

Invergarry Primary School

To coincide with timber harvesting operations we're delivering an education programme with Invergarry Primary to teach the pupils about managing woodlands. Tom is working with both classes for the next 8 weeks covering some of the theory in the classroom, while most of the work takes place in the woods. The community woodland is an ideal example to demonstrate the reasons why woodlands are managed, because it is being managed for so many different reasons: wildlife, timber production, amenity and community use. Each school visit focuses on a different aspect of what we're trying to achieve in Invergarry and there's a lot of debate about why it's sometimes necessary to cut trees down to plant new ones.

As part of this programme the pupils are learning how to identify some of the conifer species in the woodland using the needles and tree bark. Through their own research, the pupils are learning where each species originates from, what their uses are for timber or pulp, and whether they are valuable as wildlife habitat. The P4-7 have also covered how to measure trees, including a technique for measuring a standing tree's height using trigonometry, as well as the tree's diameter, and of course its age by counting the rings on tree stumps. For next week's visit to the woods the pupils will ask questions to the harvesting operators about where the timber is going and they'll be given a demonstration of the machinery in operation.



The P4-7 having lunch before starting work



The harvester arriving at the community woodland

Timber Harvesting Update

After nearly two years of planning, the timber harvesting operation has finally begun! It is estimated to take 12 weeks in total. This is a significant step in the development of the community woodland, as it's the first step in turning the woodland into something that the community have planned. By putting 'wildlife' and 'people' top of the agenda in the Forest Plan, this harvesting operation begins the 20 year process of gradually altering the composition of tree species to a more native woodland which will serve wildlife and people much better, while retaining some commercial elements of high quality timber.

The first step was building the new road and lorry turnaround next to the depot. Then after another short delay (because of weather) the harvester arrived on site on 22nd March. The harvester will work for approximately two weeks cutting trees in racks before the forwarder arrives to start the process of moving the cut logs from the racks down to the depot. Once a stack of logs has been created at the new stacking area, the haulage phase will begin with and lorries will carry the timber off to be turned into plywood, paper, woodchip, fenceposts and all the other forest products that we all use everyday. Please keep well away from operations if you are visiting the woodland. If anyone wants to visit the woodland to see the machines, please get in touch with Tom who will be happy to show you around.

Volunteering Activities

In 2018 we'll be running monthly volunteer sessions on a Friday, starting Friday 9th March, and running every second Friday of the month through until next winter. These sessions will be slightly longer than the weekly sessions we ran last year, so that we have more time to get stuck into the work. They have also been designed to cover a range of different activities, including everything from heavy physical work, to conservation management and wildlife surveying. If you're interested in coming along, there's no need to book, all you need to do is turn up on the day. Please do try to come on time though because much of the work will be taking place away from the Depot.



Muddy but happy volunteers in a ditch in the sun

Longterm Development

It's now been over two years since the community in Glengarry decided to buy the woodland. Since then, we've done our best to demonstrate what the woodland can do for the community with events, clubs for children, guided walks and other activities. We've now turned our attention to longer-term plans which the community and our funders want to see us achieve. The main reason for purchasing the woodland was so that it could be managed for the community. This means providing services and activities which meet the needs of the community; and helping to improve the local economy by providing jobs and increasing trade to other local businesses. To do this we need to set up a business which can employ people and which generates income to continue to provide the activities that the community enjoy. Over the last few months we've been looking at different options, and we're currently assessing the feasibility of offering holiday accommodation within the woodland. At the moment we're looking at how this could work, including what type of accommodation could be offered and where it could go so it doesn't disturb neighbours or wildlife. We'll be updating the community as these plans develop, and our 5 year Development Plan will also give more detail when it's out in the next couple of months. In the meantime please contact Tom if there are any questions.

Upcoming events *(all free!)*

Easter Eggstravaganza, Saturday 31st March 2-5

Family Easter event: Egg hunt, egg painting, egg and spoon race, campfire-cooked hot cross buns and pancakes, facepainting (children must be accompanied by an adult)

Into the Woods Spring Adventures! Tues, Weds and Thurs throughout Easter holidays

Forest School club for primary aged children: tree climbing, campfire cooking, den building and lots more

Volunteer Group Friday 13th April and Friday 11th May 11-3, meet at Depot

Stacking birch logs (April), Bird survey skills and practice (May)

Dawn Chorus and Breakfast Butties! Saturday May 12th 6am, meet at Depot

Our annual dawn chorus talk and short walk with resident expert Bruce, followed by breakfast cooked on the campfire