

Timber harvesting update

All tree felling is now complete, and the process of bringing out the cut timber should be finished by mid-July. This operation is the first-step to convert the woodland from an even-aged commercial plantation which was designed to be clearfelled, into a woodland with a larger mix of species of different ages which is more open, better for wildlife and nicer for people to visit. Because the forest has been grown as an even-aged plantation which received nearly no management over its lifetime, our options for carrying out this conversion have been limited. This is why we have had to clearfell some areas. We've removed areas of trees that were unstable, and other areas that were very dense, and the western hemlock which is invasive and supports virtually no wildlife has also been removed altogether so that native hardwoods can be replanted in its place. Where the woodland has been thinned, more light can now get through the canopy which allows more plants to grow, and improving the habitat for squirrels, birds and other animals.

Carrying out this operation is a significant step towards creating the type of woodland that the community have said they want, with much larger areas of oak and birch, whilst keeping some areas of commercial conifers for future income. Ultimately, the community woodland needs to be accessible to the community, and in the next few years we hope to put in paths so that people can get into the woodland to enjoy it. However, this can't be achieved overnight; it will take time and the first step has had to be the removal of these problematic areas of trees that have been left for decades. After all the timber has been cleared the next stage will be to look at re-planting the cleared areas. One of these areas will be re-planted with oak/birch and another area with Douglas fir.

The operation has left some trees around the edge of the woodland exposed and vulnerable to strong winds. Please report any trees that blow over to Tom and we'll get them cleared.

Easter Events

It has been a busy springtime at the community woodland with a number of events and clubs running over the same period. Our annual Easter Eggstravaganza! took place on Easter Saturday attracting a record number of people (just under 100). There was egg painting, egg and spoon races, Easter-themed crafts, and an Easter egg hunt which confused the children and most of the adults for a good 45minutes.



All the children went home with a lot of chocolate!

Luckily the sun shone throughout the afternoon, and the children all went home with a *lot* of chocolate!

Into the Woods

Once again our Forest School club 'Into the Woods' ran throughout the Easter holidays, with each session quickly filling up with eager children. Den building was one of the most popular activities for the children, with a number of new dens including fortifications and camouflaged entrances springing up around the camp. We were also joined by a couple of boys who had recently moved onto Fort William High school who came back to volunteer as helpers.



Dawn chorus

On a Saturday morning at 6am in early May we held our annual dawn chorus walk (with breakfast). Resident birdsong expert Bruce Kocjan explained to a group of 14 early risers some of the theory behind the dawn chorus – why it is that birds sing so much and so loudly in the morning, how we know that birds have regional accents, and which birds we have living in the community woodland. The group then took a walk along the riverside path before coming back to the Depot for a full breakfast which had been prepared on the campfire. Bacon, eggs, and pancakes with tea and coffee was served around the fireside while everybody got a chance to ask Bruce some final questions about local birdsong.



Bruce running over some of the common birdsong at 6am one Saturday morning in May!

Longterm Development - update

Everybody involved with the community woodland knows that it has to be run in a way that benefits the entire community. This means that where possible it should benefit local businesses, as well as improving the lives of people who live in Glengarry. But to have real control over what we do, we need to be able to generate our own income. Doing this, and moving away from grant funding is the only way the community woodland will be sustainable. In the last newsletter, we gave an update on the longterm plan for developing a tourism enterprise in the woodland. We are slowly progressing and we hope to be working with consultants very soon to make some real plans. The enterprise we are planning will mainly offer accommodation in a small number of units (or tents), and it would give us the opportunity to run residential courses from the Depot. It will also help to pay for new developments like a new path network so people can get into and enjoy the woods. Our aim is for the enterprise to generate enough income for us to run activities for the community (such as forest school and other new activities), cover all of the community woodland's regular costs, and create new jobs for people. The consultants will help us plan to make this happen. The first step is a Feasibility Study which will explore all the options including how to position our enterprise so it doesn't displace trade from existing businesses. We will be inviting everyone to feedback on the plans once they've progressed, and will update everyone at each newsletter. If there are any questions or comments on this please get in touch with Tom.

Upcoming events *(all free!)*

Into the Woods Summer Adventures! Tues, Weds and Thurs starting July 24th – Aug 30th

Forest School club for primary aged children: tree climbing, campfire cooking, den building and lots more. This club is free but booking is required.

Volunteer Group Friday 13th July, Friday 10th August, Friday 14th September, 11-3, meet at Depot

Clearing rhododendron (July), Path clearing (August) Cutting Firewood (September). There's no need to book but if you can let us know that you're going to come it'll help us to plan.