



native woodlands
discussion group

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NEWSLETTER

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Symposium

During the course of the Symposium a committee was set up to draw up a summary of the conclusions reached in the meeting. The results of these deliberations are given below. This summary was circulated to the delegates who attended the symposium and also used as a press release.

The papers given during the Symposium, together with the Introductory talk and the discussions will be published in due course. Most of the papers have already been received and transcripts of the tapes of the discussion are in the final stages of being edited, so that it is hoped that there will not be too long a delay before publication.

Future Programme

Informal discussions will soon be taking place concerning the future role of the Discussion Group and to consider suggestions for the 1976 programme. At the Inverness meeting in the Spring of 1974 it was suggested that some future meetings should be centred on some of the less well known outlying sites. Two possibilities are:

1. Fort William, with visits to Ardgour (Cona Glen) and Glen Nevis.
2. Kinlochewe with visits to Coulin, Shieldaig and Loch Maree.

If members could send comments on these suggestions, enquiries can be made as to accommodation. Early May would probably be a suitable time for such a meeting, which from the previous questionnaire, would probably be most suitably a day and a half in length.

Among future topics for discussion the following have been suggested:-

1. Invertebrate fauna of pinewoods.
2. Conservation management of the smaller remnants.

3. Regeneration.
4. Management of native forest/plantation forest boundaries.
5. The role of other tree species within the pine forest.

Any further suggestions would be welcomed and if any others are received, it would be perhaps useful to have an evening session, as was held in Inverness, with some brief papers to encourage discussion.

CONCLUSIONS REACHED DURING THE SYMPOSIUM BY THE COMMITTEE

The native pine forests of Scotland consist of Scots pine and associated species directly descended from the British tree population of post-glacial times. They represent the western limit of the vast natural pine forests of Europe and Asia and are of the most important forest types in Britain both historically and scientifically.

These forests are of great value to the nation

1. because of their historical interest; and because
2. they comprise a reserve of genetic material;
3. they have a high potential for amenity and recreation for the general public;
4. they are an important refuge for native plant and animal communities;
5. they provide a living open air laboratory for research and education.

Less than 4,000 acres of densely stocked forests remain. They are in serious danger of further reduction of their area and quality and some of the smaller remnants are in danger of extinction.

We recommend that every effort be made to secure the future of Scotland's native pinewoods and to promote their expansion.

Appropriate measures:

1. Establish representative gene pools from the most seriously threatened areas of forest; encourage retention of the existing trees in these forests and stimulate their regeneration.
2. In some of the forests encourage the establishment of areas in which there is minimal intervention.
3. Encourage management policies which retain the essential characteristics of the native pinewoods and discourage detrimental practices.
4. Encourage the expansion of the forests by promoting natural regeneration and in some circumstances planting of stock of the same origin in the vicinity.
5. Increase public awareness of the historical, ecological and other values of the native pinewoods, and increase opportunities for their enjoyment of this resource.
6. Stimulate and support research into the biological and environmental aspects of the pinewoods.

Owners should receive substantial financial assistance to enable them to carry out these measures in place of normal commercial treatment.

Additional support should be provided to finance research into the characteristics of the native pinewoods and the problems of their maintenance and regeneration.

Effective action, including financial support, is needed urgently.

A final point raised was the historical contribution of the pinewoods to the life of the Highlands and the number of people who still depend on the forest for their livelihood.