



Forestry and  
Land Scotland  
Coilltearachd agus  
Fearann Alba

Deborah Long  
Chief Officer  
LINK

Via email: [deborah@scotlink.org](mailto:deborah@scotlink.org)

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Dear Deborah

Thank you for your letter and the constructive discussion at our introductory meeting. I am pleased the presentation I gave was helpful. It is reassuring to hear that you recognise the financial position Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) are working under and support the continued need to deliver a timber supply to the sector.

FLS has always had to balance its public duties with its role as a productive timber business. The challenges now are greater than in the past when many of the public duties were funded by government. My presentation explained that managing Scotland's National Forests and Land (SNFL) using sustainable forest management (SFM) principles not only maintains our UKWAS certification, but also delivers many public benefits. Attaining UKWAS certification clearly demonstrates we provide a level of protection to priority species and habitats and allows us to enhance particular environmental assets in addition to maintaining visitor access.

Our current evidence, for example the increase in all species recorded as present in our managed plantations, indicates an increase in the number and range of protected species that are present in our forests. Most of this increase is due to the physical changes to our commercial plantations through management compliant with UK Forestry Standard guidelines and the delivery of SFM.

With the help of Forest Research, we are developing new metrics to measure these changes and the increase in biodiversity value this delivers, to make certain this trend continues.

We understand there is always a potential to have an impact on species of conservation importance, so our systems and processes are designed to do all that we can to reduce the risk of that happening and to expedite remediation of incidents when they do occur on the NFL. It would be helpful to have sight of the evidence your members may have that this is not happening on land managed by FLS. To date the examples we have been provided are not FLS sites, and we have no legislative responsibility to regulate the private sector.

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Ard-Oifigear/Chief Executive  
Kevin Quinlan

To help raise standards across the sector, we are endeavouring to bring our supply chain with us on the road to better environmental standards and put contracts and systems in place to ensure their compliance. It is NOT for FLS staff to do their environmental protection for them, as we have probably done in the past. The professionalism and proficiency of our staff will continue to be focused on delivering projects across the estate but will also be used to support and improve the standard of those who seek to operate on SNFL thus leveraging their impact. This is a journey with some challenges and we appreciate your engagement on it.

The FLS Environment Team are aware of the important contribution FLS can make towards protecting 30% of Scotland's land area by 2030 and the role we have supporting the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. At present NatureScot and Scottish Government have yet to clarify the process through which we can support 30x30, as their scheme for designating new areas, for example other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), has yet to be finalized. When that clarity is provided we will be ready to contribute towards these important initiatives.

And as SE LINK already recognizes, FLS already delivers first class deer management across Scotland which is fundamental to underpinning many of the environmental gains under SBS, and we are leading on the delivery of restoration activity in Scotland's temperate rainforests through INNS control and PAWS restoration.

The World Bank forecasts that even after accounting for better waste wood recycling and improvements and innovation in engineered timber products – the global timber demand will quadruple by 2050, driven by economic and population growth to meet the demands of city growth, the move to low-carbon societies and house building. Other forecasts put the increase at a lower 170% by 2050 but either way we need more timber.

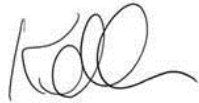
So it is imperative for Scotland's climate emergency effort that we continue to support commercial forestry for effective sequestering and storing of carbon emissions. Maintaining a sustainable supply of timber is also recognized in the SBS.

I understand that after I left the meeting, Colin and Jo continued the discussion where it was accepted that all present wanted to see less polarised discussions and take a nuanced approach to delivering across multiple objectives. I have given that some thought and suggest it could be beneficial to work with SE LINK to review species trend data against SFM delivery across Scotland's forests?

This would enable us to better understand how our UKWAS compliance affects populations, rather than simply trying to tackle and avoid isolated incidents on a case-by-case basis. I hope that an analysis such as this would enable us to begin that nuanced discussion in the future.

Finally thank you for the invitation to join SE LINK on a site visit, we would be happy to host a visit to one of our productive sites, to demonstrate how FLS are delivering the range of benefits described above.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Quinlan', with a stylized, cursive script.

Kevin Quinlan  
**Chief Executive**  
**Forestry and Land Scotland**

Alan McDonnell, Head of Nature Restoration, Trees for Life, Convenor of LINK's Woodland Group

Duncan Orr-Ewing, Head of Species and Land Management, RSPB Scotland, Convenor of LINK's Deer Group

Thomas Widrow, Campaigns Manager, John Muir Trust, Member of LINK's Woodland Group

Dr Elspeth Stirling, Trustee Scientific Evidence and Representation, Scottish Badgers, Member of LINK's Woodland Group

Hazel Forrest, Species Advocacy Officer, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Vice Convenor of LINK's Deer Group