

Campaign to save Strathyre Forest and its wildlife

Description



Aerial shot of Strathyre published by local community on change.org. Note the area of recent clearfell top left opposite the village of Strathyre.

Following my post on Forest and Land Scotland's Larch Removal Plan in Strathyre, which would decimate the forest and its wildlife ([see here](#)), the local community has set up a campaign to stop the destruction. In the words of a local person:

â??most of the villagers and local businesses had no idea this mass tree felling was happening. We had our BLS (Balquhidder, Lochearnhead and Strathyre Community Development Trust) annual meeting in the village hall, last week and that is where it was raised. FLS has not been transparent with us and we had no idea that there was a meeting on the 25th March to discuss the proposed felling. Of course no one attended and there were no objections from the villageâ?•.

That speaks volumes. The UK Forestry Standard 5th Edition ([see here](#)), which purports to set out the four home nation governments' approach to sustainable forestryâ?•, includes a requirement for public involvement (Page 91) which states:

â??Once submitted to the forestry authority (i.e Scottish Forestry) for approval, most felling, planting or management plan proposals are made available for public comment. Arrangements for this vary across the UK. Where an EIA is required, the consultation process is more extensive.

People with a recognisable interest in a forestry proposal or its outcomes should be given the opportunity to be involved in its development.â?•

It appears that local people weren't aware of Scottish Forestry's formal 28 day consultation on the Strathyre Larch Removal Plan (now closed) either and they were given no meaningful opportunity to be involved in its developmentâ?•..

More and more people are now beginning to realise that consultation on forest plans across Scotland is a farce. Even the forest industry admitted consultation could be improved at the Scottish Parliament's Rural Affairs Committee evidence session on forestry in January (which can be viewed on Scottish Parliament TV from c1.1hr 35 mins [see here](#)). However, the forestry industry also tried to blame the public for getting angry about forestry proposals when most of that is due to people having their views and interests ignored.

The people in Strathyre would have every right to be angry about being ignored but their campaign is a model of reason asking FLS and Scottish Forestry to conduct a proper consultation:

The Issue

Strathyre and Loch Lubnaig are jewels of natural beauty, cherished by both locals and the thousands of visitors who flock here year after year. Our region is renowned for its vast forests, the home of the delightful red squirrel, as well as pine martens and raptors. The clean air, lush green spaces, and rich wildlife create a beloved sanctuary, both for nature lovers and for the local economy which thrives on eco-tourism and hospitality.

However, Forestry and Land Scotland's current plans propose mass felling and thinning of our forests, threatening to dismantle this irreplaceable ecosystem and the very essence of what makes Strathyre and Callander unique. We understand that forestry management is necessary, but such drastic measures need a pause. A thorough consultation involving local businesses and a comprehensive impact assessment on our wildlife are paramount before any further actions are taken.

It's vital for the protection of our wildlife, including the endangered red squirrels, pine martens, and various raptors, as well as for maintaining the livelihoods of those dependent on the area's natural allure. The potential adverse effects on the forest's biodiversity and our community's way of life cannot be underestimated.

We must prioritize sustainable practices that respect both the environment and the communities that cherish it. Forestry practices should aim to preserve nature's balance rather than upset it.

We the people urge you Forestry and Land Scotland, and Scottish Forestry to please take immediate steps to halt these plans until a full consultation is conducted and the implications are fully understood. Let us come together to protect our forests, wildlife, and local economy.

Please consider supporting them and signing their petition [here](#). Please also consider emailing or even better speaking to your MSP about the urgent need for meaningful consultations on forest plans instead of the current tick box approach.

Scottish Forestry's website is hopeless for consultation purposes. It's very hard to find out what consultations are taking place and when you do little or no information is available and usually you have to ask for it. In terms of transparency, the planning system is bad enough but Scottish Forestry is way behind local authority planning portals as Ian Wall from the Royal Society of Edinburgh pointed out at the Rural Affairs Committee on January. Major reforms are required to give local communities, like that in Strathyre, and the wider public a real say.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

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2. forestry
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