# The Future of Forestry in Scotland: Co-design Report for Scottish Forestry





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# **Contents**

+	Introduction	1		
+	Co-design Workshops	2		
+	Young people's views & understanding	2		
+	Young people's vision & priorities	6		
+	Young people's involvement			
+	Content Campaigns			
+	Conclusion	13		
+	Appendix- Co-design Process	15		
+	Get in Touch	16		



# **Introduction**



In 2018, the Scottish Government passed the Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act, which sets out a framework for the devolution of Scotland's forest management.

To support this framework, a new Forestry Strategy for Scotland 2019-2029 has been developed by Forestry Commission Scotland (now Scottish Forestry) on behalf of Scottish Government which establishes a 50-year vision for the future of Scotland's forests and woodlands and a ten-year objectives and priorities to achieve this vision.

Before publishing the Strategy, Scottish Forestry conducted a public consultation to inform their work, and appointed Young Scot to lead on engaging young people aged 11 to 25. The consultation and youth engagement aimed to discover young people's priorities in forest management, find out about their use of forests, and discover their visions for the future of Scottish forests and woodlands. Young Scot developed and hosted a national survey on Young Scot Rewards to explore young people's understandings and perceptions of forestry and key themes of the new strategy consultation.

The insights gained through this survey can be read in the Insight: The Future of Forestry in Scotland report. The key themes and issues which were identified in the survey responses were used to tailor three co-design sessions, the outcomes of which are summarised in this report.

# **Co-design Workshops**

Using Young Scot's Co-design Model (Appendix), three creative, exploratory co-design sessions were delivered with 14 pupils at McLaren High School. The sessions explored young people's understandings and views of forestry and Scottish Forestry further and enabled young people to co-design ideas for content that communicates the key messages from the new strategy to young people.

# Young People's Views & Understanding

Young people were asked to write down their first thoughts or perceptions when they think of 'forestry' in a brain-dump exercise. Their answers mainly focused on nature and wildlife, but they acknowledged the use of forests for walking and as a place that was relaxing and peaceful for them. They also mentioned commercial forestry, cutting down trees and the timber product associated with this.

Environment & wildlife		Relaxation	Forestry
Trees Deer Wildlife Conifers Nature Birds Hedgehogs Oaks Hills Firs Maple	Birch Habitats Owls Squirrels Grass Berries Air Osprey Dark Green Colours	Walking Paths Quiet Peaceful Peace Relax Dog walks Oxygen	Cutting down trees Commercial forestry Lumber mills Deforestation Timber Fires Forestry Commission

The young people then explored what forestry meant to them in a local and nationwide context using maps to illustrate places they were familiar with and any forests they knew about or visited. The annotated maps mainly focused on places that they visit and access easily from where the live. They also highlighted areas where relatives lived, or family businesses and the associated landscapes – for example a local forest they visit near an uncle's house or the boggy ground near their grandparents' home.

Many of the young people picked out local landmarks such as Callander Crags, or a forest that they go walking in with their family. Forests were mainly highlighted as areas for walking with family, for leisure activities such as walking and cycling, and as places that were calm, peaceful and relaxing for young people. Across Scotland, the young people identified places they visit with their family on holiday or walks that are close to where their relatives live.



In order to start exploring the key aspects of the new forestry strategy, volunteers were invited to explore three broad themes identified in the strategy, these were: social, environmental, economic. The young people created collages which they felt represented the theme and described what it meant, and then highlighted the different elements back to the rest of the group.

#### Social

The social collage focused on activities that visitors do in forests, such as walking and cycling. The young people acknowledged that these types of leisure activities are often very social and are made more enjoyable by having people around. They felt they gained more benefits from the exercise and trips to the forests when these trips were social and fun.

Other activities included birdwatching, camping and water sports – many of the forests in the Trossachs, near where the young people live, border lochs and rivers. The young people also highlighted that often specific groups – for example Scouts and Girl Guides - would go out and use forests for activities. Generally, the volunteers felt that a forest was a positive social area for young people and that having a social aspect to forests was very important.





#### **Environmental**

In the environmental collage, the young people identified three habitat or environment areas which they associated with forests: the land and forest; the sky; and seas/lochs. Given the location of many of their local forests on the shores of lochs in the Trossachs, the young people identified water as an important part of their visits to forests. They also acknowledged that although monocultures of single species in forests do not make very good habitats, lots of forests do create habitats for a variety of wildlife such as pine martens.

The young people felt that the sky and blue space above forests were important due to the birds that lived in forests and use this space. They highlighted how delicate they felt the relationships between habitats and wildlife were, using the example of the relationship between rabbits and pine martens.

Building on this understanding of ecosystems, the young people stressed that forests may be home to rare, special and iconic species and therefore should be protected areas. The collage also depicts a lynx, and the young people explored the idea of reintroducing species that have previously become extinct in Scotland.

There was concern about what happens to the wildlife when these habitats are taken away due to trees being cut down. The collage also depicts factories causing pollution. The young people described how they thought forests help with pollution and that trees provide oxygen, but they also believed that deforestation contributes to climate change.

#### **Economic**

In the economic collage the young people highlighted the range of different uses of forests and the opportunity for forests to make money. The young people created a picnic table to highlight the different uses of the timber that forests produce, from furniture to wood pulp and paper.





They mentioned the process required between cutting down the trees in a forest and the finish product that the timber is used for, and highlighted how this process will provide a lot of different jobs – for example people driving the lorries which take the timber away.

The young people also discussed how forests play a role in the tourist industry, from the broad appeal of Scotland's landscapes to specific forest-based activities such as Go Ape. They noted the lack of light pollution around forests and the potential for star gazing.

## **Young People's Vision & Priorities**

One of the key areas that the young people explored through the workshops and in the survey, was their vision for the future of forests. As forest management covers long-term planning over a number of decades, Scottish Forestry were interested in young people's vision over the next 50 years. This section draws on

results from the Scottish Forestry survey hosted by Young Scot, which can be found in the separate Insight: The Future of Forestry in Scotland report.

Both the survey and the workshops highlighted the importance for young people of environmental issues. 56% of survey respondents chose "enhancing Scotland's nature and environment" as the most important priority for forestry, with 31% choosing "improving people's lives and wellbeing" and 13% choosing "supporting Scotland's jobs and businesses" as their highest priority. In the workshop 85% of young people chose "enhancing Scotland's nature and environment" as their highest priority, with 15% choosing "improving people's lives and wellbeing", and no-one choosing "supporting Scotland's jobs and businesses" as the most important priority.

This preference toward environmental factors and issues is reflected in other measures too. The young people who took the forestry survey were asked to choose their top five benefits that forests provide. The listed benefits were a mix of impacts that forests have on the environment, society and the economy.

"Providing habitats for wildlife" (76%) and "helping to reduce climate change" (70%) were the two most selected options, followed by "cleans and purifies the water and the air" (44%) and "supporting our economy" (44%). "Providing jobs and careers for people" (34%) was the fifth highest priority.

Furthermore, young people were asked to think about the most important benefits in 50 years' time. Young people again chose "Providing habitats for wildlife" (65%) and "helping to reduce climate change" (81%) most frequently, including these options in their most important list. Once again, "cleans and purifies the water and the air" (47%) and "supporting our economy" (44%) were the next popular, and "helping to prevent flooding" (40%) taking the fifth most popular spot.



In the workshops, young people were asked to rank the six priorities in the new Forestry Strategy (see section 5 of the 2019-2029 Forestry Strategy). Their ranking was:

- 1. Ensuring forests and woodlands are sustainably managed
- 2. Increasing the adaptability and resilience of forests and woodlands
- 3. Improving efficiency and productivity and developing markets
- 4. Enhancing the environmental benefits provided by forests and woodlands
- 5. Engaging more people, communities and businesses in the creation, management and use of forests and woodlands
- 6. Expanding the area of forests and woodlands, recognising wider land-use objectives

This ranking reflects, as the survey results did, that young people are concerned with forests being sustainable and resilient, can withstand changing climates, and provide good habitats and environmental benefits.



The young people in the workshops also created a 'wishing tree' of ideas they would like to see in the future in Scotland's forests. They created wishes for each of the environmental, social and economic themes, which are summarised below.

#### **Environmental**

- + Improve and increase number of wildlife habitats
- + Rewilding of animals such as wolves, bears and lynx
- + Removal of litter and plastic from the forests

#### **Social**

- + More opportunities for interactivity e.g. bush craft lessons, outdoor play, rope bridges, musical walkways, small animal handling, birdwatching
- + More 'wild' places for people to get closer to nature
- + Improved facilities like benches, camping spots, cycling and walking trails

#### **Economic**

- + Increased focus on tourism in forests
- More opportunities for youth employment in the forestry sector
- + An approach to the industrial use of wood that also preserves landscapes and habitats

The collected insights from the survey and the workshops, and the key themes from the wishing tree, contributed to a co-developed young person's vision for the future of forestry in Scotland. This is:

- Forests will have more variety and provide more homes for Scottish nature and wildlife. They will be strong for the future and help stop climate change.
- Forests will be engaging places for people and communities to be active, creative and healthy.
- Forestry will provide young people with a choice of jobs, careers and volunteering opportunities. It will provide chances for lifelong learning, education and skills development.
- Young people are fully included in discussions, decision-making, and groups involved in forestry in Scotland.

### **Young People's Involvement**

The young people involved in the co-design workshops were tasked with developing key messages to communicate to other young people about the Forestry Strategy. They also developed ways that young people could get more engaged in forestry and in helping the strategic priorities come to fruition.

To begin with, the young people look at each strategic priority, and after breaking down the wording and ensuring they understood the aim, they came up with a couple of ideas for how young people could be engaged in each one. They reviewed their ideas and decided on a key message to put forward. The groups then designed a campaign or communications concept to promote their messages and get young people interested in the priorities. Across all priorities, the importance of school and formal education in supporting these aims was highlighted.

#### **Key messages**

#### Priority 1: Ensuring forests and woodlands are sustainably managed

For this priority, the key message to get out to young people was that they should be involved in conserving the forests for themselves and future generations. To do this on the ground young people could:

- Take part in a litter pick or organise one yourself
- Take advantage of all the opportunities you can to get involved in forest development

#### Priority 2: Increasing the adaptability and resilience of forests and woodlands

This priority's key message was about preserving animal habitats in the face of global warming and climate change. To support this aim, young people should be provided with information that will empower them to:

- Help to clear invasive plant species
- Help to secure, build and preserve animal habitats near them

#### Priority 3: Improving efficiency and productivity, and developing markets

The key message for this priority is that there are many different jobs in forests, not just logging, and that there are many products made of local timber. To help enact this priority, young people should:

- Be supported to consider jobs within forestry
- Be offered volunteering roles or other opportunities which will give them experience of and contacts within forest industries

# Priority 4: Enhancing the environmental benefits provided by forests and woodlands

This priority is about how young people can be involved in protecting biodiversity, and to help achieve this young people could:

- Make bat or bird boxes to provide native species with habitats
- Take part in school projects to come up with ideas for helping animals and plants in their local area which are being damaged by climate change

# Priority 5: Engaging more people, communities and businesses in the creation, management and use of forests and woodlands

The key message for this priority is that young people should be engaged in their local forests and recognise the benefits forests provide. This priority could be achieved by:

- Supporting young people to use their local forests for group socialising on walks or bike rides
- Getting young people involved in a wide variety of volunteering opportunities, from habitat building to maintaining infrastructure

## Priority 6: Expanding the area of forests and woodlands, recognising wider landuse objectives

The focus of this priority should be on learning about and understanding Scotland's forests, and how people can engage in their local forests to help protect them. For young people this could involve:

- Asking their teachers and educators to take them outside to learn about their local woodlands and forests
- Being taught how to protect and support Scotland's biodiversity

# **Content Campaigns**

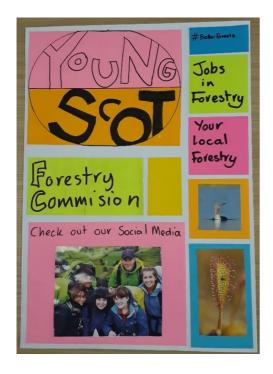
Using their key messages as inspiration, the young people in the co-design workshop developed ways to communicate their ideas about how other young people could support the delivery of the six priorities.

The first idea was for a Young Scot content campaign page developed with Scottish Forestry. This website could fulfil a number of the objectives in the previous section, including that young people:

- + Be supported to consider jobs within forestry
- + Be offered volunteering roles or other opportunities which will give them experience of and contacts within forest industries
- + Take advantage of all the opportunities they can to get involved in forest development
- + Are supported to use their local forests for group socialising on walks or bike rides
- + Get involved in a wide variety of volunteering opportunities, from habitat building to maintaining infrastructure
- + Ask their teachers and educators to take them outside to learn about their local woodlands and forests
- + Are taught how to protect and support Scotland's biodiversity

The second idea was for social media campaigns on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, etc., supported by a dedicated website, to promote a variety of the key messages and actions that came out of the priorities. These social media campaigns could tie into the two previous ideas. The two examples created in the co-design workshops looked at how young people could be:

- Supported to consider jobs within forestry
- + Taught how to protect and support Scotland's biodiversity





The third idea was for an awareness raising campaign about the impact of climate change and global warming on native animals and plants living in Scotland's woodland and forests and demonstrating how young people could get involved in protecting their local woods.

Again, this campaign addresses a couple of the priorities in the previous sections, and could include ways for young people to:

- + Help to clear invasive plant species
- + Help to secure, build and preserve animal habitats near them
- + Make bat or bird boxes to provide native species with habitats
- + Take part in school projects to come up with ideas for helping animals and plants in their local area which are being damaged by climate change





# **Conclusion**

The co-design workshops with the young people from McLaren High School proved to be an excellent accompaniment to the data collected through the Young Scot forestry survey. The young people in the workshops and who responded to the survey identified environmental issues, sustainability, habitats and climate change as the most important aspects of forests now and in the future. The young people in the workshops were able to explore these topics in more depth and with more nuance, increasing the young people's understanding of forestry and the issues surrounding forest management.



All the young people involved in the workshops enjoyed taking part and felt very positive about the experience, with many stating that they would definitely take part in similar workshops again. A number of the participants developed their understanding of forests and the integrated ways that forests are used, as well as learning new things about forest ecosystems, biodiversity, and the impacts of climate change on Scotland's forests.

The young people were highly engaged in the creative activities throughout the workshops and felt that being able to explore issues through creativity and art were huge positives that allowed them to engage more with the material and take ownership of their explorations.

After exploring Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029, the young people came up with a number of ideas for engaging more young people in forestry and getting them actively involved in achieving the long-term aims of the Forestry Strategy. These all centred on creative, fun and engaging campaigns which provided young people with understandable and accessible information as well as specific ways they could actively be involved in caring for, working in, and safeguarding Scotland's forests.

The insights and content campaign ideas developed in the workshops provide a strong basis for how young people can be actively involved in the delivery of Scotland's Forestry Strategy. Young people are evidently passionate about the forests and woodlands in Scotland, and they value them and the benefits they provide. We believe there is a strong role for young people in the delivery of Scotland's Forestry Strategy, not only in further co-designing and co-creating the content campaigns they have developed but in the future of Scotland's forests and how they are valued.



# **Appendix**

## Young Scot's Co-design Experience & Approach

Young Scot has extensive experience in engaging with Scotland's young people to seek their views and input in the development of the services they use. Young people have a significant role to play in encouraging organisations and communities to adopt a more collaborative culture, focusing resources to effectively meet the needs of individuals and communities.

Our co-design service involves young people systematically creating, designing and delivering solutions in collaboration with organisations. Young people are involved much earlier in

decision making process through a highly participative approach developing informed insights, ideas, recommendations and solutions for policy and practice.

Define by uncovering the issues through gathering insights and genuine experiences from/by young people

Create
Generate ideas and co-produce solutions with/by young people

Reflect
Consider the future impact and sustainability of the ideas produced

Recommend
Produce influential ideas/solutions with young people

Implement
Implementation of ideas/solutions with young people

Supporting people to co-design ideas has been shown to have a radical impact on service innovation. We know using a co-design approach enables a more distributed, decentralised approach to innovation that supports Scotland's ambitions to cede power and responsibility directly to young people.

This approach ties into key policy areas including:

- United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child
- Public Service Reform/Christie Commission
- Community Empowerment Act
- Getting It Right for Every Child

# **Contact**

This proposal acts as a conversation starter and we would be happy to discuss and refine activity to ensure we meet the requirements of the Alcohol Harm Prevention Team. For more information about any aspect of the work detailed in the proposal, please contact:

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We are happy to consider requests for this document in other languages

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