



**DESCRIPTION AND HABITAT**

Planted Coniferous Forest is artificially planted, commercial species supporting timber production as its main objective.

**CURRENT STATUS**

In Argyll & Bute planting of coniferous forest began in the 18th and 19th centuries with the establishment of pine and larch plantations on some of the major estates as an early attempt at diversification. This had a primary economic objective, many of these estates regarded woodland as a form of readily accessible capital funds to be drawn down when large-scale expenditure was needed-“money in the bank”, as it was called.

There was a gap in planting in the early years of this century and many such plantations were felled during World War I. In 1909, the Office of Woods (part of the Board of Trade) carried out plantings on behalf of the government on Loch Awe side. Argyll was identified as being ideal for the planting of woodlands following the establishment of the Forestry Commission in 1919.

Planting in Argyll in the early years was mainly Douglas Fir, Scots Pine, Norway Spruce and European Larch. Sitka Spruce was also planted with some of the earliest commercial plantations established on Loch Awe side.

The main era of conifer woodland expansion took place from 1945 onwards. Forestry Commission and Private Conifer Woodland is now approximately in equal proportions in Argyll. Argyll & Bute woodlands are estimated to be 198,236 ha with 159,200 ha of conifer plantations and 18,720 ha of broadleaved woodland, the balance is made up of mixed, felled woodland awaiting re-planting and open mosaic woodland.

**FACTORS AFFECTING THE HABITAT IN ARGYLL & BUTE**

- Threats:-** Wind-throw and fire – loss of timber.  
Uniform age and species composition of forests – little benefit for Biodiversity.  
Damage by pests and disease.  
Potential for shorter rotations due to improvement made in species/timber research.

- Impacts:-** Loss of timber.  
Reduction of suitable habitat for key species.

OBJECTIVES		TARGETS
1	Ensure that at least 1% of existing conifer woodland is set aside as long term retention to improve diversity.	Prepare an Indicative Forestry Strategy for Argyll & Bute by end 2002.
2	Monitor progress with re-structuring conifer forests.	Use the Indicative Forestry Strategy.

## CURRENT MANAGEMENT

- The Forestry Commission gives grant for Conifer Woodland establishment – Woodland Grant Scheme.
- The Environmental Assessment Regulations require a formal assessment of impact for any new afforestation.
- The Forestry Commission issues felling licences which make provision for compliance with the rules and practices of good forestry practice.
- The Forestry Commission regulates the activities of its agency Forestry Enterprise who prepare design plans which are approved by the Forestry Commission. The Private Forestry.
- Sector submit plans which are subject to the same approval process.
- The Scottish Executive have issued a Planning Guidance note on production of Indicative Forestry Strategies.
- The Argyll & Bute Structure Plan supports biodiversity and the management of our forests.

### ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY

1	Ensure that National Forestry Biodiversity Action Plans are linked to local action plans for habitats and species.
2	Ensure that UK Forest Standards are applied where re-structuring policies are used for habitat diversity.
3	Forest design plans and FE Conservation plans should include objectives and targets for priority species and habitats.
4	Monitor progress of design plans and re-structuring of forests and report to LBAP.

Partners involved include FC, SNH, FE and LBAP and private forestry managers.



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