



Community
Woodlands
Association

COMMUNITY WOODLANDS ASSOCIATION

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ENTERPRISING WOODS HIGHLAND Growing Woodlands Proposal

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1. INTRODUCTION

Community woodlands provide an ideal opportunity for growing food. Some community woodland groups are already doing this or experimenting by growing fruit and nut trees, whilst many edible plants are widely established in woodlands, e.g. hazel, bramble and wild garlic. With forest gardening, permaculture, vermiculture and foraging all increasing in popularity, now is an ideal time to develop different models for growing edibles within community woods or on community owned/ managed land.

The CWA Employability Services project supports around 10 highland based CWA members with regards to developing social enterprise and employability opportunities. There are 3 key themes emerging from the project which will be developed through the Enterprising Woods project. They are

- Growing Woodlands
- Health in Woods
- Wood Products and Skills.

This proposal concentrates on growing woodlands and the opportunities to grow food. Growing food within community owned/ managed land, forests and woodlands is on the increase and in the highlands there are diverse and challenging soil and weather conditions. Many of the groups involved in the Employability Services project are already experimenting with growing and/or have expressed interest. CWA has also worked with the Calman Trust to investigate potential options around woodland and forest products and social enterprise with a particular focus on food and timber products eg planters etc.

With groups looking to diversify and increase social enterprise activities, food production has revenue, employability skills and job creation potential. The aim of this proposal is to explore options, offer training, support experience and write up models for the future.

2. AIMS

The Enterprising Woods Highland – Growing Woodlands proposal aims to:

- Encourage and support community woodland groups to experiment with growing food producing species within their grounds
- Run training in permaculture, vermiculture and forest gardening
- Support groups to develop business plans and proposals
- Increase knowledge levels and create a peer support network

In the longer term this could lead to production of a guide to different models of growing food within community woodlands. With only one growing season during the lifespan of the enterprising Woods project, it is unlikely that enough groups will be in a position to accurately write up any trials.

3. PROJECT DETAILS

The project will facilitate and promote growing food in community woodlands for a range of purposes including:-

- Foraging
- Individual or group harvesting
- Commercial
- Employability skills and training

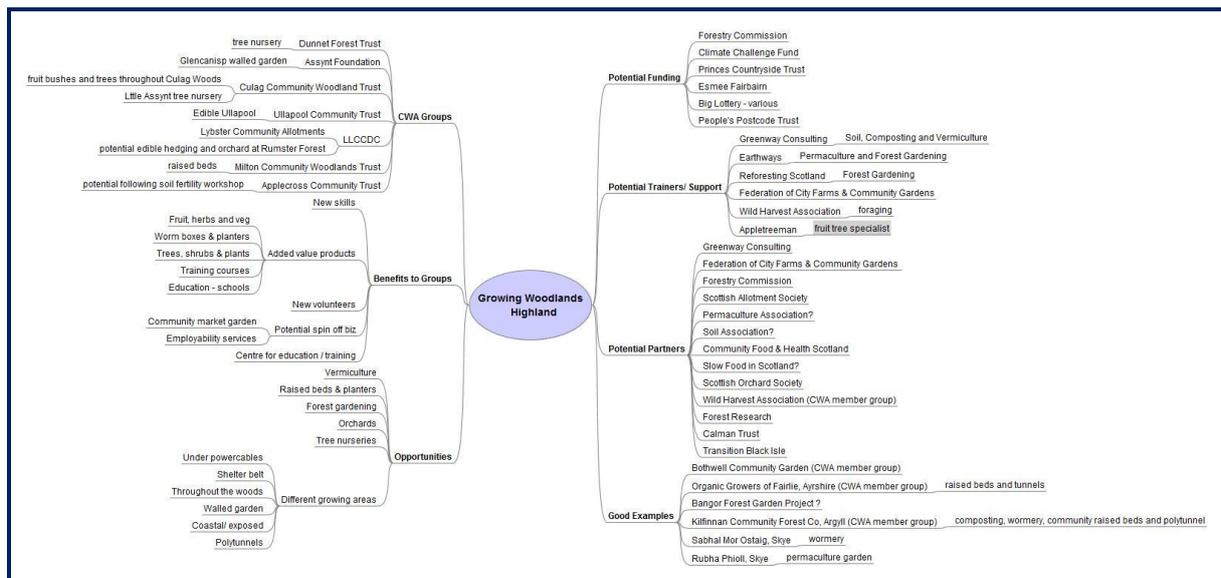
A growing woodlands seminar will introduce groups to a range of appropriate techniques, plants, options and future support. This will be followed up by location specific training and support. Each

group will monitor their progress by taking photographs and writing up results. This will feed into the guide at the end of the project.

It is expected that groups will require assistance to develop their proposals and seek the funding required to develop them. CWA, working with other support agencies where appropriate will be on hand to assist with business planning and funding proposals. CWA has secured funding to employ a part time development officer to support the Enterprising Woodlands project until December 2013.

4. STRUCTURE AND OPERATION

The diagram below outlines key stakeholders and the range and potential scope of the project.



The proposal will be facilitated and coordinated by CWA through the Enterprising Woods project.

5. OUTCOMES

More information about the outcomes from community based growing can be found in the [True Value Report](#) which gives the results of two year research project by the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, demonstrating the contribution made by community farms and gardens to increasing the well-being of individuals and communities.

5.1 Social

This proposal will:-

- Bring groups and sector experts together
- Increase confidence in groups regarding food production
- Increase skills
- Increase access to healthy, local food
- Models and examples for others to use and adapt

The wider impacts are likely to include the above and:-

- Ongoing development
- A network of peer support

5.2 Environmental

This proposal will:-

- Encourage and facilitate growing food locally thus cutting down on transport in the future
- Provide training in a number of environmentally aware and sustainable techniques which promote biodiversity and crop variety / maximisation

5.3 Economic

This proposal will:-

- Support the development of skills which can be used with volunteers, long term unemployed and people with poor mental or physical health
- Increase community capacity

The wider impacts are likely to include the above and potentially:-

- Community food production on a commercial scale
- Create jobs and employability training

6. MARKET RESEARCH

6.1 Strategic Fit

Food growing, community resilience, health and wellbeing are all high on many agendas these days. This proposal assists with meeting outcomes related to all these issues and will further the work of several strategies and in particular the Grow Your Own Working Group (GYOWG) convened by the Scottish Government in 2009 to take forward that part of the Scottish Government's Food and Drink Policy - Recipe for Success - which relates to growing your own food (www.growyourownsotland.info).

The proposal fits well with many health strategies including:-

- Scottish Natural Heritage, Health - developing the contribution of the natural heritage to a healthier Scotland, 2009
- Mental Health Strategy for Scotland, 2012-2015
- Forestry Commission Scotland, Woods for Health Strategy, 2009

6.2 Existing Resources

There are several resources out there at the moment relevant to this project including:-

- Reforesting Scotland has produced a display about forest gardening - *Forest Gardening, A Forest you can Eat*
- The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens - *Community Garden Starter Pack*
- The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens - *Social Enterprise Tool Kit*
- Greenway Consulting developed a book called Nature's Way and has since adapted it into a full training pack for CWA - *Soil Regeneration and Community Food Production*
- Transition Black Isle – *Grow North Growing Guide*

6.3 Existing Organisations

There are a number of groups and organisations now focusing on growing food and the social and/or environmental benefits including:-

- Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (www.farmgarden.org.uk/)
- Trellis (www.trellisScotland.org.uk/)
- Scottish Orchards (www.scottishorchards.com)
- Forth Valley Orchards (www.forthvalleysorchards.org.uk/)
- Permaculture Scotland (www.permaculture.org.uk/scotland)
- Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (www.sags.org.uk/)

- Transition Scotland (www.transitionscotland.org/)

The Greenspace Scotland report '[Community Growing in Scotland](#)' is the result of scoping research to produce a snapshot of the scale and range of community growing activity in Scotland. It reviews the different models and approaches that are being used, audits the range of guidance and support materials currently available, and identifies barriers and constraints.

7. COST ANALYSIS

The Enterprising Woods project provides grant funding for CWA to provide a part time Development Officer to support the Growing Woodlands Highland project. There is also a budget to cover training, workshops and events plus participants travel. This funding is however limited and it is anticipated that further funds will be sought if required (although this will take time as it is likely to involve applying to grants and trusts with different timescales).

Each community group project will have its own costs associated with developing their growing woodlands project and a number of potential funders are identified in the diagram in section 4. This list is not exhaustive or guaranteed.

8. APPENDICES

8.1 LLCCDC Soil Fertility Workshop Report

This is available online at <http://www.communitywoods.org/about-documents.php>.