

REPORT ON TRAINING



Introduction to Coastal Woodland Management



Saturday 9th February 2013

Buckhaven Community Centre
Kinnear Street, Buckhaven, Fife KY8 1BH

1. Introduction

The need for training on this subject was initially identified by CWA member, CLEAR Buckhaven, in 2012. Like other similar small community groups, community woodlands have been established on local available greenspace, and expanded through regular volunteer planting and occasional maintenance events. This has developed organically however and without significant technical or other planning. A strong need was expressed by our members to understand the basics of community woodland planning and management both in order to assess how our recent efforts are progressing and to guide our future involvement. On the basis of this training, CLEAR then wished to develop a Woodland Management Plan covering a 10 year horizon.

In discussion with CWA, it was felt that this subject matter applied to the practical 'case study' of CLEAR's own coastal woodlands would be of interest and relevance to other groups.

2. Preparations

CWA identified a suitable training facilitators Green Aspirations and a preparatory meeting with site visit was held in Buckhaven in late January which agreed the training outline and intended outcomes, which were developed and finalised by email.

Green Aspirations took responsibility for design and delivery of the training itself, CLEAR for making local arrangements including finalising the venue, catering, support (projectors, flipchart, planting tools and materials etc) and for publicising the course among its membership and across the Fife area. Good support was received from CWA which also advertised it through its own newsletter and website

CLEAR issued press releases published in the East Fife Mail, and The Courier, circulated information through the Fife Voluntary Action ebulletin (+website), Kingdom Fife radio, Freegle Fife Community events ebulletin, as well as through CLEAR's own website, Facebook page and monthly ebulletins.

3. Course Objectives and Outline

This one day workshop aimed to give delegates a basic understanding of coastal woodland management including:

- Woodland surveying & creation; *establishing the current condition and woodland type, tree species inc foraging and regeneration*

- Access & Interpretation; *discussing options and establishing need*
- Habitat & wildlife corridors; *conserving and creating areas for biodiversity*

The schedule is shown in Annex 1

4. Participants and Venue Arrangements

A total of 15 participants registered although only 13 actually turned up on the day. Four participants were from outwith the local area and the remaining eight were members of CLEAR Buckhaven (see Annex 2).

The venue for the indoor sessions was Buckhaven Community Centre, held in the cafe - an appropriate size and with facilities. Catering was organised through the Community Centre and CLEAR arranged projector and screen.

Various materials were purchased for the training including training materials (flipcharts, stationery) but also sample tools and planting materials for the practical outdoors sessions.

5. Workshop Content

a. Morning Indoor Session (10.00-11.15)

The workshop began with self-introductions, outline of the days schedule and practical arrangements

Since the training was focused on a practical 'case study', CLEAR Secretary Allen Armstrong gave a short PowerPoint presentation of the work of CLEAR, with photos of the woodlands. and some of the progress and issue faced in establishing and managing community woodlands on the coastal braes.

Green Aspirations then presented and facilitated the main content session. The concept of the Woodland Management Plan was introduced. Topics included - why plan, longer versus medium and short-term vision/horizons - a minimum of 5 years is essential. The need for a Management Plan, and its relation to potential funding (including Forestry Commission requirements

Site survey was given attention. The importance of understanding the nature of the site, and its individual compartments. How survey should be conducted and what information is needed, the different factors to be considered (biodiversity, current and future use and access, other users, other vegetation etc. The presence of paths, fences, pipelines and similar current uses and misuses need to be noted, in addition to the more natural factors including current topography and vegetation cover and of course number and type of trees planted.

PHOTOS FROM OUTDOORS & INDOOR SESSIONS, WOODLAND MANAGEMENT TRAINING
9th February 2013



Prior to the first outdoor session, the practical tasks were explained as well as the need to appreciate the site.

b. Morning Outdoor Session (11.15-13.00)

The woodlands site was only 10 minutes from the Centre and , at a prominent viewpoint, the nature of the site was fully described. The participants walked among some of the planted trees then carried out an hour of practical tree planting, discussing different techniques, species choice, site factors and others. Around 75 trees were planted in this session.

c. Lunch: A soup and sandwich lunch was provided and this hour also gave an opportunity for participants to interact. Prior to going out again, new challenges were set for the afternoon outdoor session by the Facilitators.

d. Afternoon Outdoor Session (14.15-15.15)

The afternoon session involved a lengthy walk around part of the site stepping to examine, raise questions and discussed including technique for maintaining planted trees, how to reduce the risk of adage (vandalism, wildlife other). developing the site design including glades, planning wildflower, role of shrubs, natural regeneration and others. Some of the practicalities observed were discussed further, and related to the outline plan for the site.

e. Afternoon Indoor session (15.15- 16.30)

This session focused on working from the maps of the case study site, considering what aspects make good practice in terms of practical woodland planning and management. The included broad design principles (creating compartments, rides and glades, wildflower sections as well as wild orchards) and sections for enhanced access scope for using of different species (including pioneer species such as birch, alder willow. The need to explore local self-seeding varieties and, for species such as willow, scope for promoting propagation. Scope for other appropriate such as sea buckthorn, broom gorse se. Depending on objectives a good management plan for CLEAR coastal site would involve creating a mosaic of spaces

Developing an operations plan - use. The role of work or operation plans. We discussed the scope for managing our own native tree nursery - CLEAR may be able to due to the Central Growing Space. The group's capacity to extend and manage operations, scope for linking with others (including involving other local groups, countryside ranger service, Council), funding issues. The economics of the woodlands was also briefly touched on, in terms of scope for generating revenue and funding

The importance of monitoring, and managing in line woodland, ensuring objectives are being met , importance of realistic targets

f. Evaluation

The final session closed with a evaluation. General feedback was positive, The day was felt to be useful. The combination of practical and concepts was felt to be very useful. Members of other groups appreciated an insight into CLEAR members learned from other participants as well as from

Around 80% of those submitting evaluation forms considered location and catering was very good, 50% thought organisation was very good, It was felt to be a good practical training and an excellent case study, the trainer knowledgeable

Area for improvement are to try and ensure questions and discussion are keep on subject and to allow more time. Perhaps reviewing a sample Management Plan would have helped

Using the learning from this workshop and with continuing assistance from Green Aspirations

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>V. Good</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Location		2	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good practical training, excellent case study- need a little more time • Examples of management plans, survey/ecology • Trainer knowledgeable • Tendency to be lead astray, keep on track. People want to know your opinions. Discussion is good but often lead to the side tracking of the day & having to rush at the end.
Organisation	1	4	5	
Catering		2	8	
Facilities		4	6	
Trainer		1	9	

6. Follow-up

Using the learning gained during this training, CLEAR is working with Green Aspirations to produce a basic outline Woodland Management Plan for the coastal braes - this is still in process. Some of the principles discussed at the Training have already been applied (for example, the decision to leave certain compartments unplanted to promote landscape amenity and access).

6. Conclusions

Individually and as a group, CLEAR derived real practical benefit from this exercise which has been requested and desired for several years. It provided a useful introduction to the concept of woodland planning and management as well as give us a range of issues to consider and implement. We are grateful to CWA and to funders for enabling this. We are now working on and hope to finalise a Woodland Management Plan for 10 years

Our members individually may be interested in a tending other relevant training on relevant subjects. We are also interested in organising a similar type of training on our urban orchard programme to guide it in the same way, perhaps also emerging with a Management Plan

Some suggestions for improvement:

- Time is very limited in a 1-day training so this must be maximised. Perhaps the content needs to be even further focused or narrowed down to essentials. Although it can be interested to allow discussion, this may reduce time to cover the key topics
- The facilitators should provide and refer to a sample 'ideal' Woodland Management Plan that we can use as a template
- Follow-up of promised contact details and other information by the facilitators is essential

ANNEX 1: WORKSHOP OUTLINE AND INVITATION

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Programme:

09.30	Arrival & Coffee
10.00	Indoor Session
11.00	Local Woodland Site Visit
13.00	Lunch Break
13.45	Local Woodland Site Visit
15.00	Indoor Session
16.00	Workshop ends