

Aspen Conservation & Propagation Workshop

Host Organisation: Sleat Community Trust, Skye

Trainer: Peter Livingstone, Eadha Enterprise



This event has been supported by the Scottish Government Skills Development Scheme and the Robertson Trust.

Introduction

This report focuses on the **Aspen Conservation & Propagation Workshop** event delivered as part of the CWA Knowledge and Skills Development Scheme 2011/12. This event took place on 26th August 2013, training a total of **seven** people. This report summarises the event and is supplemented by trainee feedback (forms) on the quality of the training.

Why did we do this?

Management planning for the community woodland of Tormore (owners: Sleat Community Trust) has highlighted the need to embrace a wider range of tree species and silvicultural regimes within restructuring effort – creating a more diverse (& resilient) future woodland composition that achieves both amenity and productive aims but in sympathy with the local ecology. The work of Eadha Enterprises in empowering local people to undertake environmental restoration (impoverished and degraded landscapes) using an underutilised, native tree species will provide a relevant and instructive demonstration of how Tormore woodland can be improved through a similar simple and effective ‘grass roots’ initiative.

Course Content

The objectives of the event were to equip local volunteers with knowledge of the conservation significance of native aspen, an understanding of its distribution and appearance in the natural landscape and finally, to instruct trainees in the practical techniques involved in the successful root propagation of aspen cuttings to initiate silvicultural trials of aspen within community woodland.

Event trainer

Pete Livingstone is the project officer for Eadha Enterprise Ltd a Renfrewshire-based social enterprise and registered charity that has developed a unique model for socio-economic regeneration based on the principles of ecological restoration. Peter has been involved in the conservation and propagation of aspen through Eadha for over five years and provides an illustrated presentation to communicate these ideas to others (public, scientific & forestry professionals).

List of course participants & group name

Chris Marsh – forester	Sleat Community Trust
Roger Cottis – volunteer	Sleat Community Trust Environment Group
Dorothy Jackson – volunteer	Sleat Community Trust Environment Group
Janet Macdonald – volunteer	Sleat Community Trust Environment Group
Alan Drever – volunteer	Sleat Community Trust Environment Group
Annabel Pendlebury – volunteer	Sleat Community Trust Environment Group
Judith Bullivant – project officer	Skye & Lochalsh Environment Forum

Course activity

Day1.

- Conduct an illustrated presentation including background to Eadha's work, information about aspen including its biodiversity, conservation, silviculture and folklore. Open Discussion on SCT's potential engagement in aspen project.
- Lead a group on a visit to several Sleat aspen locations. Provide training in the identification of aspen and explore its growth habits and form. Explain the principle and practical steps in taking (dormant season) root cuttings;

Any findings / conclusions / research

The workshop clearly demonstrated an effective and practical role for local volunteers to: survey for new records of (currently under-recorded) remnant aspen in the local environment; organise and undertake a systematic programme of root cutting collection; and – with the inception of a properly budgeted and resourced local project - an important role in conserving local genetic stock which may ultimately provide a productive role for aspen in multi-purpose forestry in the future.



A previously unrecorded aspen stand identified by trainer Peter Livingstone whilst travelling between demonstration sites (Sleat peninsula, south Skye) during the training event. (Information passed to HBRG & Eadha aspen distribution database).

• **Feedback from participants**

SDS Feedback forms were circulated to all 7 workshop attendees and 5 forms were subsequently returned (and submitted to CWA alongside this report).

• **PowerPoint Presentation / Handouts**

A powerpoint presentation was used by trainer Peter Livingstone in the course of the workshop. Copies of this are available to course attendees should they request it from Eadha.