



**MyForest (Sylva Foundation): online training event,  
19<sup>th</sup> January 2023, 15:30-17:00**

**Introduction**

This free CWA online training event aimed to introduce participants to the online management plan tool myForest, which is developed by the Sylva Foundation. Speakers were Paul Orsi (Director of Operations) and George Dennison (myForest Manager), both from the Sylva Foundation.

**Agenda**

Time	Topic	Who
15:30	Introductions, online protocol	Piers
15:40	What is myForest and what else does the Sylva Foundation do	Paul
16:00	myForest demonstration	George
16:45	Q&A / discussion	Paul & George, questions posted to chat & read out by participants

**Event report**

**Piers Voysey** (Senior Woodland Officer, CWA) welcomed delegates, explained housekeeping arrangements and briefly introduced the speakers.

**Paul Orsi** gave an overview of the Sylva Foundation, that works to promote appropriate management of woodlands, recognising their usefulness to society but also their vulnerability. There are 3 overlapping aims to this strategy: halting biodiversity loss, sustaining society & reducing climate change. One of their other web-based tools is the Wildlife Toolkit that helps woodland owners interrogate data and management recommendations on rare wildlife in their area. The Sylva Foundation also carries out woodland/social research through their British Woodlands Survey and uses this to inform their policy work. At a very practical level they host a wooden furniture/craft training base called “Woodschool” in South Oxfordshire.

myForest was developed to help woodland owners bring woodlands into management by providing a ‘cloud’-based mapping and planning tool. myForest provides a means to store data linked to a sub-compartment and compartment map. This data includes information about the woodland as well as management objectives and operations that can then be inserted into appropriate Forestry Commission or Scottish Forestry templates to create a forest plan, felling licence or woodland creation application. The myForest team includes not just foresters, but also 3 web designers and myForest is under continuous review and development and they have

expanded the myForest capabilities to meet the needs of not just small-scale woodland owners but also forestry agents managing multiple woodlands for multiple owners.

myForest is available as a free application but additional functionality is available by subscribing to myForest Premium. Note that even in the free version you may need to pay a licence fee to print maps at a level of detail required for the submission of plans and applications. myForest Premium includes all OS map licence fees.

myForest is supported by a suite of topic-by-topic how-to videos, if, when you start using the application it is not immediately intuitive to you.

**George Dennison** described the differences between a paid plan and a free myForest plan and illustrated the basics of how to draw compartment and sub-compartment polygons, lines and points as layers over background maps or aerial imagery. George also covered data entry and labelling for each feature and how to select the features and set up the key for any maps you want to print, either for submission to Scottish Forestry or for use by contractors in carrying out operations within your woodland. Maps can be printed and saved as .pdf documents and the team are working on how to generate geo-referenced .pdf maps that can then be used on your phone navigation applications.

One key advantage of myForest seems to be in having a lot of information loaded behind the scenes so that, for example, you can see ancient woodland sites without having to go to the ancient woodland inventory in a separate website.

The myForest application calculates areas and perimeters to a level that allows the woodland manager to know, for example, the map length of a deer fence or the number of trees to be planted within a sub-compartment. Depending on the data you input to each sub-compartment the application will create a work plan and calculate the total volume to be felled for each species for any given harvesting operation. Time spent in-putting the right data is saved in the creation of plans, reports, or schedules by myForest using the data provided by you.

## **Q&A**

George and Paul were able to answer questions, some of which exposed some of the current limitations of myForest.

Even if a community woodland has several discrete patches of woodland, they can be managed as a whole using a single woodland myForest account. Or, if they are managed with individual woodland plans then it may be appropriate to use a Forestry Agent account. Set up the account with a generic email address for your woodland group so that others in the group can log in to the account, as required if practical. The myForest team are looking at other ways to improve sharing of management plans with other partners.

Importing existing mapped information for your woodland to myForest is still restricted to a few geospatial formats, such as ESRI shape files. To import digital maps that are .pdf or .jpg files, these will need to be converted/re-drawn to a compatible geospatial format using a mapping programme before being loaded to myForest.

If Google aerial imagery has a cloud over your woodland, bad luck. myForest is only able to work with Google. Other mapping programmes such as QGIS can work with other aerial imagery such as that available through Bing.

If you have an existing woodland plan, all of the information in that plan will need to be 'cut and pasted' into myForest if you decide to use myForest going forward.

Biodiversity records can be entered as general notes for each compartment or sub-compartment and can be attributable in general or given a specific year. The Woodland Wildlife Toolkit works independently of myForest because the data sets underlying the Woodland Wildlife Toolkit are drawn from other WWT partners, such as RSPB. Increasingly there are other applications being developed to support landowners with carbon credit and biodiversity gain accounting.

## **Resources**

<https://myforest.sylva.org.uk/>

<https://woodlandwildlifetoolkit.sylva.org.uk/>

## **Event recording**

The event recording is available on our YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqrWHfHqFWg&t=2s>

## **CWA events & services**

CWA organises regular training events on a broad range of topics: see [our website](#) for details of upcoming events. Please get in touch [andy@communitywoods.org](mailto:andy@communitywoods.org) if you have an idea for a training event that we could organise.

We send out a monthly e-bulletin with details of relevant funding opportunities, news, events and jobs & a quarterly e-newsletter with updates and stories from Scottish community woodlands. Sign up to our mailing list [here](#).

Follow CWA on social media for regular updates on relevant funding opportunities, news, events and jobs: [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

CWA moderates a Google Group where people involved in community woodlands can come together to share their experiences, advice & ideas. Email [joanna@communitywoods.org](mailto:joanna@communitywoods.org) to be added to the e-group.

<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Organisation (where known)</b>
Mia Lalanne	MSC UHI net zero communities
Morag Paterson	Communities for Diverse Forestry
Nicole Digruber	Urban Roots, Malls Mire Project co-ordinator
Llinos Proctor	Strathfillan
Rebecca Logsdon	Fife Coast Countryside Trust
Bruce Callander	Small Woods Association member
Iain Gorton	Small wood owner
Louise Owen	Small wood co-owner
Simon Jones	
Lacey Lindsay	Inchinnan Development Trust
Michael Innes	myForest user
Bob Talbot	West Stormont Woodland Group
Yvonne White	Kingsburgh Forest Trust
Adrian Clark	Evanton Community Wood
Neville Kilkenny	Gifford Community Land Trust
Andrea Fisher	The Childrens' Wood, Glasgow
Ted Leeming	
Angus MacGregor	Camusbarron Community Development Trust/Gillieshill Community Woodland/Greenroutes Stirling
Tim Elliott	Cambusbarron Community Development Trust
Amy Davidson	Polbeth & West Calder Community Woods & Garden
Nikki Newbert	urban woodland charity
David Lewin	Friends of Duchess Wood, Helensburgh
Amy Clarkson	Applecross
Hugh Asher	Darach Social Croft/An Darach Forest Therapy
Dorothy Jackson	
Jacqui Matthews	Cormonachan Community Woodlands
Emma Hilton	Exeter
Colin Parsons	Fearnaig Community Trust
Mick Bird	Friends of the Glen, D&G
Elsbeth Coutts	West Stormont Woodland Group
Wendy Fenton	Carsphairn Community Wood
Samuel Lindsay	Bute Community Forest
David Miller	NW Scot (individual member)
Miriam Dobson	Trees & Woodlands, Sustainable healthcare
Ally Graham	Beechbrae SCIO, West Lothian
Norman Lannigan	Easter Breich Community Woodland
Jamie Ross	Deeside Bike Collective