



Mrs Lamb, Rowmill, King Millbank 8/1/08

Our Ref: CD/FOR/CURRENT, 50/FOR

Gordon House

Your Ref:

Blackhall Road

Date: 28 July 2003

Inverurie AB51 3WA

Telephone 01467 620981

Fax 01467 628469

Please ask for: Fiona Chirside Direct Dial 01467 628254

LP-3 INVERURIE

Dr David Welch
Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
Hill of Brathens
BANCHORY
Aberdeenshire
AB31 4BY

Esther Woodward
01651-862413

First one under new grants scheme

Dear Dr Welch

left to itself would re-establish as Leather
moderate species-rich

SCOTTISH FORESTRY GRANT SCHEME APPLICATION HARTHILL FARMS, CORRIE HILL

I refer to the above and enclose a copy of the Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme application which has been submitted to the Forestry Commission. I would be grateful for any comments you may have on this scheme by Monday 18th August as I have to respond to the Forestry Commission later that week.

Aberdeenshire Council is a consultee for Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme applications and approval for the grant lies with the Forestry Commission. Generally we provide comments on the likely positive or negative impact for nature conservation, access, recreation and landscape.

If you wish to discuss this scheme further please do not hesitate to give me a call on 01467 628254.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Chirside

James R Mackay
01467-651243

Fiona Chirside
Environment Planner (Natural Heritage)
FC/ED

Enc

Friday

PA-~~James~~
Lilly

Sorry, I have defaced all versions of this letter
David

By David
Cell, 6-01
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Esthers
earlier
visit

Part 3 - Plan of Operations

General details of work

Establishment

- P1 Establishing a well-designed productive forest
Locational Premium

Stewardship

- ~~S2 Reducing deer numbers~~
S5 Landscape improvement
S7 Woodland recreation

badgers

The existing stock fence, which runs straight up the hill following the boundary with Brada, is to be removed to help the two schemes blend together better. The boundary between the Spruce and the Larch on the west face will be softened by mixing larch with the Sitka along the length of the boundary.

Recreation

The Gordon Way follows the west and north perimeter of the scheme. A car park for six cars is to be provided in compartment 81 at a site indicated on the map. This site may need to be relocated within the compartment to suit planning requirements. The route along the west side of the scheme will be mainly through broadleaves with European Larch in the background.

Picnic benches are to sited at the top of the Corrie Hill, by the footpath and at the northeast corner of the scheme to take advantage of the views. Removal of grazing animals from the hill will make it necessary to keep the route of the footpath clear by grass strimming and gorse cutting.

Deer Management

The Estate Deer Management Plan is enclosed. High seats will be located at strategic locations along the edge of Fountain's Plantation. Some of the better areas of grass in the open ground will be limed and topped as deer control lawns.

Archaeology

There are five known sites within the scheme area and more near boundaries. No cultivation machinery will be operated near any of the sites.

Compartment 80

The gorse within the main conifer planting area will be sprayed with Triclopyr before being cleared by tractor and swipe. These and other areas of rougher grass will be scarified and hand planted. Improved grassland will be machine planted. Sitka Spruce will be planted at 2800 per hectare and Scots Pine at 3200 per hectare. European Larch will be planted at 2800 per hectare. Scots Pine and European Larch are included to improve the habitat for red squirrels. Oak and other large seeded broadleaves will be kept to a minimum to avoid encouraging grey squirrels. The spacing of the conifers and broadleaves near the east edge of the compartment will be increased to soften the boundaries and encourage full crown development for cone and seed production. Broadleaves will be spot treated with herbicide annually until well established. The conifers will be band treated with herbicide at planting and in the second growing season to speed up establishment.

The rabbits in compartments 80, 83, 84, 85 will be controlled by treating the burrows systems with Aluminium Phosphide throughout the winter before planting and as necessary afterwards.

8/1/48

Compartment 81

Compartment 81 is to be planted with native broadleaves including Elm. All broadleaves and shrubs will be spot treated with herbicide annually until well established. Open ground will be left along the burnside. A car park for the Gordon Way will be sited somewhere in this compartment, either as indicated on the map or at the south end, which will also be the main area for timber stacking and collection.

Compartment 82

Silvicultural details as compartment 81. Open ground along the burn and around the site of a former farm steading and house.

Compartment 83

Silvicultural details are mainly as compartment 80.

Compartment 84

Silvicultural details as compartment 81. The top of the hill has been left as open ground to allow views from the Gordon Way. A picnic bench will be situated near the Cairn at the top of the hill. Another picnic bench will be situated at the northeast corner of the compartment. The spacing of the Scots Pine around the open ground will be increased near the edge to allow full crown development. There will be a few scattered pines planted within the open ground.

Compartment 85

This compartment contains two blocks of Sitka Spruce to break up the straight edge of Fountain's Plantation to the east. The stocking will be as in compartment 80 with wider spacing along the edge of the open ground area and the south boundary.

Details of mixed species

Cpt/sub cpt	Area (ha)	Species group	Species type	Percentage
80	8.06	NBL	PBI	40
			ROW	20
			GW	10
			SOK	10
			WCH	10
			EM	5
			CAR	3
			ASP	2
81, 82	4.74	NBL	PBI	20
			AH	20
			ROW	10
			SOK	10

sent earlier today.
Many thanks for your e-mail,
David

BAILIBS ARCHIVES

8/1/03



Centre for
Ecology & Hydrology

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

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CD/FOR/CURRENT, 50/FOR

Fiona Chirnside,
Planning & Environmental Services,
Aberdeenshire Council,
Inverurie..

Date: 21 August 2003

Dear Fiona,

SCOTTISH FORESTRY GS APPLICATION, CORRIE HILL

I have now visited Corrie Hill together with James Mackay and Esther Woodward, and have to report that the proposal is unacceptable on botanical grounds because it will seriously damage the present biodiversity of this SESA/SINS site.

The site presently contains a considerable extent of semi-natural grasslands, this being a vegetation type rare in Aberdeenshire and which has a Biodiversity Action Plan. The BAP speaks of "the extreme decline in this habitat within NE Scotland" and has a main objective of protecting existing sites.

The proposers of this scheme requiring substantial public funding appear to have no regard for the existing biodiversity of the site, certainly not in the documents sent to me. Recreation, deer management and archaeology are discussed but there is nothing on biodiversity gains and losses. Indeed the proposals seem designed to deliberately damage plant life with a quite unnecessary amount of herbicide treatment "broadleaves will be spot treated with herbicide annually until well established", "gorse will be sprayed", etc..

As an aside, I feel it should be obligatory for development proposals affecting SESA/SINS sites to contain a description of the site's animal/plant/vegetation interest. For the present site, we were too late in the season (given the drought) to get a full assessment of the flora, and I would strongly urge that this necessitates further survey next spring and summer before the application is considered.

We did find that the biodiversity interest of Corrie Hill was quite variable, substantial parts of the hill seeming to have been reseeded with cocksfoot perhaps twenty years ago. This means that some afforestation could take place with little harm to the biodiversity, and I would hope the applicants could be persuaded to submit a revised plan giving regard to biodiversity and also appearance and the views that will be available to walkers on the Gordon Way when the forest grows up.

The most valuable ground for botanical interest was Compartment 84 where entry of cocksfoot into the grassland is negligible, and some heath species (*Calluna vulgaris*, *Vaccinium myrtillus* and *Vaccinium vitis-idaea*) survive. Clearly the vegetation has been modified from heathland by heavy grazing, meantime from cattle. Species seen included *Campanula rotundifolia*, *Carex flacca*, *Carex pilulifera*, *Genista anglica*, *Lathyrus linifolius*, *Lotus corniculatus*, *Luzula pilosa*, *Stellaria graminea*, *Trientalis europaea*, and *Veronica chamaedrys*. The valley within Compartment 85 proved to be drier than expected (?former draining) and the botanical interest came mainly from a 40m x 50m patch of rushes at which *Achillea ptarmica*, *Epilobium palustre*, *Myosotis secunda*, *Ranunculus flammula* and *Stellaria uliginosa* were noted, and the spring that arises c. 150m downhill of this, where *Montia fontana* and *Ranunculus hederaceus* are abundant.

For deer management, it is proposed that glades for culling will be incorporated into the plan, and Esther Woodward had a planting map giving some indication of the glades' location. Unfortunately the glades did not seem to coincide with the areas of greatest botanical interest. I would suggest, from my own expertise on deer feeding in plantations, that the heather in Compartment 84 (north-west section) could recover sufficiently in the next twenty years that it would strongly attract deer in winter into any glades left unplanted, and it would be in the proposers' own interest to have more ground unplanted there. Also, this would give walkers on the Gordon Way much more pleasant views than an avenue surrounded by tall trees.

I would be happy to answer questions on our site visit, and indeed speak to the proposers directly to help produce a scheme worthy of having public money spent on it.

Yours sincerely,

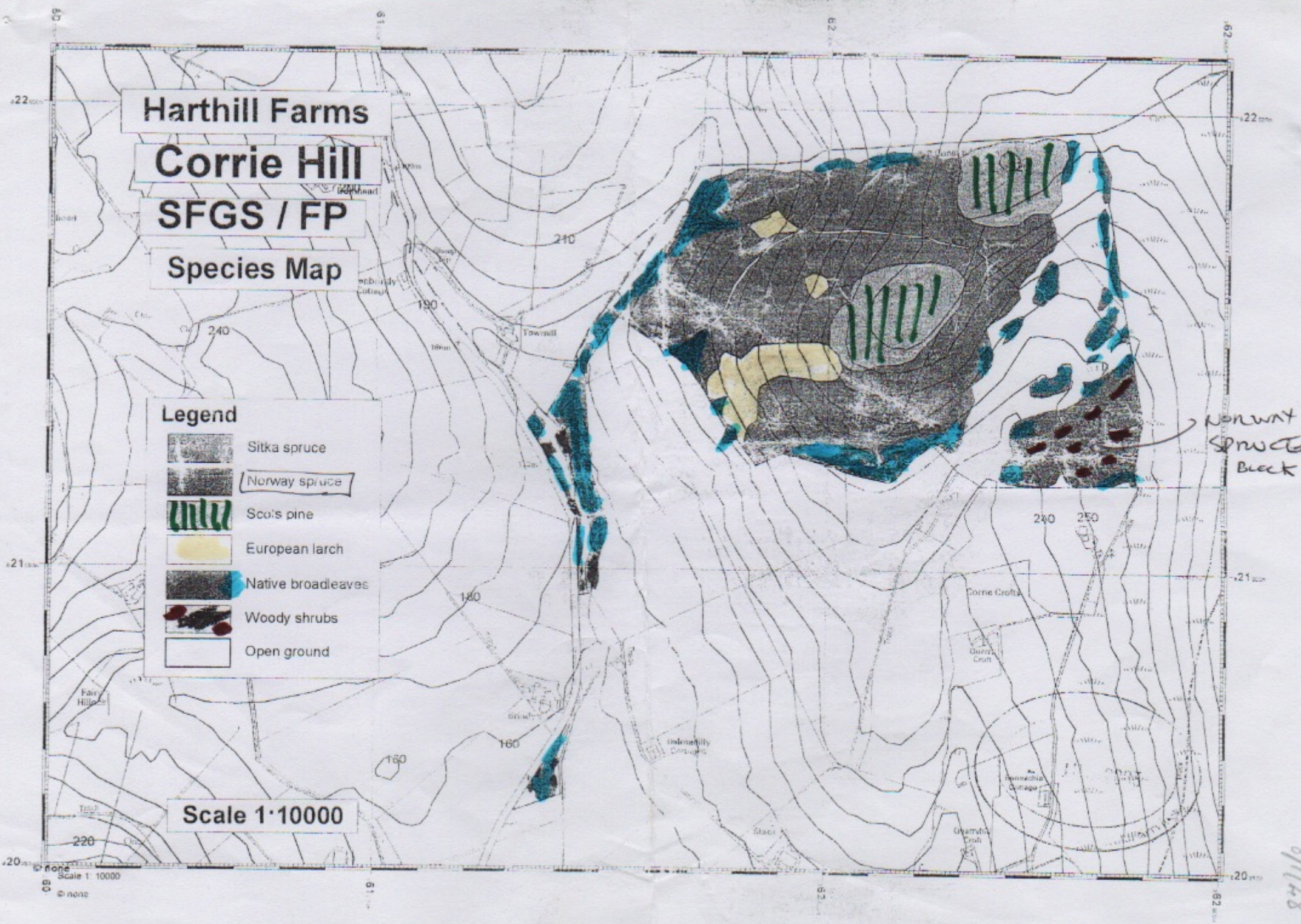
David Welch

23 8 03

JAMES Copy of SPECIES MAP roughly coloured

A good letter from David - I shall probably just support it and add a comment on (a) BC planting does not seem to form any recognizable plant community (b) slightly less - ^{wet} meadow at north end of bank 81 (c) planting along bank of Jordan Way (bank 81) and (d) hedgers.

Ethel



8/1/03



COPY FOR SM

8/1/68



**SCOTTISH
WILDLIFE TRUST**

Working for a **Scotland rich in wildlife** enjoyed by all

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Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire
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NEWMACHAR
Aberdeen
AB21 OPF

Fiona Chirnside
Environment Planner (Natural Heritage)
Aberdeenshire Council

26,8.03

Your Ref CD/FOR/CURRENT,50/FOR

Dear Fiona

SFGS CONSULTATION : HARTHILL FARMS CORRIEHILL

Thank you for consulting the Trust on this proposal. We have many concerns about the scheme which affects a Site of Interest to Natural Science (SINS). No mention of this is made in the documents which you forwarded to me (although all owners were notified in the past by Grampian Regional Council). No statement is made concerning the semi-natural plant communities which remain on parts of the site and no botanical surveys are offered.

As you are aware, I visited the site with David Welch and James MacKay. SWT would wish to support the statements made in David Welch's letter of 21 August.

We have some further comments which I give below. We hope that a redesigned scheme might allay our concerns but we wish to reserve the right to formally object if this does not happen. Therefore I should be obliged if you would treat this letter as interim comment only.

COMPARTMENT 81

This includes a relatively diverse wet meadow alongside the watercourses and the Gordon Way. Plant species noted in late summer were :

Tufted Hairgrass, Sneezewort Tufted Vetch, Monkeymusk, Yellow Meadow Vetchling Marsh Thistle, Lesser Stitchwort, Angelica, Forget-me-Not, Harebell Devils Bit Scabious, Hardheads, Brooklime There may well be other spring-flowering plants

We should like to only see groups of native broadleaves introduced into these areas (50% open land?) to allow the open ground plant communities to remain.

The north end of the roadside portion of Comp.81 is more species-rich so we would not wish the carpark to be located there.



Patron
HRH The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay

Chairman of Council
Sandy Kerr

Chief Executive
Steve Sankey

8/1/48

COMPARTMENT 85

The burn in a deep den towards the south end of this compartment is not mapped although allowance seems to be made for it in the Species Map. This short length of watercourse is important on what appears to be otherwise a relatively dry hill

CREATION OF NATIVE BROADLEAVED WOODLAND

The SFGS Applicants Booklet states on P9 that proposals for the creation of native woodland must specify the National Vegetation Classification type which it is hoped to achieve, ie the woodland type likely to occur naturally on the site. No statement is made in this case.

WOODY SHRUBS

We would like to see more woody shrubs introduced in association with the broadleaved trees seeing that up to 20% are permissible under the Scheme. These could also be used under the O/H lines.

BADGERS

We were informed by neighbours to the site that badgers are present on Corrie Hill

GENERAL

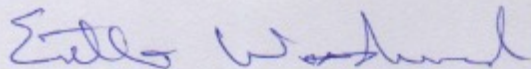
We would like to see a revised scheme which protects the acid grassland/heath and wetland communities on the site

We also think that advantage should be taken of the proposed land use changes to realign this section of the Gordon Way. This would allow people to enjoy the natural plant communities and their associated wildlife instead of walking in a corridor between dense Sitka Spruce on the boundaries.

We consider that it should still be possible to plant up to 20ha of timber-producing conifers within the site but in a modified locations in order to qualify for the Locational Premium. However we are concerned that neither the neighbours nor the Community (in the form of the Bailies of Bennachie) have been made aware of the proposals (Bullet 9 Of the eligibility list in F.C.Booklet FCCS220)

Please contact me so that we can further discuss the scheme.

Yours sincerely



Esther Woodward
Committee Member

8/1/28



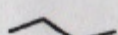



Harthill Farms

Corrie Hill

SFGS / FP

Operations Map

Legend

-  1103 Patch scarifying
-  1002 Stock fencing
-  1015 Fence upgrade
-  705 Grass cutting
-  733 Picnic benches
-  746, 722, 729 Car park and signs

Scale 1:10000

