



The Borders Forest Trust ...

... rooted in the community

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Ancient Woodlands

Ancient Woodlands is one of the Scotland wide 70 plus Millennium Forest for Scotland projects and is part of the BFT woodland restoration programme. Less than 0.25% of the land area of the Borders is categorized as ancient woodland, and those remnant woodlands that survive are in poor condition due to sheep grazing and deer browsing. Most intact woodland remnants are confined to gullies, rocky crags or steep sided 'cleuchs' where sheep, cattle and deer have difficulty reaching. Examples of these can be found at Crag bank (near Bonchester Bridge) and Hermanlaw and Muchra Cleuchs (near the Loch of the Lowes).

The ancient woodlands project mapped and surveyed some 100 woodlands in the Borders, and worked with the landowners to protect a small number (10) of ancient woodlands from Berwickshire to St Marys Loch.

BFT have been working with the Forestry Commission (FC), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Millennium Forest for Scotland Trust (MFST) and the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD), to protect ancient woodland sites from over grazing by domestic stock and damage from deer and rabbit browsing. This work has includes planting trees and stimulating natural regeneration of trees and to date some 91.8ha of land, both wooded and unwooded have been brought under management by BFT.

The pollen record for the Borders shows that there has not been a significant 'seed rain' from native woodland tree species for over 2000 years. Work undertaken through the ancient woodlands project may mean that sometime in the future native trees of the Borders will produce a 'seed rain' and native woodlands will expand and become a feature of the Borders landscape.

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