



# The Borders Forest Trust ...

## ... rooted in the community

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### Community Woodlands

Borders Forest Trust 'grew' out of an initiative led by the ground breaking Borders Community Woodland, which was the first wholly owned community woodland in Scotland and one of the leaders of community woodland development in Scotland.

Since the development of the Trust, assisted by the Millennium Forest for Scotland Trust, we have run a Community Woodland project that is designed to develop, assist and support community woodlands formed by local people who have a desire to become involved in woodland management, woodland access, and an appreciation of trees. In tandem with this woodland project a Tree Wardens Scheme exists to give people an opportunity to learn more about trees, acquire training skills and actively manage woodlands in their area.

The number of community woodlands in the Scottish Borders associated with Borders Forest Trust has mushroomed from two in the early 1990s (Borders Community Woodland at Wooplaw and Jubilee Wood in Peebles) to nineteen in 2002 and with community woodlands close to most centres of population in the Borders. Examples of these can be found at Langlee Mains next to Galashiels, Heron Hill Woodland next to Hawick, Darnick Community Woodland next to Melrose and Eshiels Community Woodland next to Peebles.

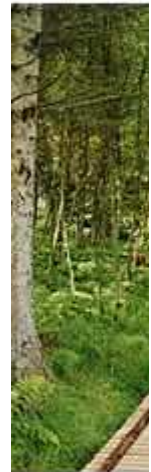
These woodlands vary in size, type, and degree of community ownership and participation however they all have one thing in common and that is open access to the public. We are currently working on developing community woodlands in Berwickshire and are assisting local people in Eyemouth, notably the Eyecatcher Group, to manage the Scottish Borders Council owned Guns Green Hill Community Woodland.

Forest Enterprise, the managers of State forests are partners with BFT in developing six community woodlands within the scenic Tweed Valley, from Yair to Peebles.

Local people have been successful in buying one of the most recent additions to the community woodland fold, Kircal Wood outside Gordon in Berwickshire, with assistance from BFT, using funds given by the Scottish Land Fund. The first such grant of it's kind south of the Highland Boundary fault Line! The woodland extends to more than one hundred acres and contains stands of mature trees and areas of young native broadleaved woodland.

One of our most far flung community woodland groups can be found at Irongray, close to Dumfries, where dedicated local people have developed a small community woodland area adjacent to the beautiful Irongray Kirk.

One of the strengths of the community woodland project has been the amount of voluntary effort given by local people, local



groups (notably the Galashiels based Scottish Wildlife Trust Conservation Team) and many individuals from out with the South of Scotland who have given of their time to provide labour and skills for woodland management and access provision.

Voluntary effort has also contributed to the many educational and artistic events that are staged within the woodlands, from totem pole creation at Wooplaw Woods (between Lauder and Stow) to nature rambles within Glenkinnon Wood (owned by Forest Enterprise and located next to the old Peel Hospital).

The community woodland project has been made possible by the hard work and commitment of local people and communities across the South of Scotland, and is generously supported by Scottish Natural Heritage, the Forestry Commission, The Hertigae Lottery Fund, the Scottish Land Fund, The National Lottery Charities Board, the Millennium Forest For Scotland Trust and many local organisations.

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