

For immediate release

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FLOATING PIER DRAMATICALLY REDUCES HIGHLAND LOGGING TRUCK JOURNEYS



A new floating pier being used in the North West Highlands will help divert the hauling of around 60,000 tonnes of timber off the Ratagan Pass, a single track road, and away from the small west highland village of Glenelg.....

Last week saw the culmination of 4 years development work by Scottish Woodlands Ltd, JST Services and the timber industry in the North West Highlands,

when an initial 56 truck loads of round timber were diverted off a single track road and onto the sea in a single working shift. In the first of many shipments from the area, the 1400t ship 'MV Red Duchess' was loaded with logs from the edge of the forest over an integrated floating pier system.

The Ratagan pass road links the A87 at Glen Shiel to Arnisdale. It travels through some outstanding highland scenery and also Glenelg village on its way to Sandaig forest, part of Eilanreach estate. The commercial conifer forest at Sandaig was planted in the 1960's and is now reaching maturity and is being sensitively harvested.

Neil Stoddart, Scottish Woodlands' Harvesting Manager said "rather than haul 60,000 tonnes of timber through the village and over the pass on timber trucks carrying 25 tonnes at a time, we started planning a more environmentally-friendly approach, seeking a sea going alternative. We started reviewing the possible location, infrastructure and hardware required back in 2004, the result today is an excellent facility which is going to remove an unprecedented volume of timber from Scottish roads, not just from this forest site but many others on the western seaboard."

With grant-aid assistance that started as feasibility study with funding from government, Scottish Woodlands Ltd initially completed a detailed report identifying the issues and reviewing possible alternatives. Secondly, they worked up a project titled 'Rathad Mara' (Sea Road) which integrated timber volumes from several maturing west coast forests and then applied for funding from the Scottish Strategic Timber Transport Scheme to allow for the construction of link roads from the forest to the sea shore.

Bob McIntosh, Director, Forestry Commission Scotland commented that: "this is a welcome development and one that many in the forestry industry will be watching with interest. Floating piers are quite innovative to Scotland and could be an important solution to reducing

timber lorry miles, avoiding the use of fragile rural roads and diverting timber haulage away from rural communities.”

Alistair Speedie, Chair of the Timber Transport Forum said: "the use of floating piers is an important step in the reduction of damage to the rural road network, as timber production increases over the coming years this will become an ever more important tool for reducing the impact of timber haulage on remote and fragile roads in Scotland."

Simultaneously JST Services, a timber haulage and handling contractor, successfully applied for Freight Facility Grant Aid funding then commenced the design and fabrication of the pier and associated link span equipment.

Whilst smaller capacity floating piers are currently successfully utilised in Scotland for shorter distance sea shipping and timber operations, the JST pier, arriving at Glenelg in August 2009 and located to the south of Glenelg Bay, has the capability to dock and load vessels up to 3000 tonnes. It has therefore opened up opportunities for the movement of round timber from this, and other previously remote locations, to timber markets throughout the UK and northern Europe.

Notes to Editors:

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- **Scottish Woodlands Ltd** is one of the country's leading forestry management companies and is predominantly an employee-owned company. The core activities are forest management, new woodland creation, timber harvesting, and generation of new forestry investment as well as a growing presence in utilities, landscaping and renewable energy. Scottish Woodlands operates from a network of 16 offices throughout the UK, utilising the company's biggest asset - its staff. The business had a turnover of £45.9 million in the year to 30th September 2008. Web: www.scottishwoodlands.co.uk.
- **JST Services Ayr**, are Scotland's largest timber handling and haulage contractor. Established in 1993, the company operates a modern fleet of timber trucks, cranes and both innovative low ground pressure 'in forest' and now floating pier plant and equipment. As well as land-based timber activity, the company loads and ships round timber to major end users throughout the UK and Europe from all major and minor ports alike. Web: www.jstservices.co.uk.
- **Forestry Commission Scotland** serves as the Scottish Government's forestry directorate and manages the 665,000 hectare national forest estate. Scottish forestry is making a sustainable contribution to Scotland's economy. Over 31,000 jobs, mostly in rural areas, are now supported by the forestry sector and the industry generates around £670 million to the Scottish economy. With wood being an important and renewable resource it also an ideal material for timber construction. Scotland's forests and woodlands are helping support many rural communities and businesses. Web: www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland.