

Olsson Forest Ltd

STRATHCONON FOREST - 2018 OPERATIONS REPORT

Timber Harvesting

This takes place in the east of the forest above the forest road where an area of over-mature commercial forest (visible across Loch Meig, west of a double row of larch) will be felled by local Dingwall company Munro Harvesting Ltd.. Work starts in early April until October. Timber lorries have been asked to avoid the primary school drop off and pick up times of 8:45 - 9:15am and 2:45 - 3:15pm during term times.

Replanting

A small area of 2.5 hectares lying in a bend about half way along the eastern forest road was replanted at end March/early April 2018.

Maintenance of the 2017-18 replanting will include assessing trees that have died and their protection by controlling weeds and young tree destroying large weevils/*Hylobius abietis*. We have already tried to reduce this damage by using large transplants and guards but almost every young trees' bark has been eaten. We will only use an insecticide that has been shown, when used responsibly, to be of minimal hazard to the environment, bees, aquatic life, spray operators and any public visiting the woodland. The insecticide chosen is Gazelle SG which has the following characteristics:

- i) Regulatory authorities in the UK and the EC have conducted extensive scientific scrutiny of the product concluding that it poses no unacceptable risks to wildlife, humans or the environment when used as recommended.

All applications will be strictly controlled and monitored to ensure that spraying is conducted safely.

- ii) While the World Health Organisation does classify the material as "Moderately Hazardous" we need to recognise that they give the same hazard classification to the caffeine in our tea and coffee.

Walking through treated trees poses minimal hazard to people, although good practice suggests dogs should be kept on leads to avoid contact with recently treated young transplants if still wet from spraying.

- iii) The product is water soluble, so any small amounts reaching the soil may be washed down by rainfall, however, the life in the soil is only 1-5 days. Therefore, there is negligible chance of reaching underground water supplies as the material will have been de-activated before moving far.

Added precautions will be taken by avoiding the use of any chemical treatments within 20m of any watercourse and a 50m radius of any spring or abstraction point complying with the UK Forestry Standard.

- Once dried on the stem & needles, the chemical is absorbed by the plant and cannot be washed off.

- All spraying is carefully controlled using a specialised spray nozzle, so that the spray is intercepted by the plant with any drips to the soil at negligible levels. Unlike agricultural spraying, only the transplants are sprayed, and not the rest of the area, thereby reducing exposure of non-target areas so that other insects are unharmed.
- The product is part of an extensive group of insecticides known as neonicotinoids, some of which are implicated with bee decline, however, this product is so harmless to bees that it can be used by fruit growers who spray when the crop is in flower and rely on pollinators for successful fruit set!
- The insecticide is not classified as harmful to fish, but can affect some aquatic insects. We are very aware of the delicate nature of the aquatic environment of local watercourses, and take effective measures to ensure that no insecticide reaches them.

Our 20m buffer zone from any ditch or stream where no insecticide use is used, far exceeds the statutory buffer zone of 1m from the top of any bank or ditch edge complying with the UK Forestry Standard.

In conclusion, while we fully understand the unease felt by people about the use of insecticides, at the present time alternatives are not reliable enough for us to be able to depend on them and we hope for your understanding over this necessary course of action.

The Forest Roads

There will be small programme of forest road maintenance during the year, mainly to remove encroaching vegetation along the forest road edges.

Rhododendron Control

A programme of *Rhododendron ponticum* control may start to be carried out during the summer mainly in the western part of the forest. To reduce pesticide use, machine extraction, piling and carefully controlled burning of stems is the preferred method, with minimal follow up work only if required to control re-growth.

Emergency Contacts

If further information is required, contact:

- Scottish Woodlands Ltd. at their Strathpeffer office on 01997 420040.
- Angela Douglas, Olsson Forest Ltd. c/o A Douglas Consultancy at Strathpeffer on 07969 327015.