Sustainable Management of Forests – Livestock Exclusion

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Aim

This option aims to bring native woodland back into active management by excluding livestock. It aims to encourage you to:

- establish natural regeneration
- carry out appropriate management of native woodlands
- restore Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites
- restore biodiversity and enhance priority habitats for priority species and designated sites

Grant support

We will pay this grant annually for up to a maximum of five years.

The rate is £43 per hectare per year. We will review the results of the livestock exclusion in the fifth year. We have calculated the grant for this option as a payment for income forgone from the loss of grazing.

If appropriate, you may also apply for grant under the Sustainable Management of Forests – Native Woodland option to help control deer and monitor habitat response on these areas if this is needed.

In addition, you can use the Woodland Improvement Grant – Habitats and Species option to support related works such as removal of non-native species, fencing and work to stimulate natural regeneration.

Please discuss applying for these options with your woodland officer.

Application eligibility criteria

Please check that you are eligible to apply for Forestry Grant Scheme funding before you begin your application.

Sustainable Management of Forests

To be eligible you must have an approved Forest Plan for woodland areas of 100 hectares or more. For woodland areas less than 100 hectares you must have an approved Management Plan or Forest Plan.

Long-term Forest Plan technical guidance

Management Plan

Please read the 'Supporting information' section below for the details you need to supply us when applying for this option.

You must use the appropriate standard template to give this information.

Woodlands are eligible if they appear on the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland either as native woodland (including native woodland scrub communities) or if they are near-native sites or other Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites where you intend to restore towards native woodland.

Other eligibility criteria

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

If the application area is within or affects a Site of Special Scientific Interest or Natura site the proposed work must fit with objectives set out in the site management statement. This statement must be supplied in support of your application.

Boundary fences

You must maintain boundary fences to ensure that livestock are excluded from the woodland. We will check that stock is excluded and the site is not being used for grazing.

You must consider the impacts of local deer populations in conjunction with the removal of livestock.

Native woodlands not in the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland

Native woodlands that were not included in the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland can be eligible if you show alternative evidence for their area and condition and they are present and above the minimum size (0.5 hectares).

You can include riparian woodlands, which were too narrow to map in the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland, where they are locally important in unwooded landscapes.

Natural regeneration

If you intend to expand the woodland using natural regeneration you can include areas around the woodland edge but only where natural regeneration is likely to occur.

The outer boundary of the proposed new naturally regenerated woodland should not exceed 50 metres distance from the woodland edge and a viable seed source.

In exceptional circumstances, and where there are prospects of regeneration occurring, we may agree to distances farther than 50 metres from seed trees. For example, if there is favourable topography and wind direction, or evidence of suppressed natural regeneration.

The minimum width for natural regeneration is 15 metres. You should check the new Natural Regeneration Establishment capital item specification for the requirements you must meet to be eligible for funding.

If you intend to extend the woodland edge by natural regeneration you must map this area as a forest land parcel. This area will be capped as a component of the allowable 20 per cent open ground.

General mapping guidance for the Forestry Grant Scheme

Supporting information

To help us assess your application, you must provide us with supporting information. You must give the details as listed below using the template provided.

Sustainable Management of Forests – Livestock Exclusion supporting information template

Please describe the current levels of grazing.

Please also provide a summary of the benefits that the exclusion of grazing stock will achieve.

The attributes you should consider are:

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- tree regeneration
  - aim for the presence of native tree and shrub species characteristic of the site and locality
  - aim for non-native species to be absent or contained at existing or low levels
- stand and vegetation structure
  - aim for a range of different age-classes and for some permanent open areas in the woodland
  - aim for improved ground and field vegetation layers
- herbivore impacts
  - aim to control the impacts of deer. Deer control, if required, must comply with Best Practice Guidance

Provide a map that shows the perimeter of the Sustainable Management of Forests – Livestock Exclusion boundary.

General mapping guidance for the Forestry Grant Scheme

If you are promoting natural regeneration to extend the woodland edge, please include:

- a survey map to show the location of an adequate seed source and where there is any advanced regeneration
- protection methods and any planned ground disturbance or preparation. Unless there is extensive advanced regeneration we expect you to mechanically disturb the ground on most sites

If applicable, please also supply the SSSI, SPA, or SAC Management Statement.

Selection criteria

To make sure we achieve the best value for money and to ensure we meet the scheme's objectives, we assess each application using selection criteria. These criteria differ depending on the option.

We will set a minimum score that an application must achieve to be considered for approval. We will make details available before the start of the scheme.

How to claim

We will pay grants for up to five years for each year that your contract is covered by a Forest Plan or Management Plan. If your Forest Plan or Management Plan expires during the five years of your contract you must ensure that it is renewed in time to be able to continue making annual claims. We cannot pay your claim for any claim year that is not covered by a Forest Plan or Management Plan.

You must claim this grant on your Single Application Form.

You are required to keep a diary of the activities carried out. This will include days spent undertaking activities that ensure that grazing animals are excluded from the woodland, such as checking fences, removing stray animals, and ensuring there are no deer present.

The diary template will be sent out with the contract and then on an annual basis. Please retain the diary and survey for checking by our woodland officers.

Technical guidance

- Long-term Forest Plan technical guidance
- Management Plan
- Native Woodland Survey of Scotland
- UK Forestry Standard
- Scottish Natural Heritage Sitelink

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