

Who will be able to see the storymap?

Once collected, the plan is to embed the stories in a digital map that can serve as a public resource and deliberation and decision-making tool, although participants have the option of making their stories available only for workshops with relevant communities of place and interest. JHI researchers will also use the material to draw out lessons for improving the adaptive management of land.

If you are interested to contribute a story or find out more about the project, please **contact:** scott.herrett@hutton.ac.uk or tel:01224 395315



This is a project from the James Hutton Institute (JHI) aiming to identify and explore human dimensions of woodland expansion within the Cairngorms. It is funded by the Scottish Government's Rural Strategic Research Programme.



UnderStory



Storying woodland use, management and expansion in the Cairngorms

Why woodland expansion?

Woodland expansion is of relevance because forestry policy increasingly aims to deliver many benefits. Native woodland restoration and other management interventions that seek to enhance the ecosystem health of existing - and create new - woodlands are priorities for addressing biodiversity loss. Also increasing woodland and forestry can help Scotland mitigate and adapt to climate change, as well as providing a sustainable timber resource. However it is recognised that in certain places woodland expansion may be detrimental to grassland and moorland biodiversity, as well as livelihoods of those involved in moorland management. Over the last few centuries the open landscapes in the Cairngorms have become highly valued by many visitors and provide residents with a strong sense of place.



Purpose of the Storymap

The digital storymap will be created using short videos, written and spoken word to provide an engaging, enduring account of perspectives on woodland use, management and expansion in the early 21st Century from the Cairngorms.

There are already digital mapping tools that primarily contain information about soil, climate and biodiversity of woodlands but miss out important human and social factors.

The storymap aims to fill in this gap and provide place based information on different knowledges, experiences, visions and feelings about woodland. This additional information will be useful in creating a dialogue to work through where particular kinds of woodland and management are appropriate (and not) and why.

Why use stories to aid land management?

Stories are the primary and most powerful means through which people communicate with each other, and have been shown to be more useful for dialogue on environmental issues than more traditional means, including facts and statistics. With woodland expansion, as any land use issue, good decision making can come about if the views of relevant stakeholders are expressed in a way that gains a deep understanding of what makes woodland (or its absence) meaningful and why, and how such meanings are rooted in a particular place. Such an understanding could include stories of how we got to the current pattern of woodland and competing land cover in Cairngorms, how we use, value and experience it, where we want to go next, and how we might get there.



What form will the stories take?

The stories will take the form of short videos or photographs (recent or old), and audio recordings from walk /go along interviews in the Cairngorms.

Whose stories?

Anyone expressing a connection with woodland and land in the Cairngorms may have relevant stories to tell. They might include local community members, land managers, recreation managers, recreational users and their representatives (e.g. walkers, runners, dog walkers, mountain bikers, wildlife watchers and photographers), land-based businesses, staff of related agencies and NGOs, and different kinds of scientists.