Broadmeadows, Scottish Borders

Broadmeadows, a hill sheep farm, in the Yarrow Valley has planted its existing low-grade grazing and hill ground with a multi-purpose woodland, combining commercial forestry, diverse conifer and native broadleaves. Still an active farm, the owner wished to look at a modern and diverse mix of land uses to optimise commercial and environmental opportunities.

Objective

The landowner wanted to create a significant woodland planting scheme, sympathetic to its surrounding landscape and contributing significantly to Scotland's climate change objectives. It was important to the client that the project didn't focus solely on commercial Sitka spruce but still provided sufficient future revenue from timber and carbon. The opportunity to develop access routes for community members of all ages and abilities, promoting responsible access to the countryside was also a key factor.

Fast Facts

Client: Alec Telfer

Project developer: Forest Direct Ltd

Previous land use: Agricultural grazing land

Area: Gross area 265ha
Net area: 243ha
Open ground: 22ha

Species Mix:
Sitka Spruce 54%,
Douglas Fir 6%,
Norway Spruce 6%,
Scots Pine 8%,
Native Broadleaves 10%
Low-density Native Broadleaves 8%
Open Ground 8%

Trees planted: 576,000

Woodland Management:
Clearfell (Sitka and Norway Spruce)
Thinning (Douglas Fir & Scots Pine),
Minimum intervention of Broadleaves

Estimated net carbon Sequestration (tCO2): 72,257

Start date: November 2018

End date: April 2019

Approach

The first step in developing the Broadmeadows scheme was a series of extensive surveys covering biodiversity, heritage, landscape, soils and tree selection. The findings were used to develop an initial design which was shared with the local community; their feedback was then incorporated to improve the existing planting scheme further.

Funding was an essential component of the project, and a successful Forestry Grant Scheme application was submitted in conjunction with registering with the Woodland Carbon Code. The Woodland Carbon Code enabled the planting of a larger volume of other conifer species, including Douglas fir, Scots pine and Norway spruce, while still providing a good rate of return on the investment. Committing all the investment in Sitka Spruce was considered high risk in light of climate change and the potential for pest and diseases.

The new path network has been designed and mapped out, ready for planning approval.

Heather management is undertaken annually in March, with the first of our annual swiping processes carried out in 2020.

By taking the sheep off the hill, natural regeneration of willow, bilberry and heather will enhance the habitat for wildlife, including black grouse, red grouse, curlew, snipe and golden plover. The new planting has also improved the flow of surface water and created major flood mitigation benefits.

A significant volume of high-quality timber will be produced in the long term providing homegrown timber to the construction and power generation industries.

The whole project had a far-reaching socio-economic benefit for the area, creating jobs for local contractors, significant contracts for tree nurseries and additional outdoor access provisions for community members. In addition, long term plans include exploring self-catering log cabin accommodation.

Legend

- Sitka Spruce
- Norway Spruce
- Douglas Fir
- Scots Pine
- Native Broadleaves
- Low Density Broadleaves
- Open Ground

Paths

- Proposed upgrade path
- New path
- Existing access route
- Amended route

Forest Direct Ltd
— Forestry Consultants —