

## **‘One stop land information shop’ makes it easier to create woodlands**

Anyone looking to assess whether land that they manage is suitable for planting trees can now find out more easily thanks to the [Land Information Search](#) on [Scotland's Environment Web](#). The new ‘one stop land information shop’ draws on over 40 different data sets providing landowners with detailed up-to-date information that will assist in the swifter preparation of high-quality applications for Scottish Government grants.

Planting trees helps improve the landscape and biodiversity and also provides benefits to landowners and farm businesses. For example, trees and woodland generate income through the production of wood fuel or by providing a habitat that would support the introduction of game shooting. They also provide shelter and shade for livestock and windbreaks to protect crops and buildings.

In addition, planting unproductive land to improve the landscape and its biodiversity creates woodlands that are home to a large number of insects that might assist in improving the pollination of adjacent crops. Trees can protect against soil erosion, can help prevent runoff and loss of manure and valuable fertiliser into water courses, and they lock up carbon - helping to reduce the effects of climate change<sup>1</sup>. Local communities and visitors also benefit as woodland provides a more attractive environment for recreation and creates education opportunities.

James Nott (Conservator for Grampian) said; “Land owners who want to apply for grant funding to help plant or manage woodlands have previously found it difficult to find detailed information about their land that the [Forestry Grant Scheme](#) application process requires.

“This may have deterred some landowners from applying or meant that their applications for funds were rejected due to insufficient or inaccurate information.

“The new agri-environment and forestry [Land Information Search](#) makes finding this information much easier, which means that more trees will get planted and better care will be taken of existing woodlands!”

SEPA, Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage worked collaboratively under the umbrella of [Scotland's Environment Web](#) to develop the [Land Information Search](#). The improved service, which collates many different datasets within one web portal, provides landowners and practitioners such as farmers, moorland managers, developers and foresters with a fast and convenient way to access a vast amount of information about their land and neighbouring areas. This includes native woodland surveys, forestry boundaries, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, historic sites and groundwater reports and much more.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/supporting/grants-and-regulations/farm-woodlands/the-benefits-of-planting-trees>

This is an excellent example of collaborative working between the Scottish Public Sector and demonstrates how making data openly and easily available benefits the wider community. In this case, making it easier for landowners to apply for forestry grants to plant and manage woodlands, providing value to their businesses, local communities and the environment.

7<sup>th</sup> December 2015

<b>Land Information Service creating woodlands Success</b>	
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landowners can access grants for their farms more easily</li> <li>• Farm businesses more diversified and sustainable</li> <li>• Boost to local economy from visitors e.g. sport shooters</li> <li>• Reduction in loss of valuable soil, manure and fertilisers from erosion and runoff</li> <li>• More productive farm business e.g. due to better pollination and the sheltering of crops and livestock</li> </ul>
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More trees locking up carbon reducing the effects of climate change</li> <li>• Reduced nutrient pollution in water courses</li> <li>• Greater biodiversity in rural areas</li> </ul>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More attractive landscape improving well-being of local communities</li> <li>• Recreational opportunities improving health for locals and visitors</li> <li>• Educational focus for school children</li> </ul>



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