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**Beinn Shieldaig update**

3rd December 2019

**Woodland Management and Creation**

* Trees for Life Woodland Services (TfL) were contracted in August 2019 and are currently undertaking baseline environmental surveys. Archaeology and phase 1 habitat surveys have been completed and TfL are working on peat and soil assessments.
* Based on this survey work, we’re starting to get a better idea of possible areas for woodland creation, both through planting and natural regeneration. The main areas for planting will probably be the corrie in the north east of the site and the western and south western slopes of Beinn Shieldaig along Glen Shieldaig. In this way the designated woodland on the estate could be extended southwards.
* We are also exploring the options of working with our neighbouring estates to look at approaching woodland creation collaboratively. Once we have more detail on how this might work, we’ll be able to produce a concept map and present our ideas.
* We aim to hold a community meeting in January so we can update on plans and progress so far.

**Woodland Trust base**

* Rural Design Ltd, the architects we contracted to undertake an options appraisal to assess the feasibility of a number of possible sites for a modest WT building have completed their draft report. This suggests two potential sites to explore further; one next to Baile Shuas and one at the end of Loch Dughail. We aim to meet with the community council and association to discuss shortly. The proposed building will contain a small office, meeting room and a small flat/accommodation (for visiting staff/volunteers/researchers).

**Access, Engagement and Interpretation**

* Many thanks to all those who came and helped out at our Family Pinewood event in November. Feedback has been very positive and it was great to meet new people.
* We will shortly have an initial events plan ready for next year. This will include some events in collaboration with Highland Highlife’s ranger.
* We have contracted a heritage consultant to produce an Interpretation and Engagement Plan for the estate by Spring 2020. This will outline how Beinn Shieldaig can best be experienced and the potential activities and opportunities for visitors to the site. We will hold a workshop in February to gather as much local information and feedback as possible.
* We have installed a number of temporary wildlife cameras and have managed to capture some great footage of squirrels and pine martens. We’re still very keen to hear from anybody who might be interested in helping monitor and collecting data so please get in touch.
* A small reminder that there is a short community questionnaire which is currently live - the aim is to gather information on how the estate is currently used and accessed, and what opportunities there may be in the future.

**Communications**

* As our plans for the site develop, there will be a number of other opportunities to engage with us and feedback throughout the year. We are happy to discuss our plans at any time.
* We will attend each ‘Strupag’ at the hall through the winter (excluding December) so please come and chat to us.
* Please look for ‘Malcolm Turner’ on if you would like to connect on Facebook. I have joined the Shieldaig Community Association page so should be easy to find.
* The WT has launched its new website in October with a new page on Beinn Shieldaig – this will be updated regularly.

**Deer Management**

* 9 stags were culled within the fence in October by a professional stalker, who also provided a report on numbers and movements. The carcasses were kept by the stalker as part of the contract. This contracted was ended so the planned hind cull for the end of October did not take place.
* We now aim to contract someone locally who could carry out culls within the woodland as dictated by regular monitoring of deer numbers and their impact. This would form part of a Deer Management Plan for the estate, as part of the overall Management Plan, and would tie in with the wider Deer Management Plan for the area.
* We aim to continue with stalking of hinds within the woodland areas until the end of February. As soon as a contract is in place, there will be the opportunity to supply some venison locally.

**Tree Safety**

* Tree safety works on two pines next to the A896, which had fungal infections and were a safety risk, was carried out at the end of October

**Please contact us for any further information:**

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