



Lochbroom Community Renewables turbine house near A835 – an area offering possible house sites for woodland crofters.



The varied slopes of Lael Forest offer a range of uses for woodland crofters. Pictured is the top of the forwarder track needing to be cleared that leads down to the turbine house.



View SW from Allt a'Mhuillin along the main access track to A835 at Allt a'Bhraighe. Looking to Braemore and Sgùrr Mòr Fannich



We are looking for potential woodland crofters

Demand is growing for local land to support new woodland crofts. Along with affordable green homes they can provide a secure home base at a fraction of the spiralling market prices in our area.

Lochbroom Community Renewables (LCR) is in the process of buying our rented hydro footprint at Lael forest from Forest and Land Scotland together with 94 hectares of surrounding woodland.

We have identified several potential woodland croft sites there. (See map overleaf) Woodland crofts of up to ten acres have been recommended by local experts. LCR is in discussions with Community Housing Trust and woodland designer Bernard Planterose. New crofts and associated social housing would be subject to Rural Housing Burden.

If you would like to explore the prospect of becoming a woodland crofter in Lochbroom Community Woodland at Lael Forest –

Email

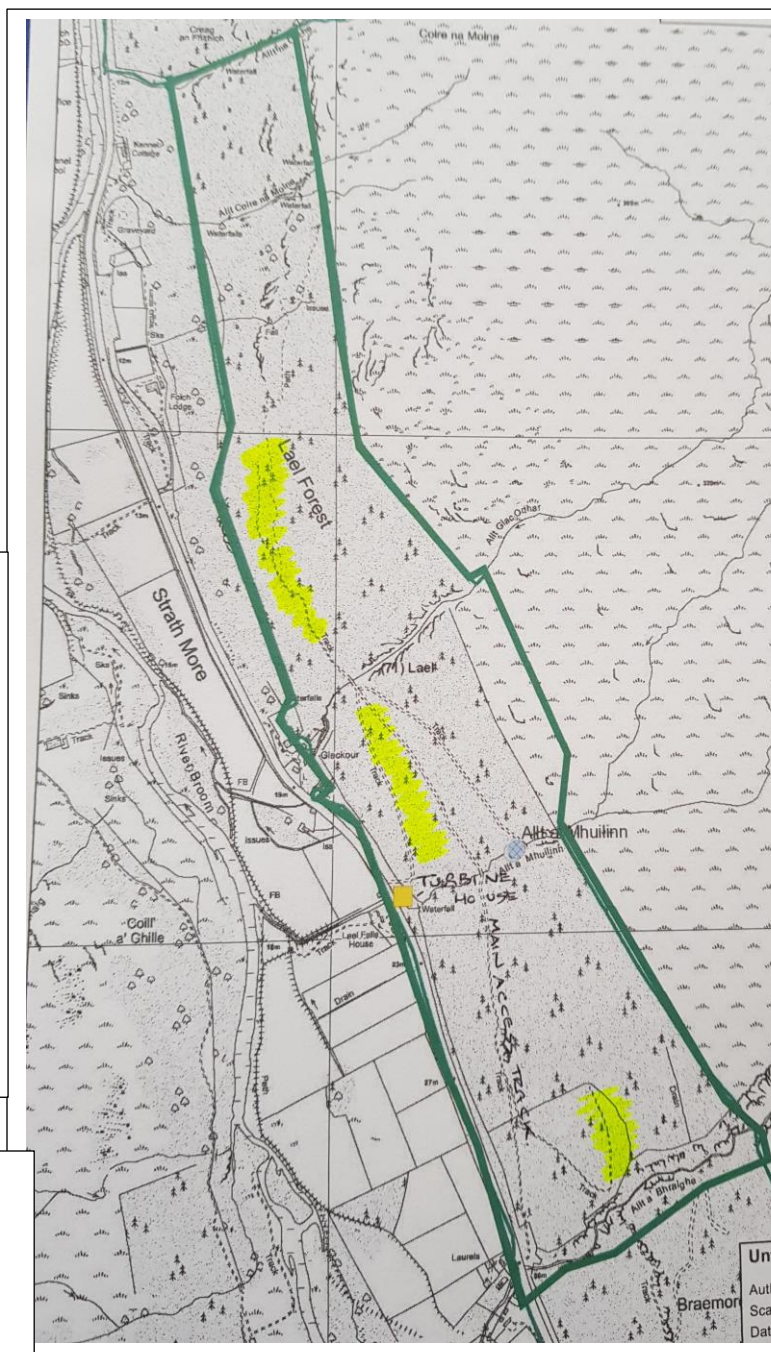
elsier@broompower.org



Up slope of open woodland surrounded by mature forest north of Allt Glacour bridge. Deer damage of replanted broadleaved trees need closer management and fencing (top)

Gentle down slopes of open woodland suitable for a base for woodland crofts. Pictured from the main access track between Allt Glacour and Allt a Mhuillinn you can see Braemore Hall in the background beyond the steep lower slopes (bottom)

Woodland crofting with hut, terraced vegetables and fruit trees Courtesy of Planterose family, Leckmelm (bottom right)



What is a woodland croft? * See the detailed description on the Woodland Crofts Association website.
http://woodlandcrofts.org/?page_id=4

A woodland croft is a croft (as defined by the Crofting Acts) with sufficient tree cover to be considered a woodland under UK forestry policy; it is subject to forestry regulation. Note however that ‘woodland croft’ is descriptive - crofting legislation does not recognise woodland crofts as distinct from any other croft.

What are the general benefits of woodland crofts?

Crofting retains rural populations, contributes to sensitive land management and provides economic opportunities. Also it can be a tool in the fight against climate change. Crofting is supported by the Scottish Government and its various departments. Although woodland crofts are a new opportunity, they are expected to provide similar benefits, with a particular emphasis on those arising from the sustainable management of existing or new woodlands.

What can a woodland croft give me?

A woodland croft can provide access to woodland to manage in support of one’s lifestyle (for example through the provision of wood fuel), and livelihood (through a woodland-based business activity). Such access to woodland is currently rare in Scotland, though more common in Europe. It can also provide a place to live and a site for a business, as well as access to certain grants specific to crofting.

For a tenant, crofting also provides security of tenure, the right of succession, the right to a fair rent and the right to the value of improvements to the croft carried out by the tenant. For all crofters – owners or tenants – crofting provides a regulated framework of tenure which provides certainty as to the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved.

Can I fell trees on a woodland croft?

Yes, but in most situations (apart from minor works) you must apply to Forestry Scotland for a felling license. This is likely to be subject to conditions, typically relating to the requirement generally to replant or regenerate the felled areas. Note that in some croft situations, the trees may belong to the landlord, so you would also need their approval too.

Do I need trees everywhere on a woodland croft?

No. A well-managed woodland should include up to 20% open space, to encourage wildlife, create diversity and protect historic features.

Areas classed as woodland include trees at varying densities – so more scattered trees and groups may provide space for other activities whilst still qualifying as woodland (woodland is defined as land under stands of trees with a canopy cover of at least 20% (UK Forestry Standard)).

Note that this definition of woodland, together with the obligation to replace trees that have been felled means that both land (newly planted with trees) and clear-felled areas are considered woodlands, thus a croft created from either would be considered a woodland croft.

Reference: Highland and Islands Woodlands Handbook – for crofters, communities and woodland owners, by Bernard Planterose. Available from Scottish Crofting Federation ISBN 978-1-5272-4061-2