

FROM: Conservator North (Scotland)

TO: Conservator, Mr Macbeath, Mr Mackay, Mr Christie, Mr Flynn, Mr Malcolmson, Mr Munro, Mr H W Bell, Area Land Agents, Area Civil Engineers, Mr J Fraser, Mr R Harrison, Mr D Waugh, HEOs, EO's, Drawing Office, Typing Pool, Library, All Field District Officers, Conservator W(S), S(S), E(S).

REF: AD 3/3

58TH ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 1977 TO 31 MARCH 1978

A number of alterations have had to be made to the Tables in the N(S) Annual Report and I should be glad if you would change the figures as follows:-

<u>Table 1</u>	Achnashellach	Col 2	Change 2740 to 2736
		Col 5	" 3120 to 3116
		Col 7	" 4684 to 4680
	Farigaig	Col 6	" 934 to 935
		Col 7	" 4397 to 4398
	Shin	Col 7	" 34459 to 34489
	Skye	Col 4	" 3882 to 3001
		Col 5	" 10068 to 10067
		Col 7	" 21143 to 21142
	TOTAL	Col 2	" 129454 to 129250
		Col 4	" 25712 to 25711
		Col 5	" 155501 to 155496
		Col 6	" 127177 to 127178
		Col 7	" 282678 to 282674
<u>Table 3</u>	Miscellaneous	Col 3	" 69280 to 69281
		Col 4	" 127177 to 127178
<u>Table 4</u>	Disposals	Plantations	" 3 to 7
	"	Land for New	
		Planting	" 49 to 50
	"	Total	" 52 to 57
	"	Other Land	" 843 to 842
	"	All Land Total	" 895 to 899
	Net Total	Plantations	" 81 to 85
	"	Land for New	
		Planting	" 2829 to 2828
	"	Total	" 2748 to 2743
	"	Other Land	" 494 to 493
	"	All Land Total	" 2254 to 2250

R B Urquhart
for Conservator
2 June 1978

GAD/CEN

TO: CONSERVATOR (N)

FROM: DISTRICT OFFICE
DINGHALL

AD 3/3

58TH ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1.4.77 TO 31.3.78
DINGHALL WEST DISTRICT

(a) Administration, Staff, Labour and Training:

No territorial changes took place in District during the year.

Head Forester P Thom settled in at the Lael section of Torrachilly, otherwise there were no staff changes and the District is regarded as at full strength.

The labour situation was influenced by the retarded production programme and no real attempt was made to recruit up to the level of the original Budget. The District faces the new Forest Year at least 5 under strength.

Three men retired at Achnasheallach and 4 were recruited - 2 at Slattadale.

There was no great turn over and inquiries for jobs increased except at South Strone which remains a problem area, not helped by unavailability of vacant housing.

Staff Training A list of courses and those attending is given herewith.

P Thom Cable Crane (January 1978)

R K Murdoch Occasional Speakers (June 1977)

K Mills Power Saw (March 1978)

Acquisitions and Disposals:

No new cases were completed during the Forest Year though a small one at Ardoch has been approved.

Nurseries and Seed Collection:

There is no nursery within the District but some seed was collected viz:-

Achnashellach Some SP from old Caledonian remnants made. Exercise incomplete by end of Forest Year.

<u>Torrachilty</u>	Betula pubescens	- 7.2 kg
	" pendula	- 5.4 kg
	Horse Chestnut	- 4.5 kg
	Lime	- 0.45 kg
	Monkey Puzzle	- 0.30 kg

Forest Management:

The Weather factor influenced management in two outstanding ways.

The summer (of 1977) was very dry and this was especially so in Skye.

Autumn was generally unspectacular and dull becoming wet into November.

Winter was fairly severe, including one very bad snowstorm in February 1978. This hindered work and communications and caused only a small amount of windblow and breakage.

Totals planted were as follows:-

New Planting - 524 ha

This includes some 20 ha of a Jubilee planting at Torrachilty.

As with the previous year the great bulk of the programme was in Skye.

Restocking - Some 33 ha were replanted following clear felling.

Use of the Double mouldboard ploughs was extended in Skye to wherever practicable and, by the end of the Forest Year, a Clark shallow double mould-board plough was in use in Skye.

The spring 1978 element of the planting was delayed by the prolonged winter. Sitka spruce and Lodgepole pine were both in short supply.

Fertilising - 153 ha were fertilised by hand

- 370 ha by air

The following Weeding had to be done -

345 ha by hand

25 ha chemical

Some heather kill was undertaken at Achnashellach and Skye (10 ha) but was not very successful. It stimulated a very interesting and critical report by Forester Mills.

No Crop Improvement fertilising was undertaken because of Budget cuts.

Another item which came to be cut was the bulldozing of Fire Traces from the Protection element of the Budget although some ploughed traces were managed - in Skye - towards the end of the Forest Year. Despite this, and considerable burning activity in Skye, no significant damage was sustained.

Fencing repairs were put in hand at Achnashellach in an attempt to stem Red deer damage, and scrub cutting (e.g. at South Strone) was undertaken in lieu of production work.

Harvesting and Marketing:

The programme was influenced by cutback in consumption by the Fort William Pulpmill and Messrs Riddoch's Mill at Kilmallie, brought on by an excess of imports of cheap Scandinavian paper and a recession in the building trade.

Nevertheless the following achievement against programme was made:-

Thinning - 11 172 m³ of 11 160 m³

Clear Felling - 9 326 m³ of 12 510 m³

Dispatches of timber accrued as follows:-

As Pulp to Fort William - 7839 tonnes (this compared with an original programme of - 11490 tonnes.)

As Sawlogs to Messrs Riddoch, Kilmallie - 1611 m³ (this compared with an original programme of - 3000 m³)

As Sawlogs to Messrs Riddoch, Mosstodloch - 3152 m³ (this compared with an original programme of - 4000 m³)

As Sawlogs to Messrs J Jones & Sons - 1097 m³ (this compared with an original programme of - 1490 m³)

As Sawlogs to Hugh Murray, Skye - 568 m³ (this compared with an original programme of - 800 m³)

In addition some 1746 m³ of a 3264 m³ Standing Sale were felled at Slattadale.

Greater use was made of Skidder (Faldstone) at both South Strome and Achnashellach.

Torrachilty's programme was largely extracted by Skyline but horses still handled a little at Lael. Towards the end of the year an operator was trained for Forwarder/Skidder extraction and a Skidder machine allocated to the Forest.

Skye continued to use contractors, who undertook all the felling and a large part of the Skyline extraction.

Civil Engineering:

Most of the work undertaken in the District was of a repair and maintenance nature.

At Achnashellach, road repairs were confined to Stromecarronach.

At Skye repairs were undertaken in Glenbrittle and Eynort and a start made to new roads in Glenvarragill (production) and Glenvacaskill (preplanting) .

At Torrachilty the new road cum Forwarder complex at Auchmore was completed.

Mechanical Engineering:

Again good service was given by mobile mechanics.

The District gained 2 vans before the year was ended.

Estate Management:

Progress has been made with the new Head Forester's house in Portree.
A contract has now been drawn up for its construction.

A good deal of fence maintenance was undertaken, particularly at South Strome.

Conservation and Recreation:

The Wildlife Officer continued his experiment on allowing Red Deer in woodlands in Glen Strathconon.

The major item on the recreation sector was the construction and opening by late summer of a minimum facility woodland caravan site at Balmacara, South Strone. The evidence suggests that this will be a popular site during the tourist season. It has not been without its teething troubles and currently in hand are schemes to improve the water supply with a storage tank, and to replace the sewage disposal tanks with something more robust. It has some 50 pitches.

Work proceeded with further Forest Walks at Rogie (Torrachilty), Storr (Skye) 1800 metres - and Victoria Falls (Slattadale) - the latter linked with a newly constructed car park within the Forest.

Much of the work involved in these walks was undertaken by either Job Creation squads or by the Conservancy Corps.

At Raasay however work began wholly by Forestry Commission labour on a Forest Walk there.

At Contin (Torrachilty) the existing car park and picnic site was fortified with new toilets.

All the existing facilities in the District reported keen tourist interest despite a season which was not rated very successful by commercial hoteliers.

Private Forestry etc

Some revival of interest in private sector planting was in evidence and several Dedication III Schemes were added to existing Approved Schemes and Basis III Schemes.

Brahan, Sdatwell, Craig and Letterewe, all had modest programmes.

Fellings continued on Applecross, Coulin, Lochluichart, Auchnadarroch and Muir of Ord.

Public Relations:

Perhaps the major item here was Skye Forest's participation in the Portree Agricultural Show. The usual pavilion was erected, housing many display boards giving comprehensive cover on most aspects of Forestry - plus an item linking a P31 Sitka stump from Eynort with the Queen's lifetime and reign. This was a contribution in support of Jubilee Year. Additionally a picnic site adorned with tops of trees was laid out, and three rooms of the Forest Office were transformed to house a Wildlife exhibit, complete with a wide selection of stuffed animals.

Two evening talks with slides were given to organisations in Skye (Uig and Portree).

A contingent from Gordonstown was shown over Lael Forest.

Two illustrated talks were given from Achnashellach - one to the pupils of Shieldaig Primary School and one to a HIDE course at Plockton School, plus a visit to South Strone.

Items of Local Interest:

The outstanding event of the year was the storm of 28/29 January which caused havoc to roads, electrical supplies, television and sheep farming. Even loss of human life was sustained and considerable loss of sheep by deep snowdrifts.

The east of the District (the Torrachilty area) bore the brunt of this and the western areas escaped virtually scot-free.

The concrete platform being constructed by Howard Doris from Kishorn has been floated to deeper water in the sound of Raasay. It will be ready for final movement to the North Sea Fields in April. So far there is no indication of a repeat order.



MR. G. DEY
DINGWALL (W.)

ACHNASHELLACH

ANNUAL REPORT.

1. WEATHER

The year started cold & wet until June when a short spell of warm weather lasted into August.

From September on the weather gradually deteriorated, November being extremely wet.

Snow was never far away during December, seldom the tops of the hills bare. Very cold weather, with frost during January turned to heavy snow on 28th. This caused disruption of work for five weeks.

The year closed wet and cold, but brightening.

2. STAFF

1. As for previous year. No changes.

2. R. K. MURDOCH, A.F. OCC. SPEAKER'S COURSE JUNE '77
K. MILLS, F. SUPERVISORS SAN COURSE MAR '78
W. GRANT, F. FINANCE COURSE CANCELLED (RE-ORG. FIN.)

3. RETIRAL, a) J. CROSS, MAY; b) M. MICHAEL, DEC;
c) G. HOGG, DEC. (ill-health)

4. RECRUITMENT, a) P. RUSSELL and J. GOLDBY, APRIL '77. (T.F.W.)
b) C. MURDOCH, JUNE '77; Pres RANGER (T.F.W.)
c) B. GREEN, JAN '78; RANGER APPLICANT (T.F.W.)
d) J. DYMOND, JAN '78; RANGER II.

5. No recruitment of Lochcarron locals even though little likely hood of new roads at Kishorn.



ACHNASHELLACH Annual Report. (contd.)

2. STAFF (contd.).

- 5 P. Russell, J. Goldly and C. Murdoch completed H.T.S.S. fencing course in June.
P. Russell and J. Goldly completed U.L.V. spraying course.
P. Russell and J. Goldly completed chain saw course February
J. McEhennan completed local stickler course July

A. MacRae, R. MacKenzie, J. Goldy and P. Russell given course on windbreak.

- 6 Recruitment very difficult. No F.C. accommodation.

3. ACQUISITIONS AND DISPOSALS.

- 1 Archival in process of completion.
2 No disposals.

4. SEED.

- 1 Very poor seed year. No normal collections were made.
2 Nat. S.P. seed being particularly requested a late start was made and will be continued into 78/79. Collection will be limited and is being made by shotgun.



ACHNASHELLACH ANNUAL REPORT (contd.)

5. F. Mar.

1. Ploughing. Too late! Even at the end of February only half the programme was completed. For five weeks the ploughs were unable to work because of snow. Final programme completed 76.5 ha.
2. Planting. Unable to complete programme because of snow at end of year. Plants unobtainable because of snow. 41 ha completed.
3. Restocking. Programme completed. Mainly catching up on areas previously claimed.
4. Generally a safe year for deer. Spring with a cold.
5. NEW FENCES AND FENCE MAINT. Golden Valley and Cairn Bhainneach areas controlled by fencing and shooting. Roughly one third of new fence at Glendie completed. Much maintenance done in Strone blocks but much more required.
6. WILDLIFE CONTROL. This has been given a greater priority. Reasonable control is possible in new planting areas, this has been given first priority and the new keeper, along with better fence maintenance should improve this aspect. A deterioration in this work is the impact by Glen Carron Estate of thirty plus wild goats from Glen Shiel.



ACHANAKALLACH ANNUAL REPORT. (contd.)

- 7 IMPROVEMENT. Drains maintenance was continued mostly in felling / thinning areas of very badly water logged areas. But this is severely limited by demands of other work. Urea spraying was very seriously attempted, but method & effectiveness are called in question. This was the subject of a separate report. No fertiliser programmes were undertaken.

6. H AND M.

- 1 A weak market was reflected in programme fluctuations during the year. Only 473 m³ were obtained from thinning, this mostly in Seattadale.
- 2 F.C. Working, even with the slow uptake of material, was very close to programme. Reduced pulp programme of 1300 tonnes came close to completion at 1100 tonnes but for rough weather in February and slow uptake of roadside stock in March. Roadside 230 tonnes. Log sales were very sticky both because of markets and weather. This was quickly cleared when almost 1000 m³ were uplifted in two weeks. Roadside sale target was 2500 m³. In fact almost 2300 were supplied with the 200 m³ balance being at roadside.
An extra 400 m³ were sold over and above programme.
Standing sales of 3000 m³ were only partly completed in the same year.



ACHANASHKELLACH ANNUAL REPORT (contd.)

6. H. AND M. (contd.)

- .3 The production work was made much more efficient and less costly by the provision of a Galstone skidder or skidder. This released two men from production - one of whom is very close to retirement age. (G. ROBERTSON FEB '80)
- .4 The training in chain saw operations of the two new men at Slattadale means that there is an increasing capability there to counter balance the decreasing one at Lochcarron.

7. CIVIL ENGINEERING.

- .1 Minor maintenance of roads.
- .2. New car parks at Victoria Falls.

8. CONSERVATION AND RECREATION.

- .1 Conservation Corps at Slattadale. This was a disaster. Partly weather but mainly inexperience. Perhaps too large a target attempted them? Work of tidy-up a new walk being worked at by Slattadale squad when opportunity allows.

9. PUBLIC RELATIONS.

- .1 An illustrated talk was given to pupils of Shielding Primary School by the Head Forester.

R. K. Murchel.
6.4.78.

South Strome

Forest.

Annual Report FY 77/78.

Weather.

The weather during the year was good for this part of the country. The season being drier than usual. During the winter, more snow & frost was experienced, than is usually the case. Rainfall figures were as under:-

April - 197 MM	July - 79 MM	Oct - 223 MM	Jan - 164 MM
May - 64 MM	Aug - 80 MM	Nov - 329 MM	Feb - 66 MM
June - 63 MM	Sept - 202 MM	Dec - 90 MM	Mar - 252 MM.

Rainfall during Sept Oct, Nov, and March, was much heavier than usual.

A.

Administration

Non Industrial Staff remained at 1 - Head Forester
1 - Forester.

The number of Industrial Staff dropped from nine to seven. Four F.W. left during the year, one, to take up training at Newton Pigg, one transferred to South Scotland; one to work at the Royal Naval Base on Hyle; and one was retired on Medical grounds. Two men were taken on, this left our Staff at the end of the year:-

5 - Forest Workers; 1 - block; 1 - Remedy.

The two men taken on were both given Point Saw training. One other man was trained in Point Saw work during the year.

B.)

Acquisition

None. Work on the new A890 road from Aukhtoty to

Strom is nearing completion. All fencing required by the making of the road has been done.

C.)

Nursery

None.

Seed Collection

D.)

Forest Management

Due to the depressed markets for timber, men were switched from H.M. to F.M. These men were mainly employed cutting Birch Scrub in Balmacova and Achmalnich Blocho. The cut area in Achmalnich will be replanted this coming FY. In Balmacova the Birch had been under plantat, but is likely to need Beating up. Because of frost the start of our planting programme was held up resulting in only 11 ha being planted in FY. . . a total of 4 ha was restocked.

Roe Deer again constituted our main problem on the Wild Life side. 24 Bucks and 56 does were shot.

Red Deer Shot, 2 Stags and 4 hinds, the animals had broken in through our fences. Fox hunting was carried out mainly in the early part of the year. Kills amounted to:-

2 DOGS; 3 VIXEN; 9 CUBS

All boundary fences were inspected, and repairs put in hand where necessary.

Harvesting

Marketing

Programmes had to be reduced owing to the lack of demand. Present, 1,012 TONS of pulp was supplied to Scottish Pulp and Paper Mills plus 1,611 M³ of logs to Ricklocks Kelmeilie Sawmill. At present logs are being supplied to Jones of Leobart, the result of a tender sale of 500 M³. (113 M³ supplied to date)

This quantity came from:-

Thinnings - 437 M³

Clear Fell - 2538 M³

f)

Roads

The road work either new or maint was carried out.

g)

Mechanical

Holdings of V.M.B.E. remained static i.e. 2 Tractor Units, 1 Land Rover, 1 Tractor fitted with 80 line cable crane and one Fabstone Skidder.

Estate
Management

The provision of a hotel store was the only major Estate project. As yet this has still to be completed. Otherwise only minor maintenance jobs have been carried out.

Forms.

With the fencing of the new A890, completed, all farm boundary fences were maintained. Work on the road to be stopped, in favour of H&M and planning programmes, but will be continued in next F.Y.

Conservation
and
Recreation.

Improvements to the Stone Wood walk, were carried out by the conservation books during the summer. A survey of use of both bar fork and picnic area, was carried out by the Planning and Economics Division. This involved the installation of a Traffic counter, as well as sample checks on days given by P & E branch.

The Babmarra baravan Site was completed and opened on 12th Aug. Difficulties in administering the site were high lighted during the short spell it was open. However it is hoped these can be resolved this coming year.

Indications are that the site will be very popular.

During the six weeks the site was open

"Banket Nights" amounted to 595 adults 259 juv.
representing 285 "fitch nights".

k)

Public
Relations

The forest was open to the Public, during the
S.W. Ross Festival of the Country Side in July.

Ym. Greaser.

RBU/DCM

FROM: CONSERVATOR NORTH (SCOTLAND)
TO: DISTRICT OFFICERS, AREA ENGINEERS, AREA LAND AGENTS,
RECREATION PLANNING OFFICER, ACQUISITION OFFICER
cc: Mr Macbeath, Mr Mackay, Mr Christie, Mr Flynn, Mr Malcolmson,
Mr Harrison

Mrs Swanson, Drawing Office

Ref: AD 3/3

58th ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1.4.77 to 31.3.78

The Annual Report for the above period will follow the usual pattern as laid down by HQ. The standard headings are listed below and you should prepare a text for the headings appropriate to you using a separate sheet for each activity.

- a. Administration, staff, labour and training
- b. Acquisition and disposal of surplus assets
- c. Nurseries and seed collection
- d. Forest Management
- e. Harvesting and Marketing
- f. Civil Engineering
- g. Mechanical Engineering
- h. Estate Management
- i. Conservation and Recreation
- j. Private forestry and control of felling
- k. Public relations
- l. Items of local interest which have arisen during the year.

Please endeavour to let me have your reports by 10 April at the latest.

The short notice is regretted but we have only just received instructions from HQ on the completion of the report together with the requirement that Conservancy Annual Reports should be with HQ Heads of Department before the end of April.

R B URQUHART
for Conservator
28 March 1978