

# Forest Tourism it's all around you

It's a fact that many visitors to Scotland are attracted, more than anything else, by our scenery, nature & wildlife and the opportunity to do outdoor activities. (The Visitor Experience 2007, [www.visitscotland.org](http://www.visitscotland.org))

It's also a fact that Scotland has more forest cover than the rest of the UK (over 17% of Scotland is forested), so we know that Scotland's trees play a big part in adding to our visitors' enjoyment.

The Forest Tourism Initiative aims to help tourism businesses realise the potential benefits of the national forests on their doorstep and to support Forestry Commission Scotland's work in improving and enhancing the visitor experience in those forests.

To discuss your ideas or requirements, contact Fiona Murray, the Project Manager.



## Expo welcome from North-east Forests

As we celebrate Expo in Aberdeen, here's a quick overview of some highlights in the local forests. Thistle award-winning Huntly Peregrine Wildwatch at the Bin Forest has also recently received its 4 star wildlife experience award and is welcoming visitors for another great year. Bennachie is one of the top hills in the area, with some superb low level walks suitable for all abilities and an informative visitor centre beside the car parks. Around Deeside, there are a variety of woodland walks (Cambus O'May and Scolty amongst them) and Aberdeen itself has 5 forests within the city boundaries (including Countesswells and Tyrebagger forest with its sculptures). Further west, Moray can boast the beach forests of Roseisle and Culbin (with its fantastic new viewing tower) and more walks around Elgin and Fochabers.

## World Mountain Bike Conference on Sustainability 2009

Along with a number of partners in Dumfries & Galloway, we worked hard to secure this global conference, moving outside Canada for the first time. It aims to attract over 400 land managers, resort operators and trail managers, to share best practice in ensuring the social, economic and environmental sustainability of mountain biking for the future. 12 - 15 May 2009 at Easterbrook Hall in Dumfries, with a series of local activities and events ensuring that everyone can get involved!

## More business development packs

Following on from the successful business development pack prepared to introduce the business benefits of the 7stanes and south Scotland's mountain biking trails, there are now 2 more packs available: featuring Mountain biking in the Highlands and Moray and Outdoor Activities in the Trossachs. Each contains ideas, contacts and case studies to inspire your future. They're available from [www.7stanes.gov.uk](http://www.7stanes.gov.uk), Business Gateway or your local HIE office, or direct from Fiona Murray.

## forest tourism INITIATIVE SCOTLAND



## Queen Elizabeth Forest Park: focus on tourism

We've been involved in important changes at David Marshall Lodge over the last year, with the arrival of Go Ape! and a new café at the centre, as well as offering the location for a Scottish Tourism Week open day and participating in a Scottish Enterprise seminar on outdoor activities. Set in the heart of the Trossachs, it's a great location for lunch or coffee stops, leg stretch or adventure, day visit or overnight stay. [www.forestry.gov.uk/qefp](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/qefp)

### Go Ape!

Adrenaline-fuelled exploration of the treetops kicked off last June at David Marshall Lodge, by Aberfoyle! Suitable for almost everyone over the age of 10, Go Ape! offers the visitors the opportunity to pit themselves against high ropes, ladders, the UK's longest zip wires and more in the heart of the Trossachs. [www.goape.co.uk](http://www.goape.co.uk)

### Bluebell Café

A new look, a new menu and exciting new start for the café at the Lodge, with the focus on tasty, healthy, local produce, made freshly every day. The Bluebell café, named for the swathes of bluebells which surround David Marshall Lodge in spring, opened in March. [www.bluebellcafe.com](http://www.bluebellcafe.com)

For further assistance, please contact the Forest Tourism Initiative Manager, Fiona Murray, Tel: 0131 314 6140 or email: [fiona.murray@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.murray@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)





## Forest Tourism in Scotland: statistics for Forestry Commission Scotland woodland

- Total visits: **8.7 million** of which tourism visits: **1.9 million**
- **18%** of tourism visits are day trips, **82%** involve overnights.
- **91%** of visitors are from the UK (**51%** from Scotland)
- **56%** of tourism visitors are male, **44%** female
- **18%** are aged 60+, **14%** are under 16.
- **22%** are aged 16 – 34, **45%** aged 35 – 59
- While **45%** of tourism visits take place during July – September and **28%** in April – June, another **28%** of tourism visits are during October – March
- When overnighting, a variety of accommodation is used: **32%** camping/cabins, **22%** in B&B/guesthouse/hotel, **20%** self-catering, **16%** with friends/family and **4%** in YH or similar.
- Average length of stay: **9 nights** (of which **8.2** in Scotland)
- Average number of forest visits: **4.7**
- Activities undertaken include walking (**44%**), dog-walking (**26%**), cycling/mountain biking (**17%**), sightseeing (**5%**) and picnicking (**2%**)
- Average time spent in woodland: **2 hours 15 minutes**
- **43%** have travelled less than 6 miles from their accommodation to visit woodland, though **11%** have travelled over 50 miles.
- **78%** have travelled by car or van, **18%** have walked, **2%** gone by bike.
- Average daily spend by forest tourism visitor: **£53.00**

### Source

*The All Forests Scotland visitor monitoring survey (2004-2007)*

## Come home to Scotland's forests in 2009

A programme of events and activities is planned for Homecoming across the national forest estate, under the themes of Ancestry and Innovation.

For ancestry, we'll focus on discovering the secrets of Scotland's forests – the clearance villages, archaeological heritage and other built heritage hidden amongst the trees – and on Scotland's incredible forestry stories and their links with overseas.

For Innovation, we're working with other partners to create a Summer of Cycling, to celebrate the invention of the bike in SouthWest Scotland. This exciting project will kick off with the World Mountain Bike Conference on Sustainability and the UCI World Cup, continuing throughout summer 2009 with participation events of all levels to get visitors and locals alike on their bikes!

## What's in it for you?

Whatever you and your visitors enjoy, you'll be able to do it in the inspiring and widespread forests in Scotland and if you choose to incorporate elements of Scotland's forests into your product, you'll find it rewarding, both financially and emotionally. If you see the potential for your local forest activities to enhance your bottom line, or if you want to work with other businesses in your area or sector to develop something new, get in touch with Fiona Murray, to discuss how the Forest Tourism Initiative could assist.

## Forest Tourism Initiative 2008 onwards

We're now fully embedded within Forestry Commission Scotland, but still working closely with the Enterprise Companies and VisitScotland. If you'd like more information on any of the activities undertaken since 2005 (licensing, stargazing, paddlesports, mountain biking, wildlife watching), please get in touch.

For further assistance, please contact the Forest Tourism Initiative Manager, Fiona Murray, Tel: 0131 314 6140 or email: [fiona.murray@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.murray@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

