



Forests & landscape information and advice



A summary of what forest and woodland managers should know on the subject of landscape. Providing links to all the sources of information that they should be aware of and describing how landscape design training can be undertaken and where, if required, advice can be obtained from a suitably qualified landscape professional.



It is now 50 years since the Forestry Commission appointed its first landscape architect, Sylvia Crowe, to advise on how forests could be integrated with the character of local landscapes. Her appointment in late 1963 was a response to a Government statement earlier that year on forestry policy that announced intended amendments to the Forestry Act in 1967.

With those amendments the **Wildlife and Countryside (Amendment) Act 1985** tasks Forestry Commissioners to achieve a reasonable balance between:

- the development of afforestation, the management of forests and the production and supply of timber; and,
- the conservation and enhancement of **natural beauty** and the conservation of flora, fauna and geological or physiological features of special interest.

The attribute of **natural beauty** has usually been interpreted as the scenic quality of the landscape.

Sylvia Crowe was engaged as landscape consultant to advise on how forest plantations could contribute towards the natural beauty of local landscapes. As she developed her ideas she showed foresters how they could incorporate landscape design into their plans. This she achieved by introducing landscape design principles for forestry and showing how these ideas could be incorporated through an integrated design process that considered all aspects of the forest environment.

In the light of experience gained from the implementation of that advice her successors further refined those design principles and process. All this theory and practice was brought together in the book **The Design of Forest Landscapes** (O.W.R. Lucas, 1991) with the key points incorporated into the original suite of three Forestry Commission Landscape Guidelines published in the 1990s.

Besides reinforcing the 1998 UKFS those Guidelines also provided the forestry community with practical guidance for preparing their plans so that the forests in their care contributed towards the scenic quality of the visual landscape.

Sylvia Crowe pencil sketch of Taymouth Castle with advice on how the forest on the slopes of Drummond Hill could be visually integrated with the policy woodlands framing the castle.

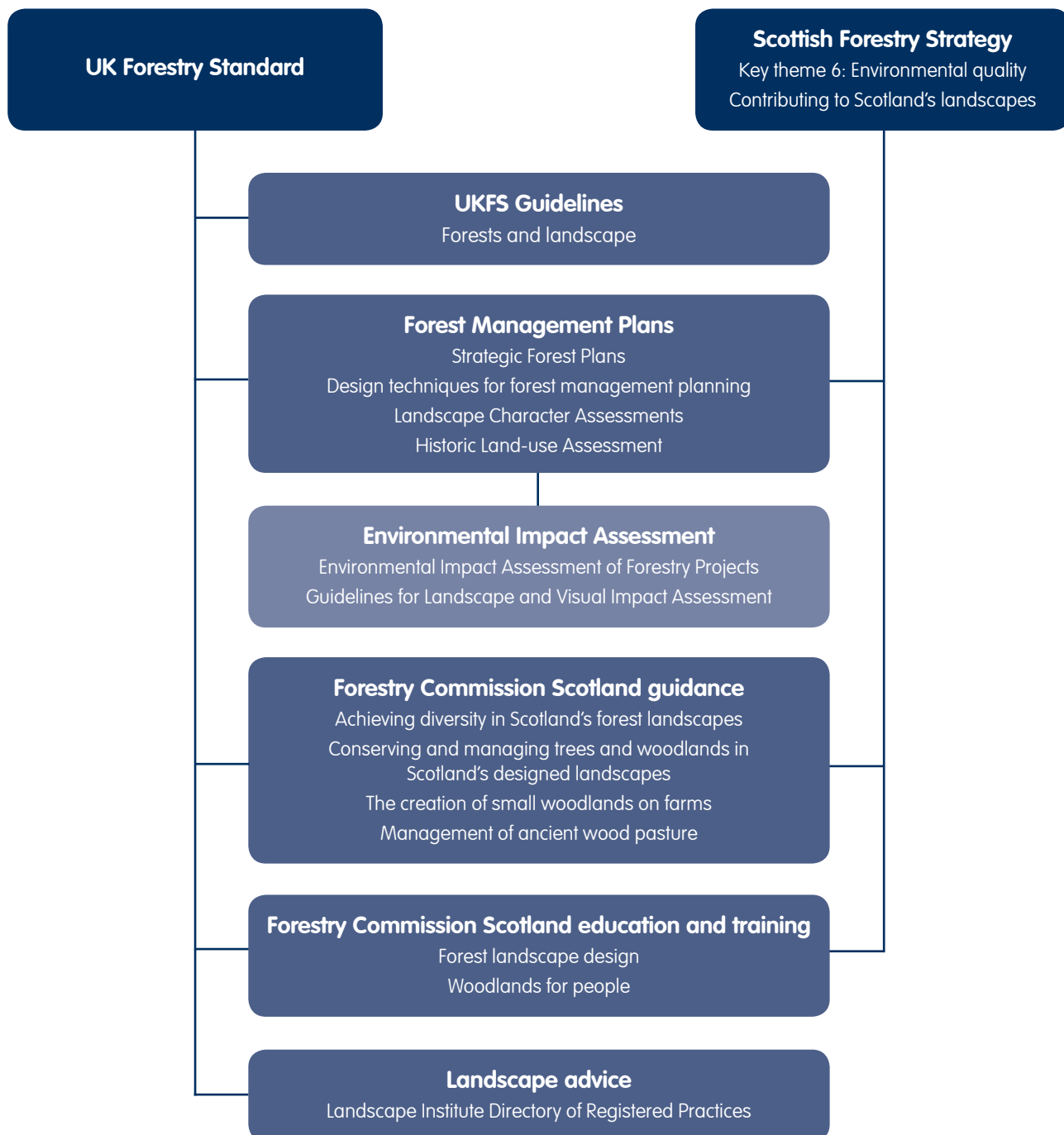
Dame Sylvia Crowe, Forestry Commission landscape architect 1963–1976.



Landscape resources

Below is a chart illustrating a hierarchy of information that forest managers should be aware of. Each box is headed by the general topic followed by specific resources that contribute towards delivering the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) Requirements for landscape. Explanations on each are given below the chart.

Landscape resources chart



Standard, Guidelines and Strategy

UK Forestry Standard and Guidelines

The **UK Forestry Standard** (UKFS) is the reference standard for sustainable forest management in the UK. It was launched together with a suite of **Guidelines** in late 2011. Landscape is a UKFS Requirement (page 34 of UKFS) highlighting both landscape context and forest landscape design.

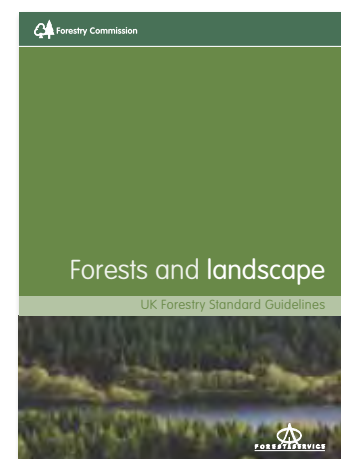
The seven guidelines focus on the legal requirements and summary descriptions of good forestry practice to achieve the required outcome of sustainable forest management. One of the particular strengths of the guidelines is that they cross-reference with each other, reflecting the contemporary view that although each subject is relatively distinct there is an essential inter-relationship between them.



UKFS Guidelines: Forests and landscape

Forests and landscape provides the landscape policy and context setting, states the UKFS Requirements for forest landscapes and describes the Guidelines that outline the fundamental principles of forest design. It reinforces the importance now placed on the quality of all landscapes by highlighting the UK's ratification of the **European Landscape Convention (ELC)** in 2006 (page 11).

The Guideline mentions the important role of Landscape Character Assessments (LCA) that contribute towards our understanding of the key characteristics that make landscapes distinct (see Forest Plans/Forest Design Plans below) and the role of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for assessing the effects of landscape change (see Environmental Impact Assessment below). Appendix 4 also provides useful advice on applying forest design principles to a range of UK forest landscapes. The Guideline is free to view and download from www.forestry.gov.uk/ukfs



Scottish Forestry Strategy

The **Scottish Forestry Strategy** (SFS) is the Scottish Government's framework for taking forestry forward through the first half of this century and beyond. One of the key outcomes of the SFS is for forestry to contribute towards the development of a high quality, robust and adaptable environment, including the delivery of a quality landscape. Describing how forestry can contribute to Scotland's landscapes, like the **Forests and Landscape Guideline** it too includes the importance of meeting the undertakings of the ELC and use of LCA to inform forest management plans (page 44).

The SFS (FCS, 2006) is free to view and download from www.forestry.gov.uk/sfs



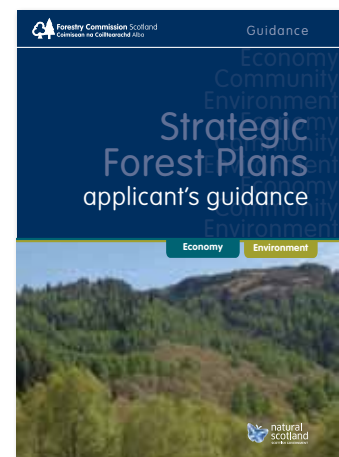
Forest Management Plans

A **Forest Management Plan** (Forest Design Plan on the national forest estate) is a strategic plan that describes the major forest operations over a 20 year period. It brings together the management objectives, silvicultural prescriptions, environmental, social and **landscape** factors into a comprehensive plan that aims to deliver long-term benefits through sustainable forest management.

Strategic Forest Plans

The requirements for a Forest Management Plan are set out in the Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) applicant's guidance **Strategic Forest Plans** (FCS, 2013) available free to view and download from www.forestry.gov.uk/publications

To help forest managers develop their plans it is recommended that they refer to the following publications:



Design techniques for forest management planning

Forest management planning involves assembling and integrating a wide range of information about a site and its potential, and a number of established design techniques are available to assist with this process. This Practice Guide provides step-by-step guidance to the techniques that can be used at each of the planning stages for the preparation of a forest management plan. The guidance applies to both the creation of new forests and woodlands and the management of existing forests and woodlands.

This guide is aimed at forest and woodland owners and managers, forestry practitioners and all those involved in forest planning and the preparation and evaluation of forest management plans.

It is available for purchase from Forestry Commission Publications and is also free to view and download - including an appendix of worked examples of design plans in different landscapes not included in the paper copy - from www.forestry.gov.uk/publications



Landscape Character Assessments

The process of **landscape character assessment (LCA)** is a recognized analytical system for identifying, describing, classifying and mapping the variety of landscape to be found throughout Scotland. It helps explain what makes landscapes different from each other. The whole of Scotland has been mapped and described under an LCA programme initiated and completed by **Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)** during the 1990s.

Generally, the accepted strength of the SNH suite of LCA is their characterization of the Scottish landscape. The landscape classification and description can be useful to forest managers at the landscape scale (meaning, it places individual features – such as forests – in their wider setting) to help guide landscape change. With the passage of time though the two other aspects of the SNH suite of LCA (forces for change and generic landscape guidance for land use change) are somewhat out of date and may not be as useful.

The suite of 30 regional LCA studies was published by SNH as reports and are available free to view and download from the SNH website. They can all be accessed from www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/looking-after-landscapes/lca



Historic Land-use Assessment

The **Historic Land-use Assessment** (HLA) is a joint project between Historic Scotland and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. It is a GIS-based map that depicts the historic origin of land-use patterns, describing them by period, form and function. Its purpose is to enhance our knowledge and understanding of the historic dimension of the landscape and to inform management decisions relating to it. It highlights relict archaeological landscapes and helps identify areas where further survey could usefully be targeted.

The assessment is based on the analysis of key data sources, such as early maps, the National Monuments Record of Scotland, aerial photography and archaeological survey results. It identifies individual **historic land-use** types, grouped together under thematic headings (categories) and assigned a likely chronological period. These historic land-use types survive within current land-use patterns and contain information in regard to landscape character and development. It also depicts **relict land-use**; archaeological landscape features that survive but have fallen out of use.

The HLA will be useful in forest planning and design; in considering the historic elements within most Forestry Commission Scotland grants and licensing activities; and in considering historic landscape character for Local Authority **Forestry and Woodland Strategies**.

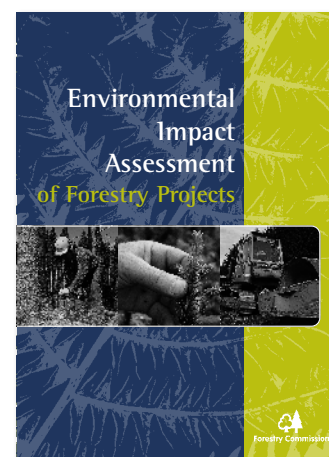
The principal output of the HLA project is a **Geographic Information System** (GIS) dataset that will cover the whole of Scotland by 2015. Guidance on its usage is also in preparation. The available HLA data for Scotland can be viewed at hla.rcahms.gov.uk



Environmental Impact Assessment

Environmental Impact Assessment of Forestry Projects

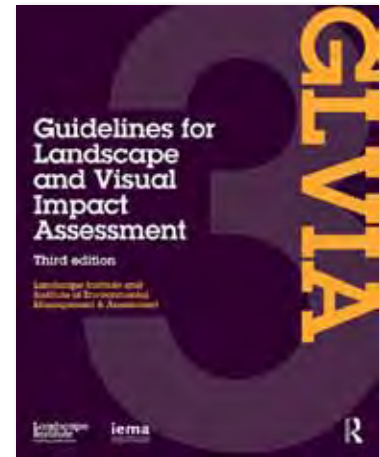
Proposals that include woodland creation, road, quarry building or deforestation will be subject to Forestry Commission Scotland making a determination under the 1999 **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations** as to whether there will be a requirement for consent under these regulations. Details on EIA Regulations can be found at scotland.forestry.gov.uk/supporting/grants-and-regulations/environmental-impact-assessment under the grants and regulations section.



Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Since its introduction EIA has become a very important tool for predicting and evaluating the wide range of effects of development on the environment and on people. **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)** is a separate but closely related process that operates within the overall framework of EIA. It specifically aims to ensure that all possible effects of change and development, both on the landscape itself and on views and visual amenity, are taken into account in decision-making.

The recognised handbook on this subject is the **Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment** (3rd edition, 2013, Routledge, ISBN 978-0-415-68004-2) by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment.



Forestry Commission Scotland guidance

Building on the **UKFS Guidelines Forests and Landscape**, Forestry Commission Scotland has produced a series of guidance documents intended to help forest managers develop their plans.

Achieving diversity in Scotland's forest landscapes

This guidance offers advice and ideas from which a forest manager may select options that meet their management objectives and are appropriate for their forest. The format of the guidance relates to the decisions which forest managers need to make when they are preparing fully integrated management proposals which will contribute to a Forest Plan.

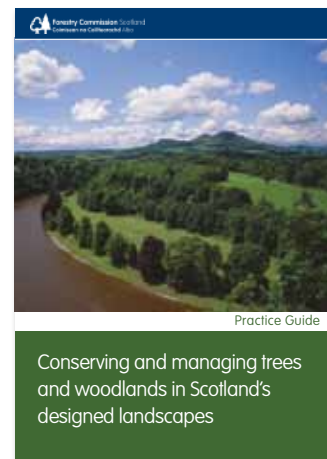
The Forestry Commission Scotland Practice Guide is available free to view and download from www.forestry.gov.uk/publications



Conserving and managing trees and woodlands in Scotland's designed landscapes

Designed landscapes and their woodlands, parkland and trees make a major contribution to the scenery of many parts of Scotland. This guidance has been prepared to assist owners and managers in caring for all the tree components in the fine heritage of designed landscapes throughout Scotland.

The Forestry Commission Scotland Practice Guide is available free to view and download from www.forestry.gov.uk/publications



The creation of small woodlands on farms

Small woodlands, woodland features and even individual trees can be an asset on any farm. This guidance describes the benefits of creating new small woodlands, where they can best be sited and offers some advice on planning, layout and species. It focuses on small woodlands of a few hectares in size, say no bigger than five hectares.

It advises on the opportunities for creating new small woodlands in the three main farming enterprises and agricultural settings in Scotland – arable land, permanent grassland and hill land with unimproved grazing. Each section is tailored to their respective different farmed landscape settings.

The Forestry Commission Scotland guidance is available free to view and download from www.forestry.gov.uk/swof. A paper copy can also be obtained by filling in the online application form.



Management of ancient wood pasture

This guidance note provides an introduction to the restoration and management of ancient wood pastures in Scotland.

Guidance is provided on the care of veteran trees and management of the pasture through the development of managed grazing regimes. The note promotes the benefits of a management plan and provides guidance for its preparation. Links are also provided to more detailed publications that may be of help and interest.

This Guidance note is aimed at land managers, their advisers and agency staff involved in land management and grant assessment. It is free to view and download from scotland.forestry.gov.uk/images/corporate/pdf/fcsancientwoodpastureguidance.pdf

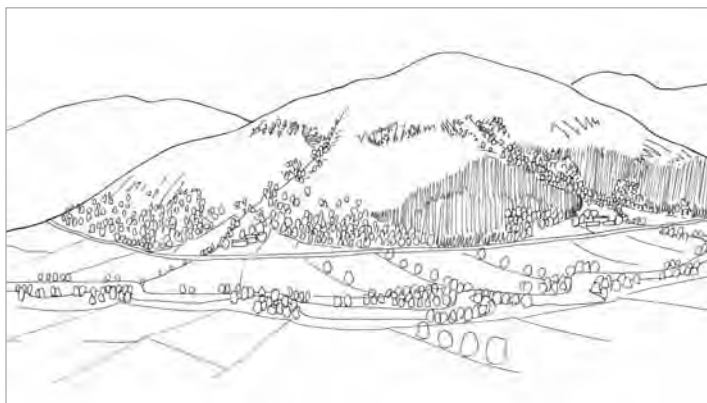


Forestry Commission Scotland education and training

Forestry Commission Scotland has developed two **training courses in landscape design** that have been specifically developed to help forest and woodland managers prepare their plans sensitive to their local landscape and situation.

Forest landscape design

A **2-day design course** for those who want to develop their skills in preparing or evaluating a forest management plan. The course explains what is meant by landscape and shows how to read and use differences in landscape character. It also explores the principles of forest landscape design and shows how they can be applied to new forests and the restructuring existing ones.



Through an integrated series of practical exercises delegates develop basic drawing skills and prepare sketch design proposals in perspective.

Woodlands for people

A **2-day design course** that demonstrates how an appreciation of the recognised design principles and their application through the design process can contribute towards the preparation of design proposals for urban woodland. It shows delegates how to design the location, use and linkages of spaces for people to optimise their woodland experience.

It also demonstrates how a carefully considered design plan can help local communities understand the benefits of their new woodlands or proposed changes to existing woods. Through an integrated series of practical exercises delegates develop basic drawing skills and prepare sketch design proposals.



Both courses are delivered by the **Forestry Commission Scotland Landscape and Culture Adviser** who can be contacted by email for further information and course availability at nicholas.shepherd@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

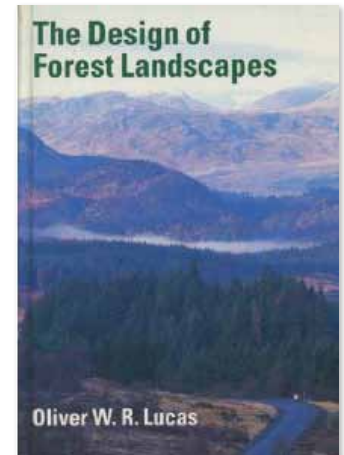
Further reading

The Design of Forest Landscapes

Published in 1991, **The Design of Forest Landscapes** (Oliver W.R.Lucas, Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-19-854280-1) is a compendium of the design principles, techniques and experience in forest landscape design built up by Forestry Commission landscape architects since Dame Sylvia Crowe was commissioned as the Forestry Commission's first Landscape Consultant in 1963.

Sound landscape principles are described and explained through detailed and illustrated examples. The book provides practical advice for the conservation and enhancement of landscape in and around managed forests. The broader implications of forestry in the landscape are discussed with matters of detail set in a wider context.

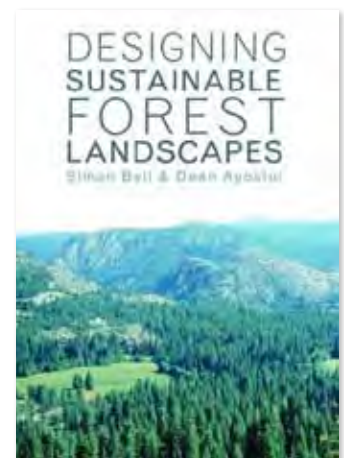
Although somewhat dated, this remains a relevant and comprehensive resource for all aspects of forest and woodland design, including the design of small woods, shelterbelts and linear corridors, such as roads, watercourses and powerline wayleaves.



Designing Sustainable Forest Landscapes

In many respects the successor to the above book, **Designing Sustainable Forest Landscapes** (Simon Bell & Dean Apostol, Taylor & Francis, ISBN10: 0-41925680-6) is a guide to the planning, design and management of forest landscapes. It covers the theory and principles of forest design as well as providing practical guidance on methods and tools.

The book focuses on ecosystem regeneration, the landscape planning of natural forests and the design of plantation forests through a variety of international case-studies. Using visualisation techniques, design processes and evaluation techniques, it looks at promoting forest landscapes that are designed to optimise the balance between human intervention and natural evolution.



Landscape advice

Landscape Institute Directory of Registered Practices

Should you decide that your plans would benefit from the professional services of a landscape architect you are best advised to consult the **Landscape Institute Directory of Registered Practices** (which also includes individuals) at www.landscapeinstitute.org/registeredpractices/search.php

You will see that the search facility **Country** (select *UK*), **LI Region** (select *Scotland*), **Discipline** (select *Forestry (woodland/trees)*) then press the **Search** button and review all companies.



Forestry Commission Scotland serves as the forestry directorate of the Scottish Government and is responsible to Scottish Ministers

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