

## Woodland Weekends Project

December 2013

### Project background and purpose

The UK is one of the most deforested parts of Europe. The activities of the industrial revolution, two world wars and ongoing overgrazing by deer and sheep are the key reasons for this. Forest cover now stands at about 19% (up from 5% in 1900), but this still compares poorly with 46% cover over the whole of Europe. The purpose of our Woodland Weekends project is to:

- benefit the biodiversity and resilience of woodland sites, thus helping to strengthen Scotland's fragile mosaic of remaining native species woodlands;
- educate people via hands-on conservation activities about the importance of woodlands and the need to protect them.



### Our achievements

The Naturesave Trust supported our Woodland Weekend project from June to December 2013, allowing us to run woodland management and creation activities at 5 diverse woodland sites, involving 62 volunteers and resulting in 186 volunteer days being delivered.

Our activities were spread out over quite a large geographical area – we spent a weekend up north at Anagagh Woods in Speyside where our task was to remove non-native species from this semi-ancient pinewood. We then spent a day right down south in the Scottish Borders thinning, a juvenile native wood and generating a wood-fuel bi-product for use by the local community.

We left the mainland on two occasions, firstly to visit the Isle of Gigha, which was subject to a land buy out some years ago and is now owned by the islanders. On Gigha we continued work from previous visits to remove a very invasive shrub called griselinia that had been introduced by the victorians. We also visited the Isle of Mull, where we carried out pruning and tree guard removal work at a young native species woodland in a very treeless part of the island. This was at a place called Camas, which offers residential placements to disadvantaged youths from central Scotland. Finally, we carried out yet more woodland management at a site near Crail in the east neuk of Fife, removing non-native sycamore saplings and rhododendron from the woods.

### The future

We continue to work away with our groups of hard-working and inspiring volunteers, planting new woodlands and managing existing ones, doing our tiny but dedicated bit to return healthy native woodland to our land wherever we can. The Naturesave Trust has played a valuable role in this journey and we are very grateful for their support. If you would like to join us, please visit our website to find out how – [www.newcaledonianwoodlands.org](http://www.newcaledonianwoodlands.org)