

PE1457/A

1st January 2013

Public Petitions Committee,
Scottish Parliament,
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

PEO1457 Scotland's National Tree

Dear Members,

Since I prepared the petition, formal support has been given by several important organisations in Scotland, namely, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; Trees for Life; the Woodland Trust Scotland; the Scottish Wildlife Trust and the John Muir Trust. Copies of their statements are attached.

Several significant environmentalists have given their support including Professor Peter Duinker, Ron Bury and Laura Brickell. Their letters are attached.

The media has shown some interest including some local papers and The Scotsman. Rosemary Goring of The Herald is writing a column to coincide with the Petition Committee meeting on January 8th. The Scotsman article is attached.

The petition has provoked Tweets through the National Trust for Scotland and likes and interesting comments on their Facebook page. See attachment.

Several MSPs have already recorded their support including Patricia Ferguson, Drew Smith, Bob Doris, Hanzala Malik and Jean Urquhart.

Scottish Natural Heritage, while not being in a position to give official support to the petition, has stated that it looks forward to responding to enquiries from the Parliament describing the Scots Pine as "a very suitable candidate as the National Tree of Scotland".

I hope for the committee's support.

Yours faithfully,

Alex Hamilton



nature's voice

RSPB SCOTLAND

Anne Peat
Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee,
The Scottish Parliament,
Edinburgh,
EH99 1SP

19.12.2012

Dear Ms. Peat,

I am writing to offer the support of RSPB to Petition 1457 which calls for the Scots Pine to be named the National Tree of Scotland. Although there are many native tree species in Scotland, the Caledonian forest, home to many Scots Pine, is an iconic habitat which contains a large number of species in need of conservation. We firmly believe adoption of this symbol would be fitting in 2013, the Year of Natural Scotland, as a celebration and strong commitment to our woodlands, helping secure it for future generations.

If we can be of any other assistance please get in touch.

Yours Sincerely

Lloyd Austin
Head of Conservation Policy

Scotland Headquarters
2 Lochside View
Edinburgh Park
Edinburgh
EH12 9DH

Tel 0131 317 4100
Fax 01767 685008

www.rspb.org.uk/scotland



TREES FOR LIFE

Restoring the Caledonian Forest



To: Members of the Scottish Parliament

27th December 2012

SUPPORT FOR THE DECLARATION OF THE SCOTS PINE AS THE NATIONAL TREE OF SCOTLAND

I am writing this letter on behalf of Trees for Life to express our support for the petition that the Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) be declared the National Tree of Scotland. As an award-winning conservation charity working to help restore the Caledonian Forest in the Highlands – a forest in which the Scots pine is the keystone tree species – we stand wholeheartedly behind this proposal.

As reasons for our support I would state the following:

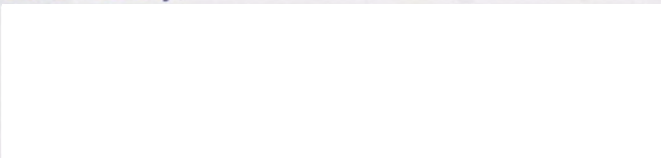
1. 2013 has been declared the Year of Natural Scotland, so it is an entirely fitting and appropriate way to start the year with the establishment of a National Tree for our country, and the Scots pine is the ideal and obvious choice for this.
2. The Scots pine is the only tree named after Scotland, and therefore is already uniquely associated with the country. For many people it provides a strong link with Scotland, not only here, but also throughout its natural range, and in other countries where it has been planted, eg New Zealand, North America.
3. The Scots pine is the most widely distributed conifer, and one of the most widely distributed trees, in the world. However, the Scots pine woodlands in Scotland are unique and different to those elsewhere, largely due to the absence of other conifers. This uniqueness adds importance to our pinewoods and has led, in part, to their designation as a priority habitat under the European Union's Habitats and Species Directive, reflecting their biological significance.
4. The pinewoods of the Caledonian Forest are home to many of Scotland's most iconic and charismatic species, including the capercaillie, red squirrel, osprey, pine marten, Scottish wildcat, twinflower, crested tit and Scottish crossbill (the only bird endemic to Scotland). The Scots pine provides an unrivalled habitat for terrestrial wildlife, which supports its designation as the country's national tree.
5. Over 70 countries around the world, from Canada to Chile and Denmark to South Africa, have National Trees (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_emblem#Trees) that provide important symbols for their national identities. At a time of increased support for Scottish independence, the declaration of the Scots pine will further the development of a uniquely Scottish national identity.
6. In a UK context, the Scots pine's current natural range distinguishes Scotland from the rest of the country, as the only naturally-occurring pinewoods are in the Highlands. The oak is thought of as the National Tree of the UK, but that is a

very English-centred perspective, as oaks predominated in the forests of England, but formed a smaller percentage of woodland cover than the pinewoods in Scotland.

7. Large numbers of Scottish people visit pinewoods such as Rannoch, Rothiemurchus, Abernethy and Glen Affric each year, as they value these important parts of Scotland's natural heritage. The Scots pine is also the principal tree in our largest national park - the Cairngorms National Park. Declaring the Scots pine the country's National Tree will, in our view, be well-received by people who value Scotland's natural beauty.

Thank you for giving this petition your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



ALAN WATSON FEATHERSTONE

Executive Director



WOODLAND
TRUST SCOTLAND

The Woodland Trust
Scotland

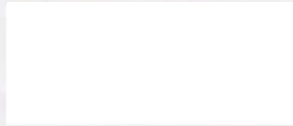
South Inch Business Centre
Shore Road
Perth
PH2 8BW

Telephone
01738 635829

Facsimile
01738 629391

Website
woodlandtrust.org.uk

Alex Hamilton,



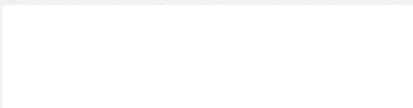
18th December 2012

Dear Alex,

The Woodland Trust Scotland certainly views the Scots pine as an iconic tree in Scotland and the idea of a national tree for Scotland is welcomed.

We very much want to see the people of Scotland involved in making the choice for a national tree and if we can help in any way, do let me know.

Yours sincerely



Carol Evans
Director for Scotland

Protecting Scotland's wildlife for the future

Alex Hamilton

18 December 2012



**Scottish
Wildlife
Trust**

Dear Mr Hamilton,

The Scottish Wildlife Trust supports the idea of having a National Tree of Scotland on the proviso that the tree is a native species.

We agree that the selection of the tree should be by public vote, particularly as this may help to promote Scottish biodiversity and raise awareness of wildlife issues within Scotland.

Simon Milne MBE
Chief Executive

Patron HRH The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay **Chairman** Allan Bantick **Chief Executive** Simon Milne MBE

Scottish Wildlife Trust 110 Commercial Street Edinburgh EH6 6NF

T 0131 312 7765 **F** 0131 312 8705 **E** enquiries@swt.org.uk **W** www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

The Scottish Wildlife Trust is a company limited by guarantee and registered in Scotland (registered no. SC040247). It is also a Scottish registered charity (charity no. SC005792).

Subject: RE: A National Tree for Scotland

Date: Tuesday, 18 December 2012, 12:32

Alex Hamilton,

The John Muir Trust supports the idea of the Scottish Government giving recognition to the value of trees and woodlands. A consultation and debate that might lead to the designation of a National Tree or perhaps a less official outcome of 'The Nations Favourite Tree' would help to raise awareness of the value of trees and woodlands and our relationship with them. With tree diseases in the headlines the initiative might help to reinforce positive attitudes towards our woodlands and the Year of Natural Scotland would be a fitting time to have this national discussion.

We hope that the initiative gains momentum and the John Muir Trust would play its part in promoting the discussion.

Regards

Stuart Brooks

Chief Executive

Stuart Brooks

Chief Executive

John Muir Trust

a: Tower House, Station Road, Pitlochry, PH16 5AN

18/12/2012

National trees

Published on **Friday 19 October 2012 00:00**

Designating the Scots Pine as Scotland's national tree (your report, 17 October) is a stellar idea. Canada has a national tree – most people know the Sugar Maple from our national flag.

Each province and territory has an official tree; in Nova Scotia it is the Red Spruce. These represent powerful symbols that helpfully draw the attention of the citizenry to our iconic native tree [species](#), and to forest conservation in general. What a disappointment, then, for the Forestry Commission Scotland spokesperson to admit that it was “not aware of any mechanism for designating a ‘national tree of Scotland’”. Surely that is the least impediment to moving forward.

In Canada, there are legislative acts that legitimise the recognition of provincial trees. Surely, at most, all it would take is for a private member's bill to come forward in the Scottish Parliament.

Nominating a national tree doubtless has low cost and potentially huge benefits. So get on with it, Scotland – make the [Scots](#) Pine your official tree.

(Prof) Peter N Duinker

School for Resource and Environmental Studies

Halifax, Canada

Biography of Peter N. Duinker, PhD

Dr. Duinker is Professor and former Director (1998-2004) of the School for Resource and Environmental Studies at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He holds a B.Sc.Agr. from University of Guelph, an M.E.S. from Dalhousie in forest ecology, and a PhD from University of New Brunswick in forest management and environmental assessment. Until June 1998, he was Professor in the Faculty of Forestry of Lakehead University and during 1988- 98 held the Chair in Forest Management and Policy. Dr. Duinker's research interests are wide-ranging and include environmental assessment, forest policy, forest management planning,

sustainable forest management systems, criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management, wildlife habitat analysis, forest biodiversity assessment, forest tenure, public participation, conflict resolution, and climate change. He has authored or co-authored some 200 publications on these and related topics. Dr. Duinker is a Research Area Leader (Integrated Resource Management) and Research Group Leader (Public Participation) for the Sustainable Forest Management Network of Centres of Excellence based at University of Alberta. He holds research grants from the SFM Network to study old-growth forests in Eastern Canada, and forest-tenure systems nationwide. He is also Manager of the Atlantic Canada office of the Canadian Climate Impacts and Adaptation Research Network.

Dr. Duinker's teaching activities include courses in environmental assessment, public involvement, forest management, forest policy and research methods, at both undergraduate and graduate levels. From 1997 to 2001, he taught annually a course on cumulative effects assessment at the Banff Centre for Management, and has participated as instructor in a series of 2-day short courses on cumulative effects assessment in Atlantic Canada. He has also served as advisor to the State Environmental Protection Agency of the People's Republic of China on strategic environmental assessment.

Other professional interests include design and facilitation of processes for collaborative inquiry and conflict resolution. Dr. Duinker was Co-Chair of Ontario's Forest Policy Panel in the early 1990s, and he frequently advises governments and companies on their environmental assessment and forest management activities. Currently he is Co-Chair of the NS Forest Technical Advisory Committee, and he just completed a two-year assignment as Chair of Voluntary Planning's Natural Resources Committee. Also, he is the Dalhousie University representative on the Partnership Committee of the Nova Forest Alliance, and serves on the NFA Management and Research Coordination Committees. In addition to work on Canadian forests, Dr. Duinker has studied European and Siberian forests while employed at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria (1986-88, 1995), and global forests while working at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN in Rome (1997).



[Redacted]
Ron Bury

20th December 2012

Alex Hamilton,
[Redacted]

Dear Alex

I'm pleased to hear that you have a meeting scheduled with the Petitions Committee of the Scottish Parliament and hope your proposal that the Scots Pine be adopted as Scotland's national tree will be favourably received.

I have often felt it strange that the Scots Pine has never been recognized in this context, as it is so quintessentially Scottish.

I wholeheartedly support your proposal in the hope that it will help to raise awareness of the plight of Scotland's upland areas and the desperate need for natural re-forestation.

Sincerely,
[Redacted]

Ron Bury
www.ronburyswildlife.com

15 December 2012

Mr Alex Hamilton

Dear Mr Hamilton

Re: A National Tree for Scotland

I would be delighted to support the petition of a Scots Pine as the National Tree for Scotland and as a former Director and long-standing member of Reforesting Scotland, I can thoroughly appreciate the association between restoration of native pinewoods and the resurgence of Scotland as a thriving nation.

Scotland was once a well-forested land, and there was a time that a sizeable population was able to find food, fuel and shelter within the trees. I would welcome the symbol of a Scots Pine to signify not only the country, but also the importance and regeneration of forest culture for the people of Scotland.

I also appreciate the association of the only native pine species with the only uniquely native bird species, the Crossbill which lives on the nuts of the Scots Pine.

Good wishes for a successful petition and I am pleased to see you have the support of RSPB as well as Trees for Life – two organisations with whom I have enjoyed planting trees to support those restoration efforts.

Yours sincerely

Laura Brickell

Member of:

Community Woodlands Association

John Muir Trust

Reforesting Scotland

Campaigners pine for Scottish national tree



Scots Pine trees at Glencorse Reservoir in the Pentland Hills near Edinburgh. Picture: Toby Williams

By SCOTT MACNAB

Published on **Wednesday 17 October 2012 00:13**

MSPs are being urged to back a campaign to have the Scots Pine adopted as the national tree for Scotland.

Supporters say it is the “largest and longest-living” tree in the Caledonian Forest and would be the ideal symbol of a “resurgent Scotland”.

A petition lodged at Holyrood calls on MSPs and the Scottish Government to work in tandem with the country’s heritage and environmental bodies to take [the proposal](#) on.

It has already met with a positive response from the Scottish Wildlife Trust, but officials say there is currently no mechanism to create the new national symbol.

Petitioner Alex Hamilton said: “I believe that the vision of the future of Scotland should include a permanent commitment to our woodlands and natural heritage.

“A clear statement to this effect should be made and, as part of that, I wish to propose that the Scottish Government and Parliament adopts the Scots Pine as the national tree of Scotland.

“The Scots Pine is known and loved by many Scots, and having it as the national symbol will encourage Scottish citizens in assessing, improving and being involved in their environment.”

The English Oak, which can live for hundreds of years, is already widely seen as the national tree of England.

“It is time for Scotland to have its national tree,” Mr Hamilton added.

“The Scots Pine is widely recognised among Scots as being their iconic tree; let the nation unite behind it.”

The proposal met with a warm response from the Scottish Wildlife Trust yesterday.

Chief executive Simon Milne said: “We welcome any initiative to affirm Scotland’s commitment to our natural environment. The pine forest is a quintessential Scottish habitat.

“Pine forests inspire thousands of people every year to value, enjoy and protect the wildlife that lives in them, not least of which is the very Scottish red squirrel.

“Wildlife-rich pine forests contribute towards people’s health and wellbeing and are an iconic part of the country that attract tourists to Scotland.”

A spokesman for the Woodland Trust Scotland said it was too early to say if it could back the call.

But he added: “The Scots Pine is native to Scotland and is the only native pine in Britain. It is found throughout Europe and Asia too.”

But the Forestry Commission Scotland, the national quango which manages Scotland’s forest and woodlands, played down the proposal.

A spokesman said: “Whilst we share Mr Hamilton’s passion for trees and woodlands, we are not aware of any mechanism for designating a ‘national tree of Scotland’.”

PINE FACTS

The timber of the Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) is

one of the strongest softwoods and is widely used in construction and joinery.

It comes in different shapes and colours and is the only native conifer grown commercially.

The Scottish crossbill, below, the only bird to be found exclusively in the UK, is confined to the pine woods.

Pine is the generic name for the tree, but it is also known as the Scots fir, the Guithais (Gaelic), Ochtach (Old Irish) and Giumais (Irish).

The National Trust for Scotland

A posting on the National Trust for Scotland's Facebook page asking for comments on the petition and asking for comments on what the National Tree of Scotland should be (<https://en-gb.facebook.com/NationalTrustforScotland>) provoked 229 likes and 39 comments that are reproduced below. Of those who commented, two thirds went for the Scots Pine. The main rival was the Rowan with single votes for the Scottish or Arran Whitebeam, the Birch, the Juniper and the Hawthorn.

8 November

Alex Hamilton is petitioning the Scottish Government to recognise the Scots Pine as the 'National Tree of Scotland'. Do you agree?

If so, you can support the campaign by signing the petition at <http://bit.ly/VHbWXg>

What's your choice for Scotland's National Tree?



6739229 Like · Comment · Share

- o XplosivBadger, La bobine de Lisette, B&B Early Grez and 226 others like this.



- o

Graham Walker How about the silver birch?

8 November at 08:36 via mobile · 1



o

Sheila Dagleish Rowan

8 November at 08:45 · 2



o

John Roots The link doesn't seem to work!

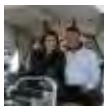
8 November at 08:50



o

John Roots apologies, it does (eventually)

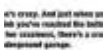
8 November at 09:02 · Edited · 1



o

Ross Johannes Ellis beautiful spot! where exactly is this?

8 November at 08:54



o

Keri Coull Hub says rowan.

8 November at 08:57



o

Maluay Carlisle It's a beautiful tree.....

8 November at 08:58



o

Linda Forbes Scots Pine

8 November at 08:59



o

The National Trust for Scotland A beautiful spot indeed - this was taken in the hills above Glen Nevis. Have you visited Lochaber [Ross Johannes Ellis?](#)

8 November at 08:59



o

Damian Kane yes

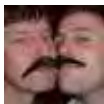
8 November at 09:01



o

Matthew Ross Yes!

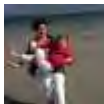
8 November at 09:05



o

Chris Holmes Surely a Scots Pine

8 November at 09:14



o

Linda Savage Dignan Link worked for me.

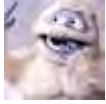
8 November at 09:18 via mobile



o

Pauline Jewett Aye, any support for the Caledonian Pine/Scots Pine would be great. While they are in need of promo should the Arran 3 and their plight not be prioritised? I shall leave the chicken & egg scenario for others, and confess to not knowing the progress on the latter recently.

8 November at 09:18



o

Mary Murray I thought Aaron Burr killed Alex Hamilton a long time ago.

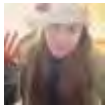
8 November at 09:35



o

Caithleen Carter Steeves yes

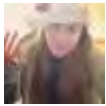
8 November at 09:43



o

Emily Waugh of course

8 November at 09:58



o

Emily Waugh Scots Pine is the national tree

8 November at 09:58



o

John Farnan Do we need a national tree? Its just going to force someone in the government to have to employ multiple persons just to look after the fact that its our national tree. Then someone will try to get PGI for it so its cannot be called a Scots Pine unless it was grown in Scotland. It will become a farce as usual and cost the country money when we are trying to save it..

8 November at 10:01



o

Ian McCall Arran whitebeams - but maybe too obscure?

8 November at 10:39 · 1



o

Milena Kusnierova I think Scotland needs a Petition -„ We need more trees“.. to prevent landslides!

8 November at 10:56 · Edited · 1



o

Graham Walker Yes, Rowan is a better idea.

8 November at 11:00 via mobile · 1



o

Mike Masterton Rowan...excellent.

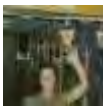
8 November at 11:11 · 1



o

John Farnan Photography rowan is a great tree but short lived and shallow rooted so tends to die young and fall over.. A great choice for Scotland lol

8 November at 11:53



o

Jackey Ofiesh Scots Pine!

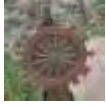
8 November at 12:44



o

Rory Syme Difficult to pick out any one tree to represent Scotland, but even though the rowan doesn't live as long as many other species it is made of strong stuff. It's a hardy pioneer that will flourish where others struggle, and it is fruitful. Scots pine are fantastic trees in their own right, but maybe they're a bit too flash for the national identity.

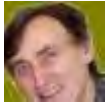
8 November at 12:54



o

Anne Langley why not!

8 November at 13:04



o

Alex Hamilton Like the people of Scotland, the Scots Pine comes in different shapes and colours. It is the largest and longest lived tree in the Caledonian Forest and is our only native conifer grown commercially.

8 November at 13:06



o

Alex Hamilton The only bird which is endemic to the UK is the Scottish crossbill (*Loxia scotica*), which is confined to the pinewoods. Sign the petition!

8 November at 13:07 · 1



o

Clare Flowers Rowan

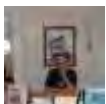
8 November at 13:39 · 1



o

Lorna McCartney Definitely the Scots Pine for me. It has such character. Mar Lodge Estate is an amazing property to view them, particularly all the Granny Pines. Really special I have added my name to the petition.

8 November at 18:28 · 1



o

Glengarry County & Area books etc.-Alex W Fraser a interesting photo

8 November at 18:35 · 1



o

Jill Renowden love these trees!!!

9 November at 01:20



o

Lorna McInnes I do agree, it's my favourite tree!

9 November at 02:11 · 1



o

Sheila Hoehne I certainly agree we had 2 at the former house, which my mother planted a male and a female.

9 November at 02:20 · 1



o

Colin Hattersley How about Juniper?

9 November at 14:02



o

Paul McArthur and dont forget the twisted and jaggy hawthorn

10 November at 02:07



o

Alex Hamilton There's only six days left before the petition closes. I hope that everybody who supports this idea will add their name to the petition to ensure that the politicians know how you feel. And tell your friends and contacts. Go to Have you signed the petition? Go to <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/gettinginvolved/petitions/NationalTreeOfScotland>

10 November at 14:25



o

Scotty Brand Scotty prefers the pine

14 November at 07:47