Gender & Diversity in forestry in Scotland

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Confor: promoting forestry & wood

• a not-for-profit organisation that works and lobbies on behalf of the private forestry and wood sector.

• Representing the whole supply chain: forestry investors, forest managers, contractors, timber transport, sawmilling and processing.

• UK wide
The report: the question
The report: methodology

- A short project
- Literature review
- Structured interviews with 6 men and 6 women
The report: literature review

‘Many women are aware of the food and medicinal values of forest products, which are particularly important during food crises’

Women in Forestry: challenges and opportunities, UN 2014.
Results: It’s not about gender?

‘What I think you’ll end up identifying is the type of person who goes into forestry, and that time of person tends to be more likely to be a bloke’
Results: diversity for resilience

‘I’m always very nervous of organisations where people are just clones of each other: eventually the ship runs aground because nobody realised the current had changed direction.’
Results: ‘graduatism’

‘If ... a university graduate who has dropped into forestry later in life can write a better answer than somebody who went into forestry at 15, that puts them at a disadvantage. Whereas in the private sector you’ll be hired on your merits.’
Results: routes into forestry

‘When I did ecology [...] there was a good smattering of girls on our course all of whom probably went into one of the environmental sciences’

‘The forestry side was heavily male dominated and it was much more even-stevens in the environmental side’
Results: role models

‘A great stocky Aberdeenshire man full of wit and sparkle [...] when I was probably about eight.’

‘I wanted to do something with the outdoors, and channelled all that into trying to become a vet, and then didn’t get the grades.’
Results: authenticity

‘It’s not as if I go to work and think, Oh I’ve got to put my work hat on.’
Results: authenticity

‘What was going on in my head was I was thinking, I actually don’t want people to notice that I’m female.’

‘I did a couple of non-forestry things [...] and talked about influencing people and [...] being your authentic self [...] recognising [...] one of your strengths can be your gender.’
Follow-up workshop

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Conclusion

Diversity is an asset, not an obligation
Thank you!

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