

Bioforum III– Ballater, Scotland April, 2002

The third workshop considered the identification and analysis of conflicts, but mainly considered the management of conflict. Several case studies, including reports of projects addressing conflicts between human activities and the conservation of biodiversity, were considered and summaries of these case studies, most written by those directly involved, are presented in Chapter 5.

The main case study involved a site visit to the Forest of Birse. Robin Callander outlined the history of the area with particular emphasis on resource rights. Birse district covers over 125sq. km (12,500 hectares or 31,500 acres) in the northeast of Scotland with the three scattered rural communities of Finzean, Ballogie and Birse and the largely uninhabited Forest of Birse. The main problem, in regard to the management of the native pinewoods spread across over 500 hectares (1,250 acres) of the North Hill of the Commonty, was that the Honourable Charles Pearson of Birse Forest Estate owned the land of the Commonty and shared the sporting rights over the Commonty with the Nicol brothers of Ballogie Estate while an indeterminate number of other parties in the parish still shared other extensive ancient land use rights over the whole Commonty. The Birse Community Trust (BCT) was set up to safeguard the future of these ancient shared rights and to secure the sustainable management of the native pinewood there. After three years of negotiation and mediation, those holding commonty rights agreed to transfer them in perpetuity to a specially created community controlled legal entity. Having successfully transferred the rights to this collective body the community is now seeking to steward them in such a way that community benefit is derived in a sustainable manner.