

# THE FOREST IS MOVING THA A' CHOILLE A' GLUASAD



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Video Editing by: Kate V. Robertson

Perth Museum and Art Gallery  
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Cover: video still of the Black Wood of Rannoch. The video delineates the northern edge of the Black Wood along a two and half mile stretch of road on the south bank of Loch Rannoch. 2013. (Twelve minutes)

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*An ecosystem is a community of living things (plants, insects and other animals) in relationship to non-living things like (sunlight, air, water and soil), that all interact to create a complex whole living system like the Black Wood. People can contribute to the health and well-being of an ecosystem, undermine an ecosystem or – destroy it.*

## THE FOREST IS MOVING

### **Thinking with the Black Wood.**

We want to talk about the Black Wood of Rannoch, a forest rated for its old trees and exemplary biodiversity that is also an iconic cultural ecosystem a living thing that shapes culture as surely as culture shapes it. We want to consider the historic moment when the Black Wood was saved by science, and the need for renewed public interest as a result of that on-going success. Finally we will touch on the ideas that ‘the forests are on the move’ and what that might mean for people in Rannoch, Perthshire and Scotland.

### **Caledonian Forests are Cultural Ecosystems.**

What is a cultural ecosystem? It is the idea that we are who we are in relationship to the places we know, the places we inhabit and the places we work in, visit or engage with. Places like the Black Wood inspire us fascinate us with new experience and expand the limits of what we know. The ancient forest of Scotland engages memories a sense of history, and imagination about who we are and what the future might hold. All of this is tied to the opportunity to experience the historic forest of Scotland.

The Black Wood is one of only 35 surviving remnants of the native pinewoods that once covered a good part of Scotland; there are trees in the Black Wood that are over three-hundred years old. Despite the fact that it is the largest most significant example of the Caledonian

*Is e coimhearsnachd de nithean beò a th' ann an eag-siostam (planntais, biastagan agus beathaichean eile) ann an dàimh le nithean nach eil beò leithid (solas-grèine, èadhar, uisge agus talamh), a tha uile ag eadar-obrachadh gus siostam beò iomlan toinnte a chruthachadh leithid An Giuthsach. Faodaidh daoine cur ri slàinte is sunnd eag-siostam, air neo eag-siostam a lagachadh - no a sgrìos.*

## THA A' CHOILLE A' GLUASAD

### **Mun Ghiuthsach.**

Tha sinn airson deasbad mun Ghiuthsach, coille aig a bheil cliù airson a seann chraobhan agus a bith-iomadachd choimeasach a tha cuideachd na h-eag-siostam cultarach suaicheanta de nì a tha beò agus a tha a' cumadh cultair a cheart cho cinnteach 's a tha cultair ga cumadh-se. Tha sinn airson beachdachadh air an àm eachdraidheil nuair a chaidh An Giuthsach a shàbhaladh le saidheans, agus an fheum air ath-ùrachadh ann an ùidh a' phobail mar thoradh air an t-soirbheachadh leantainneach sin. Mu dheireadh, suathaidh sinn air na beachdan gu bheil 'na coilltean a' gluasad' agus na dh'fhaodadh sin a bhith a' ciallachadh do na daoine ann an Raineach, Siorrachd Pheairt agus Alba.

### **Tha na Coilltean Cailleanach nan Eag-siostaman Cultarach.**

Dè th' ann an eag-siostam? 'S e am beachd gu bheil sinn mar a tha sinn ann an dàimh le àiteachan as aithne dhuinn, àiteachan sa bheil sinn a' fuireach agus ag obair, air a bheil sinn a' tadhal no leis a bheil sinn a' conaltradh. Faodaidh àiteachan mar An Giuthsach ar brosnachadh, ar tàladh le eòlasan ùra agus crìochan nas aithne dhuinn a leudachadh a-mach. Tha coille àrsaidh Alba a' dùsgadh chuimhneachain air faireachdainn de dh'eachdraidh, agus mac-meanmhainn mu cò sinn agus dè dh'fhaodadh tighinn fa-near dhuinn san àm ri teachd. Tha gach nì seo ceangailte ris a' chothrom air eòlas fhaighinn air coille eachdraidheil na h-Alba.

Tha An Giuthsach mar aon de na tha air fhàgail de 35 coilltean giuthais dùthchasach a bha aig aon àm a' còmhdach pàirt mhath de dh'Alba; tha craobhan sa Ghiuthsach a tha còrr air trì cheud bliadhna a dh'aois. A dh'aindeoin 's gur h-e an eisimpleir as motha agus as cudromaiche den Choille Chailleanaich ann an ceann a deas na Gàidhealtachd, 's e àite a th'

Forest in the southern highlands, it is a place that is largely unheard of and seldom visited by anyone outside the conservation science community. Amongst the scientists it is important because of the relationship between the trees, the ground flora and a range of lichens and fungi, insects, birds and mammals, which is quite astounding. It is the presence and interaction of all of these living things that make this place experientially rich and aesthetically memorable. The Black Wood swallows you like the sea, once properly immersed in it you will never forget it.

**The Black Wood Saved by Science is in Need of Cultural Rediscovery.** It is the isolation and lack of access that delivered the Black Wood to the 20th Century. It is an exemplary native forest under Forestry Commission Scotland care and management for over fifty years. The heart of the intact/regenerating forest radiates from the south shore of Loch Rannoch with rings of experimental restoration, which have effectively doubled the footprint of the forest. It is a living laboratory a real time museum a record of humans working with the forest to deliver culturally important native forest ecology into the future. It barely survived the first half of the 20th century. The Forestry Commission purchased the core of the Black Wood in 1947, with additional adjacent land purchased in 1958. During the first twenty years of Forestry Commission ownership an additional 5000 trees were cut and plans were in place to harvest the rest until Gunnar Godwin joined the Forestry Commission, East Scotland Conservancy in 1973. Recognizing a lack of support for the historic Black Wood he worked with the Nature Conservancy Council to establish a long-term scientific conservation plan in 1975. There is a plaque beneath a tree at a high point in the forest, which commemorates his essential contribution. This is one of the most significant legacies of the Tay Forest District, a responsibility for the health and well being of that lovely forest.

The Caledonian Forest is understood and protected through science as an important remnant ecosystem. Culturally it is an idea that seems lost in time, with no public record, no artwork or stories that tell us of its import. How many of you can find your way to a great Caledonian pine

ann air nach eil fios aig daoine gu ìre mhòr agus is ann ainneamh a tha neach bho thaobh a-muigh na coimhearsnachd glèidhteachais saidheans a' tadhal air. Tha e cudromach am measg an luchd-saidheans air sgàth an dàimh eadar craobhan, plantrais air an talamh agus an raon de chrotail is fungasan, biastagan, eòin agus mamalan a tha gu tur iongantach. Is e làthaireachd agus eadar-obrachadh nan nithean beò sin uile a tha a' dèanamh an àite seo saidhbeir a thaobh eòlais is mothachadh agus cuimhneail. Tha An Giuthsach gad shluigeadh mar am muir, aon uair 's gu bheil thu am bogadh ann gu ceart cha tèid e às do chuimhne gu bràth.

### **An Giuthsach air a Shàbhaladh tro Shaidheans le Feum air Ath-lorg Chultarach.**

Is e iomallachd agus dìth cothrom a dh'fhàg An Giuthsach beò san 20mh Linn. 'S e coille dhùthchasach gun choimeas a th' innte, fo chùram agus stiùireadh Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba thar leth-cheud bliadhna. Tha teis-meadhain na coille shlàn/ath-nuadhaichte seo a' freumhachadh a-mach bho chladach a deas Loch Rainich le cearcaill a thathar a' feuchainn a-mach às ùr air làrach na coille a dhùblachadh. Is e obair-lann beò a th' innte, taigh-tasgaidh làthaireach, clàr de chinne-daonna ag obair còmhla ris a' choille gus eag-eòlas coille dhùthchasach a tha cudromach gu cultarach a liubhairt mu choinneamh an ama ri teachd. Cha mhòr gun do shoirbhich leatha sa chiad leth den 20mh linn. Cheannaich Coimisean na Coilltearachd eitean a' Ghiuthsaich ann an 1947, le tuilleadh talamh mun cuairt ga cheannach ann an 1958. Tron chiad fichead bliadhna ann an seilbh Coimisean na Coilltearachd, chaidh 5000 craobh a bharrachd a bhuain agus bhathar a' planadh air a' chòrr a bhuain gus an tàinig Gunnar Godwin a-steach do Choimisean na Coilltearachd, Glèidhteachas Taobh an Ear Alba ann an 1973. A' tuigsinn cho beag taic 's a bh' ann don Ghiuthsach eachdraidheil, dh'obraich e còmhla ri Comhairle Glèidhteachais Nàdair gus plana glèidhteachais saidheansail fad-ùine a stèidheachadh ann an 1975. Tha plac fo chraoibh aig àite àrd sa choille a tha mar chuimhneachan air a' chuideachadh dheatamach a thug e seachad. Is e seo aon de na dìleaban as cudromaiche ann an Sgìre Choilltean Taobh Tatha, dleastanas airson slàinte is sunnd na coille bhòidhich sin.

Tha a' Choille Chailleannach air a tuigsinn 's air a dìon tro shaidheans mar eag-shiostam iarmadan cudromach. Gu cultarach, is e beachd a tha sin a tha air chall ann an tìm, gun chlàradh poblach sam bith, gun obair ealain no sgeulachdan a tha ag innse dhuinn mu a cudromachd. Cia mheud agaibh as urrainn ur slighe a dhèanamh gu coille giuthais mhòr Chailleannach? Cia mheud agaibh don aithne ainm agus làrach a' Ghiuthsaich eachdraidheil? A bheil a' choille Chailleannach air a dealbh anns na lus-ghàrraidhean, no

wood? How many know the name and location of the historic Black Wood? Is the Caledonian forest depicted in the botanic gardens, or in the public parks and museums of the cities of Scotland? How is this historic forest represented (experienced, taught and appreciated) in culture or considered in your daily life? This is the limitation of a place managed by one discipline for one purpose, and largely ignored by cultural interests.

### **The Caledonian Forests are on the Move.**

The current Forestry Commission management plans support another expansion of the Black Wood. By actively managing formerly replanted forests, and restoring native trees and understory to a recently harvested adjacent plantation the forest will move from the south-shore of Loch Rannoch to the base of the hill at Cross Craigs. Linking the core Black Wood to additional old trees along the Camghouran Burn on the western boundary. More importantly this begins to establish a pattern of native pine forest with potential to move up the valleys toward Glen Lyon. To the South the Meggernie Estate has an additional historic pinewood and its own publically funded native forest restoration programme, which is slowly moving north. In essence, the forest is moving through significant investment by Forest Enterprise with potential to reconnect the forest glens of Rannoch and Lyon. The Big Trees of the 22nd' century could be a spectacular network of native forests established on public and private estates, with significant public interest. The ecological and cultural authenticity of the Caledonian Forest will only emerge if public interest and value has the same support as those that see the benefit of lumber.

What is the future of the Black Wood? Does it remain a forest laboratory, largely invisible at best difficult to find and experience? Does it become an open-air cathedral or museum where every child, woman and man can seek proper engagement with nature in Scotland? Or is there another model that is yet to be developed? What might it take to deliver a future Black Wood that takes more than a day to walk through, and repays time and attention with special experience and knowledge that fires the cultural imagination for generations to come?



ann am pàircean poblach agus taighean-tasgaidh na h-Alba? Ciamar a tha a' choille eachdraidheil seo air a riochdachadh, air eòlas a chur oirre, air a teagasg agus air a meas ann an cultar no air a beachdachadh sa bheatha làitheil agaibh? Is e seo crìoch àite a tha air a stiùireadh le aon chuspair airson aon adhbhar, agus gu mòr air a sheachnadh le ùidhean cultarach.

### **Tha na Coilltean Cailleannach a' Glusad.**

Tha planaichean stiùiridh làithreach Coimisean na Coilltearachd a' cur taic ri leudachadh eile air a' Ghiuthsach. Le bhith gnìomhach ann an làimhseachadh choilltean a chaidh ath-chur roimhe agus ag ath-nuadhachadh chraobhan dùthchasach agus dlùth do phlanntachas air a bhuaibh o chionn ghoirid, gluaisidh a' choille bho chladach a deas Loch Rainich gu bonn a' chnuic aig Troisearraig, a' ceangal a' Ghiuthsaich ri seann chraobhan a bharrachd ri taobh Abhainn Chamgharain air a' chrìch an iar. Gu cudromach, tha seo a' tòiseachadh air pàtran de choille dhùthchasach giuthais a stèidheachadh le comas air glusad suas an gleann a dh'ionnsaigh Gleann Lìomhann. Tha coille giuthais eachdraidheil eile air Oighreachd Mhìgearnaidh aig a bheil a prògram ath-nuadhachaidh coille dhùthchasach fhèin air a mhaoineachadh le maoin phoblach, agus a tha gu socair a' glusad gu tuath. Ann an darribh, tha a' choille a' glusad tro thasgadh cudromach leis an Iomairt Coilltearachd agus comas air gleanntan coillteach Rainich agus Lìomhainn ath-cheangal ri chèile. Dh'fhaodadh Craobhan Mòra na 22mh linn a bhith na lionra mhìorbhaileach de choilltean dùthchasach air an stèidheachadh air oighreachdan poblach is prìobhaideach, le mòran ùidh bhon phoball. Cha tig dearbhachd eag-eòlasach agus cultarach na Coille Chailleannaich am bàrr mura bi an aon taic aig ùidh agus luach phoblach agus a tha aig an fheadhainn a tha a' faicinn buannachd ann am fiodh.

Dè mu dheidhinn A' Ghiuthsaich san àm ri teachd? A bheil e a' dol a dh'fhuireach na obair-lann coille, gu mòr neo-fhaicsinneach, aig a' char as fhèarr duilich a lorg airson eòlas a chur air? A bheil e gu bhith na chathair-eaglais no na thaigh-tasgaidh fosgailte far am faod gach pàiste, boireannach is fireanach conaltradh ceart a shireadh le nàdar ann an Alba? No a bheil modal eile ann a tha fhathast ri leasachadh? Dè dh'fheumar airson Giuthsach a liubhairt san àm ri teachd a bheir suas còrr agus la-tha airson coiseachd tromhe, agus a phàigheas ùine agus aire le eòlas sònraichte agus fiosrachadh a chuireas lasair ri mac-meanmhainn cultarach thar nan ginealaichean ri teachd?

This project has evolved out of a dialogue with

**The Kinloch Rannoch Forest and Trails Consortium**

Anne Benson	Artist, Chair, Rannoch and Tummel Tourist Association, Loch Rannoch Conservation Association
Bid Strachan	Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust
Jeannie Grant	Rannoch Forest and Trails Volunteer, Educator
Jane Dekker	Rannoch and Tummel Tourist Association Owner Treats Gallery, Kinloch Rannoch

**The Project Partners:**

C.Taylor, P. Fullarton	Tay Forest District Forestry Commission
D. Edwards and M. Smith	Forest Research, Roslin
Paul McLennan	Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust
Richard Polley	Arts and Heritage, Perth and Kinross
Mike Strachan	The Perth and Argyll Conservancy

For More Info about the area see

<http://www.rannochandtummel.co.uk>

**Tim Collins** BFA, MFA, PhD and **Reiko Goto** BFA, MFA, PhD are environmental artists, researchers and authors working together since they first met at the San Francisco Art institute in 1985. Over the last fifteen years they have sustained a research-based approach to art that has focused on the aesthetic conditions of the public realm with specific attention to environmental systems such as rivers, forests, and landscapes. The primary themes that inform the research began with the ethical and aesthetic entanglements found in ecological restoration, which brought them to ideas about the emancipation of natural systems from the constraints of industrial culture. This has led to new artwork that explores the empathic relationships between human and non-human entities and the social and cultural aspects of iconic native ecosystems, such as the Black Wood of Rannoch; the southern-most remnant of the great Caledonian Forest of Scotland. (See [CollinsandGoto.com](http://CollinsandGoto.com) for more information.)

*The Forest is Moving / THA A' CHOILLE A' GLUASAD  
and all related contents*

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# Black Wood of Rannoch

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