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Galloway Forest Volunteer Project opens its doors to new entrants

The Galloway Forest Volunteer Project which supports young people from Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway to gain work-based skills has recently announced that it has been successful in attracting a further 180 young people to its programme.

The Forestry Commission Project Management Team has been recruiting young people on an on-going basis to take up some of the new places since November 2009. Part of the Future Jobs Fund initiative, the Project, which is operated by a team from the Forestry Commission Scotland and South Ayrshire Volunteer Centre, offers young people from all backgrounds the opportunity to undertake a wide range of practical skills training, including forestry, horticulture and environmental conservation tasks, within a supportive group setting.

Stan Corcoran of Forestry Commission Scotland in Galloway said: Our woodlands are providing great training grounds for many young people to learn new skills, build up their confidence and prepare themselves for the job market.

Stan continued: We've been using Lantra's Skills Manager system to highlight the diverse range of skills that our young people are learning, and it's really helping them in their search for employment. Lantra's Skills Manager system has been of real benefit to the project; being able to demonstrate skills acquisition has helped us secure additional funding which will now support the inclusion of new entrants to the programme.

Tony Bird, Lantra's UK Head of Business Development said: The Galloway Forest Project works with supervisors to identify and overcome barriers to employment. The diversity of tasks and skills training they undertake make it difficult to find a suitable existing qualification that could exemplify exactly what they achieve. Lantra's Skills Manager allows for constructive coaching sessions between staff and project participants, recording achievements against set objectives. The end result enables young people to showcase the core and technical skills they have developed to prospective employers.

Betty Hill, Project Mentor said: In all the years I have worked on initiatives that are designed to help young people unlock their potential, I have never encountered anything that comes close to giving them a personal development experience like the Galloway Forest Project.

The Galloway Forest Project is supported by Project Scotland, the Forestry Commission Scotland and Volunteer Centre South Ayrshire.

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EDITOR S NOTES:

" Lantra, the Sector Skills Council for the environmental and land-based sector, is licensed by the UK Government to drive forward the new skills, training and business development agenda for the sector.

" Lantra, the Sector Skills Council for environmental and land-based industries, in Scotland represents the interests of approximately 24,500 businesses (13% of all businesses), which employ 115,700 individuals (representing 2% of all employment across the workforce) and 40,000 volunteers.