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Mr Adrian Clark  
Chairman  
Evanton Wood Community Group  
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To whom it may concern,

I recently retired from the Forestry Commission but until then I was, for twenty years, Conservator for Highland and Islands. I have always seen Evanton Wood as one of the most important woodlands on the north. In fact it is unusual in Scotland for various reasons. There are a number of woods Scotland wide that have a high percentage of large diameter trees but few of these are the result of planned silvicultural management. The wood is now an exceptional example of continuous cover forestry, transformed after WW II which makes it particularly important technically (and well recognised for it). However the wide variety of tree size and the high percentage of "cathedral" trees also make it one of the most attractive woods in the Highlands. I often organised visits both domestic and international and Evanton was frequently a wood that people wished to visit.

The wood had significant input from Professor Schlich, an iconic figure in forestry, and this makes it an important feature of the history of woodland management in the UK.

In the nineties and into this century the estate committed to continued management to maintain the silvicultural system, supported by management grants and as well as biodiversity and amenity, it included an economic objective in the forest plan. It is now one of a dwindling number of woods which can supply large diameter timber for the type of post and beam construction favoured by innovative architects.

The wood is heavily used by the public and has been for many years. It provides high quality recreation and there are tremendous opportunities for environmental education. The wood's geographical location would allow this to be developed for the local and the wider community.

I was lucky enough to be able to tour the wood last year and it is in good heart, although some catching up will be necessary. In order to safeguard management for the future the wood will require expertise and a fairly intensive management input. Unusually, appropriate expertise is available within the community and a move to community hands could well provide the intensity of management which can be difficult to achieve through conventional estate management.

In my view it is very important for the Highlands and our forest heritage that the unique qualities of this woodland are preserved and developed into the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Dunsmore', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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