



PRESS RELEASE

2 July 2018

AYRSHIRE ESTATE SECURES COVETED 'WILDLIFE ESTATES SCOTLAND' ACCREDITATION

An East Ayrshire estate has secured a coveted accreditation award in recognition of its exceptional work to protect wildlife and habitats.

Sorn Estate was presented with Wildlife Estates Scotland's advanced Level 2 accreditation at a ceremony held at the Scottish Game Fair at Scone this weekend.

The award was presented to Nick Wright of Sorn Estate by Francesca Osowska OBE, chief executive of Scottish Natural Heritage and David Johnstone, chairman of Scottish Land & Estates.

Wildlife Estates Scotland is a national version of the EU Wildlife Estates (WE) initiative and is endorsed by the European Commission's Directorate-General Environment. In order to gain accreditation, farms and estates undergo a rigorous independent assessment of their game, wildlife and habitat management, as well as their social and economic contribution to rural life.

The award brings the total amount of land in Scotland accredited under WES Level 2 to around 1.25m acres.

Sorn Estate in East Ayrshire is a mixed estate of 8,000 acres with significant sporting interests, a thriving agricultural business based on 5,000 acres of agricultural land, run on an in-hand basis, as well as Sorn Castle - a popular venue for weddings and events.

The estate's forestry is managed under the Forestry Commission Long Term Forest Plan, providing fuel for the biomass boilers and also for commercial timber, building materials, amenity and sporting uses. The owners of the estate are on track to reinstate native broadleaved trees and indigenous conifers over 800 acres, which will provide more diverse habitats for wildlife.

Dee Ward, vice-chairman of operations, Wildlife Estates Scotland, said: "Owners and managers of WES accredited estates and farms should be proud of the work they have done, often over many years, to enhance their land for wildlife and encourage the many species that now live there. WES requires evidence about 70 named species, which provides an insight into how land in rural areas can be managed for the good of the nation's wild life and also enables best practice to be shared."

WES was founded by Scottish Land & Estates with support from Scottish Natural Heritage, the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Scotland and the Cairngorms National Park Authority.

ENDS

Picture caption: Francesca Osowska Chief Executive of Scottish Natural Heritage presents a Wildlife Estates Scotland certificate of accreditation to Nick Wright on behalf of Sorn Estate with David Johnstone Chairman of Scottish Land and Estates and at the Scottish Game Fair at Scone Palace. Picture by Graeme Hart / Perthshire Picture Agency

For further information please contact:

Ramsay Smith

Media House

t: 0141 220 6040 / 07788 414 856

e: ramsay@mediahouse.co.uk

Gary McQueen

Media House

t: 0141 220 6040 / 07834 694609

e: gary@mediahouse.co.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

About WES

www.wildlife-estates.co.uk

WES aims to:

- Engage the public and private sectors in collaboration to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity;
- Promote and implement contemporary best practice in game and wildlife management to maximise the range of benefits they deliver;
- Improve the political and public understanding and perception of estates, their management practices and what they deliver in terms of economic and other public benefits;
- Provide a framework within which management initiatives designed to resolve conflicts and secure a sustainable balance between different interests and species can be developed and promoted;
- Provide and disseminate robust information about wildlife management for educational, decision-taking and policy-making purposes.

WES represents a public commitment by estates and land managers to voluntarily set out to achieve the highest standards of wildlife management and conservation that deliver a wide range of social, economic and environmental public benefits

About Scottish Land & Estates

Scottish Land & Estates is a membership organisation for landowners, rural businesses and rural professionals.

Scottish Land & Estates promotes the wide range of benefits land-based businesses provide: the tourist attractions, leisure facilities and landscapes enjoyed by the public, as well as, housing, employment, tourism & enterprise and farming opportunities.

For more information, visit www.scottishlandandestates.co.uk