

StarTree Action Research report: NWFP initiatives in the UK and worldwide

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Introduction

The following report outlines existing initiatives that involve, support and promote non-wood forest products (NWFPs) in the UK and in countries across the world.

There are a number of initiatives across the world that are specifically to do with the NWFP sector or involve the NWFP sector in some way:

- trade, industry and independent associations - included are some associations that are not directly NWFP-related, these have been included as they may be useful models for structuring an NWFP association;
- business and product directories – both online and printed;
- collaborative networks – local and regional;
- labelling, branding and certification schemes;
- research programmes and many initiatives that crossover and incorporate two or more of the above.

Each section of the report looks at existing initiatives in different countries or regions, and if more than one exists in that region, how they may link up with each other. The report will look at how they are funded, supported and run and whether they are still active or not.

Scotland

SWHA - the Scottish Wild Harvests Association

<http://www.scottishwildharvests.org.uk/>

Formed in April 2009. SWHA is an independent non-commercial association for interested parties, ranging from harvesters, producers, processors, organisations and enthusiasts, with a core ethos of sustainable harvesting and knowledge sharing.

Forestry Commission Scotland funded the initial two meetings and a conference on NWFPs. A small amount of funding was given by Dynamic Woods to assist SWHA to get established. No funding since then other than membership fees. Membership fees are low and not tiered.

In 2012, SWHA received a boost and a renewal of interest when they published a book in partnership with Reforesting Scotland, "*Handbook of Scotland's Wild Harvests*".

Currently around 60 members (maybe not all active) – mix of harvesters, processors, producers, organisations and enthusiasts.

Volunteer run, website updates and maintenance have been reliant on one volunteer. No updates or newsletters since 2013 and for a newcomer/visitor to the website it is now unclear what the SWHA is and how to join as this information is at the bottom of a long news feed scroll.



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This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement No 311919

SWHA have an active e-group and popular annual gathering, though lack of resources and volunteer time means there has been a loss of momentum. The website currently has no directory of members, courses, workshops or events and the association has no code of conduct.

ForestHarvest

www.forestharvest.org.uk

An informative website with a wealth of knowledge and resources in relation to the NWFP sector in Scotland – including a business directory, species directory, historical use, projects, sustainable harvesting guidelines, woodland information and research. ForestHarvest is a Reforesting Scotland project (hosted by the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh) and is an initiative that was set up as an interactive resource for the sector. The initial set up (2004) and maintenance (for 4-year period of time after) was funded by Scottish Enterprise and Forestry Commission Scotland.

Lies dormant presently due to lack of funding. The website was last updated in 2009. If funding or support acquired, this website has a great existing structure that could be updated and developed, though maybe too resource heavy to be a sustainable model without core funding.

Scottish Working Woods Label

www.scottishworkingwoods.org.uk

Set up informally in 2007. Formally set up as a limited company in 2010. This label/branding initiative arose to address the complexities of gaining FSC certification if you were a small business. The label is a branding that guarantees at least 90% of the product is made from materials grown, harvested, processed and produced in Scotland.

The initiative is run by volunteers and supported by volunteer representatives from the membership organisations – presently the Association of Scottish Hardwood Sawmillers (ASHS), the Scottish Furniture Makers' Association (SFMA), and SWHA.

The membership organisations act as label administrators and members of these organisations can apply to use the SWW label as licensees. There is currently no fee, however licensees must follow a code of practice and fulfil criteria to use label.

At present all the members using the label are involved in the use of timber, i.e. furniture makers, sawmillers. Nobody in the NWFP sector uses this label as yet, the criteria for NWFPs are slightly more complex and are still yet to be fully set out and agreed.

There is no money for promotion of the label at present and so the label has little exposure and is still relatively unknown in the industry. Some sawmills are seeing benefits due to the SWW label, gaining local authority contracts due to the desire by the local authorities to use local timber.

The label hopes to attract funding to launch a new marketing and promotion drive to elevate the profile and use of the label.

Tree Nursery, Willow and Woodfuel directories, Scotland

www.woodfuelscotland.org.uk

www.willowscotland.org.uk

www.treenurseryscotland.org.uk



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A Reforesting Scotland initiative, three online directories that have been developed and set up by a volunteer. Run and updated by one volunteer and dependent on users to send in information to keep it current and up to date. Last updated in 2011. Could be a great resource if updated, the woodfuel directory received 9,000 hits in one year. Slow and difficult to keep updated when reliant on one volunteer.

The following Scottish associations are included as possible model initiatives for the NWFP sector:

Scottish Basketmakers Circle

www.scottishbasketmakerscircle.org

Longstanding (26 years) membership association to promote basketmaking and associated crafts in Scotland. Currently has 110 members.

The association is voluntary run and the design, updating and maintaining of website is outsourced. Produces 4 newsletters a year. Online directory of makers and courses.

Low membership fees. Tiered fee – Individuals £20, Low Income £14, Organisations and Public Bodies £35.

Part of wider UK network the Basketmakers Association.

Scottish Furniture Makers Association

www.scottishfurnituremakers.org.uk

Established in 2000. An active trade association. 68 members. Run by volunteers and supported by Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Enterprise and Craft Scotland.

Members fees, £95.

Organises an annual exhibition and has published 5 printed directories over the years, last one in 2013.

The updating and maintaining of the website is outsourced.

Each member has space on the site to promote themselves. Alongside a makers list there is a Maker's Map – useful visual tool.

The Facebook page is updated by a volunteer within the association.

Wild Scotland - Scottish wildlife and adventure tourism association

www.wild-scotland.org.uk

Established in 2003. Very active. Almost 100 members.

Website has a search engine and map that enables users to look up providers/members, this is a very user-friendly tool.

Online directory of members with a featured member article on the website.

High membership fees, enable there to be resources to update and maintain the website regularly. High fees are able to be charged due the nature of the companies that are members, not a transferable model that can be used for small businesses and individuals in the NWFP sector.

Code of practice may be useful as a model for SWHA.



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Ireland

The Native Irish Honey Bee Society label

<http://nihbs.org/become-a-member-2/honey-label/>

This society has its own product label which its members can use to promote that their honey has been made by native Irish bees. A simple process, users have to agree to a set of terms and conditions and there is a nominal charge for the labels.

Canada

Buy BC Wild, From Our Atlantic Woods, Buy Manitoba Wild – these are all NWFP directory initiatives based on a similar model – Buy BC Wild being the original model. The directories are a free resource, listing NWFP businesses, products and associated cultural and recreational opportunities. These directories have all been supported in some manner by the Royal Roads University (RRU) – Centre for Livelihoods & Ecology (previously the Centre for Non-Timber Resources), this centre has been very active in supporting the Canadian NWFP sector but activity seems to have slowed down since 2012.

It is worth noting that the directories link in with the Canadian Directory of who's who in the NTFP Network and the Rural Opportunities network, both of which are also supported by the RRU. This academic institution has played a vitally important role in the NWFP sector within Canada – either initiating, developing or being a supporting partner in almost all of the Canadian initiatives.

Details of each individual directory are found below:

Buy BC Wild - NWFP directory for British Columbia, Canada, 2005-2010

<http://www.buybcwild.com>

A copy of the last directory can be seen here:

<http://bcfoodactionnetwork.com/content/buy-bc-wild-directory-2009-2010>

The initiative and directory was run through the Centre for Livelihoods and Ecology, Royal Roads University, to support the growth of the NWFP sector in British Columbia and received funding and support from various sources – namely banks, environmental and government agencies.

Between 2005 and 2010, 6 directories were printed and published online. They were well presented with great photos, business listings with recipes, articles, information on historic and current use of NWFPs and a harvesters' calendar. It was free to be listed, although businesses could pay for an ad to be included (source of income generation).

The Buy BC Wild initiative was not solely about the directory:

- four public awareness events were held between 2005 - 2008, they were called “ Shop the Wild” Festival and Public Markets and linked wild products producers with consumers;
- conference and networking events were also held.

The events ceased and the directory was discontinued in 2010 due to lack of external funds. All the listings from the directory were integrated into the Rural Opportunities Network, an active and up-to-date network directory.



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Though in the end unsustainable, Buy BC Wild was seen as a successful resource, and has subsequently been used as a model for directories published in other parts of Canada.

Buy Manitoba Wild - 2012

<http://manitobamodelforest.net/ntfp/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/MBWILD2012directory.pdf>

<http://manitobamodelforest.net/ntfp/>

An online and printed resource directory of products from Manitoba's NWFP sector, included are products, raw materials and associated cultural and leisure service providers. This directory is based on the Buy BC Wild model. Although there has not been a publication of another directory since 2012, the website is active and the listings on the webpage are up to date.

The directory was supported by Manitoba Model Forest (a not-for-profit NGO that represents stakeholders vested in the management of natural resources and the sustainability of rural communities in forested regions of Manitoba), Royal Roads University, Manitoba Tourism Association and the Culture, Heritage and Tourism Agency of Manitoba.

Manitoba Model Forest runs the current website.

From Our Atlantic Woods 2009 - NWFP directory for Atlantic Canada and Maine

<http://www.fromouratlanticwoods.com/en/index.php>

Based on the Buy BC Wild model. Produced as both a printed copy and online version, includes NWFP businesses, sustainable harvesting guidelines, historical and modern uses and recipes. The online resource uses map directory.

The development and production of this directory was led by INFOR Inc. with many other partners and sponsors involved – including universities, government agencies, agriculture and environmental agencies, NGOs and private centres associated with forest and woodlands.

A one-off publication.

WildTrader

<http://wildtrader.ca/about/>

An online classifieds site set up in 2012 by harvesters to create a trade network and connect people in Canada within the NWFP sector. An active, well used site by people in the sector who harvest, buy, sell or want to learn how to harvest wild products. There is no fee to post an ad.

This is a well structured, low maintenance site – minimal work needs to be done to keep the site updated and it is promoted and linked on a number of other NWFP sites.

Wildtrader has now joined forces with the Rural Opportunities Network.

Rural Opportunities Network - Canadian Network

<http://ruralnetwork.ca/>

This open active network is hosted by Royal Roads University.

Supported and financed by a range of partners: Government Agencies, Environmental Agencies, Forest and Bio-resource Centres, Producers and Banks.



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An information hub for people from across Canada to connect on issues of importance to rural communities, focused on raising awareness and creating opportunities for small businesses engaged in the sustainable use of natural resources. Alongside many tools and resources for businesses and individuals involved and interested in the NTFP sector, the network includes a national directory listing a wide variety of goods and services from forests and rural areas across Canada. Wild foods, unique arts and crafts, natural body care products, wood products, and eco and cultural tourism opportunities.

No new information added since 2013.

NTFP Network - Canada

<http://ntfpnetwork.ca/>

A network to share information and knowledge and develop expertise between a partnership of organisations, agencies, businesses, and others concerned with the sustainable and ethical development of the non-timber forest products sector in Canada.

Launched in 2010, supported by Natural Resources Canada (Government Agency). Website development and maintenance is undertaken by Royal Roads University.

Site is dormant - there have been no updates since 2011 and the directory has been removed.

SHSA - Saskatchewan Herb and Spice Association

<http://www.saskherbspice.org/index.html>

Established in 1993. Started by a wild crafter, spice grower and herb grower/processor. An industry-driven association run by a voluntary board of directors involved in the sector.

SHSA covers herbs, spices, wildcrafted products and natural health products with both wild harvested and commercially grown natural raw materials.

Evolved from a focus on purely production to encompassing the whole chain including research and development. Have a code of conduct/collection practices and developed simple, effective traceability tools.

Three tiers of membership: Corporate Sponsor, Member (with voting and non-voting rights) and Regular (£37 a year).

The website is industry orientated - no link for the public to the annual members directory. The newsletters are for members only. No additional information and knowledge about the plants and the sector on the website, the focus is on commercial industry not for people who harvest as an activity for livelihood.

United States

Minnesota Special Forest Products Directory - 2008-2013

http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/um/sfp_hm_directory.pdf

Set up in 2008 with a grant from US Forest Service State and Private Forestry's "Rural Development through Forestry" programme. Developed by and currently updated and maintained by University of Minnesota and the Department of Natural Resources.

Basic black and white listings directory. Whilst not visually eye-catching this is a simple directory that requires low maintenance to keep up to date.



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Oregon Forest Industry Directory

www.orforestdirectory.com/

This online directory for both timber and NWFPs facilitates the establishment of connections between the broad array of interests in Oregon's forestry sector.

Established in 2004 and run by Oregon State University, it was developed and is currently maintained by the Oregon Wood Innovation Centre at the university. The site was updated and upgraded in 2014. An excellent directory, user friendly and uses a geographical map for directory listings.

This is an active site that is successful and well used for both timber and NWFPs – lots of positive comments left by people using it for NWFPs.

NTFP Info.us

www.ntfpinfo.us/

Established in 1998, the purpose of this website is to provide and share information, tools and resources to develop and help promote and market the NTFP sector. Includes links to all relevant business directories in the US and Canada, a species database, good collection practice and associated publications and research.

Has had funding and in-kind support from a range of government and environmental agencies, private organisations and funding programmes.

Still appears to be active.

Finland

Arctic Flavours - Finnish nationwide natural products industry association

<http://www.arctic-flavours.fi/en/arktiset+aromit/association/>

Established in 1993.

The aims of the association are to promote the gathering, processing and use of natural products and support the wild harvest industry through compiling and sharing information and educational material, carrying out nation-wide promotional campaigns, supporting research, organising related projects and assisting its members in finding partners and building networks.

The website is supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Economic Development Fund and is active and up to date.

The website seems to be structured in a way that needs low upkeep. The web content is informative about wild produce – berries, mushrooms, herbs, sap, pine bark, recipes, explains Everyman's Rights and includes additional information for pickers and kids.

Over 100 member companies and organisations that are buyers, sellers, processors and producers.

Asia

Non-Timber Forest Products Exchange Programme

<http://www.ntfp.org/index.php?go=about>

A large-scale initiative that was set up in 1970 for the forest communities in South and South East Asia. The programme is a collaborative network of 60 civil society organisations, NGOs and community-based organisations. The focus of this



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programme is slightly different to initiatives found in temperate regions as their work is aimed at supporting whole indigenous forest-based communities in this region.

Very active, their newsletter is published bi-annually and the website includes a product directory, species database, research resources and activities taking place.

NTFP Network - Nepal

<http://www.ansab.org/networks/nepal-ntfp-network-nnn/>

Established in 1995 there are now 50 organisations and 250 individuals in the network both from Nepal and other countries such as China, UK, US, India and Uganda. Any interested parties can become a member of the network – individuals, trade associations, organisations. The network is co-ordinated by ANSAB (Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources) and aims to promote efficient and sustainable utilization of NTFPs for the sustained economic and social development of Nepalese society and help with management, marketing and policy of Nepal's NTFP resources.

Global

Fair Wild certification

<http://www.fairwild.org/certification-overview>

A worldwide certification initiative. Established in 2008, with the first certificated ingredients put on the market in 2009. The initiative promotes sustainable use of wild collected ingredients, with the focus on ecological and social sustainability of all wild collected plants.

The Fairwild Foundation, a not for profit organisation, provides the framework for the quality and implementation of the Fair Wild standard and certification system for wild collected plants.

The foundation has high profile partners: Medicinal Plant Specialist Group, Species Survival Commission, IUCN, WWF and TRAFFIC, the organisation that developed the International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP) which has now merged into the Fair Wild Standard ver.2.

The FairWild certification scheme is currently being implemented in a number of countries worldwide, from collection and gathering companies, processors and traders of raw materials to licensees who trade the finished product. In the UK, licensees include Neals Yard Remedies, Pukka Teas and the Organic Herb Trading Company Ltd.

The certification process includes an annual on-site audit for producers and the cost of the certification process depends on the size of the company, its complexity, and the number and type of certified products it is seeking to sell.

The annual fees are 200 euros for product registration and 100 euros for each product, this includes raw or processed materials or products made therefrom.

Cost of registering as a finished product licensee is higher.

Like FSC certification, the scheme and process is complex and expensive for individuals or small businesses.

A note on harvesting guidelines

Each country and almost every initiative in this report includes or has links to sustainable harvesting guidelines or best practice collection, see individual websites.



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Summary

The majority of Canadian and U.S. initiatives are linked to an academic institution; either developed, supported or maintained by a local or regional university.

Some initiatives are set up with project-based funding, making the model or initiative hard to sustain after a certain period of time.

Industry and trade associations all have tiers of membership fees apart from SWHA.

Certification and branding for NWFPs is rare and schemes such as FairWild are too complex and expensive for many small businesses and individuals

Many of the active and successful initiatives have taken a number of years to get established.

An awareness of the structure and mechanisms of NWFP initiatives across the world can help to inform ways of strengthening and supporting the NWFP sector and existing initiatives within Scotland. Parallels can be drawn between some of the models in Scotland and Canada. Developing and promoting the existing Scottish initiatives effectively, will support resilience and adaptability within the sector and will be mutually beneficial to each initiative as well as delivering significant benefits to the individuals, organisations and communities involved with NWFPs in Scotland.



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