**Praise for environmental management of Argyll Estate**

(UPM Tilhill, Argyll, January, 2015) – UPM Tilhill has been praised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for its work to implement a ground-breaking woodland creation project in Scotland after a pair of Golden Eagles was discovered nesting on the property.

Private investors bought the property in 2011 with the purpose of creating a productive conifer forest. On the day that the land was acquired by the client, a pair of Golden Eagles was discovered - the first time that eagles had been reported nesting on the site for 40 years.

In Scotland Golden Eagles are rare and have strict legal protection. This meant having to gain approval from government regulators before plans to create a new, large area of productive conifer forest could be realised. This process, within a Golden Eagle Core Area, had not been attempted before.

UPM Tilhill ecologists and forest managers had to undertake a major revision of the forest design to take account of the habitat needs of the eagles and in 2013 the Forestry Commission Scotland granted approval for the revised scheme.

The IUCN Assessor Simon Pepper said: “The outcome provides a model for other private forest owners, managers and conservation interests to follow in developing proposals in similar situations**.** It is a good example of UPM’s Global Biodiversity Programme in action and demonstrates that a thorough, open and professional approach can lead to resolution of a most challenging environmental and land-use dilemma - provided all parties are willing to work together constructively and compromise. The success of the project provides UPM Tilhill with an enhanced reputation within the forestry and conservation sectors.”

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has responsibility for safeguarding Golden Eagle populations, and evaluates all forestry expansion proposals in areas with eagles. SNH’s views along with those of other conservation organisations, are fed into a consultation process conducted by Forestry Commission Scotland.

UPM Tilhill’s Forest Ecologist John Gallacher explains: “Gaining approval for creating a large area of productive conifer forest within an eagle territory had not been attempted prior to the acquisition of this property. This project had many facets and involved a wide range of stakeholders. During projects like these, UPM Tilhill’s conservation expertise comes into its own. Our two ecologists, one of whom is a bird expert, a landscape designer and forest management team all worked together in developing the new design. The design went through many iterations before a final version was agreed that was acceptable to all parties. This involved considerable compromise by all the stakeholders, including the owners and conservation agencies.”

The original planting area was reduced to maintain open ground close to the nest, over key parts of the eagles’ hunting range and flightlines back to the nesting site. It is hoped that recovery of ground vegetation from long-term grazing impacts and the creation of low density semi-natural woodland will help improve the prey base for the eagles.

This is the first time that an extensive planting of productive conifer forest has been granted approval by the Forestry Commission in Scotland on an area of land occupied by breeding Golden Eagles.

UPM Tilhill, established more than 60 years ago, is a national company operating from a network of offices throughout the UK. UPM Tilhill is the UK’s largest forest management and timber harvesting company. The company provides a full range of consultancy and contracting services to the forest owner and forestry investor. Further information is available at [www.upm-tilhill.com](http://www.upm-tilhill.com)

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors:** Notes to editors: Through the renewing of the bio and forest industries, UPM is building a sustainable future across six business areas: UPM Biorefining, UPM Energy, UPM Raflatac, UPM Paper Asia, UPM Paper Europe and North America and UPM Plywood. Our products are made of renewable raw materials and are recyclable. We serve our customers worldwide. The group employs around 21,000 people and its annual sales are approximately € 10 billion. UPM shares are listed on NASDAQ OMX Helsinki. UPM – The Biofore Company – www.upm.com For further information contact Suzi Christie PR Consultant for UPM Tilhill on 01435 830031 or e-mail suzi@blueberry-pr.co.uk

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