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NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE USE

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Second Scottish Woodlands Student Excellence Award Announced

The Scottish Forestry Trust is delighted to announce that the winner of the Scottish Woodlands Student Excellence Award is Matti Salmela, a postgraduate student then based at the University of Edinburgh. In collaboration with a team of scientists at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, the James Hutton Institute and Forest Research, he carried out research into "Testing the Adaptive Significance of Seed Zones in Scots Pine". The thesis has clearly shown that there are genetic differences between native Scots pine populations in Scotland in terms of the timing of growth in spring and their ability to cope with cold in winter. Importantly, the observed geographic patterns were not random but reflected differences in the local environment – for example, the most cold-tolerant trees were from the coldest sites. This indicates that natural selection has been at work and that native Scots Pine forests are differently, and locally, adapted to their home site.

Speaking from his home in Finland before continuing his studies at the University of Wyoming in 2012, Matti said, "I thank the Trust and Scottish Woodlands for this recognition and I am very happy to have been able to contribute to the conservation of native pinewoods in Scotland. I hope these findings will also inspire further interdisciplinary studies on Scots pine and other native tree species".

Course supervisor Richard Ennos of Edinburgh University's Institute of Evolutionary Biology said "On behalf of all of Matti's postgraduate advisers I am delighted that his innovative applied research has been recognized by the Scottish Woodlands Student Excellence award. Matti's work has provided us with valuable new insights into genetic variation and adaptation in Scotland's most iconic tree species."

Commenting on the latest award, Guy Watt, the Chairman of The Scottish Forestry Trust's Projects and Research Committee said, "Matti's thesis has provided some very important fundamental research which will help to guide the selection of planting stock for native Scots Pine woodlands. Modifications to the existing seed transfer guidelines will help to minimize seedling mortality and improve survival rates on site. Committee members were impressed by the quality of the final thesis and by the practical relevance of the findings".

Presenting the award to Matti, Colin Mann, Managing Director of Scottish Woodlands Ltd and a Trustee of The Scottish Forestry Trust, said "I am delighted to present Matti with this award and wish him every success with his future work at Wyoming. Not only is it important to recognise achievement through excellence but it is also important to

support graduates as they start off on their career path in the forestry sector. I wish him every success for the future”.

Ends

Notes for Editors:

The Scottish Woodlands Student Excellence Award was launched by The Scottish Forestry Trust in May 2011 to recognise excellence in the quality and relevance of the output from Trust funded PhD Studentships. The Award provides £250 per recipient as a result of funding provided by Scottish Woodlands Ltd.

The Scottish Forestry Trust is the leading UK Charitable Trust providing funds for research, education and training in support of British Forestry. Established in 1983 by a gifting of share capital, the Trust is a registered charity and has a remit to provide private sector funds to support research and education throughout the British forestry industry. Since 1983, the Trust has provided in excess of £1.7m to over 100 projects ranging from supporting post graduate education through to contributing towards industry applied research and assisting policy formulation.

Scottish Woodlands Ltd is a leading Forestry Management Company with a long tradition of serving forest owners and investors in Scotland and the rest of the UK. Originally established in 1913 as The Cooperative Forestry Society, its history can be traced back for almost 100 years. The current company, which is substantially employee owned, has grown and developed significantly to become a major player in the British forestry and timber industry, delivering over 800,000 tonnes of timber per annum into UK sawmillers, and planting in excess of 25% of private sector new woodland expansion with an annual turnover in excess of £50 million.

Further information, and a photograph of Matti Salmela is available from SFT Director, Bob Stubbs at director@scottishforestrytrust.org.uk