



Drimnatorran Land Management Plan Summary

Drimnatorran LMP was approved on the 23rd May 2023 and runs for 10 years.

Drimnatorran Forest lies adjacent to Strontian village in west Lochaber. It occupies 1071ha of land and comprises of three components: the main block in Carnoch, Eggadale and Ariundle; Phemie's Wood (over 29ha), on the west side of Strontian and Longrigg (87.5ha), a kilometre west of Strontian. The forest and associated recreation facilities are valued by the local community and local tourist businesses.

The Sunart SSSI and SAC designation at Ariundle underwent substantial conifer plantation removal to allow for native woodland regeneration to achieve favourable condition. Nearly 20ha of peatland restoration took place on the floodplain of the Strontian river in Ariundle in 2019. This improved the views along the Ariundle trail of the river to the mountains beyond. It also improved the habitat for the Chequered skipper butterfly and the assemblage of dragonflies, some of which are nationally rare. One last area of restoration remains within the designated area which is difficult to access. FLS will work closely with NatureScot to ensure restoration will be achieved.

The forested area covers 1071ha, comprising of 441ha conifers (78% of the current tree cover), and 121ha of broadleaves (22% of the current tree cover). The open ground extends to 385.5ha, the majority of which lies on Carnoch hill and includes areas of blanket bog and upland heathland as well as non-priority open habitat.

This land management plan aims to build resilience for a changing climate into the management of the plantation forestry, designated woodland, other native woodland, open habitats, ecological connectivity, soil and water.

What is important in Drimnatorran Forest?

- Designated Oak woodland in Ariundle – Sunart SSSI & SAC
- Golden eagle habitat on Carnoch hill– Moidart and Ardgour SPA
- Public access – network of core paths through Phemie's Wood and around the Strontian river linking crofting townships with Strontian village, Strontian river and the Ariundle oakwood NNR (National Nature Reserve).
- Coille Dhubh ASNW (Ancient semi-natural woodland).
- Phemie's Wood – a Policy Wood on a former ancient woodland site.
- Conifer woodland on steep slopes.
- Gaining access into Eggadale on the east side of the Strontian river to reach Larch crops which are vulnerable to *Phytophthora ramorum*.
- Poorly performing conifer crops on deep peat.

- Public water supply catchment in Ariundle and Eggadale.
- Strontian river salmonid habitat which passes through the main block.
- Vulnerable public roads leading to Longrigg and Ariundle.
- Sale of Longrigg to the local community.
- Industrial woodland heritage and Fairies' knoll cultural heritage in the main block.

Vision:

To see a restored and expanded Scottish Rainforest oakwood and birchwood which links with the Ariundle Oakwood natural reserve, Coille Dhubh ASNW and riparian woodland habitat which is resilient in a changing climate. Improved link to the Scottish Rainforest in the wider Sunart landscape. Resilient public water supply and healthy salmonid habitat achieved through restored peatlands and riparian woodland habitats. Sustainable core timber production focused in South Carnoch and South Ariundle where soils are most productive. Maintained core network of paths which contributes to public health and wellbeing and enhances local tourism businesses. Sustainable population of deer for healthy plantation, native woodland and open habitats.

Drimnatorran Land Management Plan objectives:

- To complete the economic and plant health felling of commercial conifer crops in Ariundle plateau and Longrigg
- To remove non-native species from the Designated woodland in Ariundle in the area annexed from the main block by the NNR and Strontian river.
- To manage non-native regeneration within the main section of the Designated woodland.
- To fell the non-native species, including Larch, from the small isolated and difficult to access blocks on West Carnoch
- To remove the poorly performing Sitka spruce crops from the deep peat soils on Carnoch summit and from the Strontian river floodplain in Eggadale.
- To restore the afforested peatlands in Carnoch summit, Strontian river floodplain in Eggadale, in localised areas in Ariundle plateau and in the central and northern portion of Longrigg
- To replant the Carnoch felled areas with commercial conifer crops
- To expand native woodland habitat in Ariundle plateau through restock planting and natural regeneration.
- To protect the adjacent designated woodland with a protective buffer of native species and Scots pine.
- To establish Norway spruce and Scots pine crops in the Southern section of Ariundle plateau.
- To establish native woodland habitat in Northern Longrigg with riparian woodland protecting the watercourses and native woodland edge habitat protecting neighbouring houses in Southern Longrigg.
- To establish Sitka spruce on the fertile sloping ground of Longrigg.
- To secure the sale of Longrigg to the local Community.

- To maintain the existing formal recreational facilities.
- To plan and commence access to inaccessible Larch crops in Eggdale.

Summary of Land Management Plan Proposals

Species Group	Current	(2023)	Year 10	(2033)
	Area (ha)	%	Area (ha)	%
Sitka spruce	231.3	33.8	182.8	29.7
Norway spruce	0.5	0	11.2	1.8
Larches	66.1	9.7	31.5	5.1
Mixed conifers	142.9	20.8	90.8	14.7
Mixed broadleaves	18.5	2.7	16.8	2.7
Native broadleaves	102.2	14.9	165.4	26.9
Internal open space	87	12.7	47.4	7.7
Failed	5	0.7	1.6	0.3
Felled	32	4.7	68.5	11.1
Total	685.5	100	616	100
Open hill	385.5	100	455	100
Agriculture	0	0	0	0
Open water	0	0	0	0
Total	385.5	100	455	100

Planned Operations	2023 – 2033 Plan Period
Felling	247ha
CCF, Selective felling & thinning	25.85ha
Restocking	220.5ha (including associated open ground)
Natural regeneration	38.2ha (including associated open ground)

Planned Operations	2023 – 2033 Plan Period
New planting	25.5ha (including associated open ground)
Road construction: Forest roads Forwarder tracks	6810 metres 780 metres
Forest-to-bog peatland restoration	70.77ha

Significant Environment/ Conservation Features	
Designated sites	SPA Sunart SSSI/SAC SAC – 58ha SSSI – 58ha This is located on the lower slopes of Ariundle on the north west side of the Strontian river. This section of the designations continues into the adjacent National Nature Reserve and beyond into private ownership which in total occupies 164ha.
ASNW (Ancient semi-natural woodland)	21.75ha
Minimum Intervention	166ha (includes the ASNW)
Priority species 1	Chequered skipper
Priority species 2	Otter
Priority species 3	Pearl Bordered Fritillary butterfly
Priority species 4	Dragonfly assemblages

Critical Success Factors:

Outcome	
Effective deer management strategy	This is key to the successful conversion of conifer to native woodland habitats, especially within the designated Oak wood areas and the protective native woodland buffer, as well as to the successful establishment of conifer restocking. Transitional woodland habitat as well as the important upland habitats will be permanently at risk of deer damage. Sustained population control is necessary.
Resources to construct new roading and cooperation from neighbours to achieve harvesting in Longrigg	This is key to the restructuring of Longrigg and to the economic return from the sale of the conifer crop to finance the operations required in the LMP area – if the sale of this woodland does not proceed.
Sufficient stability in the mature conifer crops to allow the restructuring to occur over the timespan of the full plan	Managing the felling of crops as close to MMAI as possible to avoid over mature crops becoming vulnerable to windthrow. Swift and successful establishment of riparian areas are necessary to create the future windfirm edges.
Rapid restocking	The “hot planting “of conifer restocking areas, in combination with effective deer management and the use of pine nurse species, is crucial to the successful establishment of spruce and firs crops on sites that are susceptible to heather regeneration or soil erosion.
Resources to manage the natural regeneration to achieve the required species and stocking	This is key to meeting the main objectives of the LMP. The inconsistency of desirable seed sources and the abundance of undesirable seed sources means that intensive work is required during the first decade of natural regeneration sites to ensure the desired woodland habitat is established.
Road construction to reach the Larch stands	The construction of forest roads is required to reach Larch Phase 1 and 2 fell coupes. The construction of the first three phases of the Carnoch Access is road is required to reach the largest area of Larch in the LMP at the Southern end of Eggadale Glen rapidly in the event of a P.-‘ramorum outbreak.

Consultation and Further Information:

Council area: Highland Council.

Community Council: Sunart Community Council.

Consultation/consultees:

- A public consultation event was held on 29th September 2022 in Strontian.
- Online consultation from 22nd September until 28th October 2022
- Comments made by NatureScot, SEPA, Scottish Water, Historic Environment Scotland, East Loch Shiel Deer Management Group and various residents and community members.

For further information on the Plan, please contact:

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