


Land Management Plan Brief Lochaber Forest District LMP Unit: Glen Nevis Date: 14/2/17	
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Description

The Cut Wood is a recent FES acquisition which lies around 5km south of Fort William at the foot of the Mamore mountain range and at an elevation of 130-350m.

The woodland was felled by a private owner in 2 phases. First phase c2003 with a WGS restocking proposal of predominantly SS. The second felling of 107ha took place between 2006 and 2008 under a felling licence with a restocking condition for native broadleaf and Caledonian Scots pine. It was subsequently sold to FCS with both restocking conditions still outstanding.

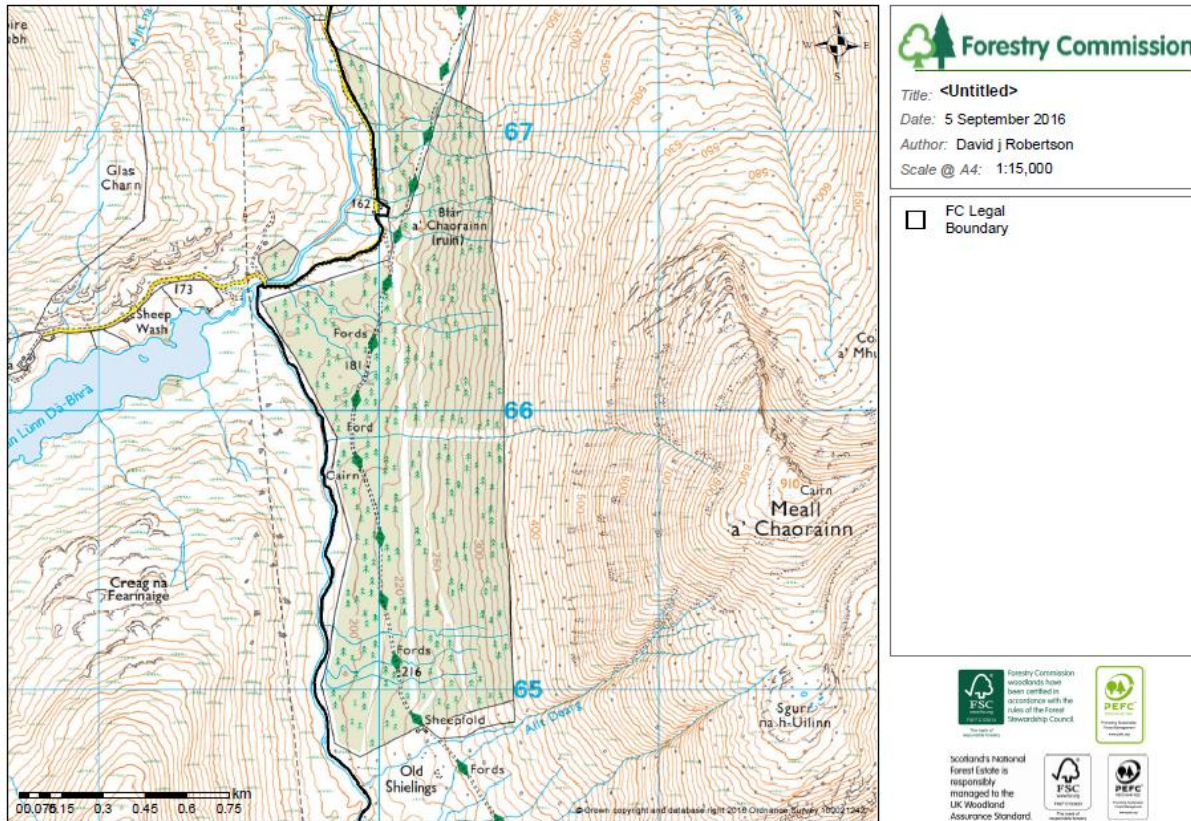
The woodland sits within the large Blar a Chaorainn new planting area to the south of the main Glen Nevis forest area. The acquisition gives an opportunity to review the new planting proposals of the original Blar a Chaorainn plan and create an integrated plan with the restocking of the felled site.

The forest is unfenced for much of its boundary and standing sections degraded. The West Highland Way, a popular long distance walking path is routed through the Cut Wood along the remains of the old military road. The interior offers views to the surrounding hills and glens set in an area of high scenic value and high recreational use. There are no PAWS designations to the forest there remains potential to establish montane woodland in the upper reaches of the area.

The open hill remains stocked with sheep and cattle where it is envisaged a gradual reduction in numbers will be balanced with a need to maintain and improve grazing through controlled stock management

The LMP will be part driven by a desire to design the restock in a sensitive manner and to reflect this by having the woodland sitting comfortably within the context of the wider landscape while retaining a strong core of commercial Conifer. This will be achieved through a diversification of species and redesign of forest edges especially around the West Highland Way.

Location map



Social Factors:

Recreation - The West Highland Way (WHW) passes through the length of the woodland and utilises the old military road as it heads through the Lairige Moire to Kinlochleven. This is a well-known and internationally renowned long distance walking route and there is considerable foot traffic through this site throughout the year. In close proximity to nearby Fort William the Blar a' Chaorainn area also offers recreational activity and access to local outdoor activities such as dog walking and cycling. The woodland experience for walkers and the views of the surrounding landscape are important considerations in the proposed new planting. The area has also been selected as one of the WWI centenary woods and restocking needs to be completed by 2018.

Access - There is an existing access already in place although will need some upgrading before it is suitable for timber haulage again. The public road is a single track road leading to Upper Achintore. The previous crop would have been extracted along this road. The felling license estimated this at 42k m3.

Environmental Factors:

The hill side above the felled woodland has potential for montane woodland development with some slightly more base rich areas. Fencing of the area is however difficult due to the terrain much above the current line. The Allt Dearg water course defines the western boundary of the Cut Wood and has remnant native woodland surviving in its upper reaches.

This and numerous other small burns empty into the Allt Lairige Moire sitting on the floor of the pass at the southern bound of the felled area. This watercourse in turn feeds north west and into Loch Lunn da Bhra the main body of water in the Lairige Moire or "big pass" where Blar a' Chaorainn is situated.

There are a small number of retained stands of larch and mixed conifer throughout site most notably mixed conifer around the stone fank NM10136485. These small and isolated stands are checked in places. It is proposed to intervene where check is evident and apply fertilizer or reduce vegetation competition to encourage these stands growth. Through this intervention during the restock process the crop here can make a small contribution to future harvesting volume. Their retention also offers the future forest structure limited but localised variation to crop age.

The records available indicate that there are small areas of deep peat within the cut wood. It is suggested these may be located where retained stands of Spruce are to be found. This would have to be considered in any future intervention proposals.

The cut wood is located between two areas of new native woodland planting proposals at Blar a' Chaorainn NN 10176771 and Lairig Mor NN NN10756413. The new planting proposals for these are currently active and can be viewed at –

<http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/managing/plans-and-strategies/land-management-plans/active/739-glen-nevis> .

The proposals are to establish a mixed forest containing elements of Scots pine, birch and oak linking the wider upland habitat matrix and montane woodland. The priority will be to link the wider land management plan for Blar a' Chaorainn and Lairig Mor to the cut wood.

Archaeology- There are no scheduled sites within the plantation however numerous features primarily the old sheep fang at NN1101648 and the old military road which marches the length of the site and carries the West Highland Way. There are two NMR records these being the Campbell stone and the military road.

Other archaeological remains exist within the restock area including ditches, cairns largely related to the clearances, previous pastoral and agricultural use of the land in this area.

Wildlife- Considerations will include an emphasis on creating habitat through a diverse tree species matrix and sympathetic planning during harvesting operations to protect wildlife populations. Black grouse are not present in the cut wood which is situated within a core area.

Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage- There are no official designations of special interest on or within the boundaries of the Cut Wood however fragments of habitat survive in the wider landscape. The clear felling of the cut wood has left behind a poor quality landscape and forest outline in an area of high public usage. By careful consideration and restocking using a diverse species mix there is potential to create an improved habitat network over the surrounding landscape and link to other woodlands in Glen Nevis.

Landscape -The cut wood sits within an area of high scenic value and the West Highland Way a highly used long distance public footpath travels through the site. The current landscape value of the woodland is poor and one objective of this LMP is to improve that poor quality and present forest outline.

Economic Factors:

Wood Production -There is a legal obligation to restock this woodland. The approved restocking is a mixture of Sitka spruce, native broadleaf and Scots pine. There is scope for this to be altered to suit the change in objectives with the new ownership and could include intimate SP /Birch mixes around riparian features.

The site is capable of growing a productive core of conifer and was originally planted with SS and LP.

Sitka Spruce is likely to remain the primary conifer species as it is suitable for the site and timber objectives to ensure the future supply of softwood timber to support local industry. The main secondary species would be Scots Pine and which would help to increase diversity while linking existing remnant native woodland especially toward Loch Lund a' Bhra and establishing new seed stocks on rocky knolls , adjacent to riparian features and other suitable sites throughout the cut wood.

There is a need to carefully consider the visual aspect from the WHW where scrub species and an intimate Scots pine birch mix would provide appropriate species allied to open space along the distance to this route and within the restock threshold.

Constraints - Forest road access is already in place although will need some upgrading before it is suitable for timber haulage again. The public road is a single track road leading to Upper Achintore. The previous crop would have been extracted along this road with the felling license estimating 42k m3 volume to be harvested in 2 phases.

Deer pressure - Is currently moderate but may increase with both the FCS managed hill and the neighbouring farm reducing the sheep numbers. Any planting restock success will require robust fencing to protect the crop from these grazing pressures.

Access to hill grazing- Will be maintained using cattle and sheep as a management tool for bio-diversity while gradually reducing sheep numbers. This is a cost effective alternative to machine or labour operations on difficult ground and provides quality cattle for export sale.

Objectives of Cut Wood LMP Area

- Improve the poor landscape quality and present forest outline.
- Enhancement of internal landscape values and the main West Highland Way long distance footpath corridor
- Retain a strong core of commercial Conifers that will fit into and improve the overall landscape.
- An emphasis to re-establish a native woodland matrix through the forest and wider landscape.
- Expansion of native species along riparian zones to a more naturalistic structure on a wider scale.
- Linking the wider upland habitat matrix and montane woodland.
- Maintain access to hill grazing
- Consult and work with local communities and stakeholders

Achieving National Priorities Locally

District Priorities and Actions

The following sections follow the themes introduced in the National Strategic Directions document to ensure clear linkages through the planning framework. Lochaber Forest District will apply an approach based on a strategic assessment of national and regional priorities with the overall aspiration of the estate being:

1. **Healthy**, achieving good environmental and silvicultural condition in a changing climate
2. **Productive**, providing sustainable economic benefits from the land
3. **Treasured**, as a multi-purpose resource that sustains livelihoods, improves quality of life, and offers involvement and enjoyment
4. **Accessible**, local woodlands and national treasures that are well promoted, welcoming and open for all
5. **Cared for**, working with nature and respecting landscapes, natural and cultural heritage
6. **Good value**, exemplary, effective and efficient delivery of public benefits.

Theme	Issues Identified for Blar a' Chaorainn Land Management Plan
<p>Healthy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will restock with a species matrix that is sympathetic to the wider landscape and current recreational usage. A longer term aim will be to increase biodiversity on the upper edges and to link the Cut Wood to other isolated habitats within the Lairige Moire and wider landscape. • We will continue to diversify species composition as a defence against increasing threats from pathogens of the forest. We will continue to monitor the woodlands for possible pathogens such as Chalara fraxinea ,Phytophthora ramorum and Hylobius spp • We will strive to manage deer populations in order to fulfil our land management aspirations with the Blar a' Chaorainn LMP area. As part of this continued management we will work with Deer Management Groups and adjacent landowners to maintain good relations and ensure that views and objectives are taken into account. We will also manage and gradual reduce sheep numbers on the open hill through careful and selective management of the current stock grazing the open hill. • The forest management of the Cut Wood will contribute toward achieving the objectives of The River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) by : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Addressing any local water body deteriorations within the plan area 2. By designing new proposals so that they will not result in deterioration in any water body status 3. By ensuring that forest activity is managed in such a way as to ensure they do not cause pollution. <p>To this effect all operations will comply with the Forest & Water Guidelines section of UKFS.</p>
<p>Productive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While there will be an increase within the Cut Wood of the area designated for native woodland it is envisaged that a strong core of commercial conifers will form part of the restock proposals. <p>There is potential but limited scope for productive broadleaf establishment within the amendment area through restocking with Scots Pine and Birch and intervening in future natural regeneration. The main consideration for this would centre on the edges of the WHW and riparian zones. The requirement to sensitively manage and improve the wider scenic and visual aspects for recreational users of the woodland could be achieved through selective thinning of broadleaf species in these areas.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local economy in Lochaber is heavily dependent on tourism and Lochaber Forest District will continue to secure and provide access to and through the woodland, allowing visitors to enjoy the outdoor environment. • The majority of visitors pass through the cut wood while undertaking the West Highland Way through the Lairige Moire. This walking route creates a corridor within the woodland and currently offers uninterrupted views to the surrounding mountains and wider landscape. We should carefully consider the potential visual impact restocking will have on a heavily used and nationally important long distance walking route. We need to recognise the principle of maintaining a sympathetic and balanced structure to our restock proposals at cut wood. • The precipitation in the area is high and this rainfall allied to terrain offers sites, which may in future offer potential to hydro – electric schemes. We will carefully consider any future proposals that should arise.
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Treasured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to open hill for grazing will be maintained • We will consider any future projects or proposals in the wider Blar a `Chaorainn LMP area and participate in community partnerships. • The original woodland was unsympathetic to the landscape. We will continue to enhance the appearance of the woodland with the amendment and wider LMP area ensuring that forests and future woodlands compliment the hills and glens within the wider landscape context. • We will continue to protect and mark the importance of archaeological remains which are located within the LMP area and continue to manage operations to protect these and any as yet undiscovered heritage features
Accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The forest is open to all within the framework of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and we will continue to promote best practice in relation to access. • Forest operations must be managed and planned in a manner that will protect access agreements within the Ardochy LMP area
Cared for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of our restock plans we will initiate the regeneration of remnant broadleaf species through protection and gradual increase of these species by supplementary under planting, restocking and intervention.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing the grazing impact of deer and sheep through exclusion within the cut wood amendment area will allow us to restore and improve the biodiversity of the amendment area. Further control of deer and reduction of sheep numbers outside the protected area will also offer improvements to the biodiversity of the wider open hill within the Blar a' Chaorainn LMP area.
Good Value	<p>To underpin the cost of managing the cut wood LMP area we will raise income in several ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sustainable crop of timber will be planted and cared for providing and contributing to the future supply of a range of local and national customers. Venison, beef and mutton produced from deer or commercial stock management activities will be sold to national game and livestock dealers for both the domestic and export market.

Stakeholders & Consultation –

There are a number of key groups and organizations that will be able to contribute to the project through support and advocacy

Statutory:

- Highland Council , Roads ,Planning and West Highland Way Rangers
- Scottish National Heritage
- SEPA
- Historic Scotland

Other Stakeholders & consultation:

- Callert Farm, North Ballachulish,Onich,Fort William, Inverness-shire, PH33 6SA
- Glen Nevis Estates Fort William, Inverness-shire, PH33 6XS
- Future Arbor Ltd41 Hawthorn Road,Shrewsbury,Shropshire.SY3 7NB

- Lundavra Farm ,Fort William ,PH33 6SZ
- SIMEC and Liberty House formerly Rio Tinto Alcan
- Nevis Landscape Partnership
- Lochaber Geopark
- Fort William Community Council (currently not functioning)
- CONFOR
- Deer Management Group

Forestry Commission Contact

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