



Glen Creran

Draft Land Management Plan Summary

Glen Creran forest lies about 21 km NE of Oban and is accessed from the public car park at Elleric, towards the end of the minor public road that runs along the glen. The Land Management Plan (LMP) area covers 2,482 ha of forest and open land that extends from sea level to 760 metres, with conditions varying from sheltered glens to exposed hillsides and sub alpine conditions at the highest elevations.

The forested area covers 1,185 ha, comprising currently, 697 ha conifers (72% of the current tree cover) and 269 ha broadleaves (28% of the current tree cover). The open ground extends to 1,365 ha, the majority of which is hill ground.

Glen Creran supports Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) - designated as a SSSI/SAC - lower down the glen with commercial conifer plantations further up the glen, above which is a huge expanse of open hill. The aim will be to maintain the designated sites in favourable condition, expand the native broadleaved woodland where appropriate and diversify the commercial forest to provide sustainable timber supplies, improve landscape impacts and to achieve a more diverse structure and range of species and habitats. The SSSI/SAC is split into two areas, separated by commercial conifer coupes. The coupe on the lower ground here has been felled and deer fenced and is regenerating naturally with native species but the coupes on the upper slopes await felling. The forested area will be managed as upper and lower forest zones: the lower zone as native broadleaved woodland; the upper zone as commercial conifers.

Lower zone

The existing conifer coupes between and above the two areas of SSSI woodland will be felled and restocked with native broadleaves. On lower slopes, these coupes will be managed as productive broadleaved woodland under a Low Impact Silvicultural System (LISS) / Continuous Cover Forestry. The coupe that was previously felled has regenerated with a variety of tree species; non-native and invasive species will be removed, trees respaced where necessary and a thinning programme implemented.

A new road and forwarder track will be required to access the felling coupes, which will pass through the upper part of the SSSI. This site is currently under commercial conifers but the route will be micro-sited to avoid any remaining mature broadleaves, and to protect key lichen and bryophyte assemblages.

The SSSI /SAC will be managed according to the agreed SSSI Management Plan, to maintain the woodland habitats and other designated features in favourable condition. This will include promoting natural regeneration of native tree species, clearing scrub and bracken to



create conditions suitable for Chequered skipper and Pearl bordered fritillary butterflies and controlling non- native and invasive species.

Upper zone

Structural diversity will be improved by revising the felling programme to help increase age diversity over the longer term, while sustaining timber supplies and designing felling coupes with a better fit to the landscape. Species diversity will be improved where possible, through use of broadleaves and a range of conifers on better soils on lower slopes and by growing Sitka with other species such as Lodgepole pine and birch on upper slopes. Buffers will be created along watercourses and open canopied broadleaved woodland developed along the larger riparian zones, notably, the River Creran and Allt Eilidh burn.

The coupes adjacent to the SSSI will be felled and restocked with native broadleaves grading to mixed conifers/broadleaves, to create a buffer between the designated site and Sitka spruce stands, helping to prevent regeneration into the broadleaved areas. Mixed conifers and broadleaves will be restocked throughout much of the lower spur to improve diversity and where windthrow risk is lower, stands will be thinned and managed under Continuous Cover Forestry.

Peatland will be restored in an area that was previously under a reservoir and has since regenerated with scattered conifers and broadleaves that have been in-check due to deer browsing. The expectation is that a mosaic will develop of broadleaved trees along the riparian corridor and on upper slopes and scattered scrub where peat is thinner, interspersed with areas of sustained peatland where the peat is deeper.

Commercial forestry will be pulled back from the steepest ground and poorest growing conditions but native broadleaves will be encouraged to develop in these areas and above the existing timber line, closer to the natural tree line. On upper slopes, natural regeneration will produce an open habitat with scattered trees; priority open habitats will be protected.

Deer browsing pressure has been high throughout the forest in recent years and deer control is the main critical success factor for delivery of the Land Management Plan (LMP). Successful deer management is dependent on the strategic deer fence that runs from Glencoe to Glen Creran and maintenance of this fence will be a priority, as will focused deer control to protect areas of young trees and priority habitats.

Once approved, Glen Creran LMP will run for 10 years.

The primary objectives for the plan area are:

- Maximise returns from the current productive stands through coupe and access design and timing of harvesting
- Optimise production potential by focusing future conifer production on the most suitable areas, concentrating on the upper glen and reviewing options on steep and marginal ground



- Manage deer populations, to allow the successful establishment of planted and naturally regenerating trees and to maintain priority open ground habitats in favourable condition
- Manage recreation access by maintaining a network of trails and the Right of Way to Glenachulish and by creating new provision to the Fairy Bridge
- Increase the resilience of the forest to climate change and pests and disease, through design and species choice
- Manage and expand the native woodland habitat, focussing on the lower zone and above the current timber line
- Manage riparian areas to protect watercourses and develop open canopied broadleaved woodland along larger watercourses
- Protect and enhance the designated sites and features
- Restore areas of deep peat

Total Plan Area = 2,482 ha

Summary of Land Management Plan Proposals

Species composition	Current – 2021		Year 10 – 2031	
	Area (ha)	%	Area (ha)	%
Sitka Spruce	474	19.10	390	15.71
Norway Spruce	34	1.37	29	1.17
Larches	45	1.81	21	0.85
Mixed Conifers	188	7.57	148	5.96
Mixed Broadleaves	80	3.22	78	3.14
Native Broadleaves	209	8.42	277	11.16
Felled awaiting restock	68	2.74	87	3.51
Internal Open Space	173	6.97	241	9.71
Total	1271	51.21	1271	51.21
Open Hill	1210	48.75	1210	48.75
Agriculture				
Open Water	1.2	0.05	1.2	0.05
Total	2482	100.01	2482	100.01



Planned Operations	2021– 2031 plan period
Felling	332.03 ha
Thinning	181.11 ha
Restocking	399.59 ha
New planting	0
Road construction	5.35 km

Significant Environment / Conservation Features	
Designated sites	368 ha SSSI/SAC on FLS ground (part of a larger SSSI/SAC, total area 703.88 ha)
Minimum Intervention	292.25 ha
Natural Reserve	0
Long Term Retention	16.7 ha
Caledonian Pine Wood	0
Priority species 1	Otter
Priority species 2	Red squirrel
Priority species 3	Golden eagle
Priority species 4	Pearl bordered fritillary butterfly
Priority species 5	Chequered skipper butterfly

Critical Success Factors:

- Deer control will be the main critical success factor for restocking by planting or natural regeneration of both commercial and native woodland. The approach taken will be deer culling (working with the Deer Management Group) combined with the strategic deer fence and possibly, limited use of enclosure fences where appropriate (a detailed Business Case will be required before any additional fencing is considered). Close collaboration with neighbours and other partners will be crucial to successful deer management
- Where deer are adequately controlled, natural regeneration will need to be managed timeously, to achieve the desired species in all crops and to remove non-native species from the native woodland areas
- The continued control of INNS, particularly Rhododendron, is required to protect the native woodland and commercial crops. Control of other potentially invasive species such as beech,



Western hemlock and Sitka spruce in the vicinity of the SSSI/SAC woodland areas will also be required to protect qualifying and notified features

- Access is also key – the timing of road construction to access felling coupes needs to synchronise with production requirements and this will determine the harvesting and restocking programmes. Continued access for adequate deer control is also important
- Continuing to cater for the growing number of visitors to Glen Creran who are looking for short walks, as well as those accessing the hills and Public Right of Way and locals who use local trails and rides. Provision of an alternative trail to replace the existing route to the Pine Marten trail will need to be supported by adequate car parking and signage

Consultation and Further Information:

Council area: Argyll and Bute Council

Community Council: Appin Community Council

Consultation - events / consultees: A public consultation event for the LMP Brief was held on 10th January 2020 in Appin; further online consultation was held - comments received from Nature Scot, SEPA, RSPB, A & B Council Roads, Argyll Fisheries Trust, Confor and various residents and community members.

For further information on the Plan, please contact:

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