

<p><b>Forestry Commission</b>  <b>Lochaber Forest District</b>  <b>Brecklet</b>  <b>Land Management Plan</b>  <b>Date: July 2015</b></p>	
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It's important to keep people informed about management proposals affecting their local forests.

Forestry Commission forests are independently certified as being responsibly managed. We're regularly audited against the United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard – the standard endorsed in the UK by the international Forest Stewardship Council® and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification.

Keeping in touch with our stakeholders is an important part of the standard. We welcome comments on these proposals.



The mark of responsible forestry



## **Description**

Brecklet Land Management Plan (LMP) sits on the slopes of Meal Mhor and is visible from the villages of Ballachulish and Carnoch, it is also prominent from the A82t road, Glencoe Orbital Route, Loch Leven and from many of the surrounding hills. The general character of the forest is one of commercial conifers, mainly Sitka spruce and Lodgepole pine on a gently sloping rounded hill.

The land was acquired by the Forestry Commission in the early 1960's and was planted with commercial conifers from 1963 through to 1967. Commercial felling of the original forest commenced in 2004/5 and has lasted through to the present day.

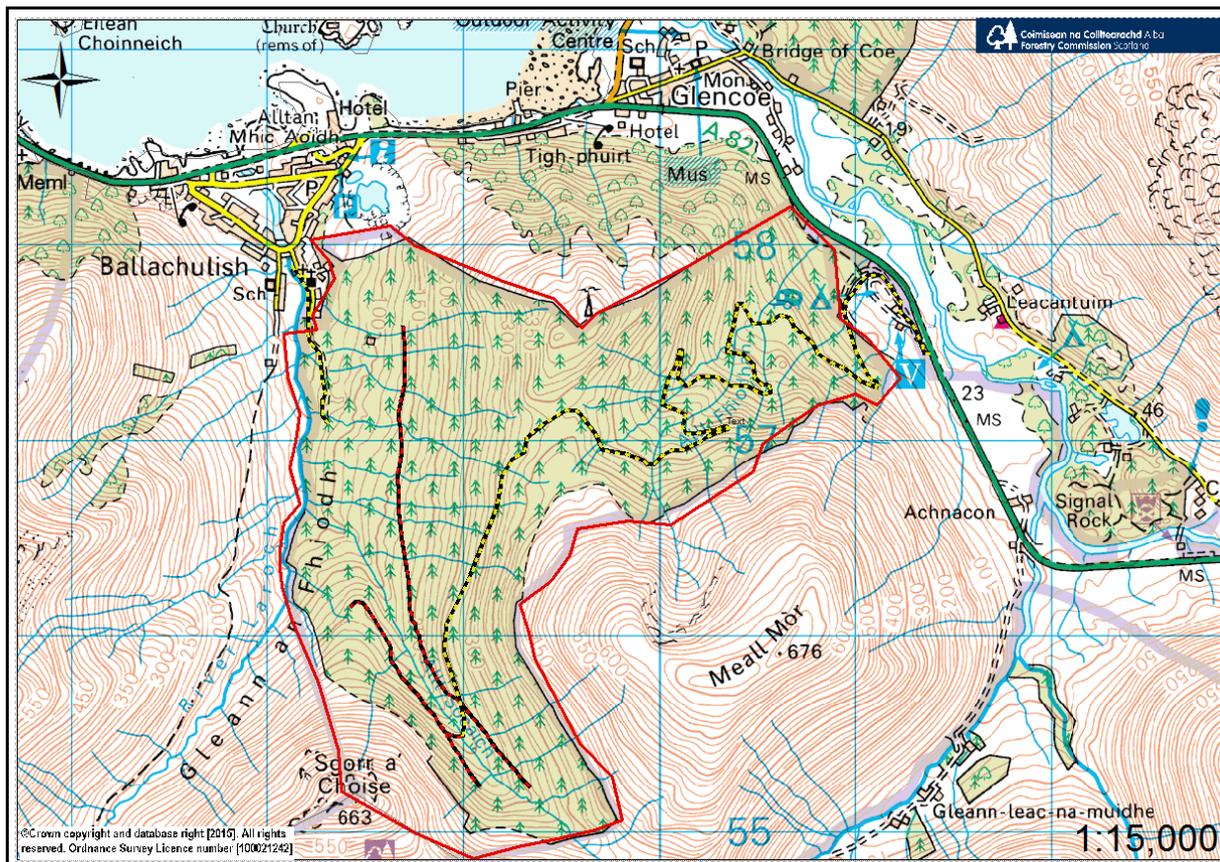
The current Forest Design Plan was largely driven by a desire to redesign the original boundaries of the forest in a sensitive manner through the clearfell of coupes with careful restocking of a range of tree species to allow the forest to sit more comfortably within the surrounding area.

While many of the policies of the original plan are still valid today, there is now a greater emphasis on conservation, biodiversity and heritage, which will result in a reduction of commercial conifers and an increase in native woodland and open space.

Recreation has played an important role within the Brecklet LMP area. The National Trust for Scotland has a visitor centre and campsite adjacent to the forest, which is linked to the Glencoe to Oban cycle/walking route by the

Glencoe Orbital Route. There is also a circular walk above the village of Ballachulish, and a popular Archery Course located in the forest. There are many archaeological features in the forest which include houses, livestock pens and quarries which are remnants from the previous agricultural and industrial land use of this area. The only heavy vehicle access to the forest is from the A82 (Grid Ref: NN11385744), which is also the vehicle access for the National Trust Centre and campsite.

### **Location Map: Brecklet Land Management Plan**



# 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 Brecklet Land Management Plan
<b>Healthy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over recent years much effort has been put into the regeneration of native woodlands. Within the Brecklet LMP area there is approximately 85Ha Identified as Ancient Woodland Sites (AWS). The district will gradually restore these sites to native woodland.</li> <li>• Within the Brecklet LMP area the FC will monitor the woodlands for possible pathogens such as <i>Phytophthora ramorum</i>, <i>Hylobius</i> spp. and <i>Chalara fraxinea</i>. We will diversify species composition as a defence against increasing threats from pathogens of the forest.</li> <li>• We will continue the programme of <i>Rhododendron</i> eradication with the aim of completely removing the species from the Brecklet LMP area. We will continue to control other invasive species, including Japanese knot weed and Himalayan balsam.</li> <li>• We will strive to manage deer in order to fulfil our land management aspirations. We will work with Deer Management Groups and adjacent landowners to maintain good relations and ensure that views and objectives are taken into account.</li> <li>• The forest management of Brecklet will contribute towards achieving the objectives of The River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) by:-               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Addressing any local water body deteriorations within the plan area.</li> <li>2. By designing new proposals so that they will not result in deterioration in any water body status</li> <li>3. By ensuring that forest activities are managed in such a way as to ensure they do not cause pollution.</li> </ol>               To this effect all operations will comply with the Forests &amp; Water             </li> </ul>

	Guidelines section of UKFS.
<b>Productive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While there will be a substantial but gradual increase in the area within the Brecklet LMP designated for native woodland, it is anticipated that a strong productive core of commercial conifers will be retained.</li> <li>• The local economy in Lochaber is heavily dependent on tourism and Lochaber Forest District will continue to provide and maintain existing facilities for visitors to enjoy the outdoor environment.</li> <li>• Thanks to the high rainfall and terrain, the area has a number of sites that may be suitable for hydro electric generation and we will work with renewable energy and power companies, adjacent landowners and local communities to develop renewable energy projects where viable.</li> </ul>
<b>Treasured</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue our work with community initiatives to develop their projects in the Brecklet LMP area and participate in community partnerships.</li> <li>• The landscapes around Loch Leven are of national importance and we will continue to enhance the appearance of the Brecklet woodland within the LMP area ensuring that the forests and woodlands compliment the hills and glens.</li> <li>• We mark the importance of archaeological remains in the Brecklet LMP area, and will continue to manage work sites to protect any known and as yet undiscovered heritage features.</li> </ul>
<b>Accessible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Forest operations must be managed and planned in a manner that will protect the PROW's Core Paths or other official access agreements within the Brecklet LMP area.</li> </ul>
<b>Cared for</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of our restoration of ancient semi-natural woodlands (ASNW) programme, we have initiated the regeneration of native woodland species in Brecklet.</li> <li>• Where the conditions dictate (soil, elevation &amp; aspect) that it is suitable we will plant native tree species on sites with the intention of producing timber, as well as increasing the area of native woodland. To complement the expansion of such woodlands we will develop &amp; conserve open areas of upland grassland.</li> <li>• Managing the grazing impact of deer will allow us to restore some open habitats and improve the biodiversity of our open hill and mountain land.</li> <li>• A number of designated sites border and in some cases include parts of the Brecklet LMP area. These include two SSSI's an SPA and an SAC. Lochaber FD will work with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to maintain and where possible enhance the integrity of these designated sites.</li> </ul>

<b>Good Value</b>	<p>To underpin the cost of managing the Brecklet LMP area we will raise income in several ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sustainable yield of timber will be sold to a range of local and national customers on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Where possible we will work with developers and community interests to generate renewable energy from small scale hydro-electric schemes.</li> <li>• Venison produced from deer management activities is sold to national game dealers for both the domestic and export market.</li> <li>• We will continue to work through the STTF to accommodate projects that reduce the impact of timber traffic on public roads and on local communities. We will continue to work with surrounding landowners to reduce the impact of timber traffic on the general public.</li> </ul>
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### **Objectives of Management Brecklet LMP Area**

- There will be an emphasis to re-establish native woodland on areas identified as Ancient Woodland Sites (AWS) and also further expansion of native species along riparian zones to a more naturalistic structure on a wider scale.
- Retain a strong core of commercial conifers that will better fit into the overall landscape.
- The enhancement of the external landscape values.
- A gradual increase in the area of open ground within the LMP area to allow the area to link and reflect the values of the SSSI/SAC/SPA & NSA within the surrounding landscape.
- The continuing consolidation and rationalisation of the recreational potential of the area, capitalising on the multi purpose aspects of productivity and environmental benefit
- Consult and work with local communities and stakeholders.

## **Stakeholders & Consultation**

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

Highland Council

National Trust

Scottish Natural Heritage

Ballachulish Community Council

Glencoe Community Council

SEPA

Historic Scotland

Forestry Commission

Scottish & Southern Electricity

Marine Harvest

Neighbours and Stakeholders

Local Deer Management Group

Lochaber Fishery Board

BSW Sawmills

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