West Loch Awe
LMP
Brief
Introduction

The Land Management Plan (LMP) for West Loch Awe (WLA) covers an area of 10,568ha, which is an amalgamation of four current Forest Design Plan areas:

1. Kilchrenan (981ha)
2. Inverinan (2351ha)
3. Loch Avich (2054ha)
4. Inverliever (5181ha)

The LMP for WLA is located to the west of Loch Awe in Argyll and Bute, between the towns of Lochgilphead and Oban. It is surrounded by the settlements of Kilchrenan, Inverinan, Dalavich, Kilmaha, Torran, Ford, Loch Avich and Kilmelford. The nearest routes are A816 which links Lochgilphead with Oban and the minor road from Ford to Kilchrenan (C30), with another minor road running from Kilmelford to Dalavich (C29).

This woodland is composed of different habitats such as blanket bog peats, heathland habitat and native and non-native broadleaves with high range of biodiversity, supporting a wide variety of animals and plants and providing vital environmental services; carbon sequestration and the reduction of soil erosion. Timber production will remain as the primary role in the area of the forest, whilst diversifying species.

Kilchrenan is a combination of two forest blocks, Achachena and Collaig. Achachena is a small block covering 74ha, with the southern part planted in 1960 with Sitka Spruce/Lodgepole Pine and Oak. The northern section of Achachena was planted between 1961-1966 with Sitka Spruce/Hybrid Larch, but clearfelled in 1993 and left as broadleaf regeneration. Collaig was acquired in 1931 covering 908ha, comprising of 150ha lochs and the remaining area planted with conifers 1954/55 and 1978/80. The area launched as a Caledonian Forest Reserve (CFR) in 1955 and there are substantial ancient woodland oakwood remnants. In 1971 a hydro-electric scheme was constructed on Loch Nant and managed by Scottish Hydro Electric.

Inverinan was acquired in two lots, Inverinan Estate in 1931 and part of the Drissaig Estate in 1932. Planting of the block began in 1933 and continued up to 1950’s, with High Innan planted in 1977. A large majority of the early plantings were felled in the 1980’s, continuing through the 1990’s. Remnants of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW) exist along the shores of Loch Awe and Inverinan Glen, managed as coppice in 18th and 19th Centuries for leather tanning and iron smelting. The area of native woodland, Lower Fernoch Wood, is
also designated as CFR. The Carraig Gheal windfarm was established in 2012 on private ground to the north of Inverinan as well as a community river hydro scheme established on the River Avich in 2018 operated by Awesome Energy.

Loch Avich was acquired in two lots, the main block in 1960 and the western Eleraig section in 1977, to enable access from the A816 Oban road. A section of land south-east of Eleraig was acquired in 1986 to improve road access into that area of the block. Planting commenced in 1961 and was completed by 1971 with predominately Sitka Spruce, larch as fire breaks, and Norway Spruce. Western most areas were planted in 1980’s. There is also a private hydro scheme at Maolachy.

Inverliever was acquired from the Portalloch estate by HM’s Office of Woods in 1907 with conifer planting on a large scale from 1909. In 1924 Inverliever became part of the Forestry Commission (FC). The lower productive areas were planted in the late 1960’s with other areas, including Liever Glen, in the 1970’s. Mackenzie’s Grove is one of the only few fragments of the original planting remaining following the bad storm in 1968. Along the shores of Loch Awe and Loch Avich are several remnants of ASNW, including the Dalavich Oakwoods (part of which is a SSSI), which is designated as a CFR.

### Progress (on previous plan)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operation</th>
<th>Plan figures</th>
<th>Actual figures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felling (ha)</td>
<td>1499.18</td>
<td>2411.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restock (ha)</td>
<td>963.63</td>
<td>1259.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road construction (km)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17.59</td>
</tr>
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### Kilchrennan

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lochans noted for dragonfly and pondweed will have shading managed through woody growths removed.</td>
<td>Ongoing improvement works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadleaves to be planted next to Loch an Leoid to act as a buffer and improve water</td>
<td>No BL planting next to Loch an Leoid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Loch Awe LMP Brief</td>
<td>West Region, FLS</td>
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**West Loch Awe LMP Brief**

**Quality.**

- Remove sitka spruce regeneration on blanket bog.
- Bog restoration works ongoing.
- Fertilising 57ha of clearfell areas which have a yield class less or equal to 8.
- No fertilising.

### Inverinan

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<th>Previous plan objective</th>
<th>Assessment of progress</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protect and enhance cultural heritage assets.</td>
<td>Management plans in place for SAMs. Kilmun enclosure passed onto community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect and enhance water features, fisheries and private water supplies.</td>
<td>Operations undertaken following Forest and Water Guidelines. Private catchments near Dalavich, Inverinan Mor and north of Inverinan protected during operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopt LISS/ATC practices wherever possible for the benefit of amenity and conservation.</td>
<td>Thinning undertaken across 7 coupes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restore PAWS sites.</td>
<td>Planting on PAWS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect and enhance key wildlife values, notably provisions for Red squirrels.</td>
<td>Red squirrels present. Black grouse present.</td>
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West Region, FLS

| Protect and enhance cultural heritage assets. | Management plans in place for SAMs. |
| Protect and enhance water features, fisheries and private water supplies. | Operations undertaken following Forest and Water Guidelines. Private catchments near Dalavich, Inverinan Mor and north of Inverinan protected during operations. |
| Restore PAWS sites. | Planting on PAWS. |
| Protect and enhance key wildlife values, notably provisions for Red squirrels. | Red squirrels present. Black grouse present. |

## Issues

- The establishment of the West Loch Awe Timber Haulage Route (WLATHR) between 2011 and present day have resulted in a delay in felling operations and subsequently restocking programmes.
- Minor roads- Ford to Kilchrenan (C30) minor fragile road with steep slopes, restricted timber lorry movements and popular tourist route. Kilmelford to Dalavich (C29) minor road narrow with very restricted access from Kilmelford due to the steepness/bend of the road.
- Eleraig area of Loch Avich- no road access from the main block or off A816.
- Renewables- Hydro schemes on Loch Nant, River Avich and River Liever Maolachy private hydro scheme in Loch Avich Carraig Gheal windfarm situated between Collaig and Inverinan
- Wildlife and environment- Protected bird nest restricting WLATHR use in Inverinan Protected bird nest resulting in ridges left as open space Osprey nests Fresh Water Pearl mussels in the River Liever Red squirrels present in all 4 blocks White-faced darter dragonfly in Inverliever
- Invasive exotic species - There are 3 identified areas of rhododendron.
- Any commercial forest in ASNW or PAWS will be restocked with native species for environmental benefits; need to protect Dalavich Oakwoods/CFR.
- Coupe size/structure and road infrastructure need further assessment and consideration in order to improve the economics and fit coupe shapes more adequately to the landscape scale.
• Phytophthora ramorum - In order to avoid more infections, Larch in WLA will be prioritised for removal as soon as possible, including felling any Larch in the adjoining coupes wherever is possible. Any new infection will be dealt as soon as possible and following the district guidance.

• DAMS scores for WLA range from over 20 for the upper ridges to the majority being less than 17. The areas which fit the following conditions could be considered for thinning: high forest, crops between 18 and 25 years old, Yield Class ≥ 12, DAMS score ≤ 17, forest road within 200 metres and slope < 33%.

• Slope- main slope issues on southern side of Loch Avich in Inverliever and west side of Loch Awe in Inverliever next to the minor road near Kilmaha.

• Low impact systems will be promoted where it is sensible.

• A policy considering replacing SS > YC20 with other species (Norway spruce, Douglas fir...) due to loss of structural quality of fast-grown SS. This policy will be considered in large areas where is economically viable.

• Recreation- high volume of visitors using the forest area around Dalavich and the Oakwoods as well as around the village of Inverinan. Fishing rights exist in Loch Avich. High volume of traffic using the minor roads around Loch Awe, which forms part of the SUSTRANS cycle route 78.

Plan objectives


• **Productive** - providing sustainable economic benefits from the land.

• **Healthy** - achieving good environmental and silvicultural condition in a changing climate.

• **Treasured** - as a multi-purpose resource that sustains livelihoods, improves quality of life, and offers involvement and enjoyment.

• **Accessible** – local woodlands and national treasures that are well promoted, welcoming and open for all.

• **Cared for** – working with nature and respecting landscapes, natural and cultural heritage.

• **Good value** – exemplary, effective and efficient delivery of public benefits.
The contribution that WLA can make to deliver these national priorities will be in the following ways:

**PRODUCTIVE**

- Timber production – commercial conifer areas and planting of alternative species to add diversity. Review the production forecast commitment through revised felling and thinning plan (may be modified to accommodate *P. ramorum* felling). Contributing to the FES Corporate Plan of producing 3M m³ of softwood timber/yr.
- Manage productive zones with correct species choice for site type restocking in line with district goals for diversity.
- Make coupes more deliverable and cost effective. Look to minimise road length needed via coupe design, size and shape.
- Implement road maintenance and construction programme required to service harvesting operations, contributing the 75 km target in the Strategic Plan.

**HEALTHY**

- Increase resilience to climate change through species diversification, removing diseased specimens and planting alternative species.
- Remove and deal with invasive species such as rhododendron and western hemlock, and improve the threaten habitats and biodiversity.
- Continue with *P. ramorum* management as per district guidance.
- Implement national deep peat restocking / restoration policy where appropriate.
- Manage watercourses and private water supplies following the UKWAS standards, Water Framework Directive and Forest and Water guidelines within UKFS to maintain and improve water quality.

**TREASURED**

- Landscape improvements through, species diversification, redesign hard edges, shapes and sizes of timber harvesting and creating a more natural tree line.
- Continue to work with local communities (stakeholder consultation, drop-in meetings) within LMP process to ensure access and facilities are fit for the purpose.
- Improve and maintain the CFR, Dalavich Oakwoods and SSSI. Maintain the carparks along the Ford-Dalavich road and forest walks from Dalavich. Enhance use of LISS and integrated management of open space within woodland.
- Maintain the original trees in Mackenzie’s Grove.
ACCESSIBLE

- Develop forest road network, especially for access into the Corrielorne area of Loch Avich.
- Maintain the carparks along the Ford-Dalavich road and forest walks from Dalavich.

CARED FOR

- Landscape improvement that responds to landform and respects natural features.
- ASNW and PAWS restoration, increasing the area of native broadleaves throughout design plan area for added biodiversity benefits, contributing to FES Corporate Plan of restoring 85% of areas on ancient woodlands and around 20% broadleaf woodland cover.
- Enhancement and protection of habitats and linkages, beneficial for golden eagles, ospreys, red squirrels, pine martins, grouses, red throated divers and dragonflies. Incorporate recommendations of the Red Squirrel Stronghold Management Plans into the LMP.
- Development of native woodland habitat networks, contribution to the 20% target for broadleaved woodland cover.
- Removing of invasive species.
- Protection and enhancement of cultural heritage assets as per FES guidelines and SAM management plans.
- Protection and improvement of water features and water supplies.

GOOD VALUE

- Continue with renewable energy opportunities, hydro and wind.
- Facilitate energy infrastructure required by national policy.
- Use of WLATHR to help control emissions.

All themes:
To comply with UKWAS & UKFS guidance for certification for verifying sustainable woodland management in the United Kingdom.
To comply with all the other relevant guidance, legislation and polices, FD Strategic Plan and overarching FCS plans.
Summary of proposals

The Forest District’s Strategic Plan for West Argyll Forest District included a vision statement, to which each individual Land Management Plan (LMP) will make a contribution. The District Vision Statement states that “West Argyll FD will be a key land manager in Argyll, producing quality timber for the market, providing sustainable employment in both the public and private rural sectors, and opportunities for renewable energy projects. We will also provide well-managed native woodlands for wildlife and places for enjoyment for visitors and local communities”.

The new Land Management Plan of WLA contributes to the District Vision by seeking the following outcomes:

Economic context

- Approval for around xxxx of felling and xxxx of restocking is being sought, for completion within 10 years of the plan
- Timber production from felling and thinning operation are currently estimated at around xxxx
- Construction of xxxx of new forest roads will be required to access coupes and for extraction of timber, which requires Prior Notification and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) determination, plus associated felling approval of xxxx. Length of new roading required must achieve a satisfactory balance between cost and coupe size, with design minimising the need for spur roads.
- Plant xxxx of trees in open ground.
- Landscape enhancement requires implementation of felling and restocking designs.

Environmental context

- Improvement of the habitat for Golden eagles, Ospreys, divers and dragonflies; maintaining the moorland and open ground condition and restoration of peat bogs.
- Development of habitat network framework for native woodland, open space and riparian corridors. Some of the broadleaved riparian areas are being invaded by conifer regeneration and need to be removed.
- Appropriate buffers along the watercourses and waterbodies; removing conifers, improving the upland heathland and improving the habitat for pondweed.
- Bog restoration will be carried out in some areas as per design.
- PAWS restoration; sites to subject to a 20 metres buffer to reduce the threat of conifer regeneration.
- Elimination of rhododendron and western hemlock as per district strategy.
- Species diversification or change due to Climate Change Agenda, national targets for broadleaves, UKWAS and plant health issues.

Social context

- Protect the public and private water supply catchments; appropriate riparian buffers.
- Maintain and enhance the CFR, Dalavich Oakwoods and SSSI; ensure forest walks open and enhance view opportunities over Loch Avich and Loch Awe.
- Maintain the car parks along the Ford-Dalavich road and enhance the views from car parks overlooking Loch Awe.
- Protect fishing rights for local angling clubs; Oban and Lorne Angling Club and Loch Awe Improvement Association (LAIA).
- Landscape enhancement with particular views from Loch Awe side roads and A816 near Kilmelford.

Stakeholders and consultation

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

- FD’s statutory stakeholders: Scottish National Heritage (SNH) and Argyll & Bute Council (A&BC).
- FD’s Non-statutory stakeholders: Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Scottish Water (SW), Historic Environment Scotland (HES), Scottish Government Agriculture and Rural (SGRPID), Confederation of Forest Industries (Confor), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT), West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS), Loch Awe Improvement Association (LAIA), Oban and Lorne Angling Club, British Dragonfly Society (BDS), Argyll Fisheries Trust. Argyll Timber Transport Forum (ATTM): will be consulted in relation to the access forest and the impact of timber transport on the public road network, local communities and the environment.
- Community councils: Avich and Kilchrenan Community Council, Dunadd Community Council
- Neighbours: where identifiable, Forestry Commission will send a letter to residents around the plan boundary.

Public consultation drop-in events: Ford - 26-3-19
Dalavich 28-3-19

Information will be published online on the FLS website at the various stages of the plan development, with the approved plan eventually being made available here; https://forestryandland.gov.scot/what-we-do/planning/consultations/west-loch-awe