



Strathdon Land Management Plan: Vision and Objectives

Vision

Over the next 20 years, this forest will continue to be managed as a commercial forest. The management of the forest will look to improve the habitat connectivity and the integrity of the red squirrel stronghold by selecting appropriate species and developing permanent riparian habitat corridors of native mixed broadleaves. The Larch on the north facing slopes of the Bunzeach offers seasonal variety within the local landscape and will be replaced with diverse conifers and broadleaves to maintain this diversity, if disease necessitates its removal. Efforts will be made to improve water quality in the catchment by undertaking concentrated areas of broadleaved planting and completing peatland restoration works to facilitate with flood management. Commercial crops will remain Spruce dominated with Lodgepole pine being used to nurse the Sitka spruce. Scots pine will also remain a key commercial species, but with an increased focus on establishing areas of Scots pine as buffers to open areas. Species will be chosen to match site conditions and will be thinned where appropriate to improve timber quality. Silvicultural systems other than felling and replanting will be used where they are appropriate to meet the plan's objectives.

Long-term Vision:

To establish areas of Caledonian pine wood type forest in upland margins and develop a successful network of riparian corridors to improve habitat connectivity within the Land Management Plan area. To support a successful, diverse commercial forest, through active thinning in appropriate areas to maximise crop quality and economic returns.

Objectives:

Due to the variation in site characteristics and differences in management objectives it has been decided that the Bunzeach and Auchernoch blocks should be individually zoned. The Bunzeach and Auchernoch blocks have respectively been separated into four and three zones. The objectives for each zone and relevant block can be seen in tables 1 and 2. Please refer to the zoned objectives maps which depict these zones.

Table 1 – Bunzeach Management Objectives

| Zones | Primary Objectives |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 | Retain and enhance the landscape character of the River Don side slopes. |
| 1&2 | Manage to produce a steady supply of small round wood and logs, whilst also supporting habitat connectivity. Establish a successful diverse, commercial next rotation. |
| 1-4 | Maintain/increase forest resilience against wind blow, pest and diseases. Ensure Larch remains accessible to ease our ability to respond to a Statutory Plant Health Notice in the future. Protect and enhance red squirrel habitat. Improve water quality and flood management. |
| 3 | Restore deep peat for carbon sequestration and flood management benefits. |
| 4 | Improve the integrity of the Morven & Mullachduch SSSI and adjacent SAC. |
| Secondary Objectives | |
| 1-4 | Retain existing public access |
| 4 | Protect and keep open the Newe’s Craig Still Scheduled Monument |

Table 2 – Auchernoch Management Objectives

| Zones | Primary Objectives |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 | Continue to manage this area commercially for the purposes of producing a sustainable supply of small round wood and logs, whilst also supporting habitat connectivity. |
| 1-3 | Create riparian corridors to improve water quality, increase habitat diversity and connectivity. |
| 3 | The long term aspiration is to convert this area into a native ‘Caledonian Pinewood’ type forest with the inclusion of appropriate riparian habitat. |
| 3 | Ensure the Larch remains accessible to ease our ability to respond to a Statutory Plant Health Notice in the future. |
| 2 | Maintain the character of the estate’s historical environment. |
| Secondary Objectives | |
| 2&3 | Retain existing public access |