



Merkins, Aucheneden & Auchentorlie are productive conifer zones supplying a range of sustainable timber products to wood using industries. Income generated from this timber is used to fund other activities & services across the forest. However, age structure of forest stands is still limited & remaining 1st rotation crops are often unstable, do not reflect landform or have limited species diversity.

Opportunity to continue restructuring forest stands to secure a resilient future timber supply & meet other UKFS requirements. Potential delivery mechanisms include the phasing of felling areas, use of long-term retentions & improving forest design at restocking

Operational access into the forest comprises a mix of temporary agreements & permanent acquired rights. There are several opportunities to improve connectivity across the plan. This would secure long term operational access, assist deer control & provide informal recreation opportunities. It would also benefit 3rd parties such as utility providers. Factors such as 'micro-siting' & landscape mitigation would need consideration.

Lochs & reservoirs within & bordering the plan provide key services: water supply, informal recreation & wetland conservation.

Opportunity to continue the redesign & enhancement of riparian zones bordering these water bodies. Priority features would be water supply infrastructure, fisheries, promoted visitor trails & wetlands.

Large parts of the plan fall within locally designated landscape & conservation sites. The previous plan considered their key features to ensure their protection &, where practical, enhancement through future forest design.

Opportunity to review progress of forest restructuring with regard to these designations & make adjustments where necessary.

Duncolm Hills:

This more remote central upland zone incorporates longer distance walking routes & popular viewpoint locations along the Duncolm Hills. Recent new planting has created a network of low density native woodland & successional open habitats. Deer fencing is still present &, in some places, having a negative effect by containing deer.

The management priority is to ensure establishment of young woodland by removing deer fencing to reduce containment effects & allow more active deer control.

Windblow is rapidly spreading through remaining mature conifer stands at Auchentorlie and Aucheneden. We are still reviewing damage from Storm Eowyn.

Opportunity to phase felling over the next 10 years based on the spread of windblow. This will ensure harvesting and restocking operations are still economically viable.

Dumbarton Muir & Saughen Braes:

Perhaps the most remote upland zone in the plan consisting of open habitats & scattered peat fringe woodland. It has low visitor usage except along the John Muir Way (JMW).

The FLS peat restoration programme is expanding & connecting priority open habitats.

Native woodland creation is largely complete but some riparian zones were not planted.

Deer fencing is still present &, in some places, having a negative effect by containing deer.

Opportunity to progress the removal of deer fencing to assist deer control. Opportunity to complete & maintain restored peat habitats as mire vegetation regenerates. Opportunity to review native woodland riparian habitats & investigate longer term expansion.

The forest sits within the 'Priority Action Zone' of SF's 'Phytophthora ramorum larch Action Plan'. This zone is where actions will have greatest impact on controlling the spread of P. ramorum.

Opportunity to review current quantity & distribution of larch species & schedule operational access, removal & replacement with suitable alternative tree species.

Anti-social behaviour such as unauthorised trail bikes, vandalism & setting of fires is a continuing issue affecting local residents, existing forest users and emergency services. The main hotspots are in southern zones of the plan. FLS & external partners currently have limited resources.

We will continue to use limited resources to target anti-social behavior hotspots. Help legitimate forest users to report crime.

Investigate path diversion routes away from local residents.

Consolidate forest-wide information on wildfire threats, important assets, fire-fighting access/infrastructure.

Highly visible south facing slopes & summits deliver a wide range of public benefits. They contain key forest entry points, linking densely populated urban areas to more remote upland zones of the plan. They are visible from many parts of Glasgow City & form a prominent landscape backdrop to the River Clyde & Antonine Wall UNESCO World Heritage Site. They converge with nationally protected conservation sites & ancient woodlands.

Management of these zones should continue to reflect their high value for informal recreation, landscape & conservation. There is now opportunity to manage recently established woodland using low intensity silvicultural systems. This includes alternative conifer stands that will require thinning for longer term stability & retention.

Recent restructuring has allowed better forest design close to ancient woodland & nationally protected sites. Some less accessible spruce stands still remain that could negatively affect some sites.

Opportunity to progress restructuring of less accessible conifer stands as agreed with NatureScot.



Kilpatrick Hills land management plan (2026-2036)

Analysis of Constraints, Sensitivities & Opportunities

Author: Central Region Planning Team

Scale @ A0: 1:15,000

Date: 16/09/2025

Legend

- Kilpatrick_Hills_Block_Boundary
- Forest Roads
- Full operational access
- Restricted operational access
- Watercourses
- Gas Pipelines
- Overhead powerline
- Underground powerlines
- Current Land Use
 - High forest
 - Felled & awaiting restock or restoration
 - Agriculture
 - Open land
 - Open Water
 - Forest quarries
 - Antonine Wall World Heritage Site Boundary
 - Kilpatrick Hills Scheduled Monuments

DRAFT

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Ancient Woodland (of semi-natural origin)
- Long-Established Woodland (of plantation origin)
- John_Muir_Way
- Core Paths
- Windblow proportions end of 2024
- Larch proportions

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Scotland's National Forest Estate is responsibly managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard.

Public & private water supplies are not shown on this map but have been considered in the future design.
For location details please contact Scottish Water (public) or the local Council (private).