



Appendix III Operations in Geological Conservation Review Sites

The following is extracted from Nature Scot's standing advice and guidance for forestry and woodland planning in geological conservation review sites. This guidance will be followed during forestry operations and Nature Scot consulted if there are any issues in doing so.

Standing advice and guidance on forestry and woodland plans and operations on different types of GCR site

2.2 Relict landform and sediment outcrop sites

Relict landform geomorphological sites (where the landscape itself and underlying sediments or rock outcrops are of interest as evidence for past environmental conditions) may be obscured by dense woodland or forestry. Visual connections between individual landforms may be interrupted. Surfaces may be damaged by inappropriately sited and constructed furrows, drainage, track building and borrow pits, and by felling machinery. Occasionally borrow pits may be considered beneficial where they reveal deposits. Seek NatureScot advice if you think this may be the case.

2.2.1 Planting and plantation management

Different methods of ground preparation and planting have different degrees of impact on relict landforms and sediment outcrops. Drainage and ground preparation, orientation of furrowing, and planting density are all issues that should be carefully considered. In general the less invasive methods of planting, or woodland restoration through regeneration, are preferable for preserving the surface materials of landforms and deposits. Care in deciding methods of ground preparation, drainage, orientation of furrowing and planting, and the species used, can limit adverse impacts on the interests of the GCR site. Many relict landform sites are extensive, and sensitive planning can reduce adverse effects of planted forestry. For planting and plantation management on relict landform geomorphological and sediment outcrop sites, standing advice to avoid adverse impacts is:

- In 'crucial' areas of a GCR site: no planting, borrow pits, fences, drainage ditches or tracks. Leave at least a 10 m buffer around 'crucial' areas.
- Deflect drainage away from distinct landforms and from 'crucial' areas.
- Maintain access routes to 'crucial' areas through neighbouring planted areas (e.g. unplanted access corridors and stiles on fence lines).
- Maintain visual connections between groups of landforms in separated 'crucial' areas, by leaving open areas, or maintaining a lower planting density.
- Do not disrupt visual connections between landforms when siting fences and designing forest edges.
- In 'context' areas: choose the least invasive planting method in order to preserve the landform surface, and use temporary tracks where possible. Tracks must comply with upland track design guidance
- In 'crucial' areas: use manual felling methods and remove all felling waste and accumulated litter.



- In forest plans for both new and existing plantations, ensure that there is regular review of drainage. Take action if gullyng starts to occur.

2.2.2 Natural regeneration of native woodland

Natural regeneration of woodland, which has adapted to the changes in moisture and soil fertility will often continue to reflect the landforms underneath and can be benign where it does not obscure sediment outcrops. These types of woodlands can be compatible with the conservation of large scale landforms, such as glaciated landscapes, and extensive slope failures. For managing natural regeneration of native woodland on relict landform and sediment outcrop sites, therefore, standing advice to avoid adverse impacts is:

- Remove regeneration from within 10 m of sediment outcrops.
- Maintain low density natural regeneration of trees to allow access to landforms and to retain landform visibility.
- Do not disrupt visual connections between landforms when siting fences and designing woodland edges.
- In 'crucial' areas: no borrow pits, fences, drainage ditches or tracks.
- In 'context' areas: use temporary tracks where possible. Tracks must comply with upland track design guidance