

A design brief for Merkland LMP

The Merkland management unit, covering 681.0ha, is a forest block just to the north of Brodick on the Isle of Arran. It is part of Scotland's national forests and land owned by the Scottish Ministers on behalf of the people of Scotland and managed by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS).

The Merkland Land Management Plan (LMP) defines the management prescriptions for the next 10 years (2021-2031) and presents the vision for the long term management of the area.

The main management objectives in this plan focus on landscape, access and health and sustainable timber production.

An Analysis and Concept map has been produced to complement this design brief. It presents the draft management objectives and highlights the opportunities and constraints for key issues.

The concept for the LMP focuses on delivering relevant National Policy and has been developed around the following key drivers:

- Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029
- Forestry and Land Scotland Corporate Plan 2019-2022

The plan will contribute to the first three outcomes of the Forestry and Land Scotland Corporate Plan (outcomes 4 and 5 relate to the organisational structure and business performance of FLS) as shown in the following table (operational actions not relevant to this plan have been greyed out).

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Outcomes from the FLS corporate plan	Operational Actions for delivery under Outcomes include:	LMP Actions / Prescriptions
<p>Outcome 1: Supporting a sustainable rural economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing the national forests and land in accordance with the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) to ensure that timber and other products produced by FLS are guaranteed to be from a sustainably managed resource • Developing our forest planning processes to ensure long-term sustainable productivity of the national forests and land • Providing a sustainable supply of timber to Scotland’s timber processing sector • Implementing the Restocking Strategy for the national forests and land and develop a new plant and seed supply strategy • Supporting Scottish tourism and the visitor economy through the provision of visitor attractions • Supporting commercial activity on the national forests and land including agricultural management, rural housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Create</i> a land management plan which meets UKFS/UKWAS requirements and where possible guidelines. • <i>Meet</i> production forecast commitment through revised felling and thinning plans. • <i>Enhance</i> the productive yield by selecting the correct species for site type restocking in line with district goals for diversity, especially in larch restock sites. • <i>Focus</i> the area within the forest block which is part of the regional thinning programme to enhance stand stability, timber quality and provide a wider range of products. • <i>Implement</i> road construction maintenance programme and quarry development/maintenance/restoration required to service proposed harvesting operations • <i>Manage</i> resident deer population with wildlife team resource and external contractors

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	<p>and renewable energy opportunities, all of which help to sustain rural communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the venison processing sector through our deer management 	
<p>Outcome 2: Looking after Scotland’s national forests and land</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing the national forests and land to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity • Maintaining and enhancing our work on peatland restoration • Collaborating with partners on integrated landscape scale approaches to habitat management and restoration • Taking specific conservation actions for vulnerable priority species • Delivering an increased contribution towards the Scottish Government’s renewable energy targets • Supporting policy development and research and act as a testbed for new and innovative approaches to forestry and land management • Developing an asset management approach to the historic environment within Scotland’s forests and land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Improve</i> resilience through smaller coupe size and increased use of woodland managed under alternative to clearfell, LISS and other continuous cover systems where appropriate. • In cooperation with NTS, <i>enhance</i> the management of the local Historic Designed Landscape by use of Policy-style woodland and appropriate landscaping. • <i>Increase</i> use of natural regeneration in our restocking. • <i>Control</i> invasive species as per FLS and regional INNS guidelines. • <i>Continue</i> with <i>P. ramorum</i> management. • <i>Increase</i> area of native BL throughout plan area for added biodiversity, targeting a permanent BL woodland infrastructure along riparian zones and upper margins; to cooperate with NTS to build on their Glenrosa woodland vision. • <i>Create</i> additional permanent open habitat for Red Deer management. • <i>maintain and enhance</i> local landscape through additional species diversity, open space management and revised coupe shapes to better suit landform; Merkland is extremely prominent in the local landscape being part of the general Goatfell view and is seen by visitors on the ferry as it comes

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with neighbouring land managers to undertake landscape-scale control of ground flora and improve habitats 	<p>into Brodick; consider FLS' part in a landscape-scale gradation from high forest to natural treeline on Goatfell.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Manage</i> watercourses and private water supplies within LMP unit in keeping with UKWAS standards, Water Framework Directive and Forest and Water guidelines to <i>maintain and improve</i> water quality. • <i>Maintain and enhance</i> area for Red Squirrel • <i>Manage</i> minor heritage features as per FLS guidelines
<p>Outcome 3: National forests and land for visitors and communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining walking and biking trails to promote fun in the outdoors, focussing on improving entry level experiences for everyone to enjoy and gain health benefits • Continuing to remove barriers to ensure that people from all backgrounds can and do access the full range of benefits of the national forests and land • Enabling outdoor learning and encouraging schools and community groups to make use of the national forests and land • Facilitating renewable energy opportunities in order to encourage community benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consult</i> with local communities and stakeholders through Land Management Plan process. • <i>Maintain and enhance</i> views of the forest from public roads and the ferry. • <i>Maintain</i> general accessibility for block. • <i>Facilitate</i> energy infrastructure as required by national policy. • <i>Continue</i> to liaise with NTS to <i>improve</i> the visitor experience to the whole of the Brodick Castle/Goatfell area.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incentivising renewable developers to offer community ownership opportunities in renewable energy developments on the national forests and land• Continuing to engage communities in decisions relating to the management of the national forests and land• Continuing to support community empowerment by enabling communities to make use of the national forests and land to benefit their communities	
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A Walker
Arran Forester
25/08/2020