



Landscape Scale Native Restoration Concept

Background

The previous Glengarry Land Management Plan (LMP) identified the opportunity to restore the native pine woodland as well as expand the native woodland through planting above the present tree line alongside the continuation of timber production from non-native conifers. There has been good progress in harvesting non-native conifer from the core areas of pine over the last 10 years. However, there have also been challenges around some areas being slow to regenerate with native species and others where the regeneration has been dominated by non-native species particularly Sitka Spruce and Lodgepole Pine.

In 2024 the national Pinewood Conference was held in Fort William to review the condition of the pinewoods across Scotland, particularly the Western pinewoods, which have a different structure and species composition to the Eastern Pinewoods. The conference highlighted the relatively poor condition and fragility of South Western Pinewoods. The conference concluded that there was an urgent need to protect and expand them.

FLS, as the manager of the Glengarry pinewood, has reviewed its vision and management approach. This has been prepared in parallel to FLS national team looking at the opportunities for landscape scale restoration of native woodlands and priority open habitat across Scotland. This Strategic Mapping exercise has identified Glengarry as one of a number of areas across Scotland as a priority for landscape scale restoration and no longer be managed for timber production once the present stands of non-native conifers are harvested. This does not preclude the potential for production of timber and other woodland products from the native woodlands in the future once they are established.

Concept

The concept for this Long Term Plan (LTP) revision is to create the right conditions for landscape scale restoration from the loch shore to the mountain top over time. The focus of this plan is the protection and connection of the core woodland remnants and the expansion of native woodlands and peatland on the mid slope to restore the connection between the upper hill ground and the lower pinewoods.

This will be through

- enabling the native Pinewood core to expand along with native woodland across the lower slope of the forest;
- converting the non-native conifers of the mid slope to native woodland and restored peat land;

- ensuring the new woodland creation and peatland on the upper slopes become established;
- creating conditions that will enable the montane woodland remnants to expand.

For Glengarry Forest this will entail continuing the work to expand the 254ha of scattered core pine areas. These core pine areas have the ability to naturally regenerate into the surrounding 100m known as the Caledonian pinewood regeneration zone. Once established this will create 1200ha of Caledonian pinewood in this location.

The upper slopes above the present tree line are a mix of open habitat and native woodland creation. A connection between Glengarry and Loch Arkaig woodlands over Lochain Fhudair of planted native woodland and peat restoration was made at the end of the previous plan. The new native woodlands are not yet fully established and ensuring this will be a priority during the life of this plan.

The mid slope of the forest are still dominated by non-native conifers which the previous plan had intended to perpetuate. In order to achieve landscape scale restoration from the loch shore to the mountain top that is more robust and sustainable into the long term the lower pine woodlands need to be reconnected to the upper open habitats. It has been agreed through the Strategic map process with the national team that this area, currently under non-native conifer crops, will be converted to a mix of native woodland and peatland.

Concept map description

Core Ancient Woodland comprises of designated woodland, broadleaf Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW), Caledonian pine (CPI) core areas and regeneration zone and Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS). These areas dominate the forested areas of Ardoch Forest, Craig Liath Forest and northern and central Glengarry Forest. These areas are coloured dark purple on the map.

Planted native woodland which is depicted by pink polygons on the map extend south of the established forest areas in Glengarry Forest.

Deep peat areas, which are depicted as solid brown and cross-hatched brown areas on the map, relate to hagged blanket bog habitats and presumption to restore forest-to-bog areas. This reflects the typical hummocky glacial topography where peat forms in the natural hollows or localised wet poorly drained summits. Restoration of these areas halt carbon emissions from hagged blanket bogs and improves the storage of carbon in soils in previously planted areas where the crops display poor growth. Restoration of these deep peats will also improve dragonfly habitat throughout Glengarry Forest.

A mountain woodland project zone around the Coire Glas massif indicates where there is an expectation of long term transition native woodland and montane scrub expansion up to the mountain summits. Habitats include montane heath, inland rock and scree and snowbed communities. The expansion of native woodland and scrub habitat in this zone will be enabled by the management of deer to sustainable levels.

The little square forest block at Balmaglaister will be felled and restocked with native slope stability woodland.

Open ground in southern Glengarry Forest is dominated by priority open habitats.

There are six main Allts in Glengarry Forest each with multiple tributaries. These watercourses generally have a southern to northern flow. Improved riparian woodland habitat will help to maintain water quality and regulate water temperatures, thus improving salmonid spawning habitat.

Restoration of riparian woodland along these watercourses connect fragmented habitats and provide an ecological link with the landscape scale native woodland restoration in the Arkaig catchment to the south of Glengarry Forest currently underway through the Beo Airceig partnership of which FLS is a member.

Management of deer to reduce the browsing damage to the woodland regeneration as well as the open habitat species is essential to securing the condition of these habitats alongside the removal of non-native regeneration and invasive non-native species and ultimately the success of this long term project.

The management of PAWS areas will include the felling on non-native trees and halo thinning ancient woodland remnants where felling is delayed. Protection of ancient woodland features is a key to the success ancient woodland restoration. The PAWS of eastern Glengarry Forest will be slowly converted to native woodland.

The mature Norway spruce crops of eastern Glengarry are an important features in the landscape, forming upper woodland storey and a valuable habitat for red squirrels. This crop may be removed as the surrounding native woodland develops and matures.

The continuation of some non-native conifer production is being considered for the Poulary area on the western edge of the forest where there are few fragments of semi-natural habitat. However, the poorer soils are suitable only for Sitka spruce and lodgepole pine and the economies of scale are likely to make this area less viable.

Visitor access

Visitor access is valued by the Glengarry Community. The current waymarked trails will be maintained, acknowledging some disruption during the Coire Glas development phase. There are ongoing discussions with the Glengarry community and stakeholders on the future of the Invergarry Black Bridge.