



# Glenhurich LMP Summary

Glenhurich Forest covers almost 4400ha of land, comprising of conifer plantation, native woodland and a large area of open hill ground. It extends from 5 metres above sea level at Loch Shiel to 795 metres elevation on Druim Garbh. The entire area lies within a National Scenic Area (NSA), partly within a Wild Land Area (WLA), and is discreet from public view. The forest roads and tracks enable low key access routes to surrounding Corbetts, Grahams and historic routes to Glenfinnan and Loch Linnhe. Informal trails around Ceanna Garbh at Loch Shiel are used by locals and visitors.

Much of the forest is currently under commercial conifer production on steep slopes, however, there are forested areas described as Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS). There are pockets of ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) confined to riparian areas, around Loch Shiel and on scattered high elevation sites. The lower level areas contain ancient woodland ground flora, with bryophytes and lichen communities typical of Scottish Rainforest habitat. Part of this area lies within the Loch Shiel Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) designation which includes terrestrial features such as upland oakwood, bryophyte assemblages and chequered skipper. The open hill ground lies within the Moidart and Ardgour Special Protection Area (SPA) for golden eagle. The entire Glenhurich catchment flows into the Loch Shiel SSSI/SPA designation for oligotrophic loch and black-throated diver as named features.

The Forest includes a 145ha Natural Reserve of plantation origin near Lochan Dubh.

There is one Scheduled Monument – a cist at Ballnaseilich close to the Polloch river at the outlet of Loch Doilet. Close to this monument are heritage features such as platforms and lithic scatter that dates habitation in this area from 1000 years ago to Mesolithic times. Elsewhere heritage features are dominated by farming and woodland management evidenced by enclosures, buildings, charcoal platforms and bloomerys.

## Objectives

Key management objectives intend to balance timber production with native habitat restoration. Non-native commercial crops will be confined to more sheltered productive areas around existing infrastructure. Native woodland will be restored on PAWS sites and expanded along riparian areas which will be widened along the floodplain areas and along the Allts to build resilience for the salmonid habitat, with high elevation native woodland replacing poorly performing commercial crops to help set up future expansion of mountain woodland and montane scrub. These steps will enable ecological connectivity between native woodland and open habitats.

## What is Planned?

Over the course of this rotation riparian woodland, extended riparian woodland around the main watercourses and PAWS areas will be restored through natural regeneration with supplementary planting to introduce desirable site suited native species where seed sources are lacking. Poorly performing high elevation commercial crops will be replaced with transition native woodland which will include some scots pine. ASNW and SSSI woodland will be managed to secure favourable condition. Removal of non-native invasive species and deer management are important to the delivery of these native woodland objectives.

Restocking of commercial spruce crops will require the use of nurse species such as alaskan lodgepole pine and scots pine to improve soil fertility without the use of carbon heavy fertiliser in a steep sensitive catchment with multiple watercourses. Norway spruce will be planted where soil suitability permits to provide timber as well as a habitat for red squirrels which are known to sometimes pass through the area.

Felling has been phased to maximise economic return, initiate the restructuring of the crop at the head of Polloch Glen, enable the gradual removal of larch crops with Coupe shapes designed to accommodate skyline winch extraction whilst minimising the potential for soil loss post felling during storm events.

Improved new access for harvesting, establishment and deer management will be key in the delivery of management objectives over the longer term.

## The next 10 years

Initially the main focus will be to secure establishment of the legacy restock coupes. Many of these include PAWS restoration or the restoration of extended riparian areas. This will require the removal of non-native regeneration and invasive non-native species such as rhododendron, as well as supplementary planting of desirable species to improve diversity and woodland structure.

A small area of woodland creation on agricultural fields will create woodland pasture habitat for chequered skipper managed by controlled grazing.

Hot planting of spruce trees post felling on many sites will be required in addition to the use of pine nurses to gain the advantage for nutrient uptake before the onset of heather encroachment.

The focus for felling in the first 10 years is to improve the resilience for travel along the minor public road by felling the mature crop which is prone to windblow in winter gales, impacting the only access out of Glenhurich for the Polloch residents. The felling of at least 20% of the larch within the forest is another important focus in the initial five years of the plan, in accordance

with the FLS Larch Strategy in response to the threat of *Phytophthora ramorum*. There is a requirement to ensure the felling of difficult and complex larch coupes by 2032.

Felling during the 10 year period will require a large road construction and major road upgrades programme which will be facilitated by the opening of a new quarry north of Kinlochan. Planned roading includes the need to access 80% of all larch crops by 2027.

## Future forest

### **Expansion of native woodland in Glenhurich and linkage with neighbouring native woodland.**

Glenhurich contains some important ASNW, native and oceanic ravine remnants that are rich with Scottish rainforest bryophyte and lichen assemblages. The protection of these areas by removing threats such as non-native species and excessive herbivore impact as well as providing protective buffers in the short to medium term helps to improve the condition and resilience of these habitats. Ecologically connecting these habitats with restored PAWS, riparian and transition native woodland enabled by effective deer control further strengthens native woodland resilience.

Over the long term this will set up for woodland expansion into the open hill ground to transition from almost sea level to the montane zone. High elevation native woodland would be stunted and quite open providing an improved habitat for prey for the golden eagle. This will provide a strong base to support a future full native woodland restoration not just for Glenhurich Forest but for the neighbouring FLS Forests from Loch Sunart along the east side of Loch Shiel to Loch Eil.