



# Appendix: Glen Loy, Gairloch and Mucomir Land Management Plan Brief

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# 1. Key background information

## Introduction

The main woodlands covered within this LMP are:

- Glen Loy (1,040 ha)
- Mucomir (253 ha)
- Gairloch (125 ha)

This management plan will replace and renew the previous Forest Design Plans of:

Glen Loy 030/519/221

Mucomir 030/519/255

Gairloch 030/519/214

The three forests of Glen Loy, Mucomir and Gairloch are being combined into a single Land Management Plan (LMP) – The current LMPs are now all beyond their expiry date and require revision.

All three forests lie along the lower part of the Great Glen between Loch Linnhe and Loch Lochy. The total LMP area covers 1,418 ha. The forests are predominantly spruce with a greater diversity introduced in the second rotation stands, and the restructuring of all three forests has been ongoing for around twenty years. The Caledonian pinewood SSSI of Coille Phuiteachain lies within Glen Loy and there are other semi-natural and Plantation Ancient Woodland Sites in both Glen Loy and Gairloch. There are areas of deep peats throughout Mucomir.

## Silvicultural Potential

Glen Loy and Gairloch Forests cover a wide altitudinal range from 50m Above sea level to 350m at the upper margins. These forests are located on the lower slopes of Beinn Bhan and Druim Fada and comprise a mixture of brown earth soils with low fertility mineral soils on the lower slopes. Fertility decreases on the upper margins. Mucomir is generally low lying at 100 to 120m. It lacks the landform of the other two and contains a high proportion of peat slopes with impeded drainage.

The prevailing cool & moist/wet climate is conducive to good conifer tree growth, although the soils and exposed topography limits the choice of tree species suitable for continued productive conifer crops. Of the broadleaved habitats, the lower slopes of Glen Loy and Gairloch are suitable for oak woodland changing to birch at higher elevations. Scots pine is suitable in many locations. Mucomir is more restricted in species choice with drier soils suitable for Scots pine and birch and wetter soils suitable for Sitka spruce and willow species. Climate change predictions suggest that the climate will become generally warmer, with drier summers and wetter winters.

## Existing crop

Approximately 69% of the site is under woodland cover, with a further 9% having been felled awaiting restocking. The remainder (22%) is given over to internal open ground including some agricultural land and wetlands. Sitka spruce accounts for 49% of the woodland with other conifers accounting for 10%. Broadleaves currently account for approximately 10% of the woodland area.

The current split in terms of age class structure is approximately:

- 3% establishing crop (0-10 years)
- 6% thicket (11-20 years)
- 47% pole stage (21-40 years)
- 30% mature (41-60 years)
- 14% old forest (61+ years)

Given that most of the woodland area was established in the middle of the twentieth century, the overall age class structure is relatively diverse. There is still a proportion in the pole and thicket stages but these will diminish as the next set of fellings is scheduled.

Much of the remaining pole stage and mature trees are first rotation forest with a small but increasing area establishing as second rotation forest. Both the first and subsequent rotations of productive forest were managed as clearfell. Thinning is not suitable across much of the area due to the relatively exposed nature of the site and predominantly peat soil.

There is a small element of larch within the forests. There have been no instances of Phytophthora in this location but this is something to be aware of in the event of an outbreak.

## Operational Access

The forests have a road network totalling approximately 33 km, allowing economic operational access (i.e. 500 m or less) for most of the sites although some areas may need consideration for further roading for future harvesting operations beyond the life of this plan.

## Natural Environment

There are approximately 340 ha of Ancient Woodland (AW). Of this, approximately 194 Ha is classed as ancient and semi natural in origin. Fragments of this can be found in Gairloch but the majority is centred around the Errocht area of Glen Loy and at Puitcheacan, further into Glen Loy. Puitcheacan pine wood is also a SSSI but is currently in declining condition.

There are various other fragments of pine wood in Gairloch.

The principal biodiversity feature at Mucomir is the presence of deep peats and unflushed bogs. Some of these have been cleared of trees in recent years but there are other areas of commercial conifers still present on deep peat sites. The eastern portion of Mucomir sits within the Parallel Roads of Lochaber SSSI. This is very large a geological SSSI and at this point is at its easternmost edge. There are several citable features that need to taken account of during certain operations.

Species noted in Glen Loy include pine marten, badger, goosander, black grouse, chequered skipper butterfly, pearl bordered fritillary, and a variety of nationally scarce beetle species.

Most of the forests sit within the River Lochy Drainage Area SEPA Waterbody Catchment. The River Loy is the central hydrographic feature and runs through the centre of Gleny Loy Forest.

## Cultural Environment

Heritage identified so far in Glen Loy are mainly dykes, sheepfolds and agricultural buildings associated with long establish rural life, the most significant being the remains of a township at Barre in the south side of the glen. There are several other typical features in Gairloch and Mucomir. Wade's Military Road runs through the middle of the forest and structures relating to the railway that once went from Spean Bridge to Fort Augustus lie within and around the edge of Mucomir.

There are no scheduled monuments within the plan area and all undesignated features across the sites are recorded in the heritage layer of GIS.

Landscape overall description:

In landscape terms, most of the site are of the Broad Forested Strath Landscape Character Type, which extends between Loch Linnhe and Loch Lochy, and along Glen Spean. Human infrastructure is clustered along the bottom of the glen where the scale of the landscape is intimate. Further up the slopes the scale increases. Thus, forests such as Mucomir are generally observed in the near distance and edge-on. In contrast, the upper margins of Glen Loy and Gairloch are best seen in the distance.

The woods form the backdrop to much recreational activity that occurs in the area. They are significant features in the landscape regarding passing traffic. Mucomir is highly visible from the A82 and is one of the woodlands closest to the Commando Memorial.

Glen Loy is highly visible from the Caledonian Canal and the upper margins form a part of the viewshed from the Snow Goose Restaurant and Sgurr Fhinniosgaig at the top of the gondolas at Aonach Mhor. Likewise, the lower edge of Gairloch forms the context of part of the Great Glen Way, but the upper margins are only visible in the distance. Scale decreases at the lower levels and increases at the upper margins.

## Community Use

Visitor access is fairly low - key by walkers, mountain bikers, horse riders and for informal hill access, with limited parking at Errocht. FLS works with Lochaber Trail Association to facilitate the development of safe off- road mountain bike routes.

There are several residential and farming properties around the edge of the forest. Private water supplies draw water from catchments partially within the forest bounds. Achnacarry Estate surrounds much of Glen Loy Forest and FLS is working with the estate as part of the wider Beo Airceig partnership.

There are small car parking areas on the edges of Glen Loy and access is provided through the forest to Druim Fada.

## Neighbours and third party interests

At Gairloch, a number of residential properties lie between the public road and the loch, most of which draw their water from catchments covering part of the forest.

The forest is bisected by the Fort-to-Fort 132kv pylon line.

## Wildlife

The primary herbivore species present are red deer these and other damaging herbivore numbers are monitored and controlled by FLS Wildlife Ranger Staff.

## 2. Strategic drivers

Published in February 2019, the **Scottish Forestry Strategy** signaled the start of a new era for forestry in Scotland and is a keystone of the statutory and administrative arrangements under the Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act 2018 (the Act).

**The Strategy** sets out a 50-year vision for Scotland's forests and woodland:

"In 2070, Scotland will have more forests and woodland, sustainably managed and better integrated with other land uses. These will provide a more resilient, adaptable resource, with greater natural capital value, that supports a strong economy, a thriving environment and healthy and flourishing communities."

To support the 50-year vision, the **Scottish Government** identified three objectives to deliver by 2029:

- Increase the contribution of forests and woodland to Scotland's sustainable and inclusive economic growth
- Improve the resilience of Scotland's forests and woodland and increase their contribution to a healthy and high quality environment
- Increase the use of Scotland's forest and woodland resources to enable more people to improve their health, wellbeing and life chance

FLS will continue to help deliver the vision for forestry in Scotland under **the vision for FLS:**

"Forests and land that Scotland can be proud of."

and its mission:

"To look after Scotland's forests and land, for the benefit of all, now and for the future."

We will achieve our vision and mission by making a positive contribution to the economy, environment and people of Scotland by:

- Protecting our forests and land;
- Growing the value of our business; and
- Investing in our people and communities

The [FLS Corporate Plan 2022-2025](#) identifies five corporate outcomes and a series of actions to take forward the aspiration of Scotland's Forestry Strategy in our work. The annex summaries those outcomes and priorities relevant to this Land Management Plan. These, alongside key issues and site-specific challenges, have informed our draft land management objectives.

### 3. Draft land management plan objectives

The plan will meet the requirements of UKFS and UKWAS

- Maintain a sustainable, long term supply of softwood sawlog timber production
- Increase the resilience of the forest and its ecosystems to future climate change and other threats
- Protect, restore and expand native woodland, focused particularly the pinewood at Coille Phuiteachain, the oakwood at Errocht and riparian woodland.
- Assess the areas of deep peat for opportunities to prevent carbon loss and for habitat restoration
- Engage with the local communities in developing the plans for the future development of the forests
- Seek opportunities to work in partnership at a landscape scale for ecosystem restoration and increased the resilience of the environment
- Enable access into an attractive forest areas for improved health and wellbeing as well as a backdrop to tourism

### 4. Stakeholders

NatureScot

SEPA

Scottish Water

SSE

Highland Council (Archaeology)

Highland Council (Forestry)

Highland Council (Roads)

Timber Transport Forum

Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge & Achancarry Community Council (Gairloch & Mucomir)

Kilmallie Community Council (Glen Loy)

West Lochaber Deer Management Group

Lochaber District Salmon Fisheries Board

Lochaber Fisheries Trust

HES (Historic Environment Scotland)

Scottish Canals

Great Glen Way Ranger Office

Lochaber trail association

Achnacarry Estate

Mucomir Hydro-electric Power Station

MOWI Loch Lochy

Commando Veterans Association (Joint Management of Commando Memorial and car park)

Neighbours

**Table 12 – Relationship between relevant corporate outcomes and the site -specific draft LMP objectives**

Corporate Outcomes Relevant to LMP	Operational Priorities Relevant to LMP	Draft LMP Objectives
<p><b>Outcome 1:</b> Supporting a Sustainable Economy</p> <p>FLS supports a sustainable, low-carbon economy by managing the national forests and land in a way that encourages sustainable business growth, development opportunities, jobs, tourism and investments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investing in long-term, sustainable timber production and developing other wider contributions to the Scottish Economy</li> <li>Increasing land-based commercial opportunities to ensure the financial sustainability of FLS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain a long term sustainable supply of softwood sawlog timber production</li> <li>Increase the resilience of the forest and its ecosystems in the face of a changing climate and tree health threats.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 2:</b> Looking after Scotland’s national forests and land</p> <p>Scotland’s national forests and land are looked after, playing their part in tackling climate change, and their biodiversity is protected and enhanced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tackling the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss</li> <li>Protecting our forests and land from other threats</li> <li>Working at Landscape scale and in partnership, to make a bigger difference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect, restore and expand native woodland, focused particularly the pinewood at Coille Phuiteachain, the oakwood at Errocht and riparian woodland</li> <li>Assess the areas of deep peat for opportunities to prevent carbon loss and for habitat restoration</li> <li>Seek opportunities to work in partnership at a landscape scale for ecosystem restoration and future the resilience</li> </ul>



Corporate Outcomes Relevant to LMP	Operational Priorities Relevant to LMP	Draft LMP Objectives
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the resilience of the forests and their ecosystems in the face of a changing climate and tree health threats.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 3:</b> Scotland’s national forests and land for visitors and communities</p> <p>Everyone can visit and enjoy Scotland’s national forests and land to connect with nature, have fun, benefit their health and wellbeing and have the opportunity to engage in our community decision making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapting to changing visitor and tourism requirements to ensure responsible approach utilising partnership working where appropriate</li> <li>• Increasing the opportunity for communities to benefit from the national forests and land</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with the local communities in developing the plans for the future development of the forests</li> <li>• Seek opportunities to work in partnership at a landscape scale for ecosystem restoration and increased the resilience of the environment</li> <li>• Enable access into an attractive forest areas for improved health and wellbeing as well as a backdrop to tourism</li> </ul>

Corporate Outcomes Relevant to LMP	Operational Priorities Relevant to LMP	Draft LMP Objectives
<p><b>Outcome 5:</b> A high performing organisation</p> <p>FLS is recognised as a high performing, efficient and effective, sustainable organisation that continues to transform and adapt.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving our business systems and processes</li> <li>• Appraising and investing in our infrastructure to support financial sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) certification</li> <li>• Maintain and, where necessary expand, an efficient infrastructure for access to the forests</li> </ul>