

Appendix 8 – Designated Site Plan

Designated Sites covered by this document:

Easter Ness Forest SSSI
Inverfarigaig SSSI
Knockie Lochs SSSI
Loch Knockie and nearby Lochs SPA
Loch Bran SSSI
Ness Woods SAC

Start date of plan : 2026

End date of plan: 2036

The land management plan is approved for 10 years; however this Designated Site Planning document will be reviewed at year 5 in line with the mid-term review to ensure that it is still fit for purpose.

Management Aims and Objectives:

The aim of the plan is to fully take into account any management and mitigation required for the designated land on and around the national forests and land (NF&L) based on the area covered by the South Loch Ness Land Management Plan. This plan aims to act as a basis for targeted management for the notified features and to recognise other operations which might affect them through general use and management on the national forests and land.

Section 1. Designated Sites Covered by this Land Management Plan

Designated Site Name	NatureScot Site Code	Site Type	Total Area of Designated site (Ha)	Area within this plan (Ha)	% on NF&L
<i>Inverfarigaig SSSI</i>	136065	SSSI	100.14	81.12	81
<i>Easter Ness SSSI</i>	591	SSSI	471.24	109.9	23
<i>Knockie Lochs SSSI</i>	880	SSSI	141.74	81.84	58
<i>Loch Knockie and Nearby Lochs SPA</i>	8529	SPA	141.74	81.84	58
<i>Loch Bran SSSI</i>	967	SSSI	17.06	15.66	92
<i>Ness Woods SAC</i>	8337	SAC	841.38	188.8	22

Table 1. Summary of designations relating to this plan.

Section 2. Features on or adjacent to the NF&L and condition

Features that exist on NF&L within this LMP or have potential to be directly affected by our management operations are listed in the table below:

Site Type	Site Code	Feature description	SCM Condition (date assessed)	Condition on NF&L	Management Pressures (if relevant)
Ness Woods SAC	8337	Mixed Woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes	Unfavourable, no change (Mar, 2010)		Over Grazing
		Otter	Unfavourable declining (Jun 2015)		Development
		Western acidic oak woodland	Unfavourable, no change (Mar 2010)		Over Grazing
Inverfarigaig SSSI	813	Upland mixed ash woodland	Unfavorable, declining (Jul 2015)		Invasive conifers, Overgrazing, Chalara fraxinea
Loch Bran SSSI	967	Dragonfly assemblage	Favourable maintained (Jun 2014)		Invasive Species, Trampling
Knockie Lochs SSSI	880	Slavonian grebe, breeding	Unfavourable, no change (mar 2005)		
Loch Knockie and Nearby Lochs SPA	8529	Slavonian grebe, breeding	Unfavourable, no change (31 Mar 2005)		
Easter Ness Forest SSSI	591	Upland mixed ash woodland	Unfavourable, no change (Feb 2010)		Over Grazing
		Upland oak woodland	Unfavourable, no change (Feb 2010)		Over grazing

Ness Woods SAC, Easter Ness Forest SSSI and Inverfarigaig SSSI covers ground within Knockie, Camus and Inverfarigaig blocks within the LMP area and runs along the from of Loch Ness. The majority of these areas have had non native commercial trees removed and have been restocked with native broadleaves to help enhance the oak and mixed woodland features. There is one remaining area of mature non native trees still within the SAC ,these will be felled as a phase 1 coupe and restocked with native broadleaves. Ongoing removal of non native will be carried out utilising contractor resource as well as local volunteers. Where operations are taking place within Ness Woods SAC all guidance will be followed to avoid any disturbance to otters. Prior to operations surveys will be carried out by a qualified and competent individual to identify any holts and signs of otters being present. If active breeding sites are found an exclusion zone of 100m to 200m around active breeding sites. If a resting place is found a 30m operational boundary will be put in place for any machinery and operations. If management operations are necessary n the exclusion zone a relevant licence will be obtained before operations start.

Deer pressure is high in this area however increase access, felling and cull targets will aim to reduce deer impacts. Please see attached DMP for more info.

Knockie Lochs SSSI and Loch Knockie and nearby loch SPA are both designated as Slavonian grebe breeding grounds is currently unfavourable, we would look to improve this by felling the no native conifers beside the Loch and restock with open native species to try and improve water quality. Any forestry operations will follow all relevant guidance relating to Slavonian grebe will be followed, operations will not take place between the months of May and July within 150-300m of a known nesting site. This is to avoid any disturbance to the nest and abandonment of chicks.

Loch Bran SSSI is in favourable condition and non native trees will be felled, restock will with native broad leaves and will leave OG around the loch and in areas for dragonfly feeding and to avoid shading of loch margins.

Section 3. Conservation Objectives for all sites and Management Undertaken

Objective	Site	Management undertaken
To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitats thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and To ensure for the qualifying habitats that the following are maintained in the long term: • Extent of the habitat on site • Distribution of the habitat within site	Ness Wood SAC, Inverfarigaig SSSI, Easter Ness SSSI, Knockie Lochs SSSI, Loch Knockie and Nearby Lochs SPA	1. Natural processes will be supported 2. Manage herbivores to avoid habitat damage 3. Remove any non native tree species or regeneration which would out compete target species.

Objective	Site	Management undertaken
• Structure and function of the habitat • Processes supporting the habitat • Distribution of typical species of the habitat • Viability of typical species as components of the habitat • No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat		
To ensure that habitats are in a suitable condition to support the important vascular plant, invertebrate and breeding bird assemblages.	Loch Bran SSSI, Knockie Lochs SSSI, Loch Knockie and Nearby Loch SPA	Work, as approved by this LMP, will ensure that habitats are in suitable condition. Vascular plants and breeding birds will be identified and protected prior to operations taking place. Non native trees around Loch Bran will be removed and shading of water to be reduced.
To ensure that conditions are suitable to support the populations of otter.	Ness Wood SAC	Otters will be surveyed before any operations.

Section 5. Operations within the LMP that could impact on the designated features on the National estate

ORC No.	ORC Description	Proposed Operations	Mitigating Measures
1	Cultivation, including ploughing, rotovating, harrowing and re-seeding.	<i>None Proposed</i>	
2	Grazing and changes to grazing management (may involve introduction/re-introduction, changes to stock numbers, types and dates, or cessation).	<i>None proposed</i>	
3	The introduction of stock feeding (may include the introduction, re-	<i>None proposed</i>	

ORC No.	ORC Description	Proposed Operations	Mitigating Measures
	introduction and changes to the type and location).		
4	Mowing or other methods of cutting vegetation. The introduction of, or changes in the mowing or cutting regime (including hay-making to silage and cessation).	<i>None Proposed</i>	
5	Application of manure, fertilisers and lime.	<i>None proposed</i>	
7	Dumping, spreading or discharge of any materials.	<i>None Proposed</i>	
8	Burning	<i>None proposed</i>	
11	The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant or plant remains, including tree, shrub, herb, dead or decaying wood, moss, lichen, fungus, leaf-mould, turf etc.	<i>Removal of non-natives and scrub where this management will benefit the designated features.</i>	<i>Dangerous trees; trees will be inspected for bats/lichen before work takes place.</i> <i>Removal of non-natives or native tree regeneration from areas where it is unsuitable.</i>
12	Tree and/or woodland management, the (re)introduction of tree and/or woodland management and changes in tree and/or woodland management.	<i>Clear felling & thinning as per approved LMP.</i>	<i>Operational plans will assess key habitat features & seek to enhance them.</i> <i>Pre-operational planning will identify important wildlife disturbance periods to be avoided.</i>
13a	Drainage (including moor-gripping, the use of mole, tile, tunnel or other artificial drains).	<i>None Proposed</i>	
13b	Modification of the structure of water courses (e.g. rivers, streams, springs, ditches, drains), including their banks and beds, as by realignment,	<i>None Proposed</i>	

ORC No.	ORC Description	Proposed Operations	Mitigating Measures
	regrading and dredging or river protection works.		
15	Infilling of ditches, drains, ponds, pools, marshes or pits.	<i>None Proposed</i>	
16b	Changes in seafood or marine life collection	<i>None Proposed</i>	
17	Reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh.	<i>None Proposed</i>	
18	Commercial bait digging in intertidal areas.	<i>None Proposed</i>	
19	Erection of sea defences or coast protection works, including stabilisation measures	<i>None Proposed</i>	
20	Extraction of minerals, including peat, sand and gravel, topsoil or sub-soil.	<i>None Proposed</i>	
21	Construction, removal or destruction of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hardstands, banks, ditches or other earthworks, or the laying, maintenance or removal of pipelines and cables, above or below ground.	<i>Existing forest roads and tracks are subject to a regular maintenance programme.</i>	<i>Road stone will come from within the forest area, but outside the SSSI boundary.</i> <i>New roads & paths, or significant alterations will be consulted on</i>
24	Modification of natural features	<i>None Proposed</i>	
27	Recreational activities other than those carried out responsibly in keeping with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.	<i>None proposed</i>	