Forestry and Land Scotland
Coilltearachd agus Fearann Alba

Blairhouse LMP 2020 – 2030 Appendices

Contents

Appendix I : Land Management Plan Consultation Record

I/1.0 Timeline

- 17th September 2019: Concept plan presented to Blairhouse Community Liaison Committee on site. Draft concept map placed on golf club noticeboard.

- 12th November 2019: Public consultation event including presentation to Blairhouse Community Liaison Committee and open drop-in session at Oakley Community Centre. Draft maps placed on golf club noticeboard

- February 2020: Draft land management plan published online for public consultation

I/2.0 Comments record

Table 1: Record of draft Land Management Plan presentation and consultation with Blairhouse Community Liaison Committee (12th Nov. 2019), conducted by Forestry and Land Scotland & Scottish Mines Restoration Trust

Statutory Consultee	Date contacted	Date response received	Issue raised	FLS Region Response
Blairhouse Community Liaison Committee	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	Is the large oak tree on site to be protected and will the acorns be spread around the site?	Yes, the oak tree will be protected at the site and suggest that if there is a community or school project to grow on the acorns then space could be made to grow these on the site
Blairhouse Community Liaison Committee	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	How can the view point at the top of the hill be maintained when the trees grow?	FLS note the desire to maintain views to the Ochils and to the view point and will discuss with the FLS Landscape Architect to look at options for views.
Blairhouse Community Liaison Committee	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	Would deer venison from the site be available to local cafes (one off free contribution and/or to buy).	All carcasses must go through the deer larder to ensure hygiene and recording standards are followed. However, an arrangement could be explored to contribute venison to the community.
Blairhouse Community Liaison Committee	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	Will there be any planting around the edge of the void?	Shrubs & fencing will be around the steeper edges of the void. The shallow edge of the void will have rushes and water plants planted by SMRT that will develop vegetation. This area will also have rocks for a long shallow 10 m into the water to allow any egress should someone get into the water.

Statutory Consultee	Date contacted	Date response received	Issue raised	FLS Region Response
Blairhouse Community Liaison Committee	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	Will facilities be made for wild water swimmers in the void (noting that people swim in the void every year and the community are concerned for safety)?	This will be addressed in the SMRT public safety audit. FLS will not provide any facilities for swimming to discourage swimming in this environment.
Blairhouse Community Liaison Committee	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	Will access for schools running clubs be allowed?	Yes.
Blairhouse Community Liaison Committee	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	Routes may not be the most suitable for accessing the site particularly for Saline residents.	SMRT answered that the routes picked are designated core paths and they are aware of a trodden path that links to this path network. SMRT will create the path network at the site and cannot make new paths on other people's land outside the site. Suggest asking the local authority planner. Note the CORE paths shown on the LMP maps may not be accessible but are shown on the official core path GIS layer (note one is ploughed up across local farm).
Blairhouse Community Liaison Committee	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	SMRT will be installing a memorial at the north west of the site . Will there be vehicle access to this?	There will not be vehicle access all the way to the memorial. The gates and roads can be open on 31st May 2020 to allow the community to commemorate the 125 year anniversary since the death of miners underground. (May need to note the road etc will be at owners risk).
Blairhouse Community Liaison Committee	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	Where will the parking for cars be at the site?	Likely at the bell mouth entrance of the main entrance to the site. The detail of the barrier placement is to be confirmed. There are no plans for a larger car park or to open the road due to the pressures of fly tipping.
Blairhouse Community Liaison Committee	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	The types of style crossing of the deer fence shown in the examples would not be suitable for disabled access and would not suit all users. A self-closing gate would be preferred.	A gate can be installed in fencing that is wide enough for access.
Blairhouse Community Liaison Committee	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	What will happen to the great crested newt at the site?	SMRT will remove the great crested newt fence at the end of the site construction. FLS will protect the GCN as per standard guidelines and note that the additional planting will extend/improve the habitat for the newts. Filtration ponds will be naturalized by SMRT. The current depth of these ponds will be reduced to 5 feet deep and the shape will be made less rectangular.

Statutory Consultee	Date contacted	Date response received	Issue raised	FLS Region Response
Blairhouse Community Liaison Committee	12/11/2019	12/11/2019		Note there may be interest in fresh pearl mussels project at the site (there are currently no populations in the area)

Table 2: Record of public consultation from drop-in event held at Oakley Community Hall (12th Nov. 2019)

Statutory Consultee	Date contacted	Date response	Issue raised	FLS Region Response
West Fife Woodlands	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	Discussion on footpath connectivity to Core Path network across the wider landscape. Will gorse in the north of the site be cut back to remove obstruction to current Core Path alignment?	Access points to the Blairhouse internal path network has been designed to connect to the Core Paths in the wider landscape. Obstructing gorse in the north end of the site will be removed during access path installation operations.
Member of the public	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	When will access be granted to the site?	Once FLS gain ownership of the site, pedestrian access will be granted as soon as is safe and practical to do so. This is unlikely to be before summer 2020.
Member of the public	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	Will there be a car park on site? If not, where should visitors park?	There will not be a public car park on site. This is primarily due to the quiet and isolated nature of the site which would likely attract anti-social behaviour. Resourcing limitations would limit FLS capabilities to staff and manage such issues. The site is designed primarily for local pedestrian access and use. Limited, sensible parking will be available in the site bell-mouth during periods when operational machinery access is not required.
Member of the public	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	What is the path surfacing going to be?	Access infrastructure surfacing throughout the site will be mixed. The main operational access road will be surfaced with stone. Minor footpaths and desire lines will be unsurfaced, grassy routes.

Statutory Consultee	Date contacted	Date response	Issue raised	FLS Region Response
Member of the public	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	What are the tree mixtures likely to look like in terms of shading and density?	- The initial establishment phase will look quite grassy and open. There will be a phase following this where mixed conifer areas will become more shaded and dense, as the tree canopy closes. First thinning, once the trees are around 12 m in height will open space between tree stems and crowns. Periodic closing and opening of the canopy around rotational thinning operations will persist thereafter. All planting mixtures throughout the site have elements of broadleaf, which will shed leaves in the winter, to provide seasonal variation in light levels. Open space around roads and paths will be maintained.
Member of the public	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	Can we have edible fruiting trees planted adjacent to the paths?	The problem with cultivated fruit trees is that they often require maintenance. There is already a community orchard in Muirside, Saline that is a good source of cultivated fruits for the community. FLS will look into providing an element of fruiting, native shrub species such as blackthorn (sloes) and hazel in strategic locations. Additional occasion crab apples or wild pears will be considered for path-side planning.
Member of the public	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	The pedestrian access from Cowstrandburn comes from a dangerous section of road with no parking.	Access from the road at this point is part of the Core Path network and is not on FLS land. Requests for additional works or facilities that the community desire could be flagged with a local Access Officers via the Fife Access Forum.
Member of the public	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	Will there be trees planted for biodiversity?	Yes. The new wet woodland and mixed broadleaf areas have been designed to extend and connect existing similar habitat types in the landscape. New planting native broadleaf species, including fruiting shrubs, will increase habitat and food sources for a wide range of associated species. Mixed conifer areas will provide habitat and food from seed cones to red squirrel and key bird species.
Member of the public	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	When will harvesting start?	Conifer areas will be first to reach maturity for a first thinning at 12-15 m in height. This is likely to be in 15-20 years' time.
Member of the public	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	Will there be a memorial to the miners kill historically on the site?	Discussions are already underway with the Community Liaison Group about location and installation of a small miners memorial. FLS will continue to facilitate this if the community desire.

Statutory Consultee	Date contacted	Date response	Issue raised	FLS Region Response
Member of the public	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	Will there be benches and viewpoints?	FLS are working on providing long-term viewpoints of prominent landscape features from the site, within the parameters of growing a productive forest on the site. FLS will look into the possibility of installing benches at some of the key points.
Member of the public	12/11/2019	12/11/2019	I think it would be a good idea to get local children and young people involved in planting and maintenance of the new woodland, to establish a sense of ownership and responsibility.	We agreed. FLS have a Community Ranger team that are already working in the area and will continue to work with local schools and community groups to provide opportunities for practical involvement.

Appendix II : Supporting Information

II/1.0 Physical site factors

II/1.1 Geology, soils and landform

Underlying geology is classified as Limestone Coal Formation, Clackmannan Group by the British Geological Survey. This is characterised by sequences of sandstone, siltstone, mudstone, limestone, ironstone, coals and searock. In practice, the restored opencast elements of the Blairhouse site have had several of these sequences unevenly mixed in the overburden removal and reinstating processes.

Soils on the restored opencast mine areas have been subject to stripping, storage and recent redistributing. They are therefore mixed and disturbed in nature. Restored soils do not act as natural soils due to disturbance of structure and microbiological function. It has been documented by studies conducted by Forest Research that such disturbed soils are characterised by impeded drainage, a lack of cohesion with underlying layers and a heightened vulnerability to compaction. Restored soils at Blairhouse are generally a sandy clay texture and have been laid at depths of 30 – 70 cm over the land-formed overburden layers.

Soils within the existing woodland areas are largely undisturbed. There are both typical surface water gleys (7) and brown surface water gleys (7b) present. Additionally there is 1.8 ha of previous agricultural ground at the south western extent of the site, that is brown surface water gley that may have historically been subject to cultivation (7bc). Indicator plant species are generally indicative of medium with patches of poor nutrient regime.

Picture 1: Photograph from top of former bing, orientated north towards Saline, showing restored soils prior to planting.

Picture 2: Photograph from the northern site boundary, orientated southeast towards the void, showing restored soils prior to planting in the foreground and the land formed former bing in the background.

II/1.2 Climate

Elements of the site are sheltered to moderately exposed with a DAMS scores of 11 to 15, depending on topography. The site is relatively low-lying at 80 – 120 m above sea level. Currently the site is classified as warm and moist with an average accumulated temperature of 1300, average moisture deficit of 120 and continentality score of 5. Climate change models show exposure increasing, accumulated temperature increasing and moisture deficit decreasing over the next 30 years.

II/2.0 Biodiversity and environmental designations

II/2.1 Designations

Much of the existing woodland on Blairhouse site is categorised at Long-Established (of plantation origin) semi-natural woodland in Scottish Ancient Woodland Inventory.

II/2.2 Habitats and species

The following UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species and Priority Habitats have been detected on site through a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal carried out by Elliott Environmental Surveyors (2018), or recorded in neighbouring FLS blocks by FLS staff. This list is not considered exhaustive, in fact only contains relatively easily detected terrestrial mammals and amphibians at present. Additional species are likely to be detected during the life-span of this Land Management Plan, as FLS staff familiarise themselves with the site. This list does however illustrate a baseline of present species and habitats for expansion and improvement.

UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species:
- Otter
- Pine Martin
- Red Squirrel
- Great Crested Newt

UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats:
- Wet Woodland
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

II/2.3 Pests and diseases

Dothistroma needle blight (*Dothistroma septosporum*) is present across Fife. Local FLS blocks, Devilla to the west and Carnock to the east, are Scots pine dominant. These blocks are currently subject to silvicultural restructuring efforts to widen structural and species diversity and subsequently improve resilience to Dothistroma needle blight. With these local factors and principles detailed in the Dothistroma Action Plan for Scotland (2018) considered, species

choice for Blairhouse represents a further contribution to local species diversity and long-term resilience to Dothistroma needle blight.

II/3.0 Social factors

II/3.1 Community and Recreation

Blairhouse falls within the Woodlands In and Around Towns (WAIT) designation, being within 1 km of Oakley (population 2,250). WIAT is a Scottish Government project with an aim 'to support the creation and management of woods to improve the quality of life for people living and working in Scotland's towns and cities.'

WIAT Objectives are:
- Bringing Urban Woodlands into active management to benefit communities
- Creating new urban woodlands to benefit communities
- Supporting programmes and activities that help people use and enjoy their woodlands

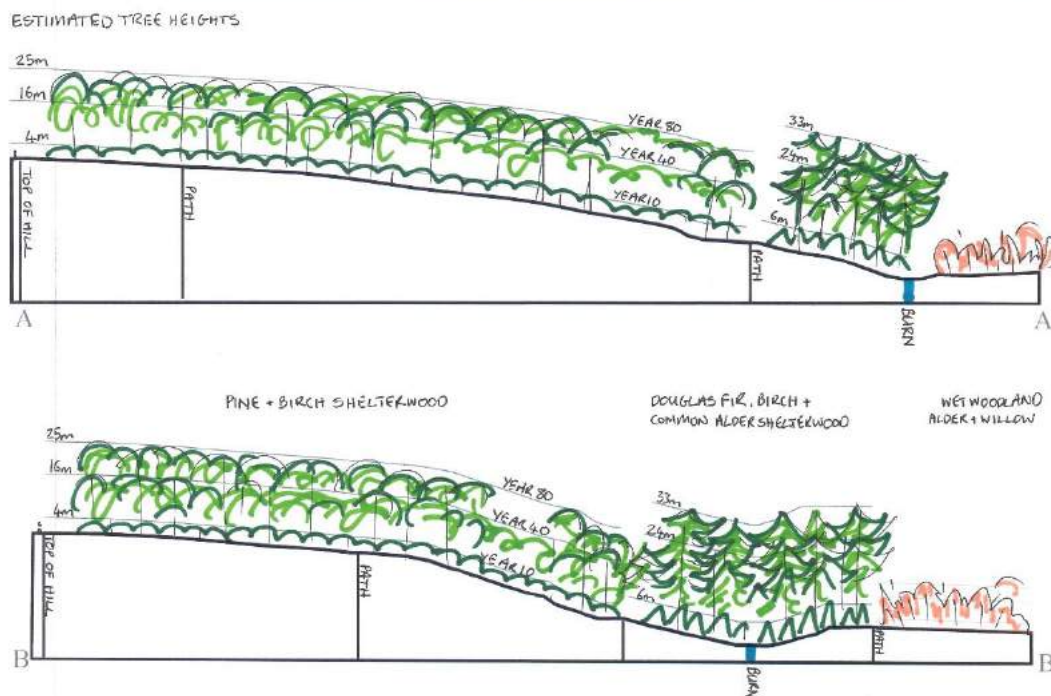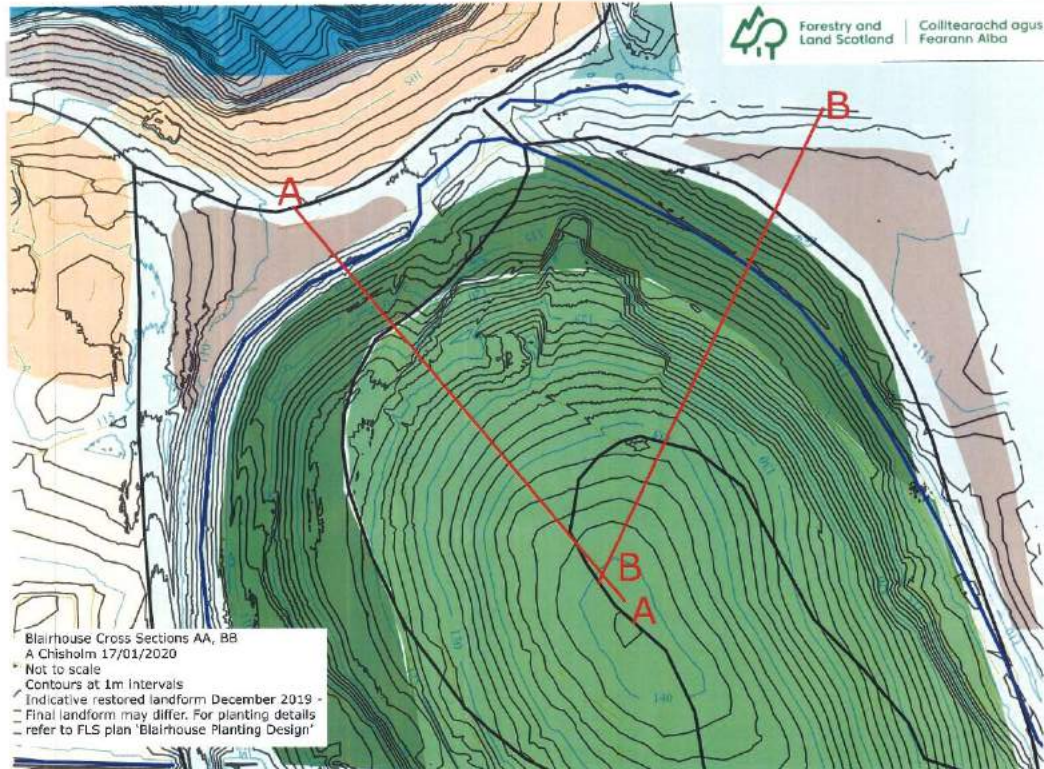Further details on WIAT are available at https://forestry.gov.scot/
Blairhouse is within the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN), which covers 10,000 square kilometres across Central Scotland, an area encompassing 3.5 million residents. The CSGN was established by Scottish Government as an initiative to support Scotland's long-term sustainable economic development. The CSGN aims to change the face of Central Scotland by restoring and improving the rural and urban landscape of the area. The CSGN vision is that:

"By 2050, Central Scotland has been transformed into a place where the environment adds value to the economy and where people's lives are enriched by its quality."

Further details, including a list of key principles and themes for the delivery of the CSGN can be found in Central Scotland Green Network: The Vision (2011) or at http://www.centralscotlandgreennetwork.org/

Picture 3: Illustration of viewpoint investigations for the top of the former bing, produced by FLS Landscape Architect. Contours and indicative route alignment are as delivered by SMRT.

Investigations of a potential viewpoint from the top of the former bing conclude that initial panoramic views will become limited by establishing woodland in the longer-term. However linear open space around access routes and a drainage network will provide channels for appreciation of the surrounding landscape. These will be further complemented by additional views through a maturing crop created by rotations of canopy thinning operations. Long-distance views will also be complemented by a more immediate sense of place created by well thinned mixed woodland and roadside open space at the pinnacle of the former bing.

II/3.3 Heritage

In Remembrance
Of
The Miners Who Lost Their
Lives Due to a Fire
In
Jersey Seam No 2 Pit
Kinneddar Colliery
On 31st May 1895

GEORGE BELL AGED 28 YEARS
JOHN HUNTER AGED 28 YEARS
THOMAS HUNTER AGED 41 YEARS
WILLIAM McKENNA AGED 42 YEARS
GEORGE RAMAGE AGED 31 YEARS
ALEXANDER SHARP AGED 42 YEARS
FRANK SHARP AGED 52 YEARS
THOMAS SHARP AGED 23 YEARS
ALEXANDER THOMPSON AGED 31 YEARS

"Dedicated To All Coal Miners"

Picture 4: Draft design of the memorial to be installed at Blairhouse.

II/3.4 Historic Land Use

Picture 5: Ordnance Survey Map, published 1856. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland

Picture 6: Ordnance Survey Map, published 1896. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland

Picture 7: Ordnance Survey Map, published 1941. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland

II/4.0 Statutory requirements and key external policies

- Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029
- A Land Use Strategy for Scotland 2016-2021
- The UK Forestry Standard 2017
- UK Woodland Assurance Scheme 2018
- A strategic Framework: Woodlands In and Around Woodlands (WIAT) Programme 2015-2020
- Central Scotland Green Network: The Vision 2011
- SEPA Flood Risk Management Strategy: Forth Estuary 2015
- Fife Local Development Plan 2017
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment 2019

Appendix III : Land Management Plan Brief

Key Background Information

- Blairhouse is a 89.5 ha site of former opencast and deep coal mining.

- The site is located in south Fife. The surrounding landscape is of mixed agriculture and forestry. There are also several other restored and derelict mining sites, and active or repurposed quarries locally.

- Neighbouring communities include Oakley, Saline and Cowstrandburn hamlet. Villages and towns across the local landscape share a strong coal mining heritage.

- Blairhouse was last operational as an opencast mine site from 2010 - 2013 under Scottish Coal Co Ltd. The site then entered a period of dereliction.

- In July 2014 Scottish Mines Restoration Trust (SMRT) acquired the site to deliver the land-forming and soil replacement phase of the site restoration.

- At the time of writing, Scottish Mines Restoration Trust (SMRT) operations are nearing completion. Soil replacement operations have been delivered to Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) specifications, which provide adequate conditions for woodland establishment and sustained growth. Where soil placement operations are complete, the ground is currently open (approx. ½ of the total site).

- As part of the land forming phase, SMRT are installing operational and recreational access routes. These have been consulted and agreed upon with the local community, Fife Council and FLS.

- All land forming, soil replacement and access installation operations will be completed by SMRT prior to FLS acquisition and the implementation of this Land Management Plan.

- Prior to mining there was woodland present on much of the site (Black Wood), mostly being Long Established of Plantation Origin. Remnant elements of this woodland now cover approximately ¼ of the site, the rest having historically been removed for agricultural expansion (1900s) and more recently for the undertaking of surface mining activities (2010 -2013).

- Blairhouse falls within the Woodland In and Around Towns (WIAT) zone and is thus subject to Scottish Government community access and engagement objectives.

- Operational access is via a gravel access road to the south which connects the site to the A907. A east-west core path is currently redirected around the northern extent of the site. Public access to site interior has remained closed throughout the active mining, dereliction, land forming and soil placement phases.

Strategic Drivers

To succeed in realising the vision as set out in the Scottish Forestry Strategy 2019-2029, six 'Priorities for Action' been identified for implementation:

- *Ensuring forests and woodlands are sustainably managed*

- *Expanding the area of forests and woodlands, recognising wider land-use objectives*

- *Improving efficiency and productivity, and developing markets*

- *Increasing the adaptability and resilience of forests and woodlands*

- *Enhancing the environmental benefits provided by forests and woodlands*

- *Engaging more people, communities and businesses in the creation, management and use of forests and woodlands*

Forestry and Land Scotland has developed five Corporate Outcomes that will guide our work over the next three years, each of which set out a position statement of where we want to be by 2022. The Corporate Outcomes support the delivery of the Scottish Forestry Strategy Priorities for Action. The Corporate Outcomes are detailed in the Forestry and Land Scotland Corporate Plan 2019-2022. In brief these are:

1. *Supporting a sustainable rural economy*

2. *Looking after Scotland's national forests and land*

3. *National forests and land for visitors and communities*

4. *A supportive, safe and inclusive organisation*

5. *A high performance organisation*

In preparing the Brief and Objectives for this Land Management Plan (LMP) for Blairhouse, site opportunities and constraints relating to delivery of the Corporate Outcomes were evaluated. Those most relevant to Blairhouse are detailed below.

Key Drivers & Draft Management Objectives

With the site's constraints and opportunities considered, a short list of the most relevant Corporate Outcomes and related Operational Actions are extracted from the Corporate Plan 2019-2022 and listed below. Subsequent Management Objectives are defined for taking forward into the Land Management Plan.

1. **Supporting a Sustainable Rural Economy**

FLS supports a sustainable rural economy by managing the national forests and land in a way that encourages sustainable business growth, development opportunities, jobs and investments.

Relevant operational actions for delivery under this outcome:
- 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.
- Providing a sustainable supply of timber to Scotland's timber processing sector.
- Support the venison processing sector through our deer management.

> **Management Objectives:**
>
> Establish a new productive and resilient mixed woodland for long-term sustainable timber supply. Species selection and silvicultural systems applied appropriately to soil conditions, habitat types and operational variables across the site.
>
> Manage and protect new woodland during establishment with appropriate planting operations and herbivore management.

2. **Looking after Scotland's national forest and land**

Scotland's national forests and land are looked after; biodiversity is protected and enhanced; and more environmental services and provided to people.

Relevant operational actions for delivery under this outcome:
- Managing the national forests and land to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.
- Taking specific conservation action for vulnerable priority species (e.g red squirrel, capercaillie, black grouse).

> **Management Objectives:**
>
> Protect and enhance the biodiversity value of the site through the provision of diverse and well-connected habitats including open space, water features and various native woodland types.
>
> Improve habitat connectivity and food availability for local populations of priority species where appropriate.

3. National forests and land for visitors and communities

Everyone can visit and enjoy Scotland's national forests and land to connect with nature, have fun, benefit their health and wellbeing and have opportunity to engage in our community decision making.

Relevant operational actions for delivery under this outcome:
- Maintaining walking and biking trails to promote fun in the outdoor, 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.

> **Management Objectives:**
>
> Establish and maintain a well-connected and diverse network of recreation routes, designed for use by local communities.
>
> Continue to work with local communities to enable opportunities for learning and engagement on the site.