

Supporting documents: Designated Site Planning

**Designated sites covered by this document**

River Evelix SAC  
Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet SSSI  
Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet SPA  
Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA\*  
Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet RAMSAR\*

\*included in Easter Ross LMP

**Dates of plan**

Start date of plan: 2015  
End date of plan: 2020

The Land Management Plan runs for 10 year's, 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 & Objectives**

The aim of this Plan is to fully take into account any management and mitigation required for the designated land on and around the National Forest Estate based on the area covered by the East Sutherland Land Management Plan.

This plan aims to act as a basis for targeted management for the notified features and to recognise other operations which may affect them through general use and management of the land on the National Forest Estate (NFE).

**Section 1 Designated Sites covered by this Land Management Plan**

Table 1: Summary of designations relating to this plan						
Designated Site Name	PA Site code	Site Type	Total Area of designated site (ha)	Area in this plan (ha)	% Within this plan	% on NFE
River Evelix SAC	8358	SAC	20.2	0.0	0%	0%
Strath Carnaig/Fleet	9188	SSSI	14703.6	2020.6	13.7%	13.7%
Strath Carnaig/Fleet	9190	SPA	14703.6	2020.6	13.7%	13.7%
Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet*	8490	SPA	7836.33	0.0	0.0%	1.82%
Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet*	8420	RAMSAR	7836.6	0.0	0.0%	1.82%

Map 3 (Key Features – Environmental) highlights the location of the above designated sites in relation to the LMP boundary and the NFE management area. The plan also shows the other designated sites in East Sutherland for context.

For further detail on the designations listed in Table 1, refer to the SNH documentation at the SiteLink page at [www.snh.gov.uk/SNHi](http://www.snh.gov.uk/SNHi) and on the North Highland Forest District electronic filing system (T/Environment/Designations).

The remainder of this plan will refer in detail only to the elements of the above designated sites on the NFE or with the potential to be directly affected by our management.

\*Dornoch and Loch Fleet SPA/RAMSAR is included in our Easter Ross Management Plan. It is noted in this plan as having qualifying features that may be affected indirectly by our management and therefore no further detail is given in this DSP.

Section 2 Features on the NFE and condition

Only features that exist on the NFE within this LMP or have the potential to be directly affected by our management operations are listed in the table below:

Table 2 Features on the NFE within this LMP

Site Type	Site code	Feature description	SCM Condition (Date assessed)	Condition on NFE	Management Classification (if relevant)
SSSI	8358	Margaritifera margaritifera	Unfavourable No Change (2003)	Partially recovering	No outstanding remedies
SSSI	9188	Circus cyaneus	Favourable Declining (2013)	Favourable	No outstanding remedies
SPA	9190	Circus cyaneus	Favourable Declining (2013)	Favourable	No outstanding remedies

Margaritifera margaritifera

The Freshwater Pearl Mussel has been the subject of significant conservation action both nationally and locally on the Evelix through the LIFE Pearls in Peril Project. Forestry operations and management has the potential to impact very significantly upon this species, positively in the form of improved water quality through riparian woodland restoration and negatively through any increases in diffuse pollution. The species is particularly vulnerable to sporadic siltation events during it's juvenile phase and adult mussels potential to reproduce is negatively affected by both sporadic and sustained diffuse pollution.

The age of the conifer crop at Achormlarie (NFE Forest immediately adjacent to the SAC) means that no harvesting or increase in civil engineering has occurred since the last LMP. Harvesting on any significant scale is still some way off however road construction associated with harvesting may progress within the plan period subject to funding.

The conservation objectives for the SAC are to avoid deterioration of the habitats or significant disturbance to M margaritifera, 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 M margaritifera that the following are maintained in the long term:

- ☐ Population of the species as a viable component of the site
- ☐ Distribution of the species within site
- ☐ Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
- ☐ Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
- ☐ No significant disturbance of the species
- ☐ Distribution and viability of the species' host species
- ☐ Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species' host species

Circus cyaneus

Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors is of national and international importance for its population of breeding **hen harrier** *Circus cyaneus*. The area regularly supports 12 breeding pairs of hen harriers, which represents approximately 2.5% of the breeding population of Great Britain. The hen harrier, amongst other bird species that are considered vulnerable or rare, is listed on Annex I to Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the Birds Directive). As such, the Government is required to take special conservation measures to ensure the hen harrier's survival and reproduction. Due to the numbers of hen harrier breeding on the SSSI, the site qualifies as a Special Protection Area under Article 4 of the Birds Directive.

The SSSI consists of two large areas of upland between Dornoch and Lairg. The predominant habitat types are heather moorland and blanket bog which together account for about 75% of the area. Two large conifer plantations are included within the SSSI accounting for 15% of the area and the remainder of the area is mostly rough acid grassland. There are a number of freshwater lochs in the SSSI, two of which (Loch Craggie and Loch Dola) also form part of the Lairg and Strath Brora Lochs SSSI and SPA. Small areas of broadleaved woodland (part of Torboll Woods SSSI is included) and willow scrub add to the diversity of the site and provide habitat for a variety of small birds which are potential prey for hen harrier. The upper part of the River Evelix SAC designated for freshwater pearl mussel is also included within the site.

### Section 3 Pressures and proposed actions

**Table 3 Pressures and proposed actions**

Site Type	Feature description	Pressures	Proposed action	Timescale	Location Map highlighting work & other key limiting factors
SSSI/ SPA	Circus cyaneus	Forestry operations	The need to maintain the proportion of open habitats within the forest is acknowledged and although the proposed felling coupes have been designed to maximise age structure and work towards a significant proportion of pre-thicket age classes, the age of the forest means that the timescale to achieve this is long.	Throughout the life of the Land Management Plan as and when required.	The proposed works are detailed in the Management Coupes and Future Habitats Maps for Achormlarie Forest, appended to this plan.
		Agricultural operations	We own a small area of land to the south east of Achormlarie that is managed under crafting tenure and as such we have very limited influence over agricultural operations. We will monitor environmental quality on this site and work with the tenant if we believe operations become deleterious to qualifying species.	Throughout the life of the Land Management Plan.	N/A
		Burning	None	N/A	N/A
		Game/Fisheries management	Deer management will be undertaken to FES best practice standards to protect tree crops and maintain the quality and structure of open habitats.	Throughout the life of the Land Management Plan.	Not mapped
		Plant pests and diseases	Crops will continue to be surveyed for Dothistroma needle blight infection.	Throughout the life of the Land Management Plan.	Not mapped
		Energy production	None	N/A	N/A
SAC	Margaritifera margaritifera	Diffuse pollution	All operations will be conducted within best practice UKFS and UKWAS standards and we will comply with 'Operations in FWPM Catchments' guidance. Both harvesting and civil engineering operations are very limited within the DSP plan period.	Throughout the life of the Land Management Plan as and when required.	The proposed works are detailed in the Management Coupes and Future Habitats Maps for Achormlarie Forest, appended to this plan.
		Forestry operations	One coupe is scheduled for clearfell during the DSP plan period, in the north west of the block. Civil engineering operations to build new roads to reach future coupes is unlikely to be undertaken during the next five years, however if funds become available this work may be brought forward (it will be subject to planning consent screening).  New riparian woodland is planned to assist in improving the condition of neighbouring SAC site and to limit the impact of these operations mechanised ground preparation will not be undertaken within 10 metres of watercourses.	Throughout the life of the Land Management Plan as and when required.	The proposed works are detailed in the Management Coupes and Future Habitats Maps for Achormlarie Forest, appended to this plan.

**Section 4 Operations within the Land Management Plan that could impact on the designated features on the NFE**

**Table 4 Operations within the LMP that could impact on features on the NFE**

Operation Type	Detailed description of operation and method	Mitigation measures to be applied	Timing	Map reference & other relevant comments
Clearfell of 1 coupe and restock of 1 coupe within Achormlarie Forest – Diffuse Pollution Risk.	Standard mechanical felling of trees by harvester and transport to roadside by forwarder for onwards transport by lorry. Ground preparation for replanting using a digger, with planting done by hand. If not done sensitively, this could represent a source of diffuse pollution compromising FWPM populations.	Wherever possible low impact ground preparation techniques will be used and follow on maintenance operations will be monitored to ensure diffuse pollution does not occur. All work will be risk assessed by the FD Environment Team through the work plan and business plan processes. Water protection measures will be rigorously enforced and UKFS Forest and Water Guidelines will be followed.	Through the life of this Land Management Plan	Management Coupes maps.
Clearfell of 1 coupe and restock of 1 coupe within Achormlarie Forest – Breeding Bird Risk. <b>ORC 1 and 11</b>	Standard forest operations to fell trees and remove to the roadside with harvester/forwarder, either removing all or most of the trees in the red phase coupes, and any subsequent amendments, and as part of the thinning programme in these areas (also including haulage of timber). This could impact on breeding hen harrier within the area.	All work will be risk assessed by the FD Environment Team through the work plan and business plan processes. This will also be influenced and informed by annual hen harrier survey. Where there is a risk of disturbance to hen harrier, work will be timed to avoid the key breeding periods. FC Guidance Note 32 will be adhered to.	Generally no op's to take place late March to late July within identified nesting areas.	Refer Management Coupes for the red phase clearfell coupes.
Creation of new forest roads as follows: Achormlarie Forest. <b>ORC 21</b>	Felling (if required) and creation of new roads by flattening of a base and then importing quarried material to create a new road suitable for timber haulage. This could impact on the hen harriers and FWPM within and adjacent to the area.	All work will be risk assessed by the FD Environment Team through the work plan and business plan processes. This will also be influenced and informed by species survey works. Where there is a risk of disturbance to breeding hen harrier, work will be timed to avoid the key periods for them. FC Guidance Note 32 will be adhered to.	Generally no op's to take place late March to late July within identified nesting areas.	Refer to CSM6 and Management Coupes maps
New planting and other machine work or operations within Achormlarie Forest (eg roads maintenance, control of non-native invasive species). <b>ORC 1 and 11</b>	Maintenance of roads which could involve lorries, diggers and other heavy machinery. Environment work to control invasive species, eg non-native regeneration with chainsaws and rhododendron control. This would also include any other operations within these forests. This could impact on breeding hen harrier within the area and FWPM in adjacent SAC. New planting of riparian woodland to increase scrub for foraging hen harriers and improve water quality.	All work will be risk assessed by the FD Environment Team through the work plan and business plan processes. This will also be influenced and informed by species survey works. Where there is a risk of disturbance to breeding hen harrier, work will be timed to avoid the key periods for them. FC Guidance Note 32 will be adhered to.	Generally no op's to take place late March to late July within identified nesting areas.	Work could be anywhere within Achormlarie Forest

# **Section 5 Operations within the Land Management Plan or aspects of the National Forest Estate within the FDP that could impact on Designated Sites adjacent to the NFE**

**Table 5: Operations that could impact on Designated Sites adjacent to the NFE**

Operation Type / Aspect of forest	Detailed description of issue or operation	Proposed action &/or mitigation	Timing	Map reference & other relevant comments
Clearfell of 1 coupe and restock of 1 coupe within Achormlarie Forest – Diffuse Pollution Risk.	Standard mechanical felling of trees by harvester and transport to roadside by forwarder for onwards transport by lorry. Ground preparation for replanting using a digger, with planting done by hand. If not done sensitively, this could represent a source of diffuse pollution compromising FWPM populations.	Wherever possible low impact ground preparation techniques will be used and follow on maintenance operations will be monitored to ensure diffuse pollution does not occur. All work will be risk assessed by the FD Environment Team through the work plan and business plan processes. Water protection measures will be rigorously enforced and UKFS Forest and Water Guidelines will be followed.	Through the life of this Land Management Plan	Management Coupes maps.
Clearfell of 1 coupe and restock of 1 coupe within Achormlarie Forest – Breeding Bird Risk.	Standard forest operations to fell trees and remove to the roadside with harvester/forwarder, either removing all or most of the trees in the red phase coupes, and any subsequent amendments, and as part of the thinning programme in these areas (also including haulage of timber). This could impact on breeding hen harrier within the area.	All work will be risk assessed by the FD Environment Team through the work plan and business plan processes. This will also be influenced and informed by annual hen harrier survey. Where there is a risk of disturbance to hen harrier, work will be timed to avoid the key breeding periods. FC Guidance Note 32 will be adhered to.	Generally no op's to take place late March to late July within identified nesting areas.	Refer Management Coupes for the red phase clearfell coupes.
Creation of new forest roads as follows: Achormlarie Forest.	Felling (if required) and creation of new roads by flattening of a base and then importing quarried material to create a new road suitable for timber haulage. This could impact on the hen harriers and FWPM within and adjacent to the area.	All work will be risk assessed by the FD Environment Team through the work plan and business plan processes. This will also be influenced and informed by species survey works. Where there is a risk of disturbance to breeding hen harrier, work will be timed to avoid the key periods for them. FC Guidance Note 32 will be adhered to.	Generally no op's to take place late March to late July within identified nesting areas.	Refer to CSM6 and Management Coupes maps
New planting and other machine work or operations within Achormlarie Forest (eg roads maintenance, control of non-native invasive species).	Maintenance of roads which could involve lorries, diggers and other heavy machinery. Environment work to control invasive species, eg non-native regeneration with chainsaws and rhododendron control. This would also include any other operations within these forests. This could impact on breeding hen harrier within the area and FWPM in adjacent SAC. New planting of riparian woodland to increase scrub for foraging hen harriers and improve water quality.	All work will be risk assessed by the FD Environment Team through the work plan and business plan processes. This will also be influenced and informed by species survey works. Where there is a risk of disturbance to breeding hen harrier, work will be timed to avoid the key periods for them. FC Guidance Note 32 will be adhered to.	Generally no op's to take place late March to late July within identified nesting areas.	Work could be anywhere within Achormlarie Forest



**Section 6 Appropriate Assessment/s undertaken on work contained within the LMP**

Appropriate Assessment for this Land Management Plan in relation to the River Evelix SAC and the Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA are attached in Annex 1. FCS will continue to consult with the FCS Species Ecologist, FWPM Steering Group Project Officer and SNH on any proposed changes to the LMP as per the tolerance table included, and a further Appropriate Assessment will be undertaken if required.

No Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken for the Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA as we feel that this is not required given the small percentage of Designated Land that we manage within this site.

**Section 7 Approvals, agreements & signatures**

**I confirm that the above management plan which covers the sections of Designated Sites shown in Table 1 of this Designated Site Planning Document in the Land Management Plan for East Sutherland contains the necessary detail, content and mitigation measures to comply with the statutory requirements contained within the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and in particular in relation to Part 2, Chapter 1, Section 14 (e), which covers consents via an agreed management plan (i.e. "SNH's consent under section 13 is not required in relation to carrying out an operation of the type described in subsection (1) of that section – .....(e) in accordance with any plan relating to the management of land which has been prepared by the public body... and approved in writing by SNH.**

**SNH Signature .....**      **Date .....**

**SNH Name .....**

**SNH Job Title .....**

**Address.....**

**Email .....**

**Contact telephone number .....**

FCS has a corporate requirement under UKWAS (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) and under the FCS Framework Document for FES (2010) to manage all designated sites in accordance with plans approved by the statutory authority, I therefore sign below to approve the contents of this plan in relation to the Designated Sites listed in Table 1 of this Designated Site Planning Document that fall within its boundary on the NFE.

**FCS Signature .....**      **Date .....**

**FCS Name .....**

**Forestry Commission Scotland**

**Appropriate assessment of forestry proposals which are likely to have a significant effect on a European site.**

(The Conservation of Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994. Regulation 48.)

**1a. Name of European site affected by the application and current designation status.**

River Evelix - SAC

**1b. Name of Component SSSI if relevant**

N/A

**2. Features of European interest, whether priority or non-priority; and conservation objectives for qualifying interests**

**SAC**

☐ *Margaritifera margaritifera* – Freshwater Pearl Mussel:  
SAC qualifying feature

To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, 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 species that the following are maintained in the long term:

- ⌚ Population of the species as a viable component of the site
- ⌚ Distribution of the species within site
- ⌚ Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
- ⌚ Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
- ⌚ No significant disturbance of the species
- ⌚ Distribution and viability of the species' host species
- ⌚ Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species' host species

## 2. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

**Name:** East Sutherland Land Management Plan

**Applicant:** Reference:

**Description of proposal:** Agreement of a Land Management Plan for the National Forest Estate in East Sutherland, along with a Designated Site Planning Section covering multiple designated sites. This plan sets out what management through the Land Management Plan will be carried out and also specific measures for management of the designated sites. The overall aim of the plan is to set out the long-term aims for the NFE in East Sutherland, agree specific measures that will benefit the designated sites, and also show how Forestry Commission Scotland will manage operations to mitigate any potential damage or disturbance.

### **Operations:**

- ☐ Thinning, clearfell, ground preparation and restock.
- ☐ Deer management.
- ☐ Roads maintenance, upgrade and construction.
- ☐ Management and maintenance of formal recreation facilities and events.
- ☐ Specific management operations for FWPM, including modification of ground vegetation and tree canopy structure in relation to riparian woodland, wetland creation and marking and monitoring of qualifying feature.

Forest operations within the catchment of the River Evelix SAC will comply fully with 'Operations in FWPM Catchments' (Environmental Guidance Note 5) and Forests & Water Guidelines. This mitigation is built into planning and work practices for ongoing forest work..

All civil engineering projects and temporary water crossings will meet SEPA best practice standards (e.g. CAR General Binding Rules & PPG) so that diffuse pollution is eliminated. Water crossings will not represent a barrier to salmonids. This will allow populations of mussels to move into appropriate habitat.

Riparian native woodland will be created along tributaries flowing into the SAC to indirectly benefit FWPM, salmonids and water quality. The new riparian zone will act as a natural buffer to protect the water course from neighbouring operations. It will also increase the food availability to FWPM and salmonids through insect/leaf fall.

FES will also contribute as required to wildlife crime initiatives to reduce the threat of poaching and pearl fishing. Finally all survey works will be undertaken using licensed and experienced ecologists.



**4. Assessment of impact on European interest.**

**4.1**

***Is the proposal directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site?***

**NO** (if Yes go to 5.)

**4.2**

***Is the proposal likely to have a significant effect on the European interest on the designated site? Yes***

All available current best practice guidance is identified within the scope of the plan to reduce indirect adverse effects on the River Evelix SAC. Benefits of creating riparian woodland development in forest tributaries will assist water quality within the SAC.

Felling/re-stocking will not take place within the catchment of this SAC within the first 10 year period of this plan.

**Conclusion – Significant effect unlikely**

**4.3 Summary of assessment in relation to possible impacts**

N/A

**4.4 Any other comments**

None.

**4.5 What would be the outcome on the site if the proposals not approved.**

If these proposals were not approved, there would be significant and damaging restriction on the development of beneficial riparian woodland. In addition, restructuring of the forest with greater diversity of species and greater area of native woodland would not be achieved.

**5 Conclusions**

***Will the proposal adversely affect the integrity of the European site:***

By planning to keep disturbance to a minimum using available guidance, surveys by experienced ecologists and expert advice when required, we feel that these proposals will not have a negative impact on the integrity of the River Evelix SAC.

**6 Conditions required (if any)**

None required, as mitigation built into planning and operational phases.

**Signed**

**Woodland officer/Area Officer:**

**Date :**

**Ops Manager/ Conservator:**

**Date:**

**Forestry Commission Scotland**

**Appropriate assessment of forestry proposals which are likely to have a significant effect on a European site.**

(The Conservation of Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994. Regulation 48.)

**1a. Name of European site affected by the application and current designation status.**

1. Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA

**1b. Name of Component SSSI if relevant**

Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet MoorsSSSI

**2. Features of European interest, whether priority or non-priority; and conservation objectives for qualifying interests**

**European non-priority interest:**

☐ Hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*

**Conservation objectives for qualifying interests:**

**Strath Carnaig & Strath Fleet Moors SPA**

**To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained.**

**To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:**

- ☐ Population of the species as a viable component of the site
- ☐ Distribution of the species within site
- ☐ Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
- ☐ Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
- ☐ No significant disturbance of the species

## 2. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

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### **Operations:**

- ☐ Thinning, clearfell, ground preparation and restock.
- ☐ Deer management.
- ☐ Roads maintenance, upgrade and construction.
- ☐ Management and maintenance of formal recreation facilities and events.
- ☐ Specific management operations for HH, including modification of ground vegetation and tree canopy structure in relation to scrubby riparian woodland, open habitat conservation and marking and monitoring of qualifying feature.

### **Mitigation:**

The proposal is over ten breeding seasons therefore there is potential for disturbance to breeding harriers. As part of operations, mitigation is included to reduce environmental impacts of proposals on hen harrier. This includes: FCS Guidance Note 32 – Breeding birds in Scottish Forests will be implemented to ensure that no breeding harriers will be disturbed linked to forestry works.

Where possible, works will be planned outwith the main bird breeding season.....

Bird surveys will be undertaken each spring to ensure HH will remain undisturbed as the proposal will run over ten breeding seasons within the SPA. Mitigation will be planned to correspond with FC Guidance Note 32.

East Sutherland Land Management Plan

**4. Assessment of impact on European interest.**

**4.1**

***Is the proposal directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site?***

**NO** (if Yes go to 5.)

**4.2**

***Is the proposal likely to have a significant effect on the European interest on the designated site? Yes*** (if yes assess impact on site)

Yes.

- Road construction – possible loss of habitat
- Re-stocking (tree planting) – possible loss of nest sites

**4.3 Summary of assessment in relation to possible impacts**

**Hen Harrier**

***a) Population of the species as a viable component of the site***

The restructuring plan is very positive for hen harrier, as this will make large areas of new ground available for both foraging and nesting harriers over a long period (up to 2050). For example, from first three phases of operation (c. 15 years), over 500ha of ground will be made favourable to hen harrier through felling, fallow and re-stocking. This site is currently in declining condition as a result of ongoing habitat loss.

***Habitat loss***

Road construction will result in some habitat loss within the SPA. Approx. 4.1km of forest road will be constructed within the plan period. This equates to approx. 6.15 ha. of habitat changed to a hard surfaced track which will have no benefit to hen harrier. However, road construction is necessary to achieve the long-term forest restructuring plan. Therefore, road construction will indirectly have a positive impact on the site and allow more open ground to become available to hen harriers.

The habitat availability and HH population is likely to increase as a result of road construction and subsequent forest restructuring.

**Conclusion – Conservation Objective met.**

***b) Distribution of the species within the site***

***Displacement - breeding***

Existing open areas traditionally used by one pair of hen harrier will be maintained within the design of the Forest Plan.

Restructuring of forests will allow new open ground to be available to nesting hen harriers, post-felling. The fallow and re-stocking periods will give the hen harrier approx. 10-15 years use until the canopy closes and it becomes less suitable for use (as HH prefer a more open aspect for nesting). New nest locations within these coupes will not be safeguarded from progressive forest closure, and no unplanted buffers will be implemented. Therefore, nest sites will slowly become less attractive within the SPA as forests mature.

However, the rolling programme of forest restructuring means hen harriers will have available nesting sites throughout the period of the plan (up to 2050). This means that they can move to more favorable habitat (a new felling/restocking area) nearby. This proposal is acknowledged as being very positive for hen harrier within the medium to long-term.

If specific HH nest sites persist and lend themselves to long-term retention, (e.g. at forest edges or on slopes in small gullies), the ongoing reviews will inform whether any particular small or edge compartments can be identified as an additional permanent HH nest site into the long-term.

*Displacement – roosting*

The exact location of the transitional autumn hen harrier roost site is not known, but is within the valley of the Allt Garbh-airigh, to the west end of Loch Buidhe. However, it should be noted that the roost site is thought to be only used on occasion and may be a temporary post-breeding roost (previously used in September/October). Phase 1 felling/restocking proposals will be cloaked from this transitional HH roost site by a new electricity substation (in construction). The distance from the roost site (approx. 700m) in addition to cloaking of works from the substation is considered to result in no displacement (and minimal disturbance) to any roosting hen harriers.

**Conclusion – Conservation Objective met**

***c) Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species***

***d) Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species***

This proposal will result in a significant increase of supporting habitat (both foraging and nesting) for hen harrier (see a & b above).

**Conclusion – Conservation Objectives met**

***e) No significant disturbance of the species***

Survey works and pre – operations planning procedures will ensure mitigation for any forestry works put in place during the bird breeding season. This will comply for FCS Guide 32.

**Conclusion – Conservation Objective met**

**4.4 Any other comments**

As this woodland is within the boundary of the SPA, hen harriers are a high priority; over and above other biodiversity target species.

**4.5 What would be the outcome on the site if the proposals not approved.**

If these proposals were not approved, there would be significant and damaging restriction on the development of beneficial habitat preservation and restructuring. In addition, restructuring of the forest with greater diversity of species and greater area of native woodland would not be achieved.

**5 Conclusions**

***Will the proposal adversely affect the integrity of the European site:***

By planning to keep disturbance to a minimum using available guidance, surveys by experienced ecologists and expert advice when required, we feel that these proposals will not have a negative impact on the integrity of the SPA.



**6 Conditions required (if any)**

None required, as mitigation built into planning and operational phases.

**Signed**

**Woodland officer/Area Officer:**

**Date :**

**Ops Manager/ Conservator:**

**Date:**

# Monument Management Plan

## North Highland Forest District 2015

### Vision

We are committed to undertaking conservation management, condition monitoring and archaeological recording at our significant historic assets; and to helping to develop, share and promote best-practice historic environment conservation management. We are proud to support *Our Place in Time: the Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland* and the emerging *Scottish Archaeology Strategy*; and often seek to contribute to the Scottish Archaeological Research Framework.

### General background

The key **UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) good forestry practice requirement** in relation to the protection and conservation of scheduled monuments within our planning framework is that “[1] *Scheduled Monuments must not be damaged and consent must be obtained from the relevant historic environment authority for any works that have the potential to damage the monument*”. The key **UKFS good forestry practice requirement** in relation to the management of the historic environment within our planning framework is that “[4] *Forest management plans and operational plans should set out how important historic environment features, including veteran trees, are to be protected and managed*” (UKFS 2011, 13).

The key **UKFS good forestry practice guidelines** in relation to the conservation of the historic environment within our planning framework are that we should “[18] *Aim to maintain the open settings for features of historical interest; where appropriate monitor changes in vegetation and consider using grazing or mowing [cutting or flailing] as part of the management plan*”; and “[19] *Manage public access so that open settings for [relevant] historic features are not subject to erosion or damage caused by visitor pressure*” (UKFS 2011, 22).

# Monument Management Plan

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The **Strategic Directions for Scotland's national forest estate** set out our priorities in terms of integrated land management. The key priorities for the historic environment state that *"we safeguard archaeological sites through our planning and management and recognise special places and features with local cultural meaning"* and that:

- *"we will continue to undertake conservation management, condition monitoring and archaeological recording at significant historic assets; and*
- *that we will continue to work with stakeholders to develop, share and promote best-practice historic environment conservation management"* (FCS 2013, 52).

Forest District Planning and Environment teams will ensure that details of our significant historic assets are included within Forest Design Plans and Land Management Plans. Historic environment features are identified and **protected** within our Work Plans and that damage is avoided during forestry operations; and relevant designated historic assets (and significant undesignated historic assets) are actively managed within a programme of detailed archaeological recording and **conservation** management. Where appropriate, significant historic assets are **presented** to the public as part of the Forest District recreational framework (with interpretation panels and access paths).

Significant archaeological sites will be protected and managed following the UKFS *Forests and historic environment* guidelines (2011), the FCS policy document *Scotland's Woodlands and the Historic Environment* (2008) and the supporting *FES Historic Environment Planning Guidelines* (available from the FCS Archaeologist). Harvesting coupes, access roads and fence lines will be surveyed by Forest District staff prior to any work being undertaken in order to ensure that upstanding historic environment features can be marked and avoided. At restocking, work prescriptions remove relevant historic environment features from ground disturbing operations and replanting. Opportunities to enhance the setting of important sites will be considered on a case-by-case basis (such as the views to and from a significant designated site).

# Monument Management Plan

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## Scottish Historic Environment Policy Chapter 5 'The Conservation of the Historic Environment by Government Bodies in Scotland'

### Designated Historic Assets Register

The implementation of SHEP5 requires the establishment of an **inventory of historic assets**<sup>i</sup>. The **Designated Historic Assets Register** contains information regarding all of the designated historic sites on Scotland's national forest estate. It includes sites from:

- **Scheduled Monuments** and **Listed Buildings** (individual designated features with **Monument Management Plans** and **Condition Surveys** respectively);
- the ***Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland***;
- the ***Inventory of Historic Battlefields*** (both non-statutory designations best considered by the relevant strategic plan); and also
- significant undesignated historic assets.

We also undertake a programme of detailed archaeological measured survey of our most significant sites in order to enhance the national historic environment record and inform conservation management.

### Forester GIS Heritage Module

The implementation of SHEP5 also required the establishment of a comprehensive GIS based national historic environment inventory for the national forest estate<sup>ii</sup>. The FCS Archaeologist has the overall responsibility for the maintenance and update of the national forest estate **Forester GIS Heritage Module** geodatabase (as *system owner*); Forest District Environment Teams have responsibility for use (as *data owners*).

Any recent archaeological surveys that have been undertaken on behalf of FCS have been incorporated into the Heritage Module geodatabase - and any new archaeological surveys required (in unimproved upland areas for example, or areas within which the archaeological record is unusually rich) will be undertaken to the standards laid out in *FES Historic Environment Planning Guidelines*. This will ensure that undiscovered historic environment features are mapped and recorded prior to forestry establishment and management operations - and will ensure the continued comprehensive protection of the known archaeological resource.

# Monument Management Plan

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## Forest District Monument Management Plans

The implementation of SHEP5 also requires an ongoing programme of conservation management, condition monitoring and archaeological recording at relevant significant designated assets<sup>iii</sup>. The annual **Forest District Monument Management Plan** identifies and records any major conservation works, significant condition monitoring programmes and archaeological measured surveys undertaken. The FD MMP is a collaborative document, referencing our **Forest District Strategic Plans** and Historic Scotland Field Officer reports and condition scores.

The annual **Forest District Monument Management Plan** replaces individual MMPs, enabling a better overview and providing a more dynamic planning document of FD priorities.

# Monument Management Plan

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## North Highland FD MMP 2015

North Highland Forest District has a significant role to play in delivering the protection, conservation and presentation of the historic environment on Scotland's national forest estate.

### Extract from Forest District Strategic Plan

*"The North Highlands is a special place. Today, the Flow Country of Caithness and Sutherland (a candidate for World Heritage Site status), the Assynt Geopark and the many Natura 2000 sites around our coastlines are recognised internationally. Through our land management planning, we will continue to identify where our resources can best be used to restore damaged habitats, protect our existing heritage sites and contribute to species conservation" (2014, 32).*

The **District Specific Actions** set out below reflect the wide range of our activity, including stakeholder involvement, protection mechanisms and specific site-based commitments.

National Key Commitment (Cared for)	District Specific Action
<b>We will safeguard archaeological sites through our planning and management, and recognise special places and features with local cultural meaning</b>	<p>We will review our significant holding of archaeology during land management planning reviews, and create proposals that enhance high priority sites and develop viewing opportunities, thus building on our work with community-based interest groups.</p> <p>We will continue to survey the National Forest Estate to identify and protect significant new heritage sites.</p>

# Monument Management Plan

## Major Monument Actions

The main objective of historic environment conservation management is to ensure the stable condition of the relevant monuments. In general terms, their condition is monitored by Historic Scotland's Field Officers, who record condition (1-5, good - poor), risk (1-5, low – high) and priority (a score of over 5 has been used to indicate a monument with significant issues) and management recommendations proposed. All intrusive scrub vegetation and tree regeneration will be removed. If required, clearance will occur at least once every year and will be undertaken by FCS Forest District staff or contractors. All scrub vegetation and naturally regenerating trees within the relevant scheduled area will be cut off at ground level using appropriate hand or power tools and removed. Any seedlings will be removed by pulling out by hand. Bracken encroachment shall be controlled within appropriate areas as necessary on an annual basis through strimming and / or chemical spraying, as appropriate. Any harvesting work will be planned and organised to avoid any damage to the relevant monuments in the course of any harvesting and timber extraction. No replanting will take place within any scheduled areas. Major monument action (and associated survey and / or special condition monitoring) is recorded below. Scheduled Monument Consent will be necessary in regard to any works that may cause damage or disturbance within the scheduled area.

Scheduled Monument	NGR	Monument Name (those in bold are / will be highlighted in their respective Land Management Plan)	Major Management Action (year action due) and / or general comments / AMS (Archaeological Measured Survey)	Date of last Historic Scotland FO visit	Condition	Risk	Priority
426	ND047607	Bridge of Broubster, standing stones 1350m NE of		12/05/2009	1	1	1.41
440	ND072592	Carriside, chambered cairn 350m NW of		24/08/2009	1	1	1.41
479	ND049583	Shurrery Kirk, chambered cairn 360m SSE of	Consider realigning fence.	16/03/2010	2	1	2.24
482	ND058570	Sithean Mor, long cairn 160m NW of Loch a'Mhuilinn		16/03/2010	2	1	2.24
542	ND052578	Cnoc an Ratha, fort SSE of Shurrery Kirk	Remove standing timber (this has been done?)	16/03/2010	4	4	5.66
550	ND205374	Golsary, broch on W bank of Burn of Golsary, Rumster Forest		07/09/2010	2	2	2.83
573	ND212372	Rumster, broch 200m WSW of, Forse		07/09/2010	1	1	1.41



# Monument Management Plan

591	ND279424	Toftgun, broch 365m SSE of, Loch of Camster		12/11/2009	1	1	1.41
1672	NH505585	<b>Knock Farril</b> hillfort	AMS (2011); new interpretation (2015)	15/04/2008	2	1	2.24
1758	NC567026	Achany, cairn 890m NW of		05/05/2009	2	2	2.83
1779	NC679390	Clach an Righ, stone circle 400m NNW of Dalharrold		29/09/2004	1	1	1.41
1784	NC557027	Druim Baile Fuir, stone circle, cairns, hut circles and enclosure		11/04/2007	4	1	4.12
1812	NC574055	<b>The Ord</b> , chambered cairns, cairns, settlements and field systems	AMS (2010); [1] Upgrade access path (this is an aspiration and will need Scheduled Monument Consent).	08/02/2012	2	1	2.24
1829	NC591103	<b>Altbreck</b> , broch 1650m ESE of Dalchork Bridge	AMS (2013); [1] fence area [2] provide conservation grazing [3] monitor impact with fixed point photography.	11/02/2010	2	2	2.83
1885	NH782944	<b>Skelbo Wood</b> , broch 300m SW of Glen Cottage	[1] Archaeological record (2012) [1] fence area [2] provide conservation grazing [3] monitor impact with fixed point photography.	14/09/2006	3	4	5
2395	NH727834	Red Burn, chambered cairn 500m S of Redburn Cottage		09/03/2010	2	1	2.24
2510	NC689416	<b>Rosal</b> , deserted township	ALS (2014); [1] fence area [2] provide conservation grazing [3] provide new interpretation (2015)	10/11/2009	2	1	2.24
2511	NC701360	Bad an Leathaid, deserted township		24/08/2004	2	1	2.24
2512	NC702346	Truderscraig, deserted township, hut circles & clearance cairns		10/11/2009	2	1	2.24
2513	NC688348	Cnoc na h'Iolaire, hut circles & clearance cairns		27/10/2005	3	3	4.24
2514	NC687370	Cnoc na Gamhna, hut circles, burnt mound & clearance cairns	[1] Archaeological survey and mark out [2] careful harvesting of standing timber	29/04/2008	4	2	4.47
2515	NC683407	Rosal, hut circles	Careful harvesting of standing timber and removal of brash and windblow	18/09/2009	3	2	3.61
2517	NC689392	Meall a Choire Bhuidhe, hut circles	Careful harvesting of standing timber and removal of brash and windblow	06/03/2008	5	4	6.4
2518	NC686357	Allt a'Bhealaich, hut circles		10/11/2009	3	2	3.61

# Monument Management Plan

2519	NC696334	Cnoc Airigh an Leathaid, hut circles		27/10/2005	5	4	6.4
2520	NC718345	Leathad an Daraich, hut circles		18/09/2009	3	2	3.61
2521	NC673417	Allt Ceann na Coille, hut circles & field clearance cairns	Careful harvesting of standing timber and removal of brash and windblow	26/03/2009	4	4	5.66
2522	NC685398	Blar na Fola & Breac Dubh, hut circles		18/09/2009	3	2	3.61
2720	NH396628	<b>Little Garve Bridge</b>	Major masonry consolidation (2007)	15/02/2006	5	5	7.07
2914	NH721767	Scotsburn Wood, chambered cairn 550m NNE of Scotsburn House		30/03/2010	2	1	2.24
2915	NH726768	Scotsburn Wood, chambered cairn 820m NE of Scotsburn House		30/03/2010	2	1	2.24
2916	NH728767	Scotsburn Wood, cairn 910m ENE of Scotsburn House		30/11/2005	3	2	3.61
3129	NH747780	Lamington Park, long cairn 950m E of Lochan a'Chlaidheimh		05/03/2008	2	1	2.24
4022	NC303079	Cnoc Chaornaidh, chambered cairn 570m SW of		23/03/2010	2	2	2.83
4023	NC301081	Cnoc Chaornaidh, chambered cairn 560m WSW of		23/03/2010	2	2	2.83
4025	NC302101	Strathseasgaich, burnt mound 500m SW of		23/03/2010	1	1	1.41
4042	NC301091	Cnoc Chaornaidh, cairn 930m NW of		30/07/2008	2	2	2.83
4043	NC311097	Loch Ailsh, chambered cairn 900m SE of Strathseasgaich		23/03/2010	1	1	1.41
4044	NC300102	Strathseasgaich, chambered cairn 700m SW of		23/03/2010	1	1	1.41
4045	NC298084	Cnoc Chaornaidh, chambered cairn 180m NNE of, Stratheskie		23/03/2010	2	2	2.83
4046	NC313079	Allt Eileag, chambered cairn 800m SE of Cnoc Chaornaidh		30/07/2008	2	2	2.83

# Monument Management Plan

4054	NC290094	Aultivullin, cairn 650m SE of		30/07/2008	2	2	2.83
4505	NH681942	Creagan Reamhan, farmstead, kiln and fields 300m SSW of		28/03/2008	1	1	1.41
4560	NC608112	Meall Meadhonach, hut circles, field system and shielings 750m SW of		20/08/2008	2	2	2.83
4563	NC619145	Dalnessie, settlement N of Feith Osdail		22/08/2008	2	1	2.24
4564	NC314091	Cnoc Chaornaidh, chambered cairn, cairn and long mound E of		30/07/2008	3	2	3.61
4569	NC622096	Loch Tigh na Creige, house 200m N of E end of		11/02/2010	2	2	2.83
4727	NH716804	Carn a Chait cairn		30/03/2010	2	1	2.24
4743	NH731786	Provost's Well, hut circles and field system 150m NW of		05/03/2008	2	1	2.24
4750	NH656722	Carn na Croiche chambered cairn		11/05/2009	3	2	3.61
4752	NH730798	Carn Liath long cairn		05/03/2008	1	1	1.41
4760	NH728784	Provost's Well, homestead and enclosure 550m WSW of		05/03/2008	2	1	2.24
4763	NH734834	Redburn Cottage, long cairn 880m SE of		30/11/2005	3	2	3.61
5078	NC614099	Loch Tigh na Crieg, farmstead 600m NNE of NW end of		11/02/2010	2	2	2.83
5081	NC597149	Loch Beag na Furalachd, cairn and shielings 1175m ESE of SW end		20/08/2008	1	1	1.41
5084	NC623139	Achadh nan Eun, shieling 1400m N of		20/08/2008	1	1	1.41
5090	NC615103	Creagan Tigh na Creige, shielings 600m W of		22/02/2010	1	1	1.41
5093	NC619124	Meall Meadhonach, settlement and shielings 900m N of		20/08/2008	1	1	1.41

# Monument Management Plan

5153	NC603093	Loch Tigh na Creige, settlement 650m W of W end of loch	11/02/2010	3	2	3.61
5154	NC625124	Achadh nan Eun, shielings	22/02/2010	2	2	2.83
5159	NC602146	Loch Beag na Fuaralachd, shielings 1000m SW of SW end of	22/08/2008	1	1	1.41
5160	NC618096	Loch Tigh na Creige, sheepfold 300m NW of NE corner of	11/02/2010	2	1	2.24
5161	NC604124	Meall Meadhonach, sheepfold 1550m NW of	22/08/2008	2	1	2.24
5162	NC624097	Tighcreag, hut circle 500m WSW of	11/02/2010	3	2	3.61
5194	NC607120	Meall Meadhonach, hut circle and field system 1200m WNW of	22/02/2010	2	1	2.24
5299	ND058593	Lorg an Fhamhair, footprint carving	16/03/2010	1	1	1.41
5300	NC589138	Cnoc a' Bhreac-leathaid, shielings and cairnfield 700m NNE of	22/02/2010	2	2	2.83
5301	ND176492	Halsary, standing stones 450m WNW of and 620m NW of	24/08/2009	1	1	1.41
5305	ND073593	Carriside, hut circle 350m N of	24/08/2009	1	1	1.41
5306	ND048607	Bridge of Broubster, limekilns 1450m ENE of	12/05/2009	1	1	1.41
5309	NC618097	Loch Tigh Na Creige, hut circle 350m N of NE corner	11/02/2010	2	1	2.24
5401	NC600149	Loch Beag na Fuaralachd, prehistoric settlement 950m SW of SW end of	22/08/2008	1	1	1.41
5406	ND067593	Carriside, cairns 750m NW of	24/08/2009	2	1	2.24
5462	NH580980	Invershin Primary School, settlement 760m NE of and 750m ENE of	05/05/2009	3	2	3.61

# Monument Management Plan

5470	NH586966	Invershin Farm, settlement and burnt mound 1200m E of		05/05/2009	2	2	2.83
5483	NH761932	Carn an Fheidh long cairn		29/04/2009	1	1	1.41
5484	NH786942	Glen Cottage, long cairn 520m SE of		28/03/2008	2	2	2.83
5493	NH771897	Davochfin, chambered cairn 700m NNW of		24/04/2009	2	2	2.83
5497	NH579965	Invershin Farm, settlement and burnt mound 500m E of		05/05/2009	2	1	2.24
5498	NH579977	Invershin Primary School, settlement 600m E of		05/05/2009	3	2	3.61
5563	NC592102	<b>Altbreck</b> , homestead 1800m ESE of Dalchork Bridge	AMS (2012) [1] fence area [2] provide conservation grazing [3] monitor impact with fixed point photography.	11/02/2010	2	1	2.24
5564	NC699438	Dalvina Lodge, hut circles 320m SE and 450m SE of		09/04/2010	2	2	2.83
5565	NC698428	Dalvina Lodge, settlements 700m SSE of and 1050m S of		09/04/2010	3	1	3.16
5573	NH772926	Prancy, hut circle 330m NNE of		18/03/2008	1	1	1.41
5627	NC693428	Dalvina Lodge, hut circle and field system 1130m SSW of		09/04/2010	1	1	1.41
5628	NC697426	Dalvina Lodge, hut circle 1300m S of		09/04/2010	1	1	1.41
5663	NC665509	<b>Cracknie</b> , souterrain and settlement	AMS (2012)	09/04/2010	1	1	1.41
5799	ND285409	Toftgun, cairn and shieling 1950m SSE of		12/11/2009	1	1	1.41
5898	NH771892	Camore Wood settlement	AMS (2012) [1] consider conservation grazing [2] monitor impact with fixed point photography	29/04/2009	3	3	4.24
10942	NH685867	Creag an Fhithich, fort, Dounie Wood	AMS (2013)	09/03/2010	2	2	2.83
11056	NH411566	Carn na Buaille, fort 750m NNW of Comrie, Contin		15/04/2009	2	2	2.83

# Monument Management Plan

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## Listed Buildings

HB Number	Grid Ref	Designation	LB Name	Comments
52317	NH688744	A	Inchindown Underground Fuel Reservoir	Underground and unused; managed decay.

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<sup>i</sup> [5.11] Organisations must be aware of the designated historic assets in their estate and should either establish and maintain an inventory of assets, or ensure that their existing property/asset management systems take account of historic aspects. Such assets might include: a building or group of buildings; part of a building (eg a retained façade); an individual archaeological site or monument or a group of them. Priority in all activities should be given to designated assets (scheduled monuments; listed buildings; conservation areas; gardens and designed landscapes or battlefields on non-statutory Inventories (see Chapter 2)). This record should where possible incorporate a statement of the asset's significance based on available information.

<sup>ii</sup> [5.12] Historic assets that are not scheduled, listed or on non-statutory Inventories – particularly archaeological features – may be material considerations in the planning system or require mitigation in advance of development and bodies should normally also record the location and, if known, the extent of such assets. These basic data are available from RCAHMS and from local Historic Environment Records.

<sup>iii</sup> [5.15] A fundamental requirement of the SHEP is to maintain a system of regular condition surveys for designated assets (no more than 5 years apart), appropriate to the sort of historic asset - buildings will require a very different approach from, for instance, archaeological earthworks. Such a survey cycle should not replace any more intensive programme of inspection, for example for health and safety reasons such as to ensure that stonework is stable. These reports should identify and prioritise necessary repair and major maintenance requirements.