

Cowal & Trossachs Forest District

West Strathyre

Land Management Plan



Plan Reference No: ****

Plan Approval Date: *****

Plan Expiry Date: *****

Summary of Proposals

The Land Management Plan (LMP) area extends to 2915Ha running along the western side of Strathyre (Stirlingshire) from near Callander in the south to near Balquhiddar in the north. The LMP area includes the full sweep of the western slope of the Strath rising from 77m at the Pass of Leny to 879m at the summit of Ben Ledi.

While Sitka Spruce dominates on the upper slopes there is a diversity of conifer species on the lower slopes and significant areas of mature Native Broadleaves (NBL). Age class is diverse & much of the woodland on the lower slopes is under Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) management.

As part of the LMP process, an assessment of the CCF suitability of the site has been carried out to take soils, exposure, slope, access and current crop into account. This assessment indicates suitable soils and exposure levels across a significant proportion of the forest. Slope is a constraint across many areas, however the good road network and the desire to stabilise slopes using CCF means that many of these steeper areas can be managed as CCF.



View across Southern Section of LMP from Ben Ledi path looking towards Callander.

West Strathyre Land Management Plan 2016 - 2025

The forest lies within the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park (LLTNP) & the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park, and has a high visual & amenity impact. Other designations include the Pass of Leny Flushes SSSI within the plan area and the Loch Lubnaig Marshes SSSI & River Teith SAC that lie adjacent to the plan area.

There are two small areas of low ground pasture that are under agricultural grazing lets, but otherwise there are limited interactions with adjacent agricultural enterprises, although march stock fencing and sheep trespass are a consideration. To the north the forest has common boundaries with three substantial areas of commercial conifer woodland and to the south the boundary areas include elements of native woodland creation and commercial conifer woodland.

There are two small hydro schemes with catchments within the plan area.

The proposed management under the LMP builds on the approach adopted under the previous two plans, with restoration of PAWS (Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site) and CCF management being priorities. In addition to timber production, CCF management and an expansion of NBL can deliver multiple benefits including enhanced: landscape, biodiversity, slope stability, structural diversity & product diversity.

Maintaining & increasing species diversity are also priorities in terms of climate change & ecosystem/economic resilience. The site can support a wide range of species across the ecocline, however ESC modelling for species selection can lead to a diminished species palette.

Landscape & recreation are key considerations throughout the plan process, and these are balanced against the objective of maintaining a productive forest.

Change in Forest Area including only Integral Open Ground

Species Group	% cover @ 2017	% cover @ 2050	% Change
Native Broadleaves	12%	30%	18%
Mixed Conifer	18%	26%	8%
Sitka Spruce	48%	30%	-18%
Open Ground	22%	14%	-8%

Note: Felled areas awaiting restocking allocated as SS. Other Land (excluded) is estimated at 854Ha. Native Broadleaves includes a very small element of beech at around 0.2%

Note: Open hill ground is defined as those compartments containing only open ground.

West Strathyre Land Management Plan 2016 - 2025

Extensive establishment of upland Birch woodland is proposed, however because of the slow growing nature of the current crop on, and adjacent to the target areas, then most of these areas are proposed for action outside the plan period.

Planned operations	2016 – 2025 plan period
Felling	115Ha
Thinning	467Ha
Restock	263Ha
Road Construction	425m
Track Construction	11002m

Note: Restock area includes areas already felled & awaiting restocking (110Ha). It includes areas of integral open ground planted as part of restructuring (38Ha). It excludes areas of designed open ground included as part of the restructuring.

Significant environmental features/proposals	
Designated Sites	Pass of Leny Flushes SSSI Loch Lubnaig Marshes SSSI River Teith SAC
Woodland Creation	Potential establishment of W4/W17/W18 type woodland within the Stank Glen area utilising Scots Pine where site conditions allow. Longer term extension of NBL on upper margins.
Creation of montane native woodland and wider native woodland linkages.	Creation of native woodland at high elevations on areas of open ground and targeted former conifer restocks. Creation of linkages between PAWS areas utilising riparian woodland. Creation of NBL non-intervention areas on steep slopes unsuitable for CCF and vulnerable to slippage.
PAWS Restoration	Continuation of work initiated under the previous plan, with the focus on areas linked to the Pass of Leny Flushes SSSI & areas of existing mature native woodland
Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF)	Evaluation of CCF based on current stock, windblow, higher resolution soil survey data, slope and exposure. The objective being to maintain and expand the CCF

	area where possible
Windblow clearance	Continue clearance operations and link to CCF assessment.

Critical Success Factors:

- Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) is a cornerstone for delivering multi-purpose forestry within the plan area. The presumption is that CCF areas will be maintained or expanded where possible. The critical success factors for CCF are considered in the following bullet points.
- CCF: Build on past management.
- CCF: Evaluate current crop in relation to stability. This relates to both mature areas and young crops with a delayed first thinning.
- CCF: Utilise new soil survey data, DAMS & slope GIS data to evaluate potential for CCF.
- CCF: Link theoretical suitability to actual stand characteristics and windblow distribution.
- CCF: Link CCF proposals to neighbouring land management proposals (new woodland creation in the south and clearfelling/restocking in the north).
- CCF: Consider & monitor current regeneration levels and species diversity in any regeneration, and implement active management to achieve objectives for specific areas.
- CCF: Continue to control deer numbers and utilise stock fencing in cooperation with neighbours to reduce sheep trespass.
- CCF: Consider deer fencing of LISS areas depending on stand lifecycle and monitoring outcomes.
- Maintain and enhance landscape value in particular with views related to Loch Lubnaig & the A84. This will require a sensitive approach to correcting landscape issues that reflects the reality of steep isolated slopes and the difficulty of intervention on these sites.
- Retain the productive capacity of the forest while balancing other factors.
- Clear accessible windblow to utilise a productive resource/site and enhance amenity/landscape.
- Retain current species diversity on the lower slopes and expand this on the upper margins where appropriate using predominantly Birch(BI) woodland & targeted Scots Pine (SP) with a wider range of broadleaved species in riparian linkages and on the lower slopes.
- Continue to work with partners to enhance the riparian environments for water quality and fish ecology with the emphasis on the River Teith SAC and the associated key species including Lamprey, Fresh Water Pearl Mussel (FWPM) & Salmon.

West Strathyre Land Management Plan 2016 - 2025

- Work constructively with local community initiatives to enhance recreational routes as opportunities arise. Given budgetary constraints these initiatives are likely to require external funding.
- Monitor Invasive species in particular Rhododendron, Giant Hogweed, Piri Piri Burr & Japanese Knotweed and control as required.
- Protect public & private water supplies within the forest.
- Monitor disease impacts in particular Dothistroma Needle Blight (DNB) and its impact on species selection within new native woodlands on the upper margin & in the Stank Glen.
- Seek to improve the water quality status of failing water bodies where this is impacted by forestry management.
- Protect and enhance the setting of Archaeological sites.

Consultation & further Information

During the development of this plan we have consulted with the local community and other stakeholders. For further information on the plan please contact:

John Hair
Planning Manager

Forest Enterprise Scotland
Cowal & Trossachs Forest District
Aberfoyle
Stirling
FK8 3UX
john.hair@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

+44 0300 0676600 (Switchboard)
+44 0300 0676597 (Direct)
+44 07764 838735 (Mobile)