

## Appendix 8: Stakeholder Consultation – Forest Plan Scoping Meeting Report 2015

### Part 1: General Details

Case number: 5027553

Forest Plan area: 1441.09ha eligible for management grant; 2057.6ha total forest management plan area.

Type of Scoping: Open meeting, public 'drop-in' (Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore, 5 May 2015) & submission of written responses.

#### List of Participants:

Open meeting: Graham MacBryer (FCS), Gail Rogerson (FCS), Catherine Wares (FCS), Peter Duncan (SNH Invereshie), Aileen Fox (Friends of Capercaillie), Kathy Fletcher (Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust), Grant Stuart (The Highland Council), Ray Sefton (Aviemore & Vicinity Community Council), Nic Bullivant (Cairngorm Mountain/Natural Retreats), Tom Cameron (Scottish Woodlands), Penny Lawson (CNPA), Tessa Jones (Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group – BSCG), Gareth Marshall (RSPB - Capercaillie Project Officer), Gus Jones (BSCG), Roy Turnbull (BSCG), Ross Watson (RSPB Abernethy) Johnnie Grant (Rothiemurchus), Piers Voysey (Rothiemurchus), Julian Orsi (Rothiemurchus), Peter Ferguson (Rothiemurchus).

Public Drop-in (in addition to Rothiemurchus staff): Alasdair Fowler, Jessie Brown, Mary Ferguson, Peter Dennis

Written Responses: Roy Turnbull, Gus Jones (BSCG), Kym Bridle (SEPA), Keith Duncan (SNH), Peter Duncan (SNH Invereshie), Penny Lawson (CNPA).

Participating stakeholders have largely represented conservation or environmental protection organisations and some of those with a limited focus, e.g. on capercaillie. Community and recreation representation was low, but the estate has regular contact with the public through voluntary or solicited feedback and liaison meetings throughout the year. Information gathered is used to review the recreation management plan.

There were no requests for additional survey work as part of the new plan, but there were suggestions to improve presentation and clarity of the plan and to highlight any key differences between this plan and the previous 2006 long-term forest plan.

The table below lists:

- The **key Issue**, or theme raised during the scoping process, numbered and titled for clarity and, where applicable quoted from the FCS record of the meeting;
- **Raised by** – the person or organisation raising the issue;
- **Detail any likely impact** - is an expansion of the issue or the concern in relation to impact on wildlife or landscape, etc (quoted, paraphrased or interpreted from the comments made in the scoping exercise);
- **Additional notes & how the existing plan addresses the issue** – self explanatory
- **Detail additional measure(s) to be taken to address the issue** – to clearly show where changes to the long-term forest plan are required to address the issue.

**Part 2: Key Issues raised through the scoping process**

Key Issue		Raised by	Detail any likely impact	Additional notes & how the existing plan addresses the issue	Detail additional measure(s) to be taken to address the issue
1. Natura 2000	Produce a 'management statement', in agreement with SNH to work with Natura 2000. Commitment to comply with Natura 2000.	Gus Jones, BSCG, Keith Duncan (SNH)	General impact of plan on designated sites	Forest Plan already includes specific reference to SSSI management statements. Previous works, e.g. track upgrades compliant with Natura 2000.	Introduce a new objective in relation to maintaining designated sites in "favourable" condition and link monitoring to SNH site condition monitoring results. Plan will reference Natura site management statements as they become available.
2. CNPA policy	Make specific reference to Caper Framework and Cairngorm Nature Action Plan	Penny Lawson (CNPA), Kathy Fletcher (GWCT), Gareth Marshall (CP)	Capercaillie Framework and Cairngorms Nature Action Plan are significant reference documents	Original plan made reference to LBAP as well as to the National Park Plan.	The new plan will make reference to CNPA policy & strategy documents, including the Capercaillie Framework . Forestry Grant Scheme applications will also be supported by reference to relevant documents as required.
3. Plant health	Bio security and plant health should be adopted in plan. Measures to promote juniper health through management, also tree health.	Peter Duncan, Gus Jones, Grant Stuart (THC), Penny Lawson (CNPA)	A number of tree and shrub species vulnerable to 'new' pests & diseases	<i>Phytophthora austrocedrae</i> present on juniper in some locations on Rothiemurchus. Forest Research monitoring being carried out for pine tree lappet moth and <i>Dothistroma</i> .	Forest Plan to include the following plant health & biosecurity measures: monitoring, collaboration with agencies, compliance with plant health notifications, raising public awareness.
4. Woodland expansion	Emphasis on maintaining deer control in response to ongoing woodland development.	Peter Duncan, Tom Cameron (SW)	Reduction in roe and red deer numbers will speed up woodland regeneration, allow woodland to spread up-hill & support regeneration of a wider range of tree and other plant species.	Existing deer management plan has maintained deer numbers at a level to support woodland expansion and regeneration.  The plan includes collaboration with neighbours through Cairngorms & Speyside Deer Management Group, compliance with legislation and to support range of objectives (woodland regeneration & expansion, economic return & local employment).	Update deer management plan.
	Expansion of woodland into Gleann Einich	Member of public	Woodland expansion contribution to wild-land amenity and wildlife conservation.	Gleann Einich is not within or adjacent to the forest plan area. Woodland expansion along the upper forest edge in the Lairig area is identified in the forest plan.	
5. Open ground habitat	Concern about the retention / loss of open ground as valuable spaces to encourage bio	Ross Watson	Woodland regeneration might cover valuable open ground habitats	Existing plan acknowledges value of open ground habitats.	Forest plan to identify open ground habitats valuable to meeting objectives; e.g. base-rich grassland; if mappable then on maps, if

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	diversity				not mappable then mentioned in sub-cmpt information.
6. Juniper woodland	Proposed management approach to deal with <i>Phytophthora</i> in juniper	Gus Jones, Grant Stuart (HC)	Timber harvesting, tree regeneration & <i>Phytophthora austrocedrae</i> could reduce conservation value of juniper component	Forest plan recognises value of juniper woodland, Existing operational planning procedures require protection of juniper where practical.	Forest monitoring to include assessment of juniper component. See above re bio-security.
7. Priority species management	Clarify management of habitat for crossbill/red squirrel/caper also EPS (e.g. bats, otter). Assess value of scrub planting in association with path network in caper areas. Promote/protect good breeding nesting habitats in relation to forestry operations. Maximise protection zones for caper adjacent to paths/tracks.	Gus Jones, Gareth Marshall (CP), Keith Duncan (SNH), Penny Lawson (CNPA)	Timber harvesting, access creation, public recreation; all have potential impact on priority species. Rothiemurchus a significant link between Inshriach and Abernethy/Glenmore.	Forest plan reflects priorities of site designations and LBAP. Forest habitat network established & retained in the plan to ensure wildlife can move through the whole forest area. Woodland expansion is providing new habitat for woodland species.  Timber harvesting aimed at creating age-class diversity, improving shrub layer, adding deadwood and follows guidelines for minimising impact on wildlife.  Deadwood component retained for species such as green shield moss.  All aspen stands mapped.	Option to include prescription to create pine hoverfly stumps post harvesting of large diameter pine or spruce.  Section 11 (Operational Planning) of the forest plan will include a requirement that operation site plans in designated areas will be submitted to SNH, well in advance of operations starting, to ensure that any recent site specific data on rare species/designated features not already known to the estate is considered.
	Any specific management for twin flower?	Roy Turnbull (BSCG)	A rare component of native pinewoods	Existing forest plan seeks to create conditions favourable to twinflower. Potential to work with any future development of the Cairngorms Rare Plants project.	Other direct intervention management for twinflower will be considered when proposed.
8. Predator control	Assess impact of feral cats, control measures for stoats and weasels, need for predator control.	BSCG, Kathy Fletcher (GWCT)	Risk to wild-cat from indiscriminate use of feral cat traps.  Benefits to capercaillie from predator control	Predator control (primarily fox & crow) is an integral part of priority management for capercaillie & follows legislation and best practice guidelines; trapping of stoats and weasels is locally focussed to have most impact on reducing predation of eggs and poults.	Opportunity to work with SRDP funding to continue predator control, as supported by Capercaillie Framework.

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	Clarify predator control and collaboration measures with neighbours particularly with caper specifically with Pityoulish.	Tom Cameron (SW)	Option for collaboration across ownership boundaries	Active participation of FE secured for 2015, 16 & 17.	Option to liaise further with Pityoulish.
9. Non-native species	Identify the ratio of change between non-native and native species in next plan period. Is there a policy to increase native over non-native species.  Pityoulish, Ord Ban and other areas East of B970 to restore to native species.	Roy Turnbull (BSCG), Gus Jones (BSCG), member of public.	Increasing the proportion of native tree species within plantations could improve habitat for native wildlife.  Removing non-native tree species from plantations will reduce the risk of non-native species seeding into designated native woodland areas, but could reduce the economic sustainability of the plan.	Restructuring plans for plantation areas will continue the previous plan's progress in reducing the non-native species component of plantations.  A proportion of non-native species is required to sustain economic viability and a number of 'exotics' have high value for native wildlife, e.g. Norway spruce & European larch.  Forest plan includes non-native species removal in native woodland areas.	Alternatives, such as short rotation forestry for fuel wood using, e.g. silver birch, will be considered.  Non-native seedling removal built into management plans as required.
	Collaboration with neighbours re deer control with zero tolerance on sika.		Sika a threat to genetic integrity of red deer.	Existing zero tolerance policy on Sika in place. Sika deer have been observed and successfully culled twice in the last thirty years.	
10. Ancient woodland	Ancient Woodland Inventory of sites. Good to see PAWS restoration, how far has this progressed.	BSCG, Penny Lawson (CNPA)	High conservation value, risk of losing native woodland flora & fauna if retained as plantations or managed intensively as timber production areas.	No change to layout of 'Habitat Network' proposed.  New plan based on review of progress against objectives set in last plan.	Plan to include a map of Ancient Woodland Inventory sites sourced from the most recent SNH data and with reference to the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland.  Option to use data & recommendations from the Woodland Trust Ancient Woodland Restoration project.
11. Deer fences	Assess need for fence marking and potential for removal	BSCG, Kathy Fletcher (GWCT), Gareth Marshall (CP)	Risk to capercaillie and black grouse from collisions with deer fences.  Old fences an intrusion in otherwise 'natural' expanse of woodland	Strategic fence now marked to reduce risk of collisions.  Stone dykes retained as part of the cultural heritage.	Ref will be made to work with the Cairngorms Capercaillie Framework
12. Deadwood	Is there a programme/ target to increase deadwood?	Ross Watson	Increasing deadwood is valuable for biodiversity & carbon sequestration, but	No change to targets for deadwood component for different forest habitat types.	

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			could reduce returns and increase costs when harvesting timber		
13. Forest bogs	Any scope to restore mire or bog woodland to original state by closing drains. Promote/develop open wetland habitat	Ross Watson, Gus Jones (BSCG)	Harvesting and access creation could damage water tables in bog woodland which are valuable conservation habitats and significant for carbon storage. Bogs could also be affected by non-native tree seedling establishment, e.g. Sitka spruce	Due to past low-impact management of forest bogs, there are no significant locations where drain blocking is required to restore the natural quality of bogs or mires that would not impact negatively on existing access tracks.  Harvesting guidelines edited to ensure bogs and mires not significantly impacted by timber extraction.  Bogs already included in habitat network for minimum intervention.	Potential to include bog woodlands in monitoring regime for other native woodlands (ref SRDP).  See non-natives above.
14. Riparian woodland	Water course management & riparian woodlands	BSCG, SEPA	River Spey SAC designation.  Riparian woodlands are a valued habitat for wildlife. Tree roots stabilise river banks, but river banks are generally unstable and dynamic and pole stage pine trees washed in during floods can cause problems to infrastructure downstream.  Impact on salmon reduced if 'in-stream' operations outwith spawning period (Oct-May).  Potential impact of diffuse pollution from timber harvesting etc.	On-going plans to thin river side pine to favour alder and willow regeneration as being 'better' for invertebrates/fish and bank stabilisation.  Areas of riparian woodland otherwise managed as minimal intervention areas.	Refer to Forest & Water Guidelines in plan. Section 11 (Operational Planning) to include a requirement that run-off from forest machine routes does not enter directly into water courses without appropriate filtration to prevent diffuse pollution.  Detailed plan implementation to consider removal of pine within 20m of river banks up to 500m upstream from critical infrastructure.
15. Montane woodland	Any plans to create/manage areas of sub and montane scrub? Montane scrub to be encouraged as an aspiration or	Roy Turnbull (BSCG), Penny Lawson (CNPA)	Recognised as a valuable habitat. The extent of montane woodland has in the past been limited by	The detailed forest plan includes an aspiration for woodland expansion on Castle Hill. Otherwise montane woodland expansion outwith the plan area is	Extension of plan area to include parts of Creag a Chalamain.

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	target.		climate, high herbivore numbers & fire.  Is it a target or aspiration for the current plan?	expected/taking place as part of the general response to the overall reduction in deer numbers.	
16. Policy woodland	Policy woodlands	BSCG	Significant as part of Doune designed landscape and other areas close to settlements; risk of non-native seed dispersal into native woodland areas	No new policy woods proposed.)	Plan to include more detail on species selection and management of policy woodlands (e.g. reduction in grand-fir component and re-spacing to favour broadleaves.
17. Carbon sequestration	Is the Estate doing any active management for carbon sequestration such as increasing bog areas	Roy Turnbull (BSCG)	See forest bogs & deadwood above	Specific plan objective exists.	
18. Access tracks	Assess impact of track widening in ecological terms particularly to wood ants. How will tracks be controlled under permitted development? Access path upgrades: clear details needed about standards and operations. Would not wish to see any new roads created. Justify need for forest road upgrade/widening & specify standards. Widening/cleaning roadsides possible conflict with caper.	Gus Jones (BSCG), Penny Lawson (CNPA), Grant Stuart (THC), Keith Duncan (SNH)	Track restoration and upgrades impact on flora & fauna (e.g. fungi & wood ants), standards & operations help minimise negative impacts.  CNPA recommends that Operational procedures include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Walk-over assessment of the character and qualities of the internal landscape as experienced from the tracks (including existing and potential views);</li> <li>•identification of the footprint of the upgraded track and extent of tree loss/habitat loss;</li> <li>•construction proposals for the works;</li> <li>•post-extraction proposals for reinstatement/narrowing of</li> </ul>	New forest roads are subject to planning permission. Track widening in SSSI is subject to SNH consent. Forest plan shows permanent road and track layout. No new forest roads proposed at this stage. In the past track up-grades within Natura areas have been carried out to ensure an equivalent area of habitat is restored. Tracks designed to be sympathetic to amenity for public access. Forest plan already includes operational procedures for harvesting & infrastructure (Appendix 6&7) Monitoring prior to works identifies key biodiversity features to work around.	Forest is FSC certified to UKWAS: FSC: SA-FM/COC-004552 G065  App 7 to include a note that where tracks are used only intermittently for forest management they may be reinstated/narrowed accordingly.

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			road margins; •a clear indication of where there is little or no scope for reinstatement/narrowing, e.g. where frequent HGV access is required for continuous cover management or to support multiple use access (bikes, pedestrians, horses)		
	Use existing quarries/borrow pits where possible rather than open new sites.	BSCG	Soil conditions generally allow for the creation of free draining tracks and paths without the addition of too much material, but the pressure of people does require construction of strong, durable paths.	To-date track up-grades have worked mainly with material from existing/previously used borrow pits. Use of locally won material is preferred.	
19. Bee hives	Assess impact of recently introduced bee hives to locality	Gus Jones	Competition with native invertebrate fauna for food, introduction of pests & diseases	Seasonal placement of hives is consented by SNH.	
20. Visitor management & conservation	Any specific events to promote good conservation measures for species like caper or to inform good conservation behaviour to the public?	Ross Watson	Getting the public 'on-side' will reduce disturbance to capercaillie and other wildlife	This is critical and is current policy, no change to existing forest plan and Rothiemurchus Recreation Strategy, and remaining responsive to best practice as promoted/developed through the Cairngorms Capercaillie Framework.	
	Assess visitor numbers/disturbance/locations to improve control & management of visitors, wild camping and dogs; reducing conflict between recreation and conservation. Seek opportunities to reduce path usage/size in relation to sensitive caper areas.	Gus Jones, Gareth Marshall (CP), Grant Stuart (THC), Aileen Fox (FofC)	Impact on nature conservation objectives	In line with land manager responsibilities according to the Scottish Outdoor Access Code recreation management supports biodiversity by attracting visitors and activities to focus areas that leave wildlife sensitive areas undisturbed.	There is an option to identify locations where maintenance and development of track side screening could reduce disturbance to wildlife. Also identify areas where track/path-use/width could be optimised.

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21. View points	Imperative for woodland to accommodate visitors with viewpoints which may include tree removal.	Ray Sefton (AVCC)	Woodland regeneration obscures key viewpoints, reducing public amenity values	Recreation plan identifies key viewpoints. These will be maintained as part of forest habitat management.	
22. Landscape character	Maintain estate as 'unspoilt' as possible	Member of public	The scale and frequency of forest operations will have an impact on wildlife and public perception of the place.	High priority in the plan for management both for wildlife and recreational amenity value.	
23. Mountain bikes	Retain the quality of the estate for mountain biking	Member of public	In the absence of appropriate facilities and information, public access could impact negatively on wildlife and the enjoyment of other users.	Recreation plan puts emphasis on promoting particular locations and routes, engaging with the public through activities and a countryside ranger service, responding to feedback and liaison with special interest groups.  Rothiemurchus promoted for family cycling on routes wide enough to accommodate walkers and cyclists.  Single track or adventure bike-riding is not promoted and is not appropriate in Natura areas used by others for quiet recreation.	
24. Plan delivery	Provide a detailed breakdown of staff numbers and their roles	Gus Jones	Implementation of plans requires staff resources	Forest, deer & recreation plans all include statement on staff resources.	
25. Plan revision	Happy with the little change identified in new plan proposals. Highlight major changes in new plan or provide a summary of change between old and new plan. Very much support proposals	Penny Lawson (CNPA), Nic Bullivant (Cairngorm Estate)	Forest plan changes 'lost' in body of text	Principle parts of the plan for readers to review are: plan objectives, 5 & 10-year felling plan and restocking plan.	If practical, highlight changes in the new forest plan or produce a summary of changes.
26. Plan terminology	Requested clarity about aims/objectives in scoping paper	Nic Bullivant (Cairngorm Estate), BSCG	Forest plan would benefit from clear descriptions of woodland types and habitat network types. Benefit from identifying areas planted and areas naturally regenerated	The plan text does explain habitats and woodland types. The terminology for, e.g. "extended old growth" was established with the approval of the current plan after considerable discussion and agreement with the Authorities. It is consistent with the Rothiemurchus Estate Forest	FCS standard keys (colour codes) to be used with maps when the plan is renewed.

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				<p>Framework (Ratcliffe 2001).</p> <p>Generally, natural regeneration is used in native woodland areas. Elsewhere Planting and Natural regeneration is used according to site condition/operational experience at the time to meet woodland objectives and targets.</p>	

## Conclusions

The scoping process has proved to be very useful; it has clarified the level and detail of public interest and enabled helpful discussion; we thank all those who participated for studying the plan and for their contributions and patience.

There has been a lot of work carried out since the last plan approval and updating, as listed above, is required. Feedback from stakeholders has indicated where the plan could be improved in terms of terminology and by cross-referencing to designated site plans and site condition monitoring; and to action plans or policy frameworks for particular species, e.g. capercaillie. New references will include, e.g.: Natura 2000 designated site management plans, as they become available; Cairngorms Nature Action Plan 2013-18; Cairngorms Capercaillie Framework; Cairngorms National Park Outdoor Access Strategy; UK Woodland Assurance Standard (3<sup>rd</sup> edition & 4<sup>th</sup> edition draft) and the Rothiemurchus Recreation Management Plan.

There was strong support for the current direction laid out in the forest plan's vision and aims, so the plan will continue to emphasise habitat enhancement (forest extent and diversity, including deadwood, with a particular focus on capercaillie) and management for recreation. Bog areas will continue to be protected from damage and important open ground elements identified within operational plans. Bio security is the new subject to be addressed.

Implementation of the forest plan is therefore a partnership effort that embraces the whole community. It is dependent on the markets for goods and services, be they timber or recreation activities, on voluntary support and public funding for the delivery of public benefits.

**Next steps.** Now that those participating in the stakeholder scoping process have had the opportunity to comment on this report it will be used to inform the Rothiemurchus Long Term Forest Plan 2016-2035. On submission to FCS the plan will be on the public register for 30 days for further comment from stakeholders in advance of final approval and implementation.