



Tilhill

BSWGROUP member of **binderholz**■

Scoping Information

Fanans Forest Long Term Forest Plan

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This document contains important information from the proposed long-term forest management plan.

Consultees are asked to respond by the **21st June 2024** with any additional comments or currently unidentified key issues which should also be considered to:

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1. Description of Forest and Plan Outline.



Figure 1: Fanans Forest Location

Fanans Forest is located between Taynuilt and Kilchrenan on eastern side of the B845.

The forest covers some 580.79ha though the main component is open ground at around 44%. As Forest Plans are limited to 20% of open ground as a condition of grant funding, the plan area will be reduced to 409.02ha per the table to the right.

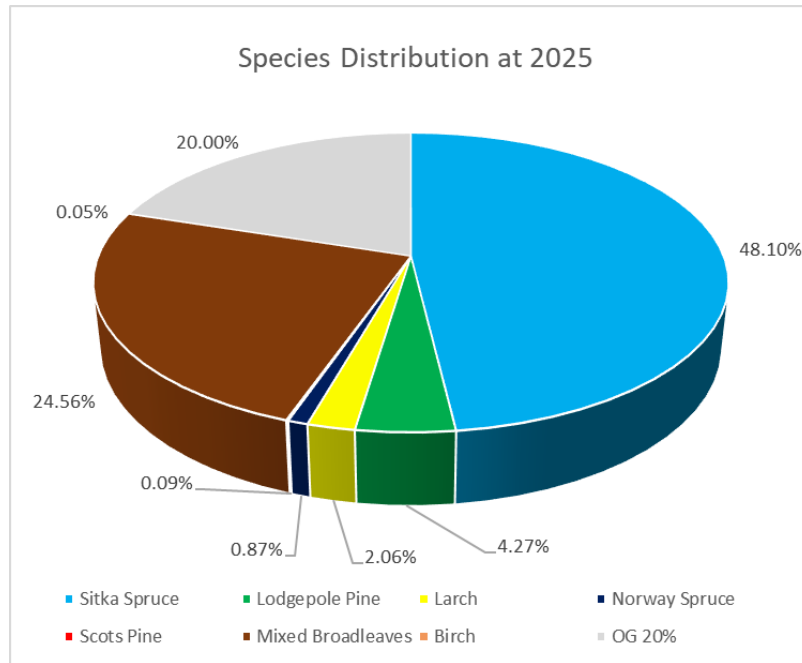
Table 1 - Overall Species

SPP	Area (ha)	%
SS	196.95	33.91%
LP	17.38	2.99%
LAR	7.59	1.31%
SP	1.03	0.18%
NS	3.55	0.61%
NBL	100.72	17.34%
OG	253.57	43.66%
Total	580.79	100.00%

Table 2 - Species with OG capped.

SPP	Area (ha)	%
SS	196.95	48.15%
LP	17.38	4.25%
LAR	7.59	1.86%
SP	1.03	0.25%
NS	3.55	0.87%
NBL	100.72	24.62%
OG 20%	81.80	20.00%
Total	409.02	100.00%

Graph 1- Current Species Proportions



The LTFP will set out the planned operations for the next 20 years (from 2025) and the Owner's objectives are as follows:

To obtain the maximum possible financial return from the growing crop through the practice of sustainable silviculture, and to secure the forest's future as a sustainable, commercial resource.

The forest will be managed in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) and the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme Standard (UKWAS), ensuring that it is FSC and/or PEFC certified.

The main operations that will be undertaken in the upcoming 10 years of this plan include:

- Commence restructuring through the fell and restock of the better growing crop areas.
- Upgrade and construct new road to facilitate the restructure.
- Manage the presence of deer within the forest, with stalking the primary method of control.

Geology and Soils

The underlying geology at Fanans forms part of the Lorn Plateau Volcanic Formation. The dominant soil formation is Sourhope with Map Unit 479 (Soil Survey of Scotland, Macauley Institute) on the lower slopes and Map Unit 480 at higher elevations. As such there are brown forest soils located on some of the lower elevations, however the remainder is a combination of mostly peats and peaty gleys, with peaty podzols forming where the terrain is steeper. This is corroborated through the growth rates of the crop with the best performing on the lower slopes as well as on steeper areas at higher elevations.

Hydrology

There are several watercourses rising from with Fanans, with the main receptor being the Nant River, which discharges into Loch Etive. The Nant has 5 tributaries rising in or running through the forest, which split into 14 distinct channels. To the South of the property there are 2 tributaries from the Dubh Loch rising within the forest, for which some of the water will discharge into Loch Tromlee and eventually Loch Awe, whilst some is discharging into the Allt Poll an Dubhaich which feeds back into the river Nant. To the East of the property there are 5 watercourses rising which discharge into the River Awe, one of which forks forming 6 distinct channels. The River Awe then discharges into Loch Etive.

The Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) classifies main bodies of water in Scotland to identify areas in order to set objectives to improve the water quality. The classifications range from High (near-natural, through Good, Moderate, Poor to Bad (severely damaged)). The 4 bodies classified are Loch Etive, the River Awe and River Nant, both classified as good, and Loch Awe, classified as moderate, due to the modifications related to Hydroelectric generation.

Given that the vast majority of the water will flow into the Rivers Awe and Nant, and ultimately into Loch Etive, the management of Fanans Forest has an role to play in maintaining the water quality classifications.

The two potential influences forest operations are likely to have on the water catchment are acidification e.g. through conifer needle deposits and siltation e.g through heavy machinery movements. Mitigation measures will be fully detailed in the Long-Term Forest Plan following consultation. Risks from pesticide use will be managed through Tilhill's Integrated Pest Management system and following legal guidance on pesticide use.

Adjacent Land Use

Adjacent land uses consist of mostly forestry, with an element of farming.

2. Consultees

The Forest Plan process will require consultation with the following Statutory consultees and interested parties:

- Argyll and Bute Council (Roads Department, Planning Department)
- Forestry and Land Scotland
- Historic Scotland
- Avich & Kilchrenan Community Council
- NatureScot
- RSPB
- Scottish Forestry
- Scottish Raptor Study Group
- Scottish Water
- SEPA
- Timber Transport Forum
- Transport Scotland
- West of Scotland Archaeology Service
- Neighbouring residential and business properties

3 Designations

There are two designations covering part of Fanans Forest, both covering the same area, to the Western tip of the forest. Here, the native woodlands of Glen Nant extend into the edge of the property, and these are designated as both a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The SSSI designation is in place for the Atlantic Oak woods which support a range of rare lichens and bryophytes, while the SAC has been designated for the Oak

woods, Alder woods, the woodlands on rocky areas areas/scree and for Otters. Whilst not part of the designation, this area also supports a strong community of nationally rare Wood Ants.

4 Ecological interests

Argyll & Bute Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Habitat Action Plan for Planted Coniferous Forest. This HAP cited the threats to this habitat as:

- Wind-throw and fire.
- Uniform age and species composition of forests.
- Damage by pests and disease.
- Potential for shorter rotations due to improvement made in species/timber research.

The impacts cited are:

- Loss of timber.
- Reduction of suitable habitat for key species.

The objectives stated to maintain and improve this habitat are:

1. Ensure that at least 1% of existing conifer woodland is set aside as long-term retention to improve diversity.
2. Monitor progress with re-structuring conifer forests.

Habitat Action Plan for Atlantic Woodlands. The Key Habitat of "Upland Oakwood" is described as climax woodlands on acid soils in zones of high rainfall (>1800mm) and low mean July maximum temperatures. Semi natural woodlands provide a habitat for a range of key species including Bats, Otter, Pine Martin, Fungi and Lichens which are likely to utilise the habitat provided by the woodlands at Pennyghael.

The objectives stated to maintain and improve this habitat are:

1. To maintain and enhance the condition of existing Atlantic woodland.
2. To expand the area of Atlantic woodland, primarily through natural regeneration, creating links between existing severely degraded resources.
3. To restore areas of Atlantic woodland which have been severely damaged by, for example, *Rhododendron ponticum* or Sitka Spruce.

The Long Term Management Plan for Fanans will identify and review the ecological threats as they apply to the woodland, and it will set out objectives and work proposals that will mitigate against the impacts resulting from the stated threats and help this woodland meet the biodiversity objectives.

Whilst further survey may identify other key species that utilise the habitats provided by Pennyghael Woodlands the following are known to be present:

1. Red squirrel
2. Lichen
3. Otter

In all cases, the Long Term Management Plan for Fanans will identify and review the ecological and environmental threats as they apply to these species, and others if identified through the planning process, and it will set out objectives and work proposals that will mitigate against the impacts resulting from the stated threats and help this woodland contribute to their conservation in future.

Deer Management

A deer management plan to protect the restock of trees will be included within the Long-Term Forest Plan.

5 Historical and Cultural Interests

5 features of historical and cultural interest can be found within Fanans⁷ [See Map 3]. One of these areas comprises 6 distinct features, meaning there are 10 known features within the boundary.

2 additional features have been recorded as located close to the boundary and one of these is Scheduled:

1. Tom An Iasgaire Fort

All features of historical and cultural interest will be marked on the Hazards and Constraints map [Map 3], and on all operational maps with appropriate buffers put in place.

All further forestry work will be conducted in a manner that protects and conserves features of historical and cultural interests, and due diligence undertaken before any forestry work to identify any new features that may still be unidentified.

6 Landscape Interests

Views of Fanans forest are extremely limited due to topography, with a generally elevated position limiting views, compounded by the cliffs to the east, and the proximity of the B845 road to the west. As such views are limited to the forest edge along the eastern boundary, evident on the skyline above Bridge of Awe, and occasional views at varying points along the B845. The most far reaching commonly seen view, is from the B845 close to Barrachander Farm where much of the SW and S parts of the forest can be seen. Beyond that, far-reaching views are limited to hill-walkers.

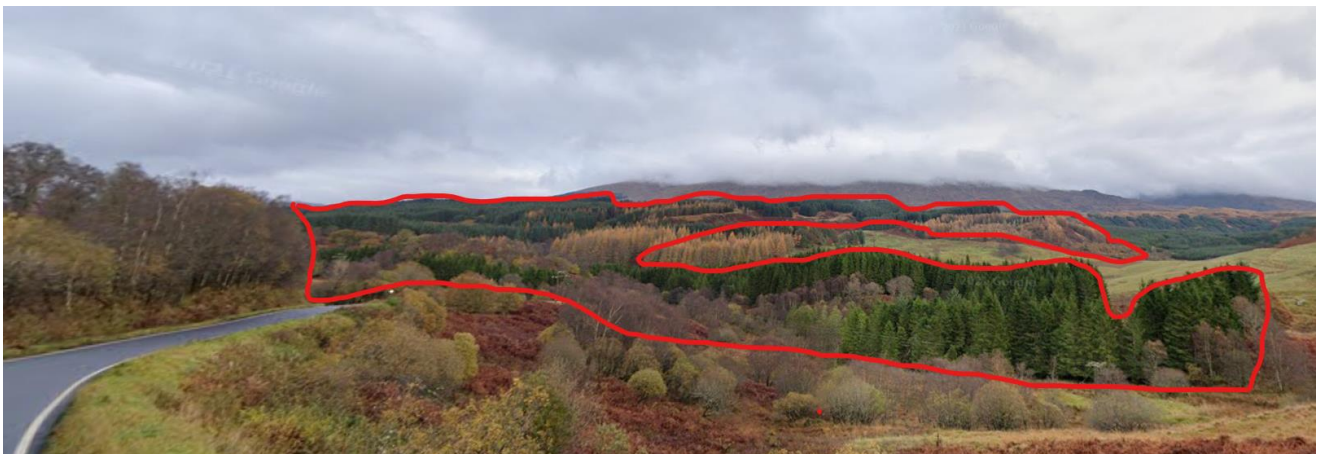


Figure 3: Views of Fanans from the B845 next to Barrachander Farm.

The Long-Term Forest Plan will allow the potential landscape impact of planned forestry operations to be considered and an appropriate level of landscape design to be carried out.

Landscape Character Assessment⁸

Landscape Character Type 40: Craggy Upland - Argyll - found in several locations in the north and north-west of Argyll and Bute. It forms a higher core area which comprises an irregular upland plateau lying either side of and around the head of Loch Awe, a smaller area north of Loch Creran,

⁷ Identified through Canmore - <https://canmore.org.uk>

⁸ [Scottish Landscape Character Types Map and Descriptions | NatureScot](#)

on the south-east peninsula of Mull in the Loch Spelve area, and on the upland cliffs of the Kyles of Bute.

The upland areas are a very large-scale mosaic of unenclosed open moorland and extensive conifer forests. The forests are concentrated on the uplands between Inveraray and Loch Awe but are a common landscape element on the upland plateau. The patchy mosaic of rock outcrops, heather and moorland grass gives the uplands a characteristic mottled appearance. Overall this is a relatively simple vegetation pattern.

Key Characteristics:

- Upland moor with irregular, rather amorphous landform.
- Rounded knolls, rock outcrops and numerous lochs in low-lying hollows and glens.
- Open moorland predominates, but extensive conifer plantations camouflage the landscape pattern in some areas.
- Oak-birch woodland on lower slopes.
- Stone walls enclose an irregular patchwork of pastures within glens on margins of moorland.
- Isolated farmsteads and small villages in sheltered sites within glens.
- Numerous archaeological remains, often concentrated on rounded knolls on lower slopes.
- Historic intricate, irregular landscape pattern in glens.

7 Access

Access Points

There is one main vehicular access points onto the forest:

1. B845 Access – NN 03231 26133

There is also an access through the neighbouring forest Ichrachan at NM 51440 26347, though there are no longer rights to use this for either party. Additionally, there are several pedestrian access points for neighbours to access private water supplies [See Map 1].

Public Access

There are no formal Public Rights of Way or paths within the core path network that run through the Estate. Though the B845 running long the western boundary is designated as a core path. There is very minimal use of the forest recreationally, as the Glen Nant forest and car park is located close by and draws in the bulk of recreational users locally.

The review of the Forest Plan will identify current access and whether increased provision could or should be considered. Operations will also be planned in such a way to keep members of the public safe.

The outdoor access code will be applied to the forest throughout the duration of this plan.

Timber Haulage

The forest has direct access to the B845 to the A85 at Taynuilt. The B845 is an agreed route under the Argyll and Bute Timber Transport Plan, meaning there are no haulage restriction affecting the forest.

8 Felling and Restructuring

The forest was planted in 1989 and 1990 and given that some areas have YC's in the high 20's and into the 30's in places, mean that areas of the forest are ready to be felled.

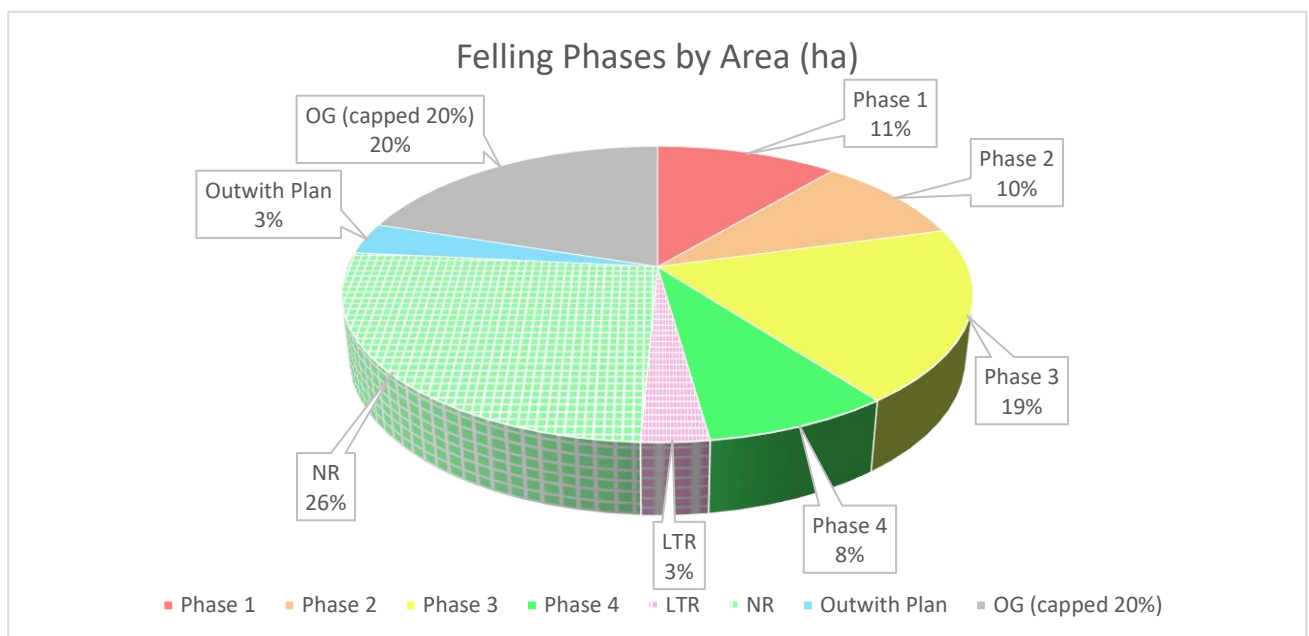
It is proposed to fell the bulk of the commercial crop over 4 phases.

The objective for all commercially viable forest blocks will primarily be to maximise on the financial value of the timber asset. This will be achieved in compliance with the UKFS and UKWAS standards, which require minimum areas of open ground, native broadleaves and maximum proportions for single species.

Draft Felling Proposals.

It is proposed to restructure the crop over a 20-year period, in 4 distinct 5-year phases. These can be seen on Map 4.

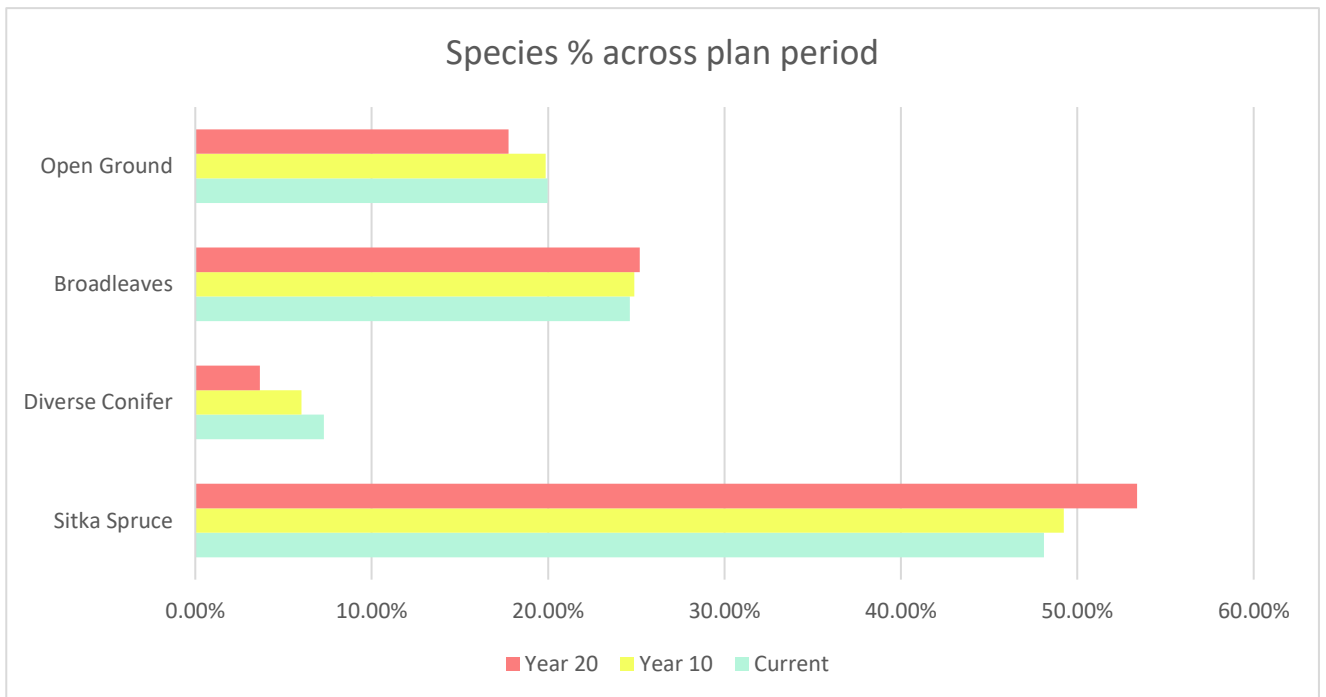
Fell Phase	Area (ha)	%
Phase 1	45.40	11.10%
Phase 2	39.47	9.65%
Phase 3	77.54	18.96%
Phase 4	33.08	8.09%
LTR	11.95	2.92%
NR	105.79	25.86%
Outwith Plan	13.99	3.42%
OG (capped 20%)	81.80	20.00%
Total	409.02	100.00%



Draft Restock Proposals

Restocking proposals will focus on commerciality with a focus on Sitka spruce as diversity levels are already compliant with UKFS. Conifer diversity will be retained with much of the Lodgepole pine being retained as Long-term Retention (LTR). Broadleaf diversity is present with over 100ha of native broadleaved woodland in the forest, and this will be assigned as Natural Reserve (NR). Although no additional broadleaf planting is currently proposed, the plan will consider how best to manage these areas and what can be done to encourage an increase in cover through natural regeneration. Restock proposals can be seen on Map 5.

Species	Current		Year 10		Year 20	
	Area	%	Area	%	Area	%
Sitka Spruce	196.77	48.11%	201.37	49.23%	218.35	53.38%
Diverse Conifer	29.81	7.29%	24.59	6.01%	14.98	3.66%
Broadleaves	100.75	24.63%	101.83	24.89%	103.07	25.20%
Open Ground	81.69	19.97%	81.24	19.86%	72.62	17.75%
Total	409.02	100.00%	409.02	100.00%	409.02	100.00%



9 Summary of Key Issues (To be updated following consultation)

Individual/ Organisation	Date contacted	Date feedback received	Response	Action

10 Appendices

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