



# Appendix

## Land Management Plan Brief Central Mull

### Contents

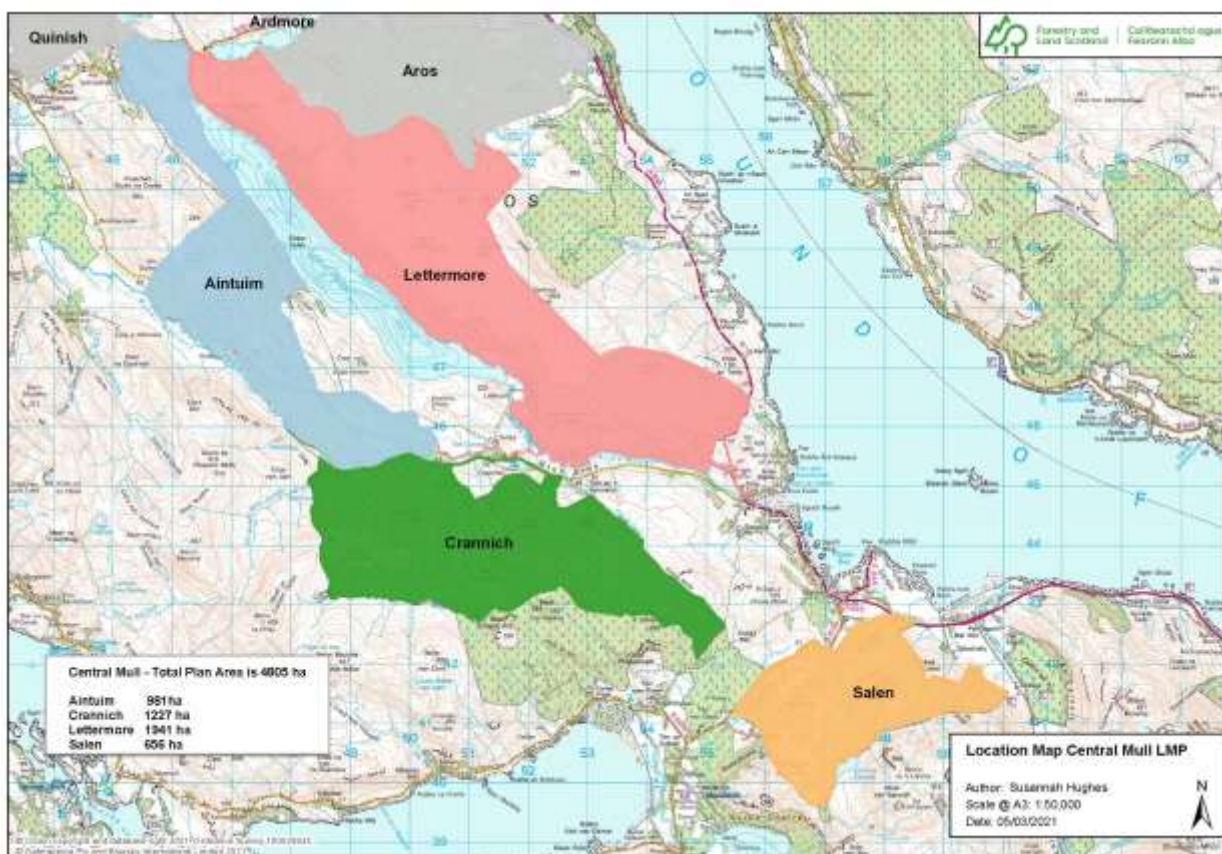
1. Key Background Information
2. Strategic drivers
3. Draft Land Management Plan Objectives
4. Stakeholders

# 1. Key background information

Central Mull LMP encompasses 4805 ha of land and the main woodlands covered within this LMP are:

- Salen (656 ha)
- Crannich (1227 ha)
- Aintuim (981 ha)
- Lettermore (1941 ha)

This management plan will replace and renew the previous Land Management Plan of Central Mull (SF File Ref 033/W/C/13(4))



Across the plan area elevation ranges from just 20m above sea level near the Aros Office in Lettermore, up to 440 m at An Speinne in the same block. The blocks sit within a mixture of two landscape types, and are primarily “Stepped Rocky Coastlands” with low stepped headlands and ridges following a SE/NW alignment interspersed with ribbon lochs and undulating moorland. Some steeper areas of Aintuim and Lettermore are classed as “Stepped Cliffs and Terraces”, an exposed open landscape with steep cliffs separating stepped-profile terraces.

The prevailing cool & wet climate is conducive to good conifer tree growth although the combination of soil types and varied topography (exposed and sometimes steep combined with very flat, wet areas) limits the choice of tree species suitable for continued productive conifer crops. Climate change predictions suggest that the climate will become generally warmer, with drier summers and wetter winters. Previous species and provenance choice has not always been ideal to make the most of the silvicultural potential.

Approximately 62% of the site is under woodland cover, with a further 3% having been felled awaiting restocking and the remaining 35% given over to open ground, with large areas in Aintuim and Lettermore. Sitka spruce accounts for just 58% of the woodland with Lodgepole Pine (LP) a relatively high component, for example Crannich block has 31% LP. Broadleaves currently account for approximately 6% of the woodland area.

The current split in terms of age classes structure is approximately:

- 7% establishing crop (0-10 years)
- 2% thicket (11-20 years)
- 36% pole stage (21-40 years)
- 52% mature (41-60 years)
- 3% old forest (61+ years)

Age diversification is therefore minimal with a predominantly even aged mature crop.

Most of the remaining pole stage and mature trees are first rotation forest with a small but increasing area establishing as second rotation. Both the first and subsequent rotations of productive forest were managed as patch clearfell. Thinning is not suitable due to the relatively exposed nature of the site and predominantly peaty soil.

There is a reasonably significant element of larch within the forests; SPHNs have been issued in Crannich for *Phytophthora ramorum* so it is assumed further infections are likely.

The forests have a road network totaling approx. 41 km. This existing network allows economic operational access (i.e. 500 m or less) for a good proportion of Crannich and Lettermore apart from smaller sections of the block. However, large areas of Aintuim and also Salen blocks need consideration for further roading for future harvesting operations as there is currently no access.

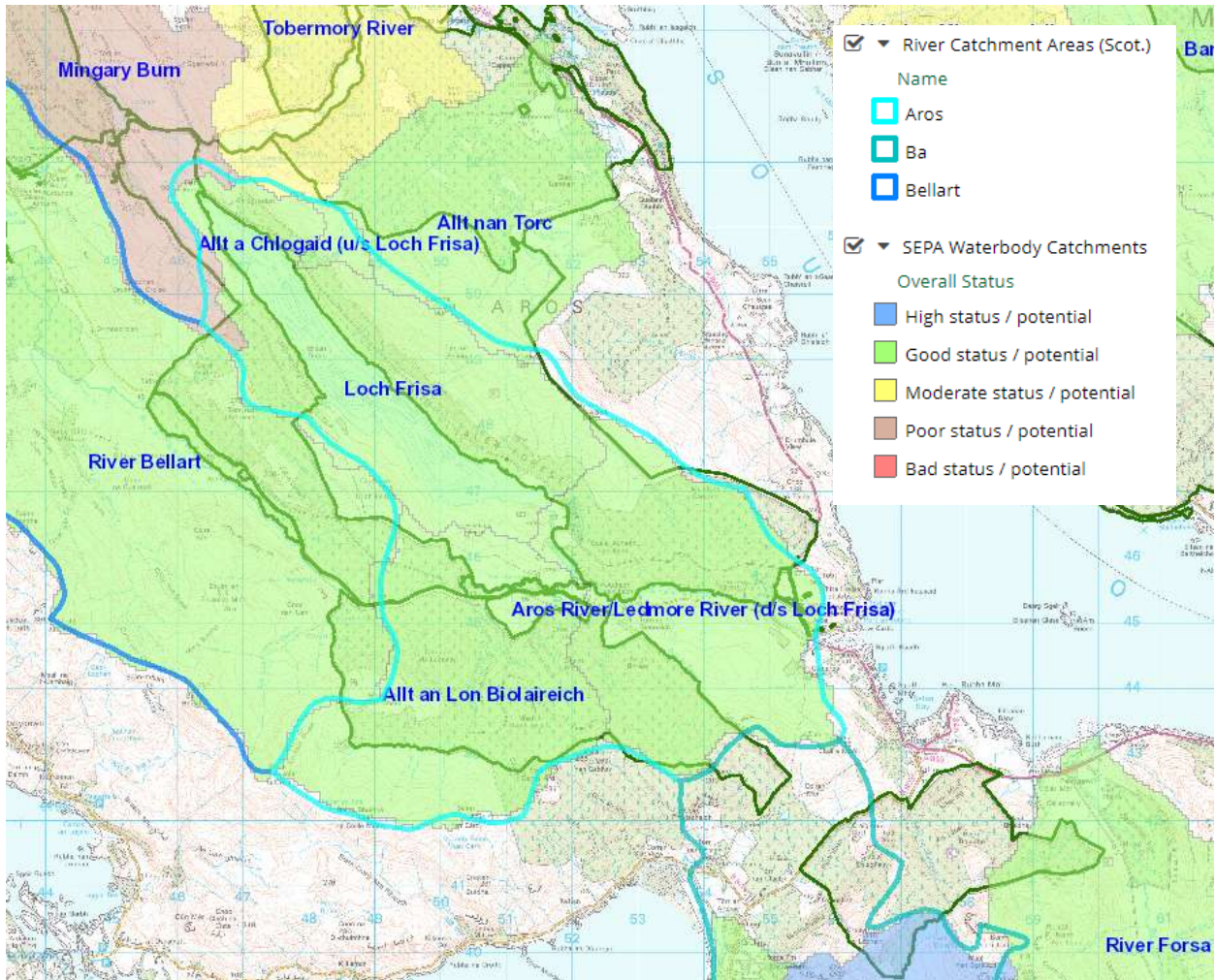
The richness of the natural environment on Mull is well known both across the UK and internationally. The island is known as a nationally important area for a variety of species including raptors such as White Tailed Eagle, Golden Eagle and Hen Harrier. Open habitats for peatland include both Blanket Bog and Upland Flush with varying conditions from drained to favourable – bog restoration will be an important component of this LMP area especially in Aintuim and Crannich. Ledmore in Lettermore was an important hoverfly habitat. Although there are no specific designations on FLS land within the Central Mull plan area, the whole of the isle of Mull is designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area and the surrounding seas form the Inner Hebrides and the Minches Marine Special area of Conversation.

Half of Salen block falls within the council's Local Landscape Area (LLA) and land bordering the southern boundary is within a National Scenic Area.

There are 160 ha of Ancient Woodland sites within the plan area, mostly in Salen, and one area of Natural Reserve in Lettermore. Japanese knotweed has been recorded in Salen quarry and *Rhododendron ponticum* is also found in Salen and Aintuim (Allt Darach).

The forests sit within three River Drainage Areas, Ba, Aros and Bellart, and are part of several waterbody catchments, all with good status/potential apart from a small area in north Aintuim (Mingary Burn) and north Lettermore (Tobermory River).





There are two scheduled monuments within the plan area, Cill an Ailean chapel (Lettermore) and Cnoc nan Dubh Leitre (an ancient fair site in Aintuim) and there are a variety of undesignated features across the sites recorded in the heritage layer, such as shielings and settlements with arrowhead finds.

NatureScot Landscape Designations show the FLS land area to be mostly Stepped Rocky Coastlands, although the high open land of Lettermore, Crannich and Aintuim are designated as Stepped Cliffs and Terraces.

A Scotways Right of Way runs through the northern section of Aintuim and along the FLS boundary; in addition Core Paths run through the forest roads of Lettermore (also a formal recreation site) and the lower road and paths of Salen.

Argyll and Bute Council's Local Development Plan LDP2 has been consulted on in 2019 and the revised plan identifies FLS land as Countryside Areas.

A large portion of Salen's drinking water catchment falls within FLS' Salen forest. There are also a small number of private water supplies within each forest in the plan. This may change as the drinking water supply for the majority of the island changes to being fed from the Tobermory water supply.

Loch Frisa offers fishing opportunities via permit for brown trout, salmon and sea trout. There is also a fishfarm present on the loch.

Deer control in both Central and North areas is undertaken by direct Wildlife staff with additional contract control assistance in five forest blocks to reduce deer impact on current and future establishment operations, this combined approach currently provides a red deer cull figure of 350+ per year across both plan areas.

Both plan areas are subject to deer and sheep movement from sporting estates with current neighbouring deer density's being available in the 2019 helicopter deer count undertaken by NatureScot in Spring 2019.

## 2. Strategic drivers

To realise the vision as set out in the Scottish Forestry Strategy 2019-2029, six priorities for action have been identified for implementation:

- Ensuring forests and woodlands are sustainably managed
- Expanding the area of forests and woodlands, recognising wider land-use objectives
- Improving efficiency and productivity, and developing markets
- Increasing the adaptability and resilience of forests and woodlands
- Enhancing the environmental benefits provided by forests and woodlands
- Engaging more people, communities and businesses in the creation, management and use of forests and woodlands

To demonstrate how we will have regard to the Forestry Strategy in our work, we have identified the relevant Forestry Strategy 'Priorities for Action' in our Corporate Outcomes section of the FLS Corporate Plan 2019-2022. These, alongside key issues and site specific challenges, have informed our draft land management objectives, as illustrated in Table 12 below.

### 3. Draft land management plan objectives

- Develop a strategy for the future management of existing poor quality crops in current rotation and increase rotation length where appropriate.
  - Improve the long term sustainability of timber production by exploring opportunities for crops of varying quality into the next rotation; this will work towards future smoothing of the production forecast whilst incorporating the impact of peat restoration work on age restructuring.
  - Work towards removing all larch from Mull within the next ten years by managed removal of prioritised larch areas, especially in Crannich, minimising the impact of future SPHNs on the sustainable management of the forest.
  - Review and improve both the choice of species and their provenance (in conjunction with ground condition suitability) and also diversification of species (within the constraints of high wind hazard classes impacting on the thinning potential of species other than SS/LP), to ensure sustainable timber production as the forests move into their next rotation.
  - Ensure both forest road network and provision of quarries is suitable for future management via an achievable road programme, especially in Aintuim and Salen.
  - Develop a strategy to reduce herbivore impact across the FLS estate.
- 
- Develop large scale Peat Restoration project in Aintuim and enhance Open Habitats, especially in Lettermore & Crannich.
  - Develop PAWS restoration in Salen and Aintuim blocks, and develop habitat networks via woodland expansion to increase the percentage of broadleaves and subsequent biodiversity (including control of Exotic Invasive species at Salen).
  - Management and protection of key species including considerable raptor interests across Mull (“Eagle Island” draws in high tourist numbers), and in addition the archaeological heritage of the area.
  - Ensure water quality maintained in River Bellart water catchment (Aintuim).
- 
- Maintain & enhance both views and existing recreation provision for the benefit of locals and increasingly large visitor numbers to Mull; focussed in Lettermore .
  - Work with local communities and MICT, especially around Salen, supporting the large-scale tourism now dominating the local economy with subsequent high nature visitor numbers.

## 4. Stakeholders

- Scottish Forestry
- NatureScot
- Argyll & Bute Council
- Argyll Fisheries Trust
- Argyll Timber Transport Group (ATTG)
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS)
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- Mull and Iona Community Trust (MICT)
- Rural Payments and Inspection Division (RPID)
- Scottish Water (SW)
- Loch Frisa Fish Farm
- Mull Deer Management Group
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Visit Scotland
- Community Councils
- Confor
- Holiday Mull
- Association wildlife tour operators
- Scottish Southern Energy
- Scottish Water
- Mull Museum
- Mull Native Woodland Group
- Neighbours



**Table 12 – Relationship between relevant corporate outcomes and the site specific draft LMP objectives**

Corporate Outcomes Relevant to LMP	Operational Actions To Deliver Outcome Relevant to LMP	Draft LMP Objectives
<p><b>Outcome 1: Supporting a Sustainable Rural Economy</b></p> <p>FLS supports a sustainable rural economy by managing the national forests and land in a way that encourages sustainable business growth, development opportunities, jobs and investments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Managing the national forests and land in accordance with the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) to ensure that timber and other products produced by FLS are guaranteed to be from a sustainably managed resource</li> <li>● Developing our forest planning processes to ensure long-term sustainable productivity of the national forests and land                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing a sustainable supply of timber to Scotland’s timber processing sector</li> <li>Implementing the Restocking Strategy for the national forests and land and develop a new plant and seed supply strategy</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Supporting Scottish tourism and the visitor economy through the provision of visitor attractions</li> <li>● Support the venison processing sector through our deer management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain Small Round Wood, pallet log and biomass production (maintained timber income, clearfell/restock)</li> <li>● Plan roads to access less accessible crops.</li> </ul>

Corporate Outcomes Relevant to LMP	Operational Actions To Deliver Outcome Relevant to LMP	Draft LMP Objectives
<p><b>Outcome 2:</b> Looking after Scotland’s national forests and land</p> <p>Scotland’s national forests and land are looked after; biodiversity is protected and enhanced; and more environmental services are provided to people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Managing the national forests and land to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity</li> <li>● Maintaining and enhancing our work on peatland restoration</li> <li>● Collaborating with partners on integrated landscape-scale approaches to habitat management and restoration</li> <li>● Continuing to implement the Larch Strategy in order to reduce the rate of expansion of <i>Phytophthora ramorum</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue to restore and maintain areas of bog habitat (reduce carbon release, diversify habitat)</li> <li>● Protect historical features</li> <li>● Mitigate against excessive water runoff in catchments.</li> <li>● Pre-emptively remove larch</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 3:</b> National forests and land for visitors and communities</p> <p>Everyone can visit and enjoy Scotland’s national forests and land to connect with nature, have fun, benefit their health and wellbeing and have the opportunity to engage in our community decision making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintaining walking and biking trails to promote fun in the outdoors, focussing on improving entry level experiences for everyone to enjoy and gain health benefits</li> <li>● Continuing to remove barriers to ensure that people from all backgrounds can and do access the full range of benefits of the national forests and land</li> <li>● Enabling outdoor learning and encouraging schools and community groups to make use of the national forests and land</li> <li>● Continuing to engage communities in decisions relating to the management of the national forests and land</li> <li>● Continuing to support community empowerment by enabling communities to make use of the national forests and land to benefit their communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide for use by local community and visitors (high tourist numbers, proposed settlement expansion, fire risk)</li> </ul>