



Map 13 Environment issues and analysis

Upper series of annotations

Restoration of some of the large deep peat area is possible with developing techniques and will contribute towards the Scottish Government's net zero target by 2045.

There are extensive areas of deep peat in Leanachan which are currently afforested and some of which will be acting as carbon sources.

Chapman Wood upper boundary currently has a sharp edge to the open hill SSSI. Here as along the full length of the boundary working with neighbouring interests would offer the best opportunity to develop the ecological transition from forest to open habitat.

Transition zone sites outside the forest boundary at the western end.

The landscape and terrain can accommodate large scale coupes which also offer other advantages including reduced costs, reduced deer damage, an improved control environment for deer and boar and more flexibility for improving drainage and future ride lines to improve the landscaping of second rotation felling coupes.

Across most of the site brash mats are essential to facilitate harvesting and reduce soil damage. Harvesting coupe design has to achieve direct access to road frontage and utilise brash mats. In many areas this means that large coupes are essential to facilitate practical harvesting.

Lon Leanachan SSSI unplanted area of bog which has recently been cleared of naturally regenerating trees. There is scope for further conifer removal from the perimeter and bog restoration.

SSSI is in unfavourable condition due to the threat of non-native regeneration and deer pressure.

Deer browsing can help to maintain open ground areas and reduce the cost of maintenance. Renewed deer fencing along the upper margin could encourage natural regeneration and the development of a more sympathetic upper margin. Feral pigs may have positive impacts on forest ecosystem regeneration and deer numbers.

Deer can cause damage to mature timber by bark stripping, particularly along the margin with open ground, and when deer are only accessing open ground at night, While BI has established across the site with ease, selective browsing will tend to favour SS and reduce the regeneration

of softer species such as SP, NS & OK. This reduces species diversity in the long term and reduces the speed of woodland expansion on the upper margin and other open ground areas where this is desirable.

Iconic landscape attracting visitors from all over the world. Opportunity to enhance the landscape through forest design process. The upper margin of the forest is developing into a natural and attractive transition from conifer through native woodland to open habitat.

Highly visible forest from above and from Commando memorial with Chapman Wood in particular to the west cutting across the dominant landform. Hard edges from previous forest management and fencing will persist in the landscape for some time.

Lower series of annotations

Burns flowing from the hills through the forest providing opportunities for enhancing habitat networks, focal points for recreation and management boundaries.

Some of the watercourses are impacted by alteration and abstraction for the aluminium smelter hydro power.

Area of craigs on more base rich geology may hold remnant montane woodland.

Difficult area to protect from herbivore impact.

Opportunity in the longer term to create interlock between NBL areas and productive conifers across slopes ideally suited to SS sawlog production. Potential to utilise BI for commercial production. Potential to expand woodland area by natural regeneration and to create an ecological transition zone between the core forest and the open hill (SSSI).

Most of the key productive slopes with a high landscape impact have been restocked and felling is post 2041. The opportunity for improving the landscape here, particularly in relation to interlock of species groups, is limited. Ownership boundary crosses ecological zones – work with neighbours

Significant area of native woodland and PAWS along the upper margin of the forest. Removal of conifers is well advanced within the PAWS areas and natural regeneration is developing. Some of the areas could be managed for Scots Pine timber production. Native woodland above the conifer forest has some veteran trees as well as some natural regeneration. There is good scope for linking the woodland remnants from Coille Leanachan to Meall na Coille Moire.

Browsing is currently holding back the natural regeneration. The strategic deer fence is no longer functioning along part of the upper margin. The intentions of the owners of the estate above the forest are not yet known in relation to the deer management. Careful siting of suitable provenance Scots pine for production. Fencing is likely to be required to protect native woodland interest.

Many of the key riparian areas carry mature mixed hardwoods and NBL regeneration across expanded riparian areas has been demonstrably good, and as a consequence restructuring to expand and link riparian NBL is both cost and practically effective.

Most of the water courses are highly modified in terms of flow volumes and patterns due to extensive hydro schemes across the area.

In addition to their ecological value, deep peat areas, retained in healthy condition with a continuing accumulation of organic matter are an asset in terms of carbon capture and sequestration. Most of the deeper peat areas are of a low productivity and harvesting/management is problematic due to the low bearing capacity of the soil, in consequence restoring peat areas can have a limited impact on forest productivity. Peat restoration can lead to the loss of productive areas and/or adverse impacts on the drainage of other productive areas. Restoration of peat areas following a conifer crop can be problematic.