Forestry and Land Scotland
Coilltearachd agus Fearann Alba

Strathyre Forests outline civil engineering proposals

Why we need forest roads and quarries

Our forest roads are essential for supporting sustainable forest management activities, and provide enhanced recreational access under the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. Existing roads require periodic maintenance and upgrading to remain fit for purpose, while new roads are sometimes needed to access isolated areas. To undertake this work, we typically source stone within the forest, close to where it is required. This reduces transport costs, traffic impacts, and carbon emissions by reducing or eliminating the need to import stone via rural road networks.

Planning process for roads and quarries

Forest roads and quarries are subject to separate regulatory processes from routine forestry operations such as felling and restocking. Larger or more sensitive proposals are assessed by Scottish Forestry through a Screening Opinion Request (SOR) under the Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. New forest roads are also subject to the Local Planning Authority's Prior Notification process, through which planning approval is obtained.

Description of the proposed works

Over the next five-year period we are proposing around 1.5km of new forest roads, and upgrade work to a further 16.2km to support forest management activities. To facilitate this work we require up to three new forest quarries. These will be located where there is access to suitable stone, to reduce the need to transport stone between areas, and designed to minimise potential impacts on the local environment. A brief description of the proposed works is given below, and shown on map **CM4**. In addition to the works detailed below, we will continue to develop the existing quarries at Kirkton and Bochastle within their current boundaries.

Benvane lower (a) (approximate length 1.25km) – this new road will provide access to conifers planted in the 1980s which are becoming vulnerable to disease and windblow. It forms part of a longer route which will eventually be constructed to access further isolated areas of the forest.
A84 North (to be confirmed) – we will explore options to access areas of larch isolated on the north side of the A84 at Kingshouse, which may include a short section of new road (<300m).
Cuaraidh na Sròine (approximate footprint 0.3ha) – this small quarry will serve forest road upgrades and maintenance in the northern section of West Strathyre, accessed via Ardoch. Although small, its location will reduce the need to transport stone through Strathyre village.
Stronyre Quarry (approximate footprint 1.2ha) – this quarry is intended to be the main source of stone for West Strathyre for the next 5-10 years, providing material for the new roads, upgrades, and maintenance in the surrounding area, accessed via the entrance at Stronyre.

Kingshouse / **An Tionndadh** (approximate footprint <1ha) – the expansion of the existing Kingshouse quarry, and/or the creation of a new quarry at An Tionndadh are two options under consideration for sourcing stone in Strathyre East, subject to further assessments.

Considering the potential impacts of roads and quarries

Potential environmental impacts are assessed as part of the Screening Opinion Request process, particularly considering the various factors listed below. All works will comply with the UK Forestry Standard, UK Woodland Assurance Standard, and the FLS Civil Engineering Handbook. Quarries are typically blasted once annually and reinstated at the end of their operational life.

Population and human health

None of the proposed roads or quarries are close to population centres (within 1500m). A small number of properties may be located near the 750m notification zone for quarry blasts and as such would receive advance notice of any blasting. None of the proposals will have a significant impact on recreation in the forest but may improve public access in some areas.

Biodiversity

We maintain records of relevant priority and protected species and habitats within our landholding and all operations are preceded by a thorough environmental walkover survey. The proposed works will not have a significant impact on any special habitats and the appropriate measures will be taken to protect local wildlife as appropriate.

Soil, water and climate

As the proposals lie within potentially sensitive catchment areas, protection of the soil and water environments will be a particular consideration. A range of site-specific design and construction measures will be used to protect the environment, as per our Civil Engineering Handbook.

Land and material assets

All of the proposed roads and quarries are located on FLS land, and it is not believed that any material assets (such as buildings or utility infrastructure) will be affected.

Cultural heritage

There are no records of any heritage features within the footprint of the proposed roads and quarries, and all operations will be preceded by a walkover survey.

Landscape

The proposed quarries are generally screened by landform and woodland cover, limiting their visibility from nearby settlements, glens and viewpoints. Views would largely be confined to higher ground and some mountain summits, where the quarries would typically appear as small features within wider landscapes. The proposed roads will generally be screened by woodland cover and will be in keeping with the character of a typical working forest environment.