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Lost Forest Woodland Creation Phase 1

Dear Sir/Madam,

A new native woodland creation proposal has been developed near Kinrara, Aviemore which is being called the Lost Forest. The proposal is now being considered by Scottish Forestry for approval and will appear on the Public Register linked below for a 28 day period. During this period, comments may be sent to Scottish Forestry relating to this proposal.

<https://forestry.gov.scot/support-regulations/public-registers/register-of-felling-permissions-and-forestry-grant-scheme-applications>

A summary of the project and key proposals are included on the following pages as well as supporting maps. Information can also be accessed online at the webpage below.

<https://www.scottishwoodlands.co.uk/public-consultations/>

Please let us know if you have any questions or would like additional details, we can be contacted at LostForest@scottishwoodlands.co.uk or by post at the address above.

If you wish to make a comment on the proposal, please respond directly to Scottish Forestry as the statutory body responsible for assessment of the proposal. You will find contact details for Scottish Forestry via the Public Register.

Yours sincerely



Megan Parker
Senior Forest Planner



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Lost Forest Woodland Creation

Phase 1 2022



Project Information

Location	West of Aviemore, near IV13 7YB, central grid reference NH 860 115
Landowner	Lost Forest Ltd
Gross Phase 1 area	Approximately 687 ha
Scottish Woodlands Contact	Lostforest@scottishwoodlands.co.uk

Summary

The ownership near Aviemore rises northwest from Loch Alvie, between the peaks of Geal-charn Mor and Geal-charn Beag, down to River Dunlain and back up to the top of the catchments of Allt Steallaig, Allt an Tudair and Coachan na Gaibhre. The estate is predominantly open land of heather moor and peatland though the eastern low ground around Loch Alvie is scattered with remnant ancient woodlands. Recent felling has removed non-native conifer trees. Traditionally this property has been managed as a sporting estate though there is significant opportunity to increase diversity through creation of new native woodlands. The site is well accessed through a central network of hill tracks and paths which have become increasingly frequented by hillwalkers and mountain bikers looking for local accessible wild areas. This proposal aims to sequester carbon and to improve the ecological value of the property over a period of years through creation of a series of new woodlands. It is likely this work will be divided into a first and second phase of operations. The information that follows covers Phase 1 which is planned to begin in 2022.

Key Proposals

- Creation of new woodland, designed as a mosaic of woodland types complimenting those natural forests found locally
- Ensuring the newly planted areas are protected with deer fencing until they become successfully established
- Integrated areas of open habitat conserved as grassland and moorland for sensitive species and for landscape benefits
- Unimpeded public access in line with the Outdoor Access Code
- New woodland designed to complement the local landscape

Concept Notes

Below are key attributes of the proposal which link to the Concept Map that follows

1. Physical Character	Extent of planting is informed by soils, vegetation communities, and landform with upper planting and regeneration margins feathered into open hill. A Landscape Review was completed to inform the design and ensure it fits within the landscape suitably. This also included choosing inverted mounding as the ground preparation for planted areas.
2. Ecological Site Classification	Selected woodland types include W4 (upland birch), W11 (sessile oak-birch), and W18 (native Scots pine) which have species mixtures suited to site conditions. Within each woodland type, individual tree species will be chosen for planting based on microsite conditions such as soil moisture and shelter to ensure diversity and resilience.
3. Environmental Designations	Several designated sites either sit within the proposal boundary or adjacent to it. Through creation of upland birch woodland and native Scots pine woodland up to the boundary with Kinveachy Forest SPA, SAC, and SSSI an important habitat connection can be realised for the population of Capercaillie to the northeast. Fence removal as soon as trees are established will ensure Capercaillie movement into the Phase 1 area will be possible in future.
4. Ancient Woodland Fragments	Existing areas of ancient semi-natural woodland are to be expanded through natural regeneration which has been strategically planned along edges and within open gaps. Remnant seed trees have also been provided space to regenerate naturally.
5. Archaeology	There are two unscheduled features identified on the Highland Historic Environment Records within the proposal area. A 5 m buffer has been given to the circular hut located close to the A9 and the uncommon non-linear grouse butts are to be relocated and protected from damage during planting.
6. Local Woodland Strategy	Target areas for woodland expansion within the Cairngorms National Park Authority are present. This proposal contributes toward reaching woodland expansion targets by creating an additional 426 ha of new woodland within a 10 year period while developing resilience to climate change in ways that compliment other land uses, key themes for the Park Authority.
7. Habitats & Species	Protected species and sensitive habitats are present within the proposal area including GWDTEs (Groundwater dependant terrestrial ecosystems), juniper, rare invertebrates such as the Kentish Glory moth, raptors, black grouse, and a number of moorland waders. Areas of unplanted ground will remain within the planted woodland creating a mosaic of habitats to favour a variety of species.

	At the lower end of the Phase 1 area open ground was left around ponds to maintain some of the wader habitat currently present. Buffers will be created around juniper trees and GWDTEs to maintain their condition.
8. Herbivore pressure	Deer and other herbivores present on site limit establishment of new woodlands. Deer fencing is required to ensure areas planned for planting and regeneration successfully establish within the first ten years. This fencing has been located and designed to minimise the impact on the landscape and the potential for birds strikes. Some sections of the fence will be marked with wooden dropper posts to make them more visible to birds. The line of the fence has been placed where it will be as unobtrusive as possible and will be removed as soon as trees are established and resilient to browsing. Compensatory culling of deer has been agreed with NatureScot and the local Deer Management Group to ensure deer welfare.
9. Natural Regeneration	Scattered remnant trees remain within steep gorges and in some areas of open hill. These seed sources will be utilised wherever possible to encourage natural regeneration. Within the Phase 1 area, over 100 ha of the area is being set aside for natural regeneration within this ten-year period with an aim of encouraging further regeneration over a longer timeframe.
10. Access	<p>This area sees relatively strong levels of public access due to its proximity to Aviemore and the A9. The three key principles of the Outdoor Access Code, to respect the interests of others, to care for the environment, and to take responsibility for our actions, are shared not only by visitors to the site, but also by those working to develop this woodland creation proposal. Continued responsible public access is welcomed on site, particularly along The Burma Road, which is a public right of way. Where fences will cross the Burma Road, new multi-use gates will be installed alongside vehicle gates to ensure horse riders, cyclists and walkers can enjoy this challenging route. Other established footpaths will also have multi-use gates installed to ensure cyclists can continue to access the site.</p> <p>Whilst no new metalled roads are being proposed, there will be the requirement to facilitate ATV access across the proposal area for initial establishment work. This will include some minor cuttings. These access routes will be designed to minimise their impact on the surrounding environment.</p>

Local Setting

The photograph of the site shown below illustrates the current local landscape setting followed by an interpretation of what the new woodland may look like on the following page.



Right: Representative view on the Burma Road looking south across Strathspey towards the Cairngorms Mountains.



Left: Indicative new woodland shown rising up the hill composed of a variety of native species including birch, Scots pine, rowan, alder, holly, willow and native woodland scrub species.