



**Scottish Natural Heritage**  
**Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba**

All of nature for all of Scotland  
Nàdar air fad airson Alba air fad

**PARALLEL ROADS OF LOCHABER**  
**Site of Special Scientific Interest**

**SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT**

Site code: 1272

**The Governor's House**  
**The Parade**  
**Fort William**  
**PH33 6BA**

**Tel. 01397 704716**  
**Fax. 01397 700303**

**Purpose**



This is a public statement prepared by SNH for owners and occupiers of the SSSI. It outlines the reasons it is designated as an SSSI and provides guidance on how its special natural features should be conserved or enhanced. This Statement does not affect or form part of the statutory notification and does not remove the need to apply for consent for operations requiring consent.

We welcome your views on this statement.

This statement is available in Gaelic on request.

**Description of the site**

Glens Roy, Spean and Gloy together form an area of outstanding importance for their landforms and sediments. At the end of the last Ice Age, between about 12,900 and 11,500 years ago, there was a final period of intense cold and glaciers blocked the lower parts of these glens. The ice acted as a natural dam, holding back lakes at different levels as it advanced and retreated. The parallel roads are what remain today of these ancient shorelines. This site provides the clearest and most complete assemblage of landforms and sediments providing evidence in Britain for the formation and drainage of ice-dammed lakes. The features were recognised internationally by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and have subsequently been crucial to the development of geomorphological concepts and the understanding of landscape evolution. In addition, the different altitudes of the former glacial lake shorelines have provided significant evidence concerning the depression of the Earth's crust in glaciated areas.

The landforms within these glens are unique in Britain: not only the glacial lake shorelines, but also the associated collection of remarkable depositional landforms. These features illustrate geomorphological processes during the successive stages of glacial lake development and their subsequent catastrophic drainage. The sediments and landform assemblages include glacial moraines, kame terraces (terraces formed in contact with glaciers), river terraces, meltwater gorges, kettle-holes (hollows left by melting blocks of ice), lake-floor sediments, fans, deltas, and landslides.

Within the site, Key Areas have been identified where the most important features are present.

An area of approximately 1,162 ha in Glen Roy has been declared and managed as a National Nature Reserve (NNR) since 1970.

<b>Natural features of Parallel Roads of Lochaber SSSI</b>	<b>Condition of feature (and date monitored)</b>
Fluvial Geomorphology of Scotland	Favourable - maintained (August 2002)
Quaternary of Scotland	Favourable – maintained (June 2009)

<b>Features of overlapping Natura sites that are not notified as natural features of Parallel Roads of Lochaber SSSI</b>	<b>Condition of feature (date monitored)</b>	<b>Designation</b>
Atlantic salmon	Unfavourable, recovering (October 2004)	River Spey SAC
Sea lamprey	Favourable, maintained (September 2002)	River Spey SAC
Freshwater pearl mussel	Unfavourable, recovering (October 2000)	River Spey SAC
Otter	Favourable, maintained (September 2004)	River Spey SAC

The Fluvial Geomorphology of Scotland feature was found to be in favourable condition in 2002. No significant impacts on the features of interest were noted in the case of this interest feature apart from the presence of forestry (planted prior to the date of the baseline survey) which was partly obstructing the visibility of features of interest.

The Quaternary of Scotland feature was found to be in favourable condition in 2009. All of the features visited were intact and there had been no reduction in visibility since the last monitoring. Again, forestry plantation was partly obstructing visibility of the features of interest, but this was planted prior to the date of the baseline survey and so the site was judged to be in favourable condition. Forest harvesting was improving visibility in one area in Glen Spean. An extension to a quarry in Glen Spean is likely to occur and will partially destroy the feature, but will allow the study of the deposits that would otherwise not happen.

### **Past and present management**

There are a variety of land uses across the site, notably forestry, rough grazing, sand and gravel quarrying, hydroelectric power generation, conservation and recreation. Due to the scale of the site, there are a large number of owner occupiers, for example individual householders with an interest in small areas of garden ground, crofters, small scale farmers and forestry and quarry operators.

Part of the SSSI is managed as Glen Roy National Nature Reserve (NNR). It is used for grazing by sheep, deer and cattle under crofting tenure. A public viewpoint and interpretation panel are provided on the boundary of the NNR. Lochaber Geopark recognise this site as one of the most important locations for Earth science in Lochaber and the organisation promotes the site through their website, information leaflet and occasional guided walks.

In many parts of the SSSI, current grazing levels ensure that the visibility and accessibility of the geomorphological features is maintained. In some areas, natural erosion, including undercutting of sediments by burns, and slumping, may result in debris flows covering exposures.

**Objectives for Management** (and key factors influencing the condition of natural features)

We wish to work with the owners and occupiers to protect the site and to maintain and where necessary enhance its features of special interest. SNH aims to carry out site survey, monitoring and research as appropriate to increase our knowledge and understanding of the site and its natural features and monitor the effectiveness of management.

The EU Habitats and Birds Directives oblige Government to avoid, in SACs and SPAs, the deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species, as well as disturbance of the species for which the areas have been designated, where such disturbance could be significant in relation to the objectives of these Directives. The objectives below have been assessed against these requirements. All authorities proposing to carry out or permit to be carried out operations likely to have a significant effect on the European interests of this SSSI must assess those operations against the relevant Natura conservation objectives (which are listed on our website through the SNHi – SiteLink facility).

- 1. To maintain the physical integrity of the landform assemblages within the site** by ensuring developments involving earth movements (such as housing developments, construction of tracks, infilling of quarries, or large-scale sand and gravel quarrying) are assessed carefully for their likely impacts and carried out sensitively.
- 2. To maintain or enhance the visibility and accessibility of the landforms and sediments** by continuing positive grazing management of the site and by ensuring that developments such as afforestation, felling and restructuring of forestry plantations, or woodland regeneration, are assessed carefully for their likely impacts and carried out sensitively.

Date last reviewed: 8 October 2010

