



Scottish Natural Heritage
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba

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

COILLE PHUITEACHAIN
Site of Special Scientific Interest

SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

Site code: 383

The Governor's House
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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.

Natural features of Coille Phuiteachain SSSI	Condition of feature (and date monitored)
Native pinewood	Favourable, maintained (January 2008)
Beetles	Favourable, maintained (May 2002)

Description of the site

Coille Phuiteachain Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is one of the most structurally intact native pinewoods known in Lochaber. It covers north-facing slopes between 90m and 300m in altitude and is typical of a western pinewood in that it is open in nature and contains a high proportion of broadleaves: oak occurs at lower levels, whilst birch is the most important broadleaf at higher altitudes. Rowan and holly are common throughout the wood and alder and willow occur in damper areas. Clumps and small stands of pine, the oldest of which are between 100 and 250 years old, dominate drier ridges and knolls. Natural regeneration of pine is occurring, particularly in open areas.

The underlying geology is Moine schists and gneisses, overlain by glacial moraines. This results in abrupt site differences from freely drained soils on knolls to wet peaty hollows.

The ground flora is species-poor, consisting of a moss layer with heather, blaeberry and wavy hair grass on the drier knolls and with the wet flushes dominated by purple moor grass and bog myrtle. The characteristic pinewood moss *Ptilium crista-castrensis*, is a good indicator of continuous woodland cover over a prolonged period. Common crossbill, redstart, crested tit and goosander all breed in the wood and blackcock lek on the woodland edge. The beetle fauna includes several nationally scarce species, several of which are particularly associated with dead wood. The chequered skipper butterfly has also been recorded.

Site Condition Monitoring of the woodland in 2008 highlighted that there are frequent young trees and well grown saplings of non-native conifers. Ideally, these should be removed before they seed.

Past and present management

The Forestry Commission have owned the site since 1931. Past management has included the erection of deer fencing, regeneration and planting on land cleared of birch 'scrub'.

The long-term aim of the Forestry Commission is to enhance and expand the pinewood through natural regeneration to produce a well-structured, species rich pine-birch woodland as near as possible to the original forest cover.

The long term health of the pinewood habitat involves the ability of the trees to regenerate successfully and thereby create a diverse woodland with associated habitats. While promoting regeneration it is also desirable to maintain open areas within the wood to encourage the chequered skipper butterfly. The Forest Enterprise work programme for this area includes maintenance of deer fences, deer control, felling in adjacent conifer plantations (to reduce the risk of invasion by non-native species), maintaining up to date fire plans, fixed point photography, the erection of signs and the improvement of access from the foot bridge.

More detailed information on past and present management is contained in the Coille Phuitechain SSSI Forest Enterprise Management Plan 2008 - 2012.

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

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

1. To maintain the native pinewood in favourable condition by:

- Safeguarding against fire
- maintaining the deer fence and ensuring deer browsing stays at a level capable of sustaining natural regeneration;
- removing non-native conifers before they seed.

2. To maintain the favourable status of the populations of nationally scarce pinewood beetles by:

- maintaining plentiful deadwood.
- avoiding use of chemicals
- safeguarding against fire

Date last reviewed:
15 December 2010