



**GLEN FALLOCH WOODS
Site of Special Scientific Interest**

SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

Site code: 707

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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.

Natural features of Glen Falloch Woods SSSI	Condition of feature (and date monitored)	Other relevant designations
Upland oak woodland	Unfavourable declining (April 2002)	SAC

Features of overlapping Natura sites that are not notified as SSSI natural features	Condition of feature (date monitored)	SPA or SAC
Otter	Favourable maintained (June 2005)	SAC

Description of the site

Glen Falloch Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is designated because of its native deciduous woodland communities. It is made up of three distinct areas: Gleann nan Caorann, Beinglas and Confluence Wood. Gleann nan Caorann is on steep north-facing ground which is rough and rocky and is dominated by downy birch with occasional oaks on the lower slopes. The canopy at Beinglas Wood, which is on a steep west facing slope, is a mixture of oak, birch, ash and hazel, while in Confluence Wood the dominant tree is oak.

The oak woodland feature is currently in unfavourable condition because of a lack of successful tree regeneration and the, partly associated, levels of deer browsing in the woods, especially in the Gleann nan Caorann wood. Confluence Wood is affected by deer browsing, but the dense canopy may be an additional factor inhibiting regeneration here.

The SSSI is part of the wider Loch Lomond Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is of European importance for its Atlantic oakwoods and its otter population. Otters use the watercourses throughout the site for moving across the area and use the woods themselves for shelter and for breeding. The otter population is in favourable condition.

The site also supports areas of species-rich grassland and flushes with characteristic “western” plant species such as pale butterwort. There is a typical community of woodland breeding birds including redstart, wood warbler, pied flycatcher and blackcap.

Past and present management

The SSSI forms part of Glen Falloch Estate, where the owners manage the land for a range of purposes, including deer stalking, hill farming and nature conservation. They are currently undertaking a land management review of the estate, with grant assistance from Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park.

Past management

Glen Falloch originally formed part of a large forest administered by the Scottish Crown. In 1568, King James VI made a grant of free forestry in Glen Falloch, the charter including conditions to ensure the perpetuation of the forest. With the opening of the lead mines at Tyndrum to the north in 1741, the only recorded use of the Glen Falloch Woods was for the cutting of alder and birch for pit props. Following the demise of lead mining, a military survey of the area by General Roy showed that lower Glen Falloch was still substantially wooded. It was during this more settled period of the mid-18th Century that a lucrative market developed for the bark of young oaks used in the tanning of hides, for which the Loch Lomond woodlands were particularly well placed for water-borne transport direct to the expanding industrial Clyde towns. In order to maintain a constant supply of bark, the Glen Falloch Woods were planted extensively under a rotation system which involved cutting the young stems every 24 years, leaving only a few standard trees to grow on for timber and seed. That the Glen Falloch Woods were incorporated in the system is shown by advertisements that appeared in the Edinburgh Advertiser in 1767 and again in 1791, offering the coppice oak for sale. The oak remaining in Glen Falloch today, and the Loch Lomond catchment beyond, is a relic of this form of forest management, which was finally abandoned towards the end of the 19th Century.

In more recent years, the woods have been grazed by sheep, cattle and deer. Little natural regeneration has occurred.

Present management

In recent years, Gleann nan Caorann has been used for sheep grazing. Confluence Wood has been split, with the eastern half having been used for over-wintering cattle and the western half holding cattle along with sheep during winter and at gathering times, in conjunction with improved pasture to the south. These practices are likely to have ceased or changed in 2007 and 2008 as tenant farmers have retired or returned their farms to the estate, with stock reductions following as the estate adjusts to profound changes in the hill farming economy.

Beinglas Wood (30.6 ha) is currently under a WGS agreement (1999-2004) as part of the Atlantic Oakwoods LIFE Project. Deer fencing has been erected around the perimeter and dense bracken areas are being sprayed with Asulox. It is hoped that higher levels of regeneration will be found here during the next phase of Site Condition Monitoring. Beinglas Wood is adjacent to the West Highland Way.

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 to aims carry out site survey, monitoring and research as appropriate to increase our knowledge and understanding of the site and its natural features.

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, in so far as 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 extent of upland oak woodland habitat** by managing browsing pressure on the woods from deer and domestic stock to allow seedlings and saplings to grow while maintaining a woodland floor which gives young trees suitable conditions to grow in.
2. **To consider the full range of ecological factors affecting regeneration** and to take action accordingly, with support from the Rural Priorities scheme. This will include shading and competition from ground flora such as bracken.
3. **To keep the site free from rhododendron and other invasive species.**
4. **To maintain populations of invertebrates** by leaving dead wood, including standing dead trees.
5. **To monitor the presence of otters on the site** and to consider the impacts of human disturbance in future land management decisions.

Date last reviewed: 09 January 2009