

## Invercauld Estate

### Forest Plan Renewal 2024-2033

*See maps*

Invercauld Estate’s Forest Plan is being renewed. This summary gives an overview of the Estate, its woodlands and the wide range of issues that will be taken into consideration in the development of the Forest Plan.

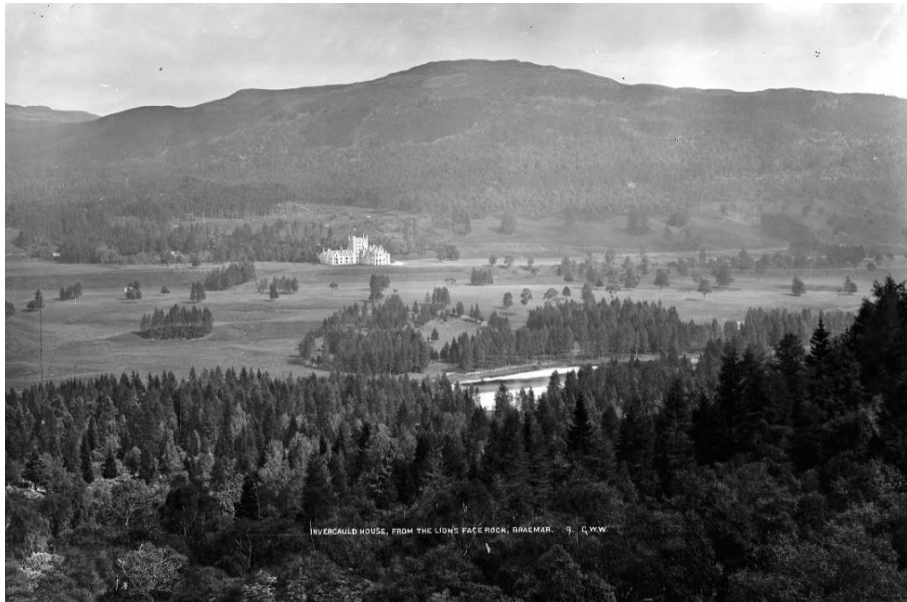
### Overview

Invercauld is a traditional upland rural estate located near Braemar. The estate totals approximately 45,000ha, of which woodlands cover 3200ha. There are a variety of land uses & enterprises on the estate including:

- Agriculture
- Property
- Forestry
- Sporting
- Tourism & Recreation

Invercauld Estate has a long history of forest management and the woodlands have been traditionally managed for generations. They are an integral part of the local landscape and comprise a wide variety of woodland types from commercial plantations, broadleaved riparian woodlands along the River Dee, traditional policy woods and specimen trees.

The plantations on the estate have been managed commercially over the centuries, providing timber to the local Deeside sawmills and income to the estate. The following George Washington Wilson photo from the second half of the 19th century shows felling behind Invercauld House. This area is the now mature trees



Most timber producing woodlands have been thinned, enhancing their appearance, timber production potential and ecological value.

Over the past decade there has been approximately:

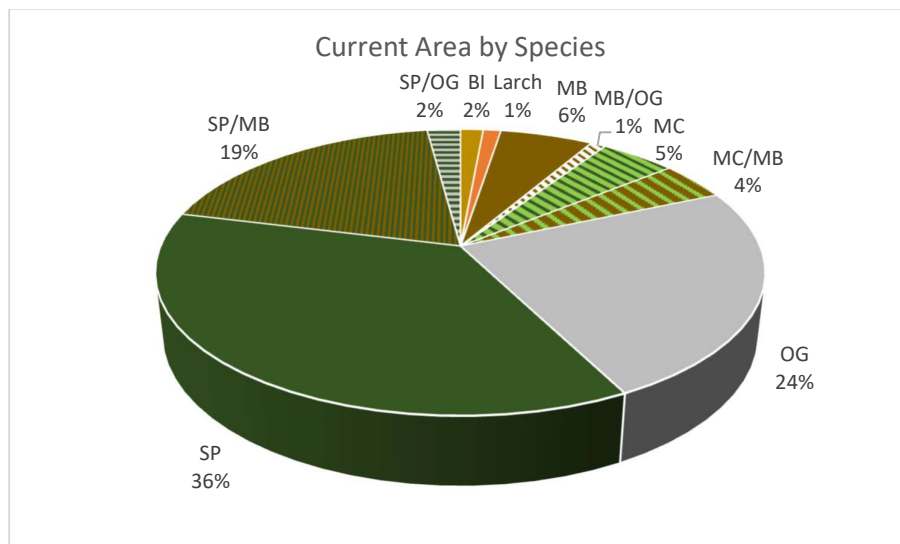
- 230ha thinning.
- 67.4ha felling.
- 41ha replanting.
- 308ha of new native woodlands planted, using approx. 750,000 trees including beat-up. Natural regeneration captured using gps, approx 300+ ha Est 330,000 trees @ 1100/ha native pine / BLV's including juniper

**Craig Leek and Meall Gorm area won Scottish finest woods award for best new native woodland 2018**

**Long Term Vision**

The long term vision is to maintain the woodlands on Invercauld as a diverse resource which positively contribute to the economy, landscape and biodiversity of the estate and local area.

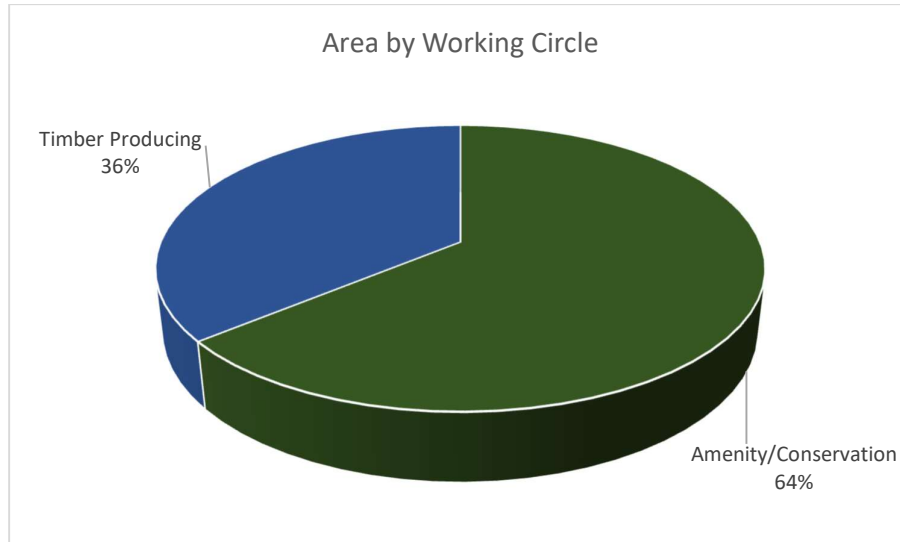
**Current Tree Species**



The woodlands are mostly native species – Scots pine, birch and other native broadleaves. It is anticipated that this will remain largely unchanged.

**Working circles**

The woodlands have been zoned into broad working circles to reflect objectives and priorities for the different woodlands.



**Timber Producing Woodlands**

Mostly Scots pine woodlands which are managed to produce commercial timber, they contain a diverse range of ages. Likely to be felled in well designed coupes as crops reach maturity and then replanted mainly with Scots pine to allow the cycle to continue.

The Scots pine plantations are a part of the local landscape and provide habitats for a wide variety of woodland species.

**Amenity/Conservation**

Predominantly native woodlands - birch/Scots pine - which will be managed to maintain and enhance their landscape and ecological value, with a reduced expectation of timber income. In general there will be little intervention, effectively providing significant areas of long term retention, natural reserves and valuable habitat for a range of flora & fauna.

## Opportunities and Constraints

A wide range of issues will be taken into consideration whilst producing the forest plan, which include:

### Public access

There is significant formal and informal public access across the Estate, including core paths, waymarked trails, access to higher mountains and informal access.

Access across the Estate will be consistent with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code

### Landscape

The forests form an integral element of the iconic Deeside landscape and contribute to the scenic values of this part of the Cairngorms National Park. Proposals will be carefully designed to ensure that they enhance the landscape in the long term.

### Deer Management

Red and roe deer are present across the estate. These will be managed to ensure that restocking and new planting can be successfully carried out, which is likely to require deer fencing.

### Ancient Woodland Sites

A significant proportion of the estate woodlands are Ancient Woodland Sites, appearing on Roy's maps of 1747. In total:

- 470 ha are Long Established Plantation Origin
- 833ha are Ancient Woodland Sites

### Designations.

The following designated sites are present within the woodlands.

- Cairngorm National Park
- Invercauld Historic Garden & Designed Landscape
- Deeside & Lochnagar NSA
- River Dee SAC
- Ballochbuie SAC
- Cairngorms Massif SPA
- Crathie Wood SSSI
- Creag Clunie and the Lions Face SSSI
- Craigandarroch Wood SSSI
- Craig Leek SSSI
- Dalnabo SSSI

Proposals are not likely to impact on the designations. Where necessary specific permissions will be obtained prior to operations taking place on designated sites.

### Archaeology

The most significant constraint is to ensure that proposals are compatible with the Invercauld Historic Garden & Designed Landscape.

Any archaeology known or found during operations will be protected in line with the UKFS *Forests and Historic Environment Guidelines* 2011.

### Water & Riparian Environment

Several significant water courses cross the estate and woodlands including the River Dee & its tributaries which is an SAC.

In addition to these there are numerous important but more minor water courses.

Forest operations will comply with UKFS Forest & Water Guidelines, with close attention paid to ensuring that they do not produce diffuse pollution.

There are numerous wetland and peatland habitats which are taken into account as part of the detailed forest design.

### Local Biodiversity Action Plan Species

The following species are present in or around the woodlands. The retention of significant areas of non commercial woodlands as natural reserves along with the phased regeneration of the commercial woodlands will maintain habitat diversity benefiting these species.

- Red squirrel
- Woodland Grouse – Capercaillie/Black Grouse.
- Osprey
- Bat species
- European Otter
- Badger
- Pine Marten
- Scottish Crossbill
- Scottish Wood Ant

### Pests & Diseases

There has been an increase in the number of pathogens affecting trees in the UK in recent years. The following could affect the estate woodlands.

- **Dothistroma Needle Blight (DNB)**

This affects both lodgepole pine and Scots pine. Scots pine will be thinned as far as possible, to increase air movement through the crops and reduce the risk of tree mortality.

- **Chalara fraxinea**

This fungal pathogen affects ash and is now present locally which will affect the local landscape and tree safety.

- **Dutch Elm Disease**

The area had been free of Dutch elm disease, but this is now present throughout the area and has affected the local landscape.

- **Phytophthora species**

*Phytophthora ramorum* which causes mortality of larch, was found locally in 2020, but does not appear to have spread since. The area is considered at low risk due to the climate but this may change.

Other *Phytophthora species* including *australis* & *pluvialis* are currently absent, but could affect the woodland in the future.

Good biosecurity measures should be in place to reduce the risk of disease.

### **Public Roads**

Some of the woodlands are accessed from minor public roads. Timber harvesting will be carefully managed to ensure that the public roads are not damaged. Prior to harvesting there will be discussion with the Aberdeenshire Council roads engineer to agree haulage details, which will include as appropriate:

- The use of tyre pressure control lorries, and maxi tyres.
- Agreed haulage directions.
- Timing.
- The maximum number of loads per day to be extracted.
- Avoiding convoying.

### **Forest Roads**

Internal forest roads are not constructed to a high standard, and are likely to require some upgrading prior to timber harvesting. It is not envisaged that extensive road construction will be required. All necessary permissions will be obtained before work commences.

### **Deer Management**

Roe & red deer are present across the estate and their population is managed to prevent damage to recently planted tree crops, by control and fencing.

It is likely that new planting and replanting will require deer fencing to ensure successful tree establishment.

### **FSC Certification**

The woodlands are certified under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)/PEFC and the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) demonstrating the estate's commitment to sustainable forest management. All operations are carried out in line with UK Forestry Standard Guidelines (UKFS)

### **Forest Operations.**

Forest operations are carefully planned to ensure that they are safe, do not damage the environment and minimise disruption to neighbours and the community.

This is achieved by:

- Carefully planning operations and making all involved aware where there are sensitivities.
- Working safely, including employing trained contractors who are members of the Forest Industry Safety Accord.
- Liaising with neighbours to make them aware that operations will be taking place, and address any issues.