

DRAFT 27.09.03

Proposed Addendum

A Framework for the Management of the Rothiemurchus Pinewoods

Background

The ‘Framework for the Management of the Rothiemurchus Pinewoods (referred to in future as, ‘the Framework’), recommended a ‘Working rationale’ (See Appendix 1 to this Addendum) that summarises the working rationale for the following areas defined in the Framework;

- Area 1 Old Growth Core areas
- Area 2. Extended Rotation Areas with consent by SNH for RE to remove timber under conditions broadly agreed in the Framework.
- Area 3. Extended Rotation Areas where consultation and agreement is required between RE, FC and SNH prior to timber extraction
- Area 4. Riparian Areas.
- Area 5. Wetlands

During further discussions focused on the practicality of facilitating access for timber harvesting, it was found necessary to define more clearly the requirements for timber removal relative to maintaining connectivity of habitats as defined in the Framework.

Additional Comments

In terms of conserving biodiversity, no problems should arise from timber harvesting as proposed in the Framework, or from providing access routes to and from the chosen sites, as long as sensitive sites are avoided and gaps in the canopy resulting from this, especially along riparian corridors, are limited to about 30–50 metres. The crossing of watercourses should be done by placement of semi-permanent structures that minimise damage to banks.

It is also important to emphasise that, outside of the Old Growth Core Areas, a regime of disturbance is as important to the conservation of biodiversity as it is to the conservation of the cultural imagery of the forest, *ie*

‘Human interference by the creation of clearings plays an important role in maintaining the structure of the forest for a range of species by removing shade, providing disturbed soil which facilitates regeneration of tree seedlings, ensuring continuity of a variety of forest habitat types, and maintaining amenity.’

A framework for the Management of the Rothiemurchus Pinewoods

Hence, the disturbance associated with the harvesting of timber, as proposed in the Framework, is *aimed at* conserving biodiversity by imposing structural and spatial diversity that will continue to support a wide range of the species associated with native pinewoods.

Appendix 1

Working Rationale

Important areas are defined on Map 1, which shows important wetlands, riparian areas OGCA's and ERA's. Wetlands and OGCA's are important habitats and are potentially fragile and so any activities must avoid damage to these areas. The following management rationale is proposed to deal with the future management of these areas.

Area 1 (OGCA). Minimal intervention as described in this framework document.

Area 2 (ERA with blanket consent). These areas are agreed by RE, FC and SNH as suitable for the creation of clearings by the felling and removal of timber. RE will manage these under the accepted ERA regime described in this framework document and in accordance with recognised codes of good practice. It is proposed that SNH provide a blanket consent to the 'Operations Likely to Damage the Features of Special Interest' (otherwise referred to as Potentially Damaging Operations or PDO's) in these areas. Specifically, PDO's No 10,11, 12, 13b, 21, 23 and 26 address woodland management issues. This consent should recognise the estate's commitment to following recognised good practice through the application of the principles embodied in the FC's Forestry Practice Guides on The Management of Semi-Natural Woodlands (especially No 7 on Native Pinewoods), the UK Forestry Standard and the FC 'Guidelines' series. This will involve the careful management of sensitive micro sites, including areas potentially sensitive to disturbance adjacent to ant nest, capercaillie leks, ancient pinewood plants (referred to earlier), etc.

Area 3 (ERA requiring consultation between the Forestry Commission and Scottish Natural Heritage). This area is composed of small patches of OGCA (often too small to be easily mapped) within a matrix of ERA. In these areas limited harvesting of timber is possible, but after initial identification of potential sites by RE, this will be approached by a case by case consideration involving RE, FC and SNH. Mitigating actions and PDO consents will need to be discussed followed by harvesting agreements when appropriate. The important Am Beanaidh/ Allt Druidh corridor will require particularly sensitive management to maintain connectivity.

While some trees that fall into rivers and burns may require to be removed, and recognising the need to fell dangerous trees adjacent to footpaths, it is proposed that broadleaves should not be felled within 20 metres of the mid point of the river. In this way riparian zones will effectively become OGCA.

Area 4 Riparian areas. Important areas within the influence of adjacent water courses. These require sensitive and possibly specific treatment and will be the subject of consultation with RE, FC and SNH.

Area 5 Wetlands. Fragile wetland ecosystems with minimum intervention management.