

Glencharnoch Wood Management Plan

DRAFT 2025 - 2030

Management Plan - Contents Page

Item	Page No.
1.0	Site details
2.0	Site description
3.0	Public access information
4.0	Long term policy
5.0	Key Features
5.1	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
5.2	Connecting People with Woods and Trees
	Appendix 1: Compartment descriptions

Maps

Legal and Sub Compartment Map
Features and Visitor Access Map

1.0 Site details

Glencharnoch Wood

Location:	Carrbridge
	Grid reference: NH901225
	OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 36
Area:	14.70 hectares (36.32 acres)
External Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, National Park
Internal Designations:	

2.0 Site description

Glencharnoch Wood is situated on the western outskirts of the village of Carrbridge and lies within the Cairngorms National Park. The woodland is accessible via Station Road and a short walk from the village centre. Glencharnoch is adjacent to Ellan Woods, and part of the larger area of post war pine plantations in the wider area, all on areas of ancient semi natural woodland. The site ranges from 250m - 280m above sea level and, although undulating, is broadly flat in aspect.

The geology of the site is comprised of glacial drifts of partially sorted gravels derived from acid granites and schists of the Moine series. This gives rise to shallow acid peats, peaty podzols and peaty gleys. There are two wet flushes which feed two small, slow-flowing, semi-permanent streams with flat, boggy stream margins. The local climate can be extreme, often being both the coldest and warmest area in Scotland and tends to be much drier than the west coast.

The woodland area under Trust ownership covers an area of 14.7ha, 57% of which is designated as Ancient Semi Natural Woodland within the Ancient Woodland Inventory and classed as '2a' appearing on the 1860 OS first edition maps. However, it is clear woodland is developing on nearby land to the south and west on the 1750 'Roy' maps. This woodland forms a part of a much larger woodland area of several hundred hectares and is part of the major concentration of ancient woodlands within the catchments of the Rivers Spey and Dulnain.

The core area of the woodland (sub compartment 1c) is an area of mature even age Scots pine with a small area of recently felled (2025) Norway spruce at the western fringe. This area was left intact during the much wider felling during the Second World War, although was heavily thinned in the 1980s prior to the sale to Woodland Trust Scotland. Other species of tree and shrub are largely absent throughout the main pine areas with only widely scattered individual rowan, birch, hazel, and juniper represented. The core pine area along the moraine ridges is surrounded by a diversity of habitats including semi-mature birch wood (sub compartment 1b and 1d), an area of pole stage plantation Scots pine (1ha planted 1985 in sub compartment 1e), an area clear-felled in 1998 with Scots pine and birch regeneration (sub compartment 1a), and an area of mixed Scots pine and birch woodland on damp soils (sub compartment 1f).

The semi-mature birch wood in sub compartment 1b contains some occasional small to pole stage specimens and a few individuals of rowan, willow, aspen and juniper. Throughout the site the natural regeneration is mainly Scots pine and silver birch, with one large group of rowan and some scattered small groups of downy birch, hazel, aspen and goat willow and juniper shrub in places - mainly near the site boundaries.

The field layer is dominated by a heather and blaeberry mosaic with a rich moss layer in places. In some locations in sub compartment 1a and 1e the field layer is suppressed due to a denser canopy. The wet flushes, marsh areas, and permanent streams provide variety with rushes and sedges present and seasonal pools provide additional interest. Juniper is present and under threat by the pathogen *Phytophthora austrocedrae*, discovered on the site in November 2017 on several bushes in the south east corner of the site.

Despite its small size, the site punches well above its weight for biodiversity value, including a number of UK BAP species. Crested tits are fairly common and breed on the site, capercaillie are known to pass through, or over, using the wood as part of the wider network of pine woodlands, although the fragmented heavily used nature of the woodland makes it unsuitable for established use by these birds. The site is particularly notable for the density of ant nests at an average of over 13 per hectare. These are predominantly Scottish Wood Ant *Formica aquilonia* and Hairy Wood Ant *Formica lugubris*. Chickweed wintergreen, and creeping ladies tresses are readily found. Red squirrels are seen through the site, feeding and moving through to feeders in the neighbouring gardens.

Glencharnoch Wood, together with Ellan Wood owned and managed by Highland Council, is of particular local importance for landscape, amenity and recreation purposes and is well used by the public. There are no forest roads within the site but the track on the southern boundary and to the cemetery give adequate access to the wood for general management purposes.

The woodland lies within a 30-mile radius of a population of over 50,000 including Inverness, and is on the very edge of the village of Carrbridge and adjacent to the railway station. Nearby parking facilities are good with space for up to 15 vehicles near the main entrance. The popular 'Landmark Forest Adventure Park', an important tourist attraction, is also within 400m of the boundary, and sits very much within the woodland Glencharnoch is contiguous with.

There are three interesting sculptured wooden seats designed by renowned sculptor Keith Rand near the north eastern entrance that are well established in the landscape, and a carved bench on one of the glacial knolls, as well as a 'wolf heads' carving near the southwestern edge of the site.

3.0 Public access information

General location

Glencharnoch is situated on the western outskirts of the village of Carrbridge, between the village, the Highland Main Line railway, and Landmark Forest Adventure Park. Carrbridge lies within the Cairngorm National Park; it is six miles North of Aviemore, and 25 miles south of Inverness.

Paths & entrances

The main entrance is via the car park off Station Road. There are three waymarked trails either on or adjacent to the site, marked within the tourism material available online, and on the orientation board in the main car park. These offer additional entrances off Station Road, and the main road through the village. These can also link up with wider paths and routes within and on the edge of the village.

Paths within the woodland are generally wide, firm and well drained, but uneven in places. The routes are generally gently sloping with short moderate slopes. There are two sets of steps within the woodland, a small bridge and a boardwalk which may limit access for some users.

Parking

The main car park is owned by Highland Council and is accessed via Station Road. From the car park, a walk of around 150m into the wood takes the visitor from Highland Council owned land onto Woodland Trust land, with no obvious land boundary, although a Woodland Trust 'Welcome' sign is in place. The site can also be easily accessed from the main community car park in the centre of the village.

Public Transport

Some, but not all, trains on the main railway line between Inverness and Edinburgh/London stop at Carrbridge. The station is unmanned and has limited facilities.

Bus services operate between Carrbridge, Aviemore and Inverness. Buses stop at the main public car park in the village centre.

For further information on train and bus services, contact Traveline tel. 0871 200 2233 or www.travelinescotland.com.

Public Toilets

Fully accessible public toilets are available in the public car park in the centre of Carrbridge, just across the road from the woods. Accessible toilets are also available for visitors to the Landmark Forest Adventure Park at the south east corner of the woods.

Other Information

The car park hosts a large entrance board showing the site, paths, and highlights.

4.0 Long term policy

The long term vision for Glencharnoch Wood is for a biologically rich semi natural woodland habitat, which forms part of a functional woodland habitat network through Ellan Wood, Kinveachy, and beyond through close collaborative working with neighbouring land owners, the community of Carrbridge, and the range of users and interest groups using the woodland area for recreation and education.

The processes of natural succession will remain dynamic within the woodland resulting in evolving age structures and densities of cover. The rich fauna and flora associated with the ancient woodland component of the site will remain secure, with the possibility of enriching this through appropriate translocation, such as twinflower, and managing for specific species if relevant, such as for the moth Kentish glory.

Wet ground and open water will be retained in the long term as an important aspect of the habitat structure of the woodland, with management intervention to maintain or create this if appropriate.

The site will be closely physically linked to the wider woodlands of the area, with threats from further development, particularly on areas within the ancient woodland inventory, carefully scrutinised reducing the risk of the woodland area being fragmented.

The woodland will provide part of an extensive area of quiet informal recreation to a wide range of users from both the local community and from further afield. The footpaths and routes will be safe and well maintained linking to the wider path network, with onsite interpretation highlighting the natural interest on the site.

5.0 Key Features

5.1 KF f1: Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description Over half of the site, and by far the most visual aspect of the site sitting atop the glacial moraines, is the ancient woodland area dominated by a near monoculture of Scots pine, much of which planted following significant felling in the Second World War. The ancient woodland is classed within the ancient woodland inventory as '2a - Ancient Woodland of Semi Natural Origin' and is first seen on the site on the OS first edition map in 1860. There has been significant woodland in this area for many more years, with large areas of Class 1a (Ancient Woodland of Semi Natural Origin) from at least 1750 to the south and west of the site, and evidence of pine having been in the area for at least 7000 years from studies carried out by St. Andrews University using tree ring correlation data as some of the pioneer species following the ice age. The high forest structure of this woodland is uniform, with few non pine species growing within or under the canopy. The ground flora is dominated by blaeberry, with a fringe of heather as the planted woodland gives way to a more open and diverse woodland structure. The varied edge of this ancient woodland area is equally important as the ancient woodland itself, providing a physical corridor between areas of ancient woodland, and creating diversity in a small land ownership area. These areas of regenerating pine and birch, boggy ground and open habitats together with under represented broadleaved species that have been, in part, planted create a structure that showcases much of what is significant about the Strathspey pinewoods in an accessible landscape.
Significance Over half of the site is classed as Ancient Semi Natural Woodland and forms part of a complex of ancient woodland fragments throughout the area. The woodland, and surrounding woodland areas, have had a long history of tree cover, with the secure nature of this woodland being utilised by nationally and internationally protected species.
Opportunities & Constraints Glencharnoch links well with woodland to the south and east providing opportunities for species movement and colonisation, which may make this wood suitable for future twinflower translocation projects within the Cairngorms National Park. The widening physical barrier to the west of the site with the widening of the A9, and development proposals on the very edge of the site are a constraint to closer connectivity of this woodland with other larger fragments to the west.
Factors Causing Change • Non-native conifer regeneration. • <i>Phytophthora austrocedrae</i> on juniper in the South East of the site (sub compartment 1f). • Natural succession resulting in the loss of open water and wet ground. • Proposed development in the draft Cairngorms National Park Authority Local Plan are likely to create an increase in pressure on the site, particularly from the proposed developments to the North West of the site. • Any loss of woodland as a result of significant development at Landmark would further isolate the woodland area from the other woodland areas. These development concerns will be further exacerbated through the widening of the A9 corridor widening the distance between this woodland and the larger ancient woodland remnants to the west.
Long term Objective (50 years+) The total area of ancient woodland will not diminish. Species and assemblages associated with the ancient woodland habitat will remain secure, with opportunities to enrich this through translocation being carefully considered. The processes of natural succession will remain dynamic resulting in evolving structures and densities of cover.

Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

Encourage the development of a varied structure within the pinewood area through the protection of broadleaved regeneration using tree shelters in sub compartments 1a and 1c. These will be provided by WTS, and installed by volunteers, with numbers to not exceed 100 recycled shelters in this management plan period, with careful consideration on landscape and visual amenity in the wood.

To plant alder, hazel, and aspen in sub compartment 1c in spring 2026 in the area cleared of Norway spruce to supplement the initial planting in spring 2025. Alder planted without protection and hazel planted around brash. Aspen in shelters if necessary, avoided if possible.

To remove all remaining non-native regeneration and young non-native conifers through the site by the end of the plan period, and to ensure the boundaries with houses remain secure from any new threats through clearing any plants or structures of concern.

To remove the few mature Norway spruce from the site by the end of the plan period as part of a wider removal in collaboration with Highland Council if a coordinated removal can be undertaken.

5.2 KF f2: Connecting People to Woods and Trees

Description

Glencharnoch Wood is a small part of much larger and extensive woodland within and around the community of Carrbridge that connects to the Caledonian pinewood remnants on Seafield and Strathspey Estates. The site is bounded by the Highland Main Line railway to the west and Station Road to the north. To the south is Landmark Forest Adventure Park, a major tourist attraction in the community and within the Cairngorms National Park area. The woodland immediately adjacent to the north east and east of Glencharnoch, Ellan Wood, is owned and managed by Highland Council. The larger surrounding woodland to the south and west is owned by Seafield and Strathspey Estates who manage the large ancient woodland area for a range of interests.

A car park that can fit up to 15 cars is within the Highland Council Ellan Wood, which has an orientation panel in the Woodland Trust brand. A well surfaced gently sloping path is situated at the rear of the car park and it is a 150m walk to the Woodland Trust ownership boundary. There is no discernible difference in the woodland or physical boundary on the ground to denote the change in ownership, although there are boundary bollards in some locations and wooden welcome signage on the path sides when entering Woodland Trust ground from the four entrances.

Within the site, 650m of paths promoted through Cairngorms National Park standard waymarking as part of the wider community network are through a short northern loop (Glencharnoch Wood walk) and a larger southern loop (Ellan Wood walk). The Glencharnoch Wood walk is a smooth gently sloping gravel path, and the Ellan Wood walk is rougher and is narrow, rooted in places, is partially surfaced, and includes a bridge and steps. Through this network, there are six benches, three of which are gathered near the main entrance to the wood.

The wood and the surrounding woodland are well used by the local community. It is a popular dog walking route, access to a wider path network, Walking to Health route, and used for small scale informal events such as an Easter Egg hunt and orienteering.

The area is well visited and hugely popular with visitors. The Cairngorms National Park is visited by 1.92 million people annually, with one of the main thoroughfares, the A9, passing close by Carrbridge. There is a programme of innovative and well attended events in the community including the World Porridge Making Championship and 'Carve Carrbridge', an international chainsaw carving competition that can be attended by up to 4000 spectators. Carrbridge has a train station on the Highland Main Line railway and a bus stop on the main highland route to Inverness. Visitors who arrive by car can park in the main car park in the centre of the village, a five minute walk from the wood, if not parking in the Highland Council car park near the main entrance to the wood. The nearby Landmark Forest Adventure Park, which sees around 170,000 visitors per year, is immediately adjacent to the wood, and has footpath access from their large car park into the wood.

There are a number of people engagement opportunities on the site, in close working partnership with Highland Council and the community. The site lends itself well to guided walks and small scale sympathetic events. There are opportunities for engagement with the local Primary School through a number of elements of the curriculum for excellence or John Muir Award.

There is a Woodland Warden volunteer onsite who is active in wildlife monitoring and engaging with users of the wood.

A leaflet is available showing the trails in the wood and in the Carrbridge area. The leaflet 'Carrbridge Paths' is available via the Cairngorms National Park or via the Carrbridge community website www.carrbridge.com. The paths are shown clearly on the orientation panel in the main car park.

Significance

Glencharnoch Wood is an important community asset and contributes to the setting of the village of Carrbridge.

A visit to the wood offers the opportunity to experience attractive recovering woodland with ancient woodland ground flora and birdlife.

Public access to the wood is important for the local community, together with the adjacent land owned by Highland Council and beyond, and offers links through and within the community of Carrbridge.

Carrbridge is a highly visited and attractive destination for visitors to the Cairngorms National Park, with the woodland area providing an opportunity for quiet recreation in an easily accessible and navigable location.

It is situated within a thirty mile radius of a population of over 50,000 including the city of Inverness.

Opportunities & Constraints

With landmark Forest Adventure Park so close by with a huge audience of families enthused about the outdoors and an experience in a woodland setting, there may be the opportunity to work more closely on information on Woodland Trust nearby, or to collaborate on information.

With Carrbridge Primary being in such close proximity to the woodland and requiring no transport provision, there is the opportunity to engage with the school and use the woodland to help deliver elements of outdoor learning that may complement activities already offered.

With a steady increase in use of the site and the wider path network, there are some locations that will require the path route to be improved to enable access.

Signage from Station Road into the car park does not mention Woodland Trust Scotland and there will be the opportunity to remedy that with the replacement of the large wooden board when Highland Council carries that out.

There are limited opportunities to increase volunteering involvement. Management objectives set out in Key Feature one will aim to involve volunteers at any relevant opportunity as well as look to involve the community and school.

As part of Scotland's Railway plan to increase use of the Carrbridge Station, there is a proposal to create a path link to the Railway Wood walk, which would then allow visitors to walk to Landmark Forest Adventure Park, arriving by train. This would allow the public to access the woodland area directly from the train station. Careful route selection would ensure there is no loss of ancient woodland, or careful design to minimise impact.

Factors Causing Change

The increase in visitors through promotion of the area and wider Cairngorms National Park is likely to increase the impact on the built infrastructure, and the human impact on the wider woodland.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Glencharnoch Wood will be part of a significant recovering ancient woodland remnant, providing an area of quiet informal recreation to a wide range of users from the local community and further afield. The use of the site by tourists will be promoted through positive relationships with neighbouring attractions and accommodation along with good signage and interpretation.

Entrances and signage will have a welcoming appearance and will demonstrate the collaboration between Woodland Trust, Highland Council, and the Cairngorms National Park Authority, and will be sympathetic to the wood.

The path network will be well maintained and suitable to the needs to the diversity of users of the site and appropriate in scale and materials to the wood.

The use of the site for education will have increased through low key self-led information or engagement for families, and through use of the site by the Primary School to help deliver elements of the curriculum, or outdoor learning initiatives.

Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

Access provision will be in keeping with the Woodland Trust access guidelines. Achieved by ensuring that:

- Entrances and signage are welcoming to visitors and well cared for on an annual basis.
- All managed or promoted paths are maintained as well drained and free from encroaching vegetation and that access features (bridges, boardwalk, steps, benches) are maintained in a safe state.
- The site is kept safe and welcoming by repair of vandalism, clearing fallen trees where access is obstructed, and regular site safety surveys including periodic tree safety assessment.
- Access from Station Road remains safe through improving steps on the approach with Highland Council.
- Install a bench at a suitable location by the new pond to encourage people to view dragonflies from this location.

Appendix 1: Compartment descriptions

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	3.53	Scots pine		High forest		Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Connecting People with Woodland and Trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, National Park
Broadly rectangular sub compartment on undulating land, containing a short, south facing, moderately steep bank falling to a flat, marshy, streamside along the southwest boundary. Supporting semi-mature openly spaced groups and individuals of Scots pine and occasional silver birch amongst a dense heather and blaeberry field layer. Towards the wetter western edge a small marshy area is present. There is frequent natural regeneration of Scots pine of variable age and density. The stream bank supports two small groups of Scots pine and mixed broadleaves.							
1b	1.35	Birch (downy/silver)	1970	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Connecting People with Woodland and Trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, National Park
Broadly triangular sub compartment on damp, flat ground between two slow-flowing marshy streams. Supporting dense, semi-mature, even-aged silver birch woodland with occasional small pole-stage specimens in a blaeberry dominated field layer. Other species include occasional scattered groups of pole stage Scots pine and rare aspen, hazel and downy birch.							
1c	4.59	Scots pine	1870	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Connecting People with Woodland and Trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, National Park
Irregularly shaped sub compartment containing flat wet areas beside slow-flowing streams in the south, rising through undulations to a gentle to moderate, west facing slope on a low ridge in the north. Norway spruce removed in January 2025 being replaced with native broadleaf planting.							
1d	1.39	Scots pine		High forest		Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Connecting People with Woodland and Trees	National Park
Broadly triangular sub compartment on a gentle north facing slope supporting semi-mature openly spaced groups and individuals of Scots pine regeneration of variable age and density amongst a rough mosaic of grasses, heather and blaeberry field layer. There are some glades and more open areas resulting from the removal of lodge pole pine in 1997. Along a trackside that forms the southern boundary there is an irregular strip of denser, pole-stage Scots pine planted in 1985 interspersed with frequent groups of pole-stage silver birch. In the extreme western corner is a small area of dense, unthinned, pole-stage, plantation Scots pine containing a scattering of silver birch saplings.							
1e	1.10	Scots pine	1970	High forest		Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Connecting People with Woodland and	National Park

						Trees	
Rectangular sub compartment on gentle north facing slope supporting dense, unthinned, pole-stage, plantation Scots pine containing silver birch and rowan saplings.							
1f	2.70	Scots pine		High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Connecting People with Woodland and Trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, National Park
Broadly rectangular sub compartment grading from a gentle north facing slope on the southern boundary to a broad, flat area containing two wet flushes towards the north. There is also a low, narrow isolated glacial ridge near the northern boundary. Predominately supporting openly spaced groups and individuals of pure Scots pine regeneration on the southern boundary grading to mixed Scots pine and silver birch regeneration towards the north and east. All regeneration is of varied age and density and there are open glades with retained high stumps and brash heaps resulting from the recent removal of lodge pole pine. Towards the northern boundary there are rare isolated groups of mature, tall Scots pine and one large group of semi-mature rowan. Towards the eastern boundary there are frequent groups of semi mature silver birch and rare scattered small groups of aspen, downy birch, hazel, rowan, and goat willow begin to appear. There are also occasional small scattered juniper present amongst the predominately heather and blaeberry field layer. Mixed broadleaves were planted in shelters on the southern and northern ends. In 2017, Phytophthora austrocedrae was confirmed on several juniper bushes on the south east corner of this compartment, it is likely to be throughout the wood, however.							

Map 1: Legal and Sub Compartment Map



Map 2: Features and Visitor Access Map

