

Central Mull Forest Design Plan
CONCEPT MAP

Scale: 1:26,000
Date: February 2013

Legend

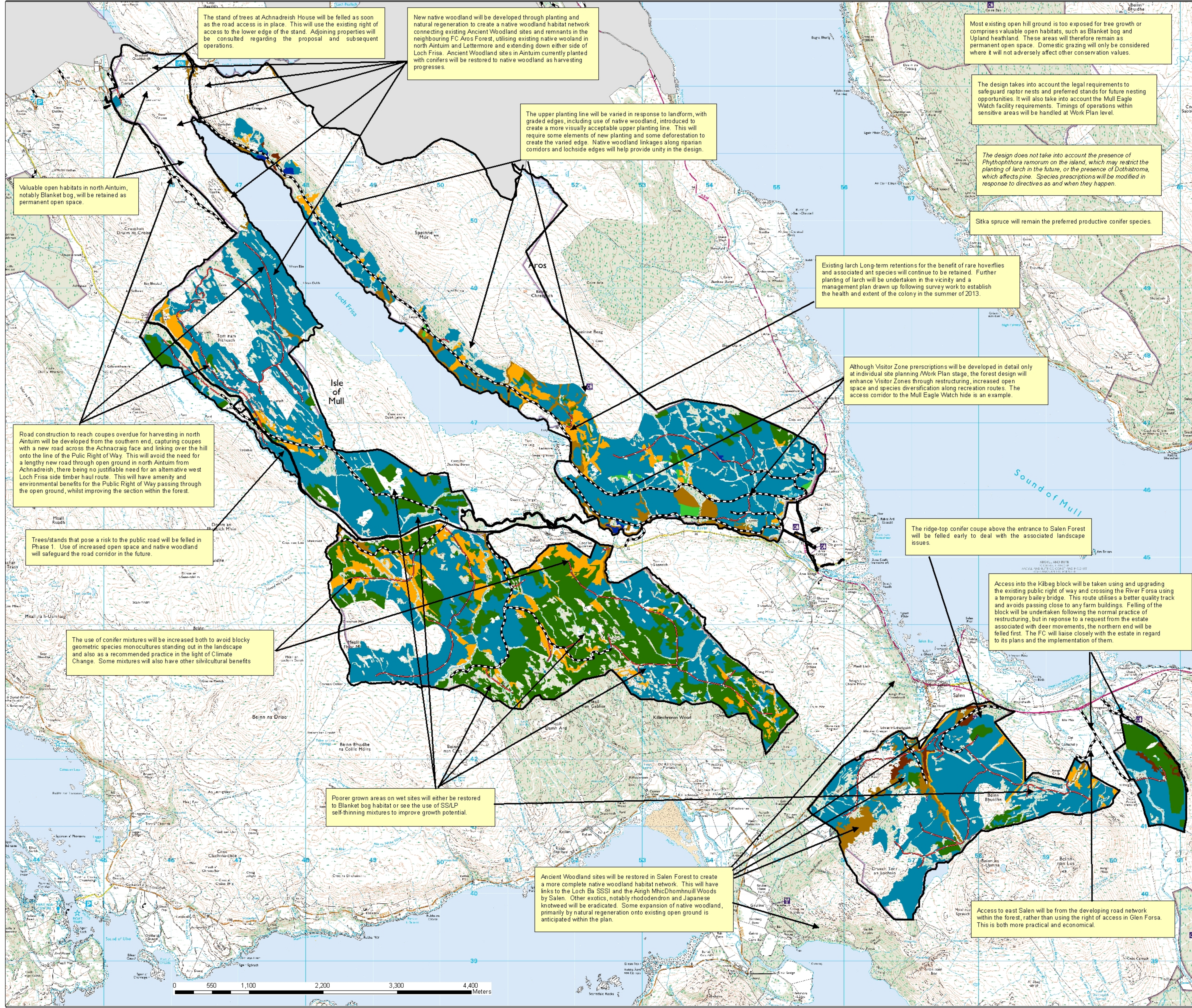
FC Woodland

- Other FC Woodland
- Central Mull forest Boundary
- Existing Forest roads and Rights of Access

Current species by largest component

- Other spruces
- SS
- Pines
- Larches
- Other Conifers
- Oak
- Other Broadleaves

proposed roads



The stand of trees at Achnadrish House will be felled as soon as the road access is in place. This will use the existing right of access to the lower edge of the stand. Adjoining properties will be consulted regarding the proposal and subsequent operations.

New native woodland will be developed through planting and natural regeneration to create a native woodland habitat network connecting existing Ancient Woodland sites and remnants in the neighbouring FC Aros Forest, utilising existing native woodland in north Aintim and Lettermore and extending down either side of Loch Frisa. Ancient Woodland sites in Aintim currently planted with conifers will be restored to native woodland as harvesting progresses.

The upper planting line will be varied in response to landform, with graded edges, including use of native woodland, introduced to create a more visually acceptable upper planting line. This will require some elements of new planting and some deforestation to create the varied edge. Native woodland linkages along riparian corridors and lochside edges will help provide unity in the design.

Most existing open hill ground is too exposed for tree growth or comprises valuable open habitats, such as Blanket bog and Upland heathland. These areas will therefore remain as permanent open space. Domestic grazing will only be considered where it will not adversely affect other conservation values.

The design takes into account the legal requirements to safeguard raptor nests and preferred stands for future nesting opportunities. It will also take into account the Mull Eagle Watch facility requirements. Timings of operations within sensitive areas will be handled at Work Plan level.

The design does not take into account the presence of *Phytophthora ramorum* on the island, which may restrict the planting of larch in the future, or the presence of *Dothistroma*, which affects pine. Species prescriptions will be modified in response to directives as and when they happen.

Sitka spruce will remain the preferred productive conifer species.

Valuable open habitats in north Aintim, notably Blanket bog, will be retained as permanent open space.

Existing larch Long-term retentions for the benefit of rare hoverflies and associated ant species will continue to be retained. Further planting of larch will be undertaken in the vicinity and a management plan drawn up following survey work to establish the health and extent of the colony in the summer of 2013.

Although Visitor Zone prescriptions will be developed in detail only at individual site planning / Work Plan stage, the forest design will enhance Visitor Zones through restructuring, increased open space and species diversification along recreation routes. The access corridor to the Mull Eagle Watch hide is an example.

Road construction to reach coupes overdue for harvesting in north Aintim will be developed from the southern end, capturing coupes with a new road across the Achnacraig face and linking over the hill onto the line of the Public Right of Way. This will avoid the need for a lengthy new road through open ground in north Aintim from Achnadrish, there being no justifiable need for an alternative west Loch Frisa side timber haul route. This will have amenity and environmental benefits for the Public Right of Way passing through the open ground, whilst improving the section within the forest.

Trees/stands that pose a risk to the public road will be felled in Phase 1. Use of increased open space and native woodland will safeguard the road corridor in the future.

The ridge-top conifer coupe above the entrance to Salen Forest will be felled early to deal with the associated landscape issues.

Access into the Kilbeg block will be taken using and upgrading the existing public right of way and crossing the River Forca using a temporary Bailey bridge. This route utilises a better quality track and avoids passing close to any farm buildings. Felling of the block will be undertaken following the normal practice of restructuring, but in response to a request from the estate associated with deer movements, the northern end will be felled first. The FC will liaise closely with the estate in regard to its plans and the implementation of them.

The use of conifer mixtures will be increased both to avoid blocky geometric species monocultures standing out in the landscape and also as a recommended practice in the light of Climate Change. Some mixtures will also have other silvicultural benefits.

Poorer grown areas on wet sites will either be restored to Blanket bog habitat or see the use of SS/LP self-thinning mixtures to improve growth potential.

Ancient Woodland sites will be restored in Salen Forest to create a more complete native woodland habitat network. This will have links to the Loch Ba SSSI and the Aingh MhicDhomhnuill Woods by Salen. Other exotics, notably rhododendron and Japanese knotweed will be eradicated. Some expansion of native woodland, primarily by natural regeneration onto existing open ground is anticipated within the plan.

Access to east Salen will be from the developing road network within the forest, rather than using the right of access in Glen Forsa. This is both more practical and economical.

