



Scottish
Forestry
Coilltearachd
na h-Alba

Bute Community Forest
Woodland Management Plan: Area 1
2023 to 2033

B U T E F  R E S T



Scottish Forestry is the Scottish Government agency responsible for forestry policy, support and regulation



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Please refer to the Management Plan Guidance note for advice on how to complete your management plan. This template does not include a section for thinning permission.

You must have an approved Management Plan before you can apply for Forestry Grant Scheme funding.

1. Details

Management Plan Details			
Management Plan Name:	Bute Community Forest: Management Plan 1		
Business Reference Number:		Main Location Code:	
Grid Reference: (e.g. NH 234 567)		Nearest town or locality:	Port Bannatyne
Local Authority:	Argyll and Bute Council		
Management Plan area (hectares):	80.63		

Owner's Details			
Title:	Mr	Forename:	Richard
Surname:	Whitcomb		
Organisation:	BCLC	Position:	Chairperson
Primary Contact Number:		Alternative Contact Number:	
Email:	richard.whitcomb@buteforest.org		
Address:			
Postcode:		Country:	Scotland

Agent's Details			
Title:	Mr	Forename:	Samuel
Surname:	Lindsay		
Organisation:	BCLC	Position:	Forest Ranger and Ecologist
Primary Contact Number:		Alternative Contact Number:	
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Address:			
Postcode:		Country:	Isle of Bute

Access Consent

You are not obliged to give us consent to enter your land, however if we are denied access to your land, and cannot carry out an assessment because of this, we may reject your application. This consent is for access to assess this application.

Do you give consent for Scottish Forestry to access your property?

YES

NO

Approval - to be completed by Scottish Forestry staff:

Management Plan Reference Number:			
Plan Period: (ten years) (day/month/year)	From:	To:	
Operations Manager Signature:		Approval Date: (dd/mm/yyyy)	

2. Woodland Description

Give information about the following:

- past management of the woodland
- current species and ages
- statutory and non-statutory constraints (e.g. designations, archaeological interests)
- existing or potential public access
- woodland protection

Use the Land Information Search to help you complete this section. For more detailed information on the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland use the Scottish Forestry Map Viewer found on our website: forestry.gov.scot

2.1 Maps required

Provide maps to support your plan, as outlined in the guidance note. Please list all of the maps that you are including with your management plan.

List of maps:
Map 1.1 Compartments 1-11
Map 1.2 Tawnich Wood
Map 1.3 Bullochreg Wood
Map 1.4 Moss Wood

2.2 History of management, Map 1.1

Moss Wood

This area of woodland is today composed of oak, birch and Alder. Historically Moss Wood was heavily used for charcoal burning. This involved harvesting the majority of mature trees in this area as well as the top layer of turf being removed from most of the forest floor. This has had significant impact on the age range of trees in this woodland as well as ground flora composition.

In recent history, the area has been subject to very light-touch management, for example removal of dead/lower branches in the area of greatest community activity.

Bullochreg and Tawnich Woods

Historically the woodlands of Bullochreg Wood and Tawnich Wood have been called Rhubodach Plantation and are recognised as that on OS maps. However, as these two areas will be managed differently, they have been split and named in relation to ancient farm steadings found on the two sections of land.

Bullochreg Wood

The entirety of this area (12.69 Ha) was planted with Japanese Larch, Norway Spruce and Sitka Spruce in the 1980s and has now been felled (Summer 2022). Prior to planting the exact management of the land is unknown however there are ruins of Bullochreg Farm in the centre of the site which would suggest that at one point this was agricultural land.

Tawnich Wood

Tawnich wood is comprised of (36.15 Ha) Sitka Spruce plantation that was again planted in the 1980s as well having pockets of birch woodland. Bute Community Land Company has previously operated a small-scale sawmill in this area however this has since been discontinued and not had significant impact to the woodland. Similarly, to Bullochreg Wood there has historically been farmland over part of this area.

The Compartment 4 of Tawnich wood has been managed by Jessica Herriot and Gordon Stevenson under the supervision of BCLC. Management here has strictly been to record the regeneration of ground vegetation in the absence of public trampling and is an ongoing study.

2.3 Species and age

Tawnich Wood (Compartments 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Tawnich wood is largely comprised of Sitka Spruce which is approximately 35-40 years old. In the lower portions of this area there are some compartments of mixed broadleaf and also young downy birch forest. Compartment 4 is predominantly Birch scrub regeneration.

Tree Sp. : Downey Birch (*Betula pubescens*), Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*), Eared Willow (*Salix aurita*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)

Bullochreg Wood (Compartments 5, 6 and 7)

This area has been felled in the summer of 2022 but previously was comprised of Japanese Larch, Sitka Spruce and Norway Spruce. Ground vegetation was largely absent from the dense Sitka Spruce and Norway Spruce compartments with only occasional wood ferns and moss species. The Japanese Larch ground cover had greater diversity with wood ferns, grasses, mosses and wildflower species present as the trees had greater spacing. Following felling, wood sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), foxgloves (*Digitalis purpurea*), bedstraws and ferns have begun to regenerate most noticeably.

Tree Sp. (after felling): Downey Birch (*Betula pubescens*), Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)

Moss Wood (Compartments 8, 9, 10 and 11)

Moss wood is predominantly composed of Downy Birch with Alder more common in the wetter areas. Common hazel, Rowan, willow and Holly are abundant throughout the woodland and compose what little understory there is. Sessile Oak trees can be found in this woodland although they are much rarer due to the woodland's previously mentioned history of charcoal burning. Ash is also found in the area and exhibits signs of Ash Dieback being present. Ground cover is dominated by grasses, mosses and bracken. The most prominent wildflowers are wood sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), foxgloves (*Digitalis purpurea*) and tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*). Biodiversity is relatively low in this area compared to what would be expected in a birch-alder woodland again due to the charcoal burning.

Tree Sp. : Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*), Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*), Eared Willow (*Salix aurita*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)

2.4 Constraints and designations

Moss Wood has historically been designated as an Ancient Woodland. Exploration of the woodland has found that there are very few remnants of ancient woodland here with the majority of the area first generation birch and alder. A survey of this area would find that the designation of ancient woodland would no longer be applicable to this area.

The Kyles of Bute and surrounding coastline are designated National Scenic Areas and National Landscape Areas. The draft Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2 also designates the area as a Strategic Master Plan Area.

2.5 Public access

As the entirety of land covered in this woodland management plan is owned by Bute Community Land Company (compartment 10 is currently owned by the Mount Stuart Trust however is in the process of being bought by BCLC) it falls within the area recognised as Bute Community Forest. Therefore, the public are allowed to access any of the areas mentioned (apart from areas where any plantation felling is being carried out). Although the public are deterred from entering compartment 4, they are still within their right to access the area. The Western border of the woodland is marked by the West Island Way track which is also a forestry road used for accessing the area and the adjacent Tallwood plantation which is in separate ownership. Only authorised vehicles are allowed access here.

There is a small carpark located in compartment 11 where the forest meets the A886 road. From here there is 100m of hardstanding footpath that runs parallel to road. Branching off from this there is one footpath that leads to the West Island Way.

Public access to the woodland is expected to increase following the completion of the quarry site carpark (compartment 10). At the time of writing this, BCLC is in the process of buying the quarry site from Mount Stuart Trust with the goal of turning the site into a main entrance area for the community forest. Plans for this project are detailed further in its respective section.

2.6 Woodland Protection

Plant Health (including tree health and invasive or noxious plants)

Tree Health

Health of mature trees in the management area is overall positive. There a mix of mature trees and standing deadwood however there is a significant lack of samplings and understory due to overgrazing by deer.

There are signs of ash dieback present in the woodland, however ash trees are rare here and their distribution limited to the lowest elevations.

Invasive plants

Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) are present throughout all compartments in the woodland.

Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) is found along the coast of the north end of the island although is currently only found in compartment 10.

Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) has self-seeded from the sections of plantation across the forest. Self-seeded Sitka is generally young and easily removed by hand.

Deer, Livestock and other mammals

Red Deer – Present, have been observed in the forest

Roe Deer – Present, have been observed in the forest

Red Fox – Present, signs of red foxes have been observed in the forest.

Badger – Absent, not found on the island.

Pine Martin - Absent, not found on the island.

Otter – Present, signs observed on the coast bordering the forest and travelling up streams that enter the forest.

Mink – Absent, no signs have been detected in the forest.

Red Squirrel – Present, have been observed in Tawnich wood and the plantation areas that border Moss Wood

Livestock – Occasional sheep from neighbouring farmland enter the woodland however they are promptly returned to the fields.

Grey Squirrels

As of November 2022, Grey Squirrels have not been observed on the Island of Bute.

Water & Soil (soil erosion, acidification of water, pollution etc.)

Water

There are various small watercourses that cross through the areas of woodland covered in this management plan. There are currently no apparent sources of water pollution in the area. Extra care was taken during the felling of Bullochreg Wood to minimise sedimentation in the watercourses.

Soil

Due to the low volume of watercourses there are no significant signs of erosion to riparian areas. There have also been no landslide activity in the area. Disturbance to the soil has taken place in Bullochreg (compartments 5, 6 and 7) Wood due to timber harvesting machinery accessing the site but this has not resulted in any erosion.

Environment (flooding, wind damage, fire, invasive species etc.)

Flooding

Due to the steep slopes of much of the forest area and small watercourses flooding has not been noted as a major concern for the site.

Wind Damage

Wind damage can be seen in some areas of Sitka Spruce plantation found in compartments 1, 2 and 3. Throughout Moss Wood there are signs of minor wind damage with occasional fallen birch trees however this is not perceived to be of any significant concern.

Fire

As of October 2022, there have been no wildfires in the woodland area. There has been evidence of small campfires in the area and this is something that is actively being deterred through signage and ranger monitoring. Following the increased management of this area there will be more fire precaution methods such as fire beaters in place as well as improved signage to deter visitors from making campfires.

Invasive Species

Rhododendron can be observed across all compartments in varying concentrations. It is particularly abundant in Tawnich Wood in and around the Sitka Spruce components. Currently only minor efforts have been made to remove rhododendron however increased active management efforts will be made as part of the implementation of this woodland management plan.

Non-Native Species

The most prevalent non-native species found in this area is regenerating sitka spruce spreading outwards from existing plantation stands. Removal of this will be an ongoing process for years to come however is not of any great concern to the wider woodland ecosystem.

3. Vision and Objectives

Tell us how you intend to manage the woodland in the long term and your goals for its development.

3.1 Vision

Describe your long term vision for the woodland(s).

Based on the purpose of the BCLC, the longer-term vision for Bute Community Forest is to balance the ongoing requirements for community engagement activities with the active management of the woodland to enhance and restore native habitats. To achieve this we aim to:

- Effectively manage the existing broadleaf woodland to encourage natural regeneration of native species and the improvement of existing habitats.
- Create three new habitats in Bullochreg Wood to benefit local flora and fauna while increasing biodiversity.
- Establish and maintain our wildlife and historical trails (including signage and infrastructure) to improve access for educational and recreational activities.
- Create a community hub with dedicated car parking where engagement, educational and recreational activities will be focused to allow us to increase access to the BCF for more local people while minimising the impact on the natural environment.
- Create an area of forest suitable for long term sustainable harvesting with a tree nursery to aid with increasing biodiversity of the entire management area.
- Create a source of income for the forest through the tree nursery, timber from the sustainable harvesting and woodland skills courses

3.2 Management objectives

Give your objectives of management and also how you will manage the woodland sustainably. Your objectives should be specific and you should also be able to measure their outcomes.

No.	Objectives (including environmental, economic and social considerations)
1	Create a Scots Pine, Aspen and Flooded Woodland Habitats in the replanting area
2	Increase path infrastructure and accessibility to the woodlands
3	Create a sustainably harvestable deciduous woodland (Tawnich Wood)
4	Increase Community engagement (and sustainable management of)
5	Small income generation (in an environmentally responsible/sensitive way)

4. Stakeholder Engagement

This may be required depending on the work you intend on carrying out in the woodland and the constraints or designations that have been identified.

Individual/ Organisation	Date contacted	Date feedback received	Response	Action

5. Analysis and Management Strategy

Analyse the information from the previous sections and identify how to make best use of your woodland and its resources to achieve your objectives.

5.1 Constraints and Opportunities

Using the table below analyse any issues raised or relevant features within your woodland and record the constraints and opportunities.

Feature/Issue	Constraint	Opportunity
Habitat creation (Tawnich Wood)	Requires clear-felling of monoculture sitka spruce	Opportunity to create native biodiverse woodland
Habitat creation (Bullochreg Wood)	Monoculture does not provide biodiverse woodland	Opportunity to create native biodiverse woodland E.g. Aspen and Scots Pine, wet woodland
Community engagement and access	Dense monoculture planting and unmanaged regenerated woodland significantly limit public access	Felled areas provide opportunity to create infrastructure (hardstanding paths) and managed regeneration areas can have lighter infrastructure (woodchip paths)
Woodland skills, sustainable harvesting and income generation	Monoculture provides limited opportunity for community involvement in sustainable harvesting	Replanting and restructure of Tawnich Wood provides opportunity for long-term sustainable harvesting and community involvement
Additional detail:		

5.2 Management Strategy

Following your analysis, provide a broad statement describing your management strategy. Consider all aspects (economics, access, biodiversity, landscape) and pay particular attention to your silvicultural strategy for meeting your management objectives.

Economic

As the BCLC acquired the forest with existing non-native monocultures, felling this timber provides a short source of income and is required for the restoration of the area. Felling of Bullochreg has been undertaken by contractors and managed/overseen by BCLC (with advice & management of contractor Stanley

Wright). Felling and replanting of Tawnich Wood is to be taken forward in similar manner or via with direct commissioning of activity by BCLC. Replanting Tawnich wood will account for the development of a sustainable continual canopy harvesting strategy.

Where appropriate grants and external funding will be applied for to help improve the forest and expand on the recreational and educational opportunities.

Access

Finding the balance between an area being natural and accessible is incredibly important for our community-oriented goals moving forward. We plan to develop primary and secondary paths throughout the forest and have these paths follow the natural twists and turns of the landscape where possible.

The introduction of the quarry site carpark and Tawnich wood carpark will further aid to accessibility as it will eliminate the issue of parking, allowing us to host events and increase wider visitor numbers.

Biodiversity

Any land that has been used for forestry has the potential to improve its biodiversity. In this woodland we plan to not only improve on the biodiversity in the existing native woodland but to also to make the most of the opportunity to introduce new woodland habitats to the felled areas.

Landscape

The landscape of Scotland has changed much as the land has been sculpted for agricultural and silvicultural practices. This makes our aim to restore some of these areas to native woodlands all the more important. We will be restoring some habitats that have almost disappeared from the island and provide a prime example of how their restoration can add to the landscape while encouraging people to further develop a connection with the land.

By restoring native woodlands, we will be securing the landscape value of the area for the future.

6. Management Proposals

Tell us the management operations you intend to carry out over the next 10 years to help meet your management objectives for the woodland. If you intend to carry out felling (e.g. clear felling) you must apply for permission separately.

6.1 Tawnich Wood, Map 1.2, (Compartments 1,2, 3 and 4)

6.1.1 Felling

The majority of coniferous species in this woodland were planted in the late eighties. We are now looking towards felling the remaining Sitka Spruce in Tawnich Wood in 2023-2024 however the felling programme may change in response to any extensive wind damage that occurs. Appropriate felling applications will be submitted and approved prior to any felling.

These areas of Sitka Spruce, found in compartments 1 (23.1 acres), 2 (7.9 acres) and 3 (2.8 acres) share boundaries with birch/alder woodlands. Where possible, broadleaf screens will be retained on the areas bordering the Sitka to help break-up the visual impact of the felling. The scale of harvesting planned, over a fairly short period, is necessary to reduce the occurrence of extensive wind damage.

The timber in compartment 1 can be accessed via the forestry track that borders the length of the compartment on its southwest side. Access to compartment 2 can be found from the A886.

Prior to each harvesting operation, appropriate site assessments will be undertaken to ensure environmental, and any historical features, are protected and that other hazards are accounted for. These assessments will be conducted in line with FCS Guidance Note 34 and current UKFS guidelines.

During felling operations, in order to safeguard the natural environment all reasonable care will be taken to avoid negative impacts. These measures will for example include:

- Sites to be surveyed prior to commencement to confirm the presence/absence of protected species.
- Drains to be bridged during operations and lifted afterwards.
- No access to watercourses with machinery.
- Brush mats to be maintained to minimise ground damage.
- Silt management plans to be made and implemented in the event of silt entering or becoming at risk of entering the drainage system.
- Fuel storage to be double bunded, secured and positioned away from watercourses.
- No waste to be left on site/roadside.
- Timber stacks to be maintained at a safe height.
- Site signage to warn public of operations and restricted access/diverted paths if required.

Regular inspections to be undertaken by Bute Community Forest Staff to ensure all prescriptions are being followed.

Compartment 4 contains no conifer species and there are no plans to carry out any harvesting within this area.

6.1.2 Replanting

Following the felling of the Sitka Spruce areas, each compartment will be replanted with native broadleaf species however the future use and management of compartments 1,2 and 3 will differ and this will be reflected by the replanting.

The goal for compartments 1 and 2 is to create a sustainable, continual canopy cover forest, where wood is regularly harvested for small scale community use. This will be achieved by planting a mixture of smaller fast-growing broadleaves such as Hazel, birch and alder with slower growing large species such as oak. As trees mature some slight thinning will take place.

The replanting of compartment 3 will differ from the other two as here there will be the inclusion of open clearings to accommodate the introduction of a small car park, play area and historical roundhouse. The species composition of trees planted between these clearings will not differ from the surrounding broadleaf woodland however extra care will be taken not to plant taller growing species such as oak too close to the clearings or roadside to reduce the risk of possible future damage. Additionally, the trees planted in this compartment will not be included in the sustainable future felling and will be left mature into an established woodland. Future light thinning may be appropriate to ensure the woodland is still accessible and faster growing species such as birch do not make the woodland too dense.

The restocking plan is also designed to take account of the environmental needs of species and match these to suitable locations. Soils, topography, hydrology, and climate are all considered to create a restocking plan where trees are suited to the land they are planted on. Suitable riparian habitats will be planted around water courses

6.1.3 Future Harvesting

As mentioned, sustainable harvesting of some broadleaf trees will occur in compartments 1 and 2. Felling will exclusively be done by hand with chainsaws and tree removal will be carried out without the use of large-scale harvesters. This selective harvesting would lend itself to (planned and supervised) woodland skills development in the community in support of overarching community engagement activities. Conifers will not be planted here and clear-felling will not take place in this area after the current Sitka compartments have been felled.

6.1.4 Recreational Usage and Public Access

The general public have access on foot to the woodland via the West Island Way which borders the East side of compartments 2 and 4. This track is also a forestry road however no unauthorised vehicles are allowed beyond the one vehicle access point to the north of the forest.

Compartment 1

Tree Nursery

A small-scale tree nursery would be of great benefit to the community forest for a number of reasons. Firstly, it would give us a source of tree saplings that we could carry our replanting with different community groups as well as continual supplementing surrounding woodland as individual trees are removed as part of the continual canopy cover harvesting. Secondly, once the community forest's own tree needs have been met, surplus saplings could be sold to the local community and potentially for export off the island to elsewhere in Argyll and beyond. This would generate a small revenue for the forest.

For alder, oak, birch, elm, holly, hazel, rowan and hawthorn seeds can be collected from elsewhere in the community forest through community events and therefore saplings would be from local tree populations.

Rarer species such as Scots Pine, Juniper, Yew and Aspen will be included in the tree nursery. However, these species will need to be bought in from other areas. These would help us reintroduce these species to the Community Forest over time and increase the woodland biodiversity where appropriate. This would be located at the northernmost area of compartment 1 where there is already suitable shed infrastructure for storing materials and accessible areas that can be levelled for growing saplings. There would also be scope in this area for the installation of a polytunnel for the nursery.

Forest schools base and learning hub

At the northernmost point of compartment 1 there is a substantial metal shed that was originally constructed for milling wood in the community forest. This will be used as a sheltered area for groups/event. Here will be the primary storage facility for the community forest for any equipment or resources.

This area could also be used as a base for our forest schools activities as this area becomes a hub for community engagement. From here lessons can branch out to the other areas of the forest and incorporate other resources that are in this immediate area such as the tree nursery and roundhouse. In terms of bushcraft and traditional skills-based work we could have tree coppicing, wood carving, wood work and other possibly future courses.

Bike Handover Station

There are plans to install a bike handover station adjoining onto the side of the tin shed. The idea is that people could cycle out to here on an E-Bike (rented out by Bike Bute) and then switch over to one of Bute Community Forest's 7 mountain bikes to explore the forest. This location also creates the possibility for people to rent one of our bikes upon arrival to the site. The handover station would be situated against the south facing wall of the shed and not interfere with any small-scale forest works operating out of the shed.

Compartment 2

Roundhouse

As part of an educational and cultural project we plan to build a roundhouse or similar replica dwelling in compartment 2. Roundhouses were built around 400 BCE and would have been the primary dwelling for people on the island then. This would create an attraction to the forest as well as being a platform for teaching opportunities. It would also be in keeping with the theme of this area or forest with slightly more focus on the relationship between people and the landscape.

Compartment 3

Carpark

Following the felling of compartment 3, we will level off an area to be made into a small carpark able to hold up to 10 cars. This will be surfaced using hardcore and the existing point where the area was once accessed for replanting will be used as the entrance to the car park. The introduction of a car park in compartment 3 would create a new access hub for Tawnich Wood. The car park is to be set back from the A886 and would be marked as the main arrival point for visitors exploring this area. This would significantly decrease foot traffic on the forestry road previously mentioned as people would have more options for scenic woodland paths. This also helps redirect visitors away from the work shed area detailed in section 6.1.4.

This area will be fitted with appropriate interpretation boards and signage with paths branching off from here to connect with the rest of the forest. There is also the opportunity for this to increase the number of visitors as it would be visible while passing on the road.

Playpark

Situated up from the carpark in compartment 3 we are planning to create a woodland playpark. Components of this playpark would be made largely out of wood and will therefore have a low visual impact on the area. This would provide another destination within the forest and be another incentive for families to come out to the forest from the main urban areas on the island and elsewhere.

Compartment 4

Compartment 4 will not have any paths accessing the area nor will there be the introduction of any other infrastructure. As previously mentioned, this compartment is being continually monitored for conservation projects and to this end, it is crucial that public access is not encouraged.

Compartments 1, 2 and 3

Footpaths

Finally, to connect all of these areas within compartments 1, 2 and 3 of Tawnich Wood we will be installing a network of footpaths. Footpaths will be categorised into primary and secondary paths with primary paths being suitable for both walkers and cyclists and secondary paths being suitable only for walkers. With the increased use of primary paths it may be appropriate to have these as hardstanding

paths with a solid surface with secondary paths being less intrusive (e.g using wood chips)

Timeline 6.1.5

Early 2023	Set up bike handover station
Early 2023	Begin preparing shed for community use
Early 2023	Outline site for roundhouse and begin construction.
Mid 2023	Fell Sitka in compartment 1, 2 and 3
Mid 2023	Prepare tree nursery construction following felling of area
Late 2023	Install new carpark
Late 2023	Outline areas to be left unplanted for playpark
Early 2024	Begin installing paths
Mid 2024	Start replanting
Mid 2024	Begin work on playpark

6.2 Bullochreg Wood, Map 1.3, (Compartments 5, 6 and 7)

6.2.1 Replanting

The restocking of this area plans to seize the opportunity to create some rarer habitats on the island of Bute. The area has been broken down into 3 compartments although boundaries between these habitats will be merged to create a seamless landscape as the forests mature. Restocking will look to take place early autumn 2023.

Compartment 5

Scots Pine can still be seen in some patches across Bute and more prominently on the Burnt Isles where it has been able to escape excessive grazing from deer. We will have the opportunity to replant an area of Scots Pine in compartment 5. Scots Pine woodlands are an iconic forest which can also attract rarer bird species such as crossbills and provide another food source for Bute's Red Squirrel population. The addition of Juniper and Yew complete Scotland's 3 native conifer species that can also be grown in this area. Again, they are species that are now rare across Scotland and therefore both valuable species to reintroduce to this area. They form a similar habitat to the Scots Pine and are an excellent food source for birds when the trees produce their berries. Ground covering of common heather and bilberry would aid in the creation of this Scot's pine woodland (National Vegetation Classification = W18). It is hoped that when these trees mature this can be a source of natural regeneration for the North of Bute.

Compartment 6

Aspen trees are now incredibly rare across the UK. The steep hillside that comprises sub-compartment 6 is not suitable for regular planting however Aspen is able to grow in such places.

These Aspen trees would eventually provide a source for future natural regeneration as well as creating a habitat not found anywhere else in Argyll and Bute and act as a unique selling point for the community forest. It would also be beneficial to grow some additional Aspen in smaller marked out areas where it would be easier to collect clones and to show/involve the public/schools with this planting.

For initial planting, clones and saplings would be both purchased from Eadha Enterprises and/or collected from Aspen trees around the west coast of Scotland. One of the significant pressures that prevents aspen expansion is that Aspen trees are dioecious and require both the male and female trees to be in flower at the same time and in the same location. By having this area containing the largest amount of male and female trees found anywhere on the west coast we stand a significantly higher chance of viable seed production.

There are two additional benefits to the location of these trees on the steep banks/cliffs.

- Aspen is easily outcompeted by other tree species and would quickly face being smothered on level fertile soil. In this location other species

would struggle to grow so they are more likely to thrive in this area well into the future.

- Although there are plans to deer fence a wider area which encompasses this hillside, eventually when the fence is either removed or no longer secure this area will still face reduced levels of grazing due to how inaccessible it is. This again ensures the protection of this Aspen woodland in the long run.

Compartment 7

Wet woodlands comprise the majority of the moss wood compartment however there are less than a combined total of 10m² of standing water across the entire area of Bute Community Forest. Freshwater ecosystems can be incredibly diverse and attract species that are already present in the community forest albeit in significantly reduced numbers than would be seen with more freshwater habitats.

Here we would propose that sub-compartment 7 be made into a birch and alder wetland area with intermittent ponds and flooded areas. In relation to water management the ponds would assist in reducing sediment loads from runoff.

The wetland area would in the short term attract amphibians and freshwater invertebrates and in time could attract other species of birds. The area is likely too small and disconnected from other similar habitats to be suitable for the reintroduction of water voles however this may be worth looking into in the future.

6.2.2 Deer Management

Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) and roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) pose a significant threat to replanting and natural regeneration in Bullochreg Wood area which is to be replanted as detailed in 6.2.1. To prevent overgrazing, a deer fence that encompasses the entire felled area is under consideration. This is an approximate 1,882m of deer fencing and could ensure that all saplings and natural regeneration in this area are protected from grazing.

An alternative to this would be to use tree tubes however at the scale of the area this would not be cost effective. This would also not be an effective long-term solution as trees could still be grazed once they outgrew the tree tubes and tree tubes would eventually need to be manually removed.

Deer culling is another alternative however we would still potentially be at risk of losing a significant amount of our saplings. A wider deer culling approach over Bute Community Forest and neighbouring landowners would be the most appropriate long-term solution to overgrazing in the area. We are in active discussions with neighbouring landowners to this end.

If we take forward deer fencing we will be mindful of the negative visual amenity. A whole landscape and proactive approach to deer culling is therefore our preferred way of managing deer although we will need to actively monitor the effectiveness of this approach to ensure saplings are not lost unnecessarily.

6.2.3 Recreational Usage and Public Access

In terms of visitor experience, the area would provide a different experience to the rest of the community forest. Boardwalks would help visitors explore this area as would the inclusion of jetties close to the water level. Interpretation boards can be placed along the boardwalks to provide information about the habitat and species that can be found there. This habitat also creates another educational opportunity with groups doing pond dipping activities and learning about this ecosystem.

As part of the management of the Forest, we will monitor visitor numbers to this area, both to assist with visitor impact management but also to track visitor/community engagement with these new habitats, from a baseline of zero.

Through Bullochreg Wood, existing forestry tracks that were installed to access the timber will be levelled off to create wider footpaths with additional narrower footpaths branching off. The creation of circular loops through the forest here will improve visitor experience by creating more interesting and varied routes. Footpaths can encompass the archaeological sites that are present in the area with interpretation boards, which will need to be developed. This provides a northern expansion to the existing birch forest at Moss Wood.

Utilising and restoring the forestry tracks created in this area will provide tracks that are suitable for quad bikes to navigate. This will be useful in terms of future management and maintenance of the area, although we are not proposing recreational use of quad bikes. These tracks will be mapped as Primary Paths and be suitable for both walkers as well as mountain bikes.

Where compartment 5 borders compartment 8 of Moss wood there is a substantial gorge. Paths will avoid going too close the steep slopes here and a small bridge will be installed lower down to allow visitors to cross here.

6.2.4 Archaeology

There are a total of 4 sites recognised as archaeological sites across Bullochreg Wood (three small settlements and an illicit still) with many more archaeological sites found throughout the Moss Wood Management Plan area. Precautions have been taken to ensure the preservation of these sites during previous felling and this will be continued to ensure they are equally protected during the replanting and any other infrastructure. Where sites are in close proximity to paths interpretation boards will be present to help show visitors how the land has historically been used and providing an insight into early Bute culture. Where appropriate a rustic wooden railing can be installed around the sites to prevent visitors trampling the sites.

6.2.5 Timeline

Early 2023	Begin ground preparation for tree planting, pond creation and paths
Mid-Late 2023	Begin boardwalk construction
Mid-Late 2023	Begin replanting

6.3 Moss Wood, Map 1.4, (Compartments 8, 9, 10 and 11)

6.3.1 Infrastructure

Existing trails in Moss Wood that connect to the West Island Way will be upgraded to be solid underfoot and therefore more accessible to the community, particularly in areas of boggy and steep terrain. Currently, many of these are not footpaths as such, but simply marked routes through Moss Wood.

Here there will also be the introduction of primary and secondary paths. Primary paths will be wider (approximately 1.2m wide) and be suitable for both walkers and mountain bikers. Appropriate signage will be put along these paths to mark locations and give directions as well as signage reminding people that it is a shared pathway. Secondary paths will branch off of these primary paths and be more discrete in terms of their size. These paths will wind through some areas of the forest and only be suitable for walkers.

6.3.2 Recreational Usage

Picnic Benches

Currently in the woodland covered by this plan there are 2 picnic benches, both located next to the Moss Wood Community area entrance (compartment 2). Adding more benches along paths throughout the forest would provide picnic and rest spots and might encourage greater use of the forest. These can be placed on clearings next to footpaths at points of interest.

The exact number will be dependent on funding possibilities however we look to install a minimum of 5 additional benches.

6.3.3 Community Forest Projects

The Charcoal Huts (Compartment 9)

These huts have been constructed by a local Bute based company using larch from our felled area Bullochreg. Beyond the huts and compost toilets there are no further plans for increasing infrastructure in this area.

To improve the biodiversity of this area, additional native tree saplings can be planted. This will add to the forest's absent understory and provide additional food for wild birds with the planting of rowan, hawthorn and hazel. Bird Boxes and bat boxes can be installed to further make the site more attracting to nesting birds and roosting bats.

Quarry Site (Compartment 10)

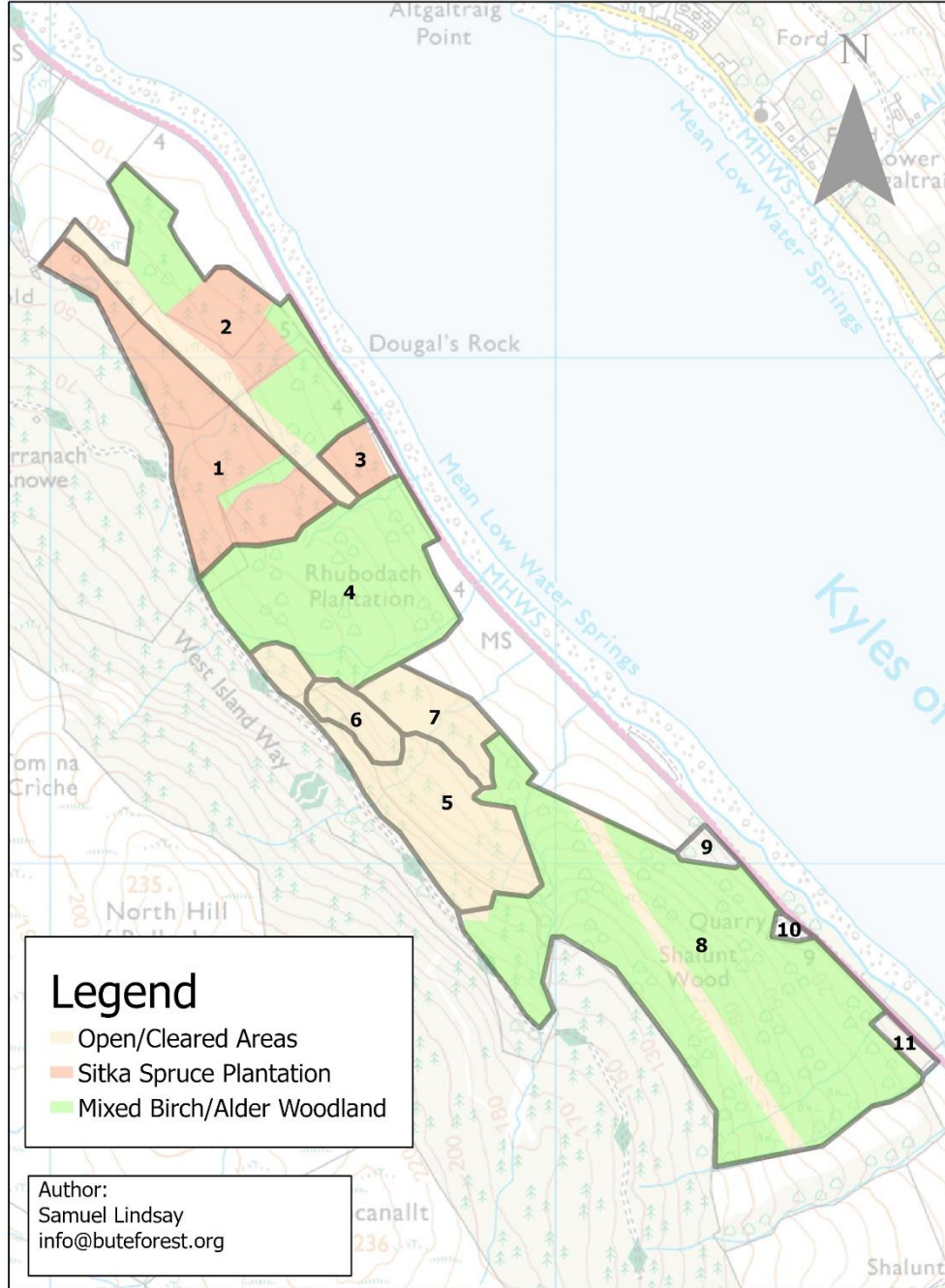
The quarry site will provide the new central hub for this part of the community forest. This area will provide a carpark for 12 cars and have a suitable area for turning. A map of the area and interpretation boards will be located here to highlight the available walks and provide a brief introduction and welcome to the community forest. From here paths will branch out to join with a network of paths exploring the community forest. An information cabin that can be open during the summer months and provide an on-site base may also be installed here.

Community Shelter (Compartment 11)

Construction for a community shelter has been approved to be built at the northern end of this area. This will aid in hosting community events in the forest and replace the current temporary structure although not in the same location. A tree and root protection plan will be created prior to the erection of this structure.

Map 1.1

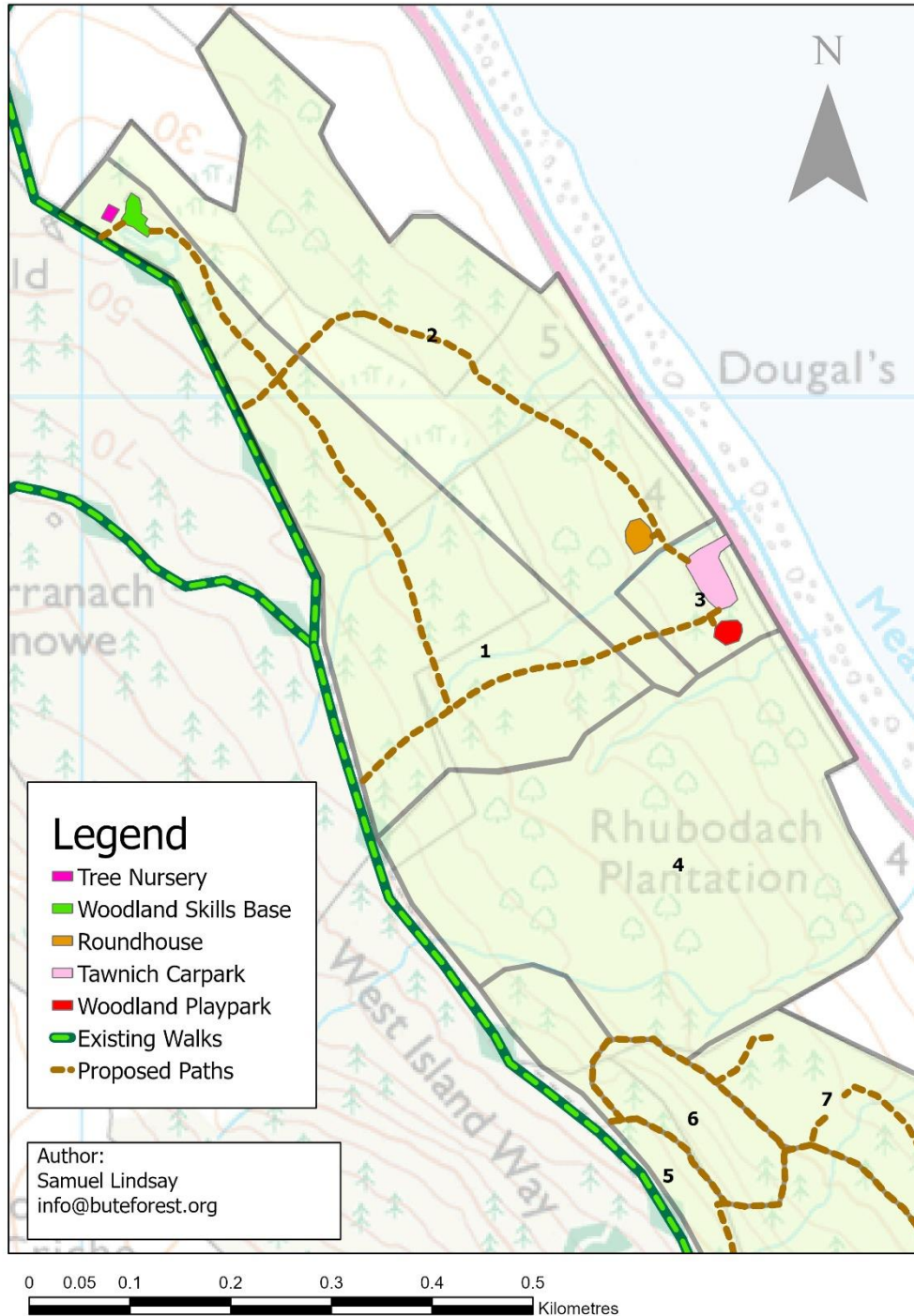
Bute Community Forest: Compartments 1 - 11



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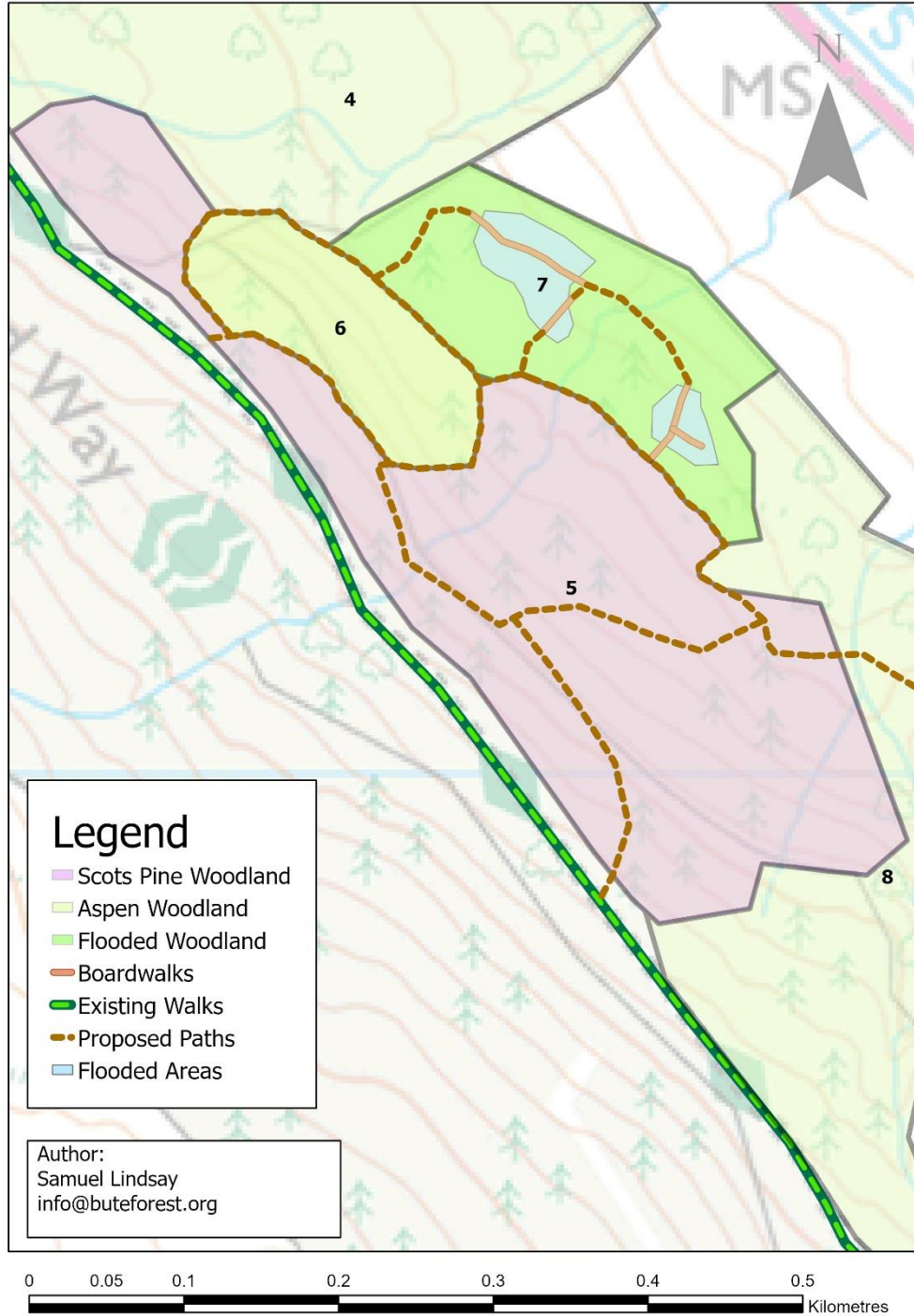
Map 1.2

Bute Community Forest: Bullochreg Wood



Map 1.3

Bute Community Forest: Bullochreg Wood



Map 1.4

Bute Community Forest: Moss Wood

