

JOHN MUIR TRUST

Management Plan for Glenlude

Prepared in 2023



Area: 149 hectares

National Grid Reference: NT302 228

For further information on our work at Glenlude:

<https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/about-us/where-we-work/glenlude>

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1 Introduction

This is a living document that outlines our management aspirations for Glenlude over a long-term period. Whilst we understand the urgency of taking action to address the climate and biodiversity crises, we also recognise that environmental restoration will take time, so we review this plan on a regular basis and update it as required, in consultation with stakeholders and the local community as necessary.

The appendices associated with this plan are currently in development and will be added during 2023.

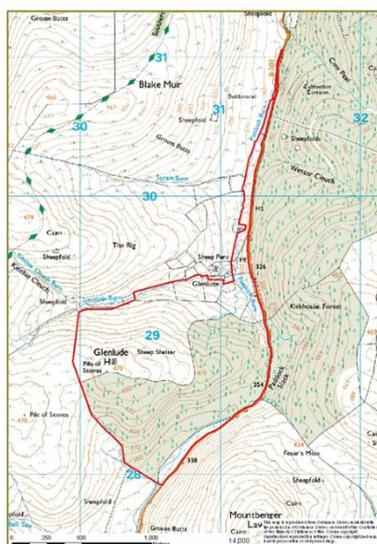
2 Glenlude

Glenlude is located in the southern uplands, in the heart of the Scottish Borders between the Tweed and Yarrow Valleys. It is 149 hectares (368 acres) and comprises of the summit and surrounding slopes of Glenlude Hill (470m) and a narrow riparian strip along Glenlude Burn.

Glenlude is part of a working landscape, traditionally dominated by farming, though more recently there has been a vast expansion of largescale commercial forestry, which also accommodates mountain bikers, walkers and horse riders, who bring economic benefits to the wider area. Although Glenlude remains a wild place, its location close to large population centres (including being within an hours' drive of Edinburgh) makes it accessible to a range of audiences that can experience first-hand our work to conserve, protect and repair wild places. As well as being an attractive location for local schools and outdoor training providers, Glenlude attracts many groups and individuals participating in the John Muir Award.

In the Scottish Borders, there are now many exciting community woodland projects, as well as Glenlude. The Borders Forest Trust's Carrifran Wildwood is 14 miles as the crow flies from Glenlude. The Southern Uplands Partnership is also working with land managers and owners to consider opportunities for new woodlands. As the area has been dominated by conifer plantations, these small areas of broad-leaved woodlands that are starting to be developed form important stepping stone habitats for wildlife, and over time these wild places would benefit from increased connectivity at a landscape scale. Approximately 1 hectare of the site falls within the River Tweed Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

For further information see appendix A for a detailed property description.



3 Our Ambitions

3.1 Our Vision

The purpose of the John Muir Trust is to conserve, protect and restore wild places for the benefit of all. Our vision is a world where wild places are valued for present and future generations. One of the ways we work towards this is by taking on stewardship of wild places, and working with the community to protect and repair them.

The John Muir Trust took on stewardship of Glenlude in 2010. During our first thirteen years on the site we have:

- Created a volunteering hub – an insulated hut with woodfired stove, gas burner, library and display, alongside a tool store
- Created a wild campsite
- Built a compost toilet
- Set up a tree nursery with poly tunnel, outdoor staging and irrigation system
- Felled 3.78 of 39.99 ha of commercial forestry, making way for native broadleaved trees. An additional 13.9 ha was line thinned in 2019
- Felled 11.45 ha of hybrid larch in response to a Statutory Plant Health Notice for plant biosecurity
- Planted over 8 ha of native broadleaved tree and shrub species
- Reduced grazing to allow trees to thrive by upgrading stock fencing and culling deer
- In the 10 years between 2013 and 2022 we received 4,202 volunteer days of conservation work

Looking ahead, John Muir Trust's vision for protecting, repairing and enhancing the wild places at Glenlude is focussed on helping nature, people and communities. To achieve our vision, our exemplary management approach is based on the priorities outlined in the sections below.

At Glenlude we will see the native woodlands expand and develop as natural processes gain momentum. It will be a mixed density woodland with glades and open areas so that a range of species can flourish with different levels of canopy cover. We will continue to expand volunteer opportunities and provide more opportunity for local people to get involved in our work. To ensure Glenlude is accessible by a diverse range of people, we will also improve our visitor infrastructure.

3.2 Freedom for nature to repair itself

Our objective is to restore a mosaic of habitats that supports a diverse range of species, working alongside our neighbours and the local community to create a sustainable and functional ecosystem.

A range of habitats are present, with 43 hectares of conifer plantation (non-native Sitka spruce). The open areas are mainly a mix of acid grassland and small areas of heath and bog. There are some areas of neutral grassland, and small patches of calcareous grassland associated with calcareous flushes at the south. To the north on the Paddock burn there are areas of willow scrub with some regeneration occurring and four ponds created by the previous owner. A habitat map can be seen in Appendix B.

3.2.1 Woodlands

Objective WG: To convert commercial conifer plantation to broadleaved deciduous woodlands. In doing so restoring a functional native woodland habitat and increasing woodland connectivity.

Using Continuous Cover Forestry management principles we are gradually removing the remaining 43 hectares of non-native Sitka spruce plantation using low impact forestry methods. Over time, we will reinstate these areas with a diverse range of native broadleaved tree and shrub species, establishing a multi-layered native woodland as part of a mosaic of other habitats across the site.

The North end is currently open hill. The vision for this part of the site is to restore a natural open native woodland which will benefit a number of locally important species including Black Grouse.

Activity	Timeline
Review the Glenlude Forest Plan, following the felling of all 10 hectares of larch due to disease	2023

3.2.2 Peatland

Objective BG: To ensure intact peatlands remain protected to capture and retain carbon, provide clean water, and support a range of specialist species.

There are small areas of peatland on Glenlude, outwith the plantations. A survey was undertaken in partnership with the Tweed Forum in 2021 finding no further action was necessary to enhance or repair these areas. The Trust will monitor Peatland condition at 3-year intervals.

Activity	Timeline
Protect existing peatland by being sensitive of its location during planned works	Ongoing

3.2.3 Freshwater

Objective FG: To protect the freshwater habitats so that the wider Tweed river system remains healthy.

The Tweed river system dominates the hydrology of the area. Glenlude lies at the watershed between the River Tweed and the Yarrow Water, a tributary of the Tweed. Glenlude Burn runs into the Paddock Burn next to the farmyard draining the site northwards towards the Tweed, whilst the Mountbenger Burn drains the site southwards to the Yarrow Water. We ensure our watercourses that are tributaries to these rivers are kept clean and clear of obstruction.

Four ponds fed by the Paddock Burn were created in 2000 on the north side of the site, to the south of the farmyard. Following a workshop with Amphibian and Reptile Conservation in 2015 it was established that they are rich in biodiversity and require little by way of intervention as natural processes have evolved and a steady through-flow of water continues.

Activity	Timeline
Ensure burns are kept clear of obstructions	Ongoing
Carry out a site-wide survey of the pond and watercourses every 10 years to ensure they remain of good quality	2025

3.2.4 Grazing management

Objective GG: Reduction of grazing pressure to a level which allows nature to repair itself.

Deer

A prevalent land use in the south of Scotland is commercial forestry. Glenlude is bordered by commercial forests and when harvested, Glenlude sees an increase in both deer number and movement. Both Roe and Sika deer are present and our annual deer cull is determined through habitat

monitoring and on the ground observations. Further information can be seen in our deer management plan (see appendix C).

Sheep

Glenlude is surrounded to the north, west and south by extensive hill farming – Kirkhouse and Mountbenger Farms. Over the past two years we have repaired the southern boundary fence and undertaken some drystone wall repairs. This has helped to reduce sheep incursions from neighbouring properties, however the problem persists at a lower-level from the North. We will replace the northern boundary fence to address this.

Activity	Timeline
Undertake an annual deer cull which is aligned to habitat recovery and increasing the natural woodland cover	Annual
Liaise with neighbours to deal with livestock incursions	Ongoing
Repair the dry-stone wall and renew 2.5 km of boundary fencing to prevent livestock incursions	2023

3.2.5 Monitoring nature’s recovery

Objective MG: To monitor for evidence of habitat regeneration in response to our management approach

The Trust takes an evidence-based approach to land management, so it is vital to monitor the impact of any interventions we make on the land, as well as how the land is changing due to external factors. We are currently assessing the following impacts at Glenlude:

Impacts	How we monitor them	Timeline
To assess changes in the level of grazing, including browsing damage, to inform deer management plans	Annual habitat impact monitoring in May and June with calcareous flush plot monitoring every second year. This includes marked seedlings, circular tree seedling plots, dwarf shrub heath plots and flush plots.	Annual
To assess changes due to woodland expansion	2 breeding bird survey transects are carried out by students of SRUC Oatridge College – Oatridge Rangers and Countryside Stewards (ORCS).	Annual
To prevent local extinctions of species that are deemed a conservation priority by the Biodiversity Action Plan	6 adder surveys across hibernacula, including sending collected sloughs to the National Genebank for genetic analysis Rockrose monitoring (host plant for northern brown argus butterfly)	Annual Annual

There is a history of volunteers assisting with habitat and species monitoring and we will continue to make use of volunteers and seek to open up learning opportunities for students to be involved where possible.

The Glenlude Monitoring Plan details the existing monitoring plan along with analysis, results and recommendations (see appendix D).

Activity	Timeline
To produce robust site monitoring plans	2023

3.3 An individual's freedom to enjoy the benefit of wild places

We believe people should have access to wild places and the knowledge and awareness of how to best connect with the natural environment and the actions they can take to protect it. This connection builds value and those who value wild places are more likely to care for and take action to protect them.

The John Muir Trust wants to inspire people and communities to experience and feel empowered to advocate for the benefits of wild places, to be able to influence government and land managers to protect wild places. To do this, we maintain an access network across Glenlude, and keep the sites safe, tidy, and free from pollution. We also write and instal interpretation and make information available via our website to allow people self-service access.

3.3.1 Access

Objective AG: To allow access to Glenlude so that people can enjoy the many benefits of wild places

There is a short section of purpose-built footpath around the hut area allowing for access to the visitor facilities. Desire lines have evolved from the bottom storage area along to the wild campsite continuing along the main ride to the southern edge; up to the open hill through the centre of the plantation area and north from the volunteers' hut to Phoenix Forest continuing onto Jamie's Wood.

To enable those of all abilities to enjoy Glenlude we will create a series of paths linking our gathering shelter, tree nursery, existing and new woodlands.

To enable the safe removal of the larch, extraction tracks were created by the forestry company, which will remain in place until the remaining plantations are removed. On completion these will be removed and the areas re-landscaped with key routes redesigned as footpaths.

Activity	Timeline
Instal people counters at Glenlude to understand better how many people are visiting	2023
Create an all-abilities access path from the hut area to the Gathering Shelter	2024
Create a 1.5 km all-abilities path that will undulate through woodland and end at an accessible area with seating and facilities for outdoor learning and enjoyment	2024

3.3.2 Visitor infrastructure

Objective IG: To provide facilities and information for people on the estate to help them enjoy and explore wild places responsibly

The current infrastructure at Glenlude consists of a hut, a compost toilet, tool stores and tree nursery. These have been built and maintained by volunteers. Lighting in the buildings and the irrigation system in the nursery are powered by solar power. Information boards that tell the story of Glenlude through pictures and text are displayed in the hut.

As part of our volunteer programme a wild campsite was created - an old sheep stell was rebuilt with a number of levelled tent pitches around the perimeter.

In 2023 we will complete the construction of an accessible Gathering Shelter. This will be built from locally sourced materials and local expertise as much as possible. This new space will increase our capacity to offer year-round opportunities to increase access to nature, such as wellbeing retreats, outdoor learning, volunteering, and training.

Activity	Timeline
Complete Gathering Shelter	2023
Review and update interpretation	2024
Investigate whether additional infrastructure is needed to support a range of audiences, such as a sensory garden or adult changing facilities	2024

3.4 The community's freedom to thrive in wild places

Thriving communities are core to the Trust's ethos and we work in partnership to enable communities to protect the wild places important to them. We understand that people and communities are not something distinct from nature but that they are interdependent, and we aim to enable communities to get the best from their wild places and thrive alongside the nature that lives there. We can only realise this with the help of communities who can care for wild places.

3.4.1 Partnerships

Objective PG: To work with other groups, organisations and neighbouring landowners, towards common aims creating better connectivity between people and wild places.

An important part of the Trust's work at Glenlude has been to work in partnership with other charities and groups fostering a sense of connectivity to nature for the benefit of all. Through this work we have furthered progress with the Trust's plans and established valuable working relationships with our partners and neighbours:

Activity	Timeline
Phoenix Forest (est. 2012) – created in partnership with Phoenix Future, who will continue to plant trees in this area	Ongoing
Green Team Wildwood (est. 2016) – established by the Green Team and used for training	Ongoing
Jamie's Wood (est. 2018) – an area of woodland restoration looked after by Jamie's friends and family	Ongoing
Continue to liaise with Traquair Estates about their forestry plans adjacent to Glenlude Hill	Ongoing

3.4.2 Volunteering

Objective VG: To ensure the local community and wider public benefit from wild places through our engagement programme, including the provision of volunteering opportunities.

Weekly Thursday work parties, involving many long term, regular volunteers enable us to keep up with maintenance of the buildings, brash hedges, and young trees as well as tree planting, seed collecting and propagation in the tree nursery.

We have run workshops for volunteers in drystone walling, scything, amphibian and reptile monitoring along with in-house training of volunteers within the tree nursery on tree planting and habitat monitoring. We also carried out knowledge sharing and volunteer exchange trips with other nature-based conservation groups, organisations and individuals.

The Trust is often approached with requests to provide opportunities for corporate volunteering days at Glenlude. We already engage with other groups such as [Phoenix Futures](#) and the [The Green Team](#) for nature-based therapy work and youth engagement (see section 0 3.4.1 Partnerships).

Activity	Timeline
Recruit volunteers from the local area by attending events and speaking with people who live locally to Glenlude	2023 onwards
Review the opportunities for corporate volunteering	2023
Refurbish the tree nursery, as the current polytunnel cover has reached the end of its life	2024
Develop Seed to Tree work	2024/5

3.4.3 Outdoor learning

Objective LG: To provide inspiring outdoor learning opportunities for people to connect with wild places and learn about our work to conserve, protect and repair wild places.

There is potential to develop new outdoor learning activities at Glenlude. There are good facilities to accommodate a range of groups, and our plans to incorporate all-abilities paths will provide access for groups to observe and discuss how we conserve, repair and look after Glenlude. The Gathering Shelter can also be used as an outdoor classroom by organised groups (see section 3.3.2 3.3.2 Visitor infrastructure).

Activity	Timeline
Secure funding to explore further development of outdoor learning	2023
Scope out need to pilot a Junior Ranger programme at Glenlude focussed on woodland management	2024/5

3.4.4 Public events

Objective EG: To identify and attend local events to connect with the local community and promote our work to conserve, protect and repair wild places.

We don't currently host public events at Glenlude, but we do attend events organised by others. We have a stall at the Moffat Eagle Festival and Peebles Wood Festival, which are staffed by volunteers to help connect with the local community, promote Glenlude and the work we are doing, and promote the John Muir Trust and the importance of wild places.

Activity	Timeline
Attend Moffat Eagle Festival and Peebles Wood Festival	Annual

3.4.5 Consultation

Objective CG: To work with communities of interested individuals and groups and incorporate their thoughts and ideas

Consultation is a key part of land management and the decision-making process. This management plan lays out the vision and broadly details our objectives for the estate. The Trust will engage with and undertake consultation with both the local community and stakeholders on specific aspects of land management as they develop.

Activity	Timeline
Consult on our activities as we develop our plans	Ongoing

4. Appendices

A: Property Description

B: Glenlude Habitats Map

C: Deer Management Plan

D: Monitoring Plan

E: Engagement Plan