



Strathaird and Torrin Estates Management Plan 2014-2019

finalised April 2014

Photo Keith Brame

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1. Introduction

This management plan follows previous plans (most recent 2008 – 2012). It contains minor updates and revisions to previous plans rather than significant changes in direction. It has been slimmed down to make it more accessible and a list of actions provided in Table 1.

2. Vision

The John Muir Trust's Vision is that:

Wild land is protected and enhanced throughout the UK and wild places are valued by all sectors of society. **This Vision will be achieved when:**

- [Wild land is protected](#)
- [Wild land is enhanced](#)
- [People engage with wild places](#)
- [Communities thrive alongside wild land](#)

3. Aims and Objectives

Aims

The Trust owns wild land to protect it from inappropriate development, to improve habitats, and to encourage a more natural landscape and ecosystem. A prime aim of management is to retain, and where possible restore, natural processes and indigenous populations of plants and animals. The Trust will therefore promote sustainable management practices, and the repair where necessary of physical damage that has resulted in declines in biodiversity and deterioration of soils and landscape. The Trust's aims are applicable to the areas it directly manages. The crofted areas are managed by the grazings committees and additional areas are rented or owned by others.

Within the non-crofted area of Strathaird there is the Strathaird farm, Strathaird Forest and the core wild area (maps 1 & 3). Strathaird farm is subject to a farm plan (available on request) and Strathaird Forest to a Forestry Commission approved forest plan (approved XXX April - available on request). This management plan refers to the core wild area, although there will be some overlap with activities in the other areas e.g. in deer management (Appendix ii) which carried out over the wider area.

Objectives

These are defined within the Trusts Wild Land Management Standards at www.wildlandmanagement.org.uk.

4. Actions

Actions are based on Wild Land Management Standards. See Table 1

5. Additional information

5.1 Location

Location map including wild land - see Map 1



5.2 Designations

Table 2 Statutory Designations

Designation	Area on Strathaird and Torrin Estates	Description	Condition on John Muir Trust land
Sligachan Peatlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	213 ha on Strathaird	Blanket bog, Wet heath, Depressions on peat substrates, Very wet quaking mires all occur in Glen Sligachan and in the bog at the north end of Druim na Ruaige	5 favourable features, 1 unfavourable recovering due to management (Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath)
Strath SAC	117 ha is within Torrin Estate; all under crofting tenure		4 favourable features, 1 recovering and 3 unfavourable
Cuillins Special Protection Area (Golden Eagles)	6490 Ha of Strathaird and Torrin		Favourable
Cuillins National Scenic Area	6824 Ha of Strathaird and Torrin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Magnificent mountain scenery • The contrast and complement of the Black and Red Cuillin • The surrounding wild landscape, a fitting foil for the mountains • Iconic images of crofting townships with dramatic backdrops • The Cuillin Ridge, a landmark throughout the northwest • The ever-changing weather • A place of inspiration • The most challenging mountains in Scotland’ <p>www.snh.gov.uk/docs/B700234.pdf</p>	n/a
Strath Site of Special Scientific interest (SSSI)	c320 ha is within Torrin Estate; all under crofting tenure		4 features favourable, 2 recovering, 1 unfavourable (upland birch woodland)
Cuillins Site of Special Scientific interest	3350 ha is within Strathaird & Torrin Estates	Bryophytes (mainly associated with peatland features in Glen Sligachan); alkaline fens (particularly at the break of slope between the blanket bog and the hill slopes in Glen Sligachan);	All features favourable

		Tertiary igneous geology (Granite and gabbro outcrops on Marsco), blanket bog; tall herb ledge (on Marsco)	
Elgol Coast SSSI	42Ha on Strathaird Estate; almost all under crofting tenure		All features favourable

Also see Map 2 on p 6, appendix i and the SNH website: <http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/index.jsp>

5.3 Management Agreements

Cuillins Special Protection Area (SPA) SRDP Management Scheme

Moorland management plans through Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) contracts are in place (from 2010-2015) as part of the management of the SPA. For the non-crofted part of Strathaird estate this contract is with the John Muir Trust. Moorland management plans are also in place for Torrin where the contract is with Torrin grazings committee and the crofted part of Strathaird where the contract is with the Elgol, Drinan and Glasnakille grazings committee between the grazing committee and SNH / SG

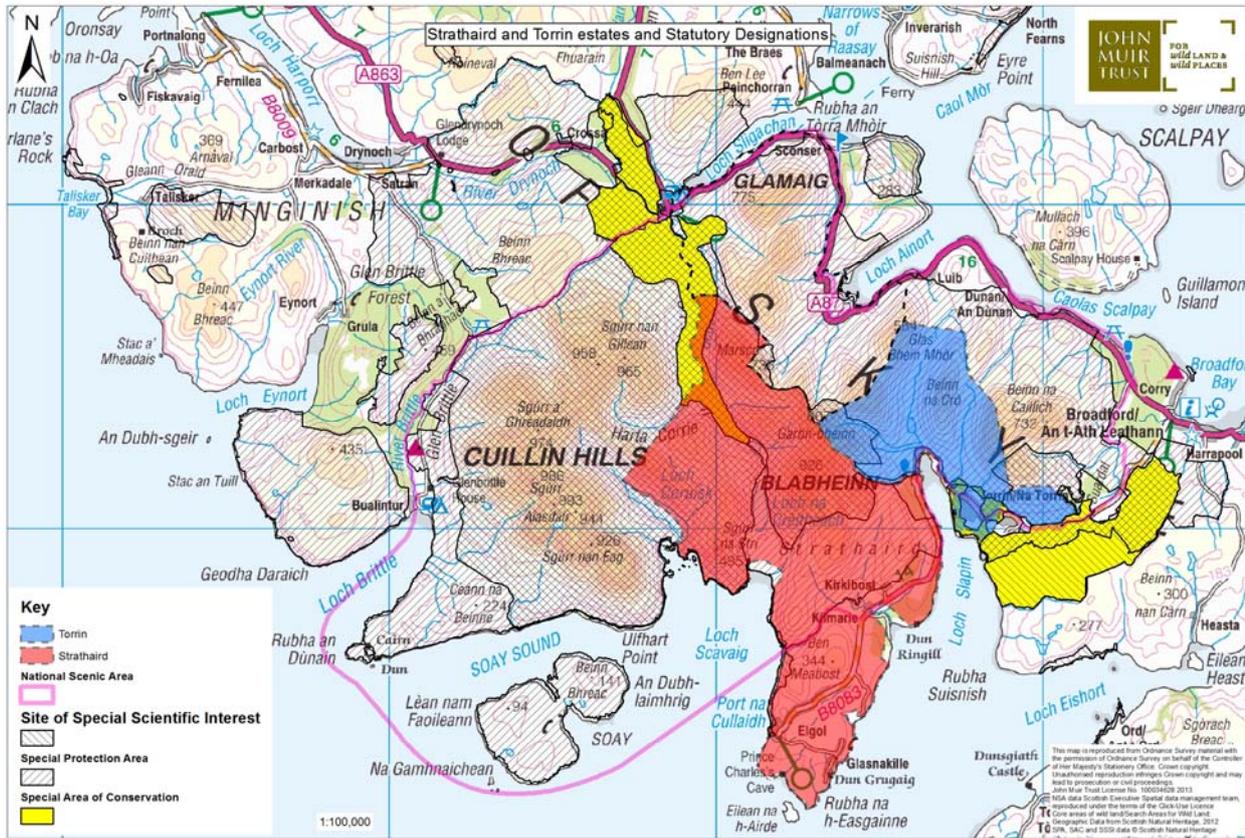
The main actions from the non-crofted Strathaird Moorland management plan are deer management to provide 8 deer carcasses between November and February for the eagles (SPA) and to manage grazing impacts (SSSI and SAC), and restriction on use of ATVs (NSA).

5.4 Tenure

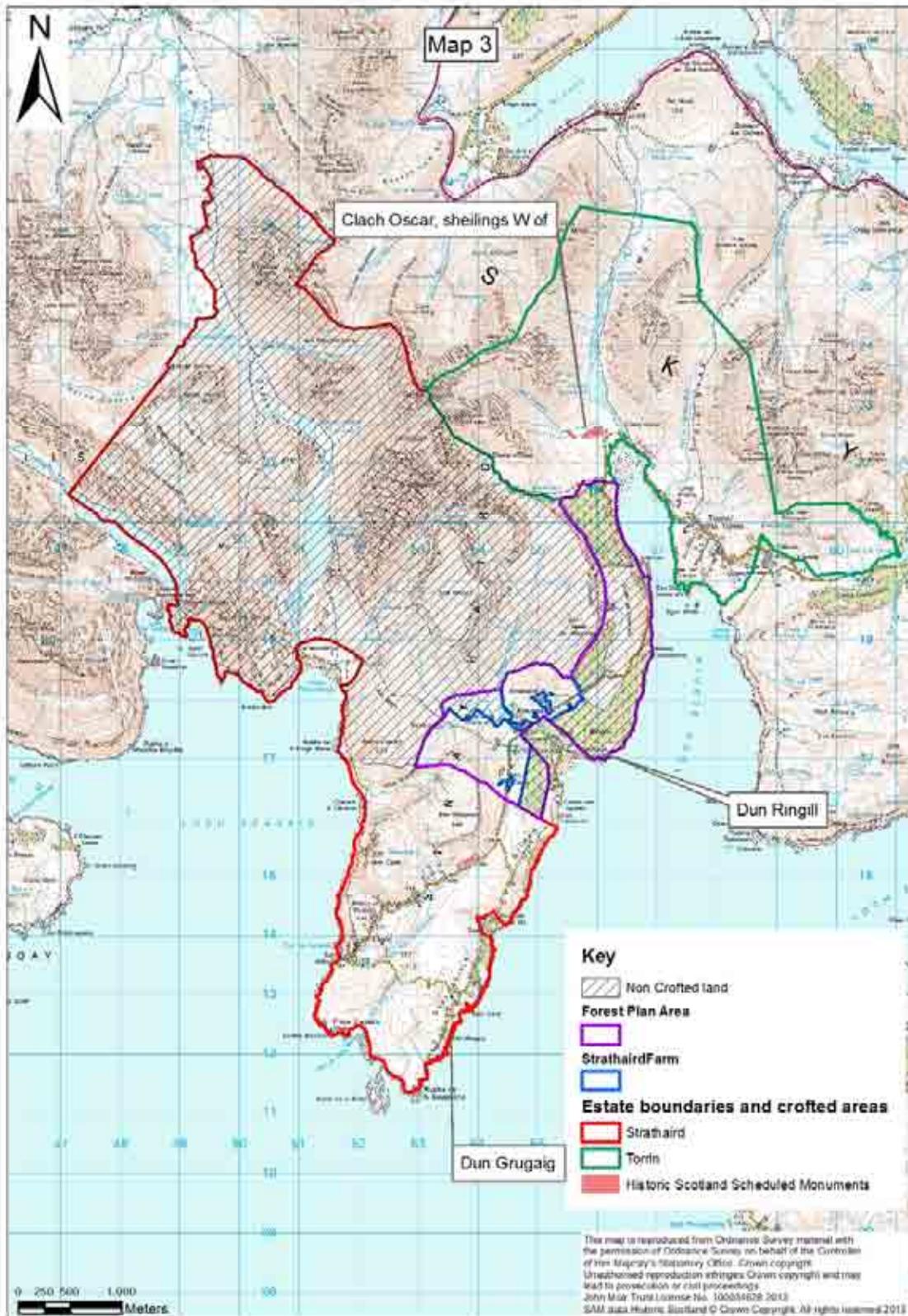
Torrin Estate was purchased by the John Muir Trust in 1991. The estate is crofted , under the management of the Torrin grazings committee. The Trust liaises with both the grazings committee and the Torrin Community Association.

Strathaird Estate was purchased in 1994. The estate is partly crofted (see map 1), with the crofted areas under the management of the Elgol, Drinan and Glasnakille grazings committees. The Trust liaises with the grazings committees and with the Strathaird Community Association.

Map 2 Statutory designations



Map 3 Tenure



Torrin Estate

The estate is under crofting tenure.

Strathaird Estate

The southern part of the peninsula (c1295 ha), is under crofting tenure with three crofting townships, Drinan, Elgol and Glasnakille. The common grazings extend to 1060 ha. The overall boundaries of the estate are shown on maps 1,2 and 3, a number of crofts, croft houses and garden grounds have been de-crofted.

Minerals

Strathaird Estate

The mineral rights of Strathaird lie with the John Muir Trust. There are no recent quarries or workings.

Torrin Estate

There is a mineral lease over the whole of Torrin Estate, excluding the Horse Park (rights were reserved to Lord Macdonald). This is due to run until 28 May 2024. The tenants have the power to quarry and work and remove limestone and dolomite and for those purposes have a right of access from public roads and to the shore at any point most suitable for the better working of the minerals but in such a way as to cause as little damage as possible. Currently the tenants are Leiths (Scotland) Limited.

The Marble Quarry (NG 583200)(Torrin 2) is operational with planning permission dating back to 1965 (refs. 1965/78 and 1965/320). North-west of the township there is a disused lime quarry (NG 572213)(Torrin1) where there is a large 'nissen' hut which provides workshop and storage facilities for the Marble quarry operation.

5.5 Legal and other obligations

Wayleaves

Hydro-Electric

Scottish Hydro-Electric has wayleaves covering pole supply to Torrin, Kilmarie, Drinan, Glasnakille and Elgol. The overhead power line runs roughly parallel to the B8083 through Torrin and Strathaird, with spurs off to Kilmarie, Drinan and Glasnakille.

British Telecom

British Telecom has wayleaves covering underground or subsurface cables supplying Torrin, Kilmarie, Drinan, Glasnakille and Elgol. The cable runs alongside the B8083 through Torrin and Strathaird Estates.

Scottish Water are currently installing a new mains water supply from Broadford to Torrin and Elgol following the route of the B8083, this is predominantly covered by a wayleave with compulsory purchase of land for pump stations.

Camasunary

There is a servitude right of access for foot and vehicular traffic from the public road to Elgol. There is a joint responsibility for maintenance between the John Muir Trust and the owners' of Camasunary.

5.6 Management responsibilities

Access

There are a number of paths and access points on the estate see Map 4 below. The Trusts Footpath officer has recently carried out a review of all the paths. Two paths at Strathaird have been identified as a priority for work by

Deer

A deer management plan for the estate is in place and is reviewed annually, see appendix ii for most recent plan.

Table 3 Deer Cull data

Strathaird Deer cull data:															
2008/2009			2009/2010			2010/2011			2011/2012			2012/2013			2013/14
Stags	Hinds	Calves	S	H	C										
12	32	13	10	33	7	11	48	17	3	13	0	24	14	2	
Torrin Deer cull data:															
2008/2009			2009/2010			2010/2011			2011/2012			2012/2013			
Stags	Hinds	Calves	S	H	C										
0	8	4	1	7	3	3	4	1	0	5	1	4	9	2	

Dwellings

Bla Bheinn: semi detached house with 6 rooms, rented to the Estate Manager

Clach Glas: the northern half of the above semi-detached building (with 5 rooms), Rented out.

Bla Bheinn and Clach Glas share a private water supply and a septic tank, and a log boiler for central heating and hot water.

Estate Management Buildings

Estate management buildings are situated at Kirkibost. These include: one large stock shed, a workshop a large barn and an old kirk.

Strathaird Farm

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Strathaird:

Dun Ringill (NG 56191708) - galleried dun

Dun Grugaig (NG 53541229) - galleried dun

Torrin:

Clach Oscar, shielings W of (NG556224)

Woodland grants and Forest Plan

A Forest Plan is currently being finalised with the Forestry Commission and is available on request.

Additional environmental information:

Was contained in the previous Management Plan (2008-12) and is available on request

5.7 Appendices

This management plan has been produced as a concise working document and further more detailed information is available on request.

- Appendix i SNH maps of relevant statutory designations
- Appendix ii Skye Estates Deer Management Plan 2013-2018
- Appendix iii Habitat map
- Appendix iv Location of habitat monitoring plots

Table 1 Strathaird and Torrin Land Management Actions

WLM - STANDARDS	Action Name	Description	Annual action (or year)	YEAR 5 OUTCOMES
1. Audit existing state and condition	Map all man-made structures	Create a map of all built structures on the non crofted area of Strathaird	2014	
	Digitise woodland	Completed for habitat mapping and Forest plan		
	Conduct archaeological survey	Archaeological surveys of Strathaird were undertaken in 1997 and 1998 by Wildgoose et al. and at Torrin in 1991 and 1997	Liaise with Historic Scotland as needed on Scheduled Ancient Monuments	
2. Establish survey and monitoring programme	Collate all relevant data	Data held at Pitlochry and Skye	Collate new data	Relevant data collated and stored.
	Conduct habitat monitoring programme	Dwarf Shrub Heath monitoring	Record 30 plots in May/June	Data assessed for any changes in habitat condition
		Marked Seedlings monitoring	(2014) Setup new plots in Forest plan area and mark new seedlings outwith Forest plan area. In subsequent years record plots	Monitor progress of forest plan, and monitor success of new regeneration
		Tree transect monitoring	Rolling programme with volunteers recording transects	Long term data on tree seedling success
		Blanket Bog plot monitoring	10 plots recorded annually, 10 recorded every five years	Data assessed for any changes in habitat condition
	Conduct species monitoring programme	Bat surveys	Trial use of SM2+ bat recorder in 2014 with a view to annual survey	Assess species present on properties
		Juniper surveys	Plots to record every three years	Data assessed for any changes in habitat condition
		Bird Surveys	Set up Breeding Bird survey in 2014, record annually, Investigate Upland bird transect as part of BTO What's up survey, find volunteer in 2014	Long term data on breeding birds
		Fish surveys	Establish baseline survey	Long term data on Fish species present
	Maintain species records	Record and maintain records of existing native vegetation and wildlife	Upload ad hoc species records to Pitlochry database	All Strathaird and Torrin records added to Trust species recording database
	Take fixed point photographs	Repeat Strathaird Fixed point photos	Every three years (2014, 2017)	
	Monitor people counters / car park usage	n/a		
	Conduct visitor survey	n/a		
3. Develop SMART actions	Develop SMART actions	Five year management plan with annual work programme	Action table monitoring and reporting on quarterly basis	Revisions drafted and approved by 31 st Dec 2019
		Annually review management plan with Biodiversity Officer to take account of results from monitoring programme	Action table reviewed annually and revised if appropriate	Working document revised as appropriate
4. Consult stakeholders	Consult on plan with stakeholder	Consult local community with regard to significant management issues	Stakeholder workshop 30/11/13	Consultation carried out as needed on issues arising over the life of the plan
5. Maximise water tables on peatlands	Drain Blocking	Drain Blocking	as appropriate	
6. Minimise exposure, burning and	Minimise Burning	Minimise Burning	Moorland management plan adopted by John Muir Trust for non-crofted Strathaird has no burning	Plan continues until 2015

Table 1 Strathaird and Torrin Land Management Actions

WLM - STANDARDS	Action Name	Description	Annual action (or year)	YEAR 5 OUTCOMES
grazing				
7. Minimise pollution	Remove litter	Remove Litter as seen on all visits	Litter removed when seen on site, including beach cleaning work parties as appropriate during the period of the plan	
8. Maintain protected sites in favourable condition	Implement SNH advice	As appropriate	Annual meeting with Area staff	Put into place all actions within trusts remit to maintain/ achieve favourable condition status
	Inform/ work with other groups / users	As appropriate		
	Advance Agri-environment scheme applications to deliver management	Moorland management plan in place through SRDP	Leaving deer carcasses for eagles between November and February	
9. Maximise native habitats	Maximise native habitats	Maximise native habitats		
10. Biodiversity species management	Map and remove non-native invasives (plants)	Input into trust-wide strategic plan for removal of INN plants		
		Map INNS plants and begin control programme	End of 2014	Ongoing control programme in place
	Develop and implement a control strategy (animals)	Establish mink survey. Investigate control programme and links to partners	2014	
11. Re-structure woodlands	Develop / implement a forest plan	Forest Plan drafted, implement action once approved	Annual work programme in Forest plan	
	Additional native woodland planting projects	n/a outside Forest plan area		
12. Re-introductions	Consider reintroductions	As appropriate		
13. Minimise deer impacts	Collect and analyse relevant deer / habitat data	Collate relevant deer and habitat data	Annual	
	Produced deer management plan	Review existing Deer Management Plan	Annual (see deer management plan in appendix x)	
	Deliver cull targets	Deliver annual cull	Annual	
	Engage with relevant group DMG / Section 7 or other stakeholders	Attend relevant meetings	Annual	
14. Leave deer carcasses for eagles	Leave carcasses	Leave deer carcasses for eagles as part of SRDP contract (between November and February)	Annual	
	Camera trap monitor	Install camera traps on deer carcasses	Annual	

Table 1 Strathaird and Torrin Land Management Actions

WLM - STANDARDS	Action Name	Description	Annual action (or year)	YEAR 5 OUTCOMES
	carcasses			
15. Minimise livestock impacts	Control numbers	Manage livestock on wild land area	n/a	
	Monitor incursions	Livestock incursions into non-crofted area, liaise with relevant grazings committee	As needed	
16. Staff training	Staff training	Implement training plan	Reviewed annually	
17. Infrastructure & heritage maintenance	Monitor and maintain paths	Maintain existing paths on property	Instigate repair work on Blabheinn 2014	Complete priority work on Blabheinn and Sligachan to Coruisk Paths by 2016. Path monitoring programme established.
	Monitor and maintain buildings, fences etc.	Maintain buildings, car park, gates, signage, wooden bridges etc.	Annual	
	Run conservation work parties	Run conservation work parties	Annual programme includes removal of INN plants and path work	Volunteers contribute to management plan objectives
18. Reduce, re-use, recycle	Minimise resource use and waste		Annual	
19. Minimise carbon footprint	Maximise energy efficiency		Annual	
20. Explore local renewable energy	Explore local renewable options	Support development of Elgol hydro scheme		
21. Remove redundant structures	Remove redundant structures	Remove any new cairns that appear on the property	Minor issue at present, Annual ongoing task as needed	
22. Sensitive new build techniques	Remove, reduce or narrow roads where this is possible	n/a		
	Apply sensitive techniques to any new build	n/a		
23. Sensitive footpath techniques	Apply sensitive techniques to any new footpath	As appropriate following prioritised programme of for work for the Trust	<i>Blabhein 2014</i>	
24. Provide responsible access	Provide guidance on large scale events	Encourage use of code of conduct for larger scale events	Annual Biathlon	
	Provide guidance on fishing policy	Investigate provision of information at access points re fishing permits, responsible access and implement as appropriate	By end of 2014	Raised awareness of fishing and access issues
25. Meet responsibilities towards local people	Advise on responsible campfires and clean up	as above	as above	as above

Table 1 Strathaird and Torrinn Land Management Actions

WLM - STANDARDS	Action Name	Description	Annual action (or year)	YEAR 5 OUTCOMES
	Liaise with neighbours	Develop relationships with appropriate neighbouring landowners, relevant local bodies and communities of interest	Annual	
	Engage with local groups	Attend relevant local grazing committee, community association and other relevant partnership meetings	Annual	
	Hold Open meetings	Management plan workshop Nov 2013	2013	
	Use local contractors / volunteers / produce	Prioritize where possible in procuring goods and services	Annual	
26. Joint project work	Liaise locally with SNH	As appropriate – mainly for protected site issues	Annual	
	Contribute to relevant wider projects	As appropriate		
27. Maximise interpretation	Review and update leaflets, ensure leaflet dispensers filled (including Gaelic)	Refill Leaflet dispenser on every visit	Annual	
	Review and maintain website information (including Gaelic)	Ensure info on website is kept up to date	Annual	
	Review and maintain interpretation panels (including Gaelic)	See Fishing and responsible access above		
	Consider providing interpretation in Gaelic	See Fishing and responsible access above		
28. Maximise education opportunities	Carry out guided walks / talks / events / land days / wild land awareness / open days programme	As appropriate	Annual	
	Produce articles for local media	As appropriate	Annual	
	Encourage local John Muir Award activity	As appropriate	Annual	