

Sconser Estate Management Plan 2014-2019

Finalised April 2014



Glen Sligachan Keith Brame

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Vision	3
3. Aims and Objectives.....	3
4. Actions.....	3
5. Additional information.....	4
5.1 Location	4
5.2 Designations	4
Map 1 Location and Landscape designations	
Map 2 Statutory designations	
5.3 Management Agreements	5
5.4 Tenure	7
5.5 Legal and other obligations (Wayleaves etc.)	7
Map 3 Tenure	
5.6 Management responsibilities.....	8
Additional environmental, cultural, social and economic Information	10
5.7 Appendices	10

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](#)

Sconser estate is 3,400ha in size and of this 2,019 ha is under crofting tenure. The Trust aims to work with the Sconser Management Committee and grazing committee on projects of mutual interest on this area. Work is ongoing to develop a memorandum of understanding between the John Muir Trust and the Sconser Management Committee.

The actions in this management plan refer mainly to the remaining uncrofted land, although there will be some overlap.

3. Aims and Objectives

Aims:

- Protecting the wild character of the estate
- Enhancing native habitats and encouraging native species
- Maintaining protected sites in favourable condition
- Working with community representatives through the Sconser Management Committee, Sconser grazing committee and the Collie and Mackenzie sculpture group

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

4. Actions

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

6. Additional information

5.1 Location

Location map including wild land - see Map 1

5.2 Designations

Table 2 Statutory Designations

Designation	Area on Sconser	Description	Condition on John Muir Trust land
Sligachan Peatlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	187 ha	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)
Cuillins Special Protection Area (Golden Eagles)	3400 ha		Favourable
Cuillins National Scenic Area	3400 ha	<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
Cuillins Site of Special Scientific interest	300 ha on Sconser estate	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); Tertiary igneous geology (Granite and gabbro outcrops on Marsco), blanket bog; tall herb ledge (on Marsco)	All features favourable

Also see the SNH website: <http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/index.jsp>

Map 1 Location of Sconser Estate



5.3 Management Agreements

As part of the 1997 management agreement between the John Muir Trust and the township committee, Sconser Management Committee came into being. The Committee is a non-constituted body which meets on a quarterly basis to discuss and implement land management activities on Sconser Estate. During the period of this plan it is hoped that a memorandum of understanding will be agreed.

A Moorland management plan is in place between the Sconser grazing committee and SNH / SG. 5.4 Tenure

The Estate was purchased in 1997. In total the land holding is 3400 hectares of which 2019 hectares is under crofting tenure.

The shooting rights lie with the John Muir Trust.

Rod fishing rights for the estate are currently leased to Portree Angling Association.

See Map 3

5.5 Legal and other obligations (Wayleaves etc.)

Scottish and Southern Energy has wayleave rights for overhead electricity supply between Luib and Sligachan using a route running roughly parallel with the A87. A small section of powerline was put underground in 2009 as part of the Sligachan gateway works.

British Telecom has wayleaves for covering underground and subsurface cables for supplying Sconser Estate. A one-off wayleave payment from British Telecom was secured in 2005 and transferred to the Sconser Management Committee.

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. One path on the Sconser estate has been identified as a priority for work by 2016 subject to SSSI consent from SNH - The Beinn Dearg Mheadhonach path, from NG4881229643 to NG514012729. After priority work is completed, a system of monitoring of paths will be set up to detect erosion at an early stage.



Deer

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

Deer cull data:															
2008/2009			2009/2010			2010/2011			2011/2012			2012/2013			2013/14
Stags	Hinds	Calves	S	H	C										
2	23	6	0	6	1	7	12	3	0	8	0	1	7	2	
Deer Count data:									2012						
									18	71	18				

Listed Buildings

The Old Bridge crossing the river Sligachan was listed category B in 1971.

Scheduled Monuments

The Old Bridge crossing at Sligachan has a Secular classification awarded by Historic Scotland.

Additional environmental, cultural, social and economic Information

Is contained in previous plans – available on request.

5.7 Appendices

This management plan has been produced as a concise working document and further more detailed information is contained in the following Appendices.

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

Table 1 Sconser 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	n/a		
	Digitise woodland	n/a		
	Conduct archaeological survey	n/a 1998 survey by Wildgoose at el.		
	Collate all relevant data	Data held at Pitlochry and Skye	Collate new data	Relevant data collated and stored.
2. Establish survey and monitoring programme	Conduct habitat monitoring programme	Dwarf Shrub Heath monitoring every 5 years using Best Practice method. See map appendix iv	2014	Data assessed for any changes in habitat condition
	Conduct species monitoring programme	n/a No specific species monitoring planned ad hoc records will be stored at Pitlochry		
	Monitor deer and livestock enclosure plots	Monitor regeneration in newly livestock fenced areas east of Sligachan (outside SSSI)	monitor regeneration	Progress of regeneration
	Maintain species records	Record and maintain records of existing native vegetation and wildlife	Upload ad hoc species records to Pitlochry database	All Sconser records added to Trust species recording database
	Take fixed point photographs	n/a		
	Monitor people counters / car park usage	Liaise with Collie Mackenzie sculpture group to assess feasibility of people counters at Sligachan gateway		Obtain information on visitor numbers
	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 2018
		Annually review management plan with Biodiversity Officer	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 held 29.11.13	Consultation carried out as needed on issues arising over the life of the plan
5. Maximise water tables on peatlands	Drain Blocking	n/a		
6. Minimise exposure, burning and grazing	Minimise Burning	Minimise Burning	Moorland management plan adopted by Sconser grazings committee till 2015	Plan continues until 2015
7. Minimise pollution	Remove litter	Remove Litter as seen on all visits	Litter removed when seen on site	
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	n/a		
	Advance Agri- environment scheme applications to deliver management	Moorland management plan in place through SRDP		
9. Maximise native habitats	Maximise native habitats	Support Sconser Management Committee in establishing tree regeneration areas	Fencing, agreeing areas	Successful implementation of tree regeneration areas
10. Biodiversity species management	Map and remove non-native invasive species (plants)	Input into trust-wide strategic plan for removal of INN plants		

Table 1 Sconser Land Management Actions

WLM - STANDARDS	Action Name	Description	Annual action or (year)	YEAR 5 OUTCOMES
		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	n/a		
	Additional native woodland planting projects	May have supplementary planting in regeneration areas outwith SSSI		
12. Re-introductions	Consider reintroductions	n/a		
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	
	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 8 deer carcasses for eagles between November and February as part of SRPD moorland management plan	Annual	
	Camera trap monitor carcasses	n/a		
15. Minimise livestock impacts	Control numbers	Livestock managed by Sconser grazings committee		
	Monitor incursions and liaise with owner	n/a		
16. Staff training	Staff training	Implement training plan	Annual	
17. Infrastructure & heritage maintenance	Monitor and maintain paths	Maintain existing paths on property	Ongoing maintenance following priorities defined by Trust footpath officer.	Complete priority work identified on Beinn Dearg Mheadhonach path by 2016. Path monitoring programme established.
	Monitor and maintain buildings, fences etc.	Fence maintenance carried out as appropriate in collaboration with Sconser Management Committee	Annual	
		Maintain car park, kissing gate, access, signage, wooden bridges etc.	Maintain structures associated with Sligachan gateway car park	
	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 the local community in investigating suitable options		
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	

Table 1 Sconser Land Management Actions

WLM - STANDARDS	Action Name	Description	Annual action or (year)	YEAR 5 OUTCOMES
	Remove, reduce or narrow roads where this is possible	n/a		
22. Sensitive new build techniques	Apply sensitive techniques to any new build	Work on Beinn Dearg Mheadhonach path	By 2016	
23. Sensitive footpath techniques	Apply sensitive techniques to any new footpath	As appropriate following prioritised programme for work for JMT		
	Provide guidance on large scale events	Encourage use of code of conduct for larger scale events	Annual Glamaig Hill race and Biathlon	
24. Provide responsible access	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
	Advise on responsible campfires and clean up	As above	As above	As above
	Liaise with neighbours	Develop relationships with appropriate neighbouring landowners, relevant local bodies and communities of interest	Annual	
25. Meet responsibilities towards local people	Engage with local groups	Attend relevant local community and partnership meetings	Annual	
	Hold Open meetings	Management plan workshop Nov 2013	2013	
	Use local contractors / volunteers / produce	Prioritise where possible in procuring goods and services	Annual	
	Liaise locally with SNH	As appropriate – mainly for protected site issues	Annual	
26. Joint project work	Contribute to relevant wider projects	Work with the Collie & Mackenzie Sculpture Group	Annual	
	Review and update leaflets, ensure leaflet dispensers filled (including Gaelic)	Refill Leaflet dispenser on every visit	Annual	
27. Maximise interpretation	Review and maintain website information (including Gaelic)	Ensure info on website is kept up to date		
	Review and maintain interpretation panels (including Gaelic)	See Fishing and responsible access above		
	Consider providing interpretation in Gaelic	See Fishing and responsible access above		
	Carry out guided walks / talks / events / land days / wild land awareness / open days programme	As appropriate	Annual	
28. Maximise education opportunities	Produce articles for local media	As appropriate	Annual	
	Encourage local John Muir Award activity	As appropriate	Annual	