

Dunardry Face

This coupe has been approved for felling since the 27/7/21 under the Knapdale Land Management Plan (LMP). The main objectives for felling the coupe are to regenerate a former area of ancient semi-natural woodland, reduce the threat from pests and diseases (Pythophthora Ramorum in larch) and to increase road safety and resilience over the coming years.

The coupe will be felled in two stages. The first stage is in the area above the forest road. The 2nd is to fell the steep strip between the forest road and the public road/canal. Given the sensitive and challenging nature of this coupe a significant amount of lead in and planning time is required. The coupe falls within the Knapdale National Scenic Area lying on a visually sensitive steep slope directly above the B841 Cairnbaan to Crinan public road and the Crinan canal. Safety is paramount in all the work we undertake and none more so than this forest site given the risk to road users the canal and the utilities and buildings which lie along the 1.5km stretch of the public road.

The main timber harvesting challenges are the above optimal tree size. An area which has primarily been thinned and retained longer than our average forest rotation before felling. (35-40 years) These trees are now over 50 years old with some specimens dating back to 1934 (89 years old) Average tree sizes are in excess of 1.5 tonnes with some of the Douglas Fir nearly 40 metres (130 feet) in height and over 3 tonnes in weight.

Planning approval was sought initially to utilise the current tracks on the site to fell and extract the timber. This approval has been granted by A&B council. This is currently under review by FLS; primarily from a health and safety perspective and also given the large tree size we may need specialist machinery and contractors to carry out the harvesting. Marketing this timber in order to fully optimise its potential will also take time as given the large trees it reduces the number of markets and sawmills able to mill the timber. Safety wise we hope to secure the approval for an additional area of felling to the south of the current approved coupe which would allow us to harvest and extract the timber back up the hill onto the southern spur road. This will significantly reduce the safety risk on the forest road which lies directly above the public road and the canal by reducing the loading/unloading operations. I have a meeting with FLS's specialist safety advisor early next week and this will also determine how we harvest the coupe and indeed the mitigation measures we require to undertake in terms of health and safety. Additionally this may also reduce the amount of "light touch" construction we had originally planned on the site which has been approved via A&B Council.

Timings

Timing of operations are still approximate at this stage but unlikely before January 2024 and FLS will provide regular updates to the community council as required.

Druim a' Dhuin (Loch Coille Bharr)

This coupe has been approved for felling since the 27/7/21 under the Knapdale Land Management Plan (LMP). The main objectives for felling the coupe are to regenerate a former area of ancient semi-natural woodland, enhance and protect a scheduled monument, reduce the threat from pests and diseases (Pythophthora Ramorum in larch) and to increase road safety and resilience over the coming years.

The coupe will be felled in three stages. The first being a narrow strip of woodland on the western edge which runs parallel (250m) with the B8025 Bellanoch to Tayvallich public road. A timber handling facility (temporary) will be required to harvest this area of timber. The harvester will initially fell the timber with the civil engineering works being carried out after that from within the forest. A planning permission has been submitted to A&B Council and we await the outcome following a positive meeting with A&B council and Historical Environment Scotland onsite last week. Once operations are complete this facility will be removed and the ground re-instated. The 2nd phase of the harvesting operation will be carried out following the upgrade of an existing forest road from the eastern ridge (as portrayed on the map by a red dotted line) down the hill (west) onto the forest road. The 3rd and final phase will be from the top of the same ridge (red dotted line) east and down onto the forest road running alongside Loch Coille Bharr. Additional surveys of the area and additional roading works have still to be quantified and agreed.

Timings

All timings are approximate at this stage given the potential for wildlife constraints and any additional planning requirements.

Phase 1 – Following planning approval – October 23 – December 23

Phase 2 – Spring 2024

Phase 3 - 2025

As above FLS will endeavour to provide the community council with regular updates with regards to these projects.

Tommy McGrory
Assistant Operations Manager

Forestry and Land Scotland
West Region (South)
5th September 2023