**South Grampian DMG Woodland Proposals**

Discussions with SG DMG members suggests that there are potentially 14 X significant woodland projects or other miscellaneous projects to be aware of in the five year period ahead. Together, these are likely to have a significant bearing on how deer are managed within the area. The total potential for woodland creation from these projects is in the region of 3500 ha, with deer potentially also being excluded from a similar size of enclosed open ground as well.

SG DMG members are asked to consider the extent and distribution of these projects, and contribute to discussion on how deer management is then likely to be taken forwards to accommodate them.

The location of the projects listed below are given on the **14.SG Potential Woodland Projects map**. It should be noted that several of these projects are still in the early stages of development, and it is possible that several of them may be curtailed or possibly cancelled. However, at the moment, these are all projects that are in development, and the purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how they will all relate to one another.

**Project 1 South Clova**

*Woodland Creation*

Clova Farms have been developing a very significant woodland creation scheme for several years now, stretching to c 450 ha, across two sides of the glen. It is planned to plant c 150 ha within the South Grampian DMG area, and this will also enclose an area of mature conifer timber. The wood will stretch along the bottom of the hill, with provision for deer to still access the lower ground. There will be a 600 metre gap to the FLS Glen Prosen fences.

**Project 2 South Balnaboth**

*Woodland Creation*

The area of Balnaboth to the south of the river has been sold to a forestry company, who plan to plant a mixed conifer/ native woodland scheme, with the total enclosed area extending to 300 ha. The woodland will therefore be a mixture of production and conservation.

**Project 3 Balintore**

*Potential woodland creation*

This scheme is not as well developed as the previous two, and it is not clear if indeed it will go ahead, but what has been suggested is a 700 ha native woodland scheme taking up the northern part of the estate. A windfarm proposal is also in development for Balintore. This would be a very significant woodland creation project if it were to go ahead.

**Project 4 Auldallan**

*Woodland Creation*

Around 150 ha of potential woodland creation has been in development at Auldallan for some time now, stretching across a number of blocks. The emphasis would be on native woodlands, with the property looking to build up habitats and natural capital, and to provide for shooting habitat as well.

There are practical challenges for this project, especially rabbit infestations in some of the areas concerned, and it is possible that this project may not proceed, given some of the challenges involved. However, the owner is determined to make something work if he can.

**Project 5 Scottish Water**

*Spring 2025 woodland creation, and change of deer emphasis*

Scottish Water implemented two significant woodland creation schemes in spring 2025. During summer 2025, they reviewed their deer management leases to focus on management of numbers as opposed to having a sporting focus, the rationale for this being agricultural protection and management of their water catchment area. Details of their plans will be included in the final draft of this document.

Subsequent to this, Scottish Water have now confirmed that one of their tenant farms is being taken in hand, with 1000 sheep being sold, and plans being developed to plant approx. 30% of the 2500 ha farm area. This is a very significant scheme right at the centre of the DMG, and in close proximity to several others.

**Project 6 FLS Glen Isla**

*Native woodland creation*

FLS are going to be planting 284 ha of native and high level woodland within their existing Glen Isla block. No new fencing will be required, but this planting will necessitate a stronger focus on control of deer numbers within that area. The areas of woodland creation will be scattered throughout the area, providing for habitat linkages and long term woodland retentions.

**Project 7 FLS Glen Prosen**

*Native woodland creation*

This will be Forestry & Land Scotland’s flagship woodland creation project in the Angus Glens. Approx 3400 ha will be enclosed in 2 phases over 2- 3 years, with 900 ha of actual planting within this, creating woodland areas that should spread by natural regeneration in the future. The enclosures will encompass existing mature conifer woodland, and the riparian woodland areas that have already been fenced and planted. The major planting will shortly be forward for EIA determination with Scottish Forestry. A modest level of agricultural activity will be retained within the glen.

**Project 8 FLS Glen Prosen Hill Ground**

*Upland habitat regeneration*

The final phase of the Glen Prosen restoration scheme will be to construct a hill wing fence to try and prevent deer ingress on to the hill ground at the top of Glen Prosen. The intention is to naturally restore montane habitat in this location, but it will not be entirely closed. The area extends to c 900 ha.

**Project 9 Corrie Fee (Nature Scot)**

*Possible montane enclosure*

There has been a deer fenced enclosure in Corrie Sharroch since 1990, which is now largely porous and ineffective. It extends to c 90 ha.

Nature Scot have been considering whether to re- fence this area, but the likelihood is that the price will be prohibitive, and this project is unlikely to go forwards.

**Project 10 FLS Glen Doll Woodland restructuring**

*Felling/ restocking*

This area was badly affected by Storm Arwen, with felling recently begun to clear this up. The opportunity has been taken to do a much wider operation, with perhaps up to 70% of the area being felled and restocked in two phases over 10 years or so.

There will be two significant impacts on deer. Firstly, the cleared areas will make it much more accessible for culling deer, and regrowth of ground vegetation is likely to make the cleared area very attractive to them in the short term before it is fenced. Secondly, deer have been accustomed to sheltering in the woodland, and when it is fenced to allow for restocking, that will no longer be possible. In addition to losing a significant area of effective range, this loss of potential shelter is likely to have a very significant effect on deer numbers using the wider area around upper Glen Doll/ Glen Clova. The effects of this have yet to be estimated, but the impact may well be similar in scale to either FLS Glen Prosen or Caenlochan.

**Project 11 Caenlochan**

*Upland habitat restoration*

Not a woodland project as such, although regeneration of montane willows will be a hoped- for output. Caenlochan is a very significant issue within South Grampian, although the accumulation of woodland creation sites will probably now have a much larger impact on deer populations across the area.

DMG members want to see this issue resolved, so that they can plan more confidently for the future.

**Project 12 Glenshee & neighbouring properties**

*Riparian woodland sites*

The Tay Rivers Trust (TRT) have initiated an ambitious scheme to create riparian woodland in the Upper River Shee area, across a number of estates, including Invercauld Glenshee in the South Grampian area.

At present the search area is over 800 ha, but the presence of wading birds is likely to reduce the actual planting area to a much lower level. At the moment, the guidelines around this issue are being enforced very strongly, and this threatens to seriously reduce what might be possible, but it is not yet understand what a final planting design will look like. The long continuous strip of trees along the upper Shee is unlikely to be as depicted on the map, with this area being most affected by constraints.

It will not be possible to judge what the deer impacts will be until we can see a final planting plan.

**Project 13 Broughdearg**

*New owner/ possible woodland creation*

This area of approx. 400 ha was sold by Invercauld Estate in summer 2025. The objectives of the new owners are still in development, but it is possible that at least some woodland planting will take place. In broad terms, the property objectives will be environmental, with no sporting interest, but it is likely the hill will be left open and grazed with cattle. In the short term, deer control will be undertaken by Invercauld Estate.

The area had a Forestry Grant Scheme contract developed for woodland creation recently, although this was not implemented by the estate. The FGS has been fully consented, with FGS contract funding in place should any scheme progress. It is unlikely that the new owners will implement this in full, as that would negate their wish to graze the open hill.

**Project 14 Glenisla House**

*Woodland creation*

It is likely that some modest woodland creation will take place on Glenisla House, possibly 20 ha or thereabouts.