



# Frequently asked questions

The questions below are ones commonly being asked in regard of the Ptarmigan Land Management Plan, to help you understand our position and the concept shown on our webpage, we thought we would answer them. This document will be updated as more commonly asked questions are received but please do use the questionnaire on the Ptarmigan webpage to provide feedback.

## How will you export the timber?

We have examined different options and the best solution, albeit still with challenges, is to use the existing forest and public road infrastructure. We acknowledge that there will be conflict with residential and recreational users to be managed throughout, however usage of the existing infrastructure is the least damaging solution.

The existing in-wood infrastructure will need some upgrades which FLS will undertake, improvements and maintenance to the public road will be managed through the Timber Transport Forum agreements.

## Will you close the West Highland Way (WHW)?

Closure of the footpath can only be granted by the relevant local authority, FLS has discussed the safety of the path with the National Park authority and both parties agree that closure of this path is not an option. FLS is therefore designing and creating solutions to maintain access for WHW users.

Impacts and localised (in wood) diversions for the WHW will be part of continuous discussions with existing local community forums

## Why such a short timeframe for removal?

Ideally a longer approach would be suitable, however there are several factors which justify the shorter proposal.

- Phytophthora Ramorum is getting ever closer to Ptarmigan, over 20% of the conifer is Larch but almost none of it can be accessed for removal at this time should infection arise. (Please see our webpages on Phytophthora Ramorum for more information - [Tree disease in Scotland - Forestry and Land Scotland](#))
- Due to its age, height and exposure to the prevailing wind, the conifer within Ptarmigan is starting to blow over. These pockets of blow are dispersed across the site (see constraints and issues map). If left as is the windblow will increase in size, potentially resulting in it becoming impossible to safely recover. This would have even greater and longer term impacts on the landscape, than felling the trees in a short time frame.

- In order to secure native woodland regeneration, we need to remove the non-native seed source. Taking a longer term approach would allow greater potential for natural seeding of non-native species, in turn more difficult to control the natural regeneration on steep and challenging terrain.
- Working over a longer period would involve the need for more permanent infrastructure for harvesting machinery, meaning greater landscape impacts.

## Is there a risk of landslip?

As has been seen at the Rest and be Thankful & Loch Katrine, slope stability is an issue for this mountainous region with its high rainfall, climate change only exacerbates the issue with more frequent extreme weather events.

FLS has commissioned a geotechnical report and will be factoring in its observations and recommendations to the land management plan and any future forest operations, this will also help to inform FLS of appropriate timescales.

## How many timber lorries will we have to put up with?

It is difficult to be exact, based upon estimated timber volume and assumptions such as percentage of volume recovery, completion within 10 years and hauling timber 5 days a week, the average is less than 2 timber lorries each day. With seasonal restrictions such as weather and visitor numbers or project overrun, that average per day is likely to be different.

As with the WHW, timber haulage and its impacts will be subject of continued communication through the existing local forums.

## What about the landscape impacts?

In the late 1950's none of the coniferous forest existed in Ptarmigan, the land is described by John Mitchell (Loch Lomondside, 2001) as being degraded pastoral woodland and grassland. Impacts on the landscape are unfortunately inevitable. The primary objectives for the timber removal phase of this project are about safety, both to people and the environment. The steep terrain exacerbates the issues of landscape impact. This project should not be viewed as for the benefit of the current generation but for future ones, landscape design is integral to the future of Ptarmigan.

Within 20 years of the start of harvesting operations you will witness a more natural landscape returning, within 40 years you will hardly know it was harvested. On adjoining land the National Trust for Scotland has shown that reduction of browsing can re-establish native habitat, FLS hopes to emulate this success throughout Ptarmigan.