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To whom it may concern,

**Cnoc na h-Eilde New Woodland Creation EIA Screening**

Following the previous round of screening and in tandem with consultation with Scottish Forestry (the Scottish Government agency responsible for forestry policy), Scottish Woodlands are now undertaking a second round of stakeholder engagement, following significant revision of this proposed planting design.

The current draft proposal is for 151ha of native woodland which has removed all the productive conifer elements of the previous proposal. Conifers have been removed and replaced with native species as such at maturity will include areas of native pine forest, native upland oak woodland and native mixed broadleaves. Further details of the proposal are provided overleaf.

The new design is informed by the findings of archaeology, breeding bird and habitat surveys and a visual landscape assessment. These have been undertaken since our previous correspondence in 2021 and are available on request.

A map showing the area under consideration and a site summary is included below. We would ask that you review the attached and raise any other interests or considerations. This feedback will be used to inform our planning process and prepare our request to Scottish Forestry for an EIA Screening Opinion under the Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. If Scottish Forestry find that EIA Consent is not required, an application for Forestry Grant Scheme funding will be submitted and Scottish Forestry will undertake a separate consultation exercise at part of their grant application approval process.

**Site summary**

Cnoc na h-Eilde consists of approximately 295ha of land at Acha-bheinn, situated between Kilmartin Glen and Kilmichael Glen, mid-Argyll (grid reference NR 843 976).

Of this 295ha proposal:

* 142ha – Native mixed broadleaves
* 9ha – Native upland oak
* 0.5ha – Native pine forest
* 96ha – Open ground
* 2ha – Existing broadleaves
* 46ha – Areas of deep peat.

The historically grazed low altitude moorland is characterised by a mosaic of rough grassland, some bracken, species rich rush and sedge flushes and springs. There are lesser tracks of calcareous grassland, limestone ridges and soils associated with springs and blanket mire in basin areas.

Cnoc na h-Eilde is bordered by mature conifer plantation to the southwest in Prince of Wales Wood, recently established mixed/ conifer woodlands to the east in Barmolloch plantation and grazed hill ground to the north.

**Constraints and opportunities**

**Surveys Undertaken to date:**

* Landscape and scenic values to Kilmartin Glen and Kilmicheal Glen
* National Scenic Area – Knapdale
* Recreational access and use
* Archaeology (unscheduled sites)
* Native Woodland Habitat Networks
* Breeding bird habitat (owls, songbirds, raptors, black grouse population within proximity)
* Marsh fritillary butterfly
* Presence of deep peat and other Ground Water Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems
* Land use change
* Timber transport
* Woodland species and site suitability.

**Constraints**

Following the previous round of scoping it has become apparent that due to significant amount of Archaeology within Kilmartin glen, that during any establishment operations having an archaeological watching brief in place will be necessary to enact appropriate measures to stop and mitigate any impact on the on these important historical monuments.

**Opportunities**

The creation of such a woodland, serves to create native woodland habitat corridors, whilst also maintaining and enhancing connected open ground habitats. This will also lessen the monoculture and lack of diversification within the landscape found with commercial conifer forestation.

Whilst an archaeological watching brief in place will serve to minimise the impact of establishment works, there is the potential for discovering new historical monuments within the area and as such will add status and sense of place of the surrounding area.

**Current Stakeholders:**

* Argyll and Bute council
* Scottish Environment and Protection Agency
* Nature Scot
* Historic Environment Scotland
* Scottish Forestry
* Argyll Raptor Study Group
* Kilmartin Museum
* Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
* Argyll Timber Transport Group
* Dunadd Community Council
* Local and adjacent Landowners and Agents.

If you have any additional stakeholders, of whom you think this list has missed, please do not hesitate to inform me on the contact information provided.