

Sharon Phipps

From: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>
Sent: 20 January 2020 16:23
To: BCF
Subject: FW: Biodiversity Challenge Fund - Initial Project Information - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project
Attachments: Biodiversity Challenge Fund-Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project - Concept Note-20-01-20.pdf; Eisg Brachaidh woodland map.pdf
Importance: High

Hi

Please find attached a concept note from the Woodland Trust Scotland, in relation to the application process for the Biodiversity Challenge Fund.

The project detailed is located at the Eisg Brachaidh Estate, seeking to re-establish native woodlands at landscape scale. This is a fantastic site with huge potential, and I hope that you will enjoy reading about our plans and be inspired to invite a full application for this exciting project.

I hope to hear from you soon - please do not hesitate to get in touch on [REDACTED] should you have any questions.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Development Officer - Scotland

Telephone: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk

Woodland Trust, 10 Queensferry Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4PG
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Biodiversity Challenge Fund – Concept Note – Eisd Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Background

The Eisd Brachaidh Estate is located to the south-east of Lochinver in Sutherland, Scottish Highlands. At 2,000ha, it encompasses oligotrophic lochs, rivers and streams amongst low-lying hills, an estuary, extensive coastline and nearshore islands, all shown on the attached map. It was previously part of the Inverpolly National Nature Reserve (1961-2004), and remains an important part of the Inverpolly SSSI and SAC, the Inverpolly, Loch Urigill & Nearby Lochs SPA, the Assynt – Coigach National Scenic Area (NSA) and it is classed as a wild area. The surviving woodland is a Plantlife Important Plant Area in addition to its SAC status, and is a focus area for the Atlantic Woodland Alliance Saving Scotland's Rainforest Project (led by The Woodland Trust and Plantlife).

The Estate is a partner in the National Lottery Heritage Fund funded Coigach and Assynt Living Landscapes Partnership (CALLP) project, one of the biggest landscape and habitat restoration projects in Europe. As such, Eisd Brachaidh has biodiversity conservation as its primary objective. Through habitat restoration at the landscape scale, the aim of the Estate is to re-establish the richness, diversity and connectivity of healthy self-sustaining native species and communities.

Some of the important features on Eisd Brachaidh include western acidic oak woodland, wet heath, dry heaths, blanket bog, upland assemblage and upland birch woodland, otter, black throated diver, red throated diver, breeding heron and fresh water pearl mussel. Effectively reducing and mitigating the devastating effects of excessive grazing and trampling by high deer numbers is by far the most important factor for biodiversity conservation and habitat restoration on Eisd Brachaidh.

Brief proposal

The Eisd Brachaidh Estate has been trying for many years to find a solution to the high deer grazing levels across its land. All other avenues have been exhausted, and it has been concluded that the only way to protect this valuable habitat against further loss is to fence the estate boundary against deer, and reduce the deer numbers within the estate to less than 1 deer per square kilometre.



A treeless landscape scarred by excessive deer grazing

Reducing deer numbers without a boundary fence has been ineffective due to the relatively small size of the estate, the high numbers of deer in the area and the management objectives of surrounding landowners. Fencing the estate will avoid any negative impact on surrounding owner's deer stalking activity. The reduction in deer grazing will allow existing regeneration to occur and boost the woodland tree numbers and age structure making it more resilient into the future.

The excessive levels of damage currently caused by deer grazing is leaving the woodlands in an unfavourable and declining condition. The woodlands come under particularly heavy pressure in winter, when deer from further inland and upland come down into what are regionally highly significant and important woodlands. These are some of the last remnants of ancient woodland in the area, and so need to be protected before they are lost forever.

The key elements of the proposed project will include:

- Removal of old and defunct deer fences remaining from the 1960's
- Repairing and replacing deer fences around the Estate perimeter (over 17km in length)
- Deer control within the fenced area
- Enrichment planting to aid natural regeneration

The deer reduction aspect of the project will be supported by a programme of enrichment planting. This will target existing native woodland remnant areas, and involve planting with species that would naturally have been present but are now only found in very low numbers. These species include aspen, oak, holly, alder, wych elm, bird cherry, scots pine, guelder rose, juniper and willows (grey, goat and eared). Trees will be sourced from seed as close as possible to Eisg Brachaidh and it is hoped to get them from a local tree nursery only 10 miles away. This nursery also grows local understorey species such as primrose, roses and honeysuckle, which the project will also plant out in the existing woodlands to boost the natural understorey.



An area perfectly suited to managed natural regeneration

The solution of fencing the estate's boundary and reducing internal deer numbers will not impact on the existing grazing tenancy that covers most of the estate. Only a small number of cattle are allowed to graze the area under an SNH agreement, and that grazing will have a positive effect on the regenerating areas and will be closely monitored to ensure that the desired results are attained.

This is a highly ambitious and exciting project, which seeks to rewild a large estate in a simple and yet sustainable way. The CALL project and Woodland Trust management plans for the area include long term evaluation and monitoring strategies to assess the deer management and woodland regeneration processes, which will be essential in ensuring that the project is successful and has a lasting legacy. It will also act as an exemplar demonstration project for this approach to landscape-scale woodland and deer management.

Cost breakdown

Work Element	Cost
Deer fencing (based on 17.1km @£17.50 per metre)	£290,700
Cattle grid across public road	£50,000
Enrichment planting & biodiversity measures, plus removal of derelict fencing	£10,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST	£350,700

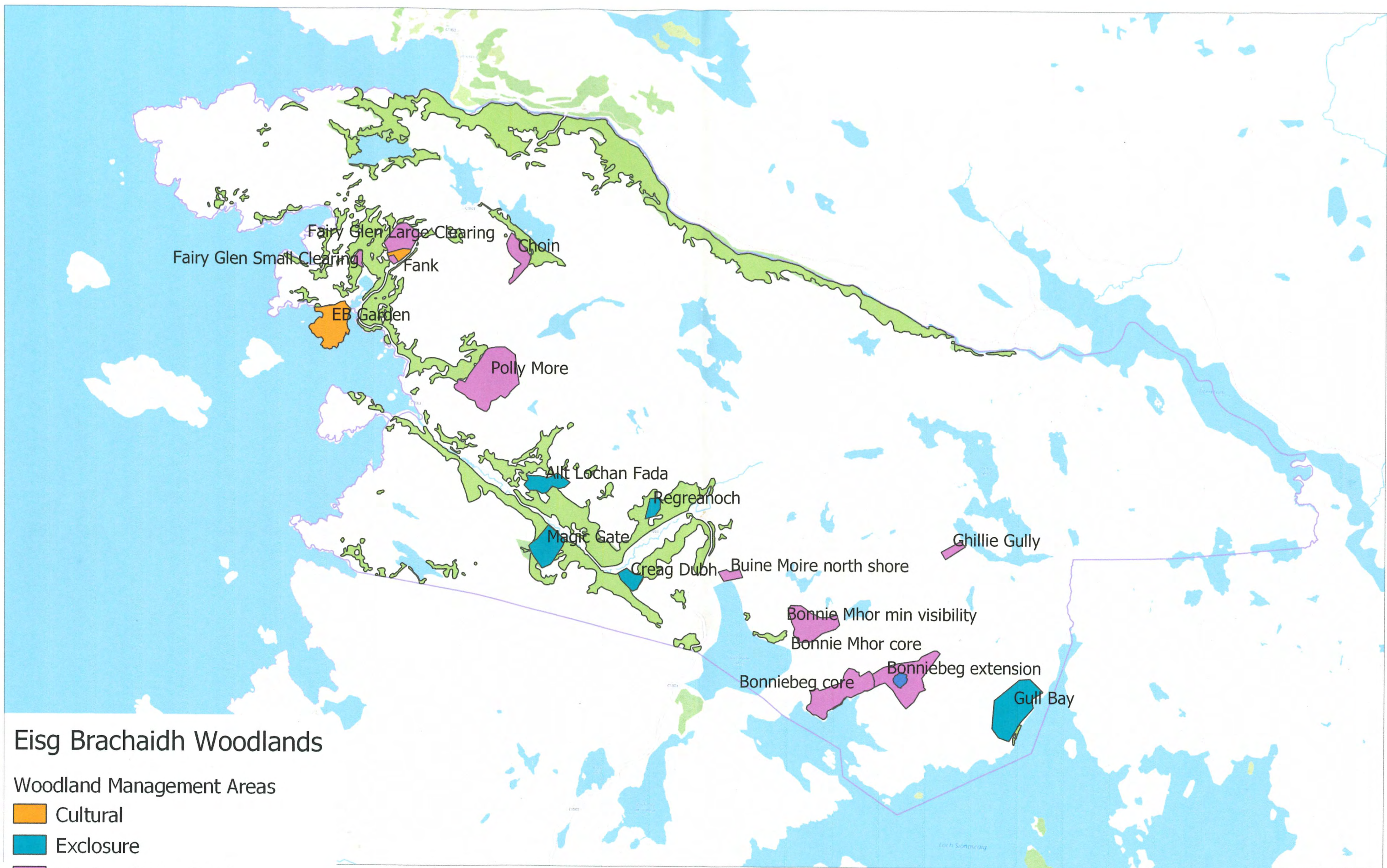
The amount of grant requested from the SNH Biodiversity Challenge Fund is £200,000. The gap of £150,700 will be met by the CALL Project budget and also through in-kind contribution in staff time from the CALL project and Woodland Trust existing teams. This will include responsibility for project management, monitoring and evaluation of the Eisd Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project in partnership with the Eisd Brachaidh Estate.

Timeframe

Fencing Work – June 2020 – February 2021

Deer Control – October 2020 – February 2021

Enrichment Planting – January 2021 – March 2021



Eisd Brachaidh Woodlands

Woodland Management Areas

- Cultural
- Exclosure
- Moribund Woodland
- Water
- Native Woodland
- Estate Boundary

0 500 1000 1500 2000 m



Sharon Phipps

From: Kirsty Hutchison
Sent: 27 January 2020 13:19
To: [REDACTED]; BCF
Cc: BCF
Subject: BCF - Initial Project Information - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Dear [REDACTED]

Eisg Brachaidh Estate BCF Proposal

Following our conversation on Friday regarding this BCF proposal, I would encourage you to submit a full application, to be received by **3 February 2020**.

Guidance contained within the "Information for applicants" and "Priorities for action" documents on the website, will assist with your application: <https://www.nature.scot/funding/biodiversity-challenge-fund-bcf/biodiversity-challenge-fund-how-apply>

Some issues to consider are:

- Highlight the uniqueness of this project and scale of delivery
- As discussed, funding from different sources across Scottish Government should be consistent, to ensure one fund is not more generous than another. For Eisg Brachaidh, as it does not fall within FGS criteria, rates should be consistent with the current agri-environment scheme (AECS) for deer fencing. In AECS, shared boundaries are only paid out at 50% costs, as the neighbouring landowner has responsibility for half these costs. If you feel that this project justifies a significantly higher rate of investment, you will need to provide justification in your application.
- As the deer fencing costs are over £25,000, BCF will require three tendered quotes. I realise you may not get these back in time for the submission deadline, but please request these now.
- Current projected deer fencing costs of £17.50/m are high, compared to the current AECS standard rate of £8.50/m. However, AECS will pay actual costs for work associated with a designated site, where there is justification (e.g. remoteness of the land on which work will be undertaken / lack of local contractors resulting in travel and subsistence for contractors during the works, longer time to access work site, difficult to deliver materials etc.) Please provide a justification for costs in your application.
- With such a large scale project requiring significant investment in capital works, please highlight the public benefits of this investment
- Address any potential landscape/access issues in your application
- Please provide information on internal management of the land once a deer fence is in place. How is the grazing tenant involved and what control will you have over grazing pressure in the future?
- Provide information on the capacity to reduce deer populations and maintain them at a low level within the area. Do you know if there will be effective deer management out-with the project area?
- There is a 10 year compliance commitment for BCF funding, so please address how the site and deer fencing will be maintained long-term. The website has a Landowner permissions template that all landowners will have to sign prior to any funding offer being issued
- BCF projects run from April 2020 – March 2021 and all funds must be spent within that calendar year
- Provide clarification that there are no double funding issue related to the current SNH management agreement on the estate which funds deer management and work funded through CALLP

Please be aware that BCF is a competitive scheme. We look forward to receiving your full application. If you require further information, please contact the [BCF](#) email address and your email will be forwarded to the right person, which may be myself or one of our funding officers.

Regards

Kirsty

Kirsty Hutchison | Agricultural Officer | Natural Resource Management

Scottish Natural Heritage | Greystone Park | 55-57 Moffat Rd | Dumfries | DG1 1NP | t: 01738 45 [REDACTED] CISCO:

[REDACTED]
nature.scot – Connecting People and Nature in Scotland - [@nature_scot](https://twitter.com/nature_scot)

From 1 May 2020, SNH will be rebranding and changing its name to NatureScot.

Sharon Phipps

From: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>
Sent: 03 February 2020 18:57
To: BCF
Subject: FW: Biodiversity Challenge Fund - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh
Attachments: Biodiversity Challenge Fund - Application Form - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh.pdf; Biodiversity Challenge Fund - Project Area Map - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh.pdf; Biodiversity Challenge Fund - Woodland Trust Eisg Brachaidh Project Finance Form.xlsx

Importance: High

Hi

My apologies – I attached the wrong project finance form by mistake. Please find the correct documents attached to this email.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 February 2020 18:50
To: 'BCF'
Subject: Biodiversity Challenge Fund - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh
Importance: High

Hi

Please find attached an application for the Biodiversity Challenge Fund. This relates to Eisg Brachaidh, a nationally important site in the Scottish Highlands which is in decline and requires an innovative approach to landscape management to protect it for the future.

We have tried to address the feedback that we received to our Concept Note within the application. I can also confirm that we have requested three quotations for the work and it is out to tender at the moment.

Please do not hesitate to contact me either by email or on [REDACTED] if you do require any more information or have any further questions. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] or [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk) for any grant-related enquiries or [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk) for any project specific enquiries.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Development Officer - Scotland

Telephone: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk

Woodland Trust, 10 Queensferry Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4PG

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Registered in England No. 1982873.

Registered Office: Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG31 6LL.

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk>

Biodiversity Challenge Fund Application Form

You should read the Information for Applicants and Priorities for Action documents on our website before completing this application. You will need to provide details of your project costs in our Project Finances spreadsheet. A template is on our website.

Your completed application form and project finances spreadsheet must be submitted by midnight **3 February 2020** to BCF@nature.scot

Section A - About you

1. Your details

This should be the person and/or organisation that is applying for the grant and who will manage the project.

Applicant name	[REDACTED]
Name of Organisation (if applicable)	Woodland Trust Scotland
Position in Organisation (if applicable)	Development Officer (Scotland)
Address	South Inch Business Centre Shore Road Perth
Postcode	PH2 8BW
Landline phone number	[REDACTED]
Mobile phone number	[REDACTED] (please use this number)
Email	[REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk
Charity or business number (if applicable)	England and Wales (No. 294344) and Scotland (No. SC038885)
VAT registration number (if applicable)	GB520 6111 04

2. Is your organisation: *(please check box)*

Public Private Voluntary Private Individual

3. Are you applying on behalf of a partnership or as lead partner in a consortium?

Yes No

If yes, please list the other partners who will be involved in delivering and managing the project, summarising their role.

This project will be delivered by The Woodland Trust on behalf of the Coigach & Assynt Living Landscapes Partnership (CALLP) project and the Eisg Brachaidh estate.

4. If you are currently receiving funding from SNH, please give details including the project identification number(s):

SNH Project Identification Number 500573. This funding is for work outwith the proposed project, relating to other projects within the CALLP area. The funding also covers 40% of the CALLP Woodland Manager's salary (so project management costs are not included within this application).

5. We request that you get in touch with us to discuss your application prior to submitting your Application and Project Finances forms. If you have discussed this application with a member of SNH staff, please tell us their name(s):

Kirsty Hutchison and Tamara Lawton (Ullapool office)

Section B - Your project

6. Project title

Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

7. Project summary – please provide a brief summary of your project describing the main activities. The summary may be used to promote your project.

The Eisg Brachaidh Estate is a fantastic 2,000ha site, offering a vast mosaic of habitats including ancient woodlands, heaths, bogs, dramatic coastlines, islands, rivers, lochs and streams. It is an iconic Scottish landscape, supporting some of our most precious native species such as red squirrels, otter, pine marten and black throated divers.

But this unique landscape is at threat of being lost forever. Excessive grazing by deer and a history of routine muirburn (burning of heather, gorse and grass) has led to a continual decline in native woodland cover. Each year, regeneration is browsed to such a high extent that it cannot recover. Yet these are some of the last remnants of ancient woodland in the area, and so need to be protected before they are lost forever. Some species that rely on this precious habitat have already been lost - recently, the continued decline in woodland condition on Eisg Brachaidh has led to the local extinction of the northern most colonies of wood ants in the UK.

After many years of battling high deer numbers and the exploration of other management strategies, an extreme solution is needed to halt the loss of woodlands across the Estate. This pioneering project will see the whole of the Eisg Brachaidh landholding enclosed and protected by a perimeter deer fence over 17km long. Coupled with deer control within the fence and enrichment planting to kick-start the re-establishment of native tree species, the long-term goal will be to protect the Estate from the effects of over-grazing and see it restored to its full potential as a haven for biodiversity – a long term commitment and vision of the estate landowners.

This is an ambitious landscape scale project, which has the potential to be an exemplar demonstration project in the management of habitats and provide an important research resource to observe the recovery of a degraded landscape following removal of deer grazing pressure.

8. Please describe your project summarising what you are going to do and what outcomes you hope to achieve, with specific reference to the Targeted action – habitats, Targeted action – marine and terrestrial species and/or Targeted action – INNS, as outlined in the ‘Priorities for Action’ guidance. We will ask you about specific activities in Q22.

Project Background

The Eisg Brachaidh Estate is located to the south-east of Lochinver in Wester Ross, Scottish Highlands. At 2,000ha, it encompasses oligotrophic lochs, rivers and streams amongst low-lying hills, an estuary, extensive coastline and nearshore islands, all shown on the attached map. It was previously part of the Inverpolly National Nature Reserve (1961-2004), and remains an important part of the Inverpolly SSSI and SAC, the Inverpolly, Loch Urigill & Nearby Lochs SPA, the Assynt – Coigach National Scenic Area (NSA) and it is classed as a wild area. The surviving woodland is a Plantlife Important Plant Area in addition to its SAC status, and is a focus area for the Atlantic Woodland Alliance Saving Scotland’s Rainforest Project (led by The Woodland Trust and Plantlife).

The Estate is a founding partner in the National Lottery Heritage Fund funded Coigach and Assynt Living Landscapes Partnership (CALLP) project, one of the biggest landscape and habitat restoration projects in Europe. As such, Eisg Brachaidh has biodiversity conservation as its primary objective. Through habitat restoration at the land-scape scale, the aim of the Estate is to re-establish the richness, diversity and connectivity of healthy self-sustaining native species and communities.

Some of the important designated features on Eisg Brachaidh include western acidic oak woodland, wet heath, dry heaths, blanket bog, upland assemblage and upland birch woodland, otter, black throated diver, red throated diver, breeding heron and fresh water pearl mussel (several of which are BAP listed species). Effectively reducing and mitigating the devastating effects of excessive grazing and trampling by high deer numbers is by far the most important factor for biodiversity conservation and habitat restoration on Eisg Brachaidh.

Project Proposal

The Eisd Brachaidh Estate has been trying for many years to find a solution to the high deer grazing levels across its land. All other avenues have been exhausted, and it has been concluded that the best and only practical way to protect this valuable habitat against further loss is to fence the estate boundary against deer, and reduce the deer numbers within the estate to less than 1 deer per square kilometre.



A treeless landscape scarred by excessive deer grazing

Reducing deer numbers without a boundary fence has been ineffective due to the relatively small size of the estate, the high numbers of deer in the area and the management objectives of surrounding landowners. Fencing the estate will avoid any negative impact on surrounding owner's deer stalking activity. The reduction in deer grazing will allow existing regeneration to grow and boost the woodland tree numbers and age structure making it more resilient into the future.

The excessive levels of damage currently caused by deer grazing and historic muirburn has left the woodlands in an unfavourable and declining condition. The woodlands come under particularly heavy pressure in winter, when deer from further inland and upland come down into what are regionally highly significant and important woodlands. These are some of the last remnants of ancient woodland in the area, and so need to be protected before they are lost forever.

The project promotes a new way of working in conservation. Rather than using the more traditional method of exclosures which can have negative consequences as they create unnatural boundaries, it will allow natural woodland linkage to develop (supported by strategic planting), to allow development of natural woodland features and formation of habitat mosaics.. Managing woodlands without fences for woodland protection, enhancement and expansion in the presence of very low deer numbers could prove to be an effective alternative option for landscape biodiversity management.

The key elements of the proposed project will include:

- Removal of old and defunct deer fences remaining from the 1960's – when the area was part of the Inverpolly National Nature Reserve.
- Repairing and replacing deer fences around the Estate's landward perimeter (over 17km in length)
- Compensatory deer cull and then ongoing deer control within the fenced area
- Enrichment planting to complement natural regeneration.

The long-term maintenance of this project work will be funded in the first year through this grant application and CALLP, and then through an ongoing programme of maintenance, deer management and enrichment planting funded through the CALLP legacy programme and the Woodland Trust's 'Lost Woods' National Lottery Heritage Fund project (currently under consideration with decision due March 2020).

The deer reduction aspect of the project will be supported by a programme of enrichment planting. This will target existing native woodland remnant areas, and involve planting with species that would naturally have been present but are now only found in very low numbers. These species include aspen, oak, holly, alder, wych elm, bird cherry, scots pine, guelder rose, juniper and willows (grey, goat and eared). Trees will be sourced from seed as close as possible to Eisg Brachaidh and it is hoped to get them from a local tree nursery only 10 miles away. This nursery also grows local understorey species such as primrose, roses and honeysuckle, which the project will also plant out in the existing woodlands to boost the natural understorey.



An area perfectly suited to managed natural regeneration

The solution of fencing the estate's boundary and reducing internal deer numbers will not impact on the existing grazing tenancy that covers most of the estate. Only a small number of cattle are allowed to graze the area under an SNH agreement, and that grazing will have a positive effect on the regenerating areas and will be closely monitored to ensure that the desired results are attained. The grazing is an 'operation requiring consent' under the SSSI regulations and is therefore guided and monitored by SNH.

This is a highly ambitious and exciting project, which seeks to re-wild a large estate in a simple and yet sustainable way. The CALLP project and Woodland Trust management plans for the area include long term evaluation and monitoring strategies to assess the deer management and woodland regeneration processes, which will be essential in ensuring that the project is successful and has a lasting legacy. It will also act as an exemplar demonstration project for this approach to landscape-scale woodland and deer management.

The CALLP project has a commitment to maintain its projects until Sept 2031. The Woodland Trust has taken on this obligation for projects that include woodland elements, although it is expected that the existing (but heavily grazed) regeneration will respond quickly to the substantial reduction of deer grazing. It is understood that this will need to be an ongoing commitment in the Woodland Trust management strategy for the site, with regular fence checking and walking the ground to ensure deer have not regained access to the ground, and through regular monitoring to ensure that the woodland is recovering and that wet and dry heaths remain healthy.

This project area will see an immediate response to the removal of high winter grazing pressure, coupled with the enrichment planting. Changes in the vegetation are anticipated within the first year or two, but this is a long term proposal which could not go ahead without investment from the Biodiversity Challenge Fund. Within 5-10 years, the changes are expected to be significant, presenting an opportunity to use the area as a demonstration of what is possible - a halfway solution between enclosures and large scale deer control which can only work when there is a large enough land area (e.g. tens of thousands of hectares) being managed appropriately. This proposal will allow woodland to develop naturally without false lines created by fences between habitat networks – aided by strategically and appropriately placed additional planting mainly with enrichment species.

This is an ambitious landscape scale project, which has the potential to be an exemplar demonstration project in the management of habitats, thereby upholding the IPBES direct drivers of biodiversity loss and the Scottish Government woodland targets of bringing 95% of SSSI's into improving condition. The combination of woodland regeneration expected and enrichment planting will also contribute to the Scottish Governments Woodland expansion target. It will create a 2,000 ha area where supported natural processes will be allowed to restore this degraded SSSI to its full potential. This feeds in directly to the Habitat and Management Priority Areas for Action, as it will support management to favour diversity of species and habitat structure at a landscape level in the uplands. In addition, it will provide the opportunity to measure the impact that deer grazing has had on biodiversity across the Eisg Brachaidh estate and the way in which it improves once this pressure is removed. It can also act as a learning resource for neighbouring estates and other areas with regionally important woodland remnants.

Most of the deer fencing will be completed by November 2020, leaving the eastern end open to allow the deer which usually winter on EB land to come down into the estate, by mid-march 2021 the eastern end will be closed.

9. Project Start Date

June 2020

Estimated Completion date:

March 2021

Note: All projects and their activities must be completed and claimed by **31 March 2021**.

10. If you contacted us before submitting your application, how have you addressed any feedback points we provided?

An initial project concept note was submitted to SNH on the 20th January 2020.

Feedback was received by email, and the points raised have been addressed at the appropriate points within the application form text.

The issue of fencing costs was raised in the feedback. A previous proposal was developed to try to address the deer grazing issues at Eisg Brachaidh, which included a number of exclosures throughout the estate and was aimed solely at protecting 69% of the woodland habitats. The current project is a more cost and resource effective option, as it will require less fencing and will protect 100% of the designated habitats within the Estate. As such, it seems justified that it should be eligible for actual costs. However, due to the structure of the ownership/tenancy at Eisg Braichaidh, the owner does not have a Business Reference Number BRN –(the main mechanism to allow an application to be made and a contract issued) that would allow the Estate to apply for this work directly through FGS and Scottish Forestry.

The location, geology and geography of the site add complexity to this project. The Estate is located a 2 hour drive north of Inverness, which is the nearest source of fencing materials. It is likely that any professional fencing labour will have at least 1.5 hour journey just to get to the site. The ruggedness of the terrain, with sheets of lewisian gneiss (hardest rock to be found in the highlands), means that steel posts are required regularly to ensure the integrity of the fence. These factors affect the cost of the fencing, making it is very expensive relative to other more accessible areas of Scotland.

11. Please describe the work your project will undertake to help address climate change and/or its impacts through nature-based solutions.

Trees are the ultimate carbon capture and storage machines. Like great carbon sinks, woods and forests absorb atmospheric carbon and lock it up for centuries. The entire woodland ecosystem plays a huge role in locking up carbon, including the living wood, roots, leaves, deadwood, surrounding soils and its associated vegetation. A young wood with mixed native species can lock up over 400 tonnes of carbon per hectare, making our native woodlands a critical defence in our fight to manage the effects of climate change.

Native trees, with a local and diverse set of genes, are likely to be more resilient to climate change, with lower pests and disease risks than non-native species. They are better adapted to thrive in local soils and climate. Through promoting natural regeneration of native species, our woodlands will be better equipped to cope with the pressures that climate change will bring.

12. Please describe how any of your project work will address diffuse pollution pressures if this is applicable.

N/A

13. Please select which Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity (IPBES) drivers of biodiversity loss, as set out in the 'Priorities for Action' guidance, will be addressed by your project: *(check all that apply)*

- Land and sea-use change
- Direct exploitation of organisms
- Climate change and its impacts
- Pollution
- Invasive non-native species

14. Please select what areas for action, as set out in the 'Priorities for Action' guidance, will be addressed by your project: *(check all that apply)*

Priorities for Action:

- Habitat management and connectivity
- Hydrological change
- Urbanisation
- INNS
- Marine

Targeted action for:

- Habitats
- Marine and Terrestrial species
- INNS

15. Please confirm the location(s) of your project where actions will be delivered, including local authority areas. You should also tell us about the current condition of the project location(s) for example baseline surveys.

The project will take place at the Eisg Brachaidh Estate, grid reference NC 095175. The site is remote, with the closest centre of population being Lochinver. It sits within the Ross and Cromarty (Highland) Local Authority area.

Due to the designation of the site as a SSSI, SAC and SPA, a number of baseline surveys have been carried out at Eisg Brachaidh. These include a full report on the SAC area, seedling surveys and Herbivore Impact Assessments.

In 2009 a survey was carried out of the SAC area to assess the potential for woodland expansion. It also identified special dry heaths that shouldn't be planted.

All of the surveys carried out provide good baseline data to devise a comprehensive monitoring plan going forward so that all the benefits of this project are captured for future learning potential.

16. If any of the project activities in your BCF application would have been eligible for AECS funding, please demonstrate how these activities comply with AECS eligibility and option requirements. These requirements can be found on the [AECS web page](#).

This project is not eligible for AECS

17. Do you own the land where your project will take place?

Yes No

18. Do you have permission from the landowner(s) to carry out the project?

Yes No

Note: Should your application be successful, the landowner(s) will be required to confirm agreement to the proposed actions and agreement of the Terms and Conditions that will include a 10 year maintenance and compliance period. A template will be provided.

19. Please tell us how many landowners will be involved in your project, your relationship with them and their involvement in the development of your project so far.

The Eisd Brachaidh Estate is privately owned, and biodiversity conservation has been central to the mission of the Estate since the current owners purchased it in the 1960's. The landowner is committed to nature conservation and to the restoration of the Estate, demonstrated by them being a founding partner within the CALLP Partnership.

. They have a history of pioneering innovative conservation solutions and, in the 1960's, actively sought to secure the first National Nature Reserve on private land across the Eisd Brachaidh estate and neighbouring landholdings.

The Woodland Trust and the CALLP project has an open and strong relationship with the Eisd Brachaidh estate, and have been working together to try to find a way to achieve landscape-scale restoration across this site. The current project has the full support of the landowner, who has been directly involved in the development of this application.

20. Is there any ongoing grazing on the area within which your project will be delivered?

Yes

No

If yes, please tell us as much as you can about the grazing and its impacts.

For example, if it's deer, do you know the deer density, has there been a recent deer count, is there a Deer Management Agreement or Deer Management Group you are aware of? If livestock, what are the livestock numbers, density and usage? Are the impacts positive or negative?

A tenant farmer currently has permission to graze cattle across the estate. It is a very low intensity grazing regime, with 30 cattle being present across the 2000ha landholding. It is controlled via an Operations Requiring Consent agreement within SSSI regulations, and is regularly assessed by SNH.

Deer are also present and graze across the Eisg Brachaidh Estate. Deer densities in the summer months are about 5 deer per km². However, this number increases in winter months to around 15 deer/km². During the summer months, the deer tend to move further inland but large numbers come down to the site in the winter. This leads to overgrazing of the vegetation and decimation of the new growth, including native tree regeneration. These high levels of deer mean that winter grazing is the most harmful to the site. The Eisg Brachaidh Estate is included within the southern area of the West Sutherland Deer Management Group (<http://wsutherlanddmg.deer-management.co.uk/>). It is also part of a Section 7 Deer agreement due to the impact of deer browsing on the designated site.

21. Why is your project needed and what evidence do you have to support this?

Please refer to the targeted action for habitats and/or marine and terrestrial species and/or INNS contained within the 'Priorities for Action' guidance.

This project is essential to halt and reverse the damage being caused by overgrazing across this nationally protected landscape. As a SSSI and SAR, it contains rare and important habitats that are recognised as being of huge conservation significance.

This project proposal focuses on the restoration of the degraded landscape across the Eisg Brachaidh Estate. It directly supports the aspiration of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) direct drivers of biodiversity loss.

It is aligned with the following Areas for Action and Targeted Actions:

- Habitat management and connectivity – the project will enhance and expand the ancient and native woodland and other habitats at Eisg Brachaidh. By promoting whole site management with the protection of an outer fence but with no inner fencing or boundaries, this work will promote diversity of species and habitat structure at a landscape scale across the estate. The project meets all of the targeted actions for habitats, namely re-establishment of habitats, increased connectivity, improvement of habitat for nature, and addressing previous physical modifications (i.e. over grazing by deer).

This project is important both locally and nationally, and will demonstrate a different approach to landscape management for conservation. Learning from this pioneering project could help to inform similar projects and influence future estate management strategies.

Section C - Your project activities

Please provide details on the activities that will be undertaken to implement your project. If your application is successful, we will base any Funding Offer to you on these activities, and assess claims for payment on progress towards them. Please take a realistic approach.

All activities that you are seeking funding for should be included in the table. We are content to receive additional information in separate document(s), particularly in relation to the wider context, rationale for project activities and maps, but will not accept applications with only 'See attached'.

Please complete the table below using the following guidance:

Project Activity - Describe the activities you will undertake with reference to the priority habitats and/or species outlined in the 'Priorities for Action' guidance. Be as specific as possible on the habitat or species being targeted and what will happen on the ground.

Location/site(s) - Tell us where each of your activities will take place. Include any designations and provide a grid square reference. You should include a map with your application (at a scale of 1:10,000 minimum) clearly showing where each of the activities will take place. We also welcome photographs that may help us to assess the proposed locations.

Outputs - specify what will be evident on the ground, or what changes will have taken place, as a result of these activities, quantifying where it is possible to do so. This must include areas of habitat that will be impacted/benefit (hectares/metres).

Who will implement - specify if it will be applicant organisation staff, another partner (if applying as a partnership/consortium) or a consultant/contractor who will be responsible for delivering specific activities.

Expected timescale – the timescale between April 2020 and March 2021 when your activities will be delivered. All projects and their activities must be completed and claimed by **31 March 2021**.

22. Project Activities and Outputs (*add additional lines if required*). In Q24 you will be asked how you will monitor, evaluate and measure success of these activities and outputs.

	Project Activity	Location/site(s)	Outputs	Who will implement	Expected Timescale
A	Removal of old and defunct deer fences remaining from the small deer exclosures established in the 1960's	Eisg Brachaidh Estate (Grid Ref:)	Old fences removed to enable free access around the estate for people and mammals and stock	Contractor	June 2020-February 2021
B	Repair and replacement of deer fences around the Estate perimeter (over 17km in length)	Eisg Brachaidh Estate (Grid Ref:)	New fence erected to protect the estate from deer grazing pressures	Contractor	June 2020-February 2021
C	Deer control within the fenced area	Eisg Brachaidh Estate (Grid Ref:)	All deer within fence removed down to a level of 1 deer per sq km	Contractors and Estate Keeper	October 2020-February 2021
D	Enrichment planting to aid natural regeneration	Eisg Brachaidh Estate (Grid Ref:)	Native species planted to kick-start natural regeneration process	CALLP project staff	January 2021-March 2021

23. Are any of the activities proposed above included in any development plans, implementation plans or action plans that you, or any of your project partners, are involved in?

For example, any activities proposed to take place within the boundaries of our National Parks must comply with the respective Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017 – 2022 or Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Partnership Plan 2018 - 2023.

Yes

No

If yes, please provide details.

This work will play a core part in the Atlantic Woodland Alliance strategy for the West Coast of Scotland, and also sits within the Woodland Trust planned long-term work to restore this degraded landscape.

It also forms part of the Highland and Islands woodland strategy expansion area, and management plans exist for the SAC and SSSI areas included on the Estate. This proposal therefore strengthens, and will be included in the conservation plans, for these designated areas.

24. How do you plan to monitor and evaluate your activities and the success of your project? Please include specific measures relating to your project activities detailed at Q22 and measures appropriate to the habitat and/or species you are targeting, for example, quantification of habitat improvements (area, length, number).

A full monitoring plan will be developed for the site. This will include regular Herbivore Impact Assessments across all habitats. Permanent monitoring plots will be set up to measure the change in density and species of tree seedlings per hectare and to continue to monitor herbivore impacts. Regular fenceline checks will be carried out to ensure the integrity of the fence is not compromised, and repairs undertaken where necessary. It is also planned to use fixed point photography to capture the changes in habitat vegetation.

As part of the wider CALLP commitment, the project will be managed up to and including September 2031 through the long term agreement made with National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of the conditions of their funding for other work in the area. Budget, outside of this application, will be made available for this.

Section D – Project Costs

We need to know the following costs, broken down by SNH financial year (1 April – 31 March):

- The **total cash cost** of your project – all cash items required to deliver the project activities
- The amount of **cash** you are requesting **from SNH**
- The amount of **cash** contributions **you or other funders** are providing
- The amount of **in-kind** contributions **you or other contributors** are providing

You will need to provide details of your project costs with your application. A **Project Finances** (Excel spreadsheet) template is provided on the Biodiversity Challenge Fund web page.

25. Are you registered for VAT?

- Yes No

26. Are you able to reclaim VAT from HM Revenue and Customs?

- Yes No

*If you are **not** able to reclaim VAT from HM Revenue and Customs, you should include **'Irrecoverable VAT'** relating to project costs as a separate line in the cash cost table in the Project Finances spreadsheet.*

27. If you are applying for Full Cost Recovery, please explain what elements are included in the value you have requested and how it was calculated.

N/A

Section E – Project Management

28. How will the project be managed?

You should tell us:

- How you, or the partnership/consortium, will manage the project on a day-to-day basis
- What governance arrangements are in place
- How you will monitor the project finances
- How you will monitor and report on project progress

The Woodland Trust is a well-run and efficient organisation with a strict project approval process. The work involved in this project has been approved.

██████████, the CALLP Woodland Manager, will lead the project during the delivery phase. ██████████ ██████████, and has worked with the landowner to develop this application. ██████████ has solid understanding of the habitats present and the challenges facing the Estate and the surrounding area in terms of restoration. ██████████ has extensive experience in rural resource management and forestry.

The project has a dedicated Funded Projects Officer from the Woodland Trust Finance Team who has been involved in the development of this application. If funding is awarded, the Funded Projects Officer will be responsible for monitoring the project finances, and monitoring and reporting on progress throughout the lifetime of the project. They will also process claims and grant drawdown, in accordance with the BCF requirements.

The project will be developed in full liaison with the landowner of the Estate. After completion, the monitoring, evaluation and long-term maintenance of the project work will be carried out by the landowner and the Woodland Trust.

29. What are the risks associated with your project, both management and delivery?
Please detail what steps you will take to prevent a risk and how it will be managed.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation	Risk Manager
Inability to secure funding for proposed work	Medium	High	Project will not go ahead	WT Team
Lack of contractor availability to undertake work	Low	High	Tender early and engage contractor	WT Team
Deer fence integrity - deer getting through fence	Medium	Medium	Bi-monthly fence checks for first two years, then quarterly checks	WT Team
Deer accessing side on seaward site of the Estate	Medium	Medium	Sections of fence where fenced into a cliff or sea to be checked monthly	WT Team
On-going management and monitoring beyond CALLP project	Low	High	Project Manager will leave Sept 2021 but Woodland Trust will take on the management of the legacy 10 year period	WT Team

30. How will you maintain the project beyond the timeframe of the BCF? Please outline the main elements that will require future maintenance, who will be responsible and how it will be funded.

As part of the wider CALLP project programme, the work planned at Eisd Brachaidh will be included in a budgeted legacy and maintenance plan which is being drawn up as part of the requirements for National Heritage Lottery Fund funding (September 2021 – September 2031). This will ensure that a robust strategy for long-term maintenance and monitoring will be established and in place for the project.

The main maintenance liability for the project will be the deer fence, which will be inspected regularly and maintained as required. The landowner of the Estate is firmly committed to this success of this landscape-scale restoration demonstration project and is aware of this obligation and the importance of having an established maintenance regime for this asset.

31. If successful, payments will be made quarterly or 6-monthly in arrears on receipt of a satisfactory progress and claim report, with the final payment subject to receipt of a satisfactory end of project evaluation report. Please indicate if you would prefer to claim quarterly or 6-monthly.

We would prefer to make quarterly claims.

Section F – Declaration

- I am the Applicant and I am applying for a grant under the terms of the Natural Heritage (Scotland) Act 1991. I have the appropriate authority to submit this application.
- I confirm that the information I have given in this application is correct, to the best of my knowledge.
- I have read and accept SNH Standard Terms and Conditions of Funding. (You will find our Standard Conditions of Funding on our website.)

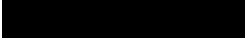
SNH will collect and hold your contact details. You should read our [Funding Privacy Notice](#)

Applicant signature

We prefer to receive an electronic copy of your application. You can either:

- insert a scanned copy of your hand-written signature, or
- insert your name and submit the application from an email address that is identifiable as you/your organisation.

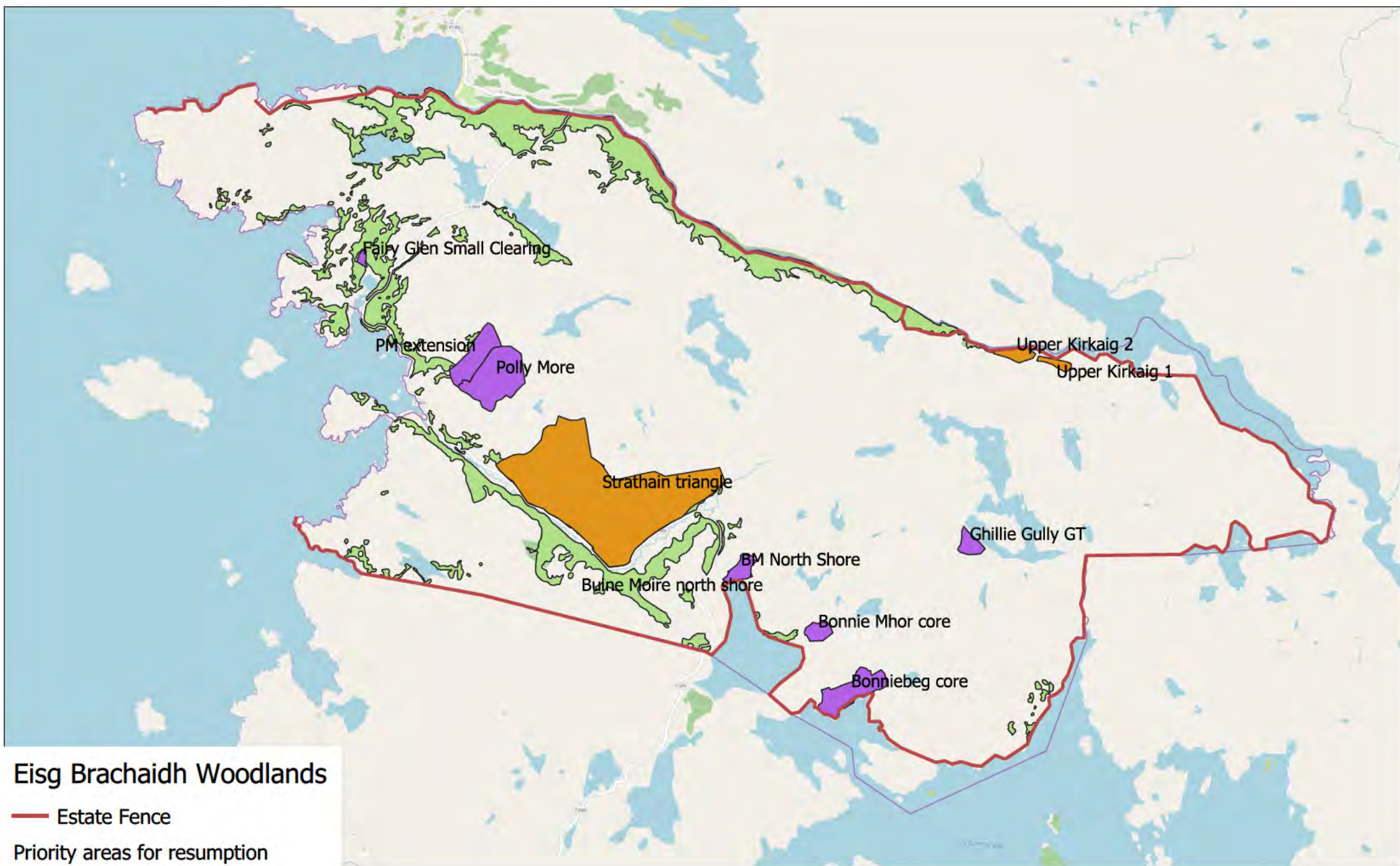
Your signature:

 – Development Officer (Woodland Trust Scotland)

Date:

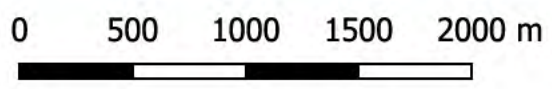
3rd February 2020

Please email your completed application form, project finances spreadsheet and any supporting documents to BCF@nature.scot by midnight **3 February 2020**.



Eisg Brachaidh Woodlands

- Estate Fence
- Priority areas for resumption**
- Moribund Woodland
- Optional Extra
- Native Woodland
- Estate Boundary



Biodiversity Challenge Fund - Project Finances

**Applications must be in the region of £100k to £200k, with projects starting from 1 April 2020.
All projects and their activities must be completed and claimed by 31 March 2021.**

Complete the yellow cells for each of the Project Costs you are requesting funding from us, and for the Match Funding and In-kind Contributions.

If you need extra rows in any tables, highlight the bottom yellow row and then right-click and select 'Insert' to add row above.

Please do not alter the grey boxes.

Name of Organisation:	Woodland Trust
Project Title:	Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Table 1. What are the **cash costs** of your project and how much cash are you requesting from SNH?

Project Cost Description' should describe the item that will incur a cost, not describe an activity to be delivered. Add additional lines as required. If you are applying for full cost recovery on any staffing resource, this should be shown on the separate line indicated.

Project Cost Description	Total Cash Cost April 2020 to March 2021	Total SNH Request April 2020 to March 2021
Deer fencing (based on 17.1km @£17.50 per metre)	242,250.00	116,666.67
Cattle grid across public road	25,000.00	25,000.00
Enrichment planting & biodiversity measures, plus removal of derelict fencing	8,333.33	8,333.33
Deer control	16,666.67	16,666.67

Table 3. Please show all sources of **in-kind contributions** to your project in the table below and whether they are confirmed for the duration of the project. If in-kind contributions are not yet confirmed then please tell us when you expect to hear a decision on the funding.

Description of in-kind contribution	Total In Kind Contribution Value April 2020 to March 2021	Confirmed Y/N (if no, add date)
TOTAL	0.00	

CASH COSTS SUMMARY	Amount (£)
Amount of cash you are requesting from SNH	£200,000.00
Amount of cash contributions from you or other funders	£150,700.00
Total cash cost of your project	£350,700.00

Please check that the sum of the total cash cost in Table 1 matches the total cash cost of your project calculated above.

Amount of in kind contributions from you or other funders	£0.00
Total Project Cost	£350,700.00

Sharon Phipps

From: BCF
Sent: 03 February 2020 19:17
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Project ID: 501341 - Biodiversity Challenge Fund - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh - Acknowledgement

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your application to the Biodiversity Challenge Fund (BCF). A member of SNH staff may be in touch with you for further information during the assessment period. We currently expect to give you a decision on your application in the week beginning 16 March 2020 but this may be later depending on the level of demand.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | **Funding Co-ordinator (Funding Team)**

Scottish Natural Heritage | Battleby | Redgorton | Perth | PH1 3EW | t: 01738 [REDACTED]

Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba | Battleby | Ràth a' Ghoirtein | Peairt | PH1 3EW

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From 1 May 2020, SNH will be rebranding and changing its name to NatureScot

From: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>
Sent: 03 February 2020 18:57
To: BCF <BCF@nature.scot>
Subject: FW: Biodiversity Challenge Fund - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh
Importance: High

Hi

My apologies – I attached the wrong project finance form by mistake. Please find the correct documents attached to this email.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 February 2020 18:50
To: 'BCF'
Subject: Biodiversity Challenge Fund - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh
Importance: High

Hi

Please find attached an application for the Biodiversity Challenge Fund. This relates to Eisg Brachaidh, a nationally important site in the Scottish Highlands which is in decline and requires an innovative approach to landscape management to protect it for the future.

We have tried to address the feedback that we received to our Concept Note within the application. I can also confirm that we have requested three quotations for the work and it is out to tender at the moment.

Please do not hesitate to contact me either by email or on [redacted] if you do require any more information or have any further questions. [redacted] or [redacted] ([@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:[redacted]@woodlandtrust.org.uk)) for any grant-related enquiries [redacted] or [redacted] ([@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:[redacted]@woodlandtrust.org.uk)) for any project specific enquiries.

Many thanks

[redacted]

[redacted]
Development Officer - Scotland

Telephone: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]@woodlandtrust.org.uk

Woodland Trust, 10 Queensferry Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4PG
01738 635 544
www.woodlandtrust.org.uk



WOODLAND
TRUST SCOTLAND

Stand up for trees

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A non-profit making company limited by guarantee.

Registered in England No. 1982873.

Registered Office: Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG31 6LL.

Sharon Phipps

From: Jimmy Hyslop
Sent: 07 February 2020 16:57
To: Meryl Carr
Subject: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project
Attachments: 501341 - APPLICATION - Woodland Trust Scotland - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project - Application Form.obr; 501341 - APPLICATION - Woodland Trust Scotland - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project - Project Area Map - Eisg Brachaidh.obr

Hi Meryl,

I have just received the attached application to the second round of the Biodiversity Challenge Fund. If you have any comments from the Area's perspective by close of play on 28 February at the latest, I would be delighted to include them in the assessment.

Many thanks,

Jimmy

Jimmy Hyslop | Funding Officer

Scottish Natural Heritage | Caspian House | Mariner Court | Clydebank Business Park | Clydebank | G81 2NR | t:0131 314 [REDACTED]
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba | Taigh Caspian | Cùirt a' Mharaiche | Bruach Chluaidh | G81 2NR
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Sharon Phipps

From: Meryl Carr
Sent: 12 February 2020 10:13
To: Jimmy Hyslop
Subject: RE: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Hi Jimmy

I have forwarded this to Tamara as she leads on Eisg Brachaidh and has been involved with this for some time.

Meryl Carr
Protected Places Team
Ullapool

Scottish Natural Heritage | 17 Pulteney Street | Ullapool | IV3 8NW | t: (reception) 01463 701600 (Direct Dial) 01463

██████████ m: ██████████ E-mail: meryl.carr@nature.scot

Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba Ullapul | 17 Sràid Pulteney | Ullapul | Siorrachd Rois | IV26 2UP

nature.scot – Connecting People and Nature in Scotland – [@nature_scot](https://twitter.com/nature_scot)

From 1 May 2020, SNH will be rebranding and changing its name to NatureScot.

From: Jimmy Hyslop <Jimmy.Hyslop@nature.scot>
Sent: 07 February 2020 16:57
To: Meryl Carr <Meryl.Carr@nature.scot>
Subject: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Hi Meryl,

I have just received the attached application to the second round of the Biodiversity Challenge Fund. If you have any comments from the Area's perspective by close of play on 28 February at the latest, I would be delighted to include them in the assessment.

Many thanks,

Jimmy

Jimmy Hyslop | Funding Officer

Scottish Natural Heritage | Caspian House | Mariner Court | Clydebank Business Park | Clydebank | G81 2NR | t:0131 314 ██████████

Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba | Taigh Caspian | Cùirt a' Mharaiche | Bruach Chluaidh | G81 2NR

nature.scot – Connecting People and Nature in Scotland – [@nature_scot](https://twitter.com/nature_scot)

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Legend

Carbon and Peatland 2016

- Non-soil
- Unknown soil
- Mineral soil
- Class 1
- Class 2
- Class 3
- Class 4
- Class 5



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0 0.3 0.6km

Map centre: 208743.20, 917120.30

geo.View 4.5.5 - Feb 18, 2020 09:21

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Scottish Natural Heritage
 Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba
nature.scot

Legend

Carbon and Peatland 2016

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0 0.3 0.6km

Map centre: 208743.20, 917120.30
geo.View 4.5.5 - Feb 18, 2020 09:21

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Scottish Natural Heritage
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba
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Sharon Phipps

From: Jimmy Hyslop
Sent: 18 February 2020 11:06
To: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk
Subject: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project
Attachments: 501341 - Assessment - Eisg Brachaidh carbon and peatland map.jpeg

Hi [REDACTED]

I am assessing your recent application to the Biodiversity Challenge Fund and have a few questions.

Peatland areas

Has a peat depth survey been undertaken across the proposed enclosure area? The proposed works will significantly impact on a substantial area of peat soil, see attached map and <https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/thematic-maps/carbon-and-peatland-2016-map/> for explanation. The map shows the areas of peat referred to in Table 1 in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) – carbon-rich soil, deep peat and priority peatland habitat. On the map, the top two classes (1 and 2), taken together, identify the nationally important resource.

SRDP: Forestry Grant Scheme

Is anyone registered for SRDP and claiming for activities on this land? (WT is not eligible for SRDP on this site as it is neither the landowner nor a tenant. I do not fully understand “due to the structure of the ownership/tenancy at Eisg Braichaidh, the owner does not have a Business Reference Number BRN”.)

The activities seem to be tailor-made for the FGS option for New Natural Regeneration Establishment <https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/forestry-grant-scheme-capital-items/new-natural-regeneration-establishment/>

Boundary

Where does the proposed deer fence line mark the boundary of the estate?

Enrichment planting & biodiversity measures, plus removal of derelict fencing

You should include a map with your application (at a scale of 1:10,000 minimum) clearly showing where each of the activities will take place.

In Q22, no grid references have been provided for the following:

- How much enrichment planting, of what, where and what cost?
- What other biodiversity measures are proposed, where and what cost?
- To what extent is the fencing removal a key part of the biodiversity efforts, where is the fencing, how much of it is there and what is the cost of removal?

You should include a map with your application (at a scale of 1:10,000 minimum) clearly showing where each of the activities will take place.

If you have any question, please do not hesitate to give me a bell,

Jimmy

Jimmy Hyslop | Funding Officer

Scottish Natural Heritage | Caspian House | Mariner Court | Clydebank Business Park | Clydebank | G81 2NR | t:0131 314 [REDACTED]
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba | Taigh Caspian | Cùirt a' Mharaiche | Bruach Chluaidh | G81 2NR
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Sharon Phipps

From: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>
Sent: 19 February 2020 12:23
To: Jimmy Hyslop
Subject: RE: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Thanks Jimmy. I will aim to get the information to you by mid-week, to give you time to finalise your assessment.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

From: Jimmy Hyslop [mailto:Jimmy.Hyslop@nature.scot]
Sent: 19 February 2020 12:20
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Thanks [REDACTED]
Please note that my assessment needs to be completed by Monday 2nd March, for consideration by the Panel.

I have found the boundary line on the original map.

Jimmy

From: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>
Sent: 19 February 2020 11:39
To: Jimmy Hyslop <Jimmy.Hyslop@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Hi Jimmy

Many thanks for getting in touch. I will work through the queries and aim to get a full reply to you as soon as possible (by the end of next week at the latest).

I hope that this is acceptable.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

From: Jimmy Hyslop [mailto:Jimmy.Hyslop@nature.scot]
Sent: 18 February 2020 11:06
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Hi [REDACTED]
I am assessing your recent application to the Biodiversity Challenge Fund and have a few questions.

Peatland areas

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The activities seem to be tailor-made for the FGS option for New Natural Regeneration Establishment <https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/forestry-grant-scheme-capital-items/new-natural-regeneration-establishment/>

Boundary

Where does the proposed deer fence line mark the boundary of the estate?

Enrichment planting & biodiversity measures, plus removal of derelict fencing

You should include a map with your application (at a scale of 1:10,000 minimum) clearly showing where each of the activities will take place.

In Q22, no grid references have been provided for the following:

- How much enrichment planting, of what, where and what cost?
- What other biodiversity measures are proposed, where and what cost?
- To what extent is the fencing removal a key part of the biodiversity efforts, where is the fencing, how much of it is there and what is the cost of removal?

You should include a map with your application (at a scale of 1:10,000 minimum) clearly showing where each of the activities will take place.

If you have any question, please do not hesitate to give me a bell,

Jimmy

Jimmy Hyslop | Funding Officer

Scottish Natural Heritage | Caspian House | Mariner Court | Clydebank Business Park | Clydebank | G81 2NR | t:0131 314 [REDACTED]
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nature.scot – Connecting People and Nature in Scotland – [@nature_scot](https://twitter.com/nature_scot)

From 1 May 2020, SNH will be rebranding and changing its name to NatureScot.

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Tha am post-dealain seo agus fiosrachadh sam bith na chois dìomhair agus airson an neach no buidheann ainmichte a-mhàin. Mas e gun d' fhuair sibh am post-dealain seo le mearachd, cuiribh fios dhan manaidsear-siostaim no neach-

Coigach-Assynt Living Landscape Partnership

Project Title:

Eisg Brachaidh – Landscape Scale Habitat Restoration

Authors:

[REDACTED]

Project Code: AP02

Document version:1

Date:

27 November 2019

Summary

Eisg Brachaidh is one of the CALL project partners. It is a privately owned estate, with a grazing tenant which is a neighbouring landowner.

The Estate is included in the SSSI 817 Inverpollly designated specifically recognising a variety of habitats including oligotrophic freshwater loch habitats, upland assemblage habitats, Blanket bogs and Woodlands. For flora and fauna it is designated specifically for Norwegian mugwort (*Artemisia norvegica*), the only mainland population of the *Otiorhynchus auropunctatus* weevil, Moths and breeding bird assemblage (further details under Project Description).

The woodlands are important remnant areas of Scottish temperate rainforest.

Over the past few decades the owners of Eisg Brachaidh have tried to find a solution to improving the condition of the designated habitats that also fits with the tenants objectives, until now without being able to find a resolution. Through P01 **Woodland Expansion Project**, to address the SNH assessed “unfavourable condition” of the Woodlands the owner is fencing approximately 34ha of designated birch woodlands to EXCLUDE all unregulated grazing (as required under SNH management plan) through a Scottish Forestry grant.

However this project brief (**AP02 Eisg Brachaidh Landscape Scale Habitat Restoration**) addresses the other approximate 2,000ha of mixed habitats to effectively REDUCE wild unregulated grazing.

Two options have been identified as being legally possible and won't affect the tenants grazing interests, the first is to cull the deer on Eisg Brachaidh ground to a low enough number to allow habitat recovery and the second is to erect a boundary fence and reduce the deer numbers within the boundary fence to allow the habitats to recover. The number of grazing cattle are low enough that they will not impact on this. The numbers of cattle are controlled by SNH, so through monitoring these number can be adjusted accordingly.

Option 1 is unlikely to work as well as the overall size of Eisg Brachaidh is not big enough in relation to the large scale of movement by deer. This means that localised control efforts will result in deer coming in from neighbouring ground as EB becomes even more of a honeypot for them. Without an external fence, maintaining the high intensity of deer control on EB estate would have an impact on the income prospects of deer stalking activities on neighbouring estates. Substantial effort has gone into exploring all possible options and having an external fence is considered by far the best option in being able to protect and restore sensitive designated habitats on EB estate while minimising the interests in deer on neighbouring estates.

Project Description

Eisg Brachaidh Estate in Wester Ross on the border with Sutherland has biodiversity conservation as its primary objective.

With habitat restoration at the land-scape scale, the aim is to re-establish the richness, diversity and connectivity, of healthy self-sustaining native species and communities. At 2,000 ha it has oligotrophic lochs, rivers and streams amongst low-lying hills, an estuary, extensive coastline and nearshore islands. It was previously part of the Inverpolly National Nature Reserve (1961-2004), it remains an important part of the Inverpolly SSSI and SAC, the Inverpolly, Loch Urigill & Nearby Lochs SPA, the Assynt – Coigach National Scenic Area (NSA) and is classed as a wild area. The surviving woodland is a Plantlife Important Plant Area for oceanic bryophytes and lichens in addition to its SAC status and is a focus area for the Saving Scotland's Rainforest Project.

Some of the important features on Eisg Brachaidh include western acidic oak woodland, wet heath, dry heaths, blanket bog, upland assemblage and upland birch woodland, otter, black throated diver, red throated diver, breeding heron and fresh water pearl mussel. Effectively reducing and mitigating the devastating effects of excessive grazing and trampling by high deer numbers is by far the most important factor for biodiversity conservation and habitat restoration on Eisg Brachaidh.

The only effective way to protect this valuable habitat against further loss is to fence the estate boundary against Deer, and reduce the deer numbers within the estate to around 1 deer per square kilometre. Over the last few decades the owners have sought to find a solution, particularly in respect of the SAC, Scottish Rainforest woodland areas. The solution of fencing the estate's landward boundary and reducing internal deer numbers will not impact on the grazing tenancy, which covers most of the estate, as only a small number of cattle are allowed to graze the area under an SNH agreement and grazing will have a positive effect on regenerating areas. Grazing effects will be closely monitored both by SNH and through this project to ensure that the desired results are attained. Reducing deer numbers without a boundary fence has been ineffective due to the relatively small size of the estate, the high numbers of deer in the area and the management objectives of surrounding landowners. Fencing the estate will avoid any negative impact on surrounding owner's deer stalking activity.

Importantly, the reduction in deer grazing within an external boundary fence will also allow existing regeneration to come away and boost the woodland tree numbers and age structure making it more resilient into the future. It will also help to protect peatlands.

The project also aims to enrich by planting existing native woodland remnant areas with species that would naturally have been present but are now only found in very low numbers. These species include aspen, oak, holly, alder, wych elm, bird cherry, scots pine, guelder rose, juniper and willows (grey, goat and eared). Trees will be sourced from seed as close as possible to Eisg Brachaidh and it is hoped to get them from a local tree nursery only 10 miles away. This nursery also grows local understorey species such as primrose, roses and honeysuckle, which the project will also plant out in the existing woodlands to boost the natural understorey.

Public access will not be inhibited at all by this proposal, the project is in line with Government objectives of restoration of valuable habitats (Removing /vastly reducing trampling of sensitive habitats like blanket bogs will also address their greatest threats and promote recovery.). The project will distribute leaflets (and provide presentation?) to the public to explain the management plan of

the estate with regards to public benefit and continued responsible access.

Training days for native woodland management will be held as well as volunteer days for the enrichment planting with trees and understorey species.

Deliverable Outputs

- Circa 1500 ha of wet heath and dry heath types allowed to develop naturally with sustainable low-level grazing pressure.
- Peatland preserved in good condition.
- 160 ha of moribund/dying low density woodland protected and allowed to recover
- 168 ha of denser NWSS mapped woodland protected from further degradation
- 200 ha of woodland regeneration in the shorter term, more in future.
- Lichen and bryophyte communities protected and enhanced
- X no of trees planted to enrich the species variety of existing native woodlands including planting of native understorey species, trees and understorey plants sourced from a local plant nursery.
- Estate landscape restoration management objectives explaining the public benefit circulated to the local community (and presented through talks?)
- Estate Habitat Management Plan updated with SNH

Outcomes 5.7 Scheme Outcomes

CALLP Scheme Outcomes

- Provide the largest area of wooded, heath and peatland landscape restored under the CALL project, providing the opportunity of using this site as a demonstration site for landscape scale restoration. The key features of the Coigach and Assynt Landscape will better understood and restored with a fit for purpose management in place to ensure the benefits are sustained.
- Where appropriate the connectivity and diversity of selected habitats will be mapped.
- Local people will have gained new skills in researching, restoring and understanding their heritage through volunteers/training days for enrichment planting and as a base for native woodland management and ecology training.
- Provide data on landscape scale habitat restoration for public and advocacy use and use by the land management sector?

HLF Outcomes

HLF Heritage Outcomes: better managed, in better condition and identified / recorded

HLF People Outcomes: developed skills, and volunteered time

HLF Communities Outcomes: environmental impacts will be reduced, more people and a wider range of people have engaged with heritage, and the local area will be a better place to live, work or visit.

Woodland Project outcomes

Enhanced woodland habitat biodiversity at a larger scale

Restoration and protection of existing woodlands

Landscape with improved resilience and a greater range & quality of ecosystem services

Increased appreciation of the potential benefits of woodland

People enjoy an improved natural environment

This project will provide improved ecosystem services and improved amenity.

Activities and timetable

Winter - Summer 2020

- Tender fencing work
- Obtain planning permission(?) for deer grid over single track road
- Start fencing work
- Initiate monitoring programme

Autumn - Winter 2020/21

- Complete fencing work and deer grid installation
- Start compensatory deer cull

Spring 2021

- Continue deer cull
- Enrichment planting

Summer 2021

- Continue monitoring
- Continue deer cull

Evidence

Review and Reporting

- Ongoing consultation with SNH regarding monitoring results, deer mgmt. mtgs for affect on neighbours and discussions with grazing tenant.
- Updating community on the results of the habitat restoration. Involving Assynt Field Club and any other interested parties in Coigach or surrounding areas.

Heritage Conservation

- Experienced contractors will be sought to carry out the work. Whilst the work is being undertaken CALL will ensure that the contractors keep disturbance to the natural heritage to a minimum and carry out the work to best practice standards.
- Natural heritage attains "favourable status" in SNH review
- The old fank and other archaeological areas are being fenced to stopped damage from cattle. (as part of the 35ha woodland scheme also being carried out through CALL Woodland project)

Beneficiaries and communication

- The wider environment and stakeholders involved with the CALL project
- Leaflet about the work and its benefits

Wider Context

Possibility to use this area as a Demonstration site and a Site for student and university studies – there have been some in the past but more could be of value/interest – e.g. habitat monitoring

Project buy-in

SNH, SF

Project lead

Coigach-Assynt Living Landscape Project – woodland manager, working with CKD Galbraith (Eisg brachaidh's land agent)

██████████, Woodland Manager, ██████████ [@coigach-assynt.org](mailto:██████████@coigach-assynt.org) or [@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:██████████@woodlandtrust.org.uk)

Partners / contractors etc.

Tenders will be sought from reputable contractors and go through the WT's tender comparison process, including advertising on public contracts Scotland.

Budgets

Deer Fencing – £300,000 (based on 17.1k @£17.50 per m)

Cattle Grid across public road – £50,000

Enrichment planting and removal of derelict fences and other biodiversity work - £10,000

Public engagement - £2,000

Management costs from CALL and Woodland Trust Scotland Staff as match funding

Monitoring and evaluation – within CALL project staff remit so match funding.

Total projected cost before quotes - £362,000

Permissions and compliance

- The proposed project has been arrived at after years of consultation with interested parties such as SNH and SF (Scottish Forestry).

Legacy and maintenance

The boundary fence will need to be monitored regularly (quarterly as a minimum) and this will be managed by CALL/WT up until 2031, along with the monitoring program which will be reviewed annually to check on grazing levels and impact.

Risks and risk mitigation

Risk assessments and site safety plans will be compulsory for each work site.

CALL will insure the project until?, after that Eisg Brachaidh will take on the insurance for the fence??

Sharon Phipps

From: Jimmy Hyslop
Sent: 21 February 2020 15:33
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisd Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project
Attachments: 2020 Feb SDC F - DRAFT AP02 Eisd Brachaidh Landscape Scale Habitat Restoration - final.doc

Hi [REDACTED]
Around all day from just after 9.

I found the attached – is this broadly the same as you are planning in the application?

Jimmy

From: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>
Sent: 21 February 2020 15:26
To: Jimmy Hyslop <Jimmy.Hyslop@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED]t@woodlandtrust.org.uk>
Subject: FW: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisd Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project
Importance: High

Hi Jimmy,

I have been speaking with [REDACTED] and we wondered if it would be possible for you and I to speak on the phone before responding in writing to the below? Are you available on Monday at all?

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: Jimmy Hyslop [<mailto:Jimmy.Hyslop@nature.scot>]
Sent: 18 February 2020 11:06
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisd Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Hi [REDACTED]
I am assessing your recent application to the Biodiversity Challenge Fund and have a few questions.

Peatland areas

Has a peat depth survey been undertaken across the proposed enclosure area? The proposed works will significantly impact on a substantial area of peat soil, see attached map and <https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/thematic-maps/carbon-and-peatland-2016-map/> for explanation. The map shows the areas of peat referred to in Table 1 in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) – carbon-rich soil, deep peat and priority peatland habitat. On the map, the top two classes (1 and 2), taken together, identify the nationally important resource.

SRDP: Forestry Grant Scheme

Is anyone registered for SRDP and claiming for activities on this land? (WT is not eligible for SRDP on this site as it is neither the landowner nor a tenant. I do not fully understand “due to the structure of the

ownership/tenancy at Eisg Braichaidh, the owner does not have a Business Reference Number BRN".)

The activities seem to be tailor-made for the FGS option for New Natural Regeneration Establishment <https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/forestry-grant-scheme-capital-items/new-natural-regeneration-establishment/>

Boundary

Where does the proposed deer fence line mark the boundary of the estate?

Enrichment planting & biodiversity measures, plus removal of derelict fencing

You should include a map with your application (at a scale of 1:10,000 minimum) clearly showing where each of the activities will take place.

In Q22, no grid references have been provided for the following:

- How much enrichment planting, of what, where and what cost?
- What other biodiversity measures are proposed, where and what cost?
- To what extent is the fencing removal a key part of the biodiversity efforts, where is the fencing, how much of it is there and what is the cost of removal?

You should include a map with your application (at a scale of 1:10,000 minimum) clearly showing where each of the activities will take place.

If you have any question, please do not hesitate to give me a bell,

Jimmy

Jimmy Hyslop | Funding Officer

Scottish Natural Heritage | Caspian House | Mariner Court | Clydebank Business Park | Clydebank | G81 2NR | t:0131 314 [REDACTED]
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba | Taigh Caspian | Cùirt a' Mharaiche | Bruach Chluaidh | G81 2NR
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Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a-mach bho SNH.

Sharon Phipps

From: Tamara Lawton
Sent: 26 February 2020 11:28
To: Jeanette Hall; Jimmy Hyslop
Cc: Meryl Carr; Sinclair Coghill
Subject: RE: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Hi Jeanette and Jimmy, apologies I hadn't got back to you before, a bit busy so working to deadlines!

It might be useful to provide a bit of background – the estate have been trying to find a way to restore the woodlands on the SAC and SSSI (western acidic oak woodland and upland birch woodland features, respectively) both of which are unfavourable declining.

Due to a convoluted history the estate has an agricultural tenant who holds the BRN for the ground, thereby making them ineligible for SRDP. They still retain the deer rights so this is within their gift.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

This latest idea means that the boundary fences will provide protection from incoming deer, whilst still allowing some deer to graze and more importantly will not impede the tenant his agricultural rights.

Whilst I have been the lead for the site, I have not had that much involvement with the BCF application, other than a phone call from the woodland manager at CALLP who was assisting WT with the application.

In terms of the SSSI/SAC, on balance, this new approach will be a leap forward for the woodland features as most of it is on Eisg Brachaidh and has been declining with little action to remedy it due to the circumstances with the tenant. We have been supportive of their plans to fence areas of moribund woodland and we have made investments in woodland surveys/management plans etc. for the last 10 years but no action has taken place. We also currently support their deer management to maintain present grazing levels for the upland features of the SSSI through a S15 management agreement as it is under a Section 7 deer control agreement. We established some time ago that it was unlikely that deer management alone can allow the woodland features to recover due to the geography etc. Surveys have shown that there is much potential for woodland to regenerate relatively quickly once deer pressure is reduced, therefore this latest proposed solution appears to combine the requirement for fences to exclude immigration from deer whilst overcoming the ineligibility of SRDP and allowing continuing use of the site for cattle grazing. Incidentally, the application says that the cattle are grazed under a SNH agreement – this is not the case, the tenant has an AECS contract.

We have emphasised to them that this proposal will have to be carefully monitored; the estate also hold important upland SAC and SSSI features that need to remain to function. We have already gone through the process of asking the Scottish Government to allow expansion of priority woodland habitat onto uplands ones but this is within limits and blanket bog feature to be protected. The deer control internally certainly would be a task and they would need to ensure that the resources are available.

In terms of the project being a national demonstration, I would support this as a key part of the project outcomes. We are seeing a current conflict between 'conservation estates' aiming to regenerate woodland without the aid of fenced enclosures (including some of our NNRs) and neighbouring sporting estates who see this as a threat to the overall deer resource by constant pressure. This would be a 'halfway house' to test how effective strategic fencing may be. It will also have the benefit of allowing the recovering woodland to have more natural structure and understorey with deer present, rather than enclosures that produce unnatural lines and age classes. Part of the woodland feature's indicators includes Scottish wood ants that would likely disappear with all grazers excluded.

The site is also a NSA and partially within a Wild Land Area so the project would have a visual impact, however a continuous boundary fence using appropriate landscape features is also less likely to have an impact than several

smaller fenced enclosures. It would also have a benefit by reducing the existing redundant fences that can have a negative visual impact on the landscape.

I anticipate that there will be significant initial concerns from some within the local deer management group, particularly sporting neighbours. The fencing is likely to change the pattern of deer movements within the areas as well as removing an important area of shelter. The proposal to allow the deer that rely on the area to enter before being closed off is likely to produce the best outcome in terms of welfare by reducing the incidence of death by lack of winter shelter and starvation.

Meryl has also reported that some members within the CALLP have expressed uneasiness about this private estate being fenced for various reasons.

So, generally speaking, the Area are supportive of this project as it will produce action on an important site that we have been trying to tackle for some time now without success. It will need monitoring and careful management to produce the outcomes they are looking for but could produce quick wins in terms of the habitat recovery. We are aware that it could potentially generate some negative views locally but it should not be a long term issue and the benefits are likely to far outweigh this. With the climate emergency and biodiversity loss the status quo is no longer an option!

Hope this is helpful.

Cheers,
Tamara

Tamara Lawton | Operations Officer

Scottish Natural Heritage | 17 Pulteney Street | Ullapool |Wester Ross| IV26 2UP| t: 01463 [REDACTED]
Dualchas Nàdair na hAlba | 17 Sràid Pholtanaidh | Ulapul | Ros an Iar | IV26 2UP
nature.scot – *A' ceangal dhaoine is nàdar ann an Alba | Connecting People and Nature in Scotland* –
[@nature_scot](https://twitter.com/nature_scot)

From: Jeanette Hall <Jeanette.Hall@nature.scot>
Sent: 25 February 2020 16:47
To: Tamara Lawton <Tamara.Lawton@nature.scot>
Subject: FW: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Hi Tamara,

I'm the topic lead for this – I don't think we've had any comments from you yet have we...? If you have anything to say in support of the application please let me and Jimmy know this week, as we need to complete the assessment by Friday.

Cheers

Jeanette

From: Meryl Carr <Meryl.Carr@nature.scot>
Sent: 12 February 2020 10:13
To: Jimmy Hyslop <Jimmy.Hyslop@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Hi Jimmy

I have forwarded this to Tamara as she leads on Eisg Brachaidh and has been involved with this for some time.

Meryl Carr
Protected Places Team
Ullapool

Scottish Natural Heritage | 17 Pulteney Street | Ullapool | IV3 8NW | t: (reception) 01463 [REDACTED] (Direct Dial) 01463 [REDACTED]
m: [REDACTED] E-mail: meryl.carr@nature.scot
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba Ullapul | 17 Sràid Pulteney | Ullapul | Siorrachd Rois | IV26 2UP
nature.scot – Connecting People and Nature in Scotland – [@nature_scot](https://twitter.com/nature_scot)

From 1 May 2020, SNH will be rebranding and changing its name to NatureScot.

From: Jimmy Hyslop <Jimmy.Hyslop@nature.scot>
Sent: 07 February 2020 16:57
To: Meryl Carr <Meryl.Carr@nature.scot>
Subject: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Hi Meryl,
I have just received the attached application to the second round of the Biodiversity Challenge Fund. If you have any comments from the Area's perspective by close of play on 28 February at the latest, I would be delighted to include them in the assessment.

Many thanks,

Jimmy

Jimmy Hyslop | Funding Officer
Scottish Natural Heritage | Caspian House | Mariner Court | Clydebank Business Park | Clydebank | G81 2NR | t:0131 314 [REDACTED]
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba | Taigh Caspian | Cùirt a' Mharaiche | Bruach Chluaidh | G81 2NR
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Sharon Phipps

From: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>
Sent: 28 February 2020 12:30
To: Jimmy Hyslop
Cc: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisd Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Hi Jimmy

Many thanks for your quick reply.

[REDACTED] are you able to clarify these points when you send through the maps to Jimmy?

My understanding is that the costs will mainly relate to the enrichment planting and removal of derelict fencing. Unfortunately I am not able to comment on the type of fencing being removed, but hope that [REDACTED] can answer this as she has a good knowledge of the site.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

From: Jimmy Hyslop [mailto:Jimmy.Hyslop@nature.scot]
Sent: 28 February 2020 12:26
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisd Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Many thanks [REDACTED]
This is great. [REDACTED] and I untangle the SRDP angle by phone.

Only two questions

- In the Project Finances there is a row for "*Enrichment planting & biodiversity measures, plus removal of derelict fencing*". What you note below for "biodiversity measures" does not indicate any specific action or cost, beyond the effects of the erection of the fencing. Am I reading this correctly?
- Is the fencing that is being removed stock fencing?

Jimmy

From: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>
Sent: 28 February 2020 12:03
To: Jimmy Hyslop <Jimmy.Hyslop@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>
Subject: RE: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisd Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project
Importance: High

Dear Jimmy

I hope that this email finds you well.

Following your conversation with [REDACTED] earlier this week, I have included below some more information relating to your questions. [REDACTED] will forward you the maps requested later today.

I trust that this answers your queries – please do not hesitate to get in touch if you need anything more at this time.

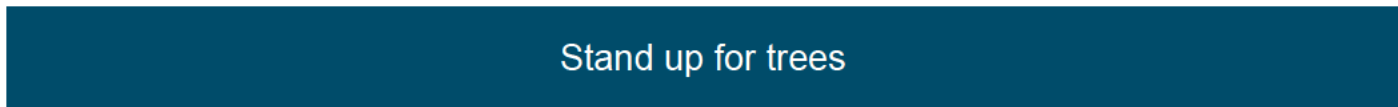
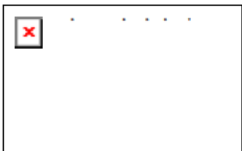
Best wishes and thanks for your help






Development Officer - Scotland

Telephone: 
Email: @woodlandtrust.org.uk

Woodland Trust, 10 Queensferry Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4PG
01738 635 544
www.woodlandtrust.org.uk



From: Jimmy Hyslop [<mailto:Jimmy.Hyslop@nature.scot>]
Sent: 18 February 2020 11:06
To: 
Subject: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Hi 
I am assessing you recent application to the Biodiversity Challenge Fund and have a few questions.

Peatland areas

Has a peat depth survey been undertaken across the proposed enclosure area? The proposed works will significantly impact on a substantial area of peat soil, see attached map and <https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/thematic-maps/carbon-and-peatland-2016-map/> for explanation. The map shows the areas of peat referred to in Table 1 in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) – carbon-rich soil, deep peat and priority peatland habitat. On the map, the top two classes (1 and 2), taken together, identify the nationally important resource.

A peat depth survey has not been carried out across the site. However, an NVC survey of the whole SSSI/SAC area was carried out a few years ago. The proposed project focuses primarily on the woodland habitats across the site, with the aim of preventing the existing native woodland from declining further in condition. It will also help to ensure the viability of the existing heavily browsed regeneration whist encouraging new regeneration to establish (with some supplementary/enrichment planting in appropriate places). It is not expected that the whole estate will regenerate. Regeneration will not occur on deep peats and regular monitoring will allow early observation and management of any encroachment onto valuable

dry heaths. it is expected that there will be an immediate response from the heavily browsed regeneration and that there will be a more gradual response as new regeneration occurs. [REDACTED] will forward on an indicative hand drawn map later today, showing where the regeneration is expected to take place.

SRDP: Forestry Grant Scheme

Is anyone registered for SRDP and claiming for activities on this land? (WT is not eligible for SRDP on this site as it is neither the landowner nor a tenant. I do not fully understand “due to the structure of the ownership/tenancy at Eisd Braichaidh, the owner does not have a Business Reference Number BRN”.)

The activities seem to be tailor-made for the FGS option for New Natural Regeneration Establishment <https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/forestry-grant-scheme-capital-items/new-natural-regeneration-establishment/>

The owner has a BRN, but the only fields connected to the BRN are those areas which the estate only has control over (eg around the house and gardens and other areas currently being resumed from the tenancy – up to a max of 35ha – a relatively small area of the estate). The owner does not have access to the land parcel/field identifier for the rest of the estate, which means that they cannot make an application under SRDP. (Jimmy – is this enough explanation?)

Boundary

Where does the proposed deer fence line mark the boundary of the estate? – The fence follows the legal boundary on the landward side of the estate – as shown on the map submitted.

Enrichment planting & biodiversity measures, plus removal of derelict fencing

You should include a map with your application (at a scale of 1:10,000 minimum) clearly showing where each of the activities will take place.

In Q22, no grid references have been provided for the following:

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Jimmy

Jimmy Hyslop | Funding Officer

Scottish Natural Heritage | Caspian House | Mariner Court | Clydebank Business Park | Clydebank | G81 2NR | t:0131 314 [REDACTED]
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba | Taigh Caspian | Cùirt a' Mharaiche | Bruach Chluaidh | G81 2NR
nature.scot – Connecting People and Nature in Scotland – [@nature_scot](https://twitter.com/nature_scot)

From 1 May 2020, SNH will be rebranding and changing its name to NatureScot.

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Sharon Phipps

From: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>
Sent: 28 February 2020 13:26
To: Jimmy Hyslop; [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisd Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Hi Jimmy,

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Maps to follow.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

From: Jimmy Hyslop [mailto:Jimmy.Hyslop@nature.scot]
Sent: 28 February 2020 12:26
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisd Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Many thanks J [REDACTED]
This is great. [REDACTED] and I untangle the SRDP angle by phone.

Only two questions

- In the Project Finances there is a row for “*Enrichment planting & biodiversity measures, plus removal of derelict fencing*”. What you note below for “biodiversity measures” does not indicate any specific action or cost, beyond the effects of the erection of the fencing. Am I reading this correctly?
- Is the fencing that is being removed stock fencing?

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From: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>
Sent: 28 February 2020 12:03

To: Jimmy Hyslop <Jimmy.Hyslop@nature.scot>

Cc: [redacted]@woodlandtrust.org.uk; [redacted]@woodlandtrust.org.uk; [redacted]@woodlandtrust.org.uk

Subject: RE: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisd Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Importance: High

Dear Jimmy

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I trust that this answers your queries – please do not hesitate to get in touch if you need anything more at this time.

Best wishes and thanks for your help

[redacted]

[redacted]
Development Officer - Scotland

Telephone: 03437705420

Email: [redacted]@woodlandtrust.org.uk

Woodland Trust, 10 Queensferry Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4PG

01738 635 544

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk



From: Jimmy Hyslop [<mailto:Jimmy.Hyslop@nature.scot>]

Sent: 18 February 2020 11:06

To: [redacted]

Subject: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisd Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Hi [redacted]

I am assessing you recent application to the Biodiversity Challenge Fund and have a few questions.

Peatland areas

Has a peat depth survey been undertaken across the proposed enclosure area? The proposed works will significantly impact on a substantial area of peat soil, see attached map

and <https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/thematic-maps/carbon-and-peatland-2016-map/> for explanation. The map shows the areas of peat referred to in Table 1 in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) – carbon-rich soil, deep peat and priority peatland habitat. On the map, the top two classes (1 and 2), taken together, identify the nationally important resource.

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Is anyone registered for SRDP and claiming for activities on this land? (WT is not eligible for SRDP on this site as it is neither the landowner nor a tenant. I do not fully understand “due to the structure of the ownership/tenancy at Eisd Braichaidh, the owner does not have a Business Reference Number BRN”.)

The activities seem to be tailor-made for the FGS option for New Natural Regeneration Establishment <https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/forestry-grant-scheme-capital-items/new-natural-regeneration-establishment/>

The owner has a BRN, but the only fields connected to the BRN are those areas which the estate only has control over (eg around the house and gardens and other areas currently being resumed from the tenancy – up to a max of 35ha – a relatively small area of the estate). The owner does not have access to the land parcel/field identifier for the rest of the estate, which means that they cannot make an application under SRDP. (Jimmy – is this enough explanation?)

Boundary

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Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a-mach bho SNH.

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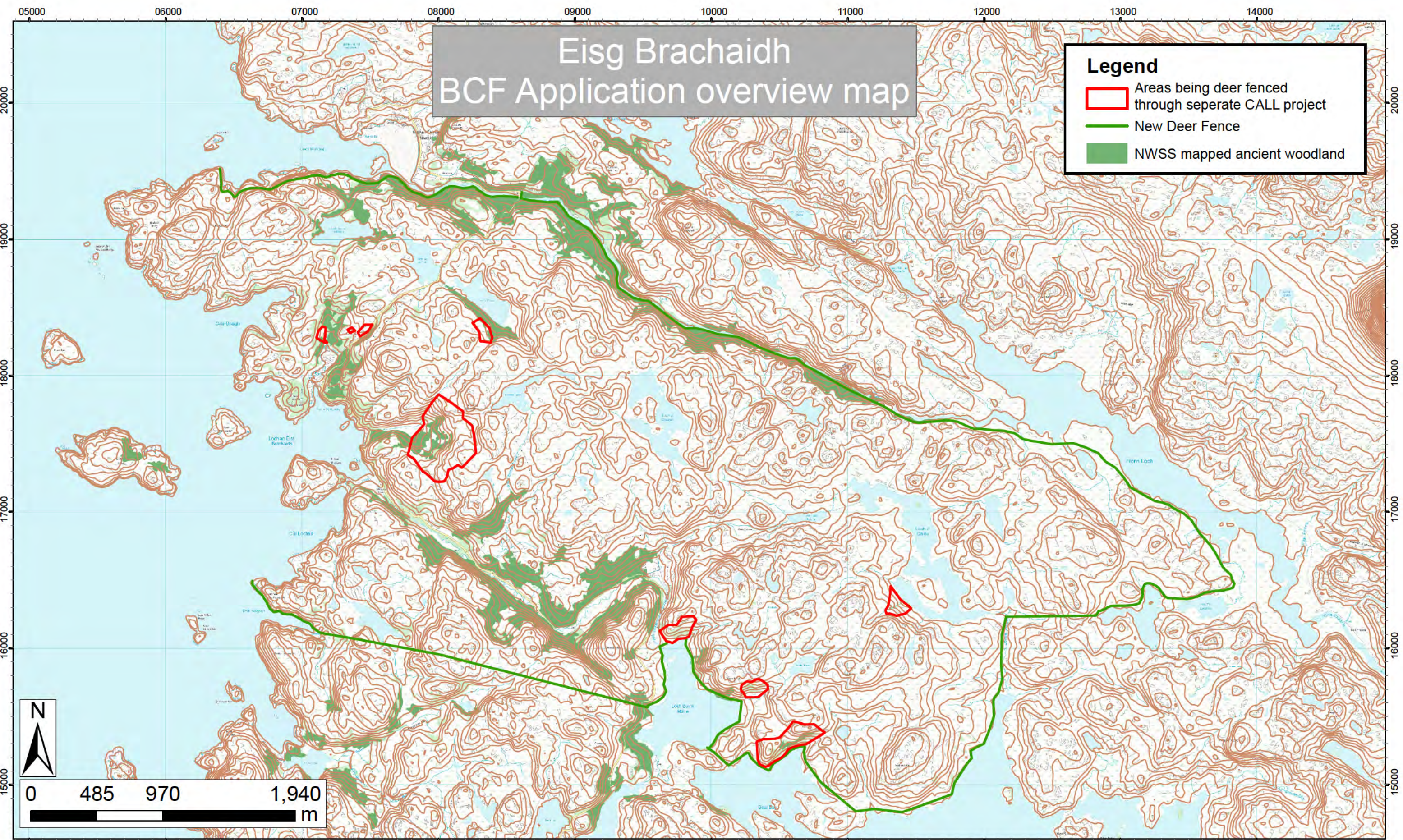
Registered Office: Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG31 6LL.

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk>

Eisg Brachaidh BCF Application overview map

Legend

-  Areas being deer fenced through separate CALL project
-  New Deer Fence
-  NWSS mapped ancient woodland



Scottish Wildlife Trust
Harbourside House
110 Commercial Street
Edinburgh
EH6 6NF

© Crown copyright and database rights 2018.
Ordnance Survey licence number 100030835.
Central Grid Reference:
Scale: 1:25,000



Sharon Phipps

From: Jimmy Hyslop
Sent: 28 February 2020 13:58
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Hi [REDACTED]
Fine to hand draw the areas on and scan the map.

Thanks on the fences.

So, for the purposes of the application, let's remove other "biodiversity measures" and separate out the fencing removal and enrichment planting and the respective costs.

Jimmy

From: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>
Sent: 28 February 2020 13:26
To: Jimmy Hyslop <Jimmy.Hyslop@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>
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Maps to follow.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

From: Jimmy Hyslop [<mailto:Jimmy.Hyslop@nature.scot>]
Sent: 28 February 2020 12:26

To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]
Subject: RE: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Many thanks [redacted]
This is great. [redacted] and I untangle the SRDP angle by phone.

Only two questions

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Cc: [redacted]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>; [redacted]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>; [redacted]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>
Subject: RE: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project
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[redacted]

[redacted]
Development Officer - Scotland
Telephone: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]@woodlandtrust.org.uk
Woodland Trust, 10 Queensferry Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4PG
01738 635 544
www.woodlandtrust.org.uk



Stand up for trees

From: Jimmy Hyslop [<mailto:Jimmy.Hyslop@nature.scot>]

Sent: 18 February 2020 11:06

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Hi Jennifer,

I am assessing your recent application to the Biodiversity Challenge Fund and have a few questions.

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Sharon Phipps

From: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>
Sent: 28 February 2020 15:30
To: Jimmy Hyslop [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisd Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Importance: High

Hi Jimmy

I have worked with [REDACTED] and revised the project finance form to show the changes that you mentioned previously.

I have attached it here – please do let me know if you need anything further.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

From: Jimmy Hyslop [mailto:Jimmy.Hyslop@nature.scot]
Sent: 28 February 2020 13:58
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisd Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Hi [REDACTED]
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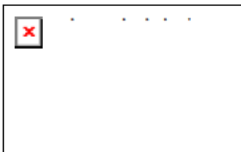
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[REDACTED]

Development Officer - Scotland

Telephone: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk

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01738 635 544
www.woodlandtrust.org.uk



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Sent: 18 February 2020 11:06
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Subject: 501341 - BCF - 2020-2021 - Woodland Trust - Eisd Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

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Is anyone registered for SRDP and claiming for activities on this land? (WT is not eligible for SRDP on this site as it is neither the landowner nor a tenant. I do not fully understand "due to the structure of the

ownership/tenancy at Eisg Braichaidh, the owner does not have a Business Reference Number BRN".)

The activities seem to be tailor-made for the FGS option for New Natural Regeneration Establishment <https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/forestry-grant-scheme-capital-items/new-natural-regeneration-establishment/>

The owner has a BRN, but the only fields connected to the BRN are those areas which the estate only has control over (eg around the house and gardens and other areas currently being resumed from the tenancy – up to a max of 35ha – a relatively small area of the estate). The owner does not have access to the land parcel/field identifier for the rest of the estate, which means that they cannot make an application under SRDP. (Jimmy – is this enough explanation?)

Boundary

Where does the proposed deer fence line mark the boundary of the estate? – The fence follows the legal boundary on the landward side of the estate – as shown on the map submitted.

Enrichment planting & biodiversity measures, plus removal of derelict fencing

You should include a map with your application (at a scale of 1:10,000 minimum) clearly showing where each of the activities will take place.

In Q22, no grid references have been provided for the following:

- How much enrichment planting, of what, where and what cost? – [redacted] will send through the breakdown and further information later today
- **What other biodiversity measures are proposed, where and what cost?** - The vegetation report indicated that overgrazing and physical disturbance by deer has reduced the health and amount of dry heath and bog assemblages across the site and that expected plant species in many locations were absent as a result. This has resulted in much of the ground being recorded by default as wet heath. The project will allow the recovery of the full suite of heathland and bog habitat and offers the scope for future bog and peatland restoration.
- To what extent is the fencing removal a key part of the biodiversity efforts, where is the fencing, how much of it is there and what is the cost of removal? [redacted] will sent through a map, costing and further details later today. If additional costs are required, they will be met through CALLP funding and will not affect the BCF application.

You should include a map with your application (at a scale of 1:10,000 minimum) clearly showing where each of the activities will take place. [redacted] will forward several maps to you later today, with a map key to show how they fit together.

If you have any question, please do not hesitate to give me a bell,

Jimmy

Jimmy Hyslop | Funding Officer

Scottish Natural Heritage | Caspian House | Mariner Court | Clydebank Business Park | Clydebank | G81 2NR | t:0131 314 [redacted]
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba | Taigh Caspian | Cùirt a' Mharaidhe | Bruach Chluaidh | G81 2NR
nature.scot – Connecting People and Nature in Scotland – [@nature_scot](https://twitter.com/nature_scot)

From 1 May 2020, SNH will be rebranding and changing its name to NatureScot.

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Biodiversity Challenge Fund - Project Finances

**Applications must be in the region of £100k to £200k, with projects starting from 1 April 2020.
All projects and their activities must be completed and claimed by 31 March 2021.**

Complete the yellow cells for each of the Project Costs you are requesting funding from us, and for the Match Funding and In-kind Contributions.

If you need extra rows in any tables, highlight the bottom yellow row and then right-click and select 'Insert' to add row above.

Please do not alter the grey boxes.

Name of Organisation:	Woodland Trust
Project Title:	Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project

Table 1. What are the **cash costs** of your project and how much cash are you requesting from SNH?

Project Cost Description' should describe the item that will incur a cost, not describe an activity to be delivered. Add additional lines as required. If you are applying for full cost recovery on any staffing resource, this should be shown on the separate line indicated.

Project Cost Description	Total Cash Cost April 2020 to March 2021	Total SNH Request April 2020 to March 2021
Deer fencing (based on 17.1km @£17.50 per metre)	242,250.00	116,666.67
Cattle grid across public road	25,000.00	25,000.00
Enrichment planting (5,000 trees @ £1.39 inc VAT per tree for plant, fertiliser, labour and canes)	6,950.00	6,950.00
Removal of existing deer fence (1200m @ £1.15 per m)	1,380.00	1,380.00
Deer control	16,666.67	16,666.67

Table 3. Please show all sources of **in-kind contributions** to your project in the table below and whether they are confirmed for the duration of the project. If in-kind contributions are not yet confirmed then please tell us when you expect to hear a decision on the funding.

Description of in-kind contribution	Total In Kind Contribution Value April 2020 to March 2021	Confirmed Y/N (if no, add date)
TOTAL	0.00	

CASH COSTS SUMMARY	Amount (£)
Amount of cash you are requesting from SNH	£199,996.67
Amount of cash contributions from you or other funders	£150,700.00
Total cash cost of your project	£350,696.67

Please check that the sum of the total cash cost in Table 1 matches the total cash cost of your project calculated above.

Amount of in kind contributions from you or other funders	£0.00
Total Project Cost	£350,696.67

Biodiversity Challenge Fund - Round 2 (BCF2) Application Assessment - TEMPLATE

Note to funding officers and topic leads: Assessments should be recorded in this document. They will be transferred to Business Planning post panel decision (by FO). Points to be addressed in the assessment are shown in fields below. Assessments should be proportionate to value and risk.

Project ID:	501341	Customer:	Woodland Trust Scotland
Project Title:	Eisg Brachaidh Biodiversity Restoration Project		
IPBES Drivers:	Land and sea use change	Priority for Action:	Habitat management and connectivity

Alerts to Panel

Priority Topic Ranking	1 (of 5)	Landowner risks	N	Staff recruitment risks	N
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Background

Existing Customer

Although SWT is the lead partner for [500573 CALL Partnership – Delivery phase](#), Woodland Trust is the lead for this project in the CALLP work plan and the LP provides match funding.

The works would take place on the Eisg Brachaidh Estate which is private, family-owned estate and a partner in the CALLP.

Woodland Trust is not the landowner or a tenant.

██████████, the CALLP Woodland Manager, will lead the project during the delivery phase.

Kirsty Hutchison provided feedback at pre-application stage.

Description of project

To include:

summary of project, what it is attempting to do (for priority habitats and species) and why; delivery partners where appropriate; extent to which the project has addressed any points raised in any pre-application discussion; whether the project features in any current development/action plans.

The estate boundary (17km) will be fenced to enable deer management across the whole estate without impinging on the objectives of adjoining land managers. Most of the deer fencing will be completed by November 2020, leaving the eastern end open to allow the deer which usually winter on EB land to come down into the estate. Deer control will be undertaken over the winter and, by mid-March 2021, reducing the deer density to less than 1 deer per square km and the eastern end of the fence will be completed.

Result will be:

- 200 ha of woodland regeneration in the shorter term, more in future.
- 168 ha of denser NWSS mapped woodland protected from further degradation
- 160 ha of moribund/dying low density woodland protected and allowed to recover
- 5,000 no of trees planted to enrich the species variety of existing native woodlands including planting of native understorey species, trees and understorey plants sourced from a local plant nursery.
- Circa 1,500 ha of wet heath and dry heath types allowed to develop naturally with sustainable low-level grazing pressure.

- Peatland preserved in good condition.
- Lichen and bryophyte communities protected and enhanced.

Inverpolly SSSI, Inverpolly SAC

Expected outputs

To include: summary of what will be delivered on the ground – quantified and with dates where possible.

- Deer fences will be constructed around the estate perimeter between June 2020 and February 2021. As stated above, the majority will be complete by November 2020, and the fence will be completed by March 2021.
- Deer control within the fenced area will be carried out between October 2020 and March 2021
- Enrichment planting will take place between January and March 2021.

Contribution to Outcomes and Priorities

To include: topic lead assessment of alignment to fund priorities and IPBES drivers, and significance of what can be delivered/achieved; proposed measures and evaluation plan for habitats and/or species work and their appropriateness for short term impacts;

This is an innovative, and well thought out, project designed to deliver favourable condition of designated habitats across the whole of the land management unit. The land owners have been working for many years with SNH and the neighbouring landowner (who is also Eisd Brachaidh's tenant) to develop a proposal that will allow them to manage the woodland to deliver favourable condition without impinging on the neighbours objectives. This new approach, to which the neighbour has agreed, is thus the result of many years of planning.

As well as being SSSI and SAC, and containing part of an SPA, the area is a Plantlife Important Plant Area and a focus area for the Atlantic Woodland Alliance Saving Scotland's Rainforest Project (led by The Woodland Trust and Plantlife, SNH is also a partner). It is part of the West Coast of Scotland IPA; the features of which include the exceptional diversity of bryophytes and lichens characteristic of the broadleaved woodland.

This is an ambitious landscape scale project, with the potential to be an exemplar for habitat management, demonstrating a halfway solution between enclosures and large scale deer control which can only work when a large enough land area (e.g. tens of thousands of hectares) is managed appropriately. The proposal will allow woodland to develop naturally without false lines created by fences between habitat networks – aided by strategically and appropriately placed additional planting mainly with enrichment species.

The project is thus a very high priority, and could not go ahead without BCF funding. The proposed works align well with the BCF priorities.

IPBES drivers:

Climate change and its impacts

The reduction in grazing pressure will lead to improvements in all habitats present (including wet and dry heath and blanket bog as well as woodland), leading to increased growth and thus carbon sequestration. This will be greatest in regenerating native woodland, including the living wood, roots, leaves, deadwood, surrounding soils and its associated vegetation. Most woodland expansion will occur through natural regeneration; planting being limited to enrichment planting with minor species on the better soils. As a result, there will be very little soil disturbance, and thus minimal initial release of carbon. A young wood with mixed native species can lock up over 400 tonnes of carbon per hectare. Some carbon will also be sequestered in recovering open habitats, although this is harder to calculate.

The work will also increase the resilience of the woodland to future climate change, aiding adaptation. Native trees, with a local and diverse set of genes, are likely to be more resilient to climate change, with lower pests and disease risks than non-native species. They are better adapted to thrive in local soils and climate. Through promoting natural regeneration of native species, our woodlands will be better equipped to cope with the pressures that climate change will bring.

Priorities for Action:

Habitat management and connectivity

Habitat management and connectivity – the project will enhance and expand the ancient and native woodland and other habitats at Eisg Brachaidh. By promoting whole site management with the protection of an outer fence but with no inner fencing or boundaries, this work will promote diversity of species and habitat structure at a landscape scale across the estate. The project meets all of the targeted actions for habitats, namely re-establishment of habitats, increased connectivity, improvement of habitat for nature, and addressing previous physical modifications (i.e. over grazing by deer).

any work to address diffuse pollution pressures;

There are no specific diffuse pollution pressures on this site.

fit with on-going/planned activity of SNH & partners (where known);

The project has been designed to deliver favourable condition on a designated site (SSSI/ SAC), so there is a clear benefit to SNH's interests. In addition, the Area sees the value of the project as an exemplar, and supports this as a key part of the project outcomes (see below).

appropriateness of activities to deliver intended outcomes;

The work proposed has been carefully planned to deliver favourable condition, and is appropriate to the site managers' objectives and the SAC's conservation objectives.

local Area's comments on proposal.

The area are supportive of the project. Comments from Tamara Lawton are pasted below:

Background

The estate have been trying to find a way to restore the woodlands on the SAC and SSSI (western acidic oak woodland and upland birch woodland features, respectively) both of which are unfavourable declining. Due to a convoluted history the estate has an agricultural tenant who holds the BRN for the ground, thereby making them ineligible for SRDP. They still retain the deer rights so this is within their gift.

For some years they have tried to negotiate with the tenant to allow for some exclosures to be erected to return their part of the SAC/SSSI woodland features to favourable condition but the tenant has never agreed. This latest idea means that the boundary fences will provide protection from incoming deer, whilst still allowing some deer to graze and more importantly will not impede the tenant's agricultural rights.

Whilst I have been the lead for the site, I have not had that much involvement with the BCF application, other than a phone call from the woodland manager at CALLP who was assisting WT with the application.

In terms of the SSSI/SAC, on balance, this new approach will be a leap forward for the woodland features as most of it is on Eisg Brachaidh and has been declining with little action to remedy it due to the circumstances with the tenant. We have been supportive of their plans to fence areas of moribund woodland and we have made investments in woodland surveys/ management plans etc. for the last 10 years but no action has taken place. We also currently support their deer management to maintain present grazing levels for the upland features of the SSSI through a S15 management agreement as it is under a Section 7 deer control agreement. We established some time ago that it was unlikely that deer management alone can allow the woodland features

to recover due to the geography etc. Surveys have shown that there is much potential for woodland to regenerate relatively quickly once deer pressure is reduced, therefore this latest proposed solution appears to combine the requirement for fences to exclude immigration from deer whilst overcoming the ineligibility of SRDP and allowing continuing use of the site for cattle grazing. Incidentally, the application says that the cattle are grazed under a SNH agreement – this is not the case, the tenant has an AECS contract.

We have emphasised to them that this proposal will have to be carefully monitored; the estate also hold important upland SAC and SSSI features that need to remain to function. We have already gone through the process of asking the Scottish Government to allow expansion of priority woodland habitat onto upland ones but this is within limits and blanket bog feature to be protected. The deer control internally certainly would be a task and they would need to ensure that the resources are available.

In terms of the project being a national demonstration, I would support this as a key part of the project outcomes. We are seeing a current conflict between ‘conservation estates’ aiming to regenerate woodland without the aid of fenced exclosures (including some of our NNRs) and neighbouring sporting estates who see this as a threat to the overall deer resource by constant pressure. This would be a ‘halfway house’ to test how effective strategic fencing may be. It will also have the benefit of allowing the recovering woodland to have more natural structure and understorey with deer present, rather than exclosures that produce unnatural lines and age classes. Part of the woodland feature’s indicators includes Scottish wood ants that would likely disappear with all grazers excluded.

The site is also a NSA and partially within a Wild Land Area so the project would have a visual impact, however a continuous boundary fence using appropriate landscape features is also less likely to have an impact than several smaller fenced exclosures. It would also have a benefit by reducing the existing redundant fences that can have a negative visual impact on the landscape.

I anticipate that there will be significant initial concerns from some within the local deer management group, particularly sporting neighbours. The fencing is likely to change the pattern of deer movements within the areas as well as removing an important area of shelter. The proposal to allow the deer that rely on the area to enter before being closed off is likely to produce the best outcome in terms of welfare by reducing the incidence of death by lack of winter shelter and starvation. Meryl has also reported that some members within the CALLP have expressed uneasiness about this private estate being fenced for various reasons.

So, generally speaking, the Area are supportive of this project as it will produce action on an important site that we have been trying to tackle for some time now without success. It will need monitoring and careful management to produce the outcomes they are looking for but could produce quick wins in terms of the habitat recovery. We are aware that it could potentially generate some negative views locally but it should not be a long terms issue and the benefits are likely to far outweigh this. With the climate emergency and biodiversity loss the status quo is no longer an option!

Project readiness – FO or TL to request the following information from the applicant to allow this part of the assessment

How ready is this project to make a start with on the ground activity? Please note any specific action(s) needed before work can start on the ground and risks associated.

SSSI consent will be required; the Area (Tamara Lawton) is supportive of the work so this will not cause any delay.

██████████, the CALLP Woodland Manager, will lead the project during the delivery phase. The landowners are not based in the area and would be unable to manage it themselves ██████████ has extensive forestry and land management experience and is well suited to manage the

project, with support from the dedicated Funded Projects Officer from the Woodland Trust Finance Team.

A risk assessment, including proposed mitigation, is provided in the application. Other than failure to secure funding, the principal risk is ingress of deer within the enclosure. Regular and frequent checks of fence integrity are planned and any maintenance required will be carried out in a timely manner. Ongoing deer management will be carried out within the enclosure. The Project Officer will leave in Sept 2021, but the Woodland Trust will take responsibility for maintenance over the legacy 10 year period.

How confident can we be that the project will deliver expected activities within timeframe of the Fund, and to the budget level recommended?

The project has been well-planned and project activities are manageable within the timeframe.

Any issues or concerns - including SRDP comment

To include: risks to delivery – specific reference to landowner permission and likelihood of landowner agreement to 10 yr compliance period and ongoing maintenance; comment on SRDP alignment; appropriateness of project management plans, noting any concerns; likelihood of all projects and their activities being completed and claimed by 31 March 2021.

Landowner is willing to sign the declaration.

There is a FGS option for **New Natural Regeneration Establishment**

<https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/forestry-grant-scheme-capital-items/new-natural-regeneration-establishment/>

Support for deer fencing is available <https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/forestry-grant-scheme-capital-items/deer-fence--fgs/>

and there are various rates for enhancing the deer fencing and for fence removal. As this is a SSSI, it can be done on an Actual Costs basis.

The planting density of regeneration is appropriate for the conservation objectives of the site but would fall below that required by FGS.

Only a single business can claim SRDP for a piece of land. The tenant is claiming SRDP for the land but will not to apply to FGS as the proposed work is not relevant to his agricultural tenancy. The owner wants to apply to FGS and has tried to but cannot end the tenancy.

Even if this was different, it is unlikely that FGS would fund this work, due to the size of the enclosure and the large area of non-wooded land within it.

“Funding from different sources across Scottish Government should be consistent, to ensure one fund is not more generous than another. For Eisg Brachaidh, as it does not fall within FGS criteria, rates should be consistent with the current agri-environment scheme (AECS) for deer fencing. In AECS costs for shared boundaries are only paid out at 50% costs” for each applicant
Kirsty Hutchison

Activities should be delivered by end of March 2021.

Would project have been eligible for SRDP:AECS funding if this had been available? (see [Info for Applicants](#))

Please check box if Yes -

Value for money – please refer to **Project Finances spreadsheet** - scoring criteria is in [Annex 1](#)

Overall score:

Reasonableness of costs:

Appropriateness of costs:

comment on the VFM scores given;

intervention rate requested against cash costs and as % of total project cost;

The applicant is seeking £199,996.67 towards total cash costs of £350,700 that is 57% of cash costs and 57% of total project costs.

Removing the old deer fencing at two sites within the proposed deer fence is not directly relevant to the BCF though there is value in tidying up the site – cost £1,656 inc. VAT.

Total eligible costs therefore £349,040.67.

funding package;

All of the £150,700 match funding, 43% of total cash costs, has been committed. This **exceeds BCF expectations** of at least 10% from the applicant.

appropriateness of in-kind contributions (in the region of around 10% of total project cost);

No in kind contributions.

risks of unconfirmed match funding;

None

risks or issues associated with any SNH support – cash or staff resource;

There is the possibility of adverse reaction to fencing off such a large area of countryside.

Need for SNH funds

BCF Priority Topic ranking: This is the top ranked woodland application (1/5)

Recommended for funding. It will deliver significant benefits for 2,000 ha. of various habitats in SSSI/SAC and finally deliver on long terms conservation aspirations.

Summary Financial Recommendation

Total Value Recommended - 2020/21	£198,340.67
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Project summary

FO to modify summary provided in application form to reflect any changes as a result of assessment. This will be used to populate Offer and future promotion of successful projects.

Reporting Expectations

To include:

appropriate reporting/claim schedule (quarterly or six monthly);

any additional reporting expectations to be included in Funding Offer if successful.

Special Conditions

To include: any case specific special conditions – all cases will require 10 year compliance/maintenance (included in template offer) and acknowledgement ([BCF acknowledgement guidance](#)).

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Funding Officer:	Jimmy Hyslop	Topic Lead:	Jeanette Hall
Other SNH staff inputting to assessment:	Tamara Lawton		
Date assessment completed	28 February 2020		

Please send email to BCF@nature.scot to confirm assessment has been completed.

Annex 1: Value for money scoring criteria

VALUE FOR MONEY	3	2	1	0
Overall score	The outputs and benefits proposed far outweigh the resources requested	The outputs and benefits proposed are acceptable for the resources requested	The resources requested appear excessive for the outputs and benefits proposed	The resources requested do not justify the outputs and benefits proposed
Reasonableness of costs - the cost of individual items/staff is acceptable	All costs sought are at an appropriate level for the outputs/activities to be delivered and can be supported	The majority of costs sought are at an appropriate level but some appear high for the outputs/activities to be delivered and could be secured for less	The majority of costs appear high for the outputs/activities to be delivered and could be secured for less	All costs are high for the outputs/activities to be delivered and cannot be justified
Appropriateness of costs – there is a clear link between the costs being sought and the outputs/activities to be delivered	All costs sought are appropriate to the outputs/activities to be delivered and can be supported	Most costs sought are appropriate for the outputs/activities to be delivered but some are unlikely to be supported	There is no clear link between the majority of the costs being sought and the outputs/activities being sought; the majority of costs cannot be supported.	There is no clear link between the costs being sought and the outputs/activities to be delivered; costs cannot be supported

Sharon Phipps

From: [REDACTED]@woodlandtrust.org.uk>
Sent: 02 March 2020 12:58
To: Jimmy Hyslop
Cc: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Detailed maps for EB BCF app

Hi,

Please find detailed maps for EB BCF application. Overview map to follow.

I have been conservative about regen hoped for, in the longer term we hope with occasional additional planting that much more connectivity of possible.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

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Registered Office: Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG31 6LL.

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk>



Eisg Brachaidh 1 of 5
BCF Application overview map

Legend

- Areas being deer fenced through separate CALL project
- New Deer Fence
- NWSS mapped ancient woodland

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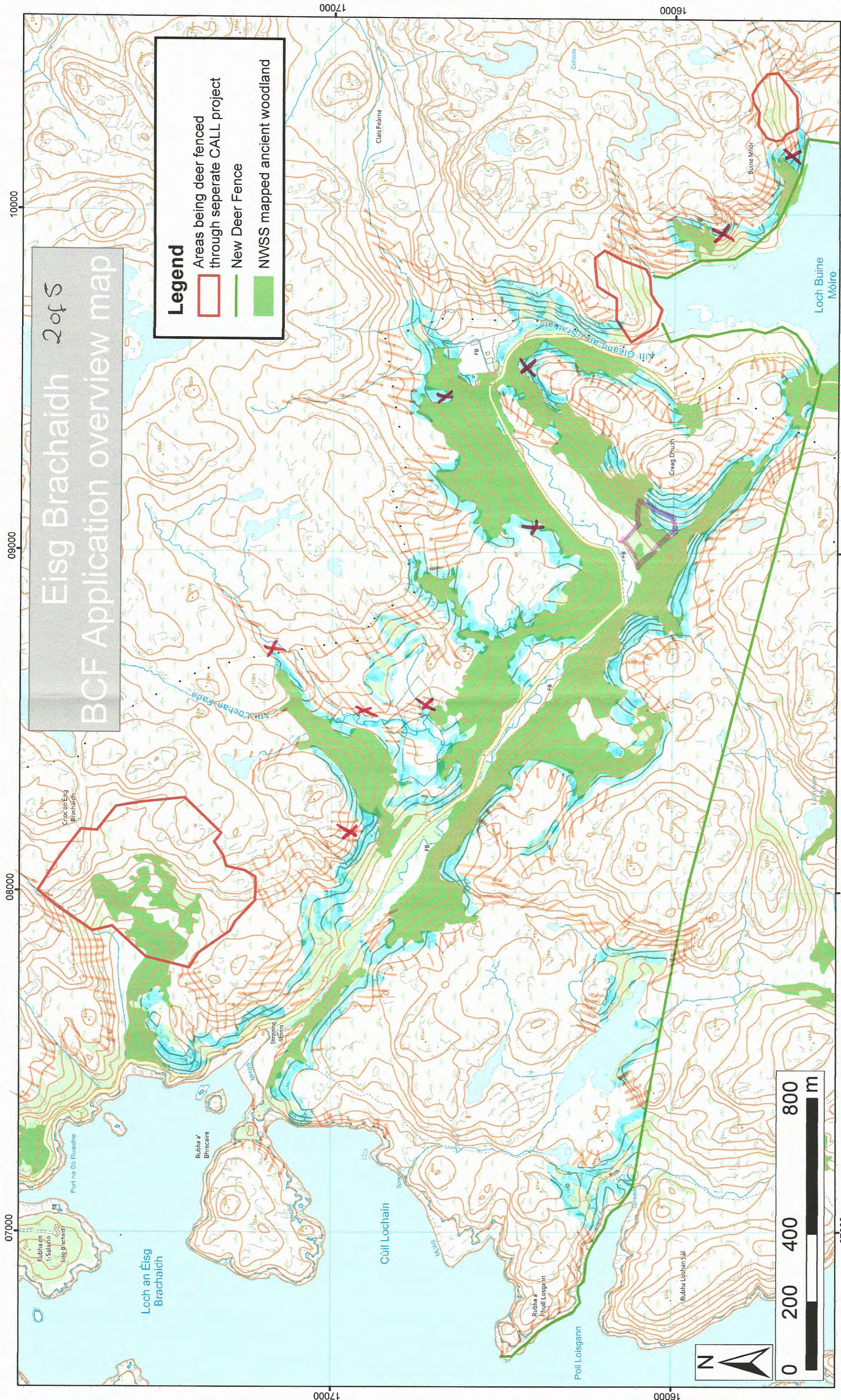
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Central Grid Reference:
Scale: 1:10,021

Scottish Wildlife Trust
Harbourside House
110 Commercial Street
Edinburgh
EH6 6NF

X = Approx loc of Enrichment Flawing
/ = Shorter Term Regen
/ = Longer Term Regen
/ = Deer fence removed

Coigach & Assynt

LIVING LANDSCAPE



Eisd Brachaidh 2 of 5
BCF Application overview map

Legend
 Areas being deer fenced through separate CALL project
 New Deer Fence
 NWSS mapped ancient woodland

X = Approx loc-y Enrichment Plant
 Blue hatched = Shorter Term Regen
 Orange hatched = Longer Term Regen
 Purple hatched = Deer fence removal

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 Central Grid Reference:
 Scale: 1:10,228

Scottish Wildlife Trust
 Harbourside House
 110 Commercial Street
 Edinburgh
 EH6 6NF

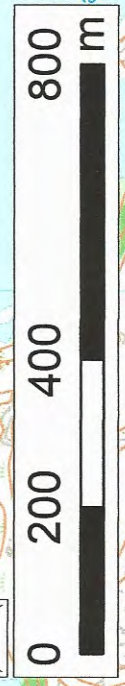
Coigach & Assynt
 LIVING LANDSCAPE



Eisd Brachaidh 3 of 5
BCF Application overview map

Legend

- Areas being deer fenced through separate CALL project
- New Deer Fence
- NWSS mapped ancient woodland



Coigach & Assynt

LIVING LANDSCAPE

- X = Approx loc of Environment Flawty
- / / / = Shorter term Regen
- / / / = Longer Term Regen
- / / / = Deer fence Removal

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