

**MAR LODGE ESTATE  
MANAGEMENT PLAN  
2012 – 2016**



the National Trust  
for Scotland  
a place for everyone



## Contents

1. Foreword
2. Introduction to the New Management Plan
3. The Significance of Mar Lodge Estate
4. The Vision for Mar Lodge Estate
5. Activity Areas & Actions
  - 5.1 Woodland management
  - 5.2 Deer management
  - 5.3 Moorland management
  - 5.4 Wild land
  - 5.5 Biodiversity
  - 5.6 Monitoring
  - 5.7 Cultural heritage
  - 5.8 Hydrological management
  - 5.9 Accommodation
  - 5.10 Visitor management
  - 5.11 Education & interpretation
  - 5.12 Volunteer opportunities
  - 5.13 Communication & engagement
6. Management Plan Action Summary
7. Table of Supporting Documents

## 1. Foreword

We took on responsibility for Mar Lodge Estate in 1995, assisted by vital and generous donations from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Easter Charitable Trust. Our vision for the estate extends over the next 200 years, restoring and regenerating the ancient Caledonian Pine Forest that would have been so familiar to earlier generations and on which local communities and a myriad of species would have originally depended. Our management plan for this great natural heritage asset unites conservation alongside field sports and access for all. We aim to ensure that the unique combinations of geological, natural and human heritage on the estate are recognised for what they are: some of the most important, dramatic and beautiful habitats in all of Scotland and northern Europe.

A vision requiring two centuries for its realisation, however, cannot bring about instant results. The Trust was caught in the middle of a long-running debate about the best methods of deer management relative to the needs of conservation and Highland field sports. This is why we invited David Windmill and Professors Jeff Maxwell and Rory Putman to carry out an independent, evidence-based review of our management of Mar Lodge Estate. The review was published in November 2011, recommending an integrated, mutually supporting set of actions, and the collection, analysis and sharing of data to inform future actions. The review recommendations have helped inform this new management plan. Importantly, they have allowed us to conclude that the Trust's original stance - that there is no inherent contradiction between our Three Pillars of Conservation, Access & Enjoyment and Field Sports - remains current and accurate. Mindful of the needs of our neighbours and our obligations as a conservation charity, we intend to pursue our vision with renewed vigour.

Our intention is that visitors to Mar Lodge Estate in, say, 2022, can expect to notice: helpful, unobtrusive directional and interpretive signage; significant areas of natural pinewood regeneration; a wide choice of themed ranger-led walks and talks; sympathetic redevelopment of Derry Lodge and other examples of cultural heritage on the estate; moorland in good condition, with signs of regular muirburn and outcrops of pinewood regeneration; obvious biodiversity across the estate's different habitats; the wild land quality of the Cairngorms plateau safeguarded, with footpaths well maintained; a thriving hospitality business welcoming individuals, families and groups, catering to differing budgets; as well as the successful and complementary management of conservation and access alongside grouse shooting, deer stalking and salmon fishing

The dominance of habitat and deer management in the Trust's dialogue with stakeholders in the past has distracted attention from other issues. In preparing this plan, we have sought to engage more effectively with everyone who has a stake in the estate's future to explain our plans to deliver on our vision. A new format for the Mar Lodge Estate Management Plan signals our intention to expend greater effort at engaging with the wider community. To that end, we are particularly grateful to all the individuals, Trust Members, agencies and organisations, which helped us shape this new plan. In particular, we recognise the contributions of the community in Braemar, owners of estates bordering Mar Lodge Estate, local Deer Management Group and Scottish Natural Heritage.

**Pete Selman** - Director of Properties and Visitor Services

**Terry Levinthal** - Director of Conservation and Projects



## 2. Introduction to the New Management Plan

This is the fourth edition of the management plan for Mar Lodge Estate since its acquisition by the Trust in 1995. Its twin-fold purpose is to set out the strategic framework through which long-term outcomes will be achieved and to describe operational activities planned between 2012 and 2016.

The timeframe against which ultimate success is gauged will be measured in centuries rather than over the lifetime of this plan or even decades. Moreover, the Trust's commitment to full integration of multiple management objectives, with their inherently different pace of delivery, adds greater complexity to the planning process. Every management plan, however, needs defined milestones against which shorter-term performance can be evaluated. This plan sets out how the Trust intends to manage the estate over the next five years and to what ends. The inevitable complexity is dealt with by integrating strategic intent with detailed plans for component management objectives.

Given the Trust's commitment to improved stakeholder engagement, a more transparent and accessible format has been adopted for this latest edition. Under a number of defined Activity Areas, each Action within the management plan is then explained with reference to one or more of the three Strategic Aims or Pillars affirmed for Mar Lodge Estate, namely Conservation, Access & Enjoyment and Field Sports.

This approach will allow those with an interest in how Mar Lodge Estate is being managed and how it is progressing in realising its long-term vision quickly to assess relevant parts of the plan, with a Management Plan Action Summary table included in Section 6.

As for previous editions, a range of different plans, policies and agreements are linked to Mar Lodge Estate which, where possible, are referenced within relevant Activity Areas and Actions in this plan. A list of these Supporting Documents is provided in Section 7. The plan has been prepared to comply with the Mar Lodge Estate Management Principles (Principal Aim and eight subsidiary principles) drawn up in 2006 to meet the Trust's moral obligations to the Easter Charitable Trust (ECT). Note that during the lifetime of this plan, the Trust intends to review and, if necessary, update these Management Principles). It also fulfils a commitment made to the National Heritage Memorial Fund to provide for a Management Agreement, confirming detailed contractual arrangements relating to access, recreation and conservation over a 25 year period, to be re-negotiated with Scottish National Heritage (SNH) every five years. It also takes account of the Trust's obligations under the voluntary Section 7 Deer Control Agreement and Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Park Plan.

The management plan has been drawn up on the basis of extensive consultation with a variety of national and local stakeholders, and is subject to final approval by the Trust's Senior Management Team and Board.

### 3. The Significance of Mar Lodge Estate

Lying at the heart of the Cairngorms National Park, Mar Lodge Estate is one of the most important areas for nature conservation in the British Isles. The estate is the largest of the National Trust for Scotland's properties, covering over 29,000 hectares.

The habitats and species at Mar Lodge Estate are of international and national significance with over 40% of the estate being designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The estate supports rare species but also species and habitats that are on the edge of their geographical distribution and hence of conservation importance.

The landscape, too, is internationally significant for its scale and diversity. The montane plateau is on a massive scale - perhaps the most significant area of wild land in the British Isles - and is part of the Cairngorm Mountains National Scenic Area. It is one of the areas least influenced by man in Britain. The estate has on or within its boundary four of the five highest summits in the British Isles, including Scotland's second highest; in total 15 Munros. The Cairngorms are also home to Britain's largest area of arctic alpine flora and snowbed communities.

Three separate areas of native Caledonian woodland cover almost 800 hectares, around 5% of the total national resource. This habitat is important for red squirrel, black grouse, capercaillie, Scottish crossbill, parrot crossbill, wood ants, other invertebrates and fungi. Some of the Scots pines themselves are highly significant as ancient trees and they have provided the second longest native pine reference chronology in Scotland, stretching back to 1477.

These pinewoods are now elderly remnants of a much larger forest cover, which has declined further over the last 150 years because deer browsing has prevented any natural regeneration. There is now an opportunity to enhance the significance of this habitat through native woodland restoration on a truly landscape scale.

Mar Lodge Estate is now one of the best-studied estates for biodiversity and geodiversity in Scotland and has significant potential to expand understanding natural heritage features through research.

The landscape is also overlain with the imprint of human use over thousands of years, with over 700 known archaeological sites identified. In total, 260 hectares are designated for their Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Much of the archaeology has been recognised as of national importance because of its state of preservation at both a structural and landscape level, and its potential to enhance considerably understanding of land-use from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In Glen Lui and Glen Dee there are some particularly fine examples of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century townships. The recent discovery of two Mesolithic sites - the first direct physical evidence of the presence of people in the Cairngorms from as far back as at least 5,000 BC - adds additional time-depth to this inhabited landscape.

Impressive 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, including the Lodge, Ballroom, Stables, Derry Lodge, Deer Larder and Princess Louise's Tearoom, have strong associations with use of the property as a Victorian sporting estate, which together with neighbouring estates played such a significant role in shaping the social, economic and agricultural environment of the area.

## 4. The Vision for Mar Lodge Estate

Working to a 200-year time horizon and adhering to the Mar Lodge Estate Management Principles, Mar Lodge Estate will be a place where:

- landscape and habitats have been restored, and woodland regenerated to a natural treeline below the montane plateaux, with grazing animals managed at sustainable levels enabling native species and semi-natural habitats to flourish.
- management of the land for field sports as well as the functions of a Highland sporting estate have been fully integrated with conservation aims and access.
- the traces of thousands of years of human history have been recognised, interpreted, respected and appreciated as an integral component of the landscape.
- collaboration with neighbouring estates, stakeholder organisations and the local community, have helped the estate to achieve recognition as a significant conservation, social and economic asset for the region and for Scotland as a whole.
- the estate is recognised by visitors as ‘a place for everyone’; that they understand and value the essential wild character of much of the land, which provides a place for people to live and work, to find physical and spiritual refreshment, or to feel inspired and challenged by their surroundings.

## **5. Activity Areas & Actions**

### **5.1 Woodland Management**

A Whole Estate Forest Plan (WEFP) 2012-2031 was prepared for the woodland on Mar Lodge Estate by the end of July 2012. The plan's primary objective is to put the Mar Lodge Estate woodlands on the right trajectory for achieving a 200-year woodland vision and in the process also bringing the woodland component of the SAC into favourable condition.

The long term vision is: "To have established a self-sustaining intimate mix of structurally and compositionally diverse woodland and non-woodland habitats extending from the valley floor to the natural altitudinal limit for tree growth; that are ecologically and culturally appropriate for the site and climatic conditions, that increase connectivity between habitats (particularly the remnant pine areas) across the landscape and within the site through the development and expansion of woodland networks, that respect and where possible enhance conservation of the estate's cultural heritage assets and that provide a range of ecological and social services without the need for intensive management "

The Whole Estate Forest plan will be aligned with NTS policies, this plan, Mar Lodge Estate Management Principles and the SNH management agreement. It will also be set in the context of local objectives such as the Cairngorms Park Plan, Upper Dee Riparian Project and the River Dee Catchment Management Plan.

Conservation	Field Sports	Access & Enjoyment
We will produce a draft Whole Estate Forest Plan by the end of July 2012, and agree key actions from that plan by end of September 2012.		We will continue to use our plantation woodlands as a commercial resource and where possible this will be exploited for use in a biomass boiler system, installed subject to investment appraisal, in Mar Lodge, and also for timber sales. The work conducted on the plantations will all contribute to the continued naturalisation of these areas and help to reduce their landscape impact.
We will fully meet our KPI (2011-2016) for woodland regeneration agreed with SNH.		
Should monitoring show that deer management and strategic fencing alone are failing to protect regeneration, we will consider other options including using small-scale enclosure fencing within the regeneration zone.		
Further strategic fencing at the Quoich will be considered, should it become evident that deer management alone is proving ineffectual in protecting regeneration.		
We will use cutting or burning of heather, mechanical scarification of the ground and/or localised planting in areas where there is likely to be little or no viable seed fall. This will be addressed through the WEFP, to be published by July 2012.		
While deer management has proved an effective tool to secure natural regeneration, if monitoring shows this no longer to be the case, we will consider other management options including the use of enclosure fencing. We will also support the establishment (by natural regeneration or planting) of areas of riparian woodland within the moorland zone using enclosure fencing. This will be addressed to an extent in the WEFP.		



## 5.2 Deer Management

Deer management is key to achieving the natural heritage objective of “continued enhancement of key habitats and species at Mar Lodge Estate with particular attention to the restoration and expansion/enhancement of native Caledonian pinewood”.

For management purposes, Mar Lodge Estate is divided into two zones. The moorland zone encompasses the south-west part of the estate while the regeneration zone falls within the north-east and includes the main glens where native Caledonian pinewood remains. NTS has entered into a voluntary Section 7 Deer Control Agreement with SNH to control deer numbers, mainly in the regeneration zone. Delivered through a Steering Group comprising representatives from NTS, SNH, Forestry Commission Scotland, neighbouring estates, deer management groups and the local community, the Mar Lodge Deer Management Plan (DMP) is fundamental to this agreement. All deer control will be in accordance with the NTS Code of Practice for Deer Management and following SNH’s Best Practice guidance.

Deer are managed at levels which allow maintenance and, if required, restoration of habitats into favourable condition. Within the moorland zone, deer are managed as a sporting resource. The current target population for the estate is 1,650 (down from 3,350 on acquisition in 1995). Deer numbers are maintained at different densities between the zones in order to achieve habitat objectives. Similarly, over the coming years, annual deer culls will continue to be based on habitat condition.

The aim of deer management in the regeneration zone is to achieve natural regeneration of the pinewood habitat and, in the long term, to ensure a healthy deer population that is in balance with the carrying capacity of this habitat. Over the last 17 years, deer numbers have been reduced in the regeneration zone to low numbers to allow tree seedlings to escape browsing and grow unchecked, with the expectation that such low numbers will need to be maintained for several decades to come.

Conservation	Field Sports	Access & Enjoyment
We will maintain a target of 1,650 red deer in the moorland zone. Deer have been and will continue to be strictly controlled to a level agreed with SNH and reviewed periodically under the auspices of the Section 7 Steering Group.	Through strategic fencing at the Linn of Dee, we will protect the population of sporting stags and set a target of 80 let days per year for red stag stalking.	
We will maintain deer densities (red and roe) in the regeneration zone at a level that allows regeneration to occur, with habitat condition determining annual cull targets. It is envisaged that in the longer term, when regeneration is progressing well, that deer numbers may be allowed to rise within the regeneration zone.	We aim to let part of the hind cull in order to maximise commercial benefit. We will target 40 let days of hind stalking each year.	
We will continue to use ponies for extraction and will ensure that we maintain an adequate number of suitably trained ponies for this purpose. We will also ensure that keepers and ghillies have the appropriate skills and resources to be able to ensure the welfare of the ponies.		
Mar Lodge Estate will remain a member of the East Grampian Deer Management Group and will also participate in the West Grampian Group. We will actively participate in these groups to find solutions to deer management at a landscape scale.		
We will work with neighbours to identify areas of woodland, which they may be able to open up to assist in providing wintering ground/shelter for deer.		



### 5.3 Moorland Management

Moorland is managed to maintain habitats in favourable condition. Appropriate habitats in the moorland zone are burned on a cyclical basis, which is beneficial for grouse shooting, biodiversity, woodland regeneration, as well as mitigating the risk and potential impact of wildfires.

NTS's Habitat Condition Assessment and SNH's Site Condition Monitoring both confirm that deer management has led to an improvement in the condition of the montane areas within the designated sites. Significantly reduced deer numbers have also resulted in considerable growth of ground vegetation and a high fuel load in some parts of the estate, particularly the regeneration zone. It may also be reducing the recruitment rate of seedlings within the regeneration zone as the dense thick moss and vegetation provides few niches for germination. The moorland on the estate also plays a role in carbon storage and management should not have a detrimental impact on this.

The heather moorland extends to an altitude of 1,000m, with some regeneration of scrub communities at the lower parts of this zone. The moorland supports important populations of red grouse, waders and raptors. The estate also supports areas of wet and dry heath as well as extensive areas of blanket bog.

Grouse shooting on Mar Lodge Estate is walked-up, often over pointers. Bags are typically 10 to 20 brace per day. The moorland zone is also where almost all of the let stalking is carried out, with current annual targets of 80 days' stag stalking and 40 days' hind stalking.

Conservation	Field Sports	Access & Enjoyment
<p>We will develop a formal plan for integrated management of all moorland areas of the estate by end of February 2013. The primary aim of such an integrated plan will be to ensure the moorland remains in favourable condition across the estate. We will fully consult with relevant industry and conservation experts, neighbours and other key stakeholders in developing this plan.</p>	<p>We will continue red grouse shooting in an ecologically sustainable manner, which provides a significant commercial gain for the estate.</p>	
<p>The moorland management plan will include details for active management of heather within the regeneration zone.</p>		
<p>The moorland plan will detail our commitment to continuing to manage heather within the moorland zone for the benefit of grouse, following the muirburn plan approved by SNH.</p>		
<p>The stalking team will continue to manage numbers of foxes, crows, weasels, stoats and mink in order to reduce their impacts on ground nesting birds and other species.</p>		



## 5.4 Wild Land

In accordance with its Wild Land Policy (2002), NTS is committed to protecting what defines wild land on Mar Lodge Estate. The Trust also seeks to ensure that the montane environment is not adversely affected by, for example, insensitive forestry or agriculture, measures to make the terrain easier or safer, and visual intrusions such as pylons, roads and fences. In addition, it seeks to minimise access pressures through promotion of responsible use (both on the estate and via raising national awareness), suitable interpretation and the application of the Wild Land philosophy, by the reduction of vehicle access and a commitment to the “long walk in” to remote areas. The montane habitat on the Cairngorm plateau, the area least managed by man in the UK, supports a number of rare and significant species such as dotterel and snow bunting, as well as three leaved rush habitats and snowbed communities. Many of these are notified features of the SAC.

Since acquisition, there has been an extensive and innovative programme of track removal from upland areas, which has benefitted the landscape. Major capital improvements to footpaths have been undertaken through contract management as part of the European Objective 2 funding programme. The focus has now turned to maintaining the paths, although auditing of the network may reveal a need for some future capital repair work.

A minimum level of vehicle use on the estate is necessary in order to carry out essential management functions and delivery. The use of ATVs has been reduced, with ponies used for deer extraction as far as possible.

The independent review panel and NTS recognise that fencing is a potentially useful management tool with regard to deer management. The Mar Lodge Estate Management Principles and Wild Land policy mean that use of fencing has to be clearly justified. Where fencing is used, it will be with a view to accepting a short-term intrusion in the landscape to facilitate a long-term gain in woodland regeneration or other benefit. Where appropriate and practicable, gates will be sited along the length of any new fences erected.

Conservation	Access & Enjoyment	Field Sports
Following on publication of the estate's ATV Policy in April 2012, we will minimise impacts to features of designated sites and wild land, and reduce the risk of new tracks appearing on the estate, by considering use of vehicles on a case-by-case basis.		
We will remove 13.5km of redundant deer fencing from within the regeneration zone by the end of 2012.		
We will undertake a fire risk assessment for the whole estate (as an action from both woodland and moorland plans) by the end of 2012 and implement resultant management measures over the subsequent years of this plan.		
We believe that cairns can be an unnecessary intrusion into the mountain landscape. Unless recognised as culturally significant, we will normally dismantle them during footpath repair and maintenance programmes. If in any doubt, we will ensure consultation with the relevant Mountain Rescue Teams is carried out prior to removal.		
	In 2012 we will carry out a full path audit across the estate in order to help inform future maintenance requirements.	



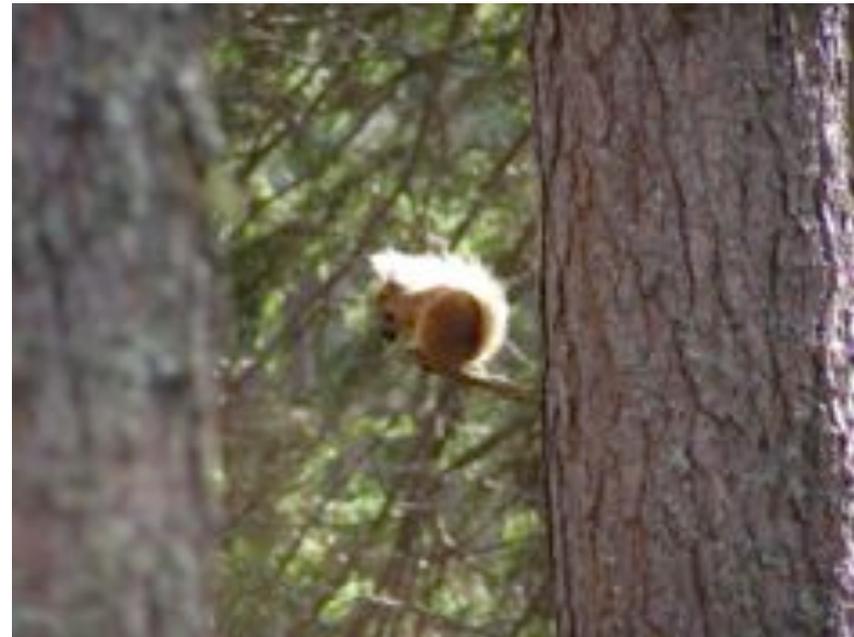
## 5.5 Biodiversity

In previous years, the estate has conducted informal biodiversity action plan liaison work with the Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) group. In the lifetime of the last management plan, a review of Biodiversity Action Plan species was conducted which took into account the UK BAP priorities, SNH's species framework and the Cairngorm LBAP priorities at that time. A number of priority species for the estate emerged from this exercise and the possible management actions were established. Work began for some of these including twinflower and the Scottish wildcat.

There is significant potential to undertake valuable biodiversity research on Mar Lodge Estate, which the Trust is unable to exploit on its own. Collaboration, therefore, with academic institutions and other bodies, continues to be explored. The montane habitats and species on the estate, for example, are likely to be some of the first to be affected by climate change, providing scope for research projects investigating its effects.

The estate also encompasses a considerable area of farmland, mainly in Glen Dee. The farmland area supports good populations of waders, some of which are declining in the UK. It is managed in accordance with the Farmland Action Plan, developed in 2011.

Conservation	Access & Enjoyment	Field Sports
We will agree within three months of CNPA publishing its review of LBAP and species priorities, our own actions to deliver these priorities.		
Meantime, we will continue our own work to deliver benefits for black grouse, capercaillie, twinflower and water vole, working with other conservation organisations as appropriate.		
We will investigate the opportunities for Rural Development Contracts to implement both Farmland and Riparian action plans by end of August 2012 and, if unavailable, will look at other options.		
We will continue to contribute wherever possible to the aims of the Dee Catchment Partnership in helping to deliver the floodplain restoration project and upper Dee riparian project.		



## 5.6 Monitoring

An ecological monitoring programme is conducted, reviewed, updated and agreed with SNH every five years. Habitat and species monitoring generally involves monitoring responses to management or monitoring species and habitats of conservation importance. The current focus is on the response of woodland and other habitats to the deer reduction. This includes assessment of moorland habitats, tree regeneration and montane scrub.

Annual monitoring of regeneration is conducted which measures browsing levels, growth rate and emergence of seedlings above vegetation height. This monitoring has indicated that in the last two years, deer numbers have reached the level required to allow successful progress of regeneration. The priority for deer management is now to maintain these levels of deer. It is envisaged that in the longer term, when regeneration is progressing well, that deer numbers may be allowed to rise within the regeneration zone to a level that does not suppress further regeneration.

Habitat condition is the principal measure of the success of deer management rather than absolute deer numbers, with monitoring results informing decisions about the annual preparation of cull plans. Deer density monitoring is also used to inform reviews of the DMP.

Other monitoring is concerned with BAP species such as black grouse, narrow headed wood ants, dotterel and ptarmigan, squirrels and raptors. NTS also collaborates in external monitoring projects, currently including the Cairngorms Rare plants project, Cairngorms water vole project, Upper Dee Riparian project, Dee floodplain restoration project and the BTO British Bird Census.

Conservation	Field Sports	Access & Enjoyment
<p>We will measure tree regeneration through monitoring of tree transects and quadrats with annual regeneration monitoring by estate staff (three yearly monitoring [2011, 2014] by agencies). The target measure will be Positive Incremental Growth in the average height of existing tree seedlings above the height of the dominant ground vegetation, with 75% of seedlings showing positive growth in the regeneration zone of the SAC.</p>	<p>By the end of 2012 we will have developed and fully implemented a methodology for comprehensive monitoring of our sporting activity.</p>	
<p>We will carry out regular counting of deer in the regeneration zone, consistently applying a single, defined approach. Helicopter counts will take place bi-annually with the Deer Management Group count (on foot) annually. The Steering Group to review frequency of counts.</p>	<p>We will continue to monitor visitor numbers at the Linn of Dee car park and explore new visitor monitoring arrangements at the Quoich car park..</p>	
<p>We will continue to monitor important natural heritage features, while awaiting the outcome of the LBAP review.</p>		
<p>We will pass all our biological records through NTS centrally to the NBN Gateway.</p>		



## 5.7 Cultural Heritage

Extensive areas along the main river systems on the estate have been designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM). A management agreement between Historic Scotland and the NTS for 2011-2015 is being implemented, in which standard methodologies are agreed for various activities within Scheduled areas, which would normally require consent from Scottish Ministers. This represents best management practice within nationally important cultural landscapes, and will reduce levels of bureaucracy with regard to conservation and maintenance operations.

Numerous archaeological sites and historic buildings on the estate lie outwith the SAM areas. NTS ensures that conservation, maintenance and development activities respect the integrity of these features and the wider historic environment. The Trust carries out regular survey, repair and maintenance work on built structures on the estate, with the support of Historic Scotland and other organisations.

The Trust is keen to ensure that the three mountain bothies on the estate are fit for purpose and managed sustainably. NTS has worked with Friends of Bob Scott's in the rebuilding of the eponymous bothy, and set up lease / repair arrangements with the Mountain Bothies Association for both Corroul Bothy and Hutchison Memorial Hut. Currently boarded up, although wind and watertight, Derry Lodge is a 19<sup>th</sup> century shooting lodge of considerable size and significance, situated at the head of Glenlui. Through renovation, the Trust is committed to bringing it back into appropriate use as a model of sustainability and renewable technologies. In addition, there are a number of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings which have suffered from problems related to their use by campers and the Trust is keen to develop a creative approach to visitor education to reduce the levels of damaging activity.

Much of the original furniture survives at the Lodge, having been stored in the Ballroom when the previous building burnt down, including over 2,000 mounted stags' heads dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A condition survey has recently been undertaken and some remedial repairs completed by Collections Conservation Services. A Housekeeping Manual has been prepared to guide staff in the day-to-day care of these important collections and in the relocation of important pieces if they are likely to be at risk.

Conservation	Access & Enjoyment	Field Sports
We will review management of bothies on an individual basis including liaison/management agreement for Bob Scott's, lease arrangements with MBA for Corrour Bothy and Hutchison's Memorial Hut. We will hold a consultation on the future of Garbh Coire Bothy and implement any forthcoming action by end of 2013.		
We will by the end of 2013 develop a management strategy for the maintenance of ruinous buildings on the estate, following the methodologies outlined in the HS/NTS management agreement. We will determine the resource requirement for delivering such a plan in order to source funding.		
We will undertake an options appraisal to identify how Derry Lodge might be brought back into regular use and develop a detailed project plan. Consulting with HS and others as appropriate, the plan will respect our commitment to minimal vehicle traffic on the track and take account of the heavy use made by campers of the flats in front of the Lodge.		
We will devise a scheme to provide a day shelter and interpretive feature within the Princess Louise's Tearoom, secure listed building consent, and seek funding.		
We will conduct a feasibility study into the possible use of the old deer larder in interpreting the tradition of deerstalking on the estate.		
We will by the end of 2013 produce and begin to implement a plan for the interpretation of the estate's archaeological and cultural heritage.		
We will ensure that the collections at Mar Lodge are appropriately cared for through training of staff, together with input from NTS's experienced teams of conservators and curators.		



## 5.8 Hydrological Management

The River Dee, regarded as one of UK's premier salmon rivers, tumbles and meanders through the estate. It is also designated an SAC for its salmon, otter and freshwater pearl mussels and, hence, of conservation importance. Eight miles of river - the highest reaches fishable on the Dee and arguably the most scenic - provide an important source of income. The fishing ranges from quiet, murmuring pools between wooded banks to more vigorous pools among rugged open moorland and the majestic mountains of the Cairngorms.

NTS maintains the 100% catch and return policy operated over the whole of the River Dee. The Trust is an active member of the Dee District Salmon Fishery Board and follows its best practice guidelines. The Riparian and Hydrological Habitat Action Plan also outlines policy for maintaining and enhancing the river and associated habitats and NTS works closely with the River Dee Trust in order to improve riparian habitats, carrying out its own work to improve such habitats. Management is deliberately responsive. Unless an estate asset is under risk, the river and natural flood plain are left to natural processes.

Salmon and sea trout fishing on the Mar Lodge Estate beat of the Dee has not been fully exploited in recent years as a commercial resource. The Trust is keen to develop and promote its full potential, subject to conservation principles prevailing.

Conservation	Access & Enjoyment	Field Sports
We will maintain the 100% catch and return policy operated over the whole of the River Dee. We will be an active member of the Dee District Salmon Fishery Board and follow its best practice guidelines.		
We will work closely with the River Dee Trust in order to improve riparian habitats and will carry out our own work to improve such habitats. This work is detailed in the WEFP, to be published by the end of 2012.	<p>Despite having much to offer, fishing on the Mar Lodge beat of the Dee has not been fully exploited as a commercial resource. Through this plan, we will develop this resource through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making full use of the Fish Dee website, posting catch returns and advertising all available lets.</li> <li>• Packaging fishing with accommodation in order to maximise economic benefit</li> <li>• Developing fishing bothies where appropriate and reusing existing building where possible</li> </ul> <p>Actively marketing our fishing through a range of PR and advertising opportunities</p>	
<p>We will in 2012 survey river embankment weaknesses downstream from the Linn of Dee. We will repair embankments only if there is a risk of flood damage to estate buildings.</p> <p>We will on an ongoing basis monitor embankments annually by fixed-point photographs where there is a potential risk to estate buildings.</p> <p>We will liaise with Mar Estate regarding possible effects of decay of embankments near Muir Cottage and liaise with Invercauld Estate with regard to possible effects on Allanmore Cottage.</p>		
We will continue our support of the floodplain restoration scheme and involvement in the revetment removal project. We will assist with an environmental impact assessment of the revetment removal and update our plans once complete..		



## 5.9 Accommodation

The range of NTS staff and volunteer accommodation includes single and shared bedrooms in the Stables, flats in Mar Lodge and cottages around the estate. For visitors, self-catering accommodation includes basic, bunkhouse rooms in the Stables, better equipped Basecamp bedrooms, comfortable apartments in Mar Lodge and two luxury cottages close to the Lodge.

All accommodation bookings are handled through NTS central Holidays team. In recent years, there has been a particularly strong demand for wedding accommodation, with capacity in the Lodge and Basecamp for over 60 guests. In addition to taking an apartment in Mar Lodge, guests are also able to book time in the drawing room, Craggan room, dining room and billiards room. For larger functions such as weddings, other parties or conferences, the Ballroom is also available for hire.

Considerable scope exists to explore new means to boost both occupancy rates and surpluses through packaging accommodation alongside other recreational activities including field sports, marketing initiatives and collaborative third party ventures.



Conservation	Access & Enjoyment	Field Sports
	We will actively develop opportunities for packaging accommodation with other estate activities, particularly field sports, in order to leverage maximum commercial yield from such activities.	
Energy Efficiency: We will carry out a second stage feasibility study during 2012 for the provision of a biomass heating facility for the Lodge and Stables. This will include an appraisal of control systems and insulation.		
We will conduct a feasibility study in relation to developing additional services in the Lodge, including possibly a restaurant/bar/tearoom facility.		
We will examine the potential for entering into strategic partnerships with other organisations, which have specific expertise in operating accommodation businesses. Where there is a clear economic, social and strategic benefit to entering into such partnerships, we will explore further the feasibility of such options.		
We will review the marketing of the Mar Lodge self-catering apartments to achieve optimum occupancy, alongside other functions and potential uses for the building.		
We will carry out improvements to the facilities within the Ballroom to maximise bookings for wedding functions; ceilidhs; meetings; conferences or other functions.		
We will develop plans for conversion of Allanaquoich Steading to suitable accommodation. This would incorporate a sensitive conversion, allowing for some consolidation and interpretation of the attached 19 <sup>th</sup> century sawmill remains. We will complete these plans to allow for development to proceed subject to funding by the end of 2015.		
Evaluate potential use(s) for the upper floor of Mar Lodge, either in a commercial capacity, or in an administrative or accommodation function.		
We will make use of the public rooms on the ground floor of the Lodge as a small venue for conferences or lectures, or as a facility for local community functions. We will open the Lodge and Ballroom to the public on a more regular basis through the provision of guided tours, in addition to 'Estate Open Days'. We will also designate an area within the Lodge for the interpretation of the natural and cultural history of the estate and the Trust's management work, for guests and the visiting public.		
We will prepare and implement a camping management strategy for the wider estate.		

## **5.10 Visitor Management**

Mar Lodge Estate welcomes 100,000 visitors a year, with differing needs and desires, yet careful planning and management has meant that there are relatively few problems. NTS aims to be a leader in promoting and managing responsible access, adhering to the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC).

Responsible public access is enshrined in the Mar Lodge Estate Management Principles. Since the SOAC was approved in 2004, NTS has contributed to raising national awareness of the new access rights and responsibilities. The NTS is also working with CNPA and SNH to develop a supplement to the SOAC that explores how it should be applied in areas of wild land (giving consideration to visitor behaviour with regard to cultural artefacts in the landscape). This work falls within the remit of the SNH management agreement. Once agreed, it will be applied to Mar Lodge Estate as a flagship site.

Estate staff work with the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Forum to assess implications for access to the estate, including links with the Core Path Network. Issues such as campfires, control of dogs, cycling and organised events are all subject to constant monitoring and review. An all-ability path at Linn of Dee is complete, but there is still potential to develop this further and other low ground walks and all-ability paths that would be suitable for visitors with mobility impairments.

Conservation	Access & Enjoyment	Field Sports
We will complete the update of our Visitor Management Plan by the end of 2012. At the core of the plan will be our capacity to deliver national and park wide objectives of health, wellbeing and social inclusion.		
We will participate in the Cairngorms Massif managers group and Park wide responsible access initiatives such as "leave no trace"		
We will maintain all National Nature Reserves minimum standards (except where declaration is required) and within three months of declaration, meet all minimum standards. We will also agree with SNH, which advanced standards it is appropriate for us to meet.		
We will continue to monitor visitor use of ruinous buildings on the estate and manage this use in accordance with the NTS/HS management agreement.		
We will undertake condition surveys of 27 bridges on the estate by the end of 2012. Subject to appropriate consents, we will repair or replace the Allanaquoich road bridge and Upper Quoich footbridge by the end of 2012. We will look to replace the Luibeg bridge during 2013.		
We will carry out a full review of signage both on and off the estate, consulting with Visit Scotland / Aberdeenshire Council to have brown tourism directional signage to Mar Lodge from the A93 and Braemar village. We will review all existing directional and information signage, and produce new signage plan for the grounds of the estate by the end of 2013		
By the end of 2013 we will carry out an analysis of present and future building functions within the estate, and use this to guide a decision on the provision of a formal reception area within the Designed Landscape Zone, to provide face-to-face information for visitors.		
As the main access point to the estate we will in 2012 provide an increased staff presence at the Linn of Dee during times of peak visitor activity to engage with visitors to the outdoor environment.		
Review the current functions within the Stable Block and consider relocation. Subject to such review, we will draw up a plan for the development of the empty upper storey of the Stables.		
	Consider the possible use of the old deer larder in interpreting the tradition of deerstalking on the estate.	
Consult with neighbours and organisations regarding possible provision of a designated camping ground in the Braemar area.		
We will support the development of pedestrian and cycle links to Braemar, in conjunction with neighbours and other organisations, including the investigation of the provision of a new footbridge across the Dee, to increase the potential for 'low ground' circular routes to Braemar (as suggested in the Core Path Plan).		
We will identify and develop preferred walking and cycle routes within the Designed Landscape Zone. We will draw up programme of work for infrastructure, including waymarking and interpretation.		



## 5.11 Education & Interpretation

The Trust seeks to provide inspiring education and interpretation about the estate - both formal and informal - which contributes to raising awareness and understanding of, as well as appreciation for, one of Scotland's most significant natural and cultural heritage assets.

There is also a need to influence how visitors behave at archaeological sites and around a number of ruinous 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century built structures, on the basis that given a better understanding of the significance of these features, people will respect and treat them well.

A new Learning and Interpretation Strategy for the estate has been prepared, embracing partnership working as well as staff training and development. The Trust is also collaborating with local communities, neighbours and stakeholders along with statutory agencies, around provision of learning, both on and off the property. Specific initiatives have been developed for local schools and community groups to enhance their engagement with the environment, and develop the potential of the property to provide a formal training role through courses and work placements.

The annual Outdoor Learning event, a partnership project with the Dee River Trust, Aberdeenshire Council and CNPA, targets secondary school pupils who enjoy learning about the outdoors and responsible access.

There is considerable scope to develop interpretation initiatives around the Lodge, currently minimal despite the significance of the building and its cultural heritage.

Conservation	Access & Enjoyment	Field Sports
We will organise at least one Outdoor Activity Week for schools each year, in partnership with others, giving school children an experience of living, working and playing within the context of a highland estate in the National Park.		
We will produce an information leaflet for DoE and John Muir Award participants by the end of 2012.		
We will review and update the content of the Mar Lode Estate website on a regular and ongoing basis		
We will organise at least one event each year to promote best practice.		
We will host at least two visits for outdoor education students, when they can experience all aspects of living and working on a highland estate and develop their skills in countryside management.		
We will produce regular newsletters for the local community and publication on the NTS website, informing stakeholders of our work, as well as events and activities which are open to all.		
We will hold at least five Junior Nature Club events each year, giving local children the ability to access the estate and its resources, and learn about all aspects of our work.		
	We will organise at least 25 guided walks each year and will partner with other organisations as appropriate.	
	We will collect visitor feedback from all our events and act on the data provided to develop and improve the programme for the subsequent year.	



## **5.12 Volunteer Opportunities**

The range and scope of work required to maintain the natural and cultural heritage of the estate in accordance with the Mar Lodge Estate Management Principles and NTS's commitment to best practice means that in-house resources are extended at or near their limit. Even regularly recurring activities such as habitat and species monitoring require additional part-time or seasonal staff and, importantly, volunteering individuals or work parties to supplement NTS staff input. There is also considerable scope for volunteers to help with research projects being undertaken on the estate.

The Trust recognises that in addition to the benefit derived from having additional willing hands, a busy volunteering programme provides ideal opportunities to raise awareness and appreciation levels around Mar Lodge Estate.

Conservation	Access & Enjoyment	Field Sports
<p>We will identify ways to increase volunteer opportunities on the estate, particularly among local people, and broaden the age range of volunteers and types of opportunities on offer.</p>	<p>Our stalking ponies offer an excellent opportunity to increase volunteer participation in the estate and, through an equine development plan to be completed in 2012, we will outline how we will take these opportunities forward.</p>	<p>Many of the activities undertaken by our stalking team are greatly enhanced or made safer by having more people available to assist. We have already successfully used volunteers to assist in some of these areas such as when carrying out muirburn. We will examine how this resource could be expanded.</p>



## **5.13 Communication & Engagement**

There are compelling reasons for stepping up efforts to engage with the community, neighbours and other key stakeholders. Principally, Mar Lodge Estate does not exist in isolation. It has a significant economic and social impact on the local community and, moreover, through the three Pillars of conservation, access & enjoyment and field sports, has the potential to deliver even greater benefit for the Braemar area. There is an obvious mutual dependency.

NTS has a continuing duty of care owed to the community for Mar Lodge Estate to participate as a good corporate citizen. Indeed, much useful work has already been carried out to build relationships with the local community such as meeting with the Braemar Community Council and many others.

Of crucial importance, eventual achievement of NTS's key, complex objectives for Mar Lodge Estate depends on the co-operation and active support of the community and stakeholders. Open, honest engagement provides a host of opportunities for Mar Lodge Estate to consult interested parties about its ambitions and plans, as well as to update the community on progress and any initiatives being undertaken.

Conservation	Access & Enjoyment	Field Sports
We will hold at least one well-publicised open day each year. Through the open days we will aim to encourage involvement / volunteering in estate management and will involve the community.		
We will produce at least one newsletter, news release and/or bulletin each month providing updates on the work of the estate.		
We will continue to contribute to the <i>Braemar Buzzard</i> , as well as developing a more proactive media relations service, through local newspapers, relevant broadcast media and specialist publications.		
We will liaise with NTS IT and marketing teams to develop, launch and maintain a dedicated Mar Lodge Estate microsite on the Trust's main website.		
We will seek visitors and others' views regarding their experience of Mar Lodge Estate, feeding back our findings to inform future decision-making. This applies across the board and would include: volunteers; wedding clients and guests; Base Camp and bothy visitors; campers; as well as stalkers, fishers and shooters.		
We will also engage with local community, tourism and partnership interests to consider shared premises and opportunities for the welcoming of visitors to the area.		
We will consult, co-operate and liaise with key local community groups including Braemar Community Council, Braemar Community Limited and Braemar Tourism Group, participating in initiatives such as Community Action Planning.		
We will consult, co-operate and liaise with our estate neighbours, informally and through participation in the Deer Management Group.		
We will publish an annual update on our performance against the KPIs included in the Management Plan.		



## 6. Mar Lodge Estate - Management Action Plan Summary - 2012-16

* - The 'Three Pillars'	
<b>Conservation</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>Field Sports</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Access &amp; Enjoyment</b>	<b>A</b>

### WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

Item	Outline Description	Pillars (*)	KPIs	Assessment Criteria	Target Date	Responsibility
1.	Forest planning	C, F	Whole Estate Forest Plan (WEFP) drafted, with actions agreed and scheduled.	Publication of WEFP. Actions agreed and scheduled	31/7/2012 30/9/2012	MLE
2.	Commercial forestry	A	Continue to exploit plantation woodland, with new timber processor delivering efficiencies.	Timber sales at least maintained. Stick sales doubled for no extra cost.	31/3/2013	MLE
3.	Biomass boiler system	A	Second feasibility study commissioned to determine whether estate timber can replace heating oil. Business case submitted to determine Rol. Investment in biomass boiler.	Feasibility study commissioned. Business case prepared, subject to feasibility. Installation and resulting heating cost savings, subject to above.	Done 31/10/2012 31/3/2013	MLE
4.	SNH KPIs	C	Meet all the SNH KPI's on time.	Quarterly liaison meetings with SNH and an annual full review meeting. Individual KPI's subject to specific reporting criteria.	Ongoing	MLE
5.	Regeneration Zone monitoring	C, F, A	Monitor effectiveness of deer management and strategic fencing within the Regeneration Zone. Implement corrective measures, such as small-scale enclosure fencing, if required.	Monitoring results published. Corrective action plan agreed.	Annual Annual	MLE
6.	Monitoring in the Quoich	C, F, A	Monitoring regeneration, developing plans for additional strategic fencing if required.	Monitoring results published.	Annual	MLE

7.	Monitoring of the riparian woodland in the Moorland Zone	C, F, A	Monitoring regeneration, developing enclosure fencing and planting, if required.	Monitoring results published. Corrective action plan agreed.	Annual Annual	MLE
8.	Moorland actions	C, F	Develop plans for additional muirburn and scarification, as well as planting where there is little viable seed fall.	Plans devised.	31/7/2012	MLE

## DEER MANAGEMENT

9.	Red deer population	C	Maintain population at or around 1,650.	Monitoring, adherence to the Section 7 Agreement, and results published.	Bi-annual	MLE SNH
10.	Linn of Dee strategic fence	F, A	Protect sporting stalking on Moorland Zone.	80 let days for stags. 40 let days for hinds.	Annual	MLE
11.	Red and roe deer densities in the Regeneration Zone	C	Adjust culling numbers according to regeneration levels.	Monitoring results as well as cull targets and policies published.	Annual	MLE
12.	Garron ponies	C, F, A	Maintain an adequate number of ponies for carcase extraction and provide appropriate training for ghillies.	Care for at least four Highland Garron ponies. Training and skills assessment for ghillies.	On-going Annual	MLE
13.	Deer Management Group liaison	C, F, A	Share information with East and West Grampian Deer Management Groups, participating in relevant DMG initiatives.	Attend EGDMG, WGDMG, ADMG and sub-groups.	As scheduled	MLE DMGs
14.	Wintering ground and shelter	C, F	Co-operate with neighbouring estates to identify where additional wintering grounds can be opened up.	Monitoring of deer densities and regeneration.	On-going	MLE Neighbours

## MOORLAND MANAGEMENT

15.	Moorland planning	C	A first Moorland Management Plan drafted, with actions agreed and scheduled, geared to maintaining moorland in favourable condition.	Publication of the plan. Maintenance of moorland in favourable condition.	31/7/2013 Assessed annually	MLE SNH
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16.	Grouse shooting	F, A	Maintain walked-up grouse shooting, adjusting let days and bags according to numbers.	Bird count. 8 let days, with bags ranging from 10 to 20 brace.	Early August 12/8 to 31/10	MLE
17.	Heather management in the Regeneration Zone	C, F	Plan devised for active management.	Publication of plan.	31/7/2013	MLE
18.	Selective pest species management	C, F	Minimise impact of foxes, crows, weasels, stoats and mink on ground nesting birds and other species.	Monitoring Control levels published.	On-going Annual	MLE

## WILD LAND

19.	ATVs	C, F, A	ATV policy drafted to minimise impacts of ATVs to features of designated sites and wild land.	Policy published.	30/4/2012	MLE
20.	Deer fence removal	C, F, A	Remove 13.5km of redundant fencing.	Fencing removed.	31/12/2012	
21.	Fire risk assessment	C, F, A	Draft whole estate Fire Risk Assessment, scheduling corrective measures as required.	Plan completed. Corrective measures implemented.	31/12/2012 Annual	MLE
22.	Cairns	C, A	Subject to consultation, if appropriate, with Mountain Rescue, cairns will dismantled during footpath maintenance.	Records maintained of consultation and cairns dismantled.	On-going	MLE
23.	Path maintenance	A	Whole estate path audit to schedule future maintenance.	Full path audit completed. Maintenance plans agreed.	31/12/2012 Annual	MLE

## BIODIVERSITY

24.	Biodiversity planning	C	Devise actions to meet CNPA's LBAP for species priorities.	Action plan published.	Within 3 months of CNPA publication	MLE CNPA
25.	Significant species	C	Maintain conservation programmes for black grouse, capercaillie, twinflower and water voles.	Monitoring results published.	Annual	MLE
26.	Farmland and Riparian habitats	C	Investigate the potential for Rural Development Contracts.	Option appraisals to be included within the Farmland and Riparian Action Plans.	31/8/2012	MLE

27.	River Dee	C, A	Participate with the Dee Catchment Partnership on floodplain restoration and Upper Dee riparian project.	Agree actions as they arise.	On-going	MLE DCP
<b>MONITORING</b>						
28.	Tree regeneration	C	In-house and agency transect and quadrat monitoring, targeting 75% of seedlings showing positive growth in the Regeneration Zone of the SAC.	NTS monitoring. SNH monitoring.	Annual Every 5 years	MLE SNH
29.	Field sports	F, A	Methodology for all sporting activity to be developed and implemented.	Methodology published.	31/12/2012	MLE
30.	Red deer numbers	C, F	Consistency applied to regular population counting. Bi-annual helicopter counts, and participate in foot counts with DMGs. Results published through the DMGs.	Helicopter counts. DMG foot counts. Counts published.	November and March Annual Annual	MLE DMGs MLE
31.	Visitor numbers	A	Continue to monitor Linn of Dee car park and develop business case for Quoich car park.	Linn of Dee visitor numbers published. Quoich business case developed.	Annual 31/12/2012	MLE
32.	Information sharing	C, F	Continue to share monitoring results with appropriate organisations.	Regeneration - SNH. Deer - SNH, DMGs. Visitor numbers - CNPA. Biological records - NBN Gateway.	As appropriate	MLE
<b>CULTURAL HERITAGE</b>						
33.	Bothies	C, A	Consolidate management/lease agreements for Bob Scott's, Corroun and Hutchison's. Commission consultation on the future of Garbh Coire and implement action as required.	Review management arrangements as required. Commission consultation and implement actions.	Annual 31/12/2013	MLE MBA MLE CNPA

34.	Ruinous buildings	C, A	Adhering to HS guidelines, plans will be developed to scope the requirement for maintenance and identify sufficient funding.	Ruinous buildings action plan and resource requirement completed.	31/12/2013	MLE HS
35.	Derry Lodge	C, A	Working to HS guidelines and MLE management principles, an options appraisal will be prepared.	Options appraisal completed.	31/12/2013	MLE HS
36.	Princess Louise's Tearoom	C, A	Listed Building consent and funding sought to develop as a day shelter and interpretative feature.	Options appraisal completed.  Listed Building consent and contingent funding obtained.	31/12/2013  31/12/2014	MLE
37.	Old Deer Larder	C, F, A	Develop plans to convert as an interpretative feature to explain deer stalking on the estate.	Feasibility study commissioned.	31/12/2014	MLE
38.	Archaeological and cultural heritage	C, A	Develop whole estate interpretative plan, scoping options and funding.	Options appraisal completed.	31/12/2013	MLE
39.	Mar Lodge collections	C, A	Conserve collections, liaising with specialists as necessary, and ensuring staff have appropriate training.	Liaison with NTS specialists.  Training and skills assessment.	On-going  Annual	MLE

## HYDROLOGICAL MANAGEMENT

40.	Fishing policy	C, F A	Adhering to Dee District Salmon Fishery Board guidelines, the extant policy of 100% catch & release will be maintained.	Liaison with Dee District Salmon Fishery Board, River Dee Trust and Dee Catchment Partnership.	On-going	MLE
41.	Riparian habitat	C	With the River Dee Trust, work will continue to improve riparian habitats, with corrective measures scheduled through the WEFP.	Planned work to be identified within the WEFP.	31/7/2012	MLE RDT
42.	Embankments	C, A	If surveyed as a potential risk to estate buildings, embankments will be repaired.	Survey to be completed downstream from Linn of Dee.  Fixed point photographic monitoring where a risk is identified.	31/12/2012  On-going	MLE
43.	Floodplain restoration and revetment removal	C, A	Maintain remedial programme and update Riparian Plan following environmental impact assessment of revetment removal	Floodplain restoration.  Environmental impact assessment.	On-going  31/12/2013	MLE
44.	Fishing lets	F, A	Plans developed to promote the estate as a fishing destination through FishDee, advertising, packaged accommodation and PR. Develop plans to convert the Bridge Lodge as fishing hut.	Marketing communication plan developed.  Feasibility plan prepared for hut.	30/9/2012  31/12/2013	MLE

## ACCOMMODATION

45.	Packaged accommodation	F, A	Packages will be developed to lever commercial yield, especially from field sport lets.	Packaged prices agreed and promoted.	30/6/2012	MLE
46.	Enhanced facilities in Mar Lodge	C, A	Feasibility study to be prepared to upgrade the Gun Room as Bar/Restaurant. Other enhanced facilities to be identified.	Gun Room study completed. Enhanced facilities proposals developed.	31/12/2014 31/12/2016	MLE
47.	Partnerships	C, F, A	The potential to exploit economic, social and strategic benefit by partnering with experienced and well-resourced third parties will be investigated.	Feasibility study to be prepared.	31/12/2012	MLE
48.	Marketing	C, A	Marketing strategy to be developed to promote greater occupancy and attract additional events.	Marketing strategy prepared and implemented.	30/03/2013	MLE
49.	Ballroom upgrade	C, F, A	Survey to be commissioned to identify potential improvements to be made.	Survey commissioned.	30/03/2013	MLE
50.	Allanaquoich	C, A	Feasibility, planning and funding proposals to be developed for residential conversion.	Feasibility study completed. Funding proposal completed.	31/12/2015	MLE
51.	Mar Lodge upper floor	C, F, A	Proposals to be developed to upgrade the upper floor for commercial, administrative and/or accommodation use.	Proposals prepared.	31/12/2012	MLE
52.	Mar Lodge public rooms	C, F, A	Proposals to be developed to promote wider use of Mar Lodge's public rooms by organisations and guests, with more guided tours, interpretative initiatives, and availability for functions and conferences.	Market-tested proposals developed, with funding requirement identified.	31/09/2012	MLE
53.	Camping policy	C, F, A	A whole estate camping management strategy will be developed to promote best practice and improve safety.	Strategy published.	31/07/2013	MLE

## VISITOR MANAGEMENT

54.	Visitor Management Plan	C, F, A	Built around capacity to deliver national and CNPA objectives of health, well-being and social inclusion, the VMP will be updated.	VMP published.	31/12/2012	MLE
55.	Responsible access initiatives	C, F, A	Participation with initiatives such as the Cairngorm Massif managers' group, plans to implement best practice initiatives will be drawn up.	Best practice responsible access initiatives plans implemented.	To comply with other agencies	MLE
56.	National Nature Reserves and SNH Advanced Standards	C, A	To determine which standards are applicable and comply within deadlines.	Clarify applicable standards. Apply standards.	As declared. Within 3 months of declaration.	MLE
57.	Ruinous buildings monitoring	C, A	Continue monitoring visitor use of ruinous buildings, implementing the HS management agreement as required.	Monitor.	On-going	MLE
58.	Bridges	C, F, A	Survey all 27 bridges on the estate and develop plans to repair or replace as appropriate.	Survey all 27 bridges. Subject to consent, repair or replace the Allanquoich bridge. Replace the Luibeg bridge.	31/12/2012 30/10/2012 31/12/2013	MLE
59.	Signage	C, F, A	All estate directional and information signage reviewed, with plans for new signage developed. "Brown tourism" directional signage will be erected in the village subject to consultation with Visit Scotland/Aberdeenshire Council.	Signage review and new signage agreed. Brown tourism direction sign erected.	31/12/2013	MLE AC
60.	Reception building	C, F, A	Based on analysis, proposals will be developed for a new formal reception area/building within the designated Landscape Zone to provide face-to-face information for visitors.	Analysis and reception proposals developed.	31/12/2013	MLE
61.	Linn of Dee visitor engagement	C, F, A	Based on existing analysis, staffing at Linn of Dee car park will be increased during peak times.	Implementation.	Known peak times	MLE

62.	Stables utilisation	C, A	Review how the Stable Block is currently being used and undertake an options appraisal for improved utilisation and efficiency.	Options appraisal completed.	31/05/2013	MLE
63.	Camping ground	C, A	Work with neighbouring estates and the community to assess whether plans should be developed for a designated camping ground in the Braemar area.	Consultation proposal agreed. Consultation concluded.	31/12/2013 31/12/2014	MLE MLE Community
64.	Pedestrian and cycle links to Braemar	C, A	Working with neighbours and the community, develop plans including low ground circular routes, as outlined in the Core Path Plan.	Ideas market-tested and proposals completed.	31/12/2014	MLE Community
65.	Routes through Designated Landscape Zone	C, A	Identify, develop and promote signed cycle and walking routes.	Plan completed.	?	MLE

## EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION

66.	Outdoor Activity Week	C, F, A	In partnership, organise at least one programme per year to give schoolchildren an experience of life, work and play on a Highland estate.	Repeated, programme delivery.	Annual	MLE AC CNPA
67.	Duke of Edinburgh and John Muir Awards	C, A	Publish information leaflet.	Publish leaflet.	31/12/2012	MLE
68.	MLE website	C, F, A	Review and update.	Review and update. Introduce MLE blog	On-going 30/6/2012	MLE
69.	Outdoor education students	C, F, A	Deliver at least two student group visits, offering experience of living and working on a Highland estate.	Identify colleges and implement.	Bi-annual	MLE
70.	Newsletters and posters	C, F, A	Publish regular local newsletters and distribute event posters.	Publication and distribution, with records maintained.	Monthly	MLE
71.	Junior Nature Club	C, A	Five Junior Nature Club events held per year to promote and learn about the estate.	Five events, with numbers and feedback recorded.	As scheduled	MLE
72.	Guided walks	A	At least 25 guided walks per year, in conjunction with other organisations as appropriate.	25 guided walks, with numbers and feedback recorded.	As scheduled	MLE
73.	Visitor feedback	A	Feedback sought from every event, recorded and analysed to identify areas for improvement.	Analysis completed.	Annual	MLE

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

74.	Recruitment	C	Proposals to be prepared to increase opportunities for volunteer participation, especially among local people.	Proposals completed.	28/02/2013	MLE
75.	Equine Development	A	Through development of an Equine Development Plan, stimulate volunteer input to care and management of the estate's Highland Garron ponies.	Equine Development Plan completed.	31/12/2012	MLE
76.	Field sports	F	Lever existing levels of volunteer participation associated with muirburn to benefit other aspects of field sports management.	Identify other field sports- related volunteer opportunities.	31/12/2012	MLE

## COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

77.	Open Days	C, F, A	At least one, well-publicised Open Day per year.	Event(s) held and participant numbers recorded.	Annual	MLE
78.	Media relations	C, F, A	At least one story developed per month, targeted to community, consumer, trade, national print and/or broadcast media per month.	News releases and features developed and targeted.	Monthly	MLE Consultant
79.	Website development	C, F, A	Working with NTS digital, existing website content will be updated, with blogs introduced to stimulate interest and debate around estate issues and events.	Training completed on content management system.	30/6/2012	MLE Consultant
80.	Satisfaction surveys	C, F, A	Operationalized marketing research techniques to be developed to assess visitor satisfaction levels across all activities.	Research proposals completed. Research regime initiated.	31/7/2012 1/8/2012	MLE Consultant
81.	Collaboration	C, F, A	Proposals developed for collaboration with community and tourism interests around shared premises and other initiatives to welcome visitors to the Braemar area.	Proposals drafted for consultation.	31/7/2012	MLE Consultant

82.	Community engagement	C, F, A	Active participation with community stakeholders such as the Community Council, Tourism Group, supporting initiatives such as Community Action Planning.	Participation at meetings and assistance with approved, joint initiatives.	On-going	MLE Consultant
83.	Neighbour engagement	C, F, A	Formal and informal engagement with neighbouring estate owners, with at least one face-to-face meeting arranged per year with each, and at least one social gathering organised.	Participation with the DMGs. Informal face-to-face neighbour meetings Annual social gathering.	As scheduled Annual Annual	MLE Consultant

## 7. Table of Supporting Documents

I.	Whole Estate Forest Plan : 2012	<b>Final</b>	
II.	Moorland Management Plan : 2012	<b>Outline</b>	
III.	Visitor Management Plan : 2012	<b>First Draft</b>	
IV.	Section 7 Deer Control Agreement & Deer Management Plan : 2010	<b>To be amended</b>	
V.	Riparian & Hydrological Plan : 2010	<b>Final</b>	
VI.	Farmland Plan : 2011-16	<b>Final</b>	
VII.	Monitoring & Research Plan 2012	<b>Outline + supporting docs</b>	
VIII.	Mar Lodge Estate Management Principles : 2006		
IX.	Mar Lodge Estate Statement of Significance : 2012		
X.	Special Designations (of all or part of the estate) : 2012		
XI.	Management Agreement with Scottish Natural Heritage : 1995		
XII.	Independent Review of Mar Lodge Estate : 2011		<a href="http://www.marlodgereview.org.uk/">http://www.marlodgereview.org.uk/</a>
XIII.	Management Agreement with Historic Scotland :		
XIV.	Declaration by the NTS to Eastrust Company Limited : 1995		<a href="http://www.marlodgereview.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2658-DeclarationToEastrustMarEstate1995.pdf">http://www.marlodgereview.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2658-DeclarationToEastrustMarEstate1995.pdf</a>