

A design brief for West Bold LMP

The West Bold Land Management Unit comprises predominantly open pasture fields in-between the Traquair and Elibank forest blocks. The management unit covers 129 ha and is located 0.5 km south of Walkerburn within the Tweed Valley, South Scotland. Purchased in 2012, it is part of Scotland's national forests and land, owned by Scottish Ministers on behalf of the people of Scotland, and will be managed by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS).

The West Bold Land Management Plan (LMP) defines the management prescription for ten years from initial establishment (2023-33), and presents the vision for the long-term management of the area. The main management objectives in this plan focus on sustainable timber production, climate change mitigation and adaptation and landscape value.

An Analysis and Concept map has been produced to complement this design brief. It presents the draft management objectives, and highlights the opportunities and constraints for key issues.

The concept for the LMP focuses on delivering relevant national policy and has been developed around the following key drivers:

- Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan 2018-2032
- Climate change and adaptation programme 2019-2024
- Forestry and Land Scotland Corporate Plan 2019-2022
- Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029

The plan will contribute to the first three outcomes of the Forestry and Land Scotland Corporate Plan as shown in table 1 (Corporate outcomes and operational actions not relevant to this plan have been removed). The full corporate plan can be viewed here; <https://forestryandland.gov.scot/images/corporate/corporate-plan/FLS-Corporate-Plan-2019-2022-v2.pdf>

Table 1, West Bold alignment with the FLS Corporate Plan 2019-2022

Outcomes from the FLS corporate plan	Operational Actions for delivery under Outcomes include:	LMP Actions / Prescriptions
Outcome 1: Supporting a sustainable rural economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing the national forests and land in accordance with the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) to ensure that timber and other products produced by FLS are guaranteed to be from a sustainably managed resource Developing our forest planning processes to ensure long-term sustainable productivity of the national forests and land Providing a sustainable supply of timber to Scotland's timber processing sector Implementing the Restocking Strategy for the national forests and land and develop a new plant and seed supply strategy Supporting Scottish tourism and the visitor economy through the provision of visitor attractions Work proactively with our tenants and stakeholders to identify potential added-value opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design a land Management Plan for West Bold that meets the requirements laid out by the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) and UKWAS. Utilising the good soils and naturally sheltered aspect of the site to ensure we can maintain a steady flow of thinnings will contribute to the volume to the surrounding blocks production outputs in the future and has good links to an already recognized timber transport route. West Bold has the potential for a variety of high yielding fast growing crops that can serve to adapt to a changing climate whilst also mitigating climate change through carbon sequestration. Utilising species which are site suited will increase the likelihood of successful natural regeneration and contribute to effective management of continuous cover forestry systems, reducing future restocking costs and reducing operational impact on soils reducing erosion, compaction and soil carbon loss. Afforesting West Bold will consolidate the landholding between Traquair and Elibank and through careful and effective landscape design connecting the already forested landscape whilst also being sensitive to the existing landscape character of the Tweed Valley. The West Bold LMP process will seek to include engagement and consultation with internal and external stakeholders through various media usage and formal meetings to inform the objectives and subsequent ongoing management of the site.

Outcome 2: Looking after Scotland's national forests and land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing the national forests and land to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity • Collaborating with partners on integrated landscape scale approaches to habitat management and restoration • Taking specific conservation actions for vulnerable priority species (e.g. red squirrel, capercaillie, black grouse) • Delivering an increased contribution towards the Scottish Government's renewable energy targets • Supporting policy development and research and act as a testbed for new and innovative approaches to forestry and land management • Developing an asset management approach to the historic environment within Scotland's forests and land • Continue to implement the Larch Strategy in order to reduce the rate of expansion of <i>Phytophthora ramorum</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Bold serves to consolidate the land holding of the NFE between the Traquair and Elibank blocks improving woodland habitat connectivity and also has potential to diversify land management use through increasing the wood pasture adding to an interesting and dynamic landscape, enhancing the aesthetics to the local area. Maintaining the existing veteran trees making up the current wood pasture assemblage and also incorporating a potentially substantial riparian broadleaf corridor throughout both the Plora Burn and Bold Burn offer eco system services such as flood mitigation, surface water run-off mitigation and improving the water quality that feeds into the Tweed River; a nationally recognized Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). • Engagement with partners will be established to ensure appropriate habitat types are designed into the West Bold LMP. • Preserving the significant on-site archaeological features alongside incorporating a conservation grazing regime will give added value to managing these areas. • Using broadleaves throughout the plan including intimately mixed in with some of the conifer elements will give autumnal and winter colour variation and can be used as a visual alternative to larch which is a key feature within the Tweed Valley.
Outcome 3: National forests and land for visitors and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to engage communities in decisions relating to the management of the national forests and land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community engagement meeting will be held with feedback and comments feeding into and assisting with the LMP design process.

Draft objectives

Primary objectives

1. Utilize high yielding softwood species to contribute to the surrounding FLS blocks productivity and taking advantage of good soils and shelter to increase the use of low impact silvicultural practices.
2. Mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change with fast growing conifer species sequestering carbon and diversifying forest crop species including the use of productive broadleaves to increase resilience to the Tweed Valley.
3. Consolidate the land holdings of Traquair and Elibank whilst being sensitive to the Tweed Valley landscape character.

Secondary objectives

1. Increase biodiversity connectivity through riparian corridors and implementing retentions of existing biodiverse features and expanding where appropriate.
2. Protecting heritage features whilst looking to diversify income with conservation grazing.