



BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

SPECIAL QUALITIES OF BREADALBANE

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

Key Features

Loch Voil and Loch Doine
Braes of Balquhidder
Burial place of Rob Roy MacGregor

Summary of Evaluation

Sense of Place

The visual/sense of place qualities of this area are considered to be of high importance, particularly the inland lochs such as Loch Voil and Loch Doine and the surrounding open upland glens and hills. The upland glens are remote and undeveloped and include some dramatic hanging valleys and waterfalls, they often form part of the 'walk in' to the uplands and typically have framed views up to the upland slopes and summits or down to glimpses of glen floor, strath farmland and lochs beyond. The upland hills are visually dominant as distinctive landmarks creating a strong sense of local identity and include the twin peaks of Ben More and Stob Binnein. Settlement is located on the loch shore and introduces a human dimension to the Balquhidder Glen and the loch landscapes.

Cultural heritage

The landuse is predominantly moorland and rough grazing which is characteristic of much of the National Park. There are surviving areas of medieval/post medieval pre-improvement agriculture including shielings, deserted farmsteads and cultivation remains across this area, most visible in the open glens and hills.

The area contains some historic features of high value including burial grounds dating to the 17th/18th century. There are prehistoric cup and ring marked stones which provide tantalising glimpses of the presence of people in the glen in the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age around four to five thousand years ago.

The area is relatively unsettled and the main village is the dispersed settlement of Balquhidder. The village has a number of small crofts with fields running down to the loch side. The Old Parish Church and Graveyard are of particular historic interest.

Biodiversity

The biodiversity of the area is of high importance. Loch Voil and Loch Doine are part of the River Teith Special Area of Conservation for salmon and lampreys. In addition to the lochs the upland areas such as the Braes of Balquhidder provide important upland habitats and part of the uplands lies within the Stob Binnein/Ben More SSSI, with many rare upland plant communities. Red deer and mountain hare and upland birds such as skylark, breeding waders, ptarmigan, red grouse, buzzard and golden eagle may be seen in these areas. Although the majority of the area is open uplands and glens some of the glens are wooded or forested, particularly those to south of Loch Voil and Loch Doine. These areas support woodland flora and fauna.

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Associations

The associations of this area are internationally renowned and of high importance. Rob Roy MacGregor spent his final years at Inverlochlarig and is buried at Balquhidder graveyard. Balquhidder has also been home to the MacLaren Clan since the 12th century. Creag an Tuirc, the Boars Rock, was the ancient rallying place of the clan. The song 'Wild Mountain Thyme' originally written by Robert Tannahill laments the clearance of Balquhidder in the 18th century.

At around the 8th century St Angus brought Christianity to Balquhidder and St Angus' Stone is in the Church.

Qualities valued by local communities

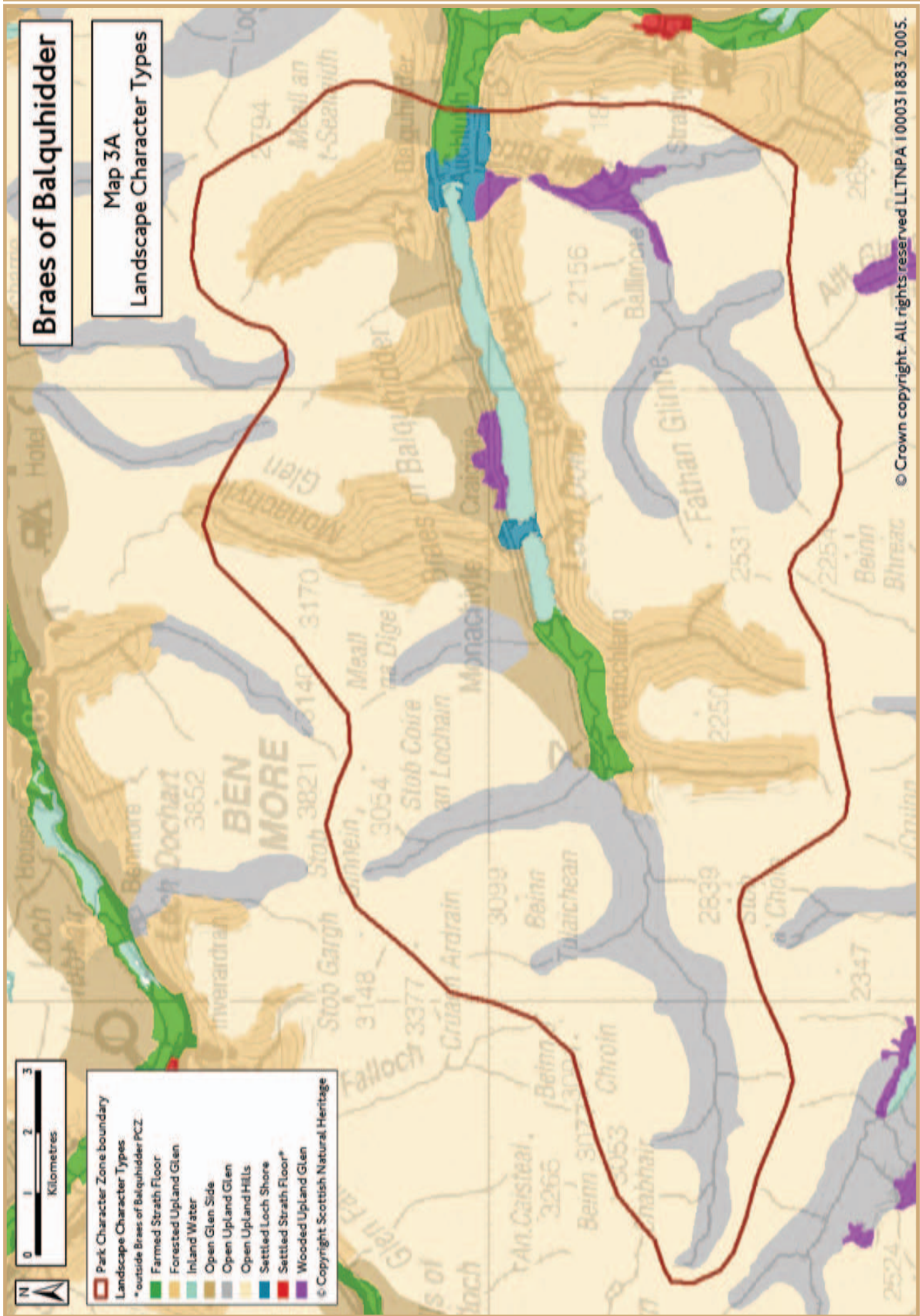
(Source: Community Futures and Park Plan Workshop on Special Qualities, April 2004)

In addition see comments under Aberfoyle and Callander which were collected as part of the Trossachs network

- Braes of Balquhidder
- Associations with Rob Roy
- Spiritual elements of the area and Celtic history

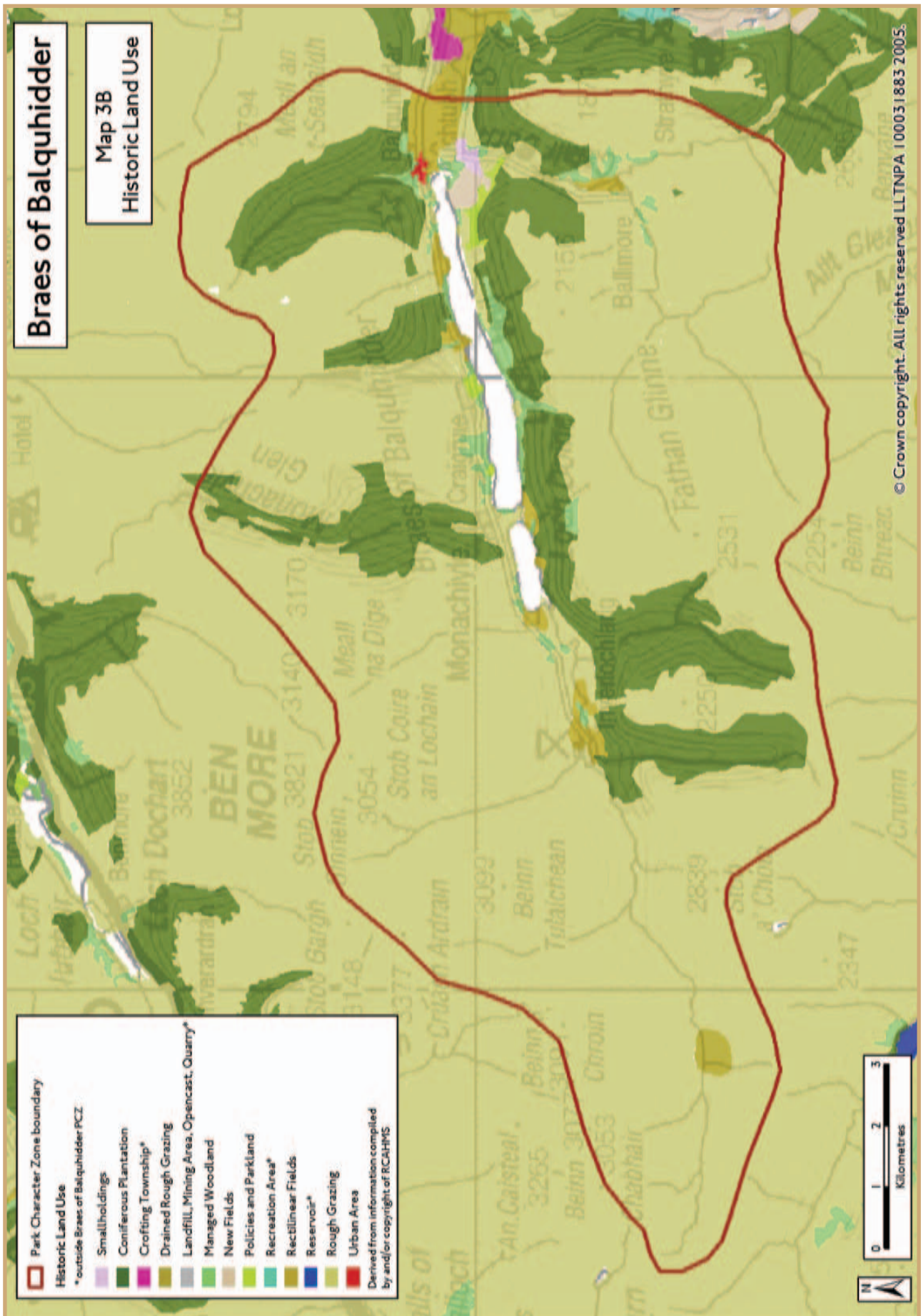
BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

MAP 3A – LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES



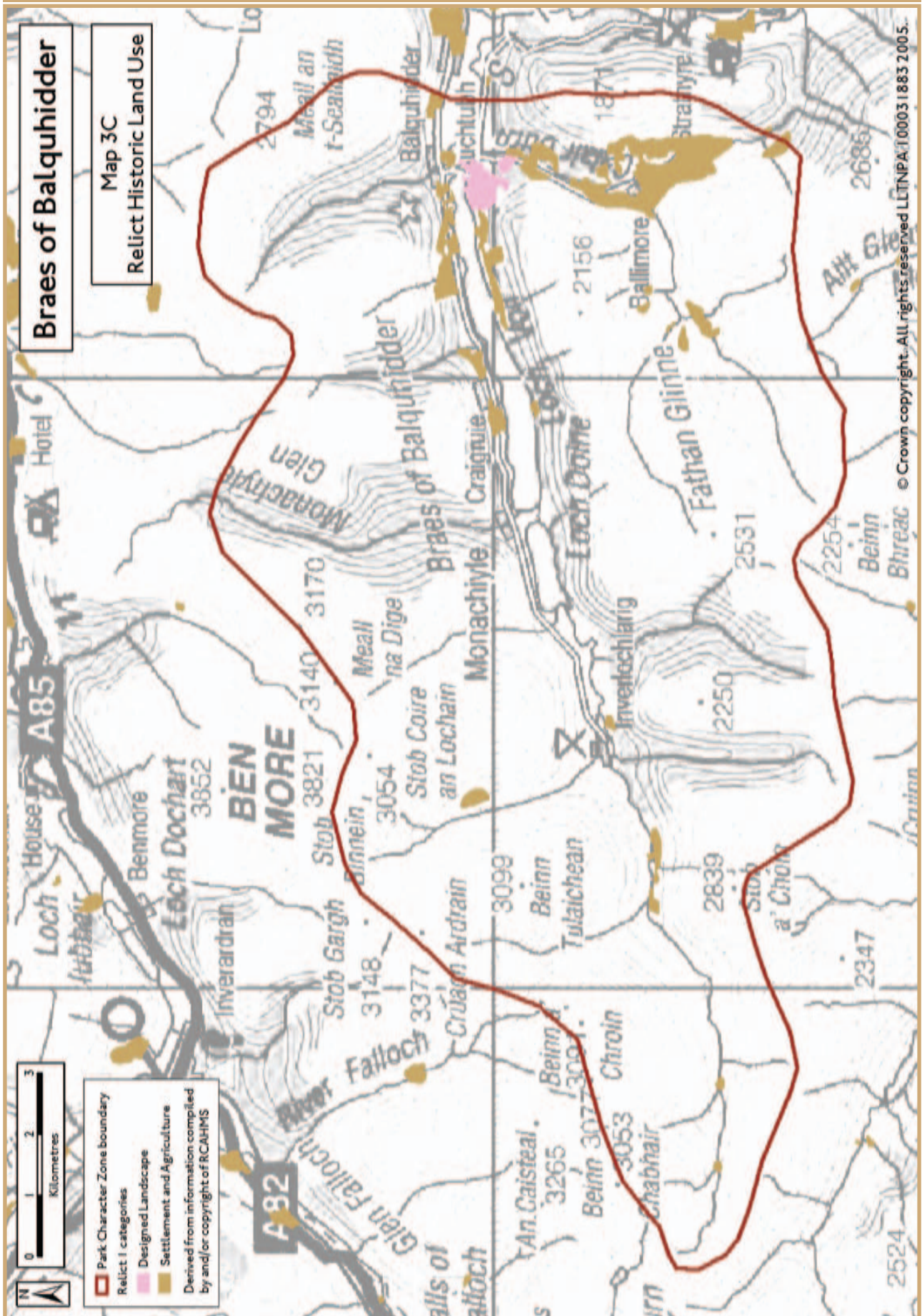
BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

MAP 3B – HISTORIC LAND USE



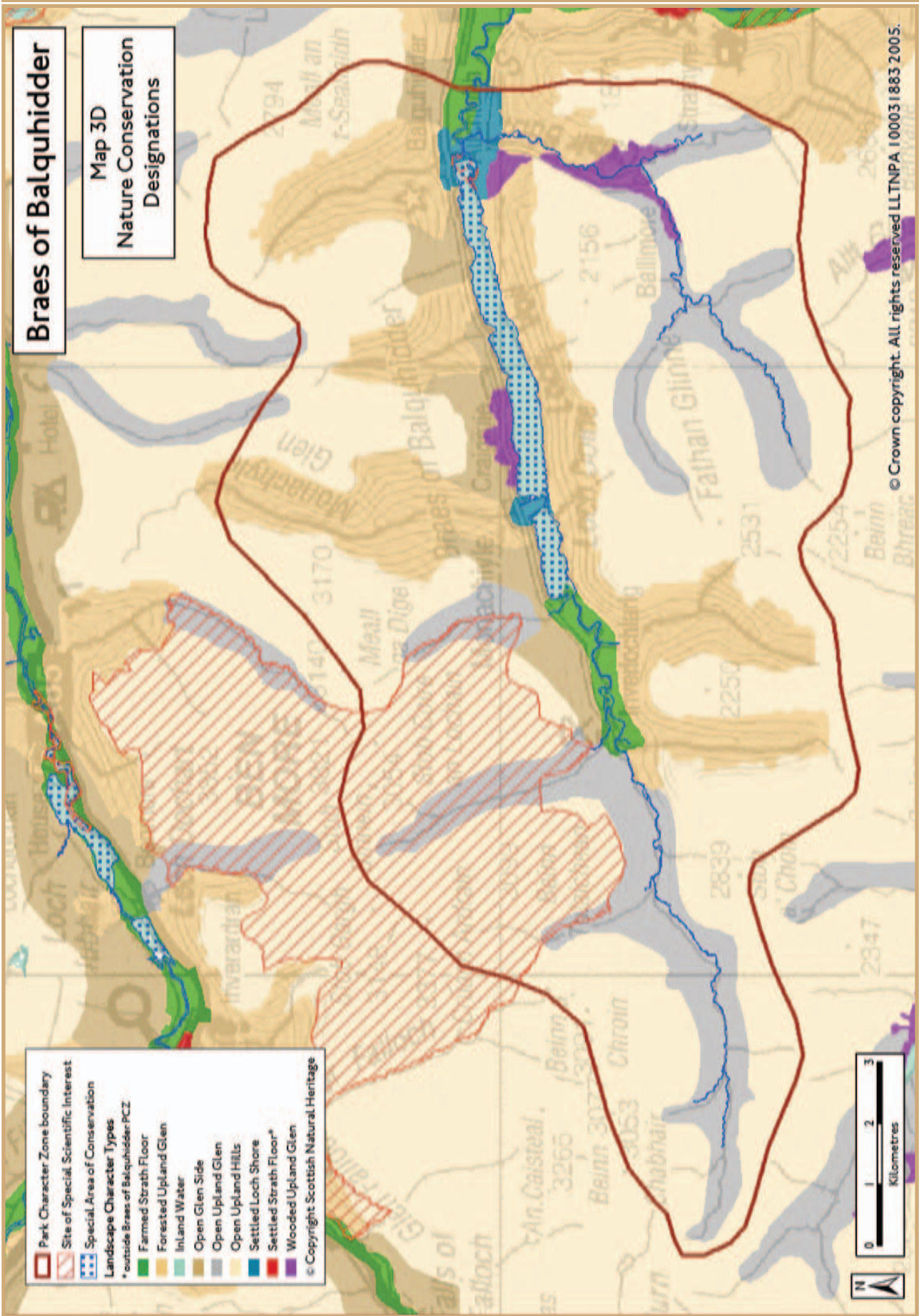
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MAP 3C - RELICT HISTORIC LAND USE



BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

MAP 3D - NATURE CONSERVATION DESIGNATIONS



BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: OPEN UPLAND HILLS

The moorland hills to the north and south of Braes of Balquhidder and the high upper slopes and summits of the upper glen. Relatively small parts of the open upland areas have been drained in the 20th century and are used for rough grazing.

HLA: Prehistoric to present moorland and rough grazing

HLA Relict landuse: Areas of medieval/post medieval settlement and agriculture.



BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
Sense of place	The open upland hills dominate the upper reaches and sides of the glens forming high rocky summits and ridgelines, with a feeling of wildness, remoteness and exposure. The upland slopes are distinct from the glen sides, which tend to form a discrete mid slope.	Whilst being physically remote and difficult to access, the open upland hills are visually dominant and significant to communities and visitors to the Park, as distinctive landmarks that create a strong sense of identity. The views up Balquhidder Glen are exceptional and the open uplands are a significant component of the composition. The twin peaks of Ben More and Stob Binnein are well renowned Munros and particularly visually distinctive as seen from Balquhidder Glen and the Kingshouse area. The upland slopes and summits offer panoramic views over the surrounding area, accessible only by foot. These areas are remote and generally unspoilt although there is some evidence of masts, pylons and unsympathetic tracks. Open upland hills are a characteristic of all the highland area of the Park, but are distinctive in the Breadalbane area as being generally higher and more unbroken, with distinct exposed upper slopes which sit beyond the enclosed glens. Qualities of wildness and tranquillity can be more readily appreciated in Breadalbane compared to other parts of the park. The overall experience of travelling up Balquhidder, one of the Park's least developed glens, and then walking through the upland glens to the upper summits offers particular dramatic sequence and sense of remoteness.	There are certain pressures on all upland hill areas including pylon, mast and wind farm development. Recreational pressures are also evident on popular upland tracks, which can easily become severely eroded. The high visibility of the uplands and the general absence of structures or developments mean that any intrusion on the scene is likely to be highly visible and detrimental to the unspoilt qualities that underpin the areas opportunity for wildness and tranquillity. Inappropriate development in neighbouring glen or upland landscapes can also adversely impact on the experience of these uplands.
Cultural Heritage	A scatter of shielings across this Zone is evidence of medieval settlement and agriculture.	Important to local people, visitors and specialists Upper Glen Buckie has a group of at least 22 shielings which is an unusually large concentration for the open upland areas of this Character Zone. Both circular and square shielings are present confirming different phases of construction in the area.	Need to maintain as open areas especially in Glen Buckie. Appropriate grazing regimes are needed to ensure sites remain open and are not subsumed by widespread regeneration of trees, especially birch and other scrub. The spread of bracken is also an issue. It obscures remains much of the year and damages buried archaeology. There is a lack of base line survey data to enable effective monitoring of the effect of stock numbers.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: OPEN UPLAND HILLS (CONT)

BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
Biodiversity	Parts of the open upland hills to the north of the Braes of Balquhidder fall within the Stob Binnein Ben More SSSI, with many rare upland plant communities. A mosaic of relatively natural upland habitat types are conspicuous, e.g. moorland, blanket bog. Upland birds, e.g. ptarmigan, red grouse, breeding waders, skylark, buzzard, golden eagle and mammals red deer, mountain hare are all present and often visible.	Important to local people, visitors and specialists. The upland wildlife and habitats are of very high biodiversity importance.	Overgrazing by sheep and deer may currently reduce the habitat quality in places.

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- The open upland areas need to be protected from development to maintain their open and wild character.
- Neighbouring uplands and glen landscapes should also be protected from inappropriate developments that would adversely impact on the peace and quiet and the view.
- Recreation and access pressures require to be managed to minimise damage.
- Interpretation and improved access to the sheiling sites could be promoted.
- Monitor the effect of changes in stock numbers and bracken spread on archaeological remains.
- Overgrazing by sheep and deer could be reduced through changes to management. Restructuring of upper woodland edges may enhance the transition into this character type from the forested glens type.
- The biodiversity benefit could be enhanced. Ecologically more sympathetic management would allow plant communities such as tall herbs, heath, treeline and montane scrub to recover.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: OPEN UPLAND GLEN

The glens dissecting the open upland moorland hills, including and extending from upper part of Balquhiddel Glen and Glen Buckie.

HLA: Prehistoric to present moorland and rough grazing

HLA Relict Landuse: Areas of medieval/post medieval settlement and agriculture.



BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
<p>Sense of place</p>	<p>These narrow glens with steep sides, rocky outcrops and screes, burns and waterfalls, are remote and undeveloped. They include some examples of dramatic hanging valleys and waterfalls. The higher upland glens provide open vistas and varied views as a result of their elevation and openness.</p>	<p>Upper Balquhiddel is an exceptionally important open upland landscape, unspoilt by development or afforestation, the interesting topography and remote 'interior' location of the glen, surrounded by some of the most dramatic mountain scenery, contribute to the areas wild land and tranquil qualities. Glen Buckie is particularly remote from views and access. The open upland glens have no vehicular access from the lower glen, which itself is only accessed by single tracks. They also tend to be hidden from direct views, although the void of the deep glens is apparent from the surrounding slopes and creates a great sense of depth in the landscape. These glens are of great significance to hill walkers, often forming part of the 'walk in'. The glens contribute to the overall open character of the open uplands and whilst well represented in the Breadalbane area, represent a pristine example in upper Balquhiddel. The glens typically have framed views up to the upland slopes and summits or down to glimpses of the glen floor, strath farmland and lochs beyond. The open upland glens are a valuable landscape and ecological resource.</p>	<p>Pressures which exist on this landscape include afforestation, new woodlands, hill tracks, and hydro-electric power developments.</p>
<p>Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>Within the glens, especially in Glen Buckie, there are surviving areas of a medieval/post medieval pre-improvement agricultural system, including shielings, deserted farmsteads, townships and cultivation remains. Many of the shielings are cut off from their townships except in Glen Buckie/Glen Dubh. There is also some evidence of iron working. Documentary research in the Balquhiddel area has confirmed that a number of the townships and farms have their origins in the medieval period. There is also a probable prehistoric homestead at Inverlochlarig which gives hints at earlier settlement in these glens.</p>	<p>Of interest to local people and visitors, especially those undertaking genealogical research. Also of specialist archaeological interest mainly because of their potential to retain information on the sequent occupancy of these glens, especially through the medieval and post medieval periods, particularly in those areas which have managed to avoid large scale conifer plantation (Character Zone Forested Upland Glen). The archaeological remains also give added value to the hillwalking experience.</p> <p>Glen Buckie is particularly important as it includes one of only a handful of township sites of this type in the Park which have been subject to archaeological excavation. Evidence of iron working, whilst important, is better represented elsewhere in the Park (at Leny Woods).</p>	<p>Care should be taken to avoid severing links, both visual and physical between townships and farmsteads and their shieling grounds, some of which may lie in the Open Upland Hills Zone. This should be a particularly important consideration when designing schemes for woodland regeneration and from damage when implementing such schemes or felling existing plantations.</p>

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: OPEN UPLAND GLEN (CONT)

BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
Biodiversity	A number of the open glens running north from Inverlochlarig form part of the Ben More and Stob Binnein SSSI. Others contain significant salmon spawning habitat in the River Teith SAC. Red deer and conspicuous birds including skylark, waders, short eared owl, golden eagle and hen harrier may be seen in these areas.	Important to local people, specialists and some categories of visitors such as hillwalkers & stalkers Of medium biodiversity importance.	A reduction in grazing could allow heather and other plants to recover allowing some bird species to increase e.g. grouse.

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- The undeveloped and predominantly open character should be conserved.
- Retain the open qualities by supporting upland agriculture but seek enhancements to open habitats through management of grazing regimes.
- Focus new native woodland along burn sides or in relation to local enclosing slopes or features.
- Access to cultural heritage could be enhanced through improving the footpath link from Glen Finglas to Balquhidder and enhancing the walking experience. Interpretation (not signboards should be either guided walks or self-guide leaflets) and the possibility of stabilisation of the ruins here could be considered.
- In terms of landscape and biodiversity the integration of the open upland glens with other landscape character types could be improved, e.g. through softening adjacent woodland edges and limited expansion of tree cover in this LCT.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: FORESTED UPLAND GLEN

Forested upland glens occur along the southern side of the Braes of Balquhidder and into the side glens to the north.

HLA: 20th century coniferous woodland and forestry with smaller areas of prehistoric to present moorland and rough

HLA Relict landuse: Some remains of the medieval/post medieval period survive.



BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
Sense of place	Dense commercial plantations, often provide a uniform and enclosed appearance in the landscape.	The forested upland glens are not highly visible from the main glen as they are seen foreshortened. They tend to have a negative impact on landscape character and visual quality on both the visitor experience and for local communities. Commercial plantations in the upland glens (and glen slopes) comprise the prominent type of woodland in the Breadalbane area and within the individual glens, where there is a relatively poor representation of more natural woodlands. The forested tributary upland glens of lower and mid Balquhidder Glen, whilst not prominent in the wider landscape, impact negatively on the setting of the surrounding uplands, with forestry tending to extend too far up slope, with insensitive margins and artificial abrupt transitions to the open ground. The Braes of Balquhidder are particularly adversely affected. The forestry also detracts from hill walks. Other features, such as engineered forest roads, erosion scars and drainage ditches can also cause significant negative visual impact. There is a cumulative negative impact from these forested landscapes where they are seen with the forested glen sides and the amount of forestry obscures the distinctiveness and identity of glen structures.	The scale of this feature is likely to decrease over time as coniferous woodlands are restructured. At present there is an abundance of forested glen, with felling and replanting likely to be the key forces for change. New forest siting and design guidelines will help to improve the landscape character.
Cultural Heritage	These coniferous woodlands date mainly from the 20th century, representing the phase of forest expansion. Numerous archaeological sites including shielings and bloomeries (iron working) still survive totally subsumed within the plantations while yet others have been destroyed. Shielings are cut off from their townships on the lower ground. There are areas of medieval/post medieval relict settlement and agriculture around Muirlaggan.	Important to specialists and local people. Monachyle Glen is a particularly poignant example where although some important archaeology was left unforested it has been concealed/damaged by the encroachment of seeded trees and bracken.	The future felling of trees could result in further damage to archaeological features if this is not carried out sensitively.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: FORESTED UPLAND GLEN (CONT)

BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
Biodiversity	There is a range of native birds including some visible or iconic species e.g. song birds, black grouse, raptors. Red squirrel, pine marten, roe and red deer, areas of ancient woodland, significant pockets of native broadleaf and pine trees amongst commercial conifers.	Important to local people, visitors and specialists The woodland biodiversity is of medium importance.	The benefit could be significantly expanded through an increase in extent and quality of the native woodland habitat. The red squirrel population in this area is potentially under threat from the expansion of grey squirrel populations up the Teith catchment.

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Landscape and biodiversity benefits could be enhanced through restructuring with an emphasis on native woodlands and networks of open space.
- Opportunities should be taken to rescue the heritage sites from the trees when felling and restocking takes place.
- Access to a selection of historic sites should also be considered. A footpath already climbs through Monachyle Glen and the experience for walkers and other visitors could be enhanced.
- Scope exists to reverse the historical losses by felling significant tracts of the non-native conifers and replacing them with new native pinewood and broadleaved woodlands, especially on FCS land and though SFGS elsewhere. This process is already underway in places.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: OPEN GLEN SIDES

The open glen sides are a feature of the northern slopes of Braes of Balquhidder

HLA: Prehistoric to present moorland and rough grazing.

HLA Relict landuse: Areas of medieval/post medieval settlement and agriculture.



BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
<p>Sense of place</p>	<p>Open glen sides contribute to the diversity of the landscape as they provide a visual contrast with wooded and forested glen sides.</p> <p>Interesting large scale open landscapes with varied features such as waterfalls and screes, which relate to the open upper slopes and summits and provide contrast and diversity with the forested glen sides south of mid and lower Balquhidder Glen and the forested upland glens of the Braes of Balquhidder. In places there appear to be relict landuse patterns, which create great visual diversity and associations with crofting patterns normally found much further north and west in Scotland.</p>	<p>The open glen sides are visible to local people and visitors, from the small rural roads up Balquhidder Glen and settlements. They make a positive contribution to landscape character and visual quality, differentiating the northern more open and southern forested glen slopes. The open glen sides reveal the diversity of a varied and contrasting landscape, which contributes to scenic quality at the local detail scale and in the wider glen context. The open glen sides have good quality views down onto the strath areas, but the glen sides are not greatly accessible due to their topography and lack of many paths. They overlook commercial plantations to the south, which do not make a positive contribution to the scenery and detract from the wider scene. There is an attractive route above Balquhidder that affords excellent views up the glen. The areas are generally unspoilt, although the adjacent forestry in the forested upland glens extends to the main glen floor, fragmenting the open glen sides. The glen sides do not always have a distinct character and may blend with the open upland hills. Elsewhere relict landuse patterns of strip fields are of great landscape character and visual interest, found only here, Loch Earn and in Glen Ogle in the Park and usually typical of areas much further north and west in Scotland.</p>	<p>These open areas are under pressure from the expansion of commercial forests, the invasion of bracken and rhododendrons and overgrazing.</p>
<p>Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>There is some visible evidence of the pre-improvement agricultural system surviving on the open south facing glen sides in the form of deserted farmsteads and townships. Some may date back to the medieval period although many in their present form probably belong to the 18th century. Many of the shielings are cut off from their townships on the lower ground by conifer plantations. There are several prehistoric cup marked stones recorded from the fields immediately to the north of the road on the eastern edge of this Character Zone. These provide tantalising glimpses of the presence of people in the glen in the late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age around 4-5 thousand years ago.</p>	<p>Most important to local people and visitors, especially those tracing their roots.</p>	<p>Increase in woodland cover could affect archaeological remains.</p>

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: OPEN GLEN SIDES

BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
Biodiversity	South facing open glen sides tend to hold visible red deer populations in the winter months. They also contribute to the habitat used by the range of birds such as ptarmigan, red grouse, breeding waders, skylark, buzzard, golden eagle.	Of limited importance to biodiversity but a visible wildlife presence.	Comparatively high deer numbers for sporting objectives present a possible conflict with management objectives of neighbouring estates.
Associations	Rob Roy through the Braes of Balquhidder and St Angus in Kirkton Glen.		

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- The open qualities should be protected as they contribute to the diversity of the landscape.
- Restructuring and enhancement of woodland and forestry could enhance the landscape and visual qualities of the glen. A more proactive approach may be needed to the south of the glen.
- Any proposed increase in woodland cover would need to be carefully designed to conserve and enhance archaeological sites and their landscape settings.
- The interface between the open glen sides and adjacent woodlands could be improved by a softer transition rather than hard deer fenced edges.
- The open glen sides could also be managed to support heather moorland in place of the limited range of unpalatable grasses.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: WOODED UPLAND GLEN

Wooded upland glens occur in Glen Buckie and, to a lesser extent just to the north of Loch Voil. They are semi-natural woodland typically low density trees becoming more scattered and structured in form with increasing altitude.

HLA: A mix of 18th to 20th century, and later 20th century planting with patches of moorland and rough grazing



BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
Sense of place	Important component of the historic landscape (where they are unaffected by plantation afforestation). The woods contribute to the overall character of the lochs and glen slope landscapes.	These more natural woodlands are significant in a landscape dominated by commercial forestry plantations. They contribute a more natural character and an element of diversity. In Glen Buckie they are a dominant characteristic, but generally they are rather poorly represented.	Not known
Cultural Heritage	Although much of the woodlands date back to the 18th century, some areas, have been planted more recently. This is reflected in the presence of several deserted farmsteads, buildings dykes etc in these areas which in the mid 19th century had lain in open fields. There is also some evidence of ironworking. Most of the woodlands are listed in the ancient woodland inventory and the Scottish Native Woodland Inventory. There is an important area of relict medieval/post medieval settlement and agriculture in Glen Buckie.	Specialists, visitors and local people. Important for genealogical research.	Not known
Biodiversity	Mainly broadleaf semi-natural woodland supporting a woodland flora and fauna.	Important to local people, visitors and specialists The biodiversity of the full range of woodland types is of medium importance.	Not known

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

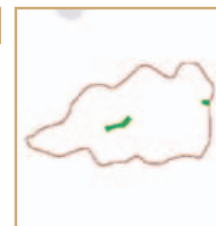
- Opportunity for further native broadleaf woodland and open space in the restructuring of plantations and along the lower slopes of Balquhidder glen, with limited extension up burn sides and locally in the open upland glen landscapes.
- There is some potential to 'rescue' archaeological sites from the forests where damage has been minimal and where the sites lend themselves to interpretation/access. Others may benefit from limited tree clearance and bracken spraying with open areas maintained in the woodlands. Care should be taken in any proposed woodland expansion schemes to ensure that features are protected.
- The biodiversity benefits could be expanded significantly, e.g. via restructuring of commercial plantations and expansion of broadleaf woodland habitats and through appropriate management.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: FARMED STRATH FLOOR

There are small areas of farm land along the glen floor.

HLA: Mix of 18th to 19th century fields and farming and prehistoric to present day moorland and rough grazing.



BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
<p>Sense of place</p>	<p>Farmed strath floors are important areas of diversity in the Breadalbane landscape, providing strong visual contrast to the enclosing upland slopes. Traditionally managed farmed lands, these areas are notably managed with distinct field patterns providing a human dimension to the landscape. They are a component of the rural setting of the settled loch shore. Winter flooding is a feature of the meadows at the foot of Balquhidder Glen.</p>	<p>The strath floors have a distinctive character due to their flat topography and contrast with the surrounding uplands. This landscape type is generally important as an element of diversity in the Park's glen landscapes and specifically contributes to the scenic and distinctive qualities of the Breadalbane glens. In Balquhidder the extent of farmed strath floors is somewhat limited, with a greater proportion of the glen floor taken up with water bodies. However, whilst still occupying a small proportion of the landscape, the straths are visually highly significant, and compositionally important within views and in terms of allowing views across and through the glens. The areas have good quality views of the surrounding hills and upland areas and they are more accessible from the small rural roads that access Balquhidder Glen than elsewhere in Breadalbane. The scenic contribution of river and meadow landscapes can be exceptional, with traditional hay meadow management adding to the summer scene and atmosphere and winter flooding to the foot of the glen. Significantly this landscape type, as where it occurs elsewhere in the Park, helps to establish a farmed countryside setting to the rural villages of a generally unspoilt and traditional quality. Balquhidder Glen probably represents one of the Park's least spoilt landscapes retaining a sense of tranquillity and remoteness of time and place that underpins the glen's spiritual quality and reputation as a Celtic 'thin place'.</p>	<p>The farmed strath floor areas may come under pressure for housing and tourist developments in the future. Changes or decline in agricultural practise could lead to the decline of traditional features, such as field boundaries.</p>
<p>Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>Several deserted farmsteads with cultivation remains are identified as relict medieval/post medieval settlement and agriculture.</p> <p>There are historic sites of interest in the area including the 18th century MacGregor graveyard at Immiriabhach, Gallows Hill and possible standing stone with historical associations.</p>	<p>Interest to specialists, locals and visitors.</p>	<p>Sites could be affected by future woodland planting.</p>

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: FARMED STRATH FLOOR

BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
Biodiversity	River Teith SAC for lamprey and salmon. The boundary features and rushy pastures in fields support wildlife including waders.	The fish populations are of high importance. The damp grassland and other farm land habitats and the bird and other wildlife they support are of more local value.	Rural stewardship schemes in parts of this LCT are retaining and restoring structural diversity previously endangered or diminished by pressures for more intensive management.
Associations	Rob Roy's House and the Clan MacGregor generally.		

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Farmers should be encouraged to continue low intensity agricultural practices, including the traditional management of hay meadows, which makes a particular contribution to the summer landscape.
- New woodland planting should be controlled and generally discouraged.
- Access to these landscapes could be improved with path network development from the villages and also links along the rivers and field boundaries.
- Potential for interpretation of pre-improvement agricultural system.
- Need to protect links between different elements of pre-improvement agriculture where these still survive.
- Potential for interpretation associated with a programme of repair for the graveyards.
- The biodiversity benefit could be enhanced through more wildlife friendly farming and measures to improve the habitat value of the riparian corridors and woodlands.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: SETTLED LOCH SHORE

The settled loch shore comprises part of the dispersed ribbon of houses extending from Kingshouse to Auchtubh and on to Balquhidder. The settled areas tend to be small groupings and clusters of development. There are small patches of 18th and 19th century rectilinear fields particularly on the lochsides.

HLA: Mosaic of prehistoric to present moorland and rough grazing, 18th and 19th century fields and farming, 18th to 20th century woodland and forestry and 19th century to the present built up area



BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS & PRESSURES
Sense of Place	Open water with some dispersed settlement. Historic character of traditional rural and estate buildings enhance the rural character.	The settlements introduce a human dimension to Balquhidder Glen and the loch landscapes. Occasional loch shore settlement is typical of the Breadalbane landscape and occurs elsewhere in the Park. Here it relates to relict landuse patterns that can still be read over the open glen sides to the north east. This is unusual in the Park found only locally at neighbouring Lochearnhead and Glen Ogle, although a more typical characteristic in the north and west of Scotland.	Potential impacts of inappropriate development. At peak times visitor numbers to Rob Roy's grave can cause traffic congestion which impacts on the sense of place qualities.
Cultural Heritage	<p>A single cup marked stone at Gartnafuaran reaffirms the presence of people in the glen around 4-5 thousand years ago.</p> <p>In Balquhidder the Old Parish Church and graveyard are of particular historic interest. The Church is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and listed. The graveyard contains Rob Roy's Grave.</p> <p>In 1848 the Stronvar Estate was purchased by David Carnegie, a wealthy local landowner, who carried out a number of village improvements. He rebuilt Stronvar House and several farms in the area and also built Balquhidder Church, School and library for the benefit of his employees. There is a relict designed landscape associated with Stronvar House dating back to the 18th/19th century. The historic bridges such as Kirkton Bridge and Stronvar Bridge and small vernacular cottages contribute to the character of the area.</p>	<p>The settled areas are valued by local people, visitors and specialists.</p> <p>The stone at Gartnafuaran may be indicative of others as yet unrecorded in the area.</p> <p>Important collection of early Christian/medieval graveslabs including Rob Roy's grave. Important both locally and nationally. There may be other equally important sites of this type elsewhere in the Park e.g. at Luss.</p> <p>David Carnegie's improvements contribute to the historic interest and character of the settled area. A number of the landmark and public buildings, including Stronvar House, were designed by the leading Victorian architect David Bryce who was one of the earliest proponents of the Scots baronial style. These buildings are of historic and architectural interest and contribute to the character of the area. The small cottages clustered around Calair Burn are of local interest and contribute to the rural character of the area.</p> <p>This area contains the only relict designed landscape in this Character Zone. It is still associated with the mansion house for which it was created.</p>	Some recent development has eroded the traditional built character of the area.
Biodiversity	Many of the houses support bat roosts, especially pipistrelle bats. Stronvar Marshes SSSI (part) falls in the zone, displaying a transition of vegetation types from open water, through reeds and wet woodlands to dry ground.	The SSSI and bats are of medium biodiversity importance.	In this area, there is no evidence of a local decline in bat numbers. The SSSI is threatened by Rhododendron encroachment.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: SETTLED LOCH SHORE (CONT)

BENEFITS

Associations	The area has rich historic and cultural associations. At around the 8th century St Angus brought Christianity to Balquhiddar and St Angus' stone is in the church. Rob Roy's Grave is at Balquhiddar graveyard. Balquhiddar has been home to the MacLaren Clan since the 12th century. Creag an Tuirc, the Boar's Rock, was the ancient rallying place of the clan.
	The song 'Wild Mountain Thyme' was originally written by Robert Tannahill lamenting the clearance of Balquhiddar in the 18th century.

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Prepare Design guidance/Village Design Statement for guiding design of new development
- Improved interpretation and visitor management in Balquhiddar could enhance access to the cultural heritage.
- Retain key landscape features of Stronvar designed landscape.
- Building works could be carried out sympathetically to the needs of bats and their hosts.
- Scope exists for improving management of the SSSIs.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER

LCT: INLAND WATER AND LOCH ISLAND

Lochs Voil and Doine are natural water bodies. There are two artificial islands on Loch Voil

HLA: Natural water bodies have no historical period associated with them



BENEFITS	CONTRIBUTION TO BENEFIT?	EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE	TRENDS,PRESSURES & TARGETS
Sense of place	The inland lochs have a small scale and intimate shoreline, with the single track road threading through rocky outcrops with trees, and around more open meadow areas. There are glimpsed views across open water, framed by trees and long dramatic vistas towards the hills. The lochs have a tranquil quality.	These inland lochs give a spectacular impression and have a distinctive identity. They are remote from main roads, which, along with their reasonably unspoilt quality creates a sense of tranquillity, further enhanced by the accessible loch shore from the single track road. Balquhidder offers a unique visitor experience, of which the loch landscapes are a key component. The lochs allow long dramatic vistas up through the glen and upland landscape of Balquhidder with good accessibility to the views, which often includes viewpoints along the footpaths and tracks at the loch shores. The views across the lochs to the plantations are less pleasing.	Use of the loch shores for informal camping can in some cases lead to fire damage, litter and erosion, having an adverse impact on the tranquillity and unspoilt qualities. Future pressures may include pressure for motorised recreational activity and development of tourist facilities.
Cultural Heritage	There are several possible crannogs recorded in the loch but these are unconfirmed.	If the presence of the crannogs was confirmed it would be of particular interest to specialists.	No pressures at present.
Biodiversity	Loch Voil and Loch Doine are parts of the River Teith Special Area of Conservation (SAC).	The biodiversity benefits associated with the SAC are salmon and lampreys. Within the lochs, these are most important to specialists but salmon angling is important to local people and visitors in the rivers that also comprise the SAC. Although forming part of a wider SAC complex, these biodiversity benefits make an important contribution to the biodiversity of the Park as a whole.	These species are suffering a widespread decline but locally some trends are moving in a positive direction, with decreases in conifer forestry in riparian corridors and improvements in regulations relating to land and water management
Associations	Alleged MacGregor stronghold on promontory on Loch Voil.		

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Opportunities to improve viewpoints and visitor management, which can locally cause damage and erosion.
- Restructuring of commercial plantations to the south of the lochs.
- A survey of the potential crannogs would confirm its status and requirements for protection and management.
- The biodiversity benefit could be enhanced through riparian habitat enhancement and removal of artificial barriers to fish migration.

BRAES OF BALQUHIDDER