Walkover Survey for Millmoor Rig OHMP - March 2025

Alba Ecology Ltd.

Dr Kate Massey, MCIEEM and Dr Peter Cosgrove, FCIEEM

March 2025

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Introduction

Alba Ecology Ltd. was commissioned by RSK Environment Ltd. to conduct a walkover survey to support the development of an Outline Habitat Management Plan (OHMP) for the proposed Millmoor Rig Wind Farm (hereafter 'the Proposed Development') in the Scottish Borders. The Site Boundary is shown in Figure 1 which was the Study Area for this walkover survey.

In June 2024 Alba Ecology was commissioned to consider the nature and scope of a range of potential biodiversity enhancement and habitat management options, using online information and the existing Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) for the Proposed Development. This initial desk study identified a series of potential OHMP options. In March 2025, the Site Boundary was walked to further develop these ideas and identify suitable locations for habitat management and biodiversity enhancement options within the Study Area.

This document reports the findings of the walkover surveys undertaken by Alba Ecology Ltd. in March 2025 and supports the OHMP which is provided in a separate document.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives for this survey and report are to:

- Walkover the Study Area and identify potential habitat management and biodiversity enhancement options for the Proposed development OHMP.

Methods

A walkover survey was undertaken in March 2025 by highly experienced ecologist Dr Kate Massey, MCIEEM and Dr Peter Cosgrove FCIEEM. Walkover survey work was undertaken in bright and clear conditions suitable for surveying.

A detailed Phase 1 Habitat and National Vegetation Classification (NVC) survey was undertaken at an appropriate scale across the Site Boundary and is reported in the EIAR. These standard habitat and vegetation surveys were not repeated although NVC communities are referred to in some Target Notes.

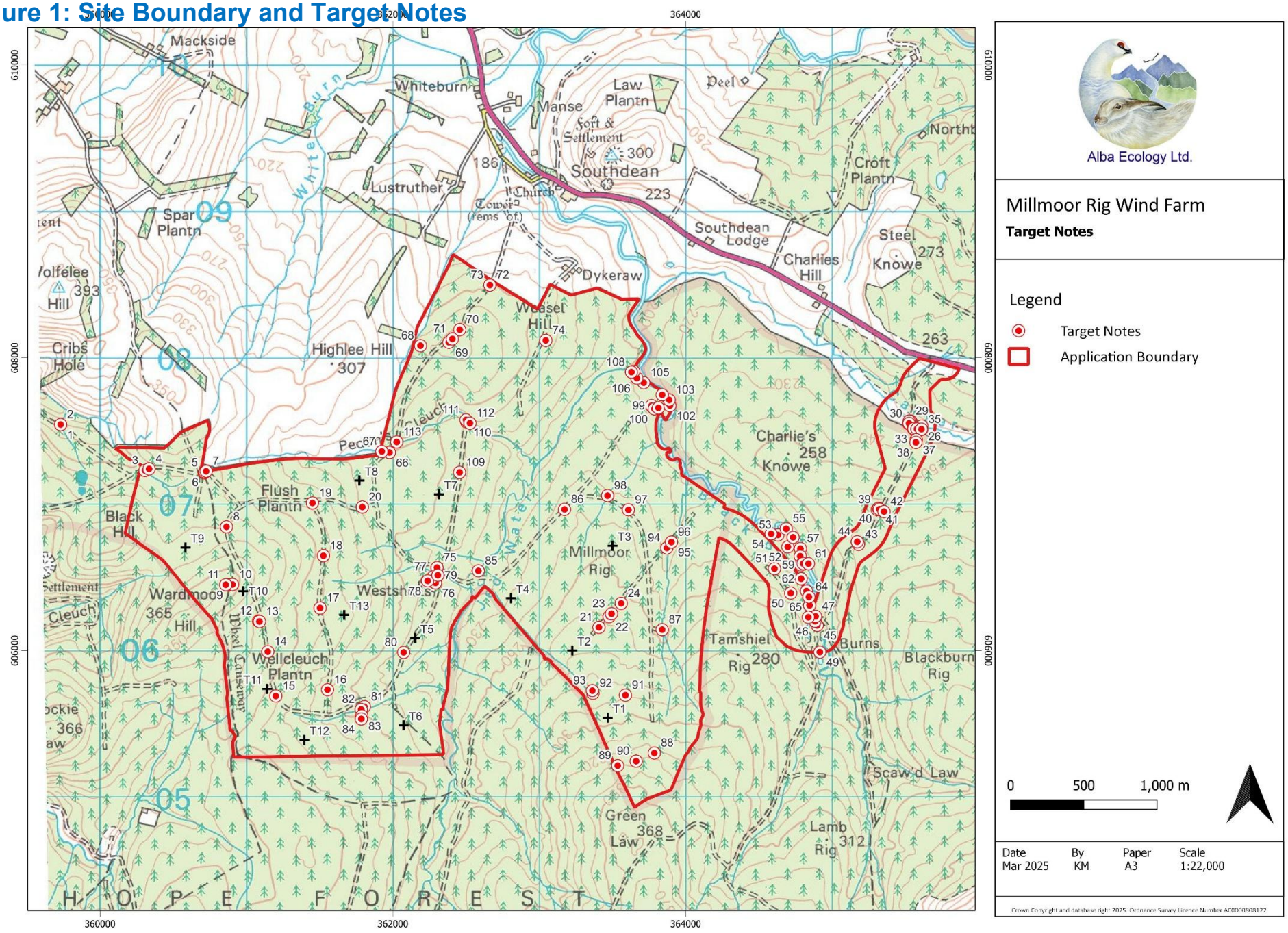
Limitations

The limitations of this survey are common to most vegetation surveys and include an acknowledgement that there is spatial and temporal variation in species appearance, and that the intention of the survey work was not to create a full inventory of all the botanical species in the Study Area, but to identify habitat management and biodiversity enhancement options.

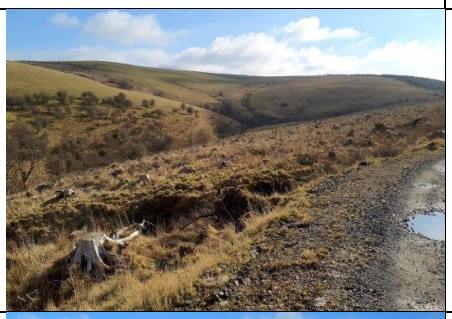
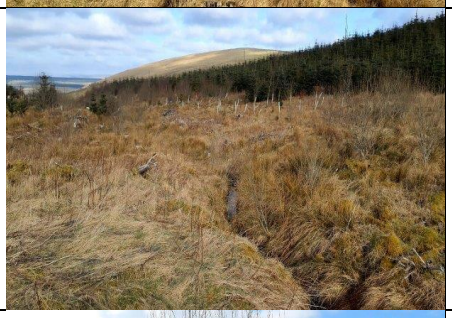
Results

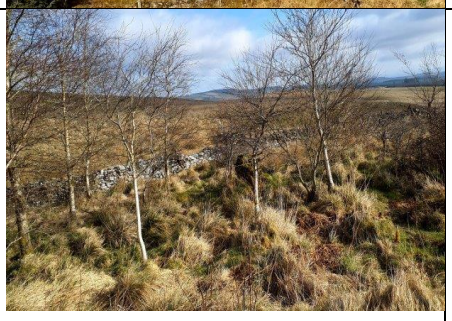
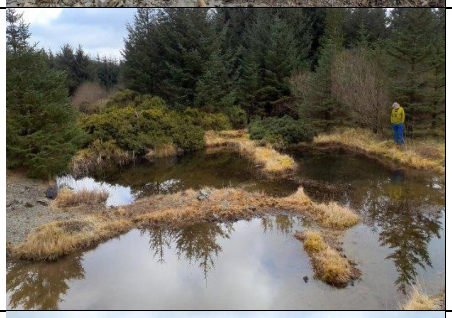
The Results of the walkover survey are provided as a series of Target Note. Their locations are provided in Figure 1. These have been used to inform the OHMP.

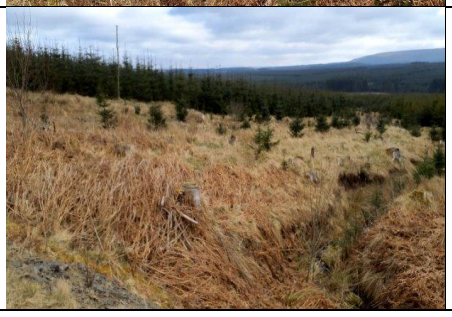
Figure 1: Site Boundary and Target Notes

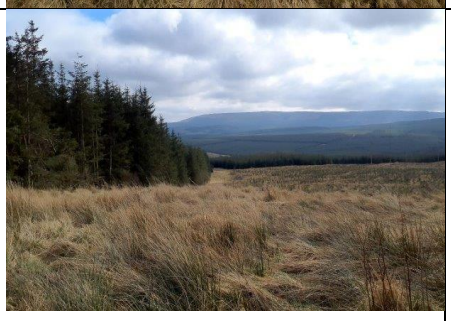
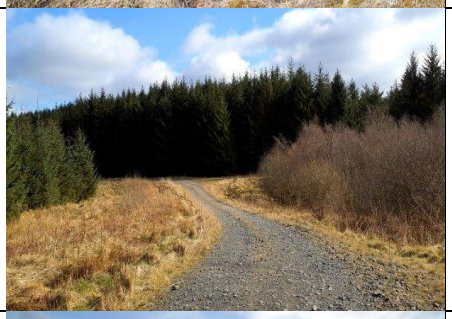


Target Notes

No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
1	NT 59730 07544	End of SSSI. Small burns have existing scrub (birch and willow) in narrow corridors. Could be reinforced and widened if get permission.		
2	NT 59730 07544	View of SSSI.		
3	NT 60306 07230	Recent native broadleaved planting along watercourse. Willow, birch and beech. Could remove invasive sitka.		
4	NT 60334 07241	Potential for creating pools in this area of rough neutral grassland (MG9).		
5	NT 60711 07214	Potential pool location on flat area with soft rush, Yorkshire fog and common sorrel (MG10). No standing water present. Suitable low topography.		

No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
6	NT 60715 07220	View of some remaining standing dead wood in coniferous plantation. Seems to be all of non-native coniferous dead wood. 13 stems seen.		
7	NT 60724 07225	Small patches of planted birch along stone walls. Good for common songbirds. Reinforcing and enlarging would help bring in additional species. It was currently 5m x 30m in size.		
8	NT 60863 06845	Ideal flat location for a pool		
9	NT 60883 06449	Quarry, with largely bare rock and species tolerant of disturbance e.g. coltsfoot and mat grass. Could make something of pools of water.		
10	NT 60904 06451	Some pools exist, with frogs and toads breeding, bulrush, pond weed. Pool was surrounded by gorse and sitka, or bare ground. Could be planted.		
11	NT 60858 06449	Pools with bulrush and soft rush on the far side of quarry. Enhancement opportunities in the quarry if quarry not still used.		

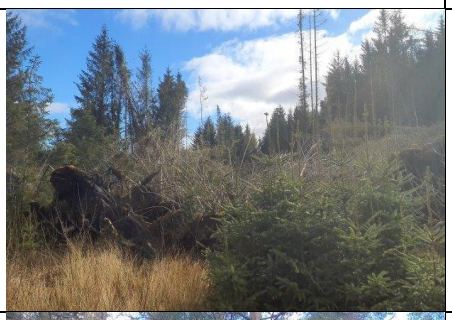
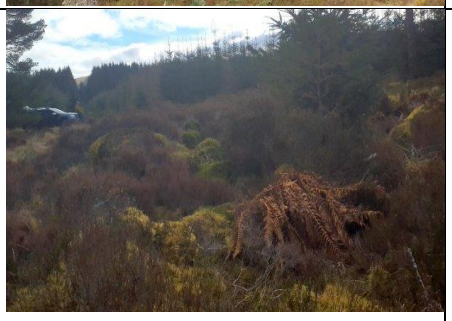
No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
12	NT 61082 06201	Pool could be created here, widened and deepen the existing very small puddle. The surrounding marshy grassland could have willow planted in to extend native woodland.		
13	NT 61088 06198	Frequent patches of planted native trees. These are good for common birds. Just tubes used. Demonstrates success. Could double the size of these patches, by planting more native broadleaved species.		
14	NT 61145 05992	This marshy grassland (species poor), could be enhanced through planting more willow and birch.		
15	NT 61200 05689	Thick patches of bracken here. These could be planted with willow and birch which would help to control the bracken. Remove sitka.		
16	NT 61553 05732	Open area of marshy/neutral grassland. Removal of sitka and reinforce area with some native species. Standing deadwood present.		

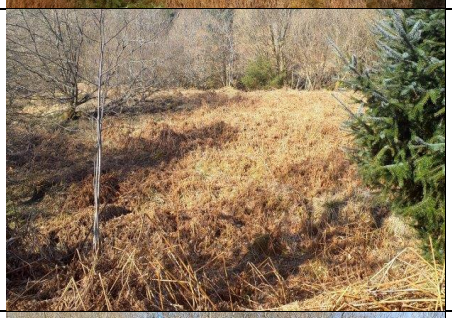
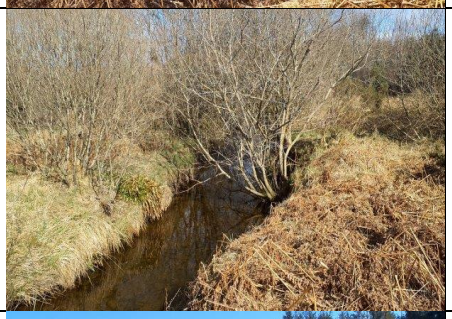
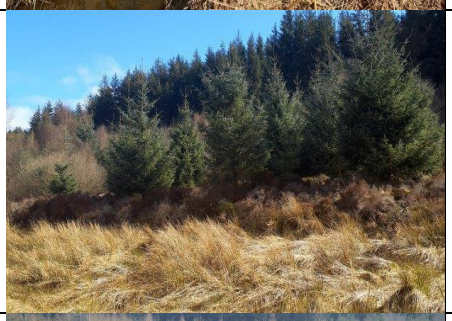
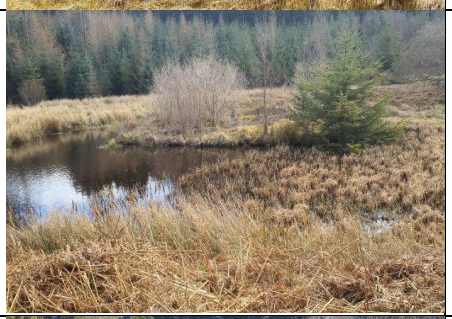
No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
17	NT 61502 06290	Suitable pool creation location. Recent native planting nearby.		
18	NT 61525 06648	Site is largely non-native coniferous plantation of varying age. The track sides and rides are largely characterised by species poor marshy grassland or neutral grassland. Willow and birch are common in in small patches. These could be enlarged and reinforced.		
19	NT 61450 07008	Need to consider stand-off distance for willow due to existing management clearance of willow close to track edge.		
20	NT 61791 06980	Patch of historically planted broadleaved wood in triangle surrounded by forest track. A pond to the left of the photo would be suitable in an area of soft rush.		
21	NT 63407 06158	Largely non-native conifer plantation with little to no ecological value. Rides and track sides largely of neutral grassland (MG9) or marshy grassland (MG10). Occasional patches of M25. Pool would add ecological value. Planting native trees would also add ecological value,		

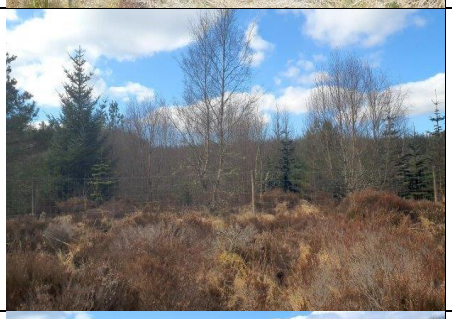
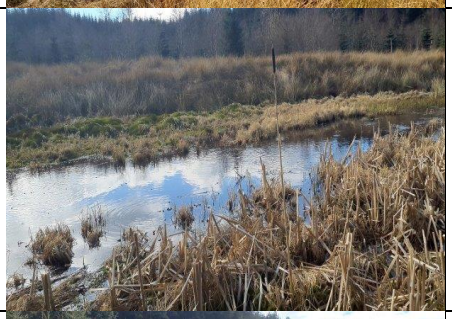
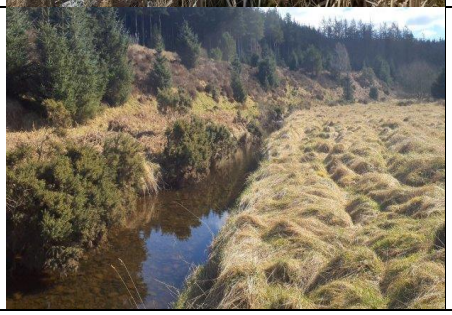
No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
		particularly if creating links.		
22	NT 63476 06231	Link willow along track sides to make a nature network.		
23	NT 63493 06251	Could widen ditch and create pool in this area of soft rush.		
24	NT 63559 06322	Link willow along track sides to make a nature network.		
25	NT 63466 07058	Riparian planting opportunity. 20m wide ride, with watercourse in middle could have native trees or scrub planted.		
26	NT 65612 07534	Flat area around existing pool to right of track as you drive into the site. Could have a pool added. Bracken dominated at the moment. Plant with alder and willow around new pool may help to lessen the dominance of bracken.		

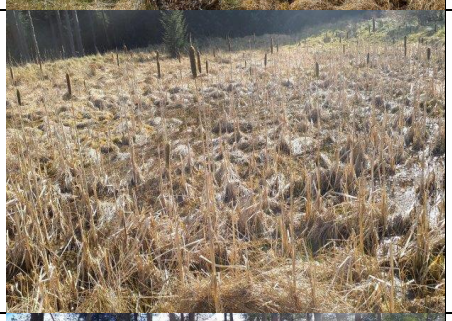
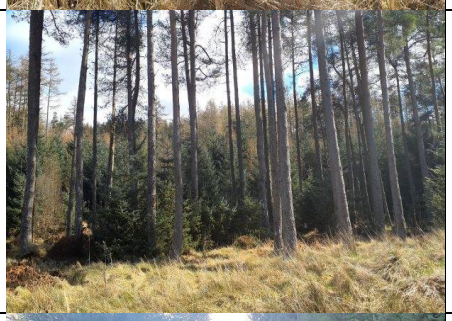
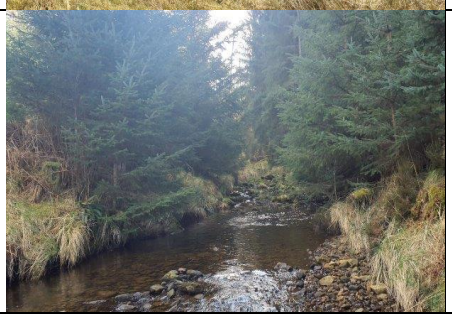
No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
27	NT 65538 07566	Pool has high ecological value. It is filled with toads and frogs breeding. Noisy and bubbling with activity. There were deep areas, as well as shallow areas of the pool which provides different niches for a variety of species. Bulrush and sedges present.		Several photos on camera.
28	NT 65536 07568	Relatively open areas with dry stone wall and bracken. Could add hibernacula as well as stands of native broadleaved species.		
29	NT 65526 07568	Already existing planted patches of alder and birch. These look to be more than 15 years old. Could add additional patches to create a variation in age and size.		
30	NT 65523 07550	Birch, beech, alder, planted c. 20 years ago. Demonstrates success.		
31	NT 65525 07552	Example of alder at the edge of existing pool. Alder should be planted in suitable locations around newly created pools.		

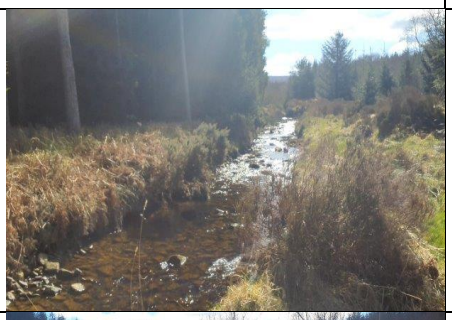
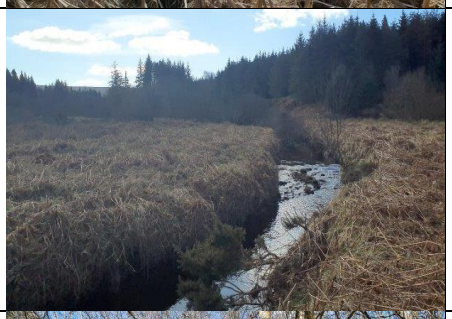
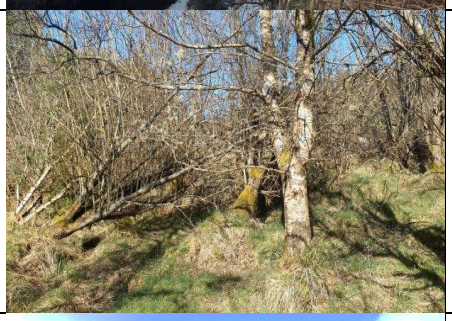
No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
32	NT 65555 07515	Some of the larger trees would be suitable for owl boxes.		
33	NT 65558 07516	Remove sitka encroachment.		
34	NT 65579 07514	Could put a line of trees along the burn.		
35	NT 65612 07511	A pool could also be created on the left side of the track. Ecological enhancement would involve removing sitka and plant alder, birch, oak, to reinforce existing planted areas.		
36	NT 65610 07512	Add pool here.		
37	NT 65574 07440	Evidence of some natural regeneration of birch in this area. Sitka also regenerating.		

No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
38	NT 65572 07422	Large area of windthrow. This could be cleared and planted with native broadleaf species to increase the patch size of semi natural habitat.		
39	NT 65308 06963	Owl box here.		
40	NT 65316 06971	Marked as M19, shallow soils but does have heather, blaeberry, and some hare's-tail cottongrass. Little to no bog moss. Could remove sitka from the ride.		
41	NT 65322 06965	There is some evidence of a ditch, but no peatland restoration opportunity.		
42	NT 65354 06949	Could create a pool here.		
43	NT 65180 06725	Patch of birch covered in lichens with heather below. This area could have the sitka removed. Perhaps have some more trees planted.		

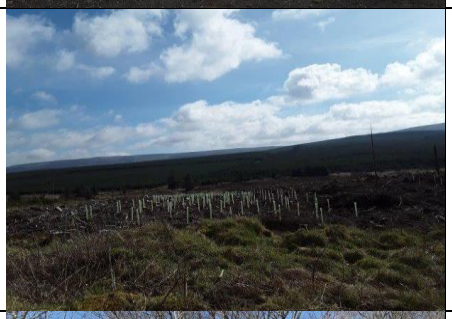
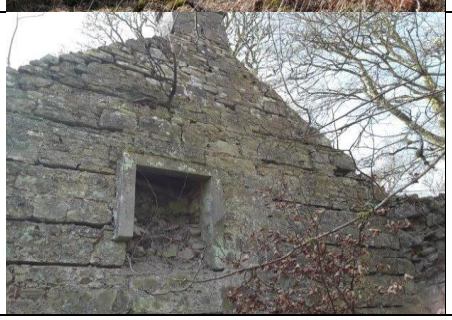
No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
44	NT 65171 06743	Area was dry heath (H12) with bracken, and a mix of tree species (birch, rowan). To enhance this area remove sitka and add more native species.		
45	NT 64898 06172	Area suitable for a pool. Relatively open mixed native trees. Remove sitka and add pool.		
46	NT 64883 06200	Watercourse was already lined with willow and alder. This is suitable and demonstrates the type of riparian planting required.		
47	NT 64887 06233	Remove sitka regen from this area which is sometimes 5m tall.		
48	NT 64846 06308	High quality existing pool. Frogs and toads breeding. Remove sitka from island. Bottle sedge here.		
49	NT 64916 05989	Evidence of some fly-tipping here. Could clear up. Rushes area suitable for pool.		

No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
50	NT 64717 06392	Woodland here was a mix of native species birch, rowan and alder with sitka. The main enhancement would be to remove the sitka.		
51	NT 64606 06559	There is a fence here. But not black grouse habitat. No requirement to mark.		
52	NT 64697 06708	The fence is around sitka plantation and areas of birch. Birch areas are dense thickets. Could remove fence into this area and allow browsing.		
53	NT 64630 06790	Infilled pool could be re-dug. Sitka could be removed.		
54	NT 64583 06797	The remaining section of pool/oxbow is filled with toads and bulrush.		
55	NT 64686 06832	This section of the burn could have sitka removed from edge and be planted with native broadleaved trees.		

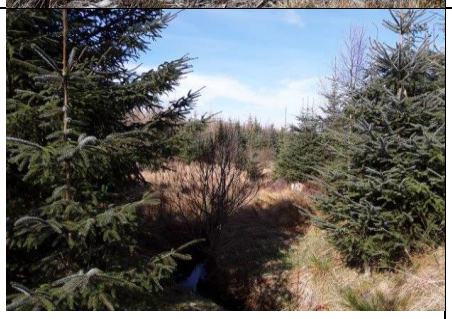
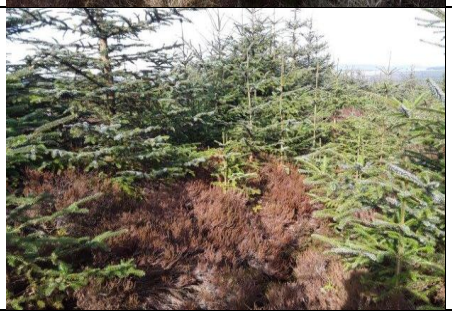
No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
56	NT 64733 06773	This area generally could have sitka removed and potentially planted with stands of suitable native species. However, some deep peat may be present.		
57	NT 64783 06696	Riparian planting would link existing stands of alder and willow.		
58	NT 64782 06644	Infilled pool. There was a little open water remaining. Bulrush and purple moor-grass infilled. A little water around the willow. Re dig this area to create a pool.		
59	NT 64787 06585	A third infilled pool. There was a very small amount of open water which was filled with breeding toads. Needs some deep and shallow areas. Infilled pool could be re-dug.		
60	NT 64802 06594	Stand of Scots pine with sitka below. Remove the sitka.		
61	NT 64838 06593	Sitka dense on side of burn. This should be removed and native broadleaved planted.		

No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
62	NT 64788 06490	Sitka dense on side of burn. This should be removed and native broadleaved planted.		
63	NT 64825 06406	Another largely infill pool with bulrush. Could be dug and profiled.		
64	NT 64841 06366	Open area of bracken. Scattered birch, alder and willow. Remove sitka and plant riparian woodland and stands of native Broadleaved. Could add hibernacula.		
65	NT 64837 06227	Example of existing wet woodland, birch, alder and willow.		
66	NT 61976 07353	Could join up two broadleaved patches, through native tree planting along dry stone wall and along track.		
67	NT 61924 07360	Could create a pool here in flat area.		

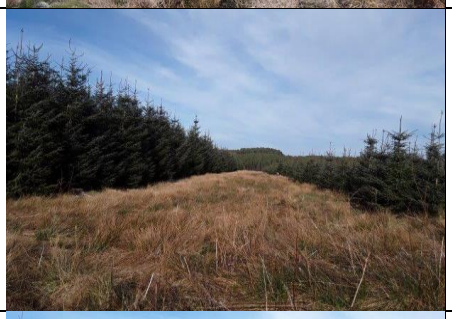
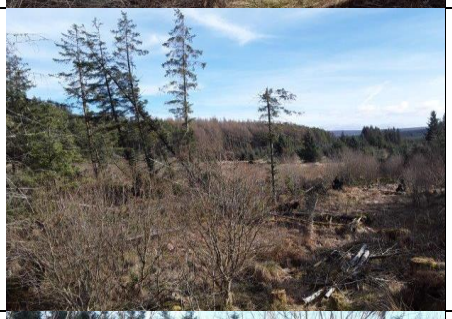
No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
68	NT 62188 08083	Example location for owl box.		
69	NT 62382 08106	Open areas here could be planted with native broadleaved species to reinforce the existing willow.		
70	NT 62456 08192	Existing pools with bulrushes soft rush, willows. Remove sitka.		
71	NT 62406 08129	The existing pool was filled with toads breeding, and frogspawn. Demonstrates that additional pools would be ideal. Frogs and toads are prey items for otters, pine martens and sometimes badgers.		
72	NT 62663 08498	Could add more trees here. There was hawthorn and beech trees. Could also add boxes for owls etc		

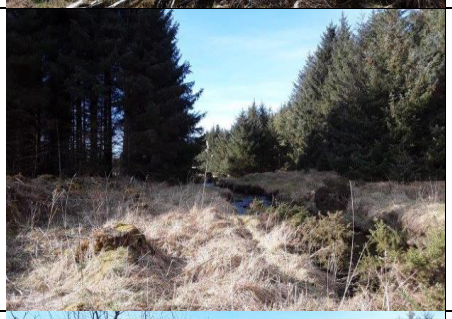
No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
73	NT 62662 08497	Could link in with these hedgerows of sloe and hawthorn.		
74	NT 63044 08119	Could put owl boxes on these larger standing dead wood trees.		
75	NT 62301 06566	Existing broadleaf planting along burn. Extending existing broadleaf wood (second photo).		
76	NT 62291 06462	Existing beech woodland. Could add bird and bat boxes.		
77	NT 62274 06502	Could have small bird boxes, such as redstart boxes, here and bat boxes.		
78	NT 62237 06476	Could add owl or bat boxes to side of house.		

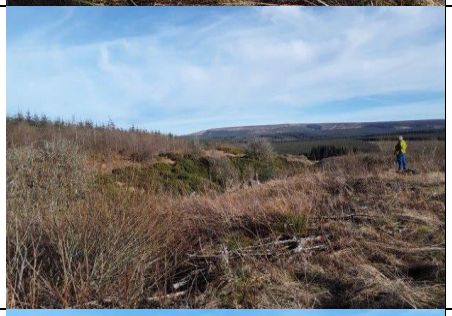
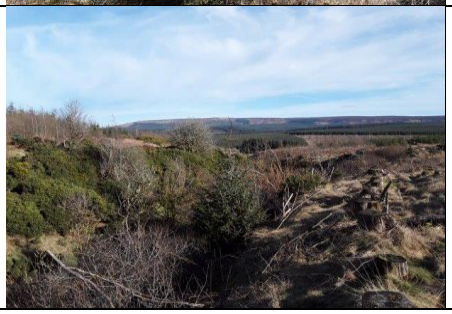
No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
79	NT 62307 06514	Very recently planted broadleaves in tubes. Likely planted in the last 6 months.		
80	NT 62073 05987	Existing recent planting of native trees.		
81	NT 61805 05616	No evidence of peatland habitat on marked deep peat in this section. Marshy grassland.		
82	NT 61783 05597	Suitable for riparian planting. No peatland habitat. Its marshy grassland.		
83	NT 61787 05553	There did appear to be some deep peat with sitka on. No evidence of peatland habitat remaining. Little peatland restoration opportunities.		
84	NT 61784 05532	There was some bog moss and heather with hare's-tail cottongrass with recently planted sitka. Restoration would require felling.		

No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
85	NT 62583 06544	Pool could be dug out and made permanent. There was existing planting which could be reinforced.		
86	NT 63172 06964	Potential for riparian planting along valley of Pedens Cleuch.		
87	NT 63839 06142	Remove sitka from c.10m from edge of watercourse and plant with native broadleaf species. Some were 1-2m away from watercourse, whilst there were also some more open areas. Some willow and birch also present. Reinforce.		
88	NT 63785 05299	Deep heather, on shallow soils. Plantation all around. No peatland restoration opportunity identified.		
89	NT 63535 05213	Deep peat must be in pockets. Deep heather over what appeared to be largely shallow soils. Thick sitka plantation. Little peatland restoration opportunity.		

No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
90	NT 63661 05244	There was some patches of red bog-moss and hare's-tail cottongrass in dense heather. Appeared to be on largely shallow soils at this location.		
91	NT 63588 05695	Small patch of perhaps just over 50cm deep with purple moor-grass M25a. Surrounded by plantation. Little peatland restoration potential.		
92	NT 63366 05708	Some forest to bog restoration possible here. Felled plantation with c. 2m tall sitka growing on top. Heather, purple moor-grass and rushes with a little red bog-moss and hare's-tail cottongrass. Occasional ditches were present and a farrow systems evident.		
93	NT 63362 05726	Drains apparent. Some standing water 0.5m below surface. Some peatland restoration potential in localised area.		
94	NT 63871 06701	Existing broadleaved planting up streamside.		

No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
95	NT 63902 06741	Existing broadleaved planting downstream of here along watercourse.		
96	NT 63902 06741	Potential pool creation location on flat marshy grassland.		
97	NT 63608 06961	Broadleaved planting opportunity below track, down ride to watercourse.		
98	NT 63466 07058	Broadleaved planting along riparian corridor below track.		
99	NT 63766 07673	View of watercourse valley. Some willow and alder already present. Some recent planting. Could remove non-native conifers and plant more native species.		
100	NT 63785 07651	Fen with some frogspawn and bottle sedge. Removed conifers.		

No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
101	NT 63813 07658	Existing patches of alder and willow, including planted areas. These could be reinforced.		
102	NT 63892 07673	Native planting along banks of watercourse is possible. Both sides here.		
103	NT 63887 07712	Planting possible here and clearing from edge of watercourse		
104	NT 63839 07747	Existing planting here. Up to 5m tall. Alder.		
105	NT 63713 07830	Existing planting stops here. Could extend, although quite steep this side better on far side. Habitat was species poor marshy grasslands. Planted with alder and birch.		
106	NT 63666 07861	More existing planting here. Extensive planting in large valley nearby.		

No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
107	NT 63645 07907	View of extensive planting around confluence of Black Burn and Jed Water. Potentially some space for more around edge, towards main watercourse, Black Burn.		
108	NT 63629 07902	Extensive recently planted native species along the valley of Jed Water.		
109	NT 62455 07217	No evidence of peatland habitat on area identified as deep peat. Rushes and marshy grassland with sitka plantation.		
110	NT 62503 07562	Native species planting potential on valley here. Some planting already present. Gorse in valley.		
111	NT 62499 07576	Another view of potential area for planting. This would be reinforcing the existing woodland.		
112	NT 62526 07553	Some existing woodland and gorse and recent native planting. Some opportunity for planting to reinforce corridor. Already a mix of ages. Could add		

No	Grid	Note	Photo 1	Photo 2
		some different species, such as oak.		
113	NT 62026 07425	There was some existing planting here, c. 5 years old, 3m tall. This could be reinforced.