

**Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to
Peterhead 400 kV Project
Environmental Impact Assessment Report
Volume 5 | Appendices**

**Appendix 12.1.62: Woodland Report Parcel 472,
Red Craigs**



APPENDIX 12.1.62: Woodland Report Parcel 472, Red Craigs

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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Appendix presents information relevant to the Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV Overhead Line (OHL) Project (the Proposed Development). It should be read in conjunction with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report, specifically **Chapter 12: Forestry**, for full details of the Proposed Development.
- 1.1.2 As part of the EIA, it has been identified that construction of the Proposed OHL Alignment and the associated access tracks would cross several woodland areas within private or publicly owned landholdings.
- 1.1.3 This woodland report assesses the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on Woodland, Parcel 472, Red Craigs. It includes the requirements for woodland removal and management recommendations to mitigate the impact of the woodland removal. The report provides an overview of the characteristics of the affected woodland, including woodland composition, site conditions, soil conditions, exposure levels and existing felling approvals. The report also provides details of existing infrastructure, and potential constraints related to forestry operations. It aims to inform decision-making by identifying key environmental and logistical considerations associated with the Proposed Development. Additionally, it evaluates the feasibility of timber extraction and access whilst highlighting necessary mitigation measures to minimise disruption to the woodland ecosystem and surrounding landscape.
- 1.1.4 Field surveys of the woodland areas have been undertaken and have been used to determine the various woodland characteristics, to identify the woodland removal required and recommended. This document also sets out the area quantity hectare (ha) to be compensatory planted to ensure no net loss of woodland is achieved.

2 Woodland Property

- 2.1.1 The landholding property boundaries are identified in **Figure 12.1.62a: Parcel 472 Location Map**. The commercial forest plantation at Red Craigs is found within a complex of forest areas around Loch Dallas in the Moray council area approximately 4.2 km south of Dallas (NJ 101511 480363). The Proposed OHL Alignment cuts through the far northern section of this ownership for approximately 300 meters.

3 Development Requirements

3.1 400 kV Overhead Line Infrastructure Requirements

- 3.1.1 The Study Area for this assessment initially focussed on a 100 m width either side of the centreline of the Proposed OHL Alignment and ancillary infrastructure, where relevant, prior to the identification of an Operational Corridor (OC). The Applicant defines the OC as the area in which it has rights to remove woodland for the purposes of the safe construction, resilience and continued maintenance of OHLs, or protection of electrical plant as required by the Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations (ESQCR) 2002¹ and The Electricity Act 1989². The OC is defined based on two different factors as follows:
- The first factor in which the OC is determined is with reference to the distance at which a tree could fall and cause damage to the OHL, resulting in a supply outage. As a result, the OC width would be based on the safety distance required to allow for a mature tree falling towards the OHL at the mid-point on an OHL span between two towers, taking account of topography and tree height at maturity. Standard falling distance for a mature conifer tree is considered to be a minimum of 45 m. Where the OC passes through areas of broadleaved woodland, it is noted that the width of woodland removal is likely to be reduced, due to the general lower height and characteristics of the tree species present.

¹ UK Gov (2002). The Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002. Available at: [The Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002](#)

² UK Gov (1989). Electricity Act 1989. Available at: [Electricity Act 1989](#)

- The second factor that is considered is the maximum distance that the OHL conductors can blow out from the tower under a 1 in 50-year return period wind condition, plus the required electrical clearance distance. This is to ensure that the OHL conductors do not come into contact with, or come close enough to, any object that could result in an electrical clearance infringement. This conductor blowout distance varies between each tower dependent on span length and must therefore be considered on a span-by-span basis.

- 3.1.2 The typical OC required within areas of commercial conifer forestry for a 400 kV OHL is 90 m (i.e. 45 m either side of the centre line). Where the OC passes through areas of broadleaved woodland, it is proposed that the extent of woodland removal is likely to be reduced due to the lower height of the tree species present. The OC for the Proposed OHL Alignment through areas of broadleaved woodland has been reduced to 70 m (i.e. 35 m either side of the centre line of the OHL). This has been based on the likely height of the woodland at maturity. Where any woodland removal within the OC is proposed to be reduced from the 45 m either side of the line, a site-specific assessment must be carried out to confirm that the conductor blowout does not exceed the OC width. If the conductor blowout exceeds the OC, then the width of the OC must be increased to meet the requirements of the blowout assessment as a minimum. This will ensure compliance with ESQCR requirements and that the required safety clearances are maintained.
- 3.1.3 A resilient OC of 90 m in width is required throughout the commercial conifer woodland within Woodland Parcel 472 taking into account the requirements of the conductor blowout assessment. The OC is illustrated in **Figure 12.1.62b: Parcel 472 Proposed Felling Requirement**.

3.2 Access Track Route Design

- 3.2.1 Temporary access tracks will be created within the OC .

4 Woodland Characteristics

4.1 Woodland Composition and Site Conditions

- 4.1.1 The woodland was surveyed in September 2024. The forest consists of plantation forest of young Sitka spruce (SS) in the OC with other species such as larch (LA) and Scots pine (SP) found further south of the OC.
- 4.1.2 The section of Proposed OHL Alignment is sheltered by high ground to the north and south as it intersects with the Lone Burn on this section. As a result, the area has sheltered exposure with a Detailed Aspect Method of Scoring (DAMS) score of 10³.
- 4.1.3 The Ecological Site Classification (ESC)⁴ identifies the site as having a cool, sheltered and wet climate. The soils have a slightly dry moisture status and very poor nutrient status
- 4.1.4 The National Soil Map of Scotland⁵ indicates, the predominant soil type within the affected areas consists of blanket peats. Soil conditions are extremely wet, and rooting is limited.
- 4.1.5 No environmental designations apply to this ownership.
- 4.1.6 The landscape is characterised by the upland moorland and forestry of Moray.
- 4.1.7 No active felling permissions or forest design plans were found for the area.
- 4.1.8 The Proposed OHL Alignment consists of a section of OC between towers CB8-15 and CB8-17.

³ Forest Research (2025). Available at: <http://www.forestdss.org.uk/geoforestdss/>

⁴ Forest Research Decision Support Tools. Ecological Site Classification. Available at: <http://www.forestdss.org.uk/geoforestdss/>

⁵ Scottish Government (2024). National soil map of Scotland. Available at: <https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/soil-maps/national-soil-map-of-scotland/>

- 4.1.9 There is existing forest road infrastructure across the lone burn on the neighboring property to the north (Parcel 13810) which appears to have been used for forest management in recent years. The Lone Burn will form a constraint to forest management and access in this section.
- 4.1.10 Considering the likely felling necessary on the adjacent ownership to the east (Parcel 3238) and west (Parcel 634) works can be combined and carried out by harvester / forwarder combinations. Timber could be extracted to the existing infrastructure but there is a risk of pollution from the Lone Burn and any work will need to be carefully planned to prevent incidents.
- 4.1.11 Timber will be extracted to the east, heading towards onto the unclassified U109E. This is classed as an Agreed Route by the Timber Transport Forum^{6,7}.

4.2 Photo Record – Operational Corridor Assessment

- 4.2.1 The following photographs provide a visual record of key locations along the OC. Each image illustrates existing vegetation types, land use, and notable landscape features relevant to the planning and management of the OC. Particular attention has been given to areas of mature woodland, natural regeneration, and locations where proposed works may intersect with ecologically or visually sensitive habitats. The photos are intended to support site assessments and inform mitigation strategies.

Photo 1: Existing SS crop and existing infrastructure (NJ 101191 481306, looking west)



⁶ The Timber Transport Forum. Introduction to Agreed Routes Map. Available at: <https://timbertransportforum.org.uk/agreed-routes-map/introduction-to-agreed-routes-map/>

⁷ Agreed Routes can be used for timber haulage without restriction (other than as regulated by the Road Traffic Act 1988). "A" roads (e.g. the A9) are assumed to be Agreed Routes unless covered by one of the other TTG classifications (e.g. Consultation Route).

Photo 2: Existing SS plantation and Lone Burn (NJ 102481 479981, looking northwest)



5 Windblow Risk

- 5.1.1 It is acknowledged that the creation of the OC would result in wider potential indirect effects on the surrounding woodland areas. These areas would be subject to potential increased risk of damage (windblow). Each woodland report identifies further areas of felling to a windfirm edge, defined as 'Management Felling' (categorised as an indirect secondary impact), which is covered in more detail in **Chapter 12: Forestry in Section 12.4**. Management felling would be considered as part of any application for felling permission. This would provide restocking as agreed with Scottish Forestry which would result in balancing the loss of woodland. Any felling undertaken out with the OC would be solely under the control of the relevant landowner (and not the Applicant). It is the intention of the Applicant to encourage the landowners to follow this good practice in terms of redesign of their current Long-Term Forest Plans, which in-turn would aim to follow UK Forestry Standard (UKFS)⁸ for the implementation of the works required.
- 5.1.2 Considering the semi-mature nature of the crop, the sheltered location, and the extremely limited rooting there is a medium risk of windblow.

6 Woodland Management Impact

- 6.1.1 As OC cuts through the far northern section of this ownership the long-term impact on woodland management is expected to be minor. Operations will reduce the area of productive forestry marginally but should not impact on forest management or access at larger scale.
- 6.1.2 As the infrastructure likely used for the felling of this section of the OC is out with this ownership it is unlikely to provide long term benefit to this ownership. However, as part of construction works, access agreements, dedicated crossing points and long-term access opportunities should be discussed with the landowner(s).

⁸ Scottish Forestry (2024). UK Forestry Standard (UKFS). Available at: <https://www.forestry.gov.scot/publications/sustainable-forestry/uk-forestry-standard-ukfs>

- 6.1.3 The Proposed OHL Alignment furthermore introduces an electrical hazard, but the constraint associated with the electrical hazard will be reduced by regular maintenance of the OC which will avoid the incidences of “Red Zone” trees (reference Forest Industry Safety Accord, FISA 804 “Electricity at Work: Forestry”⁹).
- 6.1.4 The total loss of Native Broadleaved woodland resulting from the proposed alignment is 0.0 ha.

7 Mitigation Opportunities

7.1 Woodland Mitigation Measures

- 7.1.1 Along the Lone Burn there is opportunity for the planting of low-density shrub to improve ecological value. As the burn largely overlaps with the OC opportunity to develop forest plantation is limited.
- 7.1.2 The area of spruce might be candidate for deforestation under current guidance on management of afforested deep peat. This could potentially reduce the compensatory planting and / or restock requirements. It is therefore recommended that a detailed peat depth survey is carried out to determine the extent of the peat.

7.2 Restructuring

- 7.2.1 The ownership largely consists of even-aged forests and therefore the felling and restocking will have a minor positive impact on structure in the ownership. Considering the size of the felling within this ownership the implications on forest structure are limited.
- 7.2.2 In the wider area, particularly to the north, felling has taken place which would be adjacent to the OC and management felling and depending on the time of felling for the Proposed OHL Alignment there could be an adjacency issue arising.
- 7.2.3 The felling of the OC and the building of the infrastructure for the development will create new green edges, which will allow the landowner to work to in the future. This does however not split the forest up into smaller management units as the OC only cuts off the top of this ownership and is therefore of no benefit to forest structure.

7.3 Restocking

- 7.3.1 In case the management felling south of the OC takes place there will be a restock obligation on the landowner. Considering the shape of the ownership and the location of the restock, access to the restock for establishment and protection will be very difficult unless agreement can be reached with the ownership to the north.
- 7.3.2 Areas of deep peat that could be deforested under current guidance for management of afforested deep peat would reduce the restock obligation on the landowner.

8 Net Effect / Summary

- 8.1.1 **Tables 8.1 to 8.4** outline the operational requirements for forestry management within the OC between towers CB8-15 and CB8-17. They detail the areas designated for clear felling, both within the OC and additional recommended Management Felling outside the OC to address windthrow risks and forest design considerations.

⁹ Forest Industry Safety Accord (2020), FISA 804 Electricity at Work: Forestry. Available at: <https://ukfisa.com/Safety/Safety-Guides/fisa-804>

Table 8.1: Woodland removal for Infrastructure, within OC

Item	Woodland Type	Area (ha)
Operational corridor felling	Conifer Plantation (90 m)	1.88
Access Track Felling	Conifer Plantation	0.03
Total area		0.23

Table 8.2: Compensatory Planning

Item	Woodland Type	Area (ha)
Compensatory Planting Area	Conifer plantation	1.91
Total area		1.91

Table 8.3: Woodland Removal Impact of Infrastructure

Item	Area (ha)
Total Loss of Woodland Area	1.91
Total Compensatory Planting Area	1.91
Total Net Loss of Woodland Area	0.00

Table 8.4: Woodland removal for Management Felling, outwith OC

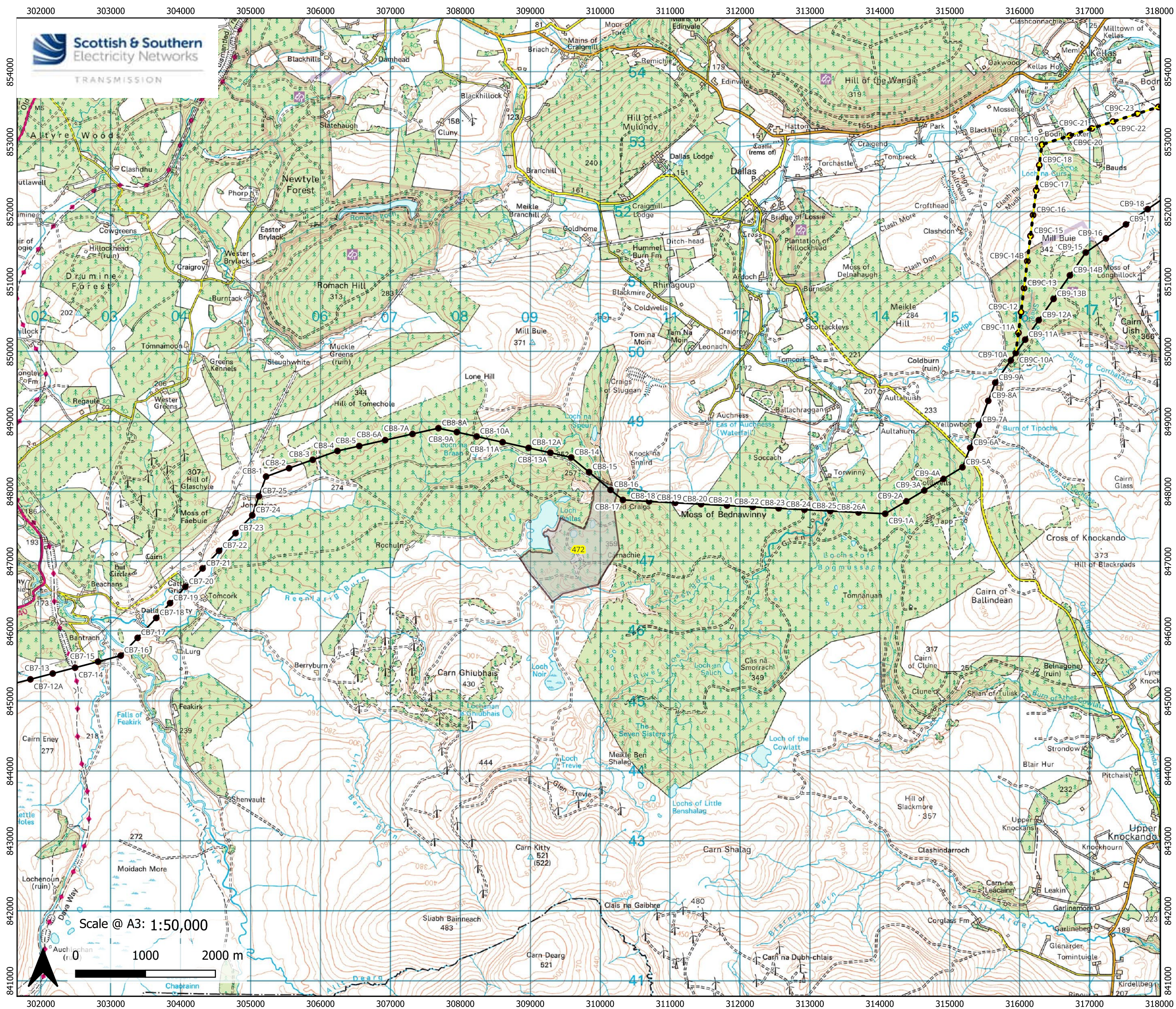
Item	Woodland Type	Area (ha)
Management Felling	Conifer Plantation	1.63
Replanting / Restocking Opportunities	Conifer Plantation	1.63
Net Loss of Woodland Area		0.00

9 Compensatory Planting

- 9.1.1 Only areas directly impacted by the OC will be included in the compensatory planting total, in accordance with the Control of Woodland Removal Policy (CoWRP)¹⁰. This policy ensures that woodland loss due to development is mitigated by appropriate replanting or regeneration efforts, but it specifically applies to areas where tree removal is necessary for the Proposed Development. See **Appendix 12.3 Compensatory Planting Management Strategy**.
- 9.1.2 Any additional felling outside the OC, such as areas cleared for windthrow management or forest design improvements, falls under the responsibility of the landowner and is not included in the compensatory planting requirements. Instead, these areas may be replanted under a forest plan revision or felling license at the landowner's discretion. This approach aligns with national forestry guidelines, balancing infrastructure development with sustainable woodland management.
- 9.1.3 The total amount of net felling requiring compensation under the CoWRP is 1.91 ha. This could be reduced by deforesting areas of deep peat under current guidelines regarding management of afforested deep peats.

¹⁰ Forestry Commission Scotland (2009). Control of Woodland Removal Policy. Available at: <https://www.forestry.gov.scot/publications/285-the-scottish-government-s-policy-on-control-of-woodland-removal/viewdocument/285>

- 9.1.4 In order to provide a greater balance limiting long-term impacts on forestry interests it is proposed that the majority of this woodland loss is compensated via offsite compensatory planting within the same local authority area. It is proposed that full details of the areas subject to this offsite compensatory planting is notified to Scottish Forestry prior to energising the OHL.



Legend

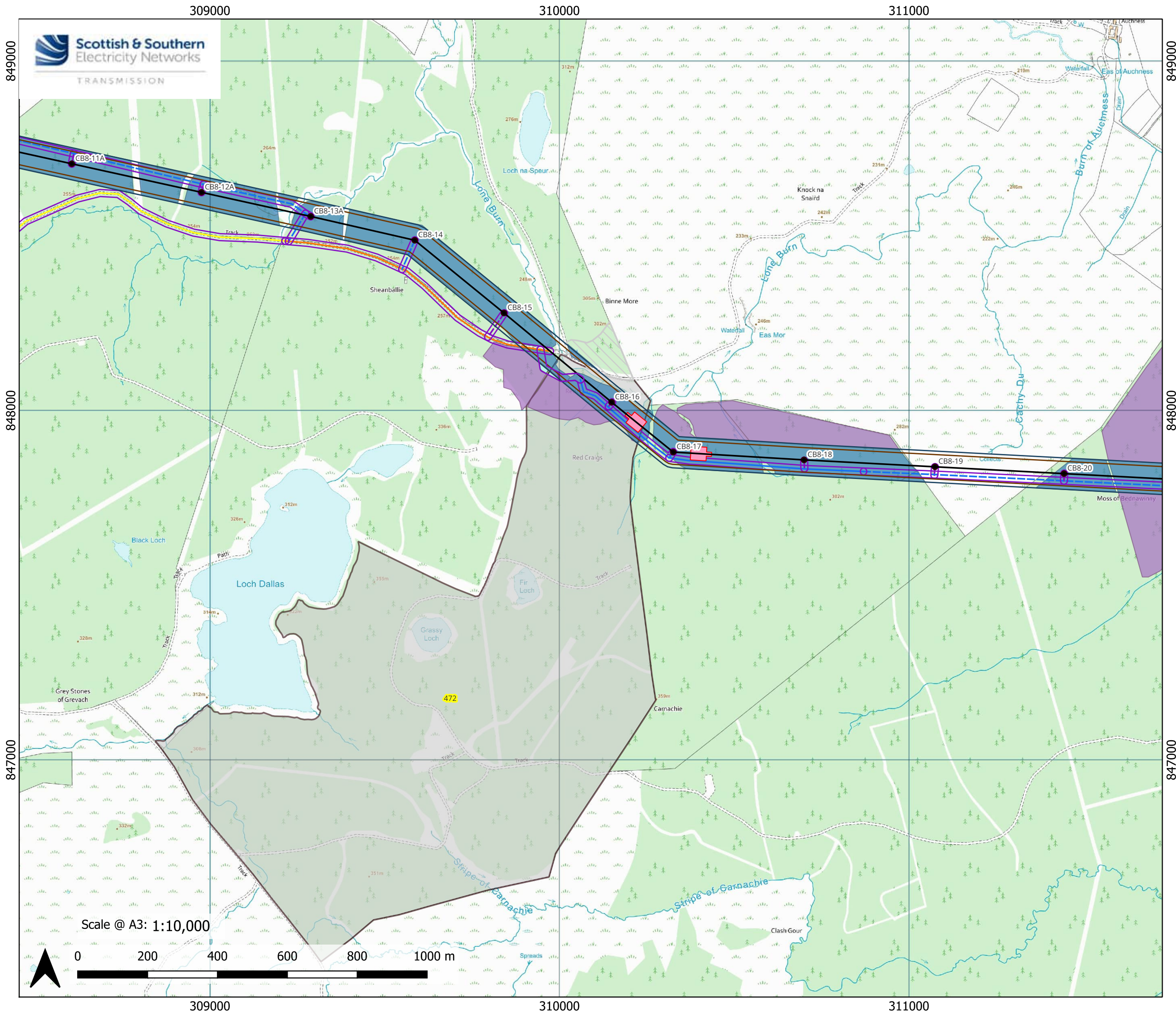
- Proposed Tower - 400 kV
- Proposed OHL Alignment - 400 kV
- Proposed Tower - Kellas Alternative Alignment
- Proposed OHL Alignment - Kellas Alternative
- Landownership Boundary/Parcel

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Project:
Beaulieu to Blackhilllock to New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV
OHL Project

Title:
Figure 12.1.62a Parcel 472 Location Map

Drawn by: LA



Legend

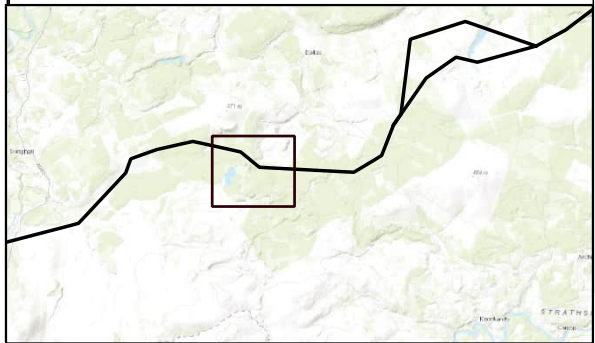
- Proposed Tower - 400 kV
- Proposed OHL Alignment - 400 kV
- Proposed Conductor Pulling Area (EPZ)
- 70m Operational Corridor - Broadleaved Woodland
- 90m Operational Corridor - Commercial Woodland
- Access Track 20m Buffer

Proposed Access Tracks

- Existing Access - Upgrade - Good/Fair Condition
- Existing Access - Upgrade - Poor Condition
- Proposed Access - Permanent
- Proposed Access - Permanent Floated
- Proposed Access - Temporary
- Proposed Access - Temporary Floated

Proposed Felling Requirements

- Mixed Conifer Operational Corridor Felling
- Mixed Conifer Management Felling
- Mixed Conifer Access Track Felling
- Native Woodland Survey Scotland (NWSS)
- Landownership Boundary/Parcel



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Project:
Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV
OHL Project

Title: **Figure 12.1.62b** Parcel 472 Proposed
Felling Requirements

Drawn by: LA