

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

**Appendix 12.1.65: Woodland Report Parcel 890,
Clashgour**



APPENDIX 12.1.65: Woodland Report Parcel 890, Clashgour

1	Introduction.....	2
2	Woodland Property.....	2
3	Development Requirements.....	2
3.1	400 kV Overhead Line Infrastructure Requirements	2
3.2	Access Track Route Design.....	3
4	Woodland Characteristics	3
4.1	Woodland Composition and Site Conditions	3
4.2	Photo Record – Operational Corridor Assessment.....	4
5	Windblow Risk.....	7
6	Woodland Management Impact	7
7	Mitigation Opportunities	7
7.1	Woodland Mitigation Measures.....	7
7.2	Restructuring	8
7.3	Restocking	8
8	Net Effect / Summary.....	8
9	Compensatory Planting	9

Appendix Figures

Figure 12.1.65a: Parcel 890 Location Map

Figure 12.1.65b: Parcel 890 Proposed Felling Requirement

1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Appendix presents information relevant to the Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV 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 Overhead Line (OHL) 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 Parcel 890, Clashgour. 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 12.1.65a: Parcel 890 Location Map**. The woodlands of Clashgour, are found within a complex of forest areas around Loch Dallas in the Moray council area approximately 4.2 km south of Dallas (NJ 129122 477332) and consists mainly of productive non-native conifer.

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 890 taking into account the requirements of the conductor blowout assessment. The OC is illustrated in **Figure 12.1.65b: Parcel 890 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 in and around the OC consists of young plantations, a clearfell and mature plantation of mainly Lodgepole pine (LP), Sitka spruce (SS) and larch (L).
- 4.1.2 Recent felling has been carried out within the OC in the south-western part of the ownership. The area was previously covered under a LTFP (4125782) which expired in 2020. Restock has already taken place with a mixture of Sitka spruce and Lodgepole pine.
- 4.1.3 No environmental designations apply to this parcel.
- 4.1.4 The section of Proposed OHL Alignment is moderately exposed as a result of the flat ground. The Detailed Aspect Method of Scoring score (DAMS) is 15^{3,4}.
- 4.1.5 The Ecological Site Classification (ESC)⁵ identifies the site as having a cool, sheltered and wet climate. The soils have a slightly dry moisture status and very poor nutrient status.
- 4.1.6 The National Soil Map of Scotland⁶ indicates, the predominant soil type within the affected areas consists of blanket peats. The area is very flat and characterised by peaty soils in the northwestern part of the ownership with better soils and slightly more topographical relief towards the river Lossie.

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

⁴ The Detailed Aspect Method of Scoring (DAMS) is a system used to assess wind exposure in forestry and land management. It provides a numerical score that quantifies the level of exposure a site experiences based on factors such as elevation, topography, and aspect (the direction a slope faces). The DAMS score helps foresters predict wind risk, which is crucial for understanding tree stability, growth potential, and the likelihood of windthrow (trees being uprooted or broken by wind). The scoring system ranges from 0 to 24, with higher scores indicating more exposure to wind.

⁵ Forest Research Decision Support Tools. Ecological Site Classification. Available at: <http://www.forestdss.org.uk/geoforestdss/>

⁶ Scottish Government (2024). National soil map of Scotland. Available at: <https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/soil-maps/national-soil-map-of-scotland/>

- 4.1.7 The Proposed OHL Alignment consists of a section of OC between towers CB8-21 and CB8-25. Proposed tracks in this section are found within the OC or follow existing infrastructure.
- 4.1.8 Recent felling has left the mature forest in the northwest of this ownership isolated from the road. The closest forest road suitable for haulage within the ownership to this area of management felling is found approximately 400 meters south of the OC. As mentioned in the report for Parcel 776 there is an opportunity for working the two ownerships together to reduce necessary infrastructure. The mature timber in the eastern part of the ownership is more accessible because of the existing forest road.
- 4.1.9 Some winch work might be required on the banks of the river Lossie to extract timber. Mulching will be necessary to remove young crops in the OC. Tree pulling on the recent restock will be required to sterilize this area of the OC. Areas of mature timber can be harvested using harvester / forward combinations.
- 4.1.10 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^{7,8}.

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: Unthinned mature larch and Scots pine around CB8-24 (NJ 128934 477835, looking west)



⁷ The Timber Transport Forum. Introduction to Agreed Routes Map. Available at: <https://timbertransportforum.org.uk/agreed-routes-map/introduction-to-agreed-routes-map/>

⁸ 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: Young lodgepole pine and Sitka spruce plantation between CB8-24 and CB8-23 (NJ 125791 477751, looking north)



Photo 3: View from CB8-23 northwest showing young plantation on the right and recent restock on the left (NJ 125461 478001, looking northwest)



Photo 4: Recent restock in the foreground and mature lodgepole pine in the background from CB8-23 west (NJ 125656 477097, looking southwest)



Photo 5: Example of instability in mature crop north of CB8-22 (NJ 121504 479643, 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 the **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 outwith 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)⁹ for the implementation of the works required.
- 5.1.2 Considering the existing signs of instability along with the inherently unstable soils in and near the OC there is a high risk of further windblow in the mature crops as a result of the felling of the OC.

6 Woodland Management Impact

- 6.1.1 The felling of the OC will create significant brown edges in already unstable pine and larch crops. It is therefore recommended that felling is taken to windfirm edges. For this ownership that means removal of any forest areas that intersect with the OC. Where the OC coincides with recent restocks the newly planted trees will need to be removed. Considering the size of the trees this could be done manually to reduce environmental impacts. The young plantation of approximately 2-4 meters will need to be mulched.
- 6.1.2 The areas proposed for management felling have previously been identified as phase 1 or phase 2 coupes in the 2010 to 2020 forest plan (4125782) indicating management felling is largely in line with previous forest management plans.
- 6.1.3 The Proposed OHL Alignment will reduce the area available for growing productive conifer which will have a lasting impact on the forest management.
- 6.1.4 The infrastructure built for this section of the OHL could provide a benefit to the landowner for future forest management as it will provide access into previously isolated forest areas. As part of construction works, dedicated crossing points and long term access opportunities should be discussed with the landowner(s).
- 6.1.5 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"¹⁰).
- 6.1.6 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 In the western section of the ownership peat depth might be such that deforestation can be done under current guidance of managing afforested deep peats. This could reduce the compensatory planting obligation.

⁹ Scottish Forestry (2024). UK Forestry Standard (UKFS). Available at: <https://www.forestry.gov.scot/publications/sustainable-forestry/uk-forestry-standard-ukfs> (accessed 01/05/2025)

¹⁰ Forest Industry Safety Accord (2020), FISA 804 Electricity at Work: Forestry. Available at: <https://ukfisa.com/Safety/Safety-Guides/fisa-804>

7.2 Restructuring

- 7.2.1 The section of forest within this ownership is split into three age categories; mature unthinned plantation, recent restock and young plantation of approximately 2-4m height. Currently the percentage of recently restocked ground is relatively small within the forest. North of the OC and the recent restock and within the south of the ownership significant areas of mature forest are found. The proposed management felling will therefore have limited impact on forest structure. As mentioned, the previous forest plan also proposed removal of the coupes identified for management felling. The felling would result in adjacency issues with the recently restocked sites within and outwith the ownership, this could be resolved through delayed restocking programmes.
- 7.2.2 The felling of the OC and the building of the infrastructure for the development will however create new green edges, which will allow the landowner to work to in the future if that is desired. It is unlikely that this will benefit forest structure in the short term as nearly all mature forest will need to be felled to facilitate the construction of the Proposed OHL Alignment.

7.3 Restocking

- 7.3.1 In case the management felling surrounding the OC takes place there will be a restock obligation on the landowner. Some areas are potentially on deep peat and could be deforested in line with current guidance on management of afforested deep peat. This could in turn reduce the restock and/or compensatory planting obligations.

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 CB8-21 and CB8-25. 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.

Table 8.1: Woodland removal for Infrastructure, within OC

Item	Woodland Type	Area (ha)
Operational corridor felling	Conifer Plantation (90 m)	8.86
Total area		8.86

Table 8.2: Compensatory Planting

Item	Woodland Type	Area (ha)
Compensatory Planting Area	Conifer plantation	8.86
Total area		8.86

Table 8.3: Woodland Removal Impact of Infrastructure

Item	Area (ha)
Total Loss of Woodland Area	8.86
Total Compensatory Planting Area	8.86
Total Net Loss of Woodland Area	0.00

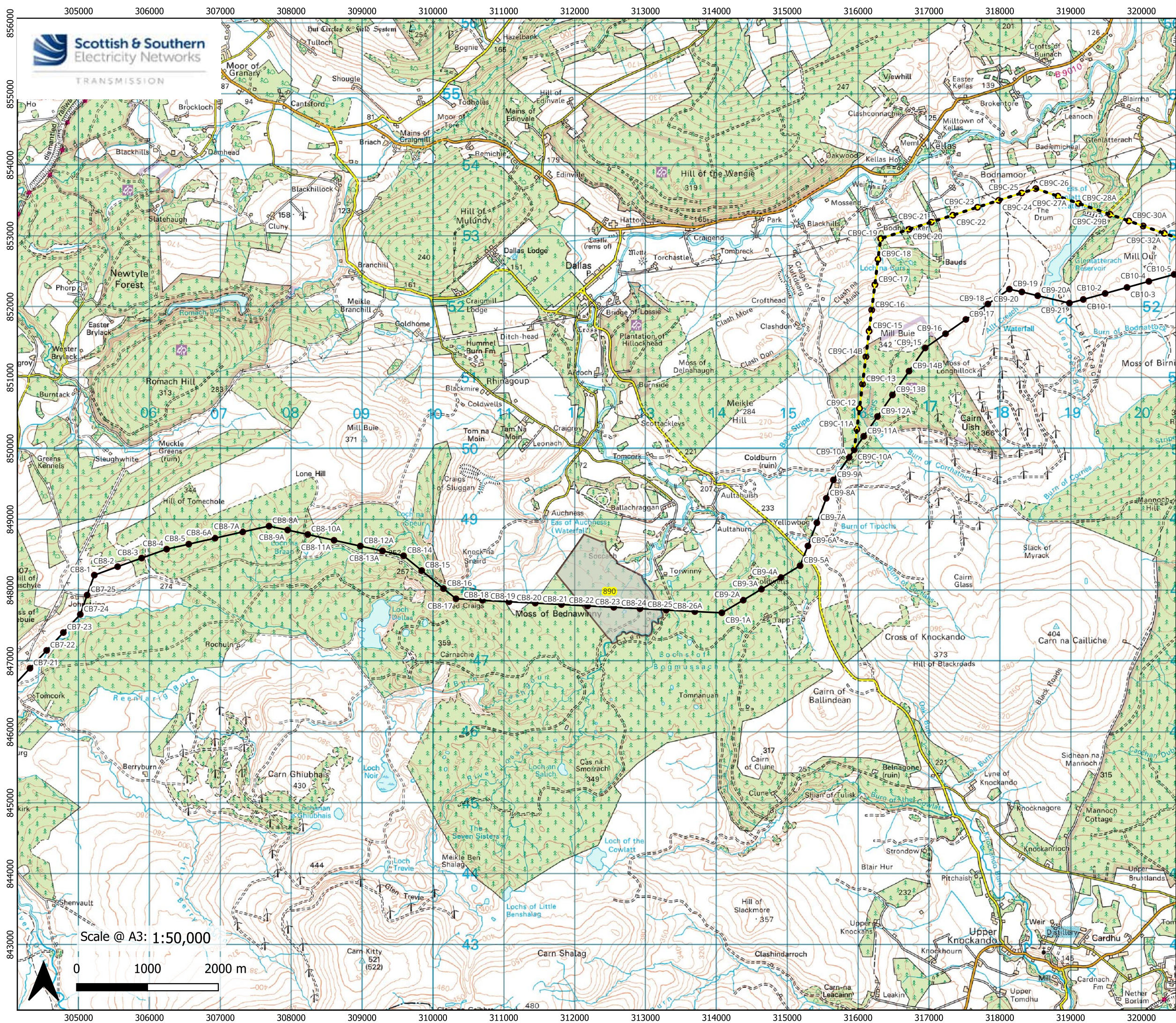
Table 8.4: Woodland removal for Management Felling, outwith OC

Item	Woodland Type	Area (ha)
Management Felling	Conifer plantation	18.36
Replanting / Restocking Opportunities	Conifer Plantation	18.36
Net Loss of Woodland Area		0.00

9 Compensatory Planting

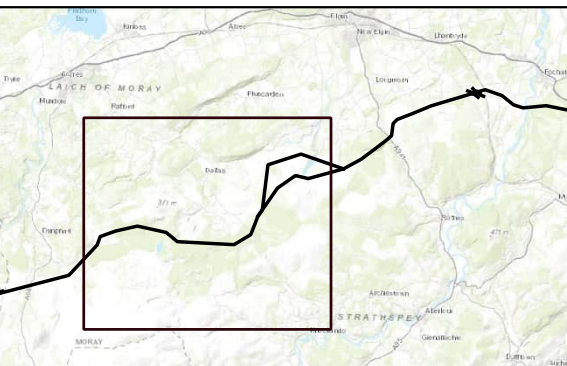
- 9.1.1 Only areas directly impacted by the OC will be included in the compensatory planting total, in accordance with the Control of Woodland Removal Policy (CoWRP)¹¹. This policy ensures that woodland loss due to development is mitigated by appropriate replanting or regeneration efforts, but it specifically 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 8.86 ha. This could be reduced by deforesting areas of deep peat under current guidelines regarding management of afforested deep peats.
- 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.

¹¹ 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>



Legend

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

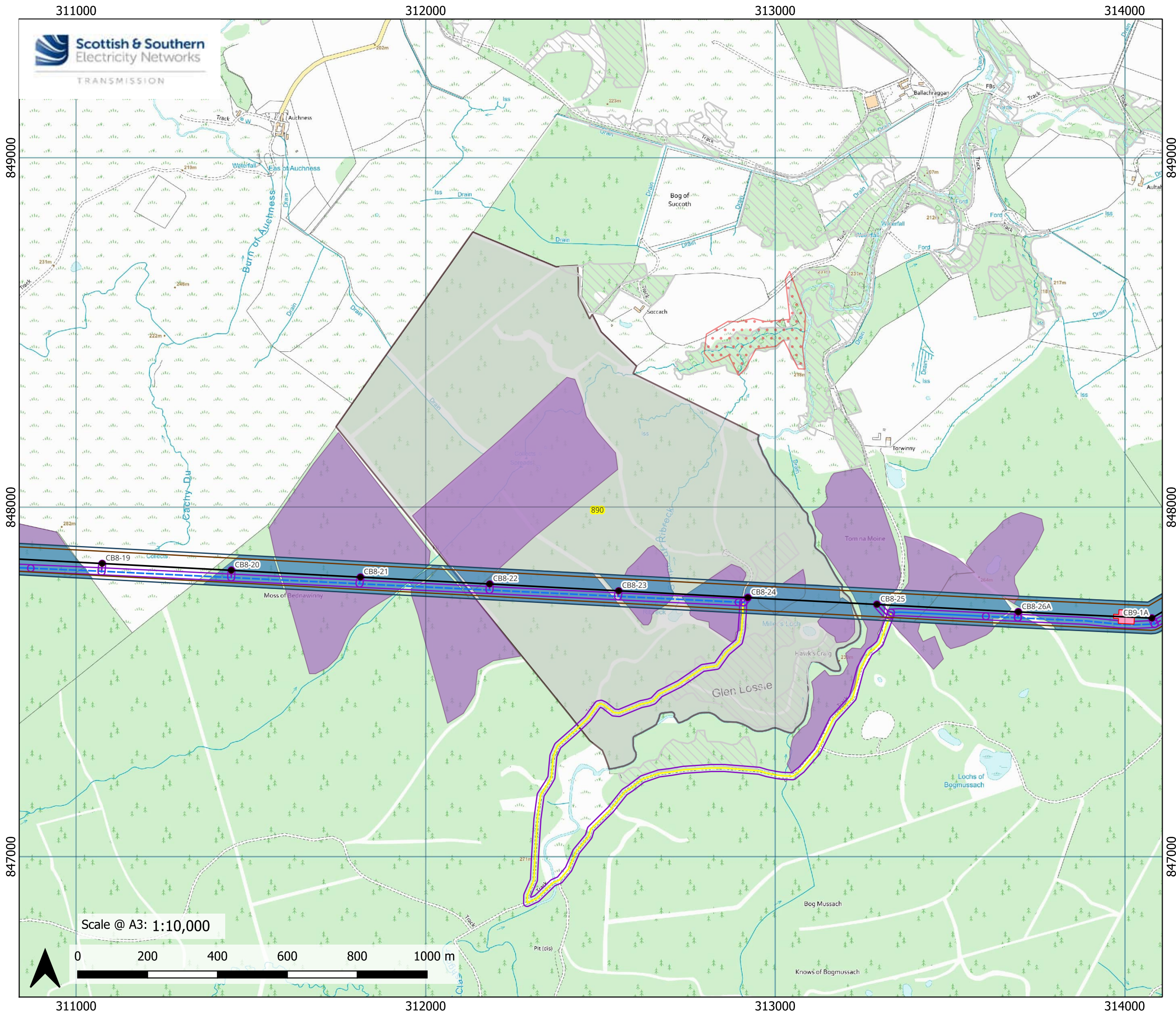


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Project:
Beaulieu to Blackhilllock to New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV
OHL Project

Title:
Figure 12.1.65a Parcel 890 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

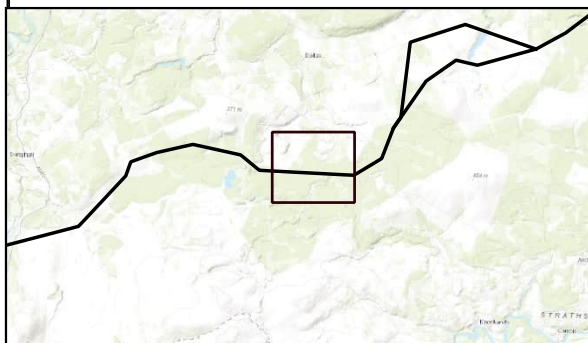
- Existing Access – Upgrade – Good/Fair Condition
- Proposed Access – Permanent
- Proposed Access – Permanent Floated
- Proposed Access – Temporary
- Proposed Access – Temporary Floated

Proposed Felling Requirements

- Mixed Conifer Operational Corridor Felling
- Mixed Conifer Management Felling
- Native Woodland Survey Scotland (NWSS)

Ancient Woodland Inventory

- Ancient (of semi-natural origin)
- Landownership Boundary/Parcel



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

Title: **Figure 12.1.65b** Parcel 890 Proposed
Felling Requirements

Drawn by: LA