

Beebraigs Forest Summary Long-term Forest Plan

Background

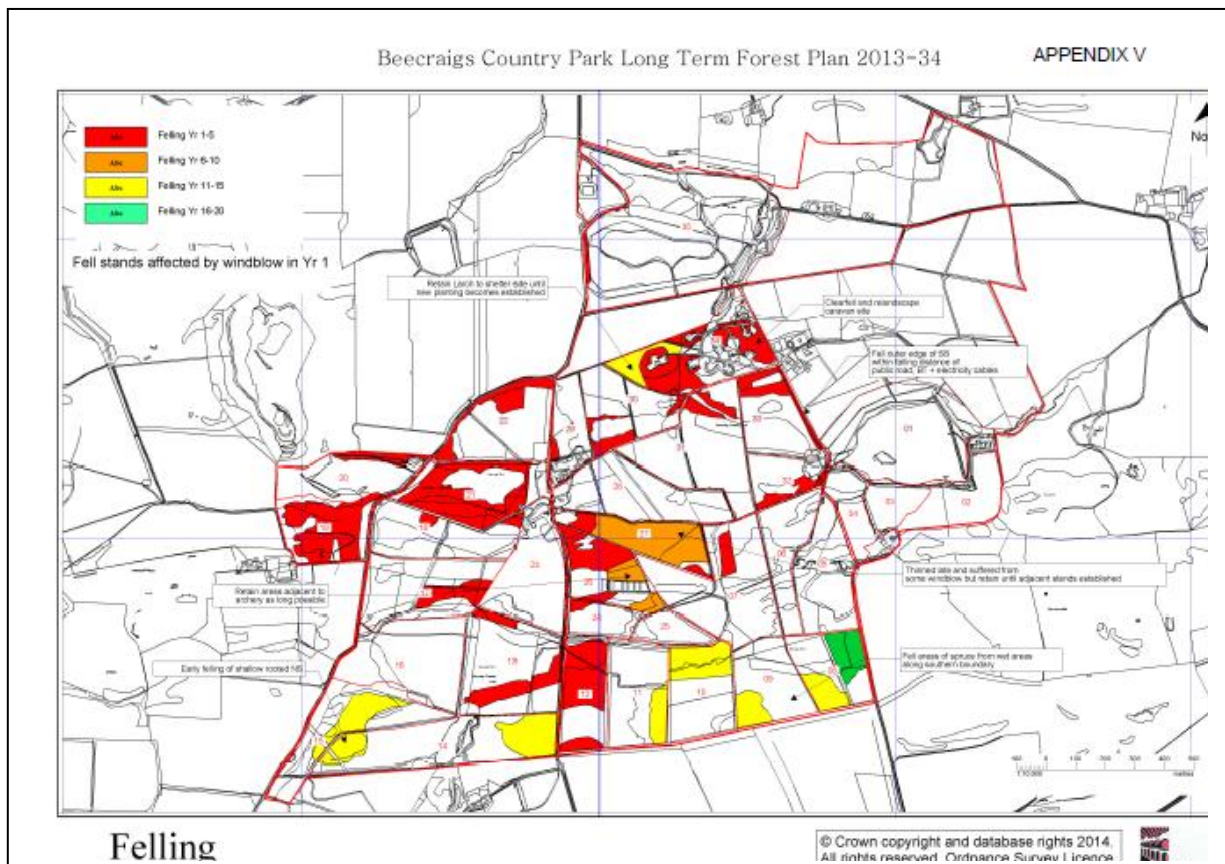
The forest at Beebraigs Country Park was originally planted as a crop of timber and as protection for Beebraigs Loch, a reservoir formerly supplying Linlithgow with water. Over the past 40 years the forest and adjacent farmland have been developed as a country park with numerous facilities for the public to enjoy outdoor recreation.

Much of the forest is now at a stage when the timber is ready for harvesting and the trees have reached a height when they are more prone to windblow. A long-term forest plan has now been prepared by West Lothian Council for the forest. This covers the proposed felling, thinning and replanting operations for the next 20 years.

Felling

Wherever possible the forest will be managed under a continuous cover forestry regime where the mature trees are gradually thinned or small areas felled to allow young trees to grow up and take their place. The more sheltered eastern side of the forest will be managed in this manner and here the wooded landscape will be retained.

This is not possible in the more exposed western and northern parts of the forest where the trees are more prone to windblow. Here it will be necessary to clearfell and then replant larger areas. Forestry Commission Scotland have issued the Council with a felling licence to start felling the most vulnerable areas including those which have suffered wind damage over the past few years and also the area around the caravan & camping site.



Shelterbelts and Avenues

The old shelterbelts, beech avenues and the Scots pine areas on the western side of the park are to be retained as long as possible. The trees in these areas will be allowed to mature and die naturally, with felling being undertaken only on safety grounds next to paths and the public roads.

Replanting and Natural Regeneration

In many parts of the forest patches of young Sitka spruce and birch have seeded and grown up naturally and will form part of the next generation of trees. Elsewhere the felled areas will be replanted with nursery grown young trees.

The long-term vision is that the central and eastern parts of the park will be mixed conifer and broadleaved woodland to give all year round interest. The conifer woods along the southern boundary and on the western side will gradually be replaced with native broadleaves such as birch, oak, alder, willows, rowan and hazel.

More open ground will be left along the edges of burns and around facilities such as the caravan & camping site and new avenues will be planted along the edges of the woodland.