A landscape shaped by people

Over several thousand years human influence has changed the appearance of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs dramatically. The patchwork of deciduous and coniferous forests and open ground you see today has developed as people used the land. Historically, the woodlands were a source of wood for charcoal, bark for tanning and timber for building. Over the past century, the planting of productive commercial conifers such as spruce and larch has produced large volumes of wood for the construction and paper industries. At Kilmun Arboretum near Dunoon, experimental plots of many of these non-native trees can be seen, as in nearby Puck's Glen magnificent specimens grow in a dramatic setting.

The working forest

Forest design plans set out how woods and forests will be managed in the long-term. The mix of tree species, felled and replanted, produces a balance of timber production with landscape improvements and wildlife habitat. This balance varies in different areas, as some places timber production is a priority, in others conservation is most important. Forest blocks are often felled and replanted in rotation, but certain woods - especially those most used for recreation - are kept under continuous tree cover with only occasional thinning to encourage natural regeneration. A safe working zone is needed during harvesting and extraction using heavy machinery, so periodically areas of forest have to be closed. Please obey warning signs and follow any diversions put in place.

Conserving the natural heritage

The Gulf Stream gives Loch Lomond and the Trossachs a mild, damp climate. The lush environment supports a great diversity of wildlife, especially within the special habitat of Atlantic oak woodland, deer, squirrel, otter, buzzard and woodland wild flowers thrive here, whilst mosses and lichens cover every rock and tree trunk. Forestry Commission Scotland is working with other partners to conserve and create an extensive area of new native woodlands around the shores of Loch Katrine and the Ben Lomond National Memorial Park. Similarly, The Forest For A Thousand Years' is being established at Cashel on the east side of Loch Lomond.

An inspiring environment

This part of Scotland is steeped in history and legend. Rob Roy and William Wallace hid in the woods, whilst drovers trod the glens. The natural beauty that inspired Wordsworth and Walter Scott to pick up their pens today helps visitors relax. There are many scenic walks and viewpoints by loch and waterfall where you can drink in the atmosphere. For a sense of freedom and some healthy exercise, explore the forests on foot or bike. There are over 60 waymarked walks and cycle trails and over 35 car parks. The long-distance path the West Highland Way crosses the Park, following the eastern shore of Loch Lomond. The Lochs and Glens section of the National Cycle Route 7 runs from Balloch to Killearn. It then continues along the South Highland Way and then onto the A82 to the West Loch Lomond cycle path, runs from Balloch to Tarbet.

Further information

More detailed information on the walks in this leaflet is available from individual sites, at West Scotland Information Centres throughout the area or at Forestry Commission Scotland and National Park Centres (see map).

Forestry Commission Scotland

David Marshall Lodge
Queensferry Forest Park
Near Aberfoyle
Tel: 01389 722321

Angus Forest Park
Near Dunkeld
Tel: 01301 770452

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park
Luss Centre
Tel: 01389 722500

Balquhidder Centre
Tel: 01389 772500

Cowal Centre
Tel: 01389 772980

Produced for Forestry Commission Scotland by McDonald & ASTM

1000 Trees Project

In 2010 we are working with communities throughout Scotland to create 1000 Trees Project. More than 100 communities are involved and we are looking to purchase trees and plant them in all four corners of the country. 

The project is a great opportunity to get involved in planting trees in your community and will bring benefits to our countryside and local wildlife.

Telephone: 0845 606 4730
Email: info@1000trees-project.org.uk
Website: www.1000trees-project.org.uk

1000 Trees Project is made possible through funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).
Key to Symbols

- Easy
  - Walks in a simple setting suitable for a family or individual. Short walks through open land or woodlands with no special equipment required.

- Moderate
  - Walks of varying length, difficulty and time. Ideal for those with a reasonable fitness level. 

- Strengthen
  - Walks requiring more time and effort to reach the destination.

- Strenuous
  - Walks that demand a high degree of fitness and mental preparation.

- Hillwalking Footwear
  - Walks that require special footwear, such as walking boots.

- Muscle Stretcher
  - Walks that include long periods of uphill walking requiring a high degree of physical preparation.

- Natural Heritage
  - Walks that provide an opportunity to appreciate the natural environment and its history.

- History
  - Walks that provide a historical perspective on the area.

- Wildlife
  - Walks that focus on wildlife observation.

- Points of Interest
  - Walks that include historical or natural points of interest.

- Accessible Walks
  - Walks that are suitable for people with limited mobility.

- Distance in Miles and Kilometres
  - Distances indicated in miles and kilometres are approximate.

- Maximum Gradient
  - Indicates the maximum gradient (1:4) on the waymarked route.

- Other Information
  - Additional information such as times and trail details.
Trees soften the loch shores and hillsides of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, contrasting with the rugged mountains rising above the glens. Many of the woods and forests are nationally owned - Forestry Commission Scotland manages 30 percent of the land area of the National Park. This encompasses Queen Elizabeth Forest Park in the Trossachs and Argyll Forest Park in the west. It includes oak woods around Loch Lomond, Caledonian Pine forest in the north and a wide variety of other special habitats. Roads and rail provide easy access to the Park, while footpaths and cycle tracks lead you to its hidden treasures.

For more information on woodland, forests and the National Park:
www.forestry.gov.uk
www.lochlomond-trossachs.org