

Trees for Life

Our purpose

Trees for Life stands at the forefront of rewilding in the Scottish Highlands. Hopeful and bold, we are committed to creating nature-rich landscapes that include and support people. Working on a grand scale, we aim to close the gap between people and nature.

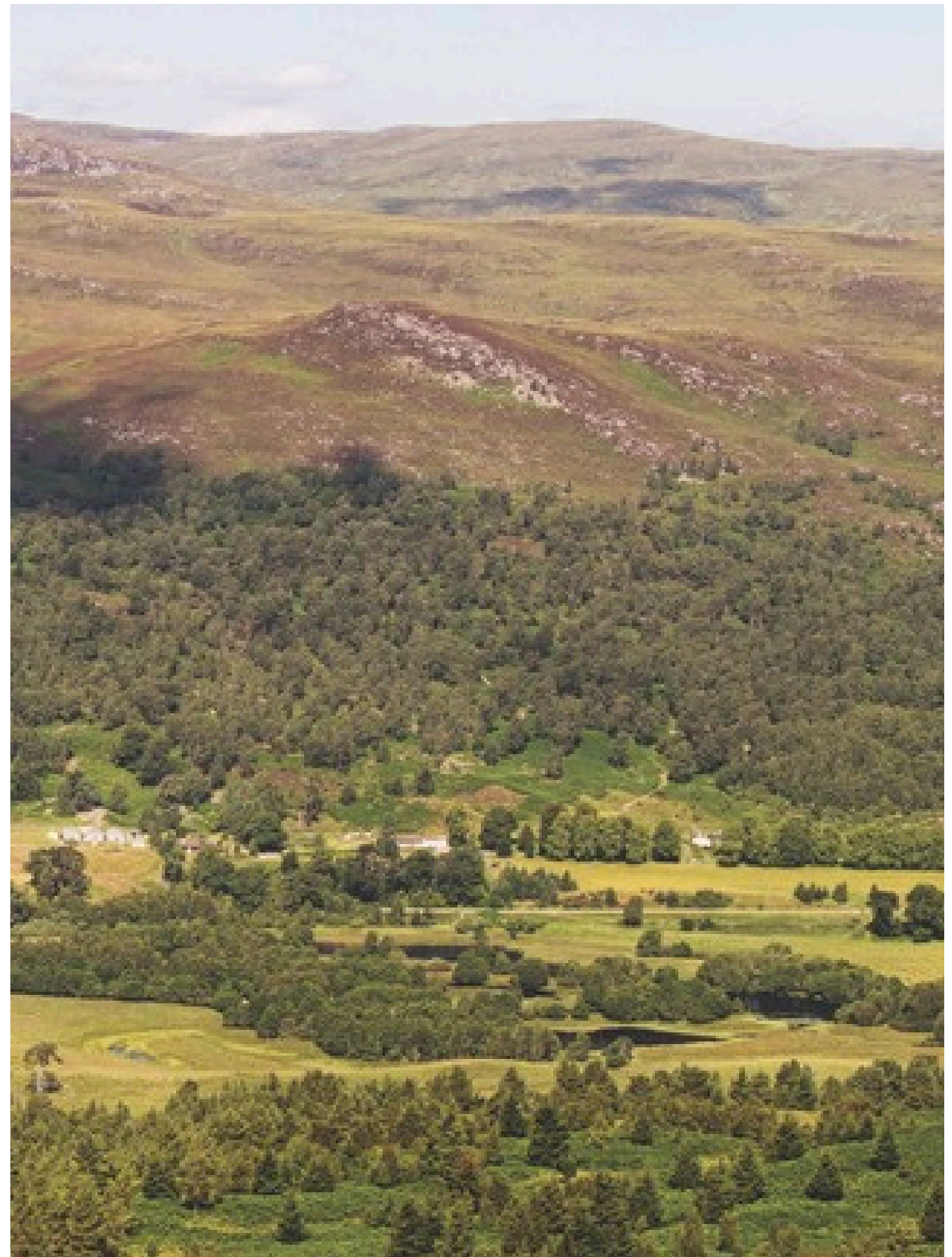
With a focus on Scotland's spectacular Caledonian forest, we foster biodiversity and encourage natural processes essential to life. From the iconic red squirrel to the elusive lynx, we are working to bring more life back to our landscapes.

Rewilding is a shared journey. Together with communities, we are restoring Scotland's natural and cultural heritage while supporting local livelihoods. Join us on this path of hope and positive action - rewild the Scottish Highlands.

What is rewilding?

Rewilding is large-scale nature restoration, led by nature and facilitated by humans. Our vision is of a revitalised wild forest in the Scottish Highlands, providing space for wildlife to flourish and communities to thrive. It is about working with nature, natural processes and seeing human activity as part of an intricate system in which everything is connected.

The key to rewilding's success is people. People to enable it, people to gain from it and people to enjoy it. Rewilding can work in harmony with how the land is managed today, and help to boost wellbeing, create jobs, and support livelihoods.



treesforlife.org.uk

Trees for Life is a registered Scottish charity (SC021303)

Dundreggan

Dundreggan is our 10,000 acre flagship rewilding estate, to date over 4,000 species of plants and animals have been found at Dundreggan, including many rare and protected species. Located on the north side of Glenmoriston, along the A887 road, six miles west of Invermoriston. It is the perfect place to connect with the ancient Caledonian forest and experience rewilding in action.

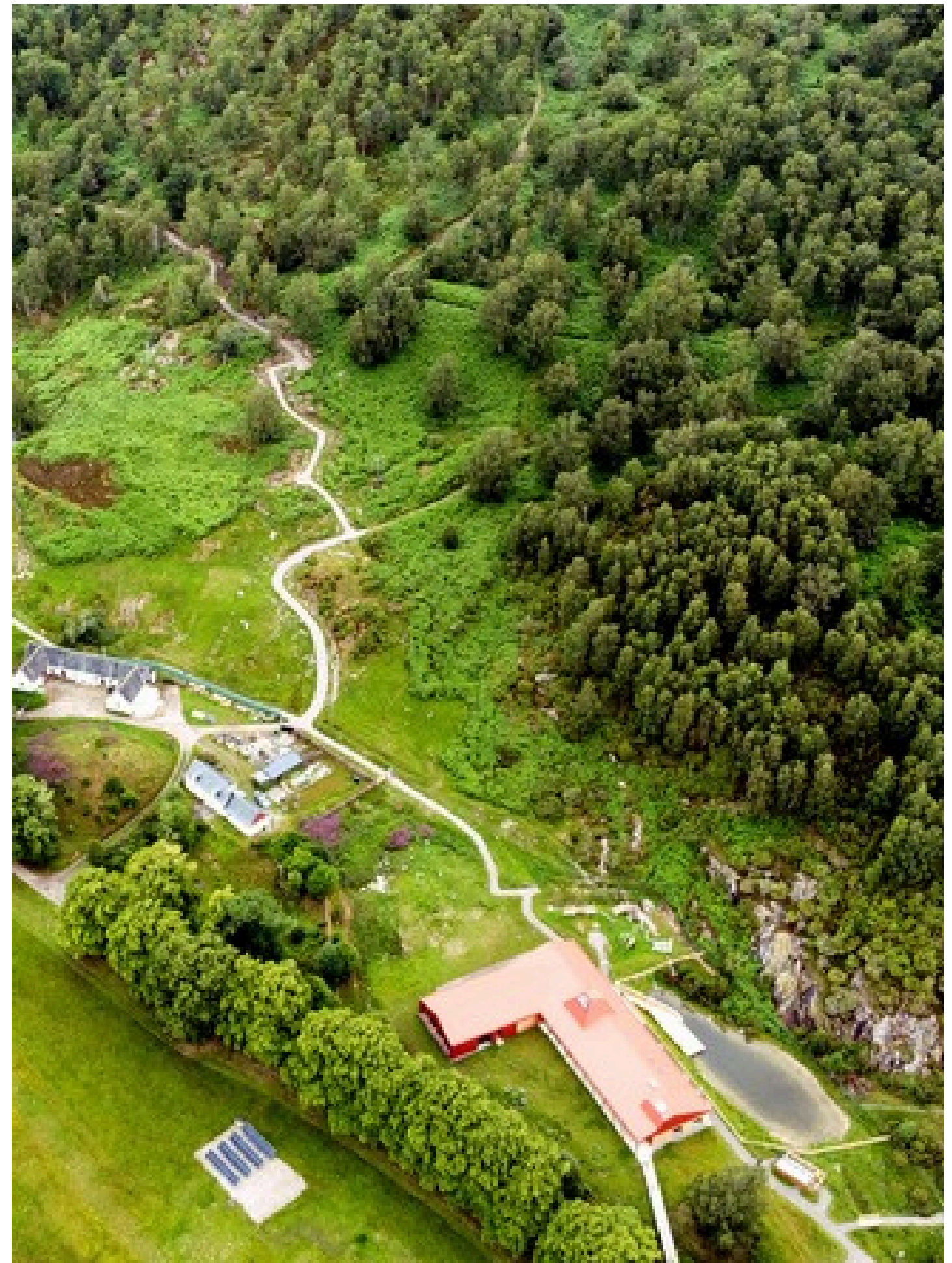
Brimming with wildlife, Dundreggan has been rewilded since we purchased it in 2008. We plant trees and support natural regeneration to nurture and expand ancient woodland fragments, as well as test new tree growing and land management techniques.

Home to our rewilding centre, the first of its kind in the world, a gateway to connecting to the landscape. The centre includes a café, storytelling area, playpark, interactive information displays, and a diverse events programme.

There is also accommodation and venue hire available on the estate for groups ranging from little to large, suitable for educational visits or corporate team building exercises. We also have a small network of paths (approx 9km) and two main access tracks to the higher hill ground (only accessible on foot/bike or for work by off road vehicles).

Our tree nursery is located on site, at any one time there are 200-300 thousand trees growing on the nursery, including rare and hard-to-grow trees. Dundreggan is also a base for our volunteer groups throughout the year who help to support nature restoration work in the Highlands.

The land is a mosaic of habitats, including open upland, ranging from grasslands rich in plants and animals to wetlands, moorlands and peatlands. Approximately 40% of the estate is woodland, covering different altitudes and ranging in types such as ancient semi-natural woodland, new native woodland, montane scrub, juniper woods, wet woodlands, and native pinewoods. We have 27 different wild tree species growing naturally on the estate, including high numbers of juniper and aspen, as well as 22 types of rare ancient woodland plants, such as dogs mercury, valerian and meadowsweet.



Dundreggan Management Plan 2024-2030

The management aims for Dundreggan Estate align with Trees for Life's long-term vision and strategic priorities for 2024 - 2030. The estate will demonstrate rewilding in action by supporting natural processes, improving the connectivity of nature, pioneering large scale nature restoration, and involving local people and communities. The aims take into account the current situation and practicalities of estate management on the ground at Dundreggan.

Each aim has specific associated objectives to be achieved in the next five years.



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Restoration of native woodland

Aim:

Restore diverse native woodland across 60% of the estate through planting and natural regeneration. This will include a range of woodland types, from river (riparian) and floodplain woodlands to pine, birch, and treeline communities of dwarf trees and montane scrub. To create more connected woodlands, with a diverse mix of tree types and densities.

Objectives:

- Develop a woodland corridor linking Dundreggan and Glen Affric, through collaboration with northern neighbouring landowners.
- Investigate opportunities to re-establish river woodlands (riparian) across the estate.
- Encourage natural regeneration, and improve tree diversity and richness.
- Manage the deer population and create access routes within existing woodlands to help with deer removal.
- Continue replacing the conifer plantation with native woodland, and explore the use of broadleaf native trees for commercial / artisanal purposes.
- Identify, protect and expand areas of montane scrub.



Restoration of other habitats

Aim:

Restore natural ecosystems and open habitats, such as bog (mires), montane scrub and sub-alpine vegetation in suitable areas of the estate. Also, support grasslands rich in plants and animals, woodland bogs (mires) and wet grasslands.

Objectives:

- Maintain the meadows and grassland areas to optimise them for wildflowers and biodiversity.
- Apply for and carry out forest bog restoration within the previous conifer plantation.
- Restore the degraded peatland in the northern area of the estate.



Restoration of plants and animals

Aim:

Provide an expanded habitat for and facilitate the spread of native plants and animals through propagations, reintroductions or natural spread.

Objectives:

- Understand the behaviour and breeding of golden eagles around Dundreggan.
- Survey the population and spread of wood ants across Coille Dundreggan.
- Evaluate the condition of previous woodland plant reintroductions (e.g. twinflower, cow wheat) and develop an action plan.
- Continue monitoring black grouse population at Dundreggan, working with partners across Affric Highlands.
- Supporting the release of a social herd of tauros cattle at Dundreggan.
- Investigate ways to maintain a population of red squirrels on the estate.

Management of non-native plants and animals

Aim:

Reduce the impact of invasive non-native species (INNS) and non-native mammals where possible.

Objectives:

- Produce an inventory of non-native plants and animals present, and prepare and implement a strategy to manage them.
- Reduce and/or remove invasive non-native species across the estate.



Management of infrastructure

Aim:

Conduct regular safety checks for hazards and tree health on the estate, remove unnecessary human-made structures like fences and rubbish that disrupt the natural landscape, and keep existing buildings well-maintained and improve their energy efficiency where possible.

Objectives:

- Carry out daily maintenance and management of the estate.
- Improve the energy efficiency and longevity of existing buildings.

Visitors

Aim:

Ensure partnership working between the rewilding centre and wider estate to welcome visitors, and develop experiences, path networks and facilities for all to enjoy at Dundreggan.

Objectives:

- Attract a wider audience by offering diverse activities and experiences.
- Develop residential experiences in collaboration with the rewilding centre.
- Connect to existing national and local access networks (e.g. national cycle route)
- Maintain current visitor infrastructure (e.g. paths, interpretation) and explore opportunities for expansion.



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Surveying and monitoring

Aim:

Establish and maintain a comprehensive and up to date inventory of all the plants and animals on the estate. Use monitoring methods (including drones) to track changes from our management actions and to adjust our policies practices accordingly. Share this data locally and nationally.

Objectives:

- Monitor social and economic parameters, such as volunteer activity, visitor numbers and economic activity.
- Undertake surveys of various biodiversity features.
- Manage data obtained from surveys and monitoring.
- Investigate the feasibility of conducting an archaeological and cultural heritage survey.
- Monitor the impact of our land management activities.
- Monitor the populations of predators on the estate, focusing on their impact on vulnerable species, such as ground-nesting birds.

Research

Aim:

Continue growing our research and field trials programme with partners to develop best practices for rewilding.

Objectives:

- Develop a programme of research projects aimed at developing, trialling and studying the impact of new rewilding techniques and interaction between plants and animals and their habitat.



Collaboration with neighbours and partners

Aim:

Work together with neighbouring landowners and the crofting tenant on shared goals. Coordinate our work on Dundreggan with similar projects on neighbouring land, to ensure larger habitat restoration and increased benefits of shared land management practices.

Objectives:

- Build strong relationships with neighbours and partners.
- Work collaboratively with Affric Highlands to accomplish landscape scale rewilding, integrating nature recovery, climate change resilience, and community benefits.
- Establish academic and corporate partnerships.

Collaboration with local communities

Aim:

Collaborate with local people and the local communities, to develop initiatives for the mutual benefit and wellbeing of nature and people.

Objectives:

- Strengthen connections with the local community and consult with them on our plans.
- Create opportunities for local people to visit Dundreggan, including volunteering.



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Volunteering

Aim:

Create rewarding volunteering opportunities that enable people from all walks of life to give their energy, skills and time to help rewild the Scottish Highlands for the benefit of nature, climate, local communities and their own wellbeing.

Objectives:

- Expand and develop our programme of day volunteering opportunities for occasional and regular volunteers.
- Maintain and develop the programme of residential volunteering experiences, including Rewilding Weeks.
- Maintain Dundreggan Lodge as a residential facility for volunteers and visiting researchers.

Employment

Aim:

Increase employment within the estate team to achieve the goals outlined in this management plan. Support the in-house team with specialist contractors (e.g. fencing, peatland restoration, meadow management) as required.

Objectives:

- Expand the employment opportunities for local people at Dundreggan.
- Employ locally based specialist contractors and consultants where possible.



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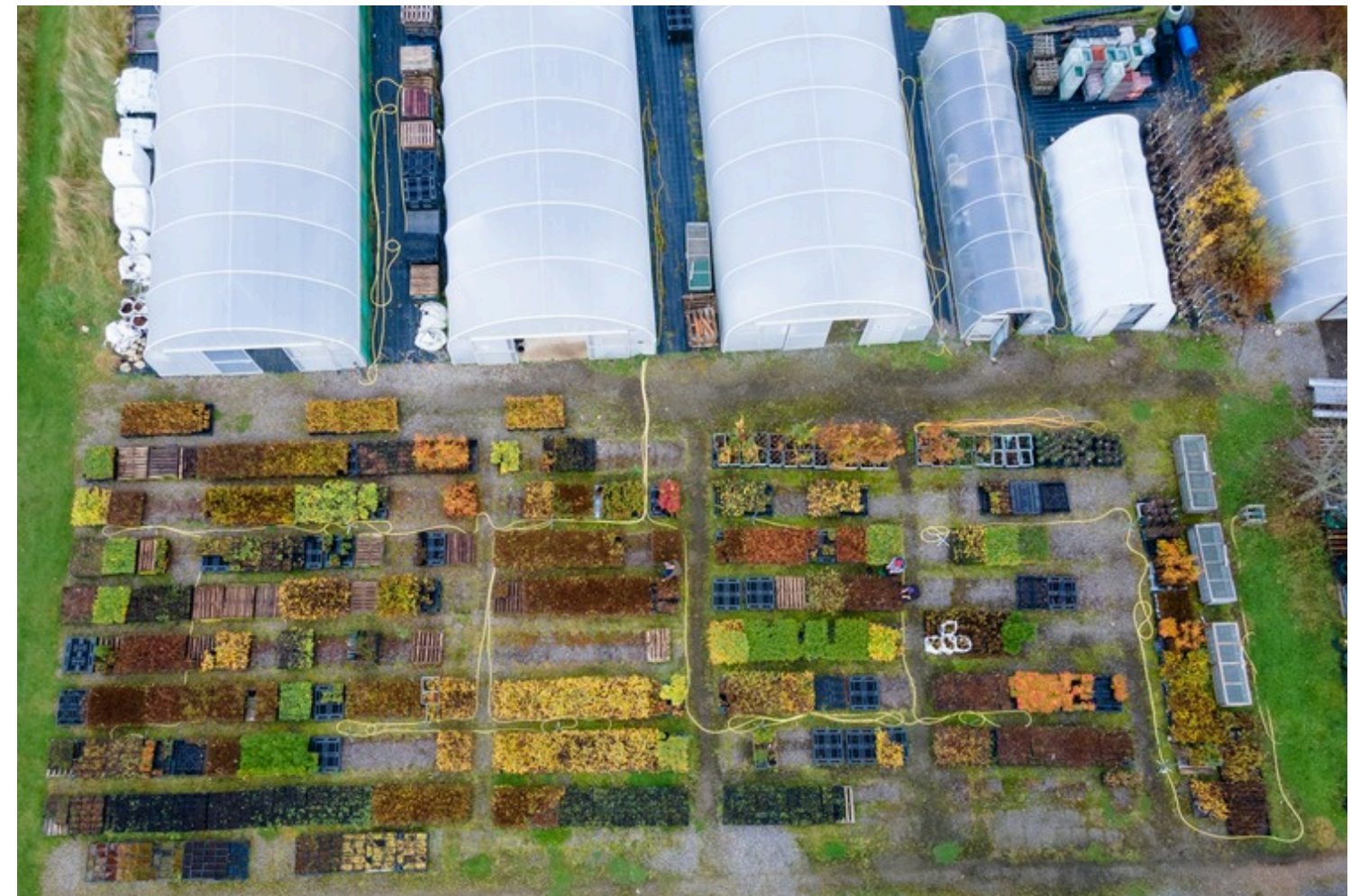
Financial sustainability

Aim:

Develop a self-sustaining financial model for Dundreggan, generating income from our own commercial enterprises, including the rewilding centre, as well as from grants, donations, stakeholder funds and research projects.

Objectives:

- Explore opportunities for grants, donations and corporate partnerships to support our activities.
- Develop commercial enterprises at Dundreggan.
- Develop relationships with academic partners to support research projects.
- Sell carbon credits from peatland restoration to support the wider nature recovery aims on the estate.
- Develop a sustainable model for a rewilding estate.



Rewilding the Scottish Highlands

- Create opportunities to inspire people to rediscover the wonders of the natural world.
- Help restore vital parts of Scotland's natural and cultural heritage.
- Boost wellbeing, and support local communities and livelihoods.
- Revive biodiversity and combat climate change, ensuring the resilience and health of our natural landscapes for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations.
- Rebalance ecosystems and restore natural processes by reintroducing and protecting native animals.
- Nurture a living landscape that promises a brighter, wilder future for the Scottish Highlands, where nature, communities and climate thrive together.