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Proposed Clune Wind Farm: Peatland Condition Assessment

Introduction

Terms of Reference

Atmos Consulting Ltd (Atmos) carried out a peatland condition assessment in September and October 2025, in relation to the proposed Clune Wind Farm development on land south of the village of Tomatin, Highland (hereafter referred to as the "Site").

The survey was done in accordance with NatureScot guidance (SNH, 2016) on assessing peatland, categorising the areas of peatland on site as either near-natural, modified, drained or actively eroding. The peatland condition assessment survey was conducted to update the desk study assessment undertaken by Atmos in June 2025, based on habitat survey data.

Site Location and Description

The Site is located approximately 20km south-east of Inverness, and approximately 3km south of the village of Tomatin. It is an actively managed grouse moor, frequently managed with muirburn, and grazed by both sheep and deer.

The Site inclines generally in a north-east to south-west direction, reaching the highest point of the Site, 750m, at Carn Dubh'Ic an Deoir. The northern edge is bounded by the River Findhorn and the eastern boundary by the A9. The Site can be approximately divided by four main watercourses that flow north into the River Findhorn: Allt Phris, Clune Burn, Allt Lathach, and Wester Strathnoon Burn.

Extensive habitat surveys have been undertaken of the Site since 2022, with Phase 1 habitat, UK Habitat and National Vegetation Classification surveys having all completed previously, as documented in the EIA Report[1] for the Proposed Development.

The results of all the habitat surveys showed that the vast majority of the Site is comprised of modified blanket bog with a mix of and wet heath. There are localised patches of upland acid grassland and occasional patches of native woodland as well as some juniper scrub.

Objectives

The objective of the work was to update the previous peatland condition assessment through a targeted survey in line with guidance issued by NatureScot.

[1] Environmental Impact Assessment Report Chapter 7 : Ecology

Methodology

Overview

The NatureScot guidance (SNH, no date[2]) details the four main categories of peatland condition typically found in Scotland:

1. Near-natural;
2. Modified;
3. Drained; and
4. Actively eroding

Categorisation of the peatland depends on features such as cover and diversity of bog-mosses *Sphagnum* spp. within blanket bog; the extent of bare peat; presence/absence of drainage features; presence/absence of muirburn and presence of overgrazing and trampling damage within the peatland habitats.

Field survey

The field survey was undertaken on 30th September and 1st October 2025 by Principal Ecologist Emilie Michael and followed the NatureScot guidance. Only areas of blanket bog were included in the survey.

Results

The results of the Peatland Condition Assessment are shown on Figure 1, overleaf, and general descriptions and representative plates are shown in Appendix A.

As shown on Figure 1, the Peatland Condition Assessment has demonstrated that the peatland on Site is either in modified or drained condition. There is no near-natural peatland present.

Within areas where the peatland is in modified condition there is evidence of frequent and widespread muirburn, as well as clear evidence of browsing. Both sheep and deer were recorded on site through multiple sightings of the animals as well as abundant records of their dung. *Sphagnum spp.,* are occasional or absent from the vast majority of areas surveyed. The sward is dominated by *Calluna vulgaris*, with patches of bare peat recorded as occasional to frequent across the site. Where the peatland is considered to be drained, there are multiple drainage features across these areas, either natural (haggs and gullies) or artificial.

Concluding Remarks

If you wish to discuss any of the information in this letter, then Atmos can be contacted using the details above.

Kind regards



Emilie Michael

Principal Ecologist

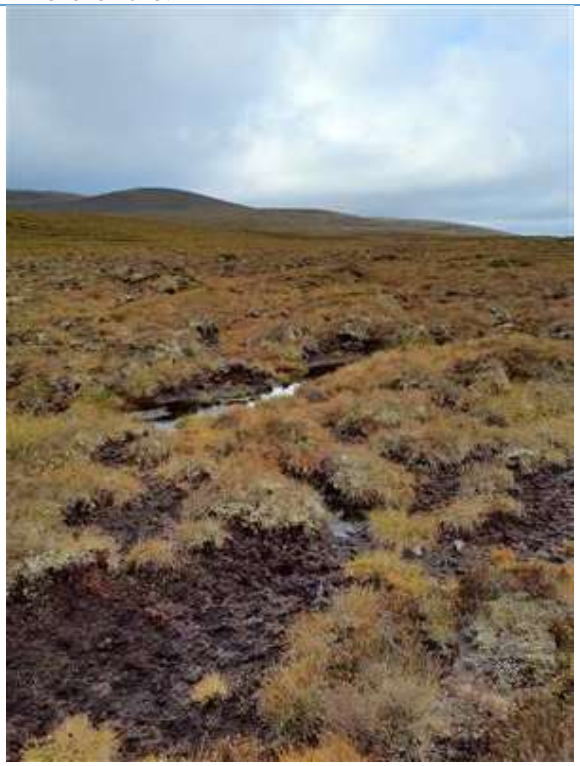
[2] NatureScot (no date). Peatland Condition Assessment. Available online at: https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2023-02/Guidance-Peatland-Action-Peatland-Condition-Assessment-Guide-A1916874.pdf (accessed 30/10/2025).

Figures

Figure 1: Peatland Condition Assessment

Appendices

Appendix 1: Descriptions of Peatland Condition on Site

Peatland Condition	Plate and Location
Modified – Evidence of frequent and widespread muirburn, as well as clear evidence of browsing. Both sheep and deer recorded on site. *Sphagnum spp.,* occasional or absent. Sward dominated by *Calluna vulgaris.* Some patches of bare peat.	 NH 81523 20459
Drained – Peatland within 30m of a hagg/gully system.	 NH 79895 20897

Peatland Condition	Plate and Location
Drained – Peatland within 30m of a hagg/gully system.	 NH 79756 20261
Drained – Peatland within 30m of an artificial drain.	 NH 79755 20633

Peatland Condition	Plate and Location
Modified – Evidence of frequent and widespread muirburn, as well as clear evidence of browsing. Both sheep and deer recorded on site. *Sphagnum spp.,* occasional or absent. Sward dominated by *Calluna vulgaris.* Some patches of bare peat.	 NH 79493 20395

Clune Wind Farm

Figure 1
Peatland Condition Assessment

Key

- Site Boundary
- Proposed Turbine Location
- Proposed Infrastructure
- Vegetation Assessment Area

Peatland Condition Assessment

- Drained
- Modified

0 0.5 1
Kilometres

N

Scale @ A3:
1:32,000

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