FROM FOREST TO SEA: COMMUNITY CONSULTATION STRENGTHENS FLS SOUTH KNAPDALE PLAN

15 October 2026

FLS South Knapdale consultation page | Appendix VIII – Marine Environment of West Loch Tarbert

New West Loch Tarbert marine appendix highlights how local knowledge and public forestry can work together for nature and communities

Action West Loch (AWL) has welcomed Forestry and Land Scotland's current draft South Knapdale Long Term Plan as a strong example of community consultation helping to improve public land management.

The consultation material now includes a dedicated eight-page appendix on the Marine Environment of West Loch Tarbert. FLS states that the information was provided by AWL at its request and reflects the group's knowledge and involvement in restoration and conservation work around the loch.

The appendix brings the forest and the sea into the same planning picture. It describes how burns draining the surrounding hills and forests flow into the slow-flushing West Loch, and sets out the sensitivity of native oysters, seagrass, maerl, historically recorded serpulid reefs and other marine features to changes in sediment and turbidity.

It also records that FLS and AWL are exploring a sediment-monitoring programme around planned forestry operations, with the aim of establishing baseline conditions and assessing change before, during and after operations. A Memorandum of Understanding is also being developed, subject to agreement, to support ongoing collaboration around PAWS restoration and coastal rainforest recovery around West Loch Tarbert.

The South Knapdale consultation page says engagement with local communities, conservation groups, neighbours and other stakeholders has strengthened environmental and operational proposals, including PAWS restoration, watercourse and marine-environment protection, felling phasing and habitat connectivity.

We want to thank the South Knapdale team and FLS West Region for listening and engaging constructively. Consultation matters when it changes and strengthens a plan — and FLS itself says community and stakeholder feedback has done exactly that here.

We hope this "forest to sea" approach can become a model for managing other coastal forest catchments in Scotland.

Action West Loch quote:

> *"For us, the important thing is not that FLS agreed with every point we raised. It is that they listened seriously, asked for evidence and were willing to bring the forest, the burns and the sea into the same conversation. That is what meaningful consultation should look like.*
> *We want to publicly thank the South Knapdale team and FLS West Region. This is a constructive example of a national land manager working with a local community and conservation partners to improve the evidence base and strengthen a plan. We hope the approach can become a useful model for other coastal forest catchments in Scotland."*

A direct quote from FLS's introduction to the South Knapdale Long Term Plan (top of the FLS consultation page):

"A key outcome of the consultation process has been the strengthening of environmental and operational proposals through constructive engagement with local communities, conservation groups, neighbours and other stakeholders. Feedback received has helped refine proposals for PAWS restoration, watercourse and marine environment protection, felling phasing, habitat connectivity, deer management, invasive species control, and operational planning. The consultation process has also established positive working relationships with local groups, creating opportunities for ongoing collaboration. As a result, the plan is better informed by local knowledge and achieves a stronger balance between sustainable timber production and environmental enhancement."