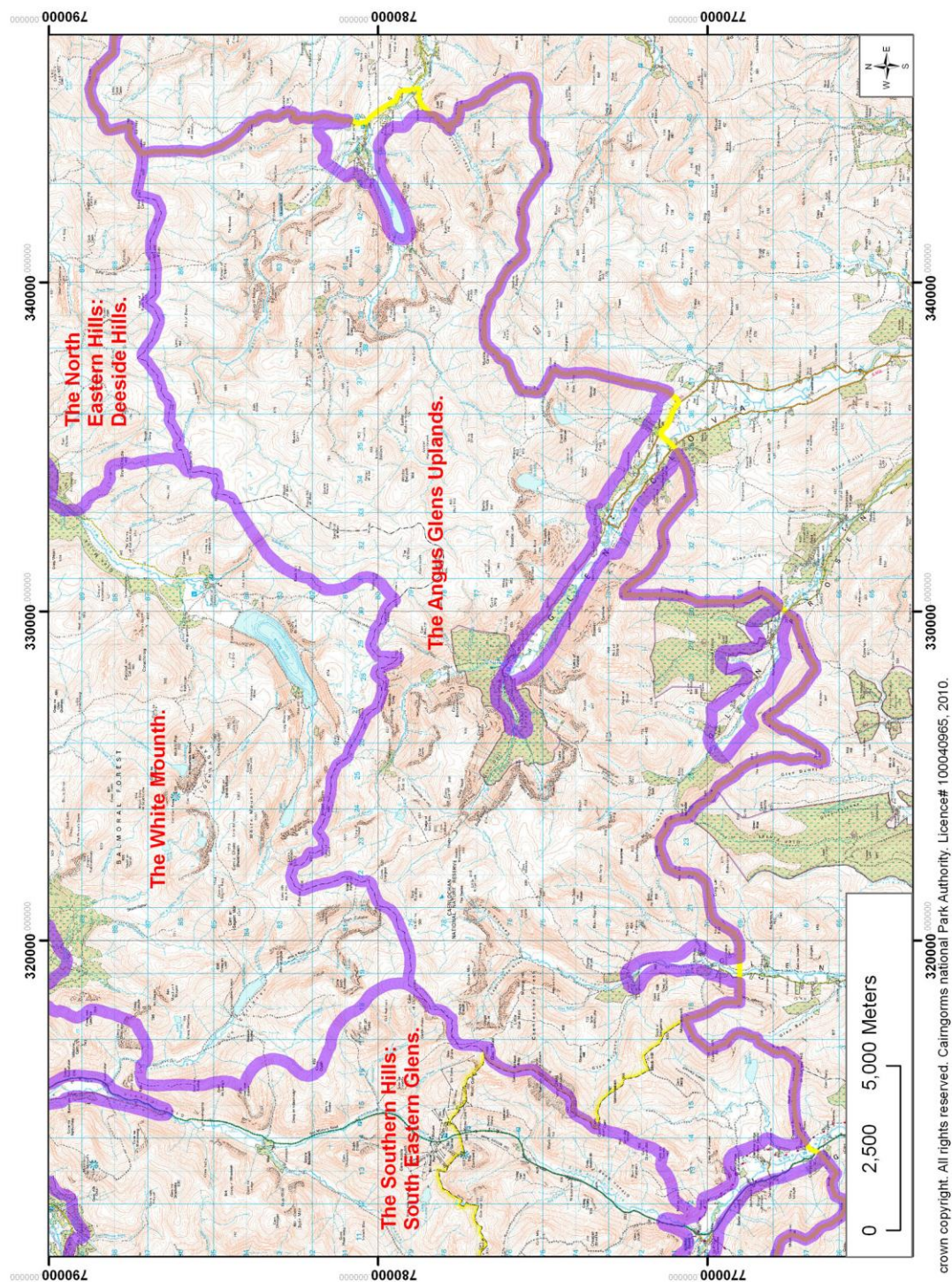


1.1 The Angus Glens Uplands



1.1.1 *Landscape Character*

The cliffs and corries of the heads of the Angus Glens bound steep-sided, narrow glacial troughs which penetrate into a rolling plateau with rounded hill summits, rising to over 900m and including a number of 'Munros'

These glens are contained by slopes which have been steepened and roughened by glacial activity, which has left behind high cliffs, exposed rocky crags and huge corries which often enclose lochans

The steep slopes below the crags are often mantled by thick scree or rockfall debris

As the head of the glens extend into the hills they become narrower and more sinuous, and the rocky side slopes become ever more craggy and dramatic, with overhanging cliffs incised by steep-falling burns

The plateau between these steep-sided glens is broad and sweeping with smooth, undulating summits and shallow river-valleys divided by an extensive network of watercourses

The extensive upland blanket peat over this plateau has been severely eroded in places and is sometimes interspersed by peat hags and wetland

This plateau is dominated by montane habitat including sedge, rush and moss heath on the upper slopes and summits

Remnants of birch woodland extend across the more inaccessible, craggy upper slopes and screes around the heads of the glens

Heather, often managed as grouse moor, dominates the side slopes, with some swathes of grassland and even occasional bracken associated with the side slopes of the lower glens

Many tributaries drain into rivers which have worked the fluvial-glacial deposits to create narrow floodplains in each of the four main glens

Small conifer shelter woods of pine, spruce or larch, are located along the glen floors and side slopes, often extending into the upper reaches of the glens

The narrow floodplains are the focus of infrequent small, fenced and drained improved grassland fields – most of which have been largely abandoned – associated with very occasional remote farms and estate houses located next to watercourses

Occasional tiny stone walled fields and rigs, often located on or near alluvial fans, are evidence of pre-improvement farming

There are occasional ruined buildings well into the interior of glens, sometimes even where the edge of the plateau meets the head of the glen and often associated with high passes

Private vehicle tracks are located along the base of the glens, leading to access routes into the hills which link one glen to another, as well

as crossing to neighbouring mountain areas over a series of high passes, many of which are ancient access routes

1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

The sense of 'expanse' experienced from the undulating plateau is reinforced by the openness of the rounded summits and the smoothness of the terrain

This contrasts with the enclosure and narrowness of the heads of the Angus glens, which are contained within steep rocky side slopes

The heads of the glens are very dramatic and rugged, with towering cliffs and huge corries contained by cliffs, often emphasised by waterfalls which plunge down the hill sides

Views from these hill tops focus down the individual Angus Glens, or north/west to Lochnagar, as well as north to the distant, higher summits of the Cairngorm massif

This character area is often secluded and can be relatively remote, particularly when traversing the extensive plateau or crossing over high passes where there are very few vehicular tracks or conifer shelter woods

Remoteness is limited, however, by the popularity of some of the glens, the presence of planted conifer woodland and vehicle tracks associated with the individual glens

1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

This hill group forms a 'transition area' between the lower, farmed and settled Angus Glens and the high summits of the White Mounth. It has a particular role, however, in linking the individual Angus Glens through its series of high mountain passes.

1.1.4 Assessment of distinctiveness

The contrast between the elevated undulating plateau and the deep, steep sided and rocky, sinuous glens is a particular feature of this landscape. The glens penetrate deep into the mountains, with ruins of former farmsteads and associated field systems often extending well into the interior, contrasting with their relatively remote location.



The heads of the Angus glens become narrower and more sinuous as the wind into the interior of the plateau



Relatively remote houses, usually former small farms, associated with the estates, are located next to watercourses and green fields on the nea by floodplain



Rock ribs and crags exposed by ice moving from the right to the left in this picture taken above Glen Isla (photograph courtesy of Dr AM Hall)



A steep-sided glacial trough, typical of the heads of the Angus glens, with exposed rocky crags above rockfall debris



Conifer woodland and shelter woods within the glens



Trees – sometimes including larch and spruce – regenerate over less accessible slopes and scree