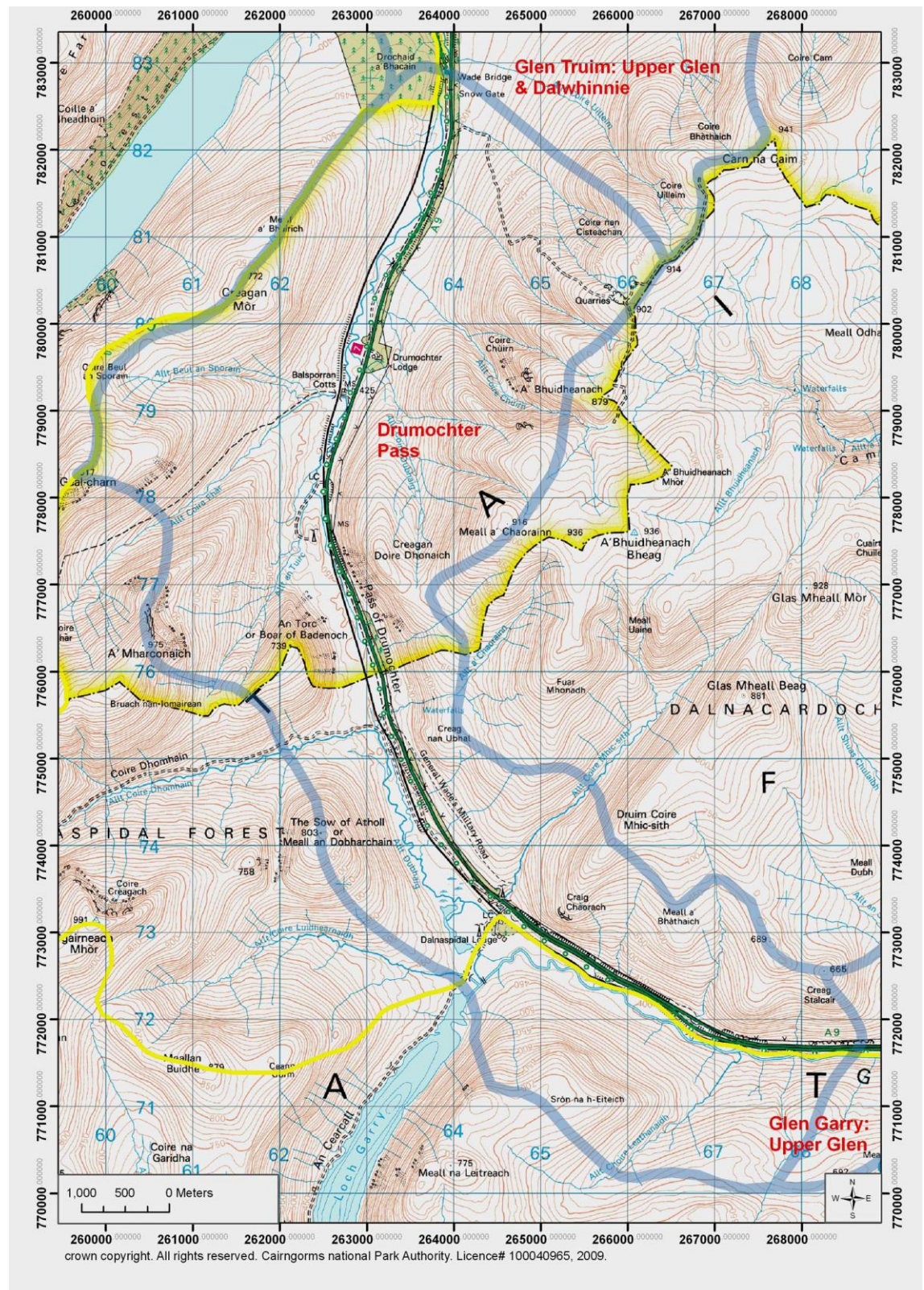


Drumochter Pass



1.1.1 *Landscape Character*

Steep, at times verging on sheer, side slopes contain this narrow, elevated pass which links Speyside to the Perthshire glens

The drainage pattern that existed before glaciation is apparent in the V-shaped form of many of the tributary valleys that join this main trunk valley. Some of these valley heads acted as accumulation areas for snow during the ice age, and are now corries

There are extensive debris slopes pockmarked with active run-off chutes and landslips while smaller water channels often simply drop down the hillsides in shallow gulleys

The lower slopes and the edge of the glen floor are often covered in extensive mounded glacial-fluvial deposits which are very prominent if side-lit or after snowfall. This is classic, hummocky moraine, where individual ridges mark standstills in the retreat of a glacier

The rivers, braided channels and their tributaries meander across the glen floor, sometimes fragmenting into a network of smaller drainage channels and wetland

Heather moorland over the sides of the pass, and unimproved grassland along the glen floor, create a simple vegetation pattern, which in detail reflects the small scale topography – with heather on drier hummocks

Conifer woodland is limited to small shelter woods associated with the very sparse settlement, and linear belts aligned parallel to the A9, to provide protection from snow

Settlement is extremely sparse, with occasional buildings and infrastructure associated with managing shooting estates and the railway located on alluvial fans where tributaries join the main river system

The A9, partially dualled, the railway and the overhead pylon line are packed into the narrow pass

Infrastructure – such as road signs and the telecommunications mast at Drumochter – are very visible in this sparse landscape

There are opportunities to walk into the interior, and access to munros and other summits from estate tracks is made more possible through car parks and laybys located at intervals through the pass

1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

The sense of drama related to travelling through such a pronounced 'pass' is reinforced by the narrowness of the glen and the precipitous side slopes, as well as the shadows cast by the steep flanks of this pass

Views from the elevated A9 into side valleys – such as where Loch Garry joins the Pass – create some relief from the sense of enclosure

A change in weather is often experienced when crossing through Drumochter between southern and northern Scotland

The infrastructure associated with the road and communications create visual clutter in this sparse landscape

1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

The pass is very self-contained, but as its character contrasts strongly with Perthshire to the south and Speyside to the north, the sequence of travelling between different characters heightens the sense of drama.

1.1.4 *Assessment of distinctiveness*

This pass has a pronounced ‘upland’ character. Sparsely and simply vegetated, wetland and low heath reveal the topography and the active scree slopes and land slips. Its simplicity has been compromised by the infrastructure, but the sense of travelling through an area where natural forces can dominate over human intervention prevails.



Hummocky terrain of glacial-fluvial deposits on the lower side slopes



The road and the railway on terraces above the glen floor, here above a stretch of wetland



Loch Garry, visible in a relatively short glimpse view from the A9



The Pass closes in when travelling south from Dalwhinnie