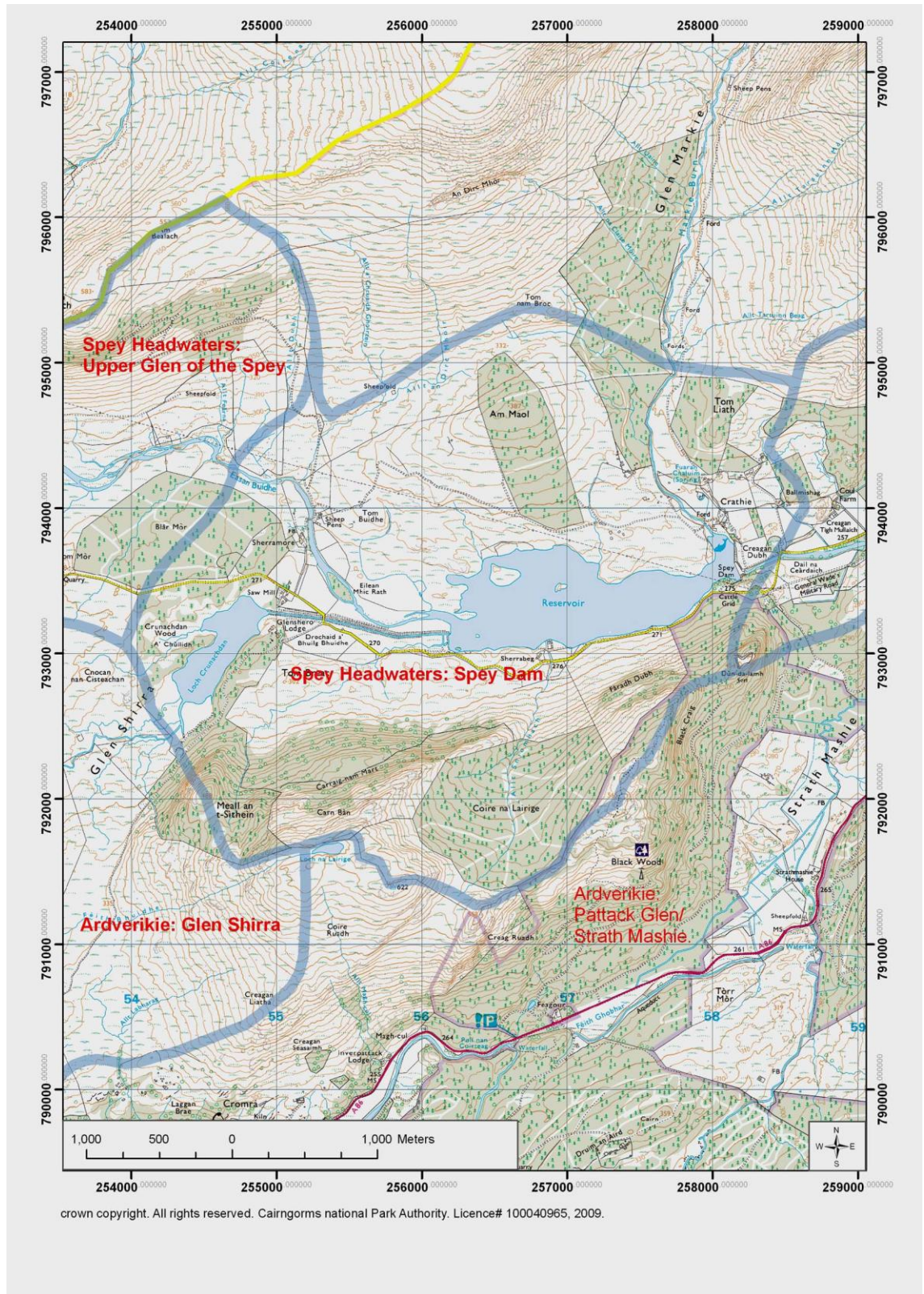


I.1 Spey Headwaters: **Spey Dam**



1.1.1 *Landscape Character*

- This relatively contained glen, orientated west/east, is enclosed by sharply rising slopes to the south and a low hill to the north, behind which rises the Monadhliath
- There are shattered rock faces high up on the north facing slopes steepened and roughened by glacial erosion
- There are numerous glacial-fluvial deposits, some of which form substantial, rounded hummocks
- Loch Crunachdan lies at the conjunction of the Spey glen with Glen Shirra, framed by the 'parabolic-shaped' side slopes
- The shallow, dammed 'Spey' reservoir extends along much of the floor of the main glen
- There is extensive evidence of previous settlement, with small townships and traces of medieval and post-medieval land use associated with the tributaries and well drained gravelly deposits, especially along the gentle, south facing slopes
- There are several large conifer shelter woods, and an area of more extensive woodland across steep, north-facing upper slopes, which merges with semi-natural birch woodland
- The limited area of valley floor is pasture, generally extensively grazed, although each cluster of present-day settlement is surrounded by late 18th/19th century improved fields, now enclosed with fences, and occasionally punctuated by single specimen trees or small groups of mature broadleaved trees
- Grassland extends onto the well-drained lower hill slopes with no distinct change in vegetation
- Estate buildings at the western end of the reservoir are prominently located on hummocks overlooking Loch Crunachdan and are surrounded by shelter woods and groups of trees
- The infrastructure associated with the dam – canalised river, concrete bridges, the dam wall, levees and embankments – reinforce that this is a man made waterbody.
- The narrow 'Wade Military' road is slightly elevated above the glen floor following the break in slope as it winds around hummocks, apart from where it sits on top of straight embankments at the western end of the reservoir
- The eastern end of the reservoir is overlooked by the dramatic ridgeline of Black Craig on top of which is Dun-da-lamh fort

1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

- This part of the glen can appear cluttered, and the location and design of more recent infrastructure and woodland pays little regard to either topography or the extensive historic land use
- The extensive evidence of past land use and settlement is clearly visible, although it can be more evident in low side light and under winter vegetation
- The elevated road allows views down to and across the reservoir

1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

This area is relatively self-contained, but there are views into the hinterland of the Monadhliath to the north, and there are framed views to Glen Shirra, with Loch Crunachdan in the foreground, a focal point of views from the lodges at Glenshero or Sherramor.

1.1.4 *Assessment of distinctiveness*

When travelling along the road, the dam and its associated infrastructure dominate, however on closer inspection, the evidence of extensive past settlement is very apparent.



Loch Crunachdan and the steep sided, wooded, southern hills of this part of the Spey



Infrastructure associated with the dam



Settlement and associated woodland on hummocks



Evidence of past land use