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Callum Nicholson  
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18 March 2019

Dear Mr Nicholson

### **Arkaig Estate Long Term Forest Plan**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on scoping for the proposed Long Term Forest Plan for the Loch Arkaig woodlands. Our interests lie with recreational access to hills and the visual effect on the landscape, including habitats for wildlife plants and animals. To this end we welcome the intentions to restore and expand the native pinewood, and to work with other landowners to extend native woodland across the landscape.

#### **Access**

We note that recreational access is not explicitly addressed in the Forest Plan, nor in the Management Objectives quoted in the Plan. Mention of access is in relation to extraction of timber only. The public benefits of promoting recreational access are recognised by the Scottish Government. We suggest consideration of access routes through woodland to reach the open hill be a clear part of the Long Term Forest Plan.

There are a number of low tops in the vicinity of the woodlands and we request that consideration be given to maintaining clear routes to the open hillside from the Right of Way during any felling and restocking operations. It is easy to create a solid block of new plantings that can obscure routes through the woodland when the trees mature.

Lines along burns or ridges may be kept free from planting to allow for recreational access, and also for the biodiversity benefits that open areas can bring. The provision of new 'trails' through the wood would be of public benefit to visitors, leading to lower tops with a view of the landscape. This would require some integration with any deer fences erected, to allow of passage through or across.

#### **Landscape**

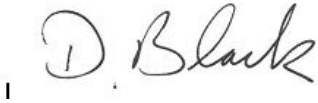
It is unfortunate that the Long Term Forest Plan envisions the use of deer fences to encourage regeneration. Fences create hard linear edges in the landscape, with grazed and ungrazed vegetation either side of it. Reducing the population of deer to levels that allow for a more natural regeneration without fencing would be beneficial to the plants and animals that exist in the area, and lead to the creation of a more natural-looking tree distribution on the hillside.

However if the use of deer fences is considered then we would expect any new planting to follow

the UK Forestry Standard, with an organic, asymmetric shape within fences, reflecting the landform and not the fenceline. Natural regeneration would achieve this.

I hope that you find these comments useful in the development of your Plan, and please do get in contact if you wish to discuss any of the points raised above.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Black". The letter 'D' is enclosed in a circle, and the signature is written in a cursive style.

**Davie Black**  
**Access & Conservation Officer**  
**Mountaineering Scotland**