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Mr Denis Torley  
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18 March 2019

Dear Mr Torley

### **Scardroy Estate Long Term Forest Plan**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on scoping for the proposed Long Term Forest Plan for Scardroy Estate. 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 expand the native woodland on the Estate, and to maintain and improve a high quality landscape and associated amenity value.

#### **Access**

The Right of Way, noted in Scottish Hill Tracks as Route 272 Strathconon to Achnasheen (published by Scotways) will require to be kept open during felling. We trust that operations will follow the guidance given in FCS Practice Note: Managing Woodland Access and Forest Operations in Scotland.

There are a couple of tops in the vicinity that are popular with hillwalkers: Bac an Eich (Corbett) Meall na Faochaig (Graham) and Beinn Mheadhoin (Graham). They are in our opinion unlikely to be affected by forestry operations.

However there are a number of lesser tops in the vicinity of the plantation and we request that consideration be given to maintaining clear routes to the open hillside from the Right of Way during 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.

This open ground is indicated on the Forest Plan Species Plan so it would be helpful to align the linear open ground with recreational access to the open hill. 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 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 new planting to follow the UK Forestry Standard, with an organic, asymmetric shape within fences, reflecting the landform and not the fenceline.

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 signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'D'.

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