

By email to: highland.cons@forestry.gov.scot

Mr Gareth Parkinson
Woodland Officer
Scottish Forestry

20 February 2025

Dear Mr Parkinson

Coire Sgriodain Long Term Forest Plan
FGS reference: 24FGS80719

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this phase of the Coire Sgriodain LTFP.

Mountaineering Scotland is a membership organisation with 16,000 members and is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers, mountaineers and snowsports tourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland's mountains. We represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering, and provide training and information to mountain users for safety, self-reliance and the enjoyment of our mountain environment.

Our interests lie generally with the effect of proposals on mountain landscapes, especially in National Scenic Areas and Wild Land Areas, and along routes to mountain summits and climbing crags. Our main interest in this proposal is the maintenance of public access to and from Stob Coire Sgriodain and Chno Dearg.

Mountaineering Scotland supports the regeneration of native woodlands and scrub where the land can naturally support them. Natural regeneration encourages plant growth that has a landscape and genetic fit with the area and can enhance wild land qualities. It may require a longer time frame than planting schemes to become fully established, and expectations may need to be managed accordingly.

We would also support the establishment of natural tree lines in Scotland's mountains, where feasible and practicable.

Mountaineering Scotland has consistently advocated that infrastructure used for land management in the uplands, specifically fencing and tracks, be avoided where possible and be kept to a minimum where it is demonstrated to be necessary. We support this project by Corrour Estate to encourage the establishment of a natural woodland without the need for extensive deer fencing. These extensive fences can be an obstacle to recreational access in the outdoors, especially where there are few crossing points or gates remain locked.

In this instance, a look at the Strava Global Heatmap demonstrates that there are a number of routes followed by hillwalkers to their specific destinations. Most people will follow the route described in the guide books and websites, but there are also desire lines in evidence that show that access is taken more widely than the described path. This approach of no fences for woodland establishment will not create interference with public access rights generally.

Mountaineering Scotland encourages Scottish Forestry to look favourably on other woodland establishment proposals coming forward that rely on deer management and not the use of extensive deer fence enclosures, where this can be achieved. This would help establish a more natural-looking landscape and allow woodlands to be more permeable for public access.

We note and welcome the intention of the estate to monitor main path condition and to keep clear of any scrub or tree growth that may impede recreational access along the most popular routes.

We hope you find these comments useful in your consideration of this Long Term Forest Plan.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Black". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'D' and a stylized 'Black'.

Davie Black
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Mountaineering Scotland

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