

Jeni West  
Forestry and Land Scotland  
Whitegates  
Lochgilphead  
PA31 8RS

3 September 2021

Dear Ms West

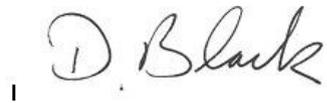
### **Glen Orchy and Glen Lochy Land Management Plan Review Consultation**

1. Mountaineering Scotland noticed this consultation on the Forestry & Land Scotland's website. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the consultation and provide observations at an early stage of the replacement LMP for this area of forest.
2. Mountaineering Scotland is a membership organisation with more than 14,000 members and is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers, mountaineers and ski-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.
3. Our interests lie with access through the Forest blocks on routes to the open high ground and mountain summits and climbing crag, and the visual implications of restocking and other management on the landscape, specifically on Wild Land Areas and areas designated for scenic beauty and wildlife conservation.
4. Regarding landscape, the forest block edges run along the border of two Wild Land Areas No. 6 Ben Lui and No. 9 Loch Etive mountains. Presumably the boundary was drawn to exclude existing forestry blocks. We suggest that there is an opportunity here to enhance the Wild Land Area boundaries with a more naturalistic woodland edge of broadleaved species, preferably by natural regeneration, but planting is an option if the soil seed bank is depleted.
5. We note in your LMP Objectives in bullet point 7, that you identify opportunity for potential increased recreational use by local communities and tourists. This is an action we support, to enable outdoor recreation opportunities in and through forest blocks.
6. In the table on Corporate Outcomes, the Operational Actions for Outcome 3, it is stated that FLS will be "Continuing to remove barriers to ensure that people from all backgrounds can and do access the full range of benefits of the national forests and land." Barriers to access can cover a range of issues, and from our hillwalking perspective extensive lengths of high deer fencing without sufficient crossing points are regarded as a barrier to access, as indicated in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, section 4.9, bullet point 4.

7. We suggest that there are two aspects to address this matter. Firstly, that routes to summits are maintained through felling and restocking operations and that fences on the upper edge of forest blocks have pass gates for walkers on these informal routes.
8. We note that you identify Munro summits in your maps, which is welcome. These summits and the subsidiary Munro Tops often have clearly defined paths on the ground. However, many walkers also seek out other "listed" hills known as Corbetts and Grahams. These tops may not have paths to them but instead rely on informal routes.
9. Corbetts in and adjacent to the forest land under consideration are: Beinn Chuirn, Beinn Bhreac-liath, Beinn Udraidh, and Beinn Mhic-Mhonaidh. Grahams include: Meall Odhar, Beinn na Sroine, Meall Tairbh, and Beinn Donachain.
10. It would be helpful to identify where the roadside start and finish points are for these summits and the routes taken through the National Forest Estate. A recent case to illustrate this at Glen Orchy, on land adjacent to the NFE, is the erection deer fence bisecting the route to Beinn Bhreac-liath with no crossing points on it, effectively prohibiting access to the summit.
11. The Strava heatmap may be helpful for this: <https://www.strava.com/heatmap#11.57/-4.82629/56.45372/hot/all>
12. The second aspect that we wish to bring to your notice is that recreational access is not constrained to following set routes. We think it is important that established routes are facilitated with gates, but also that all fencing includes crossing points at regular intervals. Walkers may not always follow the established routes and may be walking away from paths, or lose their way, or need to get down to lower ground quickly and safely in bad weather or other emergency situations, taking different lines than normally expected.
13. To facilitate access, taken responsibly, we suggest that:
  - Gates be provided where the fence crosses paths or tracks, or informal routes used to walk or cycle to summits and tops.
  - Crossing points be provided at places where people are likely to need to cross the fence, such as hilltops, ridgelines, side ridges where they meet the main ridge, and places where the fence changes direction.
  - Away from paths or tracks, stiles would be adequate for crossing, especially where the terrain is rough or remote.
  - Crossings should be provided at regular intervals so that the public do not have to make unreasonable detours. Where use is relatively infrequent it would be reasonable to provide crossings every kilometre, or 15 minutes walking time.
  - Crossing points should be clearly visible to the public. Arrows on the fence, indicating the direction to the nearest crossing point would make it easier for them to be located, and especially in poor visibility.

We hope these comments are useful to you in your review of the LMP and we will be pleased to assist Forestry and Land Scotland if we can as the plan develops. Please do get in touch if you think we could help you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Black". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small vertical line to the left of the first letter.

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