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Gareth Phillips  
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Dear Gareth

**Forestry Grant Scheme**  
**Case Title: Corrour Native Woodland Restoration**  
**Ref: 17FGS19717**

#### **Response to Consultation Documents August 2017**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above application. Mountaineering Scotland is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers, mountaineers and ski-tourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland's mountains, and acts to represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering. Mountaineering Scotland also acts on behalf of the British Mountaineering Council on matters related to landscape and access in Scotland, and provides training and information to mountain users to promote safety, self-reliance and the enjoyment of our mountain environment.

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 enshrined a right of responsible access on users and the associated Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC) details how land and water should be managed responsibly for access. Access rights should be respected when managing land or water by "taking access rights into account when planning and implementing any major land use change or development" (SOAC, 2005).

The application concerns the proposed restoration of native woodland by natural regeneration and planting, in combination with remnant mature trees, to create a varied, natural looking woodland structure. Mountaineering Scotland wholly supports the principle of woodland regeneration and in particular the development of native woodlands, so views the application favourably in this regard.

The area to which the plan relates is situated in Lochaber, with the main proposal areas located at the southern and southwestern end of Loch Treig and at the northeast end of Loch Ghuilbinn in Strath Ossian. In a statement relating to public access, it is acknowledged that the area is visited regularly by walkers and climbers, for example those accessing the numerous Munros and those using a number of long distance paths that converge at the head of Loch Treig.

While it is helpful to acknowledge the potential impact on public access, the following points should be considered:

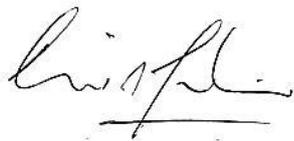
- Visitors to this area have a statutory right of access so long as they are acting responsibly and in compliance with the SOAC, and this right of access is not restricted to built roads and paths.
- We note favourably the intention to incorporate “Designed open ground” into the proposal to keep public access routes open.
- Additionally, we appreciate that the proposed restoration of native woodland by natural regeneration and planting will require deer fencing for protection from browsing, and that the intention is to maintain such deer fencing only so long as is necessary. However, in the meantime, appropriate gates should be maintained at strategic locations in order to facilitate public access.
- From the information provided, it is not stated how public access will be managed during forestry operations. For example, clear signage and the need for people to be directed to use a particular or alternative route will need to be provided at access points.
- Staff undertaking forestry operations should also be fully briefed regarding any diversions that may need to be put in place. It is assumed that all measures put in place will adhere to industry-approved good practice guidelines with respect to managing work sites where people are exercising their access rights, in particular the “Managing woodland access and forest operations in Scotland” leaflet. This should include removal of warning signs when works are completed.

Mountaineering Scotland will be happy to publicise revised access arrangements, assuming the alternatives fulfil all relevant guidelines and comply with the SOAC.

I hope that you will take the comments above into account, and please do contact me if any of the above requires clarification.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Gibson', written over a horizontal line.

**David Gibson**  
**CEO**  
**Mountaineering Scotland**