

By email to: acaraffi@andersonsnorthern.co.uk

Mr Alex Caraffi
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Dear Mr Caraffi

Glenfalloch Farms Long Term Forest Plan Scoping Consultation

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Long Term Forest Plan.

1. Our interests lie with access through the forestry and woodland blocks to the open high ground, and the visual implications of restocking and other management on the landscape of the National Park.
2. Mountaineering Scotland is a membership organisation with over 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, and acts to represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering. Mountaineering Scotland also acts on behalf of the 80,000 members of the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) 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
3. We welcome and support the intention to remove non-native trees, especially Sitka spruce and Rhododendron.
4. Many of our members welcome more tree cover on the hills, but there is also a significant percentage who appreciate the open views from hillsides and are concerned that woodland plantation would obstruct these wide and long views. Encouraging more natural regeneration, especially within the National Park, would allow trees to grow naturally where they can, and may result in a more open, scattered appearance rather than the straight rows and blocks of plantation. This would allow woodland cover to reach a natural treeline and preserve views through the trees.
5. This of course depends very much on the impact of herbivores like sheep and deer and the means to control their impact. We are of the opinion that the landscape and biodiversity would benefit from limiting the number of deer per square kilometre to allow for natural tree and shrub regeneration. This also has climate mitigation benefits through carbon storage and sequestration in the landscape.

6. Our preference would be to manage this through deer culling rather than the use of lengths of deer fencing. There are examples in other estates in Scotland where vegetation is recovering through management of herbivores without resorting to fencing. Creag Meagaidh as a National Nature Reserve is a good example of how this may be achieved on Designated Sites.

7. If stretches of deer fence are required, then it may be useful to take note that the Scottish Outdoor Access Code advises that putting up a high fence over long stretches of open country without providing gates, gaps or other access points might be considered unreasonable (SOAC section 4.9).

8. Mountaineering Scotland suggests the following to enable recreational access as there are numerous summits and tops in the vicinity:

- Gates should be provided where the fence crosses paths or tracks, or informal routes used to walk or cycle to summits and tops.
- Crossing points need to 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.
- Crossing points should be clearly visible to the public. Arrows on the fence, indicating the direction to the nearest crossing would make it easier for them to be located, and especially in poor visibility.

9. Finally, the provision and maintenance of informal parking areas at appropriate points would be a useful facility for hillgoers. Most visitors here will come by car, as public transport is limited.

I hope these comments are useful to you in your consideration of the Land Management Plan

Yours sincerely



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