

Our ref: BCG

Your ref:

Direct Dial: 0131 472 7520

E mail: campbell.gerrard@sportscotland.org.uk

3 June 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

Core Paths Plan – draft

Thank you for consulting **sportscotland** on the draft core paths plan for the national park.

sportscotland is the national agency for sport. Our aim is to encourage everyone in Scotland to discover and develop their own sporting experience helping to increase participation and improve performance in Scottish sport.

sportscotland is very supportive of the draft plan. As well as providing paths close to where people live, we are pleased see paths identified which link to the wider countryside and provision made for a range of purposes, including access to and on water, and for a range of abilities. We are glad to see provision made for the local community *and* for visitors to the park. We support the role identified for core paths in avoiding conflict with land management interests and in reducing impacts on the natural heritage. We fully agree with the sentiment that core paths are meant to complement people's access rights rather than hinder them.

sportscotland supports the way the plan indicates which routes are particularly suitable for different activities. This will be very important in directing people to paths most suited to their activity and from which they are likely therefore to get most enjoyment. It would also be useful, in the plan or in supporting material and media, to make clear that not all core paths will be capable of accommodating all uses. **sportscotland** is concerned that there is or could be a perception that all core paths can accommodate a range of activities. It is important to avoid this perception arising to ensure both the longevity of paths and the safety and enjoyment of those using the core path network.

There may be a role for the national park to control expectation in relation to certain routes and to point out where the nature of the path may restrict its use to certain activities.

sportscotland considers that the plan would benefit from expanding on the role of core paths identified on water. **sportscotland** remains somewhat unsure as to the purpose of such designation. Is there, for example, a greater expectation of infrastructure provision associated with such routes - such as slip ways, and jetties or car parks or information? Can assumptions be made about access being more straightforward on such routes with less conflict likely with other users? Again it will be important to manage the expectation associated with designating a core path on water.

sportscotland wonders if it is possible to differentiate core routes on water in any way, making them more readily identifiable to those interested in access to water? As currently indicated, they are quite difficult to pick out.

It might be useful to explain what some of the attractions are that some of the core paths identified lead to. It is clear that Core Paths Plans are intended for visitors as much as local people. From reading the plan, we consider that there could be benefit in giving more explanation on what some of the attractions referred to actually are – e.g. the Bun O Vat. Such information would help fulfil one of the purposes of core paths in promoting tourism and economic development. We appreciate that this sort of information might not need to appear in the finalised plan itself, but could appear in supporting literature or web material.

It would be if the plan could indicate whether those core paths that cross the park boundary continue as core paths in neighbouring authorities. This will provide a degree of confidence in the access taker when crossing the park boundary.

It would also be useful, as is the case in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Core Paths Plan, to give an indication of the other paths and routes that core paths link to and form the basis of access for. This would facilitate exploration and use of the park for sport and recreation purposes.

If you wish to discuss any of the above points please get in touch.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Campbell Gerrard
Planning Team



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18th June, 2008

Mr. Bob Grant,
Senior Outdoor Access Officer,
Cairngorms National Park Authority,
14 The Square,
Grantown on Spey,
Moray PH126 3HG

Dear Mr. Grant,

CNPA - proposed designation of the River Spey as a Core Path

I write to register my grave concern at your proposed designation of the River Spey as a Core Path.

This proposal, should it take place, would only benefit one small sector of the general public, i.e. the paddlers. Surely the object of a Core Path is for the benefit of a wider public - walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The paddlers already have the access and pleasure of navigating the River Spey. What more do they seek? Any substantial increase of paddlers navigating the Spey will be at the severe detriment of other users, particularly the fishermen.

Anglers generate many millions of pounds annually by visiting the Spey to fish which benefits the local economy and provides many hundreds of full-time jobs directly connected to the river. If the paddling and rafting activity is allowed to increase, then undeniably the fish and the anglers will begin to stay away.

Continued/.....

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The Rivery Spey is an internationally renowned salmon fishery and, as such, is a finite natural resource that should be recognised for its uniqueness. The great danger in your proposal is that this natural resource will be lost if your plans are to be adopted.

Yours sincerely,



L.G. Litchfield

From: automailer@cairnngorms.co.uk
Sent: 19 June 2008 20:22
To: Core Path Planning
Subject: Core Paths Planning Comments

Name: Mr Richard Burn

Address: Kirkhill

Bellabeg

Strathdon

Postcode: AB36 8UX

Email: richardwburn@hotmail.com

Phone: 01975 651241

Responding on behalf of: Friends and family

1. Do you think that the proposed core paths network is sufficient to give people reasonable access throughout the area? Yes
2. Please state clearly and fully the grounds of your objection or support to the Draft Core Paths Plan: UD05

Excellent. This would enable pedestrian access between the Hotel/Lonach Hall and Bellabeg, avoiding the main road, as well as enabling much more scope for circular walks and general access to and from Waterside. Older people in Strathdon still speak of how good it was when the old Waterside bridge existed over the Don and facilitated access to the Hotel and Houses along Waterside, and what a shame it is that it was never replaced.

UD04

Useful route along historic route of old road with good views over Strathdon, providing off-road access between Bellabeg and Heughead .

UD07

Useful link with UD04, and continues along old road.

UD08

Useful short circular route with views.

UD06 and UD09

Access to historic Poldhullie Bridge

UD03

This useful link between Bellabeg, Strathdon School and Roughpark seems to be under-used. Maybe it would be used more by schoolchildren/parents if it had a better surface.

UD10, UD11, UD12

Useful access to Ben Newe from Bellabeg. Ben Newe is a fine local vantage point, but at present it looks as though not many visitors get up it.

Summing up: the plan looks OK

3. If objecting, please indicate what change(s) you are seeking to the Draft Core Paths Plan which could resolve your objection:

Cairngorms National Park Authority

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From: automailer@cairngorms.co.uk
Sent: 19 June 2008 16:43
To: Core Path Planning
Subject: Core Paths Planning Comments

Name: Mr Richard Green

Address: 3 Coylum Road

Aviemore

Postcode: PH22 1QG

Email: rpgreen@talk21.com

Phone:

Responding on behalf of: Rothiemurchus & Glenmore Community Association

1. Do you think that the proposed core paths network is sufficient to give people reasonable access throughout the area? No
2. Please state clearly and fully the grounds of your objection or support to the Draft Core Paths Plan:
 - a. We feel that the ancient "thieves road" path which runs from Loch Gamhna to Inshriach via "Drakes Bothy" should be designated as a core path. This path is frequently used by walkers and mountain bikers.
 - b. We are concerned that some of the proposed core paths run through exposed and isolated areas. Visitors to the area may be in danger if they believe wrongly that a designated core path would be safe and accessible in all weathers.
 - c. We are concerned that it is not yet clear how the core paths will be maintained once they have been designated.
3. If objecting, please indicate what change(s) you are seeking to the Draft Core Paths Plan which could resolve your objection:
 - a. Include the Loch Gamhna to Inshriach track as a core path
 - b. Literature and maps of core paths to make it clear that the designation "core path" does not imply that a path is safe and accessible in all weathers

Cairngorms National Park Authority

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Gordon Woodlands Ltd
721 Shields Road
Pollokshields
Glasgow
G41 4PL

18 June 2008

Cairngorms National Park Authority
14 The Square
Grantown-on-Spey
PH26 3HG

Dear Sirs,

**DRAFT CORE PATHS PLAN
COMMENTS ON PROPOSALS**

Thank you for forwarding out a CD with your draft of proposals for inclusion in the Core Paths Plan within the Cairngorms National Park boundaries.

As you know, Gordon Woodlands Ltd. is the owner of Ben Newe Forest in which you make various proposals for Core Paths. In this letter, I will specifically refer to proposed path **UDO11**. Comments on the other proposed core paths within the forest are made in other letters of equal date with this one.

Proposed path UDO11 follows the primary internal vehicular access route through the western portion of the forest. This route has never been promoted as appropriate for public use, unlike other specifically constructed and promoted footpaths in the forest. Its use is restricted to access by forestry machinery, timber haulage lorries and other authorised vehicles.

At its Annual General Meeting, on Tuesday 19 February, the Board and shareholders of GWL were unable to identify any circumstances, whatsoever, where they would agree to the main vehicular accesses to the forest for timber lorries, harvesting machinery, forwarders and all other authorised vehicles being included in the Core Paths Plan.

Collectively, GWL – its members and its personnel – objects to the inclusion of this proposed path in the strongest possible terms.

Ben Newe Forest is a working forest from which GWL earns its income. As a result, all areas of this woodland will, in their own time, be planted, thinned, felled and re-planted, in accordance with the existing 20-year Forest Plan. This plan has been approved by the Forestry Commission, the Government's forestry department, following the requisite periods of public consultation, both in the local community and on the public register. During the above-listed periods of economic activity GWL must reserve its legitimate right to close access that it has made available to the public – for the purposes of public health and safety, if for nothing else.

As you will know from your survey of the proposed paths, the area at the Western end of proposed path UDO11 has recently been felled (to the South of the forest road) and thinned (to the North of the forest road). During both of these operations, heavy vehicles (timber lorries and harvesting machinery) were utilising the forest road for access. Also, timber was being drawn out of the forest to the road, where operations took place to transfer everything to stacks; and then from stack to lorry.

Encountering any of these vehicles or operations would have been unsafe to the individual concerned, as well as to GWL and the contractors undertaking the work on site, from the point of view of health and safety, for example as a result of:

- Accidents involving collisions with heavy machinery;
- Accidents involving avoidance of dogs not under control; or
- Curious individuals getting too close to moving timber.

As identified in the Forest Plan, there are areas of the Forest that are being managed under a policy of long-term retention. These areas, including some where the proposed path passes, are subject to conservation management objectives, which call for the “Improvement of woodland structure in core habitat areas to favour capercaillie and red squirrel.”

You will acknowledge, as an organisation responsible for conservation, that such ‘red list’ species are more easily startled and disturbed by pedestrians and dogs than they are by occasional vehicular passage. Consequently, encouraging dog-walkers and others onto this proposed route would absolutely contradict the National Park Authority’s other obligations to conserve the ecosystems and landscapes that brought about National Park designation for the Cairngorms area.

This proposed route is being suggested by you to link proposed routes UDO10 and UDO12. These two routes are also subject to objections. Additionally, there is a purposefully created car parking area off the unclassified public road from Strathdon to Glenbuchat, which local residents and tourists are invited to use as the starting point for enjoyment of the forest environment. Hence, there is no necessity for an extra, codified approach route to this easily accessible picnic site.

Insofar as GWL is aware, the use of the main forest road network by the general public is negligible. Such use is not, and has not, been promoted by GWL during its ownership of the property – since 1996. The sporting tenant on the property and agents acting on behalf of GWL do not report evidence of, or interference from, pedestrians.

To summarise, GWL objects to the inclusion of proposed route UDO11 in the Core Paths Network on the following bases:

- Conservation of habitat.
- Conservation of red list species.
- Danger to all users from interaction of pedestrians with timber management operations.
- The route is not necessary.
- Proposed routes that this route ‘connects’ are subject to objection, themselves.
- Potential loss of income to the company resulting from inability to carry out appropriate and necessary forest and landscape management operations.

- Paths have been created and promoted by the company to encourage appropriate and responsible, targeted enjoyment of the forest environment. This proposed route is not one of them.

As a point of interest, it is noted that the proposed Core Path through Ben Newe Forest, identified in the Interim Draft Plan, that GWL was wholly in favour of has been dropped from the Final Draft Plan. Meanwhile, paths the company was not in favour of have been retained and an additional route has been proposed in the face of strong objections to the suggestion when informed by the National Park Authority.

It gives the appearance of the National Park Authority being more concerned about placating external commentators with no pecuniary interest in the property than it is in working in partnership with the actual owners and managers of private, income-generating property.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Gordon', written in a cursive style.

Neil Gordon
Chair
Gordon Woodlands Ltd