Name: Mr Kenneth Thomson

Address: Hillhead of Derbeth

Kingswells

Aberdeen

Postcode: AB15 8SJ

Email: secretary@cairngormclub.org.uk

Phone: 01224 743655

Responding on behalf of: Cairngorm Club

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: The Draft Core Path Plan now includes 5 high-level, long-distance routes (the two Lairigs, Dee-Tilt, Dee-Feshie, and Invercauld-Inchrory-Tomintoul) whose exclusion the Cairngorm Club "commend[ed]" and "support[ed]" in the Interim Draft Core Path Plan.

The mapping and promotion via leaflets, guidebooks, etc. of these routes will inevitably lead to:

· Loss of wildness and remoteness from greater use, both by individuals, and (despite CNPA guidelines to the contrary) for organised events

• Increased pressure on current infrastructure, e.g. bridges and recently completed pathwork, and for more such infrastructure such as signposts (despite a CNPA "presumption" against for the latter - but perhaps not the former?)

• More occasional emergencies, arising from greater usage by generally less experienced walkers (and cyclists?), and hence calls for greater or at least current motorised access along tracks etc. leading to these routes, when "enhance[ment] of the natural ... heritage of the area" (a top-level Park Aim) should be trying to reduce such access.

3. If objecting, please indicate what change(s) you are seeking to the Draft Core Paths Plan which could resolve your objection: Exclusion of the above 5 routes

Cairngorms National Park Authority

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Our Ref: SEA00067/ER/SH SG Ref: SEA00061

Attention: Adam Streeter Smith

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

24 June 2008

By email: corepathsplan@cairngorms.co.uk

Dear Mr Streeter Smith,

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2005 CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK CORE PATHS PLAN DRAFT – ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

I refer to your Environmental Report consultation submitted under the above Regulations in respect of the above Plan. This was received by SEPA via the Scottish Government SEA Gateway on 28 March 2008.

SEPA has used its Scoping consultation response of 29 August 2006 to consider the adequacy of the Environmental Report and this is used as the framework for detailed comments which can be found in Appendix 1. For convenience, these comments have been structured to reflect that of the Environmental Report. Please note, this response is in regard only to the adequacy and accuracy of the Environmental Report and any comments SEPA may have on the Plan itself will be provided separately.

As the Plan is finalised, the Cairngorms National Park Authority as Responsible Authority, will require to take account of the findings of the Environmental Report and of views expressed upon it during this consultation period. As soon as reasonably practical after the adoption of the plan, the Responsible Authority should publish a statement setting out how this has occurred. SEPA normally expects this to be in the form of an "SEA Statement" similar to that advocated in the Scottish Government SEA templates and toolkit which is available at www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/09/13104943/13. A copy of the SEA statement should be sent to the Consultation Authorities via the Scottish Government SEA Gateway on publication.

Should you wish to discuss this consultation, please do not hesitate to contact me on 01224 424609 or via SEPA's SEA Gateway at <u>sea.gateway@sepa.org.uk</u>.

Yours sincerely,

ClarePorterrett

Clare Pritchett Senior Planning Officer Planning Unit (North)

Appendix 1: Comments on the Environmental Report

General Comments

- SEPA is pleased to note that all aspects of the current Plan, i.e the aims and objectives as well as the 'area networks' (the core paths on an area by area basis) have been assessed. SEPA considers that this level of assessment represents good practice.
- SEPA is satisfied that the assessment of all the routes considered in the planmaking process represents realistic alternatives, however, in the line with the Act SEPA would have expected these assessments to have been presented in the ER.

Detailed Comments

1. Sections 1 to 5

1.1 SEPA is satisfied that all the background information, including environmental baseline, environmental issues, data limitations and evolution of the environment without the Plan, of relevance to SEPA is provided.

2. SEA objectives (section 6)

2.1 SEPA notes that the 14 SEA Objectives are divided into more detailed and targeted Criteria to reflect the key issues. The Criteria are used to determine the potential effects in relation to the SEA Objectives. SEPA considers this a very comprehensive approach.

3. Assessment of Alternatives (section 4.1)

- 3.1 SEPA notes that this section identifies that that alternative scenarios for developing the Core Paths Plan were considered and that different objectives to select the core paths network were developed as well as changing the geography for selection of the core paths network to the Action Areas. However, the section does not outline whether alternatives were considered in the form of the different paths that could have been included in the Core Path Plan.
- 3.2 SEPA considers this approach valid but in line with the requirements of the Act would have expected the ER to include the presentation of these assessments.

4. Assessment of Core Path Plan Aim and Objectives (section 8)

4.1 SEPA is satisfied with the assessments provided in Annex 3. The comprehensive use of the 'reasoning' column is welcome.

5. Assessment of Area Network Proposals (section 9)

- 5.1 SEPA is satisfied with the assessments provided in Annex 4. The comprehensive use of the 'reasoning' column is again welcome.
- 5.2 However, SEPA considers that impacts on waste and pollution should have considered potential increased negative impacts of litter and foul effluent resulting from increased use. Proposed mitigation therefore does not address these potential negative impacts.

6. Future Development of Core Paths Plan and SEA

6.1 SEPA highlighted above that there may be an increase in littering in areas as a result of their promotion in the Plan. In any revised version of the ER, or in the Post Adoption Statement, SEPA would therefore welcome an amendment to Annexe 4 to highlight that this might be an issue and a section added in on mitigation. SEPA queries whether the provision of appropriate facilities, as well as informative material, could be identified as mitigation measures.

7. Monitoring (section 5)

7.1 SEPA notes the comments relating to the intention to develop a framework for monitoring the environmental effects of the Core Paths Plan. SEPA is satisfied with the initial proposals for SEA indicators and targets shown in Figure 10.1.



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Dingwall Business Park Fodderty Way Dingwall IV15 9XB

Telephone, 01349 865333 Fax: 01349 865609 Website www.snh.org.uk

Our ref: SIT/NP/8623/NPA/CPP

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

30 June 2008

Dear Murray

Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 Section 18 (1) Core Paths Plan

Thank you for your letter of 2nd April 2008 to Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) as a statutory consultee under section 18 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 (the Act), inviting representations or objections over the draft Core Paths Plan for the Cairngorms National Park. We welcome the opportunity to comment on this plan, which has been drawn up according to the provisions of Section 17 (1) of the Act.

In preparing this response we have referred to the lead roles identified in the SNH/CNPA Casework Agreement. This means that this response covers advice on the implications of the Plan for Natura sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and European Protected Species. In addition, as a statutory consultee on the core paths plan, this response also includes our advice on the Plan's sufficiency. Your colleagues in the Heritage and Land Management Group will advise on any matters concerning other nature conservation interests, and landscape and wild land issues.

SNH summary position

1. Natura

We note that you have undertaken an appropriate assessment of the effects of the Plan on the Natura sites in the Park, and that this assessment is based on our advice to you. We apologise that we are now aware of an additional Natura issue on which we should have advised you earlier. Our new advice is that the proposal to designate UDE 34 as a core path is likely to have a significant effect on the capercaillie population in the Cairngorms, Ballochbuie and Glen Tanar SPAs. Our view is that, as a consequence, you are required to undertake an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposal for the sites in view of the sites' conservation objectives for capercaillie.

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2. Sufficiency

We agree that this Plan is sufficient. We have no objection to this plan but, as a 'representation' we recommend you include:

- an additional path link between Aviemore and the access to Craigellachie NNR; .
- a better explanation of the extent to which the networks reflect demand expressed in the community consultations; and
- clearer justifications for the choices you have made about which paths to propose, and not propose, as core paths;
- the mitigation identified in the appropriate assessment and environmental report within the relevant sections of the Core Path Plan itself.

Our detailed advice on these, and other, issues is included at Annex 1.

Please let me know if you need any further information or advice from SNH in relation to this plan. I would be grateful if you could let us know of your Authority's decision in due course, or of any further changes to the plan which would be relevant to our interests.

Yours sincerely

AL

pp George Hogg Area Manager, East Highland

Annex 1: Detailed advice

The Consultation process

We are aware, through membership of your Core Paths Plan Steering Group and the Local Outdoor Access Forum, that you have undertaken extensive community consultations whilst drawing up this Plan. The Plan itself, however, provides little explanation of the key results from these consultations, whether there was any liaison with land managers, the extent to which visitors were consulted, or the extent to which it has been possible to meet community demand as expressed in the consultations.

In addition there is little justification for some of the choices you have made. For example, there is no explanation of why some parts of the Aviemore Orbital route that were proposed as core paths in the interim draft have now been removed from the Plan; of why the River Dee is not proposed as a core path; of why the route UBS31 at Laggan has now been added to the Plan; or of why only some sections of Sustrans National Cycle Route 7 are proposed as core paths. The net effect is that key parts of the logic behind the choice of core paths are not transparent. This makes it difficult to assess sufficiency on the basis of reading this Plan without painstaking cross-referencing with other documents and papers, some of which we only received through membership of the Steering Group and the LOAF, and are thus not easily available more widely.

Sufficiency

Overall, having checked the key findings from the community consultations, and how you have addressed the key issues emerging from the consultation on the interim draft Plan, we agree that the network is sufficient. We are pleased to see that

- there is now generally good connectivity between communities and parts of the Park;
- the Plan addresses the needs of communities with poor path provision;
- compared to the previous draft, it better reflects the needs of visitors;
- you have rationalised the proposals in areas that were over-provided with proposed core paths in the interim draft;
- the Speyside Way is now proposed as a core path;
- the Plan addresses priorities identified in the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Strategy;
- it includes generally good coverage of routes on, and to, National Nature Reserves; and
- you have explained how it meets the needs of different user groups.

Although we judge the overall network to be sufficient, we think that local core path provision could be improved in a few key areas. In particular, the path link from Aviemore Highland Resort to Craigellachie NNR was proposed as a core path in the interim draft Plan (mapped as part of LBS30 – Aviemore Orbital route), but is not included in this draft. This is a key access route to the NNR, and we recommend that you include it as a core path.

We also recommend that the Plan explicitly addresses the demands indicated in the community consultation for:

- off-road cycling and hillwalking opportunities around Crathie;
- links between Ballater & Loch Muick;
- more horse riding opportunities in the Eastern Cairngorms;
- an off-road link alongside the South Deeside Road at Ballater, along the Seven Bridges Walk;
- circular routes at Corgarff;
 - routes accessible for wheelchairs at Carrbridge;

Effects on Natura sites

We are pleased that you have incorporated advice we've given you previously about avoiding negative effects on Natura sites, and maximising benefits. We have recently become aware of an additional Natura issue on which we have not previously advised you. We apologise for not raising this issue at an earlier stage in your preparation of the Core Paths Plan.

The new Natura issue concerns UDE 34 near Ballater. While this path is not within any SPAs, Pannanich Forest is known to support a population of capercaillie. There are general sightings of capercaillie recorded extensively within the woodland and there is a capercaillie lek in this area. UDE34 passes within around 95 m of the lek.

The capercaillie present in Pannanich Forest form part of the Deeside/Donside metapopulation and are therefore connected to Glen Tanar, Ballochbuie and Cairngorms SPA populations. It is likely that the capercaillie found in Pannanich Forest are resident in one or more of these SPAs at different times.

Evidence has shown that capercaillie are sensitive to disturbance from recreational activities, such that otherwise suitable habitat can become unsuitable. Disturbance of capercaillie in Pannanich Forest as a result of this proposal, particularly in combination with existing recreational use, could therefore affect the capercaillie interest of the three nearby SPAs.

Our advice therefore is that the proposal to designate UDE 34 as a core path is likely to have a significant effect on the capercaillie population in the three SPAs named above. Our view is that, as a consequence, you are required to undertake an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposal for the sites in view of the sites' conservation objectives for capercaillie. We are currently carrying out further appraisal in order to help inform your appropriate assessment and we will provide further advice in relation to this shortly.

We note that you have already undertaken an appropriate assessment of the core paths plan. This will need to be expanded to include an assessment of the capercaillie issue described above. In relation to the appropriate assessment as it stands, we support your proposals for mitigating effects on Natura sites and we agree that more detailed assessments will be required for a number of paths at the planning and implementation stage. We recommend that you to describe the mitigation proposals in the relevant sections of the Plan itself, to ensure that they are clearly an integral part of the proposals, rather than something that lies forgotten in a separate document. This point also applies to the mitigation identified in the Environmental Report.

Effects on other designated sites

We note that there are a large number of proposed core paths on, or close to, SSSIs and NNRs. We are therefore pleased that you have incorporated advice we've given you previously about maximising benefits and avoiding adverse effects on these sites. We particularly welcome your proposals for core paths on, and to, NNRs.



Adam Streeter-Smith

14 The Square Grantown-on-Spey

Moray

PH26 3HG

Outdoor Access Officer

Cairngorms National Park Authority

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Dingwall Business Park Fodderty Way Dingwall IV15 9XB

Telephone: 01349 865333 Fax: 01349 865609 Website: www.snh.org.uk

Your ref: VSRG/CPP/3 Our ref: PF 301/07-08

26 June 2008

Dear Adam

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: CONSULTATION ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT OF THE DRAFT CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK CORE PATHS PLAN

Thank you for consulting SNH on this Environmental Report. As the Report and the Core Paths Plan itself are integrally linked, this response should be read alongside our response to consultation on the draft Plan, which we are sending separately.

In general, we think that this is a good Environmental Report, and that the assessment methods and conclusions are clearly explained and presented, and broadly sound. We are pleased to see that many of our comments on earlier drafts have been incorporated. Our detailed comments are included at Annex 1.

We note that you have undertaken an appropriate assessment. We agree with your conclusions in relation to the Natura issues you have assessed. However, we have recently become aware of an additional Natura issue in relation to UDE34 which we think is likely to have a significant effect on the nearby Cairngorms, Ballochbuie and Glen Tanar SPAs. We apologise for not raising this issue earlier. We have included more detailed advice on this issue in our response to the Core Paths Plan itself. Please note that our advice is that you are required to add to your appropriate assessment to consider the implications of designating UDE 34 as a core path for these Natura sites, in view of their conservation objectives for capercaillie.

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Made (con) (con security apport Ocenta of polation (20% anti-grouplanetine Please do not hesitate to get in touch with Debbie Greene (<u>debbie.greene@snh.gov.uk</u> 01479 810477) if you would like to discuss anything arising from this response.

Yours sincerely

Eve North

pp. GEORGE HOGG Area Manager

Annex 1: SNH's comments on SEA Environmental Report of the draft Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan

Our key points are in bold.

Section	SNH comment						
4.11, Fig 4.2, 4.12, 9.1	It would be very useful to explain more clearly exactly what aspects of Core Paths you have assessed. There could be a range of different effects from designating; constructing; repairing; promoting; and/or people using core paths. We are not sure which of these have been assessed in this Report.						
	We note that best practice in relation to SEA is evolving, and that a useful feature of some recent assessments has been the inclusion of detailed assessment criteria to underpin the scoring system. This would be worth considering in future SEAs.						
4.17	We note that proposals for monitoring significant environmental effects will be finalised later. We would be happy to discuss monitoring in more detail if helpful.						
Figure 5.1 Key Baseline Facts	We are disappointed that you have not taken on board our advice to include key baseline facts about the value of the Park for experiencing wildness, and about the Park's distinctive landscapes and their integral part to the outstanding national importance and value of the Park.						
	The "Water" section might usefully mention that there are 3 river SAC systems in the National Park						
Figure 6.2 SEA Objectives &	The third criterion under Objective 2 refers to 'species', but presumably this reference should be to 'habitats'.						
Criteria	We welcome the addition of an SEA criterion under Objective 6 about minimising impacts on wildness qualities.						
Section 8	We agree with your assessment of the Plan's aims and objectives.						
Section 9 and Annex 3	the the mitigation / modification						
Annex 3 Upper Deeside	er We have recently become aware that UDE 34 near Ballate passes close to a capercaillie lek site. The assessment shou assess the potential for disturbance during the breedin season, and any mitigation that might be necessary advisable.						
Annex 3 Lower Badenoch & Strathspey, SEA Objective 1	assessment should discuss the potential for disturbance to the birds during the breeding season, and any mitigation that migh						

Annex 3 Rothiemurchus & Glenmore, SEA Objective 2.	the rationale is incorrect. The fact that LBS 129 – the Glenmore off-road route – lies alongside the road does NOT mean that its construction is having little effect on the adjacent designated sites. In fact, construction of the route involves loss of qualifying habitats within the Cairngorms SAC. This loss has been mitigated by creating new qualifying habitat elsewhere in the site before construction of the route began.				
10.2	We note that you intend to develop a monitoring framework la We would be happy to discuss monitoring in more detail if helpful.				
Figure 10.1 SEA Indicators & targets	in the start has Motor Francowork				
	SEA Objective 6. We recommend adding a target to cover no loss in experiences of wildness (as is suggested by text in 9.16).				
	SEA Objective 9. Please note that in some designated sites, usin local materials won on-site may not be possible without adver- effects on designated earth science features or loss of qualifyin features on Natura sites. You could address this issue by adding the following words to the target 'using local materials, unless the would damage the notified interests on designated sites.' (as suggested by text in 9.16).				
	More generally, we note that the indicators and targets are still in draft form. In future SEAs it would be useful to link the indicators more closely to the SEA criteria.				

Form for supporting or objecting to the Draft Core Paths Plan

9P

Please note that all responses will be made public and are not valid without a full name and postal address.

Please read the explanatory notes inside the front cover and in Section 4 (see page 12) of the Draft Core Paths Plan before completing this form and return it by **30 June 2008**. Please use this form to set out your objections to or comments in support of the draft Core Paths Plan quoting the path reference number where appropriate. Further copies of this form can be photocopied, obtained from the CNPA offices or printed from our web site where you can also complete it electronically.

Title	MR	First Nam	e* Ritchie	Last Name*	HART		
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- 2. Do you think that the proposed core paths network is sufficient to give people reasonable access throughout the area?
- **3.** Please state clearly and fully the grounds of your objection or support to the Draft Core Paths Plan, continuing on a separate sheet where necessary.

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED SHEET.

3. Grounds for Objection

Path Ref No. LBS3

Campbrae Woodland Current Woodland Management

Campbrae Woodland is a commercial plantation and is primarily managed for timber production and as a FSC certified woodland is managed in accordance with the UKWoodland Assurance Standard

On behalf of our client Mr. A. Christie, Campbrae Woodland owner, we formally object to the path LBS3 being officially designated as a Core Path, based on the following reasons.

Objections and Concerns

- The proposed Core Path is a key access route for HGV vehicles and harvesting machinery during timber harvesting operations.
- Landowner/CNPA agreement of levels of core path route promotion/advertising.
- Increased use of the paths will increase the risk of a health & safety incident occurring (Grant funding availability issues for access management planning and H&S analysis reports). CNPA official agreement/approval on safety and suitability of core path physical structure and surface.
- Possible landowner Public Liability Insurance premiums increased.
- Core Path management during forestry operations and potential cost implications.
- 100% grant funding availability issues for ongoing core path maintenance costs.

Form for supporting or objecting to the Draft Core Paths Plan (continued)

4. If objecting, please indicate what change (s) you are seeking to the Draft Core Paths Plan which could resolve your objection, continuing on a separate sheet where necessary. ON BEITAGE OF OUR CLIENT, NE WOULD REQUIRE A PROCESS OF DIRECT CONSULTATION WITH A CNPA REPRESENTATIVE SPECIFIC TO THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PROPOSED CAMPBANE NOW (4m) Cone PATH 28/6/08 Rentof S.W. Lan) Signature Date

Please return your completed form to:

Cairngorms National Park Authority FREEPOST NAT 21454 GRANTOWN-ON-SPEY PH26 3BR

Forms should be returned no later than **30 June 2008**. After that date you will be contacted by a representative of the Cairngorms National Park Authority with regard to your objections.

OFFICIAL USE ONLY	Reference: 3/	174	
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From: Mike Dales [mailto:Mike.Dales@canoescotland.com] Sent: 30 June 2008 11:45 To: Bob Grant Cc: Murray Ferguson Subject: FW: Draft Core Paths Plan Consultation

Cairngorms National Park Authority Draft Core Paths Plan Consultation

The Scottish Canoe Association (SCA) supports the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) draft core paths plan.

In terms of water access, we are pleased to see that the CNPA has included the River Spey in its draft Core Paths Plan. The SCA believes the River Spey is a vital waterway for a wide range of recreational activities and we support its inclusion in the plan as this will enable the CNPA to more easily allocate financial and human resources to access related work in the River Spey corridor in future years.

From the SCA's point of view the most important aspect of the Land Reform Act is that the public's statutory rights of access to land and inland water apply to rivers such as the Spey. In terms of the duties of access authorities, such as the CNPA, we regard the duty to uphold access rights as being by far the most important access function that we wish to see being implemented. In that respect the SCA does not regard core paths status as being necessary to ensure a right of access on the water, nor the access authority's support in upholding access rights; however, we do believe that core path status can add a great deal to the access authority's capabilities in supporting and enhancing the work of recreational and land managing organisations in their efforts to improve access management on the ground.

We do not believe that core paths status will in any way attract more visitors to take their recreation on the water. The scenic quality of the area and the recreational interest in the river already attract people to it for the various activities that take place there. However, a designation such as being a core path is not going to attract any more visitors, just as being a SSSI hasn't generated any increase in anglers, canoeists or rafters. Collecting core paths is never going to become a popular activity in the way that collecting Munros has.

The Spey is already a popular river for angling, canoeing, kayaking and rafting, and as such it is the focus of a great deal of effort on behalf of the wide range of land managing and recreational interests, along

with the CNPA, and Highland and Moray Councils. The SCA believes that affording the river core path status would enable the river to be better managed with a more active involvement from the CNPA. If the Spey is not in the core path plan we fear there will be times in the future when the land and recreational managing bodies will look to the CNPA for assistance and that assistance would be less likely to be there. We therefore feel that it would be in everyone's interests to have the river in the plan, and for that reason we strongly support this draft core paths plan.

Mike Dales Access & Environment Officer Scottish Canoe Association c/o Caledonia House South Gyle Edinburgh EH12 9DQ Tel & Fax: 01738 850 175 E-mail: mike.dales@canoescotland.com Website: www.canoescotland.com Cairngorms National Park Authority The information contained in this e-mail is confidential and intended for the exclusive use of the individual(s) or organisation specified above. Any unauthorised dissemination or copying of this e-mail, or mis-use or wrongful disclosure of information contained in it, is strictly prohibited and may be illegal. Please notify the sender by return e-mail should you have received this e-mail in error.

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