

Cairngorms National Park : Local Plan Inquiry – list of documents from Mrs Alison Jane Angus.
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Your Reference Number 437

In addition to the papers and points raised since the initial consultations, I would submit documents, 6 copies and a CD with the electronic form's titles :

Water supplies Policy 13

Papers for February 09 Policy 14 on monitoring and National Emergencies

Land-use supply - point 4.33

This list

I hope to be available if required for a hearing – age and infirmity permitting! – and would be happy to co-operate with others. I shall be away from April 21-9th, and if there should be any difficulty, Miss Bell Macaulay or Mr Robin Blyth should be contacted

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Water supply Policy 13.

In the Final Plan of the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan, there is a statement that application will be made to Scottish Water for licenses to abstract more water from the River Dee. In Upper Deeside already in some summers there has been necessity to truck water from the Bridge of Canny plant, back up again to supply the needs of Ballater, and, in some years and situations, also Braemar. A new abstraction point on the Gairn may alleviate this situation, but there are proposals for more housing both in Ballater and Aboyne and it remains to be seen whether there will be a supply ample enough for any increase in demand.

In 2010-11, the effects of the summer drought of 2003 and the loss of salmon in the two lowest pools of the Dee will be known. In the last few years there has been an increase in the salmon catch through the effects of return-catch, control of the sea- and Greenland-catches and restocking by the Atlantic Salmon Trust and local proprietors. This has led to some increase in visitor- numbers and hope of a return to the former great numbers of fish. Ballater and Crathie Commuity Council, now within the National Park, has invariably supported this fishery and I am concerned that water-use of tens of thousands of houses in the lower strath could again affect, or even destroy, this important species and those dependant on it. This includes the highly skilled work-force as well as those within and near the city who benefit from the relaxing effects of the sport.

I would suggest that consideration be given to finding alternative sources for water supplies, including the provision of filtration/osmosis of seawater. Plants both north and south of Aberdeen would allow for sourcing tides outwith any energy-towers, but it would be advisable to plan this urgently rather than in later conflict. Whatever the effects of climate change, the health of the salmon fishery depends on the lowest volume of water in the Dee, not the total annual volume.

I understand that a new UK report on river volumes is to be published this week (30th March 2009) covering this point and advocating the same solution. This is a matter where the 'Nation' as well as the 'shire' is concerned. A basic part of the whole concept and the care in conservation of our area should not be ignored but dealt with by the appropriate authorities speedily.

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Policy 14 Monitoring of basic situations : I have not been able to find sources which can show the quantitative data-base of natural species before the start of the National Park beyond the NESBRC records of plants, the recent British Geological Survey maps and Memoirs and the statistically variable soil surveys. The early publications since then seem to lean to pretty pictures, are not particularly keen on boring numerical facts and seem to be an indication of an attitude which pays more attention to presentation than measurement, as a basis for policy.

I should like to see monitoring done by expert practitioners but these are expensive apart from resident volunteers. Universities nowadays do not pay much attention to taxonomy and as pensionable ages increase, so the supply of expert volunteers for biological monitoring will decrease and training will take longer, if details of hybridisation, for instance, are to be watched. There is also a risk of increased knowledge being over-tempting to specimen collectors. I have suggested convenient alternative 'hammering places' to reduce temptation to collect from some of the geological SSSIs, but plants, insects and birds are also becoming vulnerable. As yet there are no full exhibitions of natural history within the Park to encourage this interest, though efforts continue by several voluntary groups to lead towards this. The Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments, Scottish Rural Past division, has run an effective mapping training course, and local history groups are developing archives with some help from the National Park.

If the National Interest requires exploitation of minerals within the National Park, there should not be extreme delays from bureaucracy. There are excellent geological maps now available and planners are aware of old workings which are not excessively visible from roads, for instance. A short visit from BGS, or a resident with the maps and an engineer would provide expert knowledge to allow a farmer access to limestone in due season, for instance. The GCR mineral sites are unlikely to provide more than tiny supplies and so far not much exploration has been done, but again, it should be scientific or engineering matters that require consideration in extreme conditions, rather than a Plan.

Ecologically, there is a danger at present of over-concentration on particular species rather than the whole. I have not recently been able to check, but on casual visits, it appears that in one glen, , since there is so little close-cropped grass with the removal of large numbers of deer, wheatears, which depend on insect-flushing, are in decline. Deer were removed to allow tree- and –soil recovery before a complete survey of the whole ecology was attempted, and before the bark of some young trees had become too hard for browsing.

It would not be impossible to use electric fencing for particular areas to allow recovery of soil or rare vegetation, with, if necessary, volunteer cultivation to remove any shading etc., rather than take off animals which make use of grass and could provide food for a hungry world and enjoyable work in both stalking and other tourism. But this should not be a matter of outside abstract averages or committees, but knowledgeable local management.

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Land-use and supply.

4.33: 'Developments should therefore conserve and enhance semi-natural habitats for the ecological, recreational, landscape and natural heritage values, including water bodies, watercourses, wetland, peat and river corridor habitats.'

If the British Isles are to contain 74 million people, every square inch may be required for food production, so it seems logical to keep the sustainability of the local population by using sloping, semi-natural ground for buildings rather than use the intense food production flat areas, and that greater care be taken on the availability of water supply, if need be for vegetable production by hydroponics. By definition, 'semi-natural' is already compromised and altered by cultivation and animal grazing and droppings.

Thus, compromise on flat ground could be for the maintenance of the human social and economic benefit, and include some natural extension of native forest if grazing stock is replaced by responsible use for housing on slopes.

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