

Cairngorms Climate Conference

Monday 9th March 2020

Workshop 2: Enriching Nature: The Route to Help the Cairngorms to Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change

Key Speaker: Francesca Osowska, CEO Scottish Natural Heritage
Host: Andy Ford, Head of Conservation
Facilitator:

Brief overview

Of the 5 IPBES drivers for biodiversity loss the Cairngorms is particularly vulnerable to changing landuse and climate change. The attendees were divided into 5 working groups. Each one produced a preferred proposal.

Main points raised

1. *Peatland Restoration*

- Peatland restoration needs to be able to expand rapidly.
- There would be benefit to training for estate workers, particularly gamekeepers, in restoration techniques to increase the skill base. This could be delivered through colleges.
- Relaxation of species licencing would help to facilitate peatland restoration during spring and early summer.

2. *Grazing management*

- A reduction in deer numbers is particularly important as it impacts on most other measures for mitigation (Peatland and woodland expansion).
- A balance of incentive and regulation is required to achieve it.

3. *Restoration of natural processes through ecosystem improvements*

- River Catchment initiatives are a good delivery mechanism for wide spread ecosystem management, including catchments beyond confines of aquatic habitat.
- Big scale thinking is required across the whole catchment (include woodland and peatland for management of water and runoff).

4. *Optimising landuse to be flexible and deliver multiple benefits*

- Land management need to consider more flexible practices and approaches.
- There is a relatively small resident community within the CNP and so should be able to engage them in key decision making.

5. Ban Muirburn

- This will require legislation and regulation.
- Good estate fire plans could be prepared to manage the possible increase fire risk.
- There may be widespread implications to communities including crofters, farmers and estates, this needs to be managed equitably.
- It will mean significant change to landscape.

Main points on priorities for going forward

1. Strong focus on landuse was required to achieve a holistic, sustainable approach. This should also include a consideration of ending muirburn.
2. A big reduction in deer numbers is a key aim to facilitate other mitigation measures. It is likely that more than voluntary measures may be needed.
3. An increase in peatland restoration capacity was needed but this could benefit estates economically and through more skilled staff.
4. Ecosystem services need to be strongly linked to habitat restoration to highlight the direct public benefits.

Cairngorms National Park Authority

August 2020