

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

T: 01479 873 535

20 November 2023

Dear Badenoch and Strathspey farmers and crofters,

Beavers and the Cairngorms National Park

It was good to meet with you at the visit to South Clunes farm. I think the visit was worthwhile with a wide-ranging discussion across lots of different farming topics. On beavers I thought it would be best to set out the approach that we discussed on the day in writing so that you are clear about what was said by the Park Authority. I have also added in a section about flood banks that I hope will provide extra reassurance.

- 1) We are awaiting the result of the translocation licence application to NatureScot. This is in line with the Park Authority board decision in summer 2022 and with the National Park Partnership Plan that was signed off by Scottish Ministers in 2022 also.
- 2) There has been an extensive engagement programme around the proposal to bring beavers back to the Cairngorms including drop-in events, site visits and meetings with all farmers that have requested it. That engagement is ongoing and pre-emptive work to prevent/mitigate potential impacts has already started at certain locations (i.e. tree protection).
- 3) The three locations where the beavers are proposed for release have optimum beaver habitat. Beavers will disperse, but where habitat is suitable and food plentiful movement is usually triggered through population growth or territorial behaviour so movement is unlikely in the short to medium term. This is supported by modelling work undertaken by NatureScot.
- 4) The Park Authority is the applicant and has a beaver team in place. The Park Authority will respond quickly if contacted by a farmer to ascertain whether there are impacts arising from beavers and will support landowners to access and go through the mitigation hierarchy for measures such as tree protection and dam removal. This



Cairngorms
National Park Authority

Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a'
Mhonaidh Ruaidh

14 The Square
Granttown on Spey
Scotland, PH26 3HG

☎ +44 (0) 1479 873 535
✉ enquiries@cairngorms.co.uk
🌐 cairngorms.co.uk

support will involve applying for a licence on behalf of the landowner should one be required. You are not alone in this; the Park Authority is here to help.

- 5) The Park Authority as the applicant will identify highly sensitive areas of productive agricultural land in the Spey catchment within the National Park, notably where there are flood banks less than 20 metres from a watercourse. If there are signs of beaver prospecting and establishing a territory in these areas, the Park Authority will work with the land manager to thoroughly assess the likelihood of potential damage to the flood bank. Where there is a predicted high risk and high probability of impacts, the Park Authority will work with the landowner and apply for a translocation license as per the mitigation hierarchy and licencing tests. The Park Authority will undertake an initial survey of the flood banks to provide a baseline of flood bank location and condition and periodic surveys thereafter. When beaver are detected in areas with potentially vulnerable flood banks we will upscale monitoring enabling us to react quickly.
- 6) The Park Authority as the applicant has allocated budgets to provide additionality to the national scheme, to enable mitigation to happen quickly and to focus on issues of relevance in the National Park. On the issue of flood banks in the National Park the Park Authority as the applicant will provide grant assistance for any breach in the flood banks in the National Park proven to be caused by beaver burrowing where the flood bank was shown previously to be in good condition (as per surveys mentioned above). This specific offer of grant assistance to remediation of damaged flood bank will be in place until March 2026 when future agriculture payments systems are changed nationally. The Park Authority will be seeking to ensure the future agri-environment schemes provide appropriate support for farmers and the role they play in managing protected species and natural flood management.

Beavers will mean change in the National Park and change is a constant when we look at the impacts of climate with increased flooding and droughts. The Park Authority wants to work closely with farmers so that nature and people thrive in the National Park. To that end the Park Authority will be setting up a Farmers Forum with the first meeting in January 2024 so that we can have regular dialogue on the key issues that face farming in the National Park.

Yours sincerely



Grant Moir
Chief Executive Officer



Cairngorms
National Park Authority

Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a'
Mhonaidh Ruaidh

14 The Square
Granttown on Spey
Scotland, PH26 3HG

+44 (0) 1479 873 535
enquiries@cairngorms.co.uk
cairngorms.co.uk