



THE MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL OF SCOTLAND

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Management Proposals for Creag Meagaidh NNR 2009- 2015

Mountaineering Council of Scotland Response

The Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCoFS) is recognised by the Scottish Government as the representative body for hill walkers, climbers and ski-tourers. We have 10,000 members, and represent the interests of all 400,000 mountaineers.

2 Management of the Heritage

The MCoFS greatly welcomes the prominence given to wild land and landscape. We would like to reiterate that this needs to be at the forefront of all decision-making at Creag Meagaidh.

The Moorland Zone (p9)

Management and monitoring proposals

The last sentence states: "In future we must ensure the woodland zone does not encroach onto the important communities in the moorland zone." The MCoFS believes that management should not be prescriptive about these 2 zones. Serious consideration should be given to allowing the dynamism of natural processes to shape future vegetation composition of, and between, the woodland and moorland zones. The effects of climate change may be in the process of changing the balance between these zones, and preservation of a boundary between the two may not reflect the developing conditions.

Woodland Zone (p10-11)

Management and monitoring proposals

The MCoFS strongly supports continued deer management to achieve an increase in the area of native woodland through natural regeneration (objective 3) without fencing. Fences present problems for access and landscape, hence should be avoided unless absolutely necessary.

3 Management for People

Managing for Visitors – Facilities (p18)

The MCoFS welcomes the consideration of landscape and wild land in the context of visitor facilities, as elsewhere, and the commitment "to retain 'Wild Land' by minimising the infrastructure and facilities in the area beyond Aberarder Farmhouse, to reduce the impact on landscape and retain the natural feel of this area" (p18, para. 4). However, we would suggest strengthening the

commitment to “minimise.” Unless the paths are repairing erosion beyond the farmhouse, we would suggest that provision of facilities beyond this point is not desirable due to the impact on the landscape and wild land character. Any new interpretation and facilities should be restricted to the existing Aberarder car park, Farmhouse, new low level woodland walk and beside A86.

Path into Coire Ardair

The MCofS is disappointed that the path work is so uniform and the culverts are piped. The use of pipes for culverts is intrusive and unacceptable in upland/mountainous sites (they are clearly visible along the Coire Ardair path and even the large burn is piped and the blue lining is very obvious). There has been a significant loss of character and variation along this walk which had an adverse impact upon the landscape. We note that it appears to be used by an ATV, which may have maintenance implications, and may set a bad precedent as we believe the work was funded as a path. The MCofS considers that the path should not be promoted as “Best Practice“, or be included in future Demonstrations (Objective 6):

The Local Community

In addition to the stake that the local community has in their neighbouring NNR, the hill walking and climbing community also has a similarly high stake. Although not a geographically-specific community, Creag Meagaidh is an important site. Objective 8 should include a commitment to actively engage with the hill walking and mountaineering community, or another objective written that aims to engage that audience. Page 17 states that “an estimated 8,000 people visit each year, with some 70% believed to visit for hill-walking, and mountaineering/ice climbing being popular with nearly 20% of visitors.” There are no equivalent statistics for visitors from the local community, but 5,600 visits per year is a large show of commitment by the mountaineering community.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely

Hebe Carus
Access & Conservation Officer