



THE MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL OF SCOTLAND

The Old Granary
West Mill Street
Perth PH1 5QP
01738 493942
(messages only)
hebe@mcofs.org.uk
www.mcofs.org.uk

24/8/10

lisa.mackenzie2@highland.gov.uk

Dear Ms Mackenzie

10/03303/FUL - Construct and convert several buildings and structures to house European elk, European bison and European wildcat, within three perimeter fences (to include a barn, a shed and two handling yards)

Please accept these comments from the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCoFS). The MCoFS is the representative body for hill walkers, climbers and ski tourers, and is the only national representative body of the sport of mountaineering in Scotland. We have 10,500 members, and are recognised by the Scottish Government as representing the interests of all mountaineers. Mountaineers contribute approximately £150 million to Scotland's rural economy each year and are attracted to Scotland where there are mountains, crags or a relatively wild experience. The MCoFS supports rural economic activity that is sensitive to the landscape, biodiversity and wild land qualities.

The MCoFS welcomes the difference in the plans at Alladale from those appearing in the media. The MCoFS supports conservation of true wildness (without recent man-made structures such as fences, buildings, tracks etc). We also support complementary conservation of species and education, including about biodiversity and landscape.

The three enclosures in this planning application are small enough and appropriately enough located not to have significant extra impact on the landscape alone. Although not part of the planning application, consideration should be given to the context, including the imminent application for a woodland creation scheme in the same area. These two plans cannot be treated in isolation. It is stated in the Introduction document to this planning application that certain fences are to be removed. We wholeheartedly welcome this, however this planning application will introduce more fences into this relatively wild area. These would be additional to any planned for the woodland creation scheme. An overall increase in fencing would not be desirable and would have a significant impact upon the wildness of the area.

The MCoFS welcomes the fact that none of the three enclosures in the planning application have hill walking access implications. The fences that are to remain of the current 173 ha enclosure (as stated in the Introduction document) must have sufficient access points for a choice of route to ascend or descend the ridge from wherever they are approached. This would require opening of the gates and several other crossing points at likely locations. Any use of areas outside the three enclosures of this planning application for animals under the current Dangerous Wild Animals licence and any future Zoo Licence would have significant negative impact on public access. For this reason nothing should be consented under this planning application that would create a situation where this would be more likely to occur in the future.

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

Yours sincerely

Hebe Carus (Ms)
Access & Conservation Officer