



MBA and MCoFS Joint News Release

26th August 2011

For immediate release

Emergency Shelter Rebuilt in the Cairngorms

The Fords of Avon Refuge, located in a remote part of the Cairngorms National Park, has provided emergency shelter for hill walkers and climbers for over forty years. This coming weekend, the Refuge will be rebuilt by volunteers from the Mountain Bothies Association in conjunction with support from RSPB Scotland (who own the land on which the refuge is situated), the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCoFS) and the National Outdoor Centre Glenmore Lodge.

Heather Morning, the Mountain Safety Advisor with the MCoFS has been the force behind this initiative. She says "Fords of Avon is very much part of our mountaineering cultural heritage and provides emergency shelter at a key location in the remote Cairngorms Mountains. The Refuge is sited within metres of a major river crossing which can be impassable in spate conditions. I believe the Refuge has saved many lives over the years, but sadly over the last decade it has fallen into disrepair and has long been overdue for a refurbishment to make it functional again."

The Refuge is being rebuilt on a 'like-for-like' basis with full support from the Cairngorms National Park Authority. Importantly, the new Refuge will be looked after by the Mountain Bothies Association (MBA) to ensure it stays in good condition for future hill walkers and climbers to access shelter.

John Arnott, Chairman of the Mountain Bothies Association said "The MBA is delighted to be playing a leading role in the rebuild and future maintenance of this vital emergency shelter. It is important to emphasise, however, that we will not be installing facilities such as a stove, sleeping platform, etc. that we provide in many of the 100 or so other bothies that we maintain. Rather, we will look after the fabric of the building so that it can continue to provide the function of an extremely basic shelter providing emergency accommodation to those requiring urgent protection from the elements."

Bob Kinnaird, Principal of The National Outdoor Training Centre, Glenmore Lodge said; "The location of this shelter makes it an important safety facility that has been sadly neglected over the years and we would like to acknowledge that this important project has only been made possible through the initiative of the MCoFS and the active collaboration of various stakeholders with diverse interests."

Ian Perks from RSPB Scotland says “The hut is in a very remote place that is difficult to reach and can be a life saver. It has been great to work with the MBA and the MCofS to refurbish such an important mountain building. It should be stressed, however, the hut is not a bothy and is only suitable for refuge in an emergency. Hopefully the hut will be there providing safe refuge for future generations.”

Further details/photos can be obtained from Heather Morning, Mountain Safety Advisor with The Mountaineering Council of Scotland. Heather can be contacted on: msa_mcofs@hotmail.co.uk and 01479 861 241.

For information about the MBA please contact the MBA Publicity Officer, Neil Stewart, on 0141 578 6553 or 07717 464 324 or look at www.mountainbothies.org.uk. The MBA Chairman, John Arnott, will be pleased to provide further information about the MBA involvement at Fords of Avon and can be contacted on 01592 840 607.

Ends

Notes for Editors:

The Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCofS) acts to represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering.

MCofS is a membership organisation with 11,000 members representing hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers, funded through a combination of membership subscriptions; non-governmental grants; and investment from sportscotland, which supports public initiatives and services in mountain safety, mountain weather information services, mountain leader training and the development and promotion of mountaineering activities. MCofS is a not for profit company limited by guarantee and incorporated in Scotland. Company number SC322717.