



# THE MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL OF SCOTLAND

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Dear Sir / Madam

## **Glen Lyon Hydro Schemes- 11/00061, 11/00062, 11/00063, and 11/00064/FLL**

The MCoS main interests in planning applications, such as this hydro scheme are the potential impacts on recreation access, visual amenity and landscape. The Loch Lyon area is a very popular location for mountaineers, including the hills that immediately surround the proposed development.

### **Allt Lairig nan Lunn**

This part of the scheme is of least concern in terms of mountaineering interest due to the existing road close by on the east bank of the river and the close proximity of the Lubreoch dam. We have some concern about the unavoidable impacts on the Annex 1 habitats, but do not object to this part of the scheme.

### **Allt Cailliche**

This part of the scheme, along with the Allt Meurain development, is of significant concern due to the impact on the landscape, visual amenity and wildness quality. The NSA boundary is <2km on the ridge above the development to the north. This is currently a glen untouched by recent human artefacts of any kind. The dammed Loch Lyon and associated artefacts are obscured by the topography and the steep craggy hillsides surrounding the development are rugged and have a high wildness quality. In this wild glen the construction of a powerhouse and kilometres of new track would have a significantly detrimental impact on the high quality of this secluded glen. The MCoS therefore does not agree with the ES assessment that, "development of the proposed Allt Cailliche hydro scheme is unlikely to significantly affect the local landscape character, and the landscape could accommodate the proposed development." Section 128 of the current Scottish Planning Policy states as follows:

"The most sensitive landscapes may have little or no capacity to accept new development. Areas of wild land character in some of Scotland's remoter upland, mountain and coastal areas are very sensitive to any form of development or intrusive human activity and planning authorities should safeguard the character of these areas in the development plan."

Neither the current Structure Plan nor the Highland Area Local Plan make mention of wildness, however wildness must still be considered as a material consideration. Note the rough and ready map of SNHs Search Areas of Wild Land is not designed as a pseudo-designation outwith which wildness does not need considered, and should not be used for this as shortcut to considering wildness.

## **Allt Meurain**

This development has the same issues as the Allt Cailliche as stated above. Both these developments will have a significant detrimental effect on the local landscape character, and hence we object to these schemes. If the Council is minded to grant the developments, this should be made with a condition of “greening” the tracks after the construction phase to reduce the impact. This measure is to be implemented in the Glen Falloch schemes nearby where the width and surface are treated such that the track is less impacting on the landscape. We do not consider this condition is sufficient to remove the MCofS objection, but offers some level of mitigation.

## **Glen Tullich**

The ES recognises that, “the wide U-shaped valley with Loch Lyon located at the bottom creates a sense of exposure and remoteness within the surrounding landscape.” These are strong constituent factors in wildness quality which will be significantly impacted upon by the introduction of the access track.

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

Yours sincerely

Hebe Carus (Ms)  
Access & Conservation Officer