



THE MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL OF SCOTLAND

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5/5/11

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Dear Ms Hackett

Storr Woodland Recreational Improvements

The Mountaineering Council of Scotland's interests in these plans are primarily based on access availability and quality of this and the landscape.

Paths Option 1 - All abilities route

We do not intend to make comment regarding the all abilities path options as all options are within the intended re-planting area and we do not have the expertise to assess demand for such facilities.

Paths Option 2 – Wider circular route

As 2.1 is located within the re-plant area, and therefore in the medium and long term there will be no landscape impacts, we are neutral on this option.

We have concerns about the potential impact of option 2.2 as we consider the priority for funds for path works should be concentrated on routes with proven demand, as evidenced by linear erosion along desire lines or need for repair of existing paths. Additionally 2.2 is at a reasonably high altitude and therefore would have a landscape impact which we consider should be avoided. The discussion document is correct in stating that there would be considerable expense in creating such a route as well as its maintenance. These resources if source-able would be better allocated to improving non-landscape impacting access for all abilities and repairing erosion along existing desire lines.

Paths Option 3 – Upgrade of existing path

We consider it essential that all path works outwith the planting area must be of an 'upland character' as suggested by the discussion document. There are machine techniques used by a few contractors that show this character is not necessarily dependent upon hand working, but contractors with this sensitivity are few, and any selection of contractors should be based on examples of previous work. An example is the machine work on the Windy Ridge path on Cairngorm Mountain Ltd ground. Equally very bad examples of upland machine work also exist such as the Halfway Lochan branch path on Ben Nevis. The 'upland character' path requirement should not just be restricted to drainage features as suggested by the discussion document, but must be the complete character of the path including alignment, path surface, landscaping, variable width as well as drainage.

Paths Option 4 – Car parks linkage

Any linkage paths should be routed as closely as possible to existing developments such as the road and lay-by to minimise landscape impact.

Interpretation and information

The option of one main information point is established to minimise proliferation of signage clutter.

Toilets

The location of the closest public facilities should be assessed and the potential implications of providing all abilities paths that may attract a new group of access users. Also needing assessed is the potential implications of the felling on toileting behaviour as this will remove the relative privacy in a plantation. This may impact on behaviour patterns.

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

Yours sincerely

Hebe Carus (Ms)
Access & Conservation Officer