

Environmental damage and the evidence for the proposed camping byelaws

Description

The LLTNPA used claims about damage to trees by rogue campers as part of their justification for the camping byelaws, their main evidence being a few photos. Previous posts on Parkswatch have criticised these claims, pointing out most of the woodland in the area owes its survival to coppicing and far more damage is done by operations such as clearing of roadside verges. I did not however have any photos to illustrate roadside tree clearance.

This afternoon I drove up the A82 to Inveruglas to go for a run over Ben Vorlich and Ben Vane. Shortly after the Arden roundabout it was evident that the Council had been clearing the roadside verges and had done so all the way to Inveruglas. I stopped in a couple of places and on one short stretch I counted at least ten fresh tree stumps. Along this stretch of road, 28km approximately, hundreds of trees have been chopped down – I suspect the Council or its contractors have destroyed more trees in a week or so than all the rogue campers in the Park have over a number of years

Most of the woodlands along this section of the A82 are included in the Ancient Woodland Inventory which the Park included in its map of Designated Nature Conservation Areas even though AWI are not protected areas as such. This gave the misleading impression that campers were damaging protected areas. In fact, as the photos illustrate, far more damage is done by Council. The problem basically is that the Park is so focussed on getting rid of campers it ceased a long time ago to try and put its evidence into perspective.



The machine cleared road verges are obvious all the way along the A82



Some pruning has been done carefully

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Other trees have been
butchered



Environmental damage or inadvertent
coppicing?



Between Tarbert and Inveruglas some
“ancient” trees had been felled

Its not necessary to oppose roadside verge management – although many people will wonder why the former tree in the last photo was felled – to see the total hypocrisy of the LLTNPA. In fact, what is really sad is this an opportunity missed. The Council or its contractors has cleared most of the timber but left the litter. An imaginative Park would have got the Council or its contractors to clear the litter but leave the wood for campers to use – it might have even let a local person collect the wood and sell it to campers, thus creating a new local business (some landowners in the Trossachs have successfully done this). Unfortunately all the evidence suggests is the Park is not interested in finding alternative solutions to any of the problems it has associated with people camping.

The Park, also unfortunately, appears little interested in demonstrating best conservation practice. While the quality of the woodland felling along the A82 appears highly variable, I cannot understand why the grass verge all along this section of road has been mown. The Spring flowers are just coming out and in other places, Councils deliberately delay mowing of verges to help wildflowers. One would have hoped such sort of best practice would be standard in our National Park. This would save money that could then be used to pick up some of the litter.



Recently mown grass verge

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. Camping bye laws
2. conservation
3. natural environment

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