

LINK hill tracks campaign by George Allan

Description



Hill Track Glen Ey, Mar Estate 1991, now in Cairngorms National Park
Watson/NEMT

Photo Credit Adam

Poorly constructed and often illegal hill tracks have visually blighted many parts of the Highlands over the past decades. Recent changes in legislation have brought some measure of control to these but ongoing vigilance is needed. Although this is a Scotland wide issue, it is highly relevant to the National Parks.

Scottish Environment LINK hill tracks campaign is keen for people to continue to submit photos and information about new tracks. Details of what is need and how to submit material is at-
<http://www.scotlink.org/work-areas/link-hill-tracks-campaign/>



Photo of track Beinn a'Chait, Atholl, Cairngorms NP submitted June 2016 Photo Credit Jane Meek/ LINK

Legislation, in force for over a year, requires developers considering constructing tracks for agriculture or forestry purposes to notify the relevant planning authorities (Prior Notification procedures). Before the legislation, developers could construct such tracks without notifying anyone. LINK still considers that full planning consent should be required for all hill tracks but that the new system does allow a measure of democratic accountability and will lead to better constructed tracks.



Poorly constructed hill track, Lynwilg, Cairngorms National Park Photo Credit Helen Todd

LINK volunteers have been monitoring all new planning applications for such tracks over the past year and comments have been made to the planning authorities in a number of cases. The following are the key issues which have emerged:

- few problems have been identified regarding forestry tracks.
- it is likely that some tracks claimed to be for agriculture continue to be primarily for sporting purposes with agricultural activity being limited to sheep being put on the hill as tick mops. Proving this is problematic and it is an issue which would exist even if full planning consent were required.
- the new arrangements mean that planning authorities can now try to ensure that tracks are built to a good standard and follow the best line on the hill.
- the new system allows third parties to comment.

LINK is continuing to monitor, hence the need for people to provide more information/photos.

LINK is also concerned that reinstatement/remedial work on the tracks created to facilitate the

construction of small scale hydro projects is not being carried out well in some instances and it intends to keep an eye on the situation regarding these too.



Hydro track, Glen Falloch, Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park – can such destruction ever be successfully?
Photo Credit Isla Kempe

Category

1. Cairngorms
2. Loch Lomond and Trossachs
3. National Parks

Tags

1. hill tracks
2. planning

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