

Behind the scenes – the HIE Natural Retreats farce

## **Description**

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On 11th October Natural Retreats posted this photo on the behind the scenes section of the Cairngorm Mountain blog. The caption above it read:

*The West Wall Poma project is progressing well, with the steel work installation scheduled to commence on Monday 17th of October. The picture below shows a 20 tonne excavator which has*

*been instrumental in most of the excavations, ground works and lifting and positioning equipment. In this image you can see the driver creating a path of pads for travelling over the route to Tower 16.*

Has good practice now arrived at Cairngorm? Its too early to say, but I suspect excavator creating its own board walk was done for the cameras judging by the evidence from the Ptarmigan webcam just a few days earlier ([see here](#)). You only have to scroll down to the previous post, dated 7th September, to see how Natural Retreats operates for most of the time.



The caption to this read “Below you can see a digger starting work on the initial trench that that (sic) cable will go into. This ground will be fully reinstated once the entire cable is laid.”

What you can see clearly in the photo is how use by vehicles (which are not supposed to drive here), including the digger, have eroded the ground vegetation and created tracks prior to the cable trench being dug. The ground could never be fully reinstated as Natural Retreats as claimed in their photo caption because their vehicles had already destroyed much of it.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise, are not just the landowners, they are funding much of this farce. Dave Morris had a letter in the Herald on Friday ([see here](#)) about HIE which included this paragraph on HIE’s ownership of Cairngorm:

*In 1971 a disastrous decision by the UK Government led to the transfer of nearly 1,500 hectares of the upper slopes of Glenmore National Forest Park from Forestry Commission ownership to Highlands and Islands Development Board, the HIE predecessor body. Today the First Minister can see the result of so-called stewardship of this iconic tract of land by HIDB/HIE – abandoned ski tows and chairlifts, derelict and decaying buildings, collapsed and rotting snow fences and zero possibility that her public agency knows how to plan for the future. The economic heart of our largest national park continues its downhill spiral. Ms Sturgeon needs only a brief exposure to HIE’s incompetence in mountain land management to realise this land must be returned to the Forestry Commission (FC) as soon as possible. We need integrated planning and operations, from the lowest to the highest slopes of Cairn Gorm, by the public body which has been managing land in the Cairngorms since 1923; even better if the FC can also establish a community development trust to involve local and national stakeholders in its management of the whole Forest Park.*

With the Government currently reviewing the role of HIE it could, if it had the political will, put a stop to the destruction at Cairngorm in a twinkling as Natural Retreats have shown they won’t do anything without public funding.

## Category

1. Cairngorms

## Tags

1. conservation
2. HIE
3. natural retreats
4. restoration

5. Scottish Government

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