

The destruction caused by the Beaully Denny in the Cairngorm National Park

Description



This photo is of same section of restoration work of Beaully Denny line as was featured in Park champions from below

The purpose of Parkswatch is to try and ensure that our National Parks live up to the aspirations that led to their creation. The focus is on what is going wrong, trying to understand why this is happening and then suggesting what needs to happen. In trying to do this, I and other contributors will not always get things right and being an open and critical forum are committed to correcting errors where they occur.

I am grateful to the person who, in response to the post on [Park Champions](#), has pointed out to me that the Cairngorms National Park Authority were not the planning authority in this case and that the

decision was taken by the Scottish Government. I have also been informed that in relation to extremely poor restoration work, the CNPA had a number of site meetings with the Developer to express its concerns but, as its not the planning authority in this case, it cannot require the Developer to put the damage right. In other words its the Scottish Government that needs to be held to account for this. I am pretty certain this is right and have contacted the Government to try and find out what they have done or are planning to ensure the terrible destruction along the Drumochter is restored properly.



Besides their objection to the Beaulieu Denny powerline going through the Drumochter, which was overruled by the Government Reporter, the CNPA has used its powers to reject subsequent planning applications by the Drumochter and Ben Alder estates to retain the tracks that were installed to construct the powerline ([see here for Drumochter committee report](#)). Its worth quoting from that report says:

11. In summary, in relation to this part of requirements were that:-
- Temporary tracks would be designed to blend into the landscape, wherever possible, for both the visual and avoiding disturbance of natural features.
 - Track widths would be kept to the minimum required for operational use of the track.
 - Reinstatement works to any disturbed areas would be undertaken to ensure that all tracks blend into the surrounding landscape.
 - Restoration of the area would be undertaken once the track is removed, to ensure the landscape is returned to its pre-works condition.

In other words, there was supposed to be restoration “to ensure the landscape is returned to its pre-works condition”. The photos show that this clearly has not happened.



Indeed while planning permission may have been rejected by the CNPA to make tracks permanent, it appears that tracks are able to create de facto tracks by driving their vehicles along the area of “restored” ground as in the photo above.

Re-reading my comment in “Park Champions” I think it was still partially valid. I accept that it appears the Scottish Government should be taking a lead on ensuring the ground that was destroyed in the construction of the Beaully Denny is properly restored (and it would have been good to have mentioned this), but there is still a question of whether the CNPA is happy with the quality of the work:

The photo above is to illustrate the excellent question to Grant Moir by Mark Stephen who observed that in travelling up the A9 corridor on entering the Cairngorms National Park you “are hit” with pylons and asked whether this gave the wrong message? While Grant explained the CNPA had adopted a policy of no large wind turbines in the National Park, and that national priorities had overridden the objections of the CNPA to the Beaully Denny powerlines, he said

nothing about whether the CNPA was happy with the quality of the work.

The question this case raises is whether the CNPA should have more powers so the Government cannot simply allow breach of planning conditions to be ignored. This is very relevant to the Drumochter and other parts of the Cairngorms National Park where the project to dual the A9 could have significant impacts on landscape and indeed access (a subject to which I will return). The CNPA has been trying to influence that process and its vitally important that the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland ensure that the final plans are the best possible for the National Park. The Beaulieu Denny may have been in the national interest, but the way its been finished has certainly not been according to the standards we should expect in a National Park.

Category

1. Cairngorms

Tags

1. CNPA
2. planning
3. Scottish Government

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