

Three Lochs Forest Drive Zone 'D' – No Camping Pitches!

Description

First impressions count for a lot – I think “utter contempt” would describe what I thought on first viewing this site. That’s the utter contempt shown to visitors by the LLTNPA. They have the gall to suggest that this constitutes a replacement camping place to those now banned to visitors on our loch shores. Quite frankly it’s preposterous to suggest any visitor would consider camping in Zone D as a valuable life experience in natural surroundings. It has all the charm of a landfill site.

Plus points: parking for 2 cars. Minus points: everything else!



Zone D represents everything we despise in the forestry industry

Utter devastation is wrought on the landscape when forests are clear-felled, leaving a wasteland of

fallen branches and cutoff tree trunks. Although the clear-fell in Zone D did not happen yesterday it should serve as a reminder that Forest Drive is an active working forest and forest operations are continuing at many other camping zones in the area rendering some of them unusable.



On viewing a Satellite Image I expected a forest location – nothing prepared me for the vista in the photo above. The location map is not fitted in the correct position (the map is not drawn correctly) and the two posts on the other side of the river which would normally demarcate the zone limits, are side by side, outside the permit zone and on the wrong side of the stream. It would seem even those laying out this zone could not fathom where the zone begins or ends.

Just Commit a criminal offence if you can't find a camping spot!

It's so bad that the LLTNPA "Get a Permit" website even encourages visitors to commit a criminal offence by camping outside the permit zone. They seem to be well aware there are no viable camping pitches within the zone.

Grade & terrain:

Moderate. Access is directly off the forest track. There is some space available on the opposite side of the burn but there is no formal crossing point.

The fact that other side of the burn is outside the permitted area is however somewhat academic as its hard to imagine anyone would want to camp there and secondly, felled forests do not hold much hope for finding camping pitches, as well as which they are quite hazardous areas to enter. I can confirm there are no camping spots in the immediate vicinity of the two marker poles on the south of the river as after stumbling on them I searched the area before realising they were positioned in the wrong place.



The zone map is somewhat confusing as it shows what

appears to a fork in Forest Drive with a large car parking area right on the junction. At first glance there would appear to be a path running around the southern perimeter of the zone. On comparing the map with the terrain it is a stream not a path. The main camping area marked with the tent symbol looks like an open grass area bounded by the stream. However the presence of zone markers in the wrong location on the other side of the stream makes initial orientation impossible until you can accept the fact they're wrong. . This isn't acceptable, the zone boundary only became clear when the path of the river was traced out on foot and even then I doubted I was in the right location because of the unsuitability of the location as a camping zone and lack of any obvious pitches. The trees shown in the permit zone map and the area beyond are fictional as the entire area has been harvested.

More phantom camping provision, 2 pitches claimed for this site?

The zone is another fantasy, there is no choice of camping pitches as there are no pitches.



The only spot in the entire zone in which you could fit a tent.



It's on rough grasses growing over previously felled wood and not suitable.



Looking from the far end of the zone towards the zone map post (top right)

Zone D is yet another example of phantom camping provision from the LLTNPA and supposedly provides 2 camping pitches to replace those on the areas of our loch shores where campers are now banned. This area has zero amenity. There is no good reason to be here, let alone camp, it has no redeeming features and the presence of the stream holds only false promise. It is a thoroughly unrewarding location.

Camping on the side of Forest Drive is not desirable

The drive-by location highlights another issue. Zone D is at the bottom of a long downhill section of Forest Drive where would-be boy racers just can't help themselves trying to get close to 50 mph, despite the 10 mph limit, thus causing a dust storm, not conducive to sitting by a tent good.

The LLTNPA's abject failure to fulfill their promises

Anyone being duped into paying for this site or other similar permit areas should seek compensation from the LLTNPA. Not just a return of the the permit fee but compensation for the loss of a weekend, the travel expenses and any other ancillary costs incurred getting to this ridiculous camping zone. The National Park is quite clearly misrepresenting the nature of this site and a visit to the small claims court should surely see compensation awarded despite their denial of liability in their terms and conditions ([See Permit Terms and Conditions here](#)).

Meantime, perhaps the LLTNPA could explain publicly just how many viable camping places are actually available? Its promise to the Minister to deliver 300 “new” camping places by the 1st March was clearly never met if you take account of all the unusable permit areas and the non-functioning Loch Chon campsite.

Category

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