

Glen Falloch hydro penstock makeover starts

Description

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A year after Parkswatch first started to cover the hydro schemes in Glen Falloch

and highlighted the failure of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority to follow its own best practice guidance ([see here](#)) that penstock and other materials should wherever possible be in colours that blend into the natural environment, the penstock above the A82 has been painted. A belated well done to the planners!

The improvement though, to my mind highlights the light concrete which holds the penstock in place and will take years to weather. Why can't the LLTNPA also get Falloch Estates to face the concrete with natural materials as per its own Guidance?

I had asked the LLTNPA what is was going to do about the penstock last year and received this non-committal answer which failed even to admit that anything had gone wrong:

“ b) whether the LLTNPA has any plans to ensure that all the other exposed parts of the Glen Falloch schemes are painted an appropriate colour as per Guidance Practice on Renewables.”

The Park Authority's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Renewable Energy projects takes into account when assessing a range of factors, including the visual impact of a hydro scheme on the landscape. As explained above, the Glen Falloch schemes are not complete and officers continue to monitor all aspects of these schemes, in consultation with the Forestry, Woodlands, Ecology and Landscape Advisers.

It's good therefore the LLTNPA has implicitly recognised that blue penstock are not good enough but it has a long way to go in Glen Falloch if all the penstock are to be painted. While the Eas Eonan hydro pipe is buried below this penstock, it then emerges to cross the River Falloch and the penstock there is still bright blue. Not visible from the A82 but highly visible from the West Highland Way.



Penstock crossing Falloch between two metal girders – photo taken from just below A82



I also noticed driving up the A82 that the blue penstock crossing the Alt Chuilinn

(and part of that scheme) is still bright Lomond blue – the pipe (photo left) should have been placed underneath the bridge but again the LLTNPA ignored its own guidance. I think its fair to say therefore that the makeover of the penstock has only just started. That it has taken a year to get this far demonstrates a lack of will but the basic problem is the LLTNPA has allowed the Glen Falloch schemes to be developed with inadequate specifications in place (blue penstock that needed painting should have never been allowed) and then has not been properly monitored.

There is a real risk the Park will run out of time to ensure the schemes meet its own Guidance – it has three years to ensure the planning conditions are met – as has happened with the award winning Allt Fionn scheme (which I visited on Friday and will cover in future post).

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. landscape
2. LLTNPA
3. planning
4. renewables

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