

The impact of hydro – the Eagle Falls no longer

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Returning from a

great day on the hill yesterday, I stopped at Inverarnan at the head of Loch Lomond to have a look at the Eagle Falls. I wanted to check how much ice had formed. While on past experience the temperatures we have had over the last ten days would not have been cold enough to freeze the falls, I was interested in the impact of the Ben Glas hydro scheme. This siphons off water from above the

falls and I wondered if the reduced flow of water might have aided ice formation.

In fact, as you can see from the photo above, the hydro scheme has had the opposite effect. The volume of water is so small (you can see what is left of the Eagle Falls running down the side of the left hand gash) that there is nothing to splash on the rocks aiding ice formation.



Eagle Falls January 2010. While the volume of water used to reduce in a hard freeze, it was still enough to splash over all the rocks in the great gash in the hillside aiding ice formation.

One wonders, with the hydro scheme, whether people will ever again be able to savour the experience of the frozen waterfall. This is not just about ice climbers and outdoor activities, its about scenery and landscape and people coming to the National Park to experience what was a great spectacle.

While generally I believe hydro schemes are compatible with National Parks, albeit in far too many cases poor design and construction has resulted in unnecessary adverse landscape impacts, Ben Glas provides a good example of a scheme that should never have been built. The Eagle Falls are no longer worthy of that name, the wild area above no longer feels wild due to the intakes, track and a bridge ([see here](#)), while the track up from Glen Falloch is far too steep and forms a great scar up the hillside.

The Ben Glas hydro therefore should be a prime candidate for removal once the construction debt has been paid off. I would like to see the LLTNPA admitting a mistake has been made at the Eagle Falls and committing to redress this in the longer term, say in 20 years time.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. landscape
2. LLTNPA
3. renewables

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