

Hitting the headlines again – the beech trees on Inchtavannach Island, Loch Lomond

Description

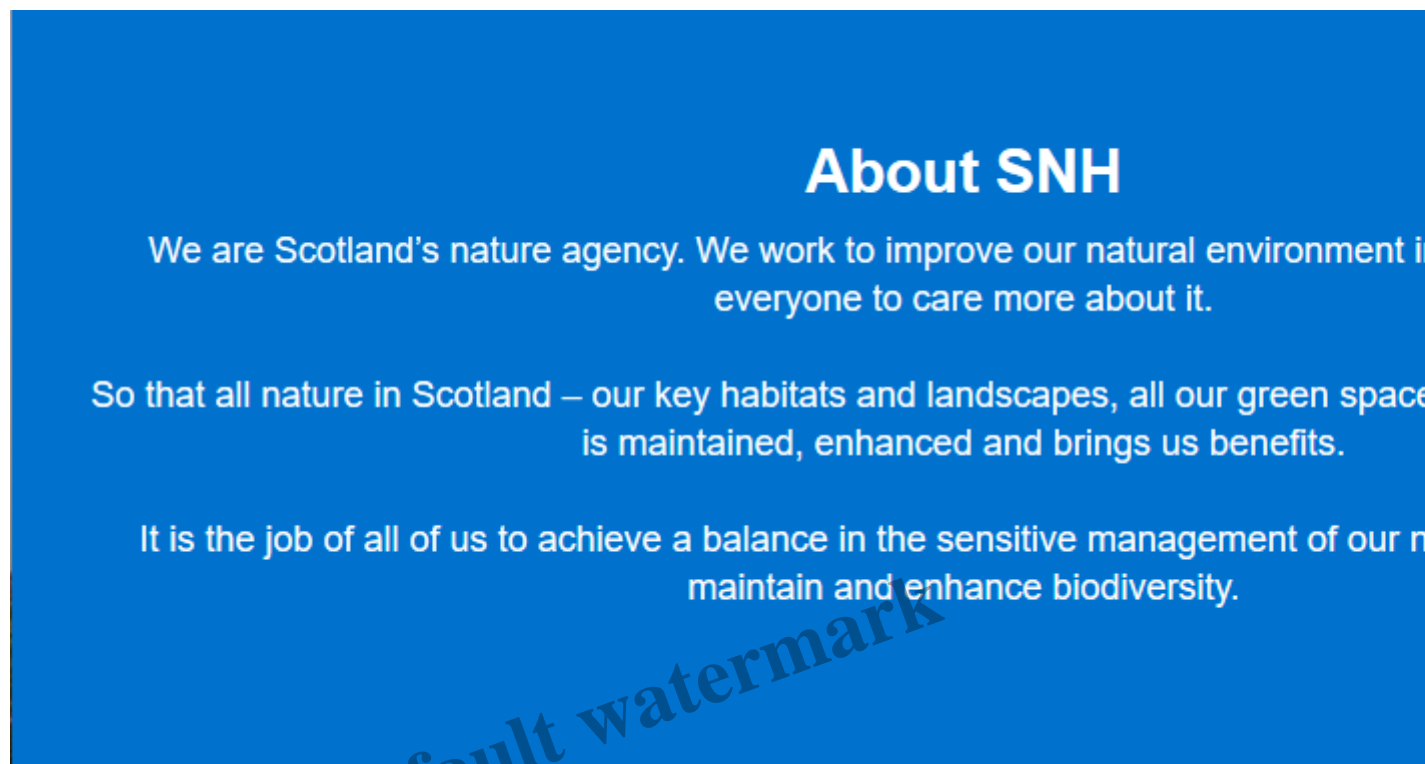


The poisoned beech trees – but what is the way forward? Photo credit – Mary Jack

Back in August 2017 ([see here](#)) I queried the felling of some beech trees and poisoning of others on the Island of Inchtavannach on Loch Lomond.

That article was based on a study/paper claiming that the beech trees were indigenous to the area and not non-native as claimed by Scottish National Heritage. That aside, the fact remains that around 300 trees were deliberately killed.

So much for biodiversity and the contribution trees make in reducing our carbon footprint and Climate Change! This from a Scottish Government quango of 'specialists' presumed to be 'experts' in their field.



Extract from SNH website

The outcome of the ensuing friction between Luss Estates and Scottish National Heritage (SNH) appears to have come to a closure last week. The BBC contacted parkswatchscotland to use my photos as per my original article as the one sent to them by SNH appeared to show that there had been very little damage! Incidentally, Luss Estates have used one of my photos on their web page without credit or my permission ([see here](#)).

The BBC News article ([see here](#)) stated:

“SNH apologises for killing 300 beech trees on Inchtavannach Island

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has apologised for killing more than 300 mature beech trees on an island in Loch Lomond.

SNH said it should have consulted Inchtavannach Island's owners before [poisoning the beech trees](#) with a chemical injection.

SNH had agreed a “selective felling” of non-native trees on the island in 2013, but did not tell Luss Estates about the change of plan.

*... It (SNH) will pay to remove the fallen trees”. **NOTE** the use of ‘fallen’.*

“Luss Estates previously said the island was left looking like a “wasteland” and accused SNH of creating a “major eyesore in one of Scotland’s foremost beauty spots”.

The two parties have now reached an agreement in the long-running dispute.....”

It is not clear from the above whether or not the dispute ever went to a Court of Law as was proposed at the time ([see here](#))

“Luss Estates contends that SNH entered into an agreement with the estate and the tenant of the island in 2013 to remove rhododendron, beech saplings and also gradually fell mature beech trees, which SNH at that time considered ‘non-native’, over a five-year period.”

NOTE:- which SNH at that time considered ‘non-native’. So are SNH now in agreement that the trees are/were indeed native and should never have been killed by whatever means at all??

The Luss Estates website also carries the story, 29 Nov, and refers to an “unreserved apology” ([see here](#)):

Scottish Natural Heritage and Luss Estates reach agreement over poisoning of 300 beech trees at Loch Lomond beauty spot

SCOTTISH Natural Heritage and Luss Estates have today reached an agreement following the conclusion of a dispute on the killing of over 300 mature beech trees on the island of Inchtavannach by chemical injection.

.... David MacLennan, SNH Area Manager for Argyll and the Outer Hebrides said:

.... The speed, scale, and visual impact of the operation was much greater than anticipated....” [

Comment: really??]

“.... “There remains a need to undertake works to remove fallen timber from agreed areas – and we have offered to do this through a new agreement. ...”



(Felled beech trees, Inchtavannach – photo credit Mary Jack)

“Fallen Beech trees on Inchtavannach Island (Luss Estates)

The difference in wording (fallen/felled) is, to my mind, very important. Without a doubt, the resulting massacre is unsightly to say the least.. BUT ...

Is it only fallen timber that is to be removed?

Fallen – *synonyms:* [dead](#) · [killed](#) · [murdered](#) · [slain](#) · [slaughtered](#)

Is the felled timber to be removed?

Felled – *synonyms:* [cut down](#) · chop down · hack down · saw down · [knock down](#) · [hew](#)

What about the “eyesore” of the poisoned trees that are still standing?

This is not a commercial felling operation, as defined by Forestry Scotland, so should the dead trees be removed? What about the wildlife that have inhabited these trees, fallen, felled or standing?

Furthermore, how will this clearing/ *'works to remove fallen timber'* be viewed by loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park (LLTNPA)?

The LLTNPA actively discourage removing/collecting wood in their [Camping in the National Park leaflet](#) (under "Camping Byelaws: What you need to know"):

"The byelaws also cover irresponsible firelighting, including collecting firewood. If you have a fire, make sure you build it in a place where it will cause no damage or use a fire bowl. Bring your own wood, as collecting firewood has a damaging effect on wildlife in the area."

A similar message is given in the LLTNPA's ['Angling in the Park' leaflet \(1.7 MB\)](#):

"Fires If you have a fire when you are fishing it should be small, under control, not cause any damage and you should bring your own firewood."

And also after the unlawful felling of trees at Drumkinnon Bay

"... It is important that as much of the cut down timber as possible stays on site in order to encourage restoration of the trees and minimise any impacts to the wildlife of the area." ([see here](#))

Of course the LLTNPA are a law unto themselves :- the unlawfully felled trees in the woods at Drumkinnon Bay were 'tidied' on the say so of Gordon Watson CEO of LLTNPA prior to the European Open Water Championships held in Drumkinnon Bay! Don't expect them to be consistent when it comes to Inchtavannach and SNH. There appears to be one law for campers/members of the public and another for landowners and public agencies.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. forestry
2. landscape
3. LLTNPA
4. scottish natural heritage

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