

## Plastering Balquhiddy with plastic – the inspirational leadership of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority

### Description

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**Gordon Watson**  
@LochLomondCEO

Inspiring to see the great work [@Forth\\_Rivers](#) [@ForthRiversT](#) are doing at the River Larig, Balquhiddy and meet the excellent young trainees getting [#greenjobs](#) experience. Delighted [@lomondtrossachs](#) helped fund 5km riparian tree cover connecting habitats +improving fish conditions



Tweet 17th March

Unless tree shelter manufacture has been revolutionised recently it looks remarkably like the Chief Executive of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) was celebrating the erection of hundreds of plastic tree tubes along the River Larig in Balquhiddy last week. Incredibly his tweet – fake news about conservation – got 49 likes



Close up, they look even more like plastic tree shelters

As the plastic tree tubes start breaking down plastic particles will enter the River Larig and thence to the Firth of Forth and the North Sea. That is unless a big flood sweeps away the lot before then. The River Larig, above Loch Voil, is part of the River Teith Special Area of Conservation and supposed to be one of our most protected freshwater systems, Conservation has reached new lows when the Chief Executive of a National Park Authority believes that lining both banks of this river with hundreds of plastic tree tubes is inspirational. David Attenborough's films and all the publicity about plastic pollution appears to have passed Mr Watson by completely.

This is not nature conservation. But when their Chief Executive shows so little understanding, it is no wonder that the LLTNPA has so far failed to take a single action to ban or remove plastic tree tubes or failed to follow the example being shown by Forest and Land Scotland and organisations like the

Woodland Trust which have in the last year pledged not to use them.

It is hard not to feel sorry for the “green trainees” who have presumably been brainwashed into thinking that its fine to bring up hydrocarbons from beneath the earth’s surface to plant trees.

## **The LLTNPA’s conservation failure**

The reason the LLTNPA has been helping to fund the use of plastic tree tubes along the River Larig is the consequence of a much wider conservation failure. In their twenty years of existence they have failed to reduce significantly historic overgrazing by sheep and deer in Balquhider and intense rainfall associated with climate change has triggered a number of serious landslips in the upper glen and flooding below. There is a major conservation problem in Balquhider and by planting trees the Forth Rivers Project is hoping to strengthen the river banks and reduce flooding.

This, however, fails to address the cause of the problem. Slowing down water once its reached the floor of the glen is too late. Conservation needs to start from the summits of the surrounding hills and tackle overgrazing by sheep and deer but this is being ignored. Tree shelters down in the glen may offer some temporary protection against browsing but as soon as the first tree shoots emerge, they will be at just the right height for deer to nibble them: unless, of course, hungry deer learn to knock over these shelters to eat the trees inside them before then.

### **Category**

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

### **Tags**

1. conservation
2. Deer
3. LLTNPA
4. plastic

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