

The green way to plant trees? What hope for our National Parks?

Description



Lorna Slater planting trees at Howden Park in West Lothian

Yesterday the Scottish Government issued a news release ([see here](#)) announcing that Scotland's 32 Local Authorities and two National Parks were being allocated £6.5m from the Scottish Government's £65m fund to restore nature over the next four years. The news release was accompanied by two photos of Lorna Slater, the Green MSP and Minister for Biodiversity and National Parks, posing with a spade in field full of what appear to be plastic tree tubes.

Ms Slater – or rather it was probably her officials – provided some quotes to the news release:

“The Scottish Government is committed to tackling the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change, both at home and abroad.

Comment: so how does using plastic, a product fabricated from fossil fuels and which sustains the oil industry, help tackle climate change? Does Lorna Slater know how long it will take for the tree she has planted to offset, albeit only temporarily, the fossil carbon used in the production of the shelter?



The second photo – if these tubes aren’t plastic one might have expected the Green Minister to say so!

“Connecting people with nature, in urban and rural areas, brings so many benefits in terms of health and wellbeing. Improving our more (sic) green spaces will enable people to enjoy spending time outdoors and care for the natural environment on their doorstep.”

Comment: so how does scattering plastic tree tubes across the countryside help care for the natural environment?

The Greens also sent out an email to supporters which repeated part of the news release but also pointed out that that the Nature Restoration Fund had been *“negotiated as part of our cooperation agreement with the Scottish Government.”*

The email made a couple of other interesting claims:

“This will provide critical funding for habitat and species restoration, coastal and marine protection and the expansion of our woodland.”

Comment: so where does much of the plastic that litters our countryside end up? The oceans. Has the Minister for Biodiversity watched David Attenborough and, if so, why cannot she see the connections?

“When we take care of our environment it takes care of us. Clean water, clear air, healthy soil and locally grown and sustainable food are good for all of us.”

Comment: exactly! So what justification is there for using tree tubes that result in even more plastic entering natural ecosystems?

It is just over six months since the Scottish Greens called on the UK Government not to block action on plastics. Their Environment spokesperson Mark Ruskell MSP claimed ([see here](#)):

“Scottish Greens are committed to tackling the plastic that permeates our landfill sites, oceans and waterways, and the impact that has on our environment and the climate emergency.”

Having tried to document on parkswatch the damaging use of plastic tree tubes in our National Parks for a couple of years now ([see here](#) and [here](#) for example) I had hoped that Lorna Slater, as Minister responsible for National Parks, might have taken a lead on calling for a ban. Instead she appears in grave danger – in that rush for a Ministerial photo opportunity – of compromising herself and her party’s ideals.

This is another reason we need strong independent National Parks committed to conservation. Having met Ms Slater they could have briefed her on the issues and helped prevent her from putting her foot in it. Instead she has just copied the hapless Chief Executive of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority ([see here](#)).

Category

1. National Parks

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