

BrewDog's diggers – how not to create a Lost Forest at Kinrara

Description

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Digger on the minor road leading to the start of the Burma Rd. Photo credit Parkswatch reader

Following my most recent post on BrewDog's Lost Forest ([see here](#)), I was sent some photos showing the impact of diggers on and around the Burma Rd which crosses from Strathspey over to the River Dulnain. The first clearly illustrates one aspect of the problem, some of the machines that have been used on the hill are wider than the road.



Note the stone work now lying in the burn. Photo credit parkswatch reader.

Higher up, at c500m, caterpillar tracks from an oversize vehicle have destroyed the edge of an attractive old bridge. Recent work on the Lost Forest has involved both ground preparation for tree planting and peatbog restoration. Due to a lack of transparency on the part of the public authorities which appear to be funding most of this work, Scottish Forestry and NatureScot, there is NO publicly available paper trail which might help establish which the projects – or maybe it was both? – have been using oversize vehicles on the hill and might be responsible for this damage.



The crushed parapet of the bridge. Photo credit parkswatch reader.

In 2021, in a welcome move to improve transparency, the Scottish Government required Peatbog Restoration schemes to be notified to the local planning authority. Three for the Lost Forest at Kinrara were notified to Highland Council, although only the location of one was given. These were granted prior approval without any specific conditions but in accordance with the “particulars submitted in the prior notification”. Unfortunately, whatever those particulars were they have now been removed from Highland Planning Portal ([see here](#)). It is not possible to tell therefore if those particulars contained details about the size of vehicles to be used or of contractors’ liabilities to repair any damage caused.



Photo credit parkswatch reader

These vehicles are not damaging roads and bridges, they are damaging the wider landscape, the natural environment and exposing peat to the atmosphere where it breaks down releasing carbon. This undermines the carbon off-setting rationale which has been used to justify Scotland pouring large sums of public money into forest planting and peatbog restoration.



Photo credit Dave Morris

Lichen heath is a fragile habitat that does not tolerate being driven over. Lichens are also rich in carbon which they absorb from the atmosphere and convert in carbohydrates, hence why reindeer can survive on the them. How many years will it take BrewDog's Lost Forest to recover from this carbon vandalism?



Photo credit Dave Morris

Do BrewDog know what is being in their name? If not, why not? What have the consultants who are employed to plan the forest planting and peatbog restoration done to prevent this? (The damage on the top of the hill appears most likely to have been caused by the peatbog restoration scheme). What about the funders, Scottish Forestry and NatureScot, what are they doing to ensure damage by vehicles, such as that featured here, is prevented?

If the work to create a new “Lost Forest” had been funded privately by beer drinkers and not the general public, damage such as this would warrant both tree planting and peatbog restoration schemes being brought fully into the planning system. But given that most of this work appears to have been publicly funded through Scottish Forestry and NatureScot, the Scottish Government should require both agencies to impose conditions on the use of vehicles in carbon off-setting projects as a matter of urgency.

Category

1. Cairngorms

Tags

1. BrewDog

Date Created

February 22, 2023

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