

The pollution of the Gynack continues – people and nature let down by our public agencies

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The view of the Allt Mhor/River Gynack from the bridge to Pitmain Lodge 13th June Photo credit Kingussie resident

Parkswatch has now been sent photos from four different readers resident in Kingussie who are concerned about the polluting silt that continues to run down the River Gynack over six weeks since repair work to the overflow started ([see here](#)), ([here](#)), ([here](#)) and ([here](#)). The latest was on Monday:

"I walked up the River Gynack from the golf club car park to Pitmain Lodge and around the far side of the loch. Walking past the golf course, I was surprised by how murky the water was. The answer became clear as we neared Pitmain Lodge and saw machines moving massive boulders and what looked like lots of new earthworks beside the river. I took two photos, one looking over a bridge beside the lodge and the other showing the contrast with clean water entering from a side stream".

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The clean water flowing in from the right. Photo credit Kingussie resident

"It seems nonsense that they can do this work without putting in place measures to catch the silt before it pollutes the whole river. I have put in a complaint to SEPA".

That will not be the first complaint in this case and still neither SEPA nor the Cairngorms National Park Authority appears to have acted (I have asked the CNPA for all communications from the Pitmain Estate about these repairs). It is difficult to avoid concluding that ordinary people care a great deal more about the natural environment than our public agencies who are supposed to be protecting it on their behalf.

The one consolation in this case is the silt flowing into the Gynack may be slightly less damaging for freshwater pearl mussels than I initially feared. I have informed by a freshwater pearl mussel expert that as far as he is aware there are no colonies of this endangered species between the Gynack overflow and the Insh Marshes. These should act like a gigantic silt trap and protect the waters and freshwater pearls downstream. What impact the silt will have on the marshes is another question.

On Monday Humza Yousaf also happened to announce that he had appointed Gillian Martin MSP as the new Environment Minister, a post that had disappeared when he announced his first cabinet. Ms Martin also holds the Energy portfolio ([see here](#)), an interesting combination. Responsibility for environment managers is now quite fragmented at both the Cabinet Secretary (Mairi Gougeon Rural Affairs, Mairi McArthur Net Zero) and Ministerial level (Lorna Slater Biodiversity, Gillian Martin Environment).

It is not yet clear from the Scottish Government website who leads on SEPA and water quality. Ms Martin's appointment, however, raises an intriguing possibility. As some who worked for ten years in public relations for the oil industry ([see here](#)), she would appear ideally placed to ask for a meeting with Majid Jaffar, the oil magnate who, with his family, owns the Pitmain Estate and is ultimately responsible for all this pollution flowing down into the River Spey.

Category

1. Cairngorms

Tags

1. CNPA
2. conservation
3. landed estates
4. planning
5. Scottish Government

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