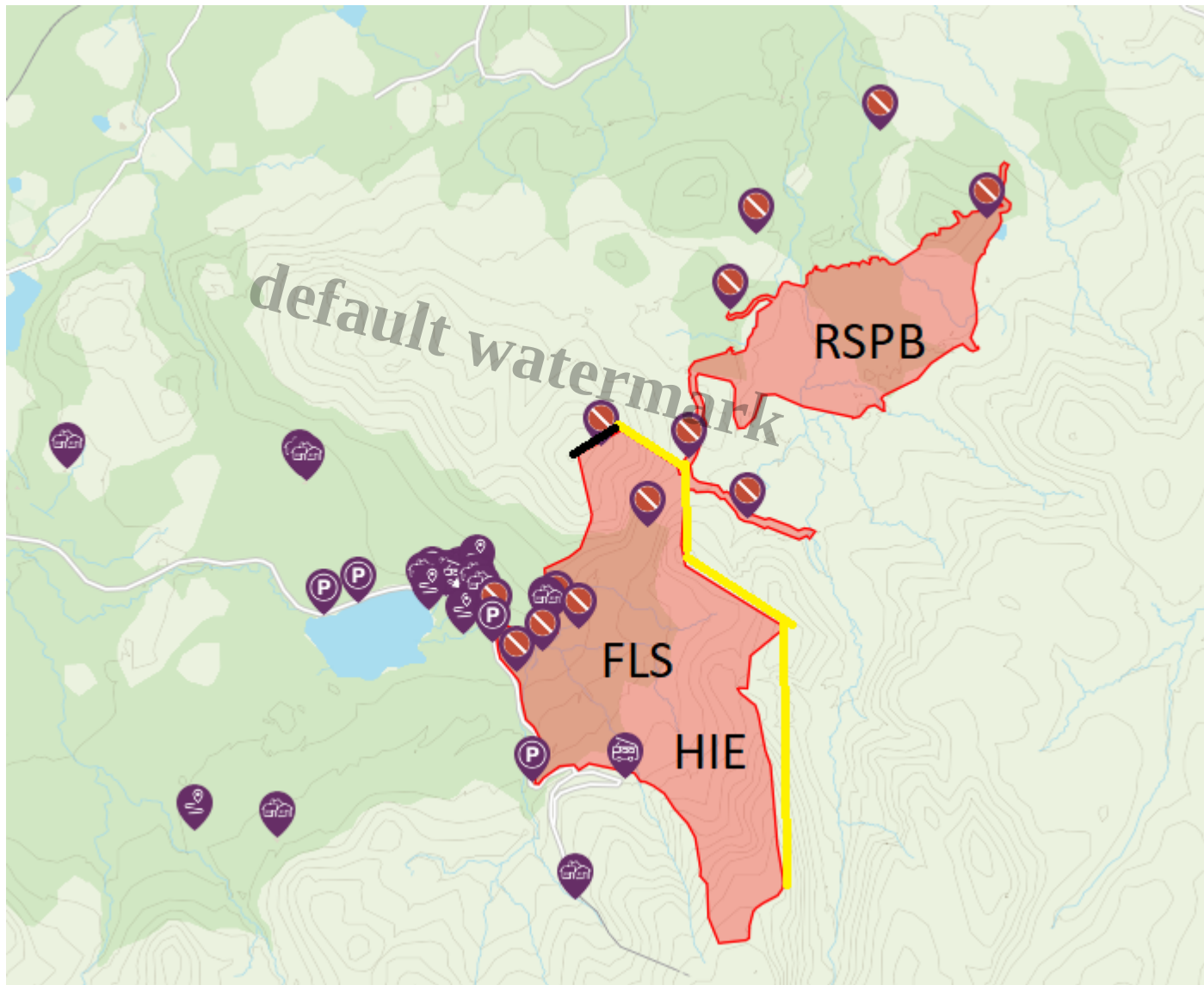


The CNPA's reduction in the size of their 'Exclusion Zone' in Abernethy/Glenmore

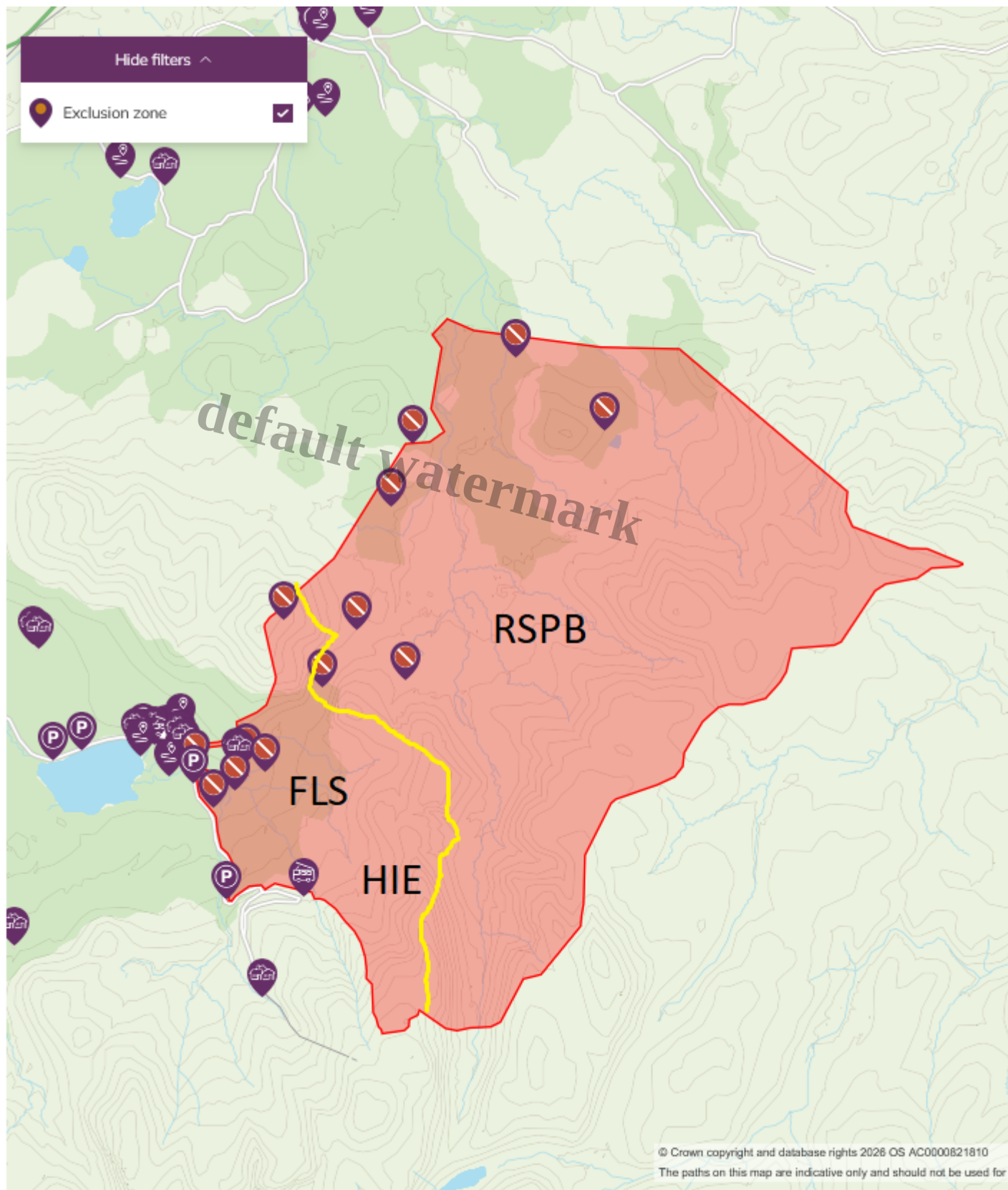
Description



'Exclusion Zone' and path closure map as at 11/09/26 annotated with the yellow line showing the boundary between RSPB Abernethy and land owned by Scottish Ministers, on behalf of the public, and managed by FLS and HIE.

On Friday the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) reduced the size of Abernethy/Glenmore the 'Exclusion Zone' it had created in Glenmore/Abernethy. There is nothing I can find to announce the change on its website, apart from the changes in the map shown on its path closures webpage ([see here](#)) and nothing on its Facebook Page. It appears that the CNPA does not want anyone to know that it has reduced the size of its 'Exclusion Zone' which, as I explained twelve days ago ([see here](#))

has no legal basis under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.



• 1st September with yellow line showing approximate boundary between FLS and RSPB in Abernethy.

A comparison between the two maps shows that the size of the area at RSPB Abernethy which people are being asked to avoid has reduced dramatically. Effectively the public are being welcomed back to all the moorland areas at Abernethy, with the exception of the tracks to Pass of Ryvoan and into Strath Nethy (where the fire started) and an area above Ryvoan bothy, and all the ground above that. This is extremely welcome.



Screenshot of RSPB Loch Garten Abernethy Facebook page post dated 11th September 2026

The RSPB also advertised these changes to the access restrictions (which are agreed at weekly meeting with the CNPA) immediately in contrast to the silence from the CNPA. It is notable too that the RSPB have avoided using the draconian language of 'Exclusion Zone', which was appropriate only to the previous statutory closure of the land by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) for fire fighting purposes, and instead refers to 'closed areas'. That is more in line with the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.

While initially I was very concerned what the RSPB meant when they said 'areas will remain closed for some time', it does seem they have been making genuine efforts to 're-open' the closed

areas at Abernethy and addressing health and safety concerns as quickly as they can following the wildfire.

The contrast with Forest and Land Scotland (FLS) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) is striking. It appears that FLS/HIE have not reduced the size of the area they are asking people not to visit in Glen More and Cairngorm Mountain, since FLS announced that Glenmore Forest Park was open again. FLS they are still trying to claim that the SFRS's statutory Exclusion Zone is in place despite them leaving the scene several weeks ago:



Glenmore Forest Park open

Following the wildfire incident which began 15 July 2026, the Coylumbridge roadblock and some path closures have been lifted, meaning it is possible to access most of Glenmore Forest Park.

However, the area between the ski road and the Ryvoan Trail has been significantly affected by the wildfire and firefighting efforts. There are large areas with unstable trees and ground, and there remains a risk of flare-ups and smoke as the fire continues underground.

For your safety and to enable our staff and contractors to work as efficiently as possible, please follow onsite signage and respect the exclusion zone while we conduct safety checks and continue restoration work so we can reopen this area as soon as it is safe to do so. It's also currently not permitted to fly drones anywhere in the park while thermal drone operations continue in the area as part of the ongoing wildfire incident.

The exclusion zone includes our Allt Mor and Allt Ban car parks, the Ryvoan and Lodge Trails, An Lochan Uaine / the Green Lochan, the eastern path on Meall a' Bhuachaille, and the right of way between Glenmore and Nethy Bridge.

In the meantime, we are delighted to welcome you to the areas around Badaguish, Upper Rothiemurchus and Loch Morlich, including our waymarked Beach Trail, Pine Knoll Trail, and Loch Morlich Circular Trail. Please check the web pages for individual car parks for more information.

To get an idea of what to expect on your visit, and to see a map of closed areas, please read our Glenmore update.

Screenshot 12th September 2026

FLS is also still trying, with the endorsement of the CNPA, to stop people using areas that were never affected by the fire ([see here](#) for Andy Amphlett's mapping of the extent of the fire), like the public car parks at the Allt Ban and the Allt Mor:

 Glenmore: Allt Mor car park and Allt Ban car park

Due to the wildfire the Allt Ban and Allt More car parks remain closed.

The car parks at Loch Morlich, Lochside, Beach, Hayfield and Sugarbowl are open.

Check [Forestry and Land Scotland](#) for latest updates.

The CNPA's advertising of the car park closures on its path closures page

Both FLS and HIE, whose land at Cairn Gorm is under the aegis of the Cairngorm Estate managed by Cairngorm Mountain, are also continuing to try and stop people from walking over the burned area on Cairn Gorm above the main forest. There is no risk of large trees falling on people in this area and any risk from fire still smouldering below the surface (the main justification for trying to exclude the public from these areas) is minimal to non-existent after all the rain of the last two weeks.



The CNPA's 'Exclusion Zone' covers the entire area visible in this photo taken from the edge of the Coire na Ciste car park. The boundary between Glenmore and the Cairngorm Estate, owned HIE and managed by Cairngorm Mountain, takes a zig zag line from just below the car park to the di in the skyline at the centre of the photo.

If RSPB can open up the much much larger area of moorland and higher ground at Abernethy because they believe its safe to do so, what is the justification for FLS and HIE/Cairngorm Mountain failing to do

so?

The CNPA has, as the access authority for the area, a statutory duty to uphold access rights. In addition it has a further duty as a National Park Authority to promote public enjoyment of the land. It should have challenged both FLS and Cairngorm Mountain on these unjustifiable restrictions but failed to do so.

The only reasonable explanation for why the CNPA has agreed to reduce the restrictions at Abernethy but failed to do so in Glenmore and at Cairn Gorm is that in terms of access, it simply does what landowners ask.

Glenmore: Ryvoan trail (blue waymarkers)

Due to the wildfire the Ryvoan trail from Glenmore to An Lochan Uaine (the Green Lochan) is closed. There is no way to reach the Green Lochan at present.

The path may remain closed for some time until safety inspections and repairs can be undertaken to make the area and path safe.

Check [Forestry and Land Scotland](#) for latest updates.

An Lochan Uaine, the Green Lochan

The Green Lochan is within the wildfire exclusion zone. Currently all the paths to the Green Lochan remain closed and there is no way to reach the Lochan.

Access to the Green Lochan may remain closed for some time until safety inspections and repairs can be undertaken to make the area and path safe.

Check [Forestry and Land Scotland](#) for latest updates.

Ryvoan pass

Due to the wildfire the Ryvoan pass between Glenmore and Forest Lodge (nr Nethy Bridge) is closed to the public. This includes the Ryvoan path and Ryvoan bothy.

Consequently, it is not possible to access the Lairig an Laoigh or Bynack More from Ryvoan.

The Ryvoan route may remain closed for some time until safety inspections and repairs can be undertaken to make the area and path safe.

Alternative route – there is not an obvious alternative route. Those planning expeditions or long-distance walks looking for a way from Glenmore to Nethy Bridge could use either Badaguish – An Slugan – B970 – track to Tulloch, or follow the Old Logging way to Aviemore and then the Speyside Way to Nethy Bridge.

Contrary to what the CNPA claim, it is quite possible to walk along the core path and Right of Way to Ryvoan and it is quite possible to reach An Lochan Uaine whether it would be sensible to do so is another matter (I have no photos from which to judge)

The route from Glenmore Lodge to Ryvoan is one of the most important routes in Glenmore Forest and indeed in the whole of the National Park. In recognition of this importance it is a core path and a right of way to boot. (Rights of Way are supposed to offer additional legal protection against closure).

Whatever the risks posed by burned trees in the forest, such as around An Lochan Uaine, the route itself should have been a top priority for re-opening. The evidence from a mate of mine who ran along the track was the risks then were low.[\(see here\)](#). FLS, which has far more resources than the RSPB, has had three weeks since then to make the track safe in its eyes. Its failure to do so is telling..

One wonders too if the explanation for why the RSPB are still advertising the track from the edge of Abernethy forest to Ryvoan pass as being closed is that they have been asked to do so to spare FLS criticism?

What the CNPA, FLS and HIE all have in common is that they are public authorities under the control of Scottish Ministers.

Category

1. Cairngorms

Tags

1. Cairn Gorm
2. CNPA
3. Forest and Land Scotland
4. HIE
5. paths
6. Scottish Government
7. wildfire

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