



Wednesday 11 March 2020

## Landowner must restore Cairngorms hillside after track appeal is dismissed

Campaigners hail 'landmark' decision over unauthorised track in Glen Clova

\*With picture

A Scottish Government reporter has today dismissed a landowner's appeal against an order forcing the removal of a controversial vehicle track in scenic Glen Clova, Cairngorms NP.

The decision ends a long-running battle over the 1.5km track, which is visible for miles around and features spoil mounds up to 10 metres wide.

The landowner had launched an appeal in December 2019 against Cairngorms National Park Authority's enforcement notice ordering him to remove the vehicle track, as it appears to be used to support field sports.

But today Allison Coard, a reporter appointed by Scottish Ministers, has dismissed the appeal and ordered the land to be restored "so far as is reasonably practicable" within one year.

Scottish Environment LINK Hilltracks Group, which continues to campaign for stronger public oversight of upland vehicle tracks, commended the reporter and the national park authority for their decisive action.

Helen Todd, who is Ramblers Scotland's policy manager and co-convenor of the LINK Hilltracks group, said: "This is a landmark result, and sadly one of very few examples of an authority feeling able to commit enough time and money to retrospectively tackle unauthorised tracks.

"This ugly track is scarring the landscape in this historic, protected glen - and we look forward to seeing the hillside restored within the coming year.

"All Scottish landowners should take note of today's decision, and the expensive restoration job that the landowner will now need to carry out."

Beryl Leatherland, of Scottish Wild Land Group and co-convenor of the LINK Hilltracks group said: "The case highlights the urgent need for the Scottish Government to introduce stronger controls over vehicle tracks in our hills – to boost local democracy, improve construction standards and protect precious environments from further damage."

The Scottish Government has made hilltracks one of the top priorities in its forthcoming review of 'Permitted Development Rights', which governs which types of developments can bypass the full planning permission process.

Currently, landowners simply need to tell authorities before building tracks which are said to support 'agriculture or forestry' – and full planning permission is generally not required. Campaigners believe these tracks are often created to support shooting activities and therefore should be subject to a planning application.

Research published in 2018 by the Scottish Environment LINK Hilltracks group found that vehicle tracks continue to expand further into Scotland's mountain landscapes, and that weak planning processes can lead to them



being badly-sited and designed. Some tracks have even been built over the top of narrow, low-impact trails and historical routes, with little chance for the public to comment in advance.

You can view the full appeal decision and history [here](#).

## ENDS

### Contact details

For further details, or to request an interview with Helen Todd or Beryl Leatherland, please call the Ramblers Scotland press office on 0131 357 5854 or 07557 527607 (out of hours). Alternatively, please email [scotland@ramblers.org.uk](mailto:scotland@ramblers.org.uk).

### Editors' Notes

You can read about the Scottish Government's review of Permitted Development Rights here: [gov.scot/publications/transforming-planning-practice-post-bill-work-programme](https://www.gov.scot/publications/transforming-planning-practice-post-bill-work-programme/).

Read more on Scottish Environment LINK Hilltracks group at [scotlink.org/workareas/hill-tracks](https://scotlink.org/workareas/hill-tracks).

Ramblers Scotland is recognised by **sportscotland** as a governing body of sport and we are a membership organisation and a charity with a grassroots network of 54 local groups, running 3,500 group walks a year which are all led and organised by volunteers. Follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/ramblersscotland](https://facebook.com/ramblersscotland) and Twitter at [\*\*twitter.com/ramblersscot\*\*](https://twitter.com/ramblersscot).

Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with over 35 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society [www.scotlink.org](https://www.scotlink.org)