

14th September 2016

Mr David Love
Senior Planning Officer
Development and Infrastructure Services
Argyll & Bute Council
Municipal Buildings, Albany Street
Oban PA34 4AW

Dear Mr Love

Tracks relating to 10/02163/PP - Merk Hydro, Cairndow

I am writing to let you know that Ramblers Scotland shares the concerns raised with you by David Gibson of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland over the damage caused by tracks relating to the Merk Hydro scheme on Beinn Bhuidhe.

Over the past year I have received a number of photographs from walkers who have alerted me to the condition of these tracks. The photos have been sent to me in my role as co-convenor of the Scottish Environment LINK hilltracks campaign group. You may be aware that this group has campaigned against the lack of public oversight on tracks constructed using permitted developments rights. We are now monitoring the use of the new prior notification processes for new and improved tracks across Scotland. As a result, I have not had the capacity to investigate the issue of these hydro tracks further given that they already had received planning permission.

However, the damage to the landscape and environment from this particular scheme does seem to be so severe, due to the poor construction methods, that I have discussed the issue with David Gibson who made me aware of your correspondence.

We are very pleased that the council is considering taking enforcement action to restore these tracks as far as possible, and support your actions to do so, but it is disappointing that the damage has already been caused. We very much hope that lessons have been learned with regard to future hydro schemes.

I would be very grateful if you could keep me informed of progress regarding the restoration of these tracks.

Yours sincerely

Helen Todd
Campaigns & Policy Manager

Attached: photos taken on June 2016