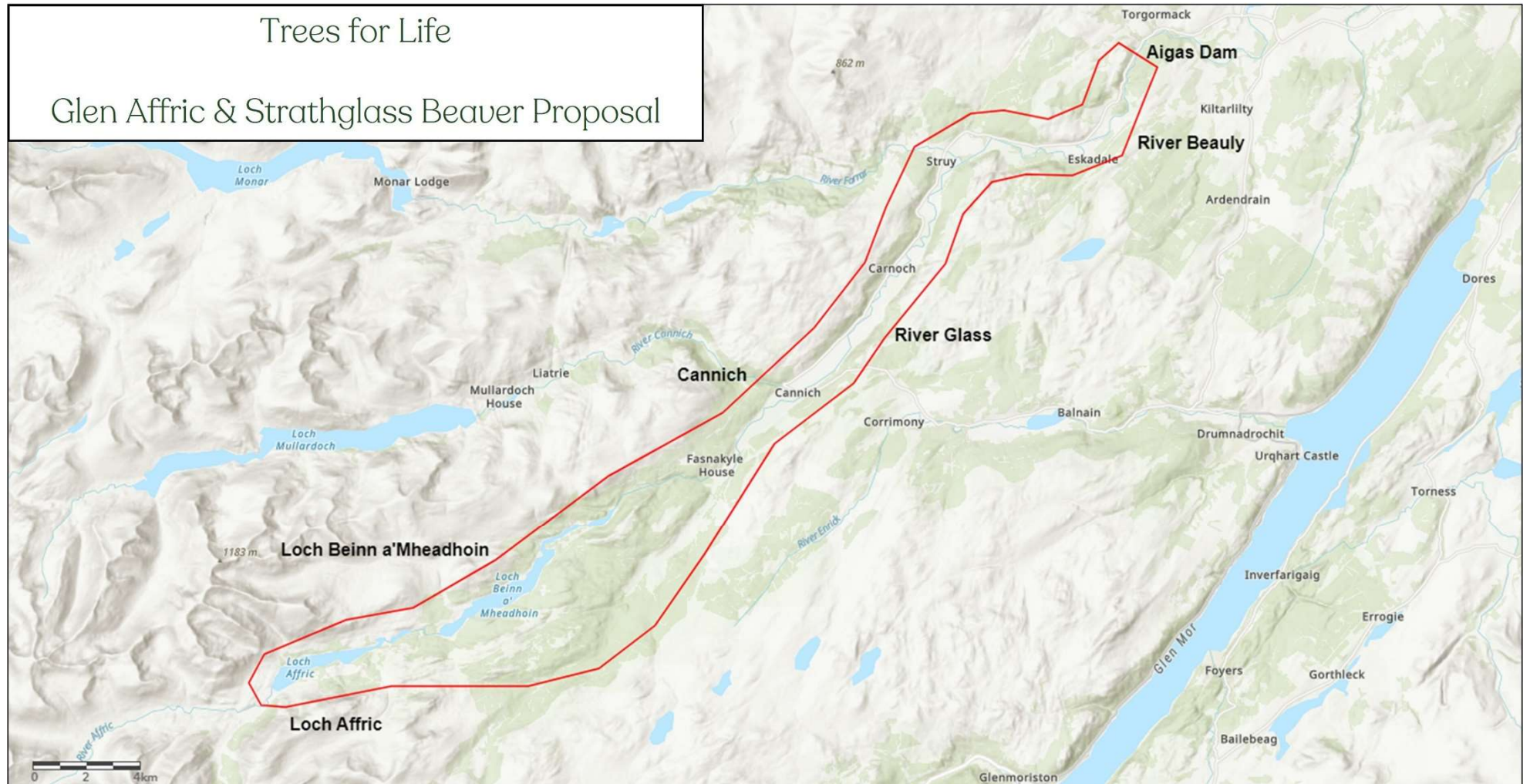


Annex B, Proposed Release Area



Annex C, Responses submitted to the Consultation

In addition to the private individuals and businesses we could identify in the proposed release area, we also contacted the organisations shown below.

- Strathglass Community Council
- Strathglass Community Company
- Kilmorack Community Council
- Beauly Community Council
- Beauly Angling Club
- Kilmorack Community Hall
- Kiltarlity CC
- Kirkhill and Bunchrew CC
- Glen Urquhart CC
- GURCA
- Beauly Fishery Board
- SLE
- NatureScot
- Scottish Forestry
- Scottish Water
- SSE
- Highland Council
- Councillors - Helen Crawford, David Fraser, Emma Knox, Chris Balance
- MSPs – Kate Forbes, Emma Roddick, Edward Mountain, Jamie Halcro Johnston, Rhoda Grant, Arianne Burgess
- Soirbheas
- NFUS
- SEPA

In line with the Trees for Life Privacy Policy, the responses received to the consultation are shown in their original form below with all personal information removed.

Initial email from Trees for Life requesting views on the proposal:

From: **Alan McDonnell** <alanm@treesforlife.org.uk>
Date: 26 Jul 2022 at 08:01
Subject: Requesting your views - Beaver proposal for Glen Affric and Strathglass
To:

Dear

A group of landowners in Strathglass and Glen Affric are exploring the possibility of supplementing the existing beaver population in the Affric-Beauly catchment later this year. After our engagement with

local stakeholders about the beaver population in Strathglass five years ago, they have asked Trees for Life to act on their behalf to develop an application to NatureScot for a license to bring up to 6 groups of beavers here from lower Tayside.

The most important step in this is to understand the views of the local community and stakeholders on the pros and cons of having beavers upstream of the Aigas dam in this catchment. To help with this, we have collated a wide range of information on a website at treesforlife.org.uk/beaverproposal where you can find more information about the proposal, FAQs and the plans in place for managing beavers in the future.

We will be approaching people to ask for their views between now and 9th September when the consultation will close. We are very aware that beavers can bring uncertainty around the impacts they can have, and we are particularly interested in hearing your views, be they positive, negative or a bit of both. We think that one-to-one conversations will be the most productive way to understand people's thinking and I will be in touch to see if you would like to meet to discuss this, either online or in person. In addition, we will hold drop-in events open to all where people can pick up information, ask questions and share their views. All of these meetings and events will be opportunities to discuss the studies of how beavers might affect this landscape, listen to what people think and identify who else we should speak to.

The group of landowners leading this proposal has been brought together by Nigel Fraser at Guisachan. Both Alex Grigg at Hilton and the Matthews family at North Affric estate have joined him. Further downstream at Aigas, Sir John Lister Kaye has added his name to the application with landowning body Forestry and Land Scotland also involved as the fifth party.

The initial point of contact for questions about the proposal is myself, please feel free to get in touch either by email or on the number below and I'll be happy to talk or set up a meeting. You can also submit your views and queries about the proposal to this email address: beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk

Best wishes | Le dùrachdan

Alan McDonnell

Email Responses Received

Response 1

From:

Date: Tue, 26 Jul 2022 at 10:54

Subject: Beavers in Glen Affric

To: beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am wishing to note my support for the proposals for beaver reintroduction to Glen Affric, I place I frequent often for its quality of habitat and a perfect location for such proposals.

Many thanks,

Response 2

From:

Date: Tue, 26 Jul 2022 at 11:31

Subject: Beaver consultation

To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hello,

I live near Drumnadrochit and am responding to your beaver translocation consultation.

I think this is a brilliant idea and one with strong ethical and scientific justifications. Beavers are crucial ecosystem engineers and the proposed release area is ideal habitat for them, with low risk of conflict with human activities. Other European nations live alongside far larger beaver populations with few problems, and there is no reason we should not do the same. The environmental benefits are likely to be very large, as are economic benefits related to eco-tourism. The low population density of the area means that any negative impacts should be easily manageable.

While I'm technically part of the 'local community' I'd also note that many of us will be entirely unaffected by the proposed release, and that there is also a strong national community interest in restoring habitats and reversing the precipitous decline of biodiversity in Scotland - something that this scheme can contribute to.

Best regards,

Response 3

From:
Date: Tue, 26 Jul 2022 at 22:09
Subject: Beavers Consultation
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

I support the reintroduction or relocation of Scottish wildlife, and I am keen to hear more on any progress made.

As someone that enjoys walking alongside Beaulieu river on a regular basis, I wonder if literature (such as posters placed at popular car parks for walkers in the area) with a link (QR code or website URL) would benefit members of the public who are otherwise unaware or perhaps deliberately misinformed by those protecting their own interests. If the general public can be educated on the benefits then more support should be easier to muster. This project should also be a positive talking point amongst the public, especially after all the misery we have faced and still contend with on a daily basis.

I wish to remain anonymous if my comments are to be added to any public consultation document.

Thanks

Response 4

From:
Date: Wed, 27 Jul 2022 at 09:38
Subject: In favour
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

For the attention of Trees for Life.

Good morning,

As a Cannich resident, property owner and business owner I would like to advise that I am 100% in favour of the proposed beaver re-introductions in Glen Affric and the surrounding area.

I wish you every success with your campaign.

Kind regards,

Response 5

From:
Date: Wed, 27 Jul 2022 at 10:40
Subject: Beaver releases - Affric / Beaully
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

As a resident and land manager in the Beaully catchment I am strongly in favour of the proposal. It is clear to me that beavers would significantly enhance the biodiversity of the area and therefore improve functional ecological resilience. Resilience to the oncoming effects of climate change is vital to the persistence of all life (including human).

Part of the strategy for introduction of beavers must be a means of assessing adverse effects of their re-introduction, criteria for mitigation measures and the types of mitigation measures.

Yours sincerely.

Response 6

From:
Date: Wed, 27 Jul 2022 at 09:51
Subject: RE: Requesting your views - Beaver proposal for Glen Affric and Strathglass
To:

Dear Alan

Thank you for your email to Kate. We really appreciate you taking the time to write to Kate and welcome further updates you can offer in the future.

Have a good week.

Kind regards

Caseworker for Kate Forbes, MSP
Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch
12 High Street
Dingwall
IV15 9RU

Response 7

From: **Burgess A (Ariane), MSP** <Ariane.Burgess.MSP@parliament.scot>
Date: Wed, 27 Jul 2022 at 08:42
Subject: RE: Requesting your views - Beaver proposal for Glen Affric and Strathglass
To:

Dear Alan,

I'm delighted to hear from you on this initiative.

I'm the Environment Link beaver and aspen champion and have been keen to encourage more uptake from landowners to welcome beavers.

From what you write your approach of one to one meetings and also community engagement is the best way to go.

I am not completely familiar with that area the project would cover – do you have a map that shows the area and the estates involved?

If you want a letter of support for the application I'm happy to write that, although I think at this point NatureScot has a pretty much open door to projects that do the due diligence of bringing the surrounding community with them.

Cheers,
Ariane

Response 8

From: **Emma Knox (Councillor)** <Emma.Knox.Cllr@highland.gov.uk>
Date: Tue, 26 Jul 2022 at 09:18
Subject: Re: Requesting your views - Beaver proposal for Glen Affric and Strathglass
To: Beaver Proposal <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hello Alan

Thank you for getting in touch. I will read the information on the website and consider the proposals. Meantime, have you approached the Community Councils in the affected areas? Local Community Councils and Community Trusts are probably your best way to engage with the local communities and gather their views. It's probably worth casting your net pretty widely and approaching the following Community Councils (they will also be able to provide contacts for local Trusts and community groups):

- Strathglass
- Kilmorack
- Kirkhill
- Kiltarlity
- Beaully

- Glenurquhart
- Invermoriston

You can search here for the relevant Community Council contacts: https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory/20/community_council_contacts.

(You might already be on top of it... Apologies if I am teaching my granny to sook eggs)

[Community council contacts | The Highland Council](#)

Community councils are voluntary organisations that act as a voice for their local area. They represent and express the views of the whole community they serve.

www.highland.gov.uk



Cllr. Emma Knox
Aird & Loch Ness Ward
07787 007741

Response 9

From:
Date: Wed, 27 Jul 2022 at 12:03
Subject: Beaver Return to Glen Affric
To: beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

I was very interested to learn of the proposed reintroduction of beavers to Glen Affric and the associated public consultation. Although I am not a local resident, I am a frequent visitor to the area - including as a volunteer with Trees for Life - and enthusiastically support these plans.

The environmental & biodiversity benefits of beavers are well-recorded, particularly in Benedict Macdonald's recent book *Cornerstones*. None of the alleged negative aspects of beaver presence on modern agriculture would be an issue in Glen Affric as it is not an industrial farming area (and it has not been explained why other European countries' farming systems have been able to accommodate beaver reintroduction with little friction compared to Scotland).

Economic effects would be only positive. The long-running sorry tale of the Glen Affric Hotel in Cannich lying derelict for years indicates how much the local visitor economy needs boosted and the return of beavers with associated opportunities for wildlife tourist business would bring much-needed jobs & money into the locality.

The climate & biodiversity crisis means that the return of keystone species like the beaver becomes ever more urgent and I very much hope that NatureScot and the Scottish Government agree to the plans so that beavers are back in Glen Affric's ideal habitat very soon.

I wish all involved parties every success with Glen Affric beaver reintroduction.

Response 10

From:
Date: Wed, 27 Jul 2022 at 13:00
Subject: Relocation of Beavers to Glen Affric and Strathglass
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

I am fully supportive of this proposal to re-introduce beavers to my local area. I don't have any questions but sincerely hope that the project is successful.

Regards,

Response 11

From:
Date: Wed, 27 Jul 2022 at 13:53
Subject: Beaver
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

To me consultation to me would require community meetings to allow people to make an educated decision

Response 12

From:
Date: Wed, 27 Jul 2022 at 20:24
Subject: My views
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Dear Trees for Life,

I'm extremely supportive of the proposed release of problematic Tayside beavers into the Beaully catchment.

Not only does this avoid the beavers in my native Tayside from being culled unnecessarily, I also believe beavers will add a huge amount to the Beaully catchment, in terms of biodiversity enhancement, flood mitigation and improved habitat for salmonids.

Furthermore, beavers are likely to enhance the appeal of beautiful areas like Glen Affric for those people visiting the Glen for tourism or recreation.

Scotland needs to embrace beavers in as many catchments as possible. They will help provide caches of water during times of drought and refugia against wildfires, which may become more frequent.

Best,

Response 13

On Wed, 27 Jul 2022, 6:07 pm:

Good evening Alan,

Thank you for your mail advising the Strathglass Community Council of your plans to introduce beavers to the Strathglass / Glen Affric area, which I will circulate to all SCC members.

I must admit to personal considerable disappointment that the first formal confirmation of your plans was learnt from a BBC Scotland news report (presumably based upon a TfL press release) early on 26/7. I get the impression that communication with the SCC was very much an afterthought.

However, as the subject will likely be of concern to sections of our community, it will be included on the agenda for our next scheduled meeting on 5/9 after which, we will make a considered response. You, and any other stakeholders, are welcome to attend.

Best regards,

Chair, SCC

Response 14

From:
Date: Tue, 26 Jul 2022 at 22:15
Subject: Consultation
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Good evening

As a Cannich resident and nature lover, I am personally very supportive of the exciting proposal to release Beavers in the Glen Affric area.

It is disappointing however that the Strathglass Community Council was not informed /contacted prior to the launch of the consultation. Avoiding proper channels is unfortunately likely to raise suspicion.

I hope the project succeeds.

Kind regards

Response 15

From:
Date: Thu, 28 Jul 2022 at 12:11
Subject: Beaver proposal for Glen Affric and Strathglass
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

My husband and I live near Kiltarlity and are regular visitors to Glen Affric and Strathglass. We support wholeheartedly the proposals to reintroduce beavers and the strategy for doing this.

With best wishes,

Response 16

On Thu, 28 Jul 2022 at 16:22,
Email to Alan McDonnell

28th July, 2022

Dear Alan

Beaver proposal for Glen Affric and Strathglass

One of the Syndicate members has commented as follows:-

“I would be interested to see the ecological assessment that determines that the catchment can support 6 “groups” of beaver without impacting riparian woodland and migratory fish, the proposed release site for each “group” and proposed measures for future management should this be required.

From a personal perspective, I find it somewhat frustrating that a “Riverwoods” initiative was recently introduced, which will undoubtedly target deer as a herbivore given that they are deemed to have a negative impact on riparian woodland and a further initiative is now being proposed to reintroduce a further herbivore that will have an unknown impact on the same riparian woodland. There needs to be a greater degree of joined up thinking between these initiatives and sharing of clear information with local stakeholders by the groups proposing them.

I think it would be helpful for Alan McDonnell to be invited to present the ecological assessments, site selection and management proposals to the syndicate and other fishery interests and to explain how the riverwoods and beaver initiatives will both positively and negatively impact fishery management in Strathglass.”

Another response from one of the Syndicate members raises concern as to bank erosion. The River Glass Syndicate have over the years incurred considerable costs in bank repairs in order to prevent erosion to the adjacent farmland. He is concerned to understand the extent to which beavers will tunnel into the bank and the possible consequences for the stability of the bank in high water.

No doubt there will be other responses which I will relay on to you.

With kind regards.

Macandrew & Jenkins

Response 17

From:

Date: Fri, 29 Jul 2022 at 21:17

Subject: Beavers back in Glen Affric

To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Good morning

What a wonderful idea. I love the idea of beavers spreading throughout Great Britain. As well as improving rivers for fish and other wildlife, and in addition to mitigating flooding, more wetlands and moisture retention reduce the risk and intensity of wildfires. I read recently that one beaver re-engineered stream, acted as an effective firebreak during a fire in California.

So, yes please. More beavers. And not two or three pairs over two or three years, but half a dozen pairs as soon as possible. We don't have much time!

Regards

Response 18

From:
Date: Fri, 29 Jul 2022 at 22:32
Subject: Beavers Affric and Strathglass
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

I'm 100% in favour as a resident to Strathglass for 12 years, This keystone species is desperately needed back in parts of the uk, that said however I am concerned these beautiful and important species may have some adverse effects of some of the positive progress on re wording this part of the highlands especially as some of the more palatable species and habitats may not be robust enough to support a population of beaver another browsing herbivores. I mention herbivours as an issue here, as deer still drive the motivations of many estates here and it is my belief we are far from a balanced place when it comes to deer, I can't believe I am saying this as I desperately wish to see these animals (Beaver) back in our strays and glens I feel 2 outstanding issues still need addressing, 1. Current imbalance of deer numbers 2. Current habitat condition, especially riparian young woodlands with some of the more palatable species Aspen, Hazel, Roman to name a few, the final and dare I say the most important point is, the habitat needs to be sustainable for the beaver providing enough resource for them to thrive here and dare I also add we need to be comfortable talking about how numbers are managed if/when they need to be, translocation or maybe even some form of lethal control akin to deer, not sure this final point would be popular?

Response 19

From:
Date: Sat, 30 Jul 2022 at 20:54
Subject: In support
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hi. I think this proposal would be great for the area and help rebalance the ecosystem.

Invermoriston

Response 20

From:
Date: Sun, 31 Jul 2022 at 08:12
Subject: Beaver release in Glenn Affric
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hello,

I would like to contribute my opinion about the re-introduction of beaver into this area of the highlands. I am not local to the area but have visited on numerous occasions to walk in the area and observe the wildlife.

I can only see positives for both nature and the local communities if the beaver are to return. For nature, the chance to rewild and create more wetland and biodiverse environments is an absolute positive. A further consequence of this though, I am sure, would be to create eco-tourism opportunities, which would provide income for the local area. I know for a fact that I would visit often to witness the habitat being created by the beaver.

I really hope that this project can go ahead, and that any negative views can be answered with strong scientific reasoning as to why reintroduction of beaver will be good for all parties, and that includes fish stock.

If you require any further information from me please feel free to contact me

Aberdeenshire

Response 21

From:
Date: Sun, 31 Jul 2022 at 10:14
Subject: Comments
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hello Alan,

I'm pleased to see that common sense seems to have prevailed after the mistakes made by trapping the animals previously living peacefully near Aigas. I'm currently living on the west coast so I don't have any personal interest in this proposal but I think that it is an excellent idea and hope that it comes to fruition. Best wishes,

Response 22

From:
Date: Wed, 3 Aug 2022 at 07:53
Subject: Re
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

I heartily endorse the proposal to site beavers in Glen Affric and Strathglass. I have watched them at work. They are brilliant engineers and their activities are useful for flood protection and for creating ponds which encourage other forms of wildlife.

Response 23

From:
Date: Tue, 26 Jul 2022 at 12:55
Subject: Beaver reolocation to Glen Affric
To: beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Good afternoon,

I would like to note that I am wholly in favour of the proposed re-introduction of beavers to the Glen Affric catchment area such. They already exist nearby. I can see their marks on trees on the island opposite the bottom of my lane in Beauly.

1. As is known beavers are a keystone species. Their reintroduction would lead to an increase in areas of wetland through their damming activities.
2. This in turn would assist in improving insect and plant life biodiversity through the creation of a more diverse habitat. This is a key UN agreement. As a result of this, greater opportunities for salmon spawning would exist and this would greatly increase the survival chances of our native salmon which need all the help available.
3. Opportunities for (and possible employment in) eco-tourism could be created leading to vital well paid jobs in rural Scotland.

I consider the proposal to be ecologically sound as all species (including humans!) would benefit from it. It also makes economic sense as the spin-offs in tourism would far outweigh any starting costs.

Response 24

From:
Date: Tue, 26 Jul 2022 at 12:26
Subject: Beaver reintroduction
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Dear Sir or Madam

I support the move to reintroduce beavers in Glen Affric and, was a funder of the original RSZS project to bring beavers back to Scotland. Farming is important and I appreciate the essential work that farmers do but, for too long, this has been at a severe cost to species diversity. Whether it's pine martins, foxes, birds of prey or capercaillie, it feels that farmers are keen to eradicate them all by shooting, poisoning or removing habitat. We are all the poorer because of this. Human habitation and feeding our population must coexist with nature. I believe beavers are a good starting point.

Best wishes

Response 25

From:
Date: Fri, 5 Aug 2022 at 09:18
Subject: reintroduction
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Drove up both in June and just what I was thinking.
Get it done.

Response 26

From:
Date: Fri, 5 Aug 2022 at 10:42
Subject: Beaver reintroduction
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

I am in favour of this proposal which I think will bring positive ecological benefits to the area.

Response 27

From:
Date: Tue, 2 Aug 2022 at 15:25
Subject: Comment
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hi

Good luck with your consultation, may it end with beavers!

I did hear of a consultation (in the north-east of England I think) that failed after months of meetings etc because the farmer thought that beavers would eat his fish and so he felled the whole project! It shows you have to keep reiterating the basic information from start to finish.

Best wishes

Response 28

From:
Date: Sat, 6 Aug 2022 at 16:04
Subject: Beaver release
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

What is to stop the beavers or their future offspring relocating themselves in other parts of the river system in the future and causing flooding in residential areas eg Tomich.
Would there be some sort of control of numbers ?

Response 29

From:
Date: Sun, 7 Aug 2022 at 18:28
Subject: Requesting your views - Beaver proposal for Glen Affric and Strathglass
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Thank you for your letter Alan, reference the Beaver Project.

I am replying on behalf of the Beaully Angling Club, a few of our members have discussed this project.

Our main concern would be escapees. We have had Beaver sightings and trees gnawed on the Club's waters below the bridge, seen this year. Obviously they were not attempting to dam the Beaully, but anything impeding the migration of fish through the local burns and tributaries would have a deleterious effect on the fish population, which is already under threat. Our concerns would be quick capture and return of Beavers from whence they came, and not having a lot of red tape stopping an operation like this from completing.

Similarly we would be concerned about the effects of Beaver Lodges further up the Beaully system affecting the spawning grounds for migratory fish, which could not reach the tops of the river system to spawn.

We know that Beavers can decrease water flow and stop flash flooding, but that should be taken care of by the hydro dams in place along the Beaully system. Would there be an effect on the water flow through a hydro dam from a Beaver Lodge collapsing under extreme water conditions?

I should be able to join the Drop-in the 8th September at Kilmorack, thank you for the invitation.

Regards

Response 30

From: Date: Mon, 8 Aug 2022 at 11:13
Subject: Beavers
To: beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hello. It is only my informal view but if Beavers are introduced and monitored correctly, then they can only bring benefit to the countryside which is rapidly being destroyed in other ways (climate change has proven this).

Good luck with it all.

Response 31

From:
Date: Mon, 8 Aug 2022 at 13:06
Subject: Beaver relocation to Glen Affric and Strathglass
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hello

I would like to respond to your request for views on the potential relocation of beavers from Tayside to Glen Affric and Strathglass.

I am a local resident, having lived in nearby Glen Urquhart since 1993 and frequently spend leisure time in Glen Affric and in Strathglass.

These are my personal views.

Between 1993 and 2006 I was the Forestry Commission Scotland Forest District Manager responsible for Glen Affric and Strathglass woodlands. I largely wrote the approved Habitat Management Plan for Glen Affric and its subsequent successor, the Upper Beaully Catchment Forest Design Plan. The evidence in these documents was the basis for Glen Affric being assessed initially as a Caledonian Forest Reserve, then as being managed for primacy of nature with the resultant statutory designation as a National Nature Reserve in 2001/2.

As part of my FDM duties in 1998, I visited Norway to scope successful beaver reintroduction sites in Norway under the guidance of experienced beaver specialist experts Frank Rosell and Howard Parker of the University Of Telemark and Vidar Holthe of the Norwegian Foresters Federation. I subsequently hosted and guided a reciprocal visit by Frank Rosell, Howard Parker and Vidar Holthe in 1998 to several potential beaver re-introduction sites in Scotland, including Glen Affric and Knapdale. In their subsequent paper 'A Gross Assessment of the Suitability of Selected Scottish Riparian Habitats for Beaver *Castor fiber*', it is notable that Glen Affric was stated as one of their favoured release sites. Following formal consideration by the responsible Scottish authorities, another site favoured by the Norwegian experts – Knapdale - was ultimately selected and approved as the official release site for the Scottish Beaver Trial.

Since retirement from professional forestry and now as a part-time canoe river guide I have led or have taken part in SNH/NatureScot commissioned canoe surveys on the River Beaully (twice) and on the River Forth. Two of these surveys were conducted and participated in by Dr Roisin Campbell-Palmer, Eurasian beaver field ecologist and leading UK beaver reintroduction specialist.

In reflection of seeing several sites years after successful reintroduction of beaver to Norway, together with the evidence of the Scottish Beaver Trial, the evidence of successful colonisation of beaver in the Tay catchment over many years (in spite of determined persecution by farmers) and personal experience of toe-hold colonisation of beaver on the River Beaully and on the River Forth, I have no doubt whatsoever that relocation to Glen Affric and Strathglass would be successful. I am in total support of the proposed relocation.

I regard the beaver as a key species to enable full natural biodiversity within the riparian ecosystem. A fully connected, naturally efficient river and watercourse system is critical for long term effectiveness of all associated habitats and the beaver is a well known creator and engineer of optimal conditions for this system to function.

The benefits of a natural, dappled shade river woodland ecosystem is acknowledged to be critical, in fact vital, for migratory fish spawning, specifically the endangered Atlantic salmon that spawn throughout this system. The need for river side woodlands is principally due to their natural mitigation of extreme water temperature levels, particularly devastating de-oxygenating high temperatures in summer and in the vast increase in the production of insect food dropping into the water from riverside trees. Beavers are the ultimate engineers of the conditions required to produce the most efficient river side habitat in both these critical respects.

The small lochans, tributaries and wetlands of the Glen Affric NNR are already noted for the presence of amphibians and insect life. In particular the Reserve has one of the widest ranges of dragonfly species anywhere in Scotland and has several endangered species listed in the *Red Data Book*. Visitors to the NNR in springtime are often amazed to see the huge numbers of common toads returning to their natural natal pools. The ability of beavers to significantly increase the conditions where these species and others thrive will be of enormous benefit.

The abundance of small to medium sized natural lochans, numerous burn tributaries, shoreline areas and slow moving watercourses within the suggested relocation area will reduce the danger of flooding likely to affect other land uses and is ideal for colonisation by a beaver population.

Glen Affric in particular and Strathglass in general has a very suitable density and quantity of suitable broadleaved tree species such as birch *Betula sp.*, rowan *Sorbus sp.* and willow *Salix sp.*, with an increasing amount of aspen *Populus tremula*, a favourite food source.

The constant regeneration and increase of a scrubby field and shrub layer following coppicing of tree stools by beaver will provide a significant amount of new habitat for all associated species.

In their paper, *Parker, Rosell and Holthe* regarded water fluctuations levels due to hydro extraction in Glen Affric to be within acceptable levels for beaver colonisation.

There has been a long standing awareness that Glen Affric has a low proportion of desirable deadwood within the forest ecosystem generally. Beaver will continually contribute to provision of deadwood, increasing the function and quality of the forest ecosystem by a significant measure.

Glen Affric in particular has an extremely low proportion of any competing land uses where the presence of beaver may create commercial tension, such as arable agriculture. The effect of beaver on any valuable, productive forestry in the area will be non-existent.

Lower down in Strathglass where arable land is more evident, responsible farming practice that avoids cropping to the water's edge, plus restoration and conservation of riverside woodlands currently in decline or under threat from agriculture will prove to be effective mitigation measures. The family run commercial golf course at Aigas is an exception where commercial interest may be a fair concern. The likelihood of any impact to any of these landowners, together with the likely probably of colonisation on any specific piece of ground such as the golf course is worthy of good pre-emptive advice, especially as beaver activity (if not exclusively) may be expected to be most frequent within 25m of the waterside and any flooding may be unlikely or within manageable limits.

Potential beaver habitat in Glen Affric is abundant within the Reserve and was considered by the visiting Norwegian experts in 1998 to be defined for beavers on Loch Beinn a' Mheadhoin to a useful degree by the hydro dam. Overall, this geographical profile may provide conditions suitable enough to avoid the need for beavers colonising the Reserve area to seek preferential natural dispersal elsewhere for many years.

The popularity of the presence of beaver with visitors is likely to be very beneficial to the local economy, who may engage through taking opportunities for more nature based tourism.

Although there are some poorly informed sceptics in the community, the alliance of all the principal landowners (in respect of Glen Affric at least) *vis. Fraser (Tomich), Grigg (Guisachan), Matthews (North Affric), Scottish Government (Forestry and Land Scotland)* together with the support of Aigas wildlife champion *Lister-Kaye* is likely to be a strong and well informed collaboration, well placed to implement and successfully deliver the relocation objectives.

Response 32

From:
Date: Mon, 8 Aug 2022 at 14:37
Subject: Relocation of beavers
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hi
Just to let you know I am fully in favour.
The positives to the ecosystem fully outweigh the negatives. Hopefully you will be releasing them this autumn.
Best of luck

Response 33

From:
Date: Mon, 8 Aug 2022 at 17:20
Subject: Support for beaver proposal
To: beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hi
I am emailing to indicate my support for your application to legally reintroduce beavers to the Affric/Beaully catchment.

Your proposal is well considered, well explained and is sufficiently broad based. Wider releases of beavers are long overdue and I believe there will be very few (if any) significant adverse issues arising from their presence in this area. I believe that some of the concerns (eg impacts on salmonids) are overstated and will not be realised in practice.

It is good to see reference to support being available to help address any conflicts that arise but I hope that such support does not, in the long term, develop to be a major burden on the resources of conservation bodies.

Good luck with this proposal.

(Kilmorack)

Response 34

From:

Date: Tue, 9 Aug 2022 at 19:56

Subject: Introduction of Beavers in Glen Affric/Strathglass

To: beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

I am writing to notify you of my disapproval of the proposal to introduce beaver, as above.

I am not a local resident, but I have been visiting Glen Affric two or three times a year for many years (40 approx.)

I understand that you held a meeting in Cannich with local residents a few years ago on the introduction of beaver and there was a substantial majority against the idea because of the potential damage to the land.

It seems to me that the opinions of local residents should be the criterion and canvassing opinion throughout the country, despite the fact that such others may have no local knowledge, is no more than an attempt to override the local preference.

It is also somewhat contradictory for an organisation that discourages red deer from their natural habitat by fences (aided by the constant massacre by commercial culling over the last 10 years or so), all because the deer munch at a few young trees, to be keen to bring in a species that will bring down some of the same trees that have had to be protected from the deer.

Fort William

Response 35

From:

Date: Sun, 7 Aug 2022 at 12:16

Subject: Beaver proposal for Glen Affric and Strathglass

To: beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Dear Trees for Life,

I wholeheartedly support the Trees for Life proposal to relocate beavers to Glen Affric and Strathglass. The comprehensive feasibility study by experts in this field demonstrates that this project would deliver significant biodiversity benefits in this river catchment.

Whilst in some cases, beavers can negatively impact land and property, the killing of beavers should absolutely be a last resort when all other alternative options have been explored and are considered unviable for genuine evidence-based reasons. The Scottish Government has made a commitment to actively support the expansion of the beaver population and promote translocation to suitable areas; and their advisory agency NatureScot have gained considerable experience of managing beavers to mitigate negative impacts should they arise.

Trees for Life have demonstrated exceptional leadership and inclusivity of different opinions on other successful species reintroduction projects such as their red squirrel project. They are leading the way in

taking action to deliver big biodiversity gains, demonstrating that bold and important conservation actions are not only essential if we are to reverse biodiversity loss, but are entirely possible.

This proposal not only avoids the unnecessary killing of healthy animals, it would bring significant biodiversity benefits, helping to address the biodiversity crisis and mitigating against the negative impacts of climate change. In addition, this proposal would bring economic opportunities to local isolated rural communities through wildlife tourism.

Yours faithfully

Response 36

From:

Date: Sun, 7 Aug 2022 at 16:18

Subject: Beaver introduction to Glen Affric and surrounding areas.

To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hi

I am emailing in response to your request for comment on the beaver introduction to Glen Affric and Strathglass.

I am long time (>30years) resident of Glenurquhart and regular visitor to Glen Affric for recreation.

I want to express my full support for the proposal as I consider the benefits will definitely outweigh any perceived drawbacks.

Britain has as a result of human intervention denuded the native flora and fauna to an extent greater than most other countries. Having hiked in the rocky mountains in Colorado and Wyoming I have seen the impact that beavers are having on the ecosystems there. They fortunately still have a more balanced ecosystem with a range of predators helping to control the impact of deer and other browsing animals.

The impact of Beavers must be considered at all scales down to the soil microbiome and invertebrate balance. The arguments against beavers often centre on damage to trees but this is a myopic and very short term view. The beavers given time will reach a balance where they enhance the whole ecosystem by increasing water retention in the upper reaches of watersheds, enhance aquatic environments benefiting the food chain of many species of bird, reptile and mammals. Their hydraulic engineering will play an important role in retention of water to mitigate against drought and floods. I have seen beaver dams in the rocky mountains at altitudes of 12,000 feet a.s.l. and they are surrounded by willow saplings. Although European beavers do have differences in behaviour I see no reason why in time the beavers in Glen Affric would help with the re-wilding aims and assist in forest expansion to higher altitudes restoring the hillsides damaged by overgrazing.

Without natural predators I do see that some population control may eventually be required but this will need to be managed scientifically. Hopefully the population will be allowed to expand to the surrounding areas including Glenurquhart where I live and there are numerous burns in the catchment area that would be perfect for the expanding population.

It will provide a much needed rebalancing of the ecosystem that has for too long been degraded by humans. With the increasing awareness of the need to protect our environment and improve biodiversity I'm hopeful that sceptics can be persuaded to see the longer term benefits evidenced by existing scientific research.

I hope to visit the consultation in Cannich if I can but my email expresses my views as a local resident.

Kind regards

IV63 6TN

Response 37

From:
Date: Wed, 10 Aug 2022 at 18:52
Subject: Beaver consultation Glen Affric
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Yes, I'd be in favour of this.

Kind regards

Response 38

On Thu, 11 Aug 2022 at 12:18:

Dear Alan,

Beaver Proposal

The response from the River Glass Syndicate should be with you within the next two or three working days. I would be obliged however if you could let me have a response to these particular points which were raised by one of our syndicate members: -

1. Trees for Life are a Charity and presumably know something about trees, but does that make them experts in the field of introducing a new species to a river system?

2. Have there been any academic studies made of the Tay Project and the financial impacts of having introduced beavers?
3. Two months seems a very short time frame in which to come to an informed conclusion as to what the issues for the River Glass may be.
4. Where a new species is being introduced to a rural environment, assessments should be made on the expected impacts on property and existing commercial interests and policies should be crafted to deal with eventual claims for loss or damage incurred by the beaver population.

Could you please let me have a response to these observations.

Regards,

Macandrew & Jenkins WS Ltd

Response 39

From:

Date: Thu, 11 Aug 2022 at 15:27

Subject: Beaver Consultation

To: beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Dear Trees for Life

I'd like to support the introduction of beavers to the areas proposed in the latest application to Nature Scot, namely the rivers Glass, Beaully and Affric. I've been impressed by the tenacity of various wildlife experts who support reintroduction of beavers generally, and given the support of the 5 local landowners I would expect that this project would be managed sensitively and with consideration for other local landowners who may be less enthusiastic.

We need to encourage the highest level of biodiversity wherever we can and beavers encourage biodiversity. We also should try wherever possible to accommodate those beavers that have had to be moved and this area seems like a good fit. If the potential issues can be mitigated then there should be no barriers, and indeed the many visitors to the Highlands, as well as many locals like myself, will be absolutely delighted to be able to visit such a beautiful area to see the animals in their natural environment.

Yours sincerely

Response 40

From:
Date: Thu, 11 Aug 2022 at 20:36
Subject: Beaver Proposal
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hello Trees for Life,

I am writing to offer my wholehearted support for the beaver proposals.

All the very best with the consultation and licence application.

Kind regards,

Abriachan
Inverness
IV3 8LB

Response 41

From: **Mountain E (Edward), MSP** <Edward.Mountain.msp@parliament.scot>
Date: Fri, 12 Aug 2022 at 10:40
Subject: RE: Beaver proposal update
To: Beaver Proposal <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Dear Alan,

Thanks for this email and for sharing the information on beavers.

I have to say that I find this proposal somewhat at odds with previous management of the area. You will know that for the past 30 years the area has been subject to stringent deer control to ensure that young trees can establish. This proposal seems to put in jeopardy all that work.

Unless I can be convinced otherwise I am afraid that this proposal does not seem sensible to me.

yours

Edward Mountain MSP | Highlands and Islands Region

Response 42

From:

Date: Fri, 12 Aug 2022 at 11:18

Subject: Glen Affric Beavers

To: beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Glen Affric must be one of the most beautiful and wildest places in the British Isles – and one of the first Native Pine forests to be conserved.

The reintroduction of Beavers would add significantly to this increasingly pristine environment. Pools and bogs are a crucial habitat within boreal forests, supporting a range of iconic species. Beavers create a natural pattern of wetland that simply cannot be replicated by man-made action.

The beavers themselves will add a further dimension of naturalness in their own right, as well as being an iconic species for people to see. Spinoff benefits will include improved upstream habitat for fish.

I strongly support the proposed re-introduction.

Response 43

From:

Date: Fri, 12 Aug 2022 at 14:27

Subject: Beaver proposal

To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

To whom it may concern,

My name is and I own ____ Farm Strathglass IV4 7LE. A riverside property with low lying fields.

I attended the meeting in Cannich hall 10/08/2022, I spoke to Alan who suggested I put my concerns down on email.

I feel there is a conflict of interests and this feasibility study should have been completed by an independent 3rd party.

I am totally opposed to this proposal to release 6 groups of beavers into the African/Beaully catchment area and do not consent to the use of any part of _____ farm for these purposes.

I have read through the report published on www.treesforlife.org.uk "beaver proposal" and I have to say that I find this proposal incomplete and very one sided in its information. I would like to be given access to all environmental impact reports regarding this subject of predicted destruction of trees and potential flood risk zones created over time for the proposed release.

I think the fact that the beavers were previously removed from the area and that they are causing

“Conflict” in the area that they currently reside and the wording of the proposal report suggests that trees for life also understand that the beavers if released will cause issues and “Conflict” in the Affric/Beaully area within a short period of time from proposed release and I welcome reading any environmental impact reports in relation to the negative effects this invasive species would create if released in the future.

Regards.

Response 44

From: (Same respondent as above)

Date: Thu, 18 Aug 2022 at 17:53

Subject: Response to email received 16/08/2022

To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Alan,

I have read the report from trees for life and feel it mentions lots of advantages but very few disadvantages. I didn't see a link to a proper Hydrological report, environmental impact report for loss of trees nor mention to the multiple well known serious diseases that beavers can carry and spread not only to humans but livestock and other animals as well, Giardia lamblia, Echinococcus multilocularis to name but a few and no suggestion as to how they would be tested for diseases. I find it highly irresponsible that there is no mention not only the threat to my family and pets but to animals that will enter the public food chain. Is there a valid reason that the “Specialists” haven't mentioned the diseases that beavers can carry and spread?

Will nature Scotland be doing their own independent surveys after your chairman and his 3 partners put in their application for license?

You mentioned the Beaver management Framework, is there a direct link in your report?

The government decided in 2017 for a valid reason, not because a politician took a dislike to a specific breed of animal but because of the dangers and hazards that they create in a flood risk area with hydro plants. The change of stance only came about because the SNP required the green party for a government but the dangers haven't changed.

I think I have made my point that I do not consent to beavers being released anywhere on _____ farm at anytime or have them in the river.

We are past the time for anyone from trees for life visiting _____ farm, that should have been suggested before trees for life decided to survey the land from the river and publishing the results without informing anyone what they were doing.

We would however welcome an independent company for a hydrological survey of the area.

Regards

Response 45

From:

Date: Mon, 15 Aug 2022 at 14:42

Subject: Beaver Proposal for Glen Affric and Strathglass

To: beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Dear Alan,

Beaver Proposal for Glen Affric and Strathglass

Further to our meeting with the Chairman of the River Glass Syndicate, on 5th August 2022 I write to summarise the views of the River Glass Fishing Syndicate which I will copy to beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk.

The River Glass Syndicate are proprietors of approximately 80% of the salmon fishings in the River Glass and the proprietors of the riverbank along approximately one half of the salmon fishings.

The River Glass Syndicate members are unanimous in their opposition to this proposal to introduce six groups of beavers into the Affric/Beaully catchment. Their reasons for their opposition are as follows: -

1. Bank Erosion

- a. Bank side trees will be felled by beavers which will cause localised bank erosion through changes to the current.
- b. Trees which are felled and are able to pass downstream will ultimately form a blockage which will result in bank erosion.
- c. Beavers are known to burrow into the bank. It is understood that the density of beavers could reach a level of one family per one half to two kilometres of riverbank. The syndicate's interest extends over approximately twenty miles of riverbank which means that there could be as many as twenty/thirty pairs of beavers burrowing into the riverbank over this stretch of water thereby creating multiple riverbank erosion problems.
- d. The River Glass Syndicate has maintained the riverbank to prevent erosion causing damage to adjacent agricultural land and also to prevent significant silt issues within the river system arising from major bank erosion. In the past twenty years, the Syndicate has spent in excess of £100,000.00 preventing further erosion of vulnerable banks. The River Glass is particularly vulnerable to bank erosion due to the combination of the topography, constitution of the bank and the variable release of water from the Hydro Electric Power Station at Fasnakyle. These are significant existing factors giving rise to bank erosion which can only be exacerbated by the introduction of beavers.

2. Fishing

It is understood that beavers taking up their territory within the main stem of the river will not seek to dam the main river. Their instinct however is to increase the wetted area within their

territory. This they will effect by damming tributaries/drains/ditches. The damming of tributaries will inevitably include some spawning burns which will prevent the passage of fish. It is understood that as the population of beavers increases, territorial pressure will spread the population of beavers to more remote areas, which can be dammed and some of those areas will include important redds which will no longer be accessible to migratory fish.

3. Damage to Agricultural Ground

- a. The potential loss of agricultural ground as a result of bank erosion has been referred to above. The bank of the River Glass is extremely vulnerable to erosion, particularly during the winter and spring months when flooding is more likely to occur. Such damage is a threat to the adjacent agricultural ground.
- b. It is understood that beavers block not just tributary burns but drains and ditches in order to increase the wetted area within their territory. The River Glass Syndicate proprietors work in conjunction with the adjacent proprietors in order to co-operate over bank maintenance and access. They have no wish to see the bitter conflict that exists between farmers and those with an interest in repopulating beavers within the River Tay catchment replicated in Strathglass.

4. Population Control

It is believed that the preferred model for population control is for it to reach a natural/balanced density. The experience of the River Tay catchment area is that there are now in excess of one thousand beavers within the River Tay catchment causing significant problems to agriculture, bank erosion and conflict between the interested parties. The River Tay model indicates that the population "is out of control" and as a result there is conflict and uncertainty within the community over what, if any control measures should be imposed.

The River Glass Syndicate would like to thank Trees for Life for the opportunity to comment on the proposal. They do however take issue with the collation of information being conducted by parties with a declared interest in the introduction of beavers. They would also like to comment on the fact that whilst four landowners are stated as leading the proposal, they are not the landowners/fishing proprietors in the areas most affected by this proposal who will be the ones to suffer the problems arising from this proposed introduction of beavers.

In conclusion, therefore, the River Glass Syndicate members are unanimously opposed to this proposal to introduce six groups of beavers into the Affric/Beaully catchment.

Yours faithfully,

Macandrew & Jenkins

Response 46

From:

Date: Thu, 18 Aug 2022 at 15:11

Subject: Beavers

To: beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hi there,

I am writing to support the Trees for Life consultation to introduce beavers to Glen Affric and Strathglass.

Beavers are an important keystone species that will provide huge nature conservation benefits in creating rich and diverse wetlands. These wetlands as well as supporting wildlife will be important firebreaks in a Scotland that is more prone to dry summers leading to a higher fire risk of wildfires.

I have always been an opponent of the Scottish Government's previous policy of culling beavers. No beavers should be culled until beavers occupy a substantial part of their historic range. Translocation must be the first option. It is great to see this local consultation taking place.

Wishing you success in working with local communities to reintroduce beavers.

Regards

Fortrose

Response 47

From:

Date: Thu, 18 Aug 2022 at 18:21

Subject: Beaver Proposal for Glen Affric

To: beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Dear sir / madam

We understand that you are currently gauging opinions of local people in Glen Affric regarding the introduction of beavers to the area.

My wife and I live in Tomich. We fully support the introduction of beavers. We understand the impact they can have on the area and have previously visited Aigas to view the beaver areas. We believe the introduction of beavers would significantly improve biodiversity and encourage ecotourism. It would be wonderful to see beaver dens in or around Loch Affric and wish you all the best with your plans.

Kind regards

RESPONSE TO PROPOSAL TO RELEASE
BEAVERS INTO THE RIVER
AND
REQUEST FOR FURTHER AND BETTER PARTICULARS
OF THE PROPOSED RELEASES

1. We are grateful to have been consulted as to the proposal to release beavers into the river.
2. We are most dismayed to learn of this proposal to introduce beavers in many locations into an enormous area of watercourses which includes the rivers Affric, Glass and Beaully and two sizeable lochs. The proposal is made despite the fact that Trees for Life recognises on their website <https://treesforlife.org.uk/about-us/beaver-proposal/> that beavers may “negatively impact land and property”.
3. Experience elsewhere has shown that escape, breeding and extensive population spread is inevitable. This will result in costly detrimental impacts.
4. We strongly object to the proposal.
5. The starting point is the criminal law. It is an offence contrary to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 for beavers to be released anywhere in Scotland without a licence. The penalty for release is up to 2 years imprisonment and an unlimited fine. It was for a very good reason that

Parliament enacted this provision and its terms should be enforced and not undermined.

6. Beavers cause extensive damage to trees and riverbanks and cause flooding. The spread of the population of beavers will mean that such flooding is likely to impact on the livelihoods of farmers and local businesses. Recent floods at and near Fasnakyle caused very real impacts on the land used for agricultural purposes and undermined riverbanks, some of which are used by otters, kingfishers and dippers, all of which are protected by various legislative provisions. The proposals jeopardise the habitats of such rare or endangered species. The actions of multiplying numbers of beavers will have a detrimental impact on the land used by local farmers and shepherds and on gardens close to the river. This will undermine businesses and use of such land and will add to costs.
7. At Fasnakyle land close to the river is used by local tenant farmers for the grazing of sheep and cattle and for haylage. We object to anything that would impact negatively on their use of the land.
8. At a time when farmers and many others are struggling with increased overheads and regulation, and with the negative impacts of wild boars breeding in the wild and tearing up fields, the last thing that is needed is yet another avoidable headache and cost.
9. We are dismayed that the consultation period is so short (26 July to 9 September: only about 6 weeks). Nor do we understand why it was decided to hold it at a time of year when many people will be away on holidays. We invite Trees for Life to consider whether the period of their consultation should be extended.

10. We have a number of questions that would need to be answered to address the concerns and would be grateful for responses:

-given that Nature Scot has power to permit the release, is it your understanding that they would conduct their own consultation before release could occur?

-has there been any communication between Trees for Life and Nature Scot as to this proposal? If so what views have been expressed by any employee of Nature Scot as to the merits or otherwise of the proposal?

-what, if any, comments been made by the Scottish government as to the proposal?

-who in Nature Scot would decide the locations of the releases?

-how will the beavers be contained?

-what is the experience and qualifications of those containing the beavers?

-given past experience on the Beaully River and elsewhere, can it be guaranteed that beavers do not escape?

-given the inevitability of escape and breeding in the wild (which has already happened – see the Trees for Life webpage), what scheme is proposed to recapture escaped beavers and prevent breeding in the wild?

-how have some beavers come to be in the river in the first place? From where did they escape? What efforts were made to capture those that escaped? Why is it that any efforts to recapture them were unsuccessful, as the feasibility report appears to suggest?

-who will fund recapture?

-is there a compensation fund in place to compensate for damage?

-how much *public* money is likely to be required to fund the proposed scheme? Has Trees for Life sought to quantify the total?

-why are beavers not desired in Tayside? What has led to the proposed relocation?

-our understanding is that recent problems have been caused by beavers on the River Spey; please indicate what if any consideration you have given to the lessons to be learnt from those or other such instances.

11. What proposals are you making for providing consultees with access to other responses made to Tree for Life? For the avoidance of doubt, please can we be provided with access to other such responses, including any from the Beaully Fisheries Board, SEPA, fishing syndicates, or others addressing the impact on migration and numbers of fish, eg relating to the impact on salmon spawning?

12. We note the feasibility study in favour of release. However the whole purpose of that report was to support the proposal: *“This feasibility work seeks to demonstrate the suitability of this area to act as a beaver release*

site...” (p.8). This begs the question: has Trees for Life obtained other *independent* expert evidence specifically exploring the potential detrimental impacts?

13.If Trees for Life has not obtained other independent expert evidence exploring detrimental impacts, are they willing to fund such a report commissioned by local communities concerned about the proposal?

14.Please can we be provided with access to the materials referred to by the authors of the feasibility report which highlight the negative impacts of release? It would assist if the source materials listed at the end of the feasibility report could be uploaded to the Trees for Life webpage.

15.Please can we have better copies of the maps in the report. It is difficult to identify the precise 16 locations where it is proposed to release beavers.

16.We note with dismay that p37 suggests likely impacts near Fasnakyle. This highlights our concerns, especially given that the neighbouring areas likely to be impacted include an Ancient Woodland of Semi-Natural Origins¹, Site of Special Scientific Interest (“SSSI”), Special Area of Conservation (“SAC”) and areas of ancient woodland. Has Trees for Life informed relevant authorities of the potential damage to such areas?

19TH August 2022

¹ status awarded to woodlands which have existed in the landscape as far back as the 1700s

Response 49

From:
Date: Fri, 19 Aug 2022 at 16:15
Subject: Beavers In Glen Affric
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Dear Trees for Life,

As a young, 27 year old, who has spent the majority of his life growing up in Glen Affric and has an appreciation for its special landscape and wildlife, I am excited by the possibility of the introduction of one of our lost key stone species.

Glen Affric is renowned for its wild and untouched nature making eco tourism a key to the local economy. With the increase in biodiversity that Beavers could help bring and the increase in demand on the highlands through ecotourism I would hope that more young people would stay in the area as job opportunities become available.

Although beautiful Glen Affric is a manufactured landscape, I would welcome the natural dam builders to return and add their touch.

Not being a landowner I cannot speak to the potential negative effects they may bring, however do believe that these could be managed for the few they affect and the benefit to the community as a whole could be vast.

Best wishes with the project,

Response 50

From:
Date: Sat, 20 Aug 2022 at 07:49
Subject: Glen Affric Beaver proposal
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Dear all,
I am responding to your invitation to comment on the current proposal. I strongly support it! It would be a wonderful addition to the Strathglass area; adding to its already burgeoning diversity.

The Beavers will bring many benefits which far outweigh any short term difficulties. So I very much hope this can go ahead.

I am not a local resident (am in far away Edinburgh) but my mother's family were all from Inverness and I have been visiting the Glen Affric area since I was a small boy (am now 65). I can recall Tomich post office in the 1960s run by a woman we called "Moolie", and Guisachan house was a feature of my granny's ghost stories!

Best wishes

Response 50

From:

Date: Sat, 20 Aug 2022 at 20:29

Subject: Beaver release consultation response

To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Dear Alan

Many thanks for this opportunity to comment on the proposed beaver release in Affric/Strathglass. Please register me as being strongly supportive of all the proposals, both release above and below the Aigas Dam.

I live relatively locally, near Marybank west of Muir of Ord, so know the area and knowing a small amount about beaver I struggle to believe that they would have significant negative impacts. The issues of crop damage and localised flooding that have been reported in Tayside dont really apply in this area as it is much less heavily populated by people and there is far less arable agriculture. I'm sure I don't need to describe the ecological, hydrological and economic benefits they will bring!

All the very best wishes for the project.

Regards,

Muir of Ord

Response 51

From:

Date: Sun, 21 Aug 2022 at 10:46

Subject: Beavers. Really!!

To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

To whom it may concern.

This is a ridiculous idea to release Beavers into these areas.

If the current population of beavers has not been sustainable then we should not be introducing more.

There is a reason for this.

Landowners involved are continually pushing their ridiculous views on the wider community, for their own selfish benefits only!!

These animals are not necessary to the biodiversity of the Glen's so why should we be changing that right now.

There are more important factors that are needing to be dealt with for the human population at this dire time!!

Response 52

From:

Date: Sun, 21 Aug 2022 at 15:54

Subject: Glen Affric and Strathglass

To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hi

I am very excited at your proposal to re-introduce Beavers back to Affric and Strathglass.

It cannot come quick enough for me (I am 76). I was outraged at the SG decision to trap the existing beaver population in Strathglass back in 2015 which had been established a number of years earlier through 'accidental' escapes from captivity.

You have my support and backing all the way.

Where next, Glen Moriston, River Conon.....

Response 53

From:

Date: Mon, 22 Aug 2022 at 11:21

Subject: Re: Beaver proposal for Affric & Strathglass - update

To: Beaver Proposal <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Alan,

I was shocked to learn that only a select few of the residents whose properties are on the banks of the Glass and Beauly were personally asked for their opinion before the consultation was opened to the general public.

The residents along with the crofters, farmers and landowners whose properties are on the banks of the rivers are the people who should have been personally approached first. They are the ones whose trees will be destroyed by these rodents.

It is very disappointing your chairman Nigel Fraser a landowner himself did not feel it important to seek the views of all these people first.

It would be interesting to know how many of the responses came from people who could be directly affected by the release of beavers and indeed from people living in the Strath.

I will get in touch later regarding our concerns of them getting up the river Cannich.

Regards

Response 54

From:

Date: Thu, 8 Sept 2022 at 10:21

Subject: Beaver Consultation Glen African & Strathglass

To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hi,

I am definitely against this proposal and the suggestion that the beavers that are already there have escaped from private collections, as opposed to having been deliberately released, is insulting to anyone with a modicum of intelligence.

I do not expect any comments I make will make any difference to the decision to allow this reintroduction to go ahead as I'm sure it is a foregone conclusion. I will only say therefore that there must be a control plan put in place that includes culling of beavers when their numbers grow too large or their activities cause problems for agriculture, forestry and fisheries and in particular migratory fish (salmon and sea trout). I expect my comments will fall on deaf ears and Nature Scot will do nothing of the sort eg as they're currently doing in relation to the capercaillie and control of pine martens and other predators which I expect will result in their extinction within the next decade.

Regards,

Response 55

From:

Date: Thu, 25 Aug 2022 at 07:55

Subject: Relocation of Beavers - Lovat Estates Limited

To:

Dear Alan,

Please accept this email as Lovat Estate Limited's response to the Trees for Life Beaver relocation consultation.

Firstly we have experience, albeit limited, of Beavers already within close proximity/on the estate. As noted on your website there is a small population of Beavers to the west of Eskdale and we appear to still have one downstream of the Kilmorack Dam.

We do not have an objection to the relocation and repopulation of Beavers as a general rule. The ecosystem benefits they carry in creating wetlands etc are clear.

My concerns lie firmly in the spread of the population to areas where competing land uses are such that Beavers could, and likely will, have a serious detrimental impact.

Agriculture

We own a significant area of arable agricultural land close to the River Beaully, with field drains discharging directly into the river, or into burns/ditches which flow to the river. Drainage installation and maintenance is an expensive business and takes experienced and skilled operators to carry the work out. We are continually working to ensure the areas these drains discharge into are kept free and clear of debris so water levels do not build up, slowing and stopping the field drains from running.

Poorly drained and flooded fields are clearly not as productive with increased costs and reduced yields. There is an increased likelihood of poaching, soil erosion and structure breakdown and where livestock are present liver fluke can thrive in waterlogged conditions.

These direct agricultural impacts will clearly only be an issue where agriculture takes place. This takes me back to my earlier point whereby Beavers in the correct location, i.e. low to zero agricultural activity or where drainage cannot be impacted, can improve the area.

As there are no predators and through the impacts identified on the Tay in central Scotland, the spread of Beavers can be prolific, it would be an absolute must that any relocation comes with the ability to control the population thereafter. The expense of this should not be borne by the landowner or occupier who is experiencing the negative impact. Provided the impact can be shown to be the result of Beavers there should be funding available to carry this out, be this lethal or trapping and relocation. A further issue with the control is that animals that have previously been trapped can understandably become trap shy, therefore legal control may be the only acceptable means.

If, as it is suggested, the presence of Beavers can bring financial gain to an area through tourism then there should be a mechanism where this revenue is used to cover all associated costs in dealing with their impact when they spread to areas not suited.

Consideration would need to be given to how the public perception of control would be received. I can foresee estates/farmers being victimized for carrying out or requesting control when they should have a legitimate right to do so. It would be unfair for them to be subject to vitriol, in an age when people are quick to go online, opinions can be formed without fact and lives can be made very uncomfortable.

Forestry

Further to the agricultural concerns, Lovat estate have carried out extensive tree planting; amenity, roadside, commercial and native plantings. Some of these, Easter Main and east of Eskdale are in very close proximity to the river Beaully. On funded plantations we have an obligation to ensure trees establish and continue to grow thereafter. We carry out regular checks of these including ensuring the deer fencing is in good condition. The plantations at both Easter Main and Eskdale are approx 15 years old – I believe these trees are of size and age that would be extremely susceptible to Beavers. Consideration would need to be given to the impact, mitigation and costs.

Related to the above, we like all land managers have a responsibility to ensure the health and safety of staff, visitors and wider public while on the estate. We have a significant spend each year on tree maintenance in public areas, roadsides etc. I think it would need to be written into any management agreement that someone, independent of the estates/landowners where it is known Beavers are located, is employed to regularly survey public area trees, report back condition and arrange for work etc if required – this should be at no cost to the estate.

Finally, while an increase in tourism does have many positive impacts, we do experience issue with the volume of traffic travelling on estate roads while the occupants look to park and walk on the estate. This despite no unauthorised vehicle signs etc. We would need to see funding available to cope with any negative impact of increased footfall. This may only need to be information boards/signage or perhaps the development of a viewing area and information tour where visitors can view animals/their dams in suitable locations.

I am aware this email focuses on negative interactions with Beavers. As mentioned at the start, we are not against relocation. Our main request would be that there are mechanisms of control where they are found to be having a serious detrimental impact and that the costs of control do not fall on those experiencing the issue.

Kind regards,

Lovat Estates Limited
Lovat Estates Office
Beaully
Inverness-shire
IV4 7DA

Response 56

The letter below is signed by twenty-three separate land users and farmers from Strathglass:

Concerned Strathglass Land users and Farmers

07/09/22

Beaver Proposal for Strathglass and Glen Affric

Dear Sirs, we the undersigned are unanimous in our opposition to the above proposal and would like to give our views.

1. We take exception to the fact that not all of the landowners/stake holders in Strathglass were contacted prior to the feasibility study being commissioned and before the consultation period was rolled out.
2. We acknowledge the extension to the infeasible short consultation period and object to the perception that the outcome is a foregone conclusion, in that the beavers were to be released in the autumn.
3. We also take exception to the lack of due diligence being carried out. Nowhere is there any information about the adverse effects to livestock health, farmland and to the existing wildlife and ecosystems. The information offered about the erosion of riverbanks and flood defences does not address the negative impact to farmland and it should be emphasized that the beaver will be culled should the population become out of control. The River Glass has tributaries that are not part of the proposal but would ultimately be found by beavers looking to expand or find new territory. The same can be said for the Affric proposal.
4. The land adjacent to the River Glass is a flood plain and so the banks are very susceptible to erosion, the land is also predominantly light sand and gravel deposits, again very susceptible to erosion. Trees felled by beavers will leave the banks further susceptible to erosion. From the feasibility study it is apparent that the beavers will burrow into the banks in places, rather than making dams. As the banks are sand/sandy soil on top of gravel, in many places, there is a greatly increased risk of erosion. The level of the water in the River Glass is controlled, to a great extent, by the hydro. Water levels can fluctuate by over a metre when generating, this is also a factor in bank erosion.
5. The feasibility study states that the land affected in Strathglass is mostly rough grazing. This is not the case. The land is in fact very productive. It is cropped for silage/hay and arable silage as well as providing grazing for cattle and sheep which is essential to the productivity of the farms and crofts in the area. Permanent grass also plays an important role in carbon storage. Bank erosion will inevitably cause a reduction in grassland as it will have disappeared into the river!
6. Riverbank and flood bank erosion will inevitably lead to some areas of highly productive pasture to become flooded or wet, resulting in loss of productivity. Loss of productivity and land area means that prices for farmland, and thus the value of the farms

themselves, will inevitably be reduced. There is also a livestock welfare concern. Wetlands increase the risk of liver fluke in livestock.

7. The question of who pays for repairs to the riverbank and flood defences, caused by beavers, needs to be addressed. While there seems to be small amounts of money available in the short term, there is no evidence to suggest a long-term commitment to provide sufficient funding to cover costs of future damage to flood defences and riverbanks.
8. The feasibility study states that the beaver population will increase until a natural balance is established. The River Tay, however, has experienced a population explosion resulting in upwards of 1000 beavers in the catchment area. This has resulted in extensive damage to riverbanks and agricultural land. The population explosion has also resulted in licenses being issued for lethal control, upwards of 115 beavers in 2020 alone. This cannot be allowed to happen in Strathglass. As beavers are territorial, it is inevitable that they will expand into the Rivers Farrar and Cannich.
9. Beavers can potentially carry certain diseases including

Echinococcus Multilocularis – tapeworm which is lethal to humans

Giardiasis – stomach bug caused by a tiny parasite found in infected water

Cryptosporidium – respiratory and gastrointestinal illness

It would be interesting to know if a study has been carried out, to assess the risk to indigenous wildlife and farm animals, as well as the risk to humans, as the proposed Affric sites have become a preferred location for water sports in the area.

In conclusion

It is felt that there has been an insufficient length of time for a consultation period.

Trees for life has not put forward a valid case showing any benefits of releasing beaver in this specific location.

The potential damage done to riverbanks, flood banks and farmland is unacceptable.

The damage of increased silt released in the river from accelerated bank erosion has not been addressed.

There has been insufficient information regarding the detrimental aspects occurring from the release of beavers.

There has been a lack of scientific study into the health aspects of releasing beavers in the area.

There has not been enough information offered to the general public in relation to the lethal control of the beaver population.

It is perceived that the beavers will reach a natural population density.

From experience elsewhere, this will not happen before excessive damage has already occurred to riverbanks, ditches, farmland etc thus resulting in lethal control of the population.

It is also felt that the proposal for the release of beaver in the rivers Glass and Beaully lacks credibility.

There is no benefit to Strathglass.

Flood mitigation

Strathglass already affords flood protection to the Villages along the Glass, as it is one huge flood plain.

Flood water spills from the river, and as the land is so flat it holds vast quantities of water, protecting properties and villages from flooding.

Beavers in Strathglass will not prevent flooding but will cause flooding to farmland by breaching the riverbanks and damming drains, ditches and many burns.

What will be the benefit to the ecosystem?

As there has been no work done at this time to establish a "base line" this is unquantifiable.

The fact that the river only drops 10m in 15km between Fasnakyle and Aigas means that there are already numerous wetlands and as the river meanders its way down to Beaully it has naturally formed several oxbow lakes. These Stillwater lakes are generally acknowledged to be wildlife and biodiversity havens.

What will be the impact on the existing wildlife? Has this been studied?

What are the benefits to the beaver?

Is moving them from one area, because they are to be culled due to overpopulation, to another area a benefit when it is accepted that they would ultimately suffer the same fate?

Tree for life state that they chose Strathglass as a proposed beaver release site, as there is already a beaver population there due to illegal release/escapees.

This surely is not a valid reason for release and certainly not a scientific one.

Trees for Life have not given one positive reason for the introduction of beaver to Strathglass and indeed have only identified negatives.

Would it not be a better idea to commission a study to find a location in Scotland which would benefit from a beaver population.

Would it not be a better use of public money to fix the problems caused by beavers in Tayside, study the Tayside beaver population and complete the National Beaver Strategy before contemplating beaver release.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on your proposal.

Yours Faithfully

The undersigned

Response 57

From:
Date: Sat, 10 Sept 2022 at 22:01
Subject: Beavers in Strathglass/Glen Affric
To: <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>
Cc:

To whom it may concern

We have read with interest your proposal to introduce additional adult beavers into the Affric - Beaully catchment. This is a very interesting proposal and has the potential to expand the range of freshwater habitats within the catchment, and so the biodiversity associated with them. This can only be a positive change for the health of the river systems and their dependent plants and animals, including fish.

Having seen the impacts of beavers in one area and the positive effects they have had on a range of features we think this could be a really constructive move. Given current predictions of changes to the weather patterns, the retention of water above any beaver-built dams will potentially insure against drought and increase resilience with benefit to all river/burn-side vegetation and their dependents. The engineering also allows the expansion of wetland that is easily accessible to stock, particularly cattle - as illustrated in the attached photo - reducing the need to provide additional drinking water. In addition there was evidence of the beavers harvesting tall bracken stems for bedding, cutting green and leaving bundles to dry before then taking them into the lodges (photo).

Naturally, there is some concern regarding the longer term impact on the corridor of trees within the catchment. This is identified clearly in the study, along with issues of erosion along the banks of some stretches of the water courses. It would be good to see particular measures in the project to ensure the evolution of the riparian woodland ecosystem, particularly the expansion of species usually coppiced by beavers, such as willows and aspen. We noted that beavers will travel quite long distances to reach aspen which is one of their favoured food plants. We would urge that any woodland expansion should be based on natural regeneration, maximising natural processes and

protecting the existing biodiversity. Ideally such measures should start prior to the release and be carried out on a rolling basis along the main water courses predicted to be utilised by beavers. Natural regeneration should be the norm unless there are fundamental reasons why it wouldn't be successful. One such example maybe aspen. As a favoured species new stands will need to be established by planting as there are very few in the proposed project area.

We wish the project every success, and look forward to being updated on progress as Project planning develop.

Nature Foundation

Response 58

From:

Date: Wed, 21 Sept 2022 at 14:42

Subject: Re: Beaver proposal for Affric & Strathglass - update

To: Beaver Proposal <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Dear Alan McDonnel

I wish to make a response to the proposal to release beavers in Glen Affric. I have read the questionnaire on the website but I am choosing to respond to you direct.

I would have liked to be able to support the proposal to release beavers in Glen Affric, but having read the documents, attended the exhibition in Cannich, heard the presentation to Strathglass Community Council and listened to the views of local residents there are points which I would like to make.

There ought to have been consultation right at the beginning of this project. The document prepared by Trees for Life is more like a finished paper.

The exhibition in Cannich was useful but the maps on view were hydrological only and did not indicate houses or settlements likely to be impacted.

The roots of this initiative are not clear, nor is its long term purpose but the parties are Trees for Life and 3 other landowners. One landowner is chair of Trees for Life which could result in a conflict of interest, and another runs an educational tourism business. Beavers would no doubt be commercially valuable.

Local residents, not all of whom are opposed to the project, have valid concern which are not being taken seriously.

Beavers have fairly specific preferences and it has been suggested that the relocation site may not be ideal. The water level on the loch rises and falls and the water flow varies due to weather and hydro electric activities. This is likely to result in the beavers leaving the original location and settling in other areas where they are unwelcome.

Reintroduction of species raises ethical issues. There are instances of relocations not going well, including the death of the animals. I am concerned by frequent use of the word "manage" with regard to situations where the beavers depart from their script. Inevitably if a successful colony establishes itself there will be clashes with residents and farming or forestry activities. There seems to be a presumption of extermination in these cases.

Mismanagement of deer and wild boar are examples of situations where animals initially portrayed as "cute" and good for tourism come to be regarded as dangerous pests. Such situations rarely end well for the animals concerned and it is predictable that beaver could suffer the same fate within a short timespan.

In conclusion, I am not opposed to reintroduction of beavers as such, but I feel there needs to be much more genuine consultation with local residents and a defined plan of management to do as much as possible to ensure that such a project does not result in conflict with residents and exploitation of beavers.

Please will you ensure my comments reach the website.

Regards....

Glen Urquhart

IV63 6TN

Response 59

22nd September 2022

Beaver Proposal for Strathglass and Glen Affric

Dear Sir/Madam

I have already sent in my objections to this proposal along with other Strathglass farmers and landowners in a letter dated 7th September 2022. I just wanted to add a couple of my own personal viewpoints with regards to our farming policies within Strathglass Farms.

I have spent most of my adult working life in Strathglass. I began with a suckler herd of cows and have built this into a viable herd of pedigree Aberdeen-Angus cattle. I take pride in selling quality breeding stock to various parts of the country. I enjoy breeding native cattle and have observed how useful a conservation tool grazing cattle can be within our diverse farm eco-system.

From day one it has been a fundamental farm management policy to protect and look after the integrity of the riverbanks and flood defences. We realised very quickly how detrimental a breach in the riverbank could be for livestock safety, land and grazing viability. This policy has involved a lot of expense, labour and miles of fencing to prevent the cattle accessing and damaging the banks.

The feasibility study states that the main agricultural land use in Strathglass is “rough grazing”. I strongly disagree with this statement. My farm is valuable agricultural land which crops silage and hay and has also grown oats in the past. It has sustainable clover rich grasslands which produce livestock every year. It also acts as a source for capturing carbon, imperative in our fight against climate change. This is also true for farmland up and down Strathglass.

The conclusion of the feasibility study states that “ The main negative impact beavers will have in Strathglass is bank erosion”. This acknowledges the fact that their natural behaviour to burrow into and fell trees along the banks will seriously erode and undermine the integrity of the banks. This will result in productive land being lost into the river and farmland becoming flooded.

Another major concern is the beaver’s ability to build dams and create wetland areas. The drainage system within the farm is a series of ditches and channels constructed many years ago. The system works well, in that it allows slow, free flowing drainage. If these channels were to become blocked up by beaver dams this, again, would create unwanted wetlands and flooding on the farmland.

Beavers will create flooding issues and increase wetland areas within Strathglass. This, in time, will have a huge impact on the flood defences for the community and the viability of farmland and properties up and down the Strath. I have farmed in Strathglass in a very environmentally sensitive manner for all my years. I would like to make the proposers aware of how distressed and concerned I feel about this proposal. It feels very unjust that my farming policies could be brushed aside, my land value and viability totally undermined and my livestock health and safety put in jeopardy by the vision of five landowners who, themselves, will not be adversely affected by their proposal.

Response 60

Scottish Water response to Glen Affric, Strath Glass and River Beaully proposed Beaver Translocation

September 2022

Introduction

Scottish Water is concerned with the abstraction, treatment and distribution of public drinking water and the collection, treatment, and safe discharge to the environment of wastewater. In carrying out these functions we must comply with a wide range of environmental and other regulations.

Scottish Water supports the Scottish Government policy on beaver reintroduction in Scotland, including translocation.

We are aware of potential impacts from Beavers on river, loch, and reservoir water resources & assets related to the quantity, provision and quality of public drinking water supplies and that mitigation options have been identified by work previously done at a local and strategic level.

We consider it possible, however low risk, that our assets and their function related to the collection, treatment and safe discharge of wastewater to the environment could also be impacted by Beaver activity.

We would expect guidance to be prepared to ensure appropriate mitigation measures can be used to manage beavers where they pose a risk to our water and wastewater operations and assets, including emergency situations.

We are concerned that significant costs may be associated with precautions or actions Scottish Water may consider necessary to mitigate negative interaction with beaver at a local level, therefore we would welcome engagement to ensure that these costs are minimised.

Scottish Water Drinking Water Protected Area (DWPA) are most likely to be vulnerable to beaver activity. Where Beaver negatively impacts on raw water resource quantity and quality, compensation flows or asset integrity, we would expect competent authorities to set out appropriate guidance and to take action to protect public drinking water supplies and infrastructure.

Water Resources & Assets

Scottish Water does carry out operations within the proposed translocation area, however no impacts to water resources (quantity) are foreseen in these catchments. We consider it possible that beaver

activity could have an impact on our assets and therefore their function e.g., through burrowing. We would therefore highlight certain key locations and activities.

River Beaully catchment

Scottish Water abstract raw water from Loch Bruicheach via a deep-water intake with a small compensation flow provided downstream of the dam. This is subsequently treated to provide public drinking water at Convinth Water Treatment Works (WTW)

River Glass

We abstract raw water from Loch Glass via a deep-water intake with a variable compensation flow which operates according to the reservoir level in Loch Glass. We have recently amended the compensation valve control so that changes in compensation volume occur slowly.

We abstract raw water from the river Glass downstream of the dam via a bankside intake with a screening chamber. There is a flow measuring weir spanning the river at this point which can catch debris and therefore may make it an attractive spot for beaver activity. Please note that a build-up of debris at the weir affects the depth of flow being monitored and associated calculation of flow volumes, this could create operational and possibly compliance issues for Scottish Water.

We understand that there are several private run-of-river hydro generation schemes downstream of Loch Glass and active fisheries interests.

Tomich borehole

We have a borehole at Tomich. It is located on a shallow aquifer by Abhainn Deabhag water course, near the confluence with the river Affric. There are trees along the river side, but not near the borehole which is a few meters above the river and unlikely to be affected by flooding or tree felling.

Water Quality

Dissolved Organic Compound

From a Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and Water Quality (WQ) perspective, Scottish Water anticipate a possible increase in Dissolved Organic Carbon (DOC) but not significant to warrant any major concerns.

Parasites (Cryptosporidium and Giardia)

Reviewing the evidence that has been gathered from the licensed Knapdale trial and information provided from NatureScot, there does not appear to be an added risk of significant loading of either cryptosporidium or giardia on raw water.

Consideration may need to be given to the existing treatment process at Water Treatment Works (WTW) downstream of beaver activity and whether any historical final water (potable) crypto sample results demonstrate that treatment has been consistently effective as a barrier to cryptosporidium.

Consideration ought to be given to increasing the frequency of raw water crypto monitoring for at least an initial period to be able to gauge any increased parasite loading associated with the catchment because of the beaver translocation project.

Overall, we consider that the risk of parasitic, bacteriological, and protozoan hazards increasing due to the reintroduction of beavers is low. Therefore, currently we do not see the need to recalculate risk other than to have access to records of beaver populations.

Water Risk Assessment Platform (WRAP)

Scottish Water may need to reflect the outcomes of beaver translocations within our Water Risk Assessment Platform (WRAP) (the replacement for Drinking Water Safety Plans) so we would welcome being kept updated on the progress of the proposed translocation.

Beavers are not included as risk factors in WRAP catchment assessment for water quality hazards such as Protozoa (Cryptosporidium) and bacteria as the literature suggests that beavers don't present a major risk, relative to livestock and other wildlife (i.e., deer), which are included.

Our current catchment assessment approach requires a national scale dataset on the location and number of a risk factor (i.e., livestock or deer counts). We have recorded a note on Beaver in the knowledge and data gap section of WRAP. If new data or information on the risks to water quality posed by beavers becomes available, then it could be added to future iterations of WRAP.

Project management & screening for protected species

While carrying out our investment programme, Scottish Water will consider Beavers in the same way as all other protected species encountered on development sites. We would note their presence during a survey (if applicable), undertake monitoring if required, agree a mitigation strategy with the wider project team and apply for any required licences to allow us to progress with our work. Given the likely increase in beaver distribution we will see in the coming years, their presence is to be expected throughout the catchments we work in, and our teams will work around them, as we do for all other European protected species.

Response 61



**Glen Affric and Strathglass Beaver Translocation Proposal response from
NFU Scotland**

28/09/2022

Dear Sirs/ Madam

NFUS is aware that there are number of benefits beavers can provide to the Scottish environment however such proposals like Glen Affric and Strathglass translocation of the Scottish Beaver population must be considered in a manner that no negative impact will occur to those living and working in the proximity of the proposed translocation.

NFUS has been approached by several of our members /land managers who are concerned about these proposals and the negative effect that they are likely to bring to them their businesses and their land.

In response to the Glen Affric and Strathglass translocation proposal: -

- NFU Scotland very much believes that natural expansion of Beavers can continue however we believe that the translocation of beavers should not be considered until an extremely robust mitigation scheme is established with guaranteed funding in place to allow those within close proximity to protect their property. We had discussion with yourselves at previous meetings where it was suggested that volunteers remove dams and damage mitigation measures are available, however there is neither a guarantee or time scale given on this offer.
- We are extremely concerned that translocation is being considered given mitigation trials are in their infancy. Time needs to pass to ensure successful means of mitigation have been established before allowing translocation.
- We are extremely disappointed with the proposal process being undertaken which has led to frustration and anxiety on the ground. Like all consultations all facts are laid out to allow land managers to make an informed decision some of the likely affected parties have not had any direct contact from those running the consultation. Unfortunately, not all interested parties received a copy of the proposal. It should be standard practice that all neighbours and those with downstream interests receive the proposal.
- While the consultation process appears to be very full and widespread the lack of numbers engaged in the consultation seem very low for a proposal that is likely to have effects over a large area if any translocation is successful and the beavers breed well.
- Throughout the consultation proposal it is suggested that there are mitigation support measures available to Land Managers from NatureScot. There is a very small amount of

funding available for river or flood bank damage repairs but nothing at all to help with any losses of crops or grazing caused by this damage.

- As it stands NatureScot does not fund all mitigation, land managers bear most of cost implementing measures to protect their property. Future support continues to be debated, robust measures and long-term government financial support is needed before any consideration should be given to translocation or reinforcement projects.
- We were disappointed that the latest Nature Scot beaver strategy fails to address the costs of damage being caused by beavers being borne by the farmers, crofters and land managers suffering these losses and damage. Until this is fully addressed along with a proper suite of mitigation options no translocations should be taking place.
- If against what we believe will be better judgement and the translocation is approved we would like assurance as to how quickly mitigation measures would be available to those effected as we can not see our members subjected to delays in bank repair, dam removals, relocation of problem beavers or lethal control licenses being granted.

There seems to have been a lack of thought within the proposal of the possible loss of productive land within Strathglass, where this land is hugely important in the maintenance of these productive farms and loss of grazing or worse still land to make important winter feed could challenge the future of these businesses and the viability of the whole Strath.

We can not over state the concerns that our members with in the Strathglass area have around the proposed translocation of beavers to the Strath this is already causing some untold stress and anxiety around this proposal that is being brought about without even identifying a willing landowner or suitable release site within Strathglass.

We believe that at this time these proposals should be withdrawn until a full suite of mitigation measures are available to all experiencing the negative affects of beavers. Along with full cost recovery for any negatives like increased flooding, riverbank damage (very likely in the soft banks of the River Beaully) and grazing/ crop losses. It seems irresponsible for any translocation to occur into an area such as Strathglass with such high likely hood of negatives on those farming and crofting in the area.

Yours sincerely,

NFU Scotland Highland Regional Manager

Response 62

From: Beaver Proposal <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Sent: 03 October 2022 09:31

To: Beaver Proposal <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Subject: Beaver proposal update

Dear All,

Many thanks to all of you who have responded to the consultation on the beaver proposal for Glen Affric and Strathglass, whether by email, [online](#) or in person at one of our drop in days.

The consultation period closes today, Monday 3rd, at midnight, so there are still a few hours if you want to contribute your views.

The next step will be to begin writing the consultation report, seeking to summarise the range of views we've received and recommending options on how to proceed to the landowners involved in the proposal. We aim to complete this report and share it with the landowners involved by the end of this month and their decision should follow shortly after that.

We will be in touch again as soon as there is news on this, along with a weblink to the consultation report, which will include copies of all the responses we have received with personal detail removed. If you would prefer that your anonymised response is not included with the report, please let me know via this email address.

Kind regards,
Alan

Response 63

Trees for Life
By email:

beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk

October 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

Trees for Life – Beaver Translocation Proposal for Beaully Catchment – RSPB Scotland comments

RSPB Scotland own and manage Corrimony Nature Reserve which sits within the Beaully catchment.

We believe beavers are a crucial addition to our wetlands. They help to introduce complexity to our rivers and streams, slowing the flow and improving water storage. We accept that in certain areas, such as low-lying agricultural land, beaver activities can be problematic, but we believe that, where possible, beavers should be moved rather than resorting to lethal control. We therefore welcomed the announcement by the Scottish Government in 2021 that further beaver translocations would be authorised and with appropriate engagement we are keen to progress plans for bringing beavers back to some of our key wetland reserves such as Loch Lomond.

As such we are supportive of landowner proposals in Glen Affric and Strathglass to relocate beavers from Tayside to the Beaully catchment. It is important that appropriate consultation and community engagement are part of this process to identify potential issues and help resolve potential concerns prior to release.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require further input.

Yours faithfully

Conservation Officer – South Highland



RSPB Scotland Headquarters
2 Lochside View
Edinburgh Park
Edinburgh
EH12 9DH

Tel: 0131 317 4100
Facebook: @RSPBScotland
Twitter: @RSPBScotland
rspb.org.uk



The RSPB is part of BirdLife International, a Partnership of conservation organisations working to give nature a home around the world.

Chair of Council: Kevin Cox **President:** Miranda Krestovnikoff **Chair, Committee for Scotland:** Dr Vicki Nash **Director, RSPB Scotland:** Anne McCall
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654 Registered address: The Lodge, Pottton Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL

Response 64

From:
Date: Mon, 3 Oct 2022 at 09:59
Subject: RE: Beaver proposal update
To: Beaver Proposal <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hi Alan,

I would like to pass comment on something new that has come to light in the last few days.

I hear that in England beavers are now to be a protected species which could also happen in Scotland as well. Having spoken about the scenario that beavers cause an unexpected problem in an area where they have extended their habitat I was assured that they would not be protected so therefore able to be moved or in the worst case scenario culled. (I am not for culling as if this is needed the animals should never have been put there in the first place to be then killed). If the beaver becomes protected then we have a problem just as we do now with too many badgers and their issues and even pine martens when we cannot even protect poultry. It seems very sad that man seems to want to obliterate a species so it becomes endangered so it is then protected, that species becomes overpopulated and can be a problem as they have no natural predator. What guarantee is there that the beaver will not become a protected species in Scotland?

Kind regards,

Response 65

From: Date: Tue, 4 Oct 2022 at 10:12
Subject: RE: Beaver proposal update
To: Beaver Proposal <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hi Alan,

Thank you for your quick reply and clear explanation and if it stays this way seems a good system as protects beavers from just anyone disturbing them but the right people coming in if required. So long as Nature Scot can always get a licence then no problem but of course this could change at any time. What I heard for England was no disturbance of beaver dams etc would be allowed or do they have a similar system in place like our Nature Scot?

Kind regards,



Trees for Life
The Park, Findhorn Bay,
Forres,
Moray,
IV36 3TH

Corff House, Lovat bridge,
Beaully,
Inverness,
IV4 7BE

3 October 2022

Trees for Life Beaver proposal response

To Alan,

Further to your request for responses to the beaver translocation proposal here is the Beaully Fishery Board's response:

Whilst we accept that the translocation of beavers into the catchment could have wider ecological, biodiversity and ecotourism benefits, as the statutory body responsible for the protection of Atlantic salmon and sea trout in the Beaully catchment we cannot be supportive of this application as it is unclear at this time what impact (if any) the presence of beavers may have on the already declining numbers of returning adult Atlantic salmon and sea trout in the catchment.

The habitat and dam capacity maps included in the feasibility study are useful to see where potential conflict between beavers and salmonids may occur. Having conducted a short ground-truthing visit to some of these burns with The Beaver Trust on 16 September (and having been out conducting electro-fishing surveys) we are under the impression that beavers will most likely stay/ lodge on the mainstem and venture into tributaries for foraging only. If beaver damming occurs on salmon spawning burns (e.g. Erchless, Eskadale, Teanassie, Culligran, Belladrum and Bruaich) they are likely to be seasonal only due to the gradient, width and rocky nature of these burns. The exception to this is small tributaries in the Belladrum sub-catchment important for sea trout.

Our main concerns regarding fish are currently:

-Beaver damming, possibly affecting **fish passage and habitat** on Culburnie burn (Belladrum sub-catchment) and its tributaries and other small tributaries likely to be used by **sea trout** and brown trout. It remains unclear as to the potential for damming on the small but important tributaries of the A. Deabhag (Home and Kennel burns, Tomich) which contain juvenile salmon and trout. Seasonal damming may reduce the prevalence of salmon fry habitat on some burns.

-Beaver translocation may conflict with our strategy of encouraging **riparian native woodland** as a climate change resilience tool to keep water cool for salmonids and other freshwater species. This concern is mainly relevant to riparian trees bordering small and upland tributaries where temperatures are forecast to rise most quickly. Please see [Scottish River Temperature Monitoring Network](#) map (View Climate change>SRTMN Management priority layer). The abundance of alder in the catchment may be a benefit in the short term as these trees are less palatable compared to other tree species for beavers. Additionally most planting schemes involve deer fencing which protect trees from beavers, although to our knowledge specific water-gates suitable to keep beavers out and allow salmonid passage through are yet to be implemented.

-Burrowing activity on rivers with soft banks (R. Glass and Beaully) has the potential to release sand and silt into the water. As beavers generally prefer slack areas it is anticipated that **fine sediment**

release may be confined to these areas and will have minimal impact on mainstem salmon spawning substrate, however there is uncertainty around exactly where burrowing may occur and what (if any) impact there might be.

Other concerns:

-Additionally we note that the timing of this application is unfortunate as the absence of a National Beaver Strategy or implementation plan makes it unclear how (if any) support may be provided to proprietors, or the board in the event of conflict with fisheries. We are aware that our current capacity to support proprietors, remove beaver dams for the protection of fish passage and habitat is limited and that tree protection can be expensive.

-Proprietors are concerned that the removal of beaver dams may be a lengthy and bureaucratic process.

Recommendations:

-We have produced a [Beaver Briefing note](#) to help inform proprietors and landowners, recommendations include:

- Tree protection (in the form of tree guarding or painting) for old and sparsely distributed trees on the R. Beaulieu and R. Glass.
- Riparian restoration (fencing off of the river to create 10m buffer zones) in areas with existing grazing pressure and/ or soft banks e.g. R. Beaulieu, R. Glass, R. Farrar. Fencing off the river bank can bring multiple benefits and funding is available for this work.

-To avoid the worst potential conflict we would recommend that if the translocation of beavers goes ahead that they are put into **Glen Affric first**. This would give time for the local community on the R. Glass to get used to the idea of beavers and for the National Beaver Strategy to be finalised. Above badger falls is an area not naturally accessible to salmon or sea trout.

-With the absence of natural predators, proprietors may apply for mitigation licences to remove beavers and beaver dams from particularly sensitive areas and they **generally wish to have a non-bureaucratic process for removal of beaver dams** (as is currently the case through the NatureScot mitigation scheme for dams <2 weeks old).

- We would recommend that the Scottish Government makes it easier for landowners to live with beavers for example through a compensation scheme.

We are currently working with (and aim to continue facilitating the work of) Trees For Life, University of the Highlands and Islands, Beaver Trust and other organisations to understand better the interactions between salmonids and beavers in the Beaulieu catchment as there may be wider benefits to salmonids through enhanced ecosystem processes and abundance of invertebrates. Monitoring is likely to include salmon genetics, isotope analysis (to see if there is a shift between sea to brown trout populations), invertebrate monitoring and eDNA sampling. We will also work through FMS to have a voice on national strategy.

Yours Faithfully,

Response 67

From:
Date: Mon, 3 Oct 2022 at 15:26
Subject: Relocation of Beavers - Lovat Estates Limited.2
To: Beaver Proposal <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Dear Alan,

Further to my earlier email of 25th August 2022, a copy of which is attached above.

I would like to strengthen the estates' position on the matter by saying we are not in support of the application to relocate Beavers to the River Beaully or its catchment.

This view is based on a number of reasons, most of which are detailed in my previous email. In brief,

- Severe detrimental impact to areas of improved agriculture.
- Bank erosion and undermining of banks and deposition of silt from such.
- Tree damage to riparian woodland.
- Potential H&S concerns on bank slippage, undermining beneath agri fields where stock and machinery pass and trees felled or left hanging in areas of public access.
- Uncertainty over the impact on migratory fish

Further to these physical pressures, and while it has been acknowledged in your 'summary of feedback on the consultation process', I feel the time allowed to consider the proposal is reflective of the desire to relocate the Beavers, without allowing the time for those who will suffer negative impacts to consider their response, nor for a full impact assessment to take place.

This has been an unfortunate starting point as it immediately puts those with the greatest impact on the back foot.

Prior to any action, and if this relocation proposal is to take place, there must be a robust set of measures agreed that will allow for the effective control of Beavers. This takes time to develop and agree; the costs of control have to be laid out and the funding mechanism detailed. It would be irresponsible to release them without this in place.

Yours sincerely,

Director
Lovat Estates Limited
Lovat Estates Office
Station Road
Beaully
Inverness-shire
IV4 7DA

Response 68

From:
Date: Mon, 3 Oct 2022 at 23:12
Subject: Beavers in Strathglass
To: Beaver Proposal <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Alan,

In my e-mail of 22nd August I said I would get back in touch regarding our concerns of the beavers appearing on the river Cannich. These are the reasons why they should not be reintroduced into the river system.

Contrary to what you said when we met in the village hall I am sure beavers will "appear" in the river Cannich before long if introduction takes place in the river Glass.
I cannot see any benefit of having them at this time

The river Cannich was one of the finest trout rivers in Scotland until the building of Mullardoch Dam in the late 1940s /50s. Pollution from the workings depleted the fish stock. The trout took another hit in late 1990s when the alder trees slowly died off due to disease leaving the banks almost treeless. The fish stock suffered through the loss of shade and feeding under the trees.
With the lack of fish other wildlife suffered with the dippers and kingfishers disappearing even the ospreys who used to regularly come here to catch fish stopped.

Through a change in our management by removing the sheep and reducing deer numbers we are now seeing a recovery of the riparian woodland with saplings of alder and aspen seen along the banks. It is a slow process.
I know that alder are not the beavers first choice of tree but they will destroy them with Aspen being their favourite.

On Glen Cannich Estate we are trying to manage our river banks to allow these woods to recover naturally and as they do we hope to see the return of the trout, bird species and otters which used to live here.

We fear the introduction of beavers will destroy the work we are doing and do not see any benefit from having them in this river system.

Regards

Response 69

From:
Date: Tue, 11 Oct 2022 at 15:11
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Affric and Strathglass beaver proposal, SSE
To: Beaver Proposal <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hi Alan,

Yes – the points below are fine insofar as SSER interests are concerned.

Will look forward to hearing more in due course.

Best wishes,

Hydro Environmental Advisor
SSE Renewables
Contin Office
by Strathpeffer
Ross-shire, IV14 9EG

Response 70

From: **Beaver Proposal** <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>
Date: Fri, 30 Sept 2022 at 16:27
Subject: Affric and Strathglass beaver proposal, SSE
To:

Hi _____,

I'm just starting to draw together my report on the consultation to relocate beavers to Glen Affric and Strathglass and I wanted to check how to relate SSE's view with you. Our intention is to add all the responses we've received as an Annex to our consultation report and I've drafted the following from the main points I captured from our meeting were:

- SSE do not envisage significant impacts on their assets in the catchment.
- An increase in deadwood in the river may lead to some more woody debris collecting around intakes but this is seen as being manageable.
- SSE are generally fairly supportive of the proposal for its biodiversity benefits.
- If the proposal goes ahead and a licence is granted, it will be important to get in touch about the locations of the specific sites where releases are proposed, once these are confirmed. SSE may wish to comment or request changes to these.

This is all I was going to propose recording in the consultation report, but please feel free to correct me if I've mis-described anything. Alternatively, you can send me an email putting your position into your own words if that's easier.

Best, Alan

Response 71

From:

Date: Mon, 3 Oct 2022 at 10:39

Subject: RE: Beaver proposal update

To: Beaver Proposal <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Thanks Alan

Since submitting my comments in support of this proposal, I have become more aware of some people's concerns in the Strathglass community.

I hope that the proposal will not be derailed by poorly informed opinion about beaver ecology in respect of burrowing and flooding on farmland. Some of the opinion I have heard has been vociferous and could be seen as an effort to intimidate more considered and intelligent thought.

I believe an objective assessment of both these beaver traits in the Strathglass area would show a low risk to farmland and have a negligible economic impact.

I remain concerned that poor farming practice of grazing livestock to the water's edge is principally culpable for this reaction, especially to burrowing. Current grazing practice of this nature is environmentally detrimental and should not be used as a reason to frustrate this proposal moving forward. Conversely I am certain that good practice showing the safeguarding of a relatively narrow area of riparian land and relaxation of grazing pressure would negate most of these concerns. Establishing riparian land as a priority for ecology on farms should be formally established and farms should claim any form of Government support for grazing or developing riparian land should be corrected.

I also believe the potential ecological improvements that could be created by these same traits would far outweigh these concerns.

Presumably the assessment of the environmental impact of reallocating beavers to this river system prior to any release would strongly demonstrate the positive benefits and help to allay misconceptions.

I am more concerned at hearsay reports of 'experts from Perth' who have been invited to the area to advise or directly eliminate beavers already present on the river system. Against this practice, I would hope that the profile of wildlife crime will be raised. I also hope that this concern will be countered by pro-active monitoring of land where beavers are present and action taken as required.

Kind regards

Response 72

STRATHGLASS ACTION AGAINST BEAVERS

ON BEHALF OF PROPERTY AND BUSINESS OWNERS ON THE RIVERS GLASS, CANNICH AND BEAULY

3rd October 2022.

Mr. Alan McDonnell,
Trees for Life,
Findhorn,
Forres.

Dear Mr. McDonnell,

Introduction of Beavers in Glen Affric and Strathglass

This is a formal objection on behalf of the above members, who range from Glen Cannich, Tomich, Cannich and Strathglass, to the proposal to introduce beavers to the river systems of Glen Affric and Strathglass. We appreciate the time and meetings and emails from you to discuss our objections but, at the end of the day, are very worried that the outcome of the consultation will be biased in favour of the proposal as Trees For Life has a vested interest in the subject and that your chairman is one of the landowners applying for the Licence.

To the many of us who have lived and developed businesses and properties along the banks over a number of years, we face the prospect of having our efforts literally eroded in a very short time on the whim of a few people who will not be directly affected by these rodents. We have read all the arguments in favour of beavers and appreciate that there may be areas where they might have a beneficial effect. This river system is not one of them. As there has not been a beaver population in this part of Scotland for 300/400 years it is impossible for anyone to know that they will bring any benefits but we do know, from observations on the Tay and in other parts of Europe and Canada, that they are regarded as nothing better than a pest. Nature Scot have stated that they can breed at a rate of up to 30 per cent per year and if that is the case we would very soon be overrun by numbers of them. If the plan is to bring some of the problem beavers from the Tay and relocate them here, to my mind that is like taking rats from a barn on one farm and going up the road and putting them in the barn of another and it just does not make any sense to introduce a problem where we are already have to contend with an increase in the populations of pine martens, badgers and escaped wild boar which are causing devastation everywhere. As this would be another protected species and there would be no compensation for damage it is not something we anticipate with any favour at all.

There was an illegal release of beavers into the river a couple of years ago and they found their way to a site just below Comar Bridge and in the short time that they were there they did untold damage to the trees in that location and had already started making structures on the river bank. There are houses, holiday accommodation and rural roads running alongside these banks and any undermining of the bank areas alongside the roadways would cause collapse, especially of the Kerrow/Tomich road which is held together by trees. The banks of the Glass and other rivers are of sandy soil and would

be easily eroded causing loss of land to farmers and businesses and creating more flood risk to houses. Tree felling would cause further erosion to banks and alteration of the river course.

We also have a new matter to consider in the light of climate change. Flood warnings have increased and rainfall is heavier and riverbanks have to be maintained more extensively as a result of this and the introduction of any creature that may exacerbate the problem of erosion would be catastrophic.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of Strathglass Action Against Beavers.

Response 73

From:

Date: Mon, 3 Oct 2022 at 14:35

Subject: Re: Beaver proposal update

To: Beaver Proposal <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Hi Alan,

This was discussed at our last Community Council meeting and did not meet with universal support. Rather the opposite in fact. I have been asked to convey our concerns to you.

In essence we need the government guidelines to be published regarding the maintenance of the beavers and what happens when there are problems, which there will be and we are aware of from Tayside. Simply relocating the problem elsewhere creates a bigger problem. We would prefer the problem is not in our area. We are certainly concerned that the issue may well move down the Glass and eventually to the Beaully.

The government and SNH are asking for the public's approval to introduce them without knowing these important details (guidelines). The beavers have no natural predators so need managing and we need to know how this occurs, especially with the current lack of resources and infrastructure to manage them.

Kind Regards,

Kilmorack Community Council

Response 74

From:

Date: Mon, 3 Oct 2022 at 23:15

Subject: Re: Beaver proposal update

To: Beaver Proposal <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Dear Alan,

Many thanks for the email reminder that the consultation period closes this evening, prompting me to write in the final hours!

I'm writing to you as a former Chartered Biologist and freshwater biologist and as a long-term resident in rural Strathglass. Living near a quiet stretch of the Glass, I've had the pleasure of watching beavers up close and am always on the look-out for recent signs of beaver activity. In short, I like beavers! However, I'm sorry to say, I don't believe a formal reintroduction programme has enough merit to earn approval. My objections are regarding (i) the lack of proven benefits & (ii) the ethics of reintroduction.

(i) Lack of proven benefits

This was raised at the recent Strathglass Community Council you attended and I felt it a very valid point. We know beavers can improve biodiversity and reduce flood risk in some areas, but there has been no study to show that beavers would have such a positive impact in Strathglass.

The farmland to the south of the Glass is subject to low intensity grazing and benefits from a sympathetic management system that has seen improvements in biodiversity over the past decade - entirely subjective I know, but I've seen an increase in diversity of insect life, abundance ground nesting birds and the return of some waders. Strathglass retains natural hydrological features such as ox-bow lakes and areas of less productive grazing which are allowed to flood, acting as sinks to store vast amounts of water at times of peak flow. (If you've never seen the Strath's sinks in action at times of spate, I would urge you to climb up one of the steep tracks to see for yourself what a marvel it is. Textbook stuff!) These backwaters and ox-bow lakes also provide a natural wetland, ideal for insects, amphibians and juvenile fish. More productive land is elevated or protected by the established riparian woodland and naturalised flood banks, both of which have wider benefits to biodiversity (and human habitation!).

This is a thriving semi-natural environment where careful management by the current farmers has struck a balance between flood alleviation and flood management, and the production of high quality beef cattle while allowing space for wildlife to flourish.

How would beavers improve this? I fear they would disrupt the balance!

(ii) Ethics of reintroduction

Reintroduction of species is not my area of expertise and I'm not going to look up the regulations now, but I would have thought a criteria for reintroduction would be that the location selected must allow for beavers to live in a natural and sustainable manner where they can exhibit normal beaver behaviour - ie. to feed, find shelter, reproduce and disperse with minimal human conflict.

We know that beavers do not fit this criteria and have already run into conflict in Tayside, hence need to trap and relocate them. They will not meet this criteria in Strathglass as there is a great deal of fear over flooding, damage to property, loss of livestock and financial loss. Like it or not, when faced with such serious concerns, beavers will be subject to persecution, any structures they may try to build will be damaged, they may be trapped or shot.

It is entirely unethical to release an animal into an area where it cannot live sustainably and will require ongoing 'management' and human intervention. Previous experience has demonstrated that live trapping doesn't always end well for beavers!

I hope you find my views helpful when considering this proposal. There are very good reasons why the proposal has been met with such opposition from people in the area and for the beavers sake I hope that you take this onboard and do not seek approval for the project.

Best regards

Response 75

From:
Date: Thu, 6 Oct 2022 at 09:43
Subject: Re: Beaver proposal update
To: Beaver Proposal <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Thanks for your acknowledgement, Alan. I'm glad you find it helpful and maybe we'll get the chance to discuss these issues further at some point.

Another issue that concerns me, which I didn't add to my email, is whether beavers will come into conflict with our otter population if the environment dictates a need to use bank burrows rather than build dams. I know availability of refuge and nest sites can be limiting factors for bird populations and I imagine this may well be the same for a mammal such as an otter.

Best regards,

Response 76

From:
Date: Mon, 3 Oct 2022 at 23:57
Subject: RE: Beaver proposal update
To: Beaver Proposal <beaverproposal@treesforlife.org.uk>

Dear Alan,

In my personal capacity as the proprietor of _____ Estate, I have four concerns:

1. The introduction of Beavers to the Glen Strathfarrar SSI are forbidden – see attached.
2. I will not allow beavers to be released on _____ Estate.

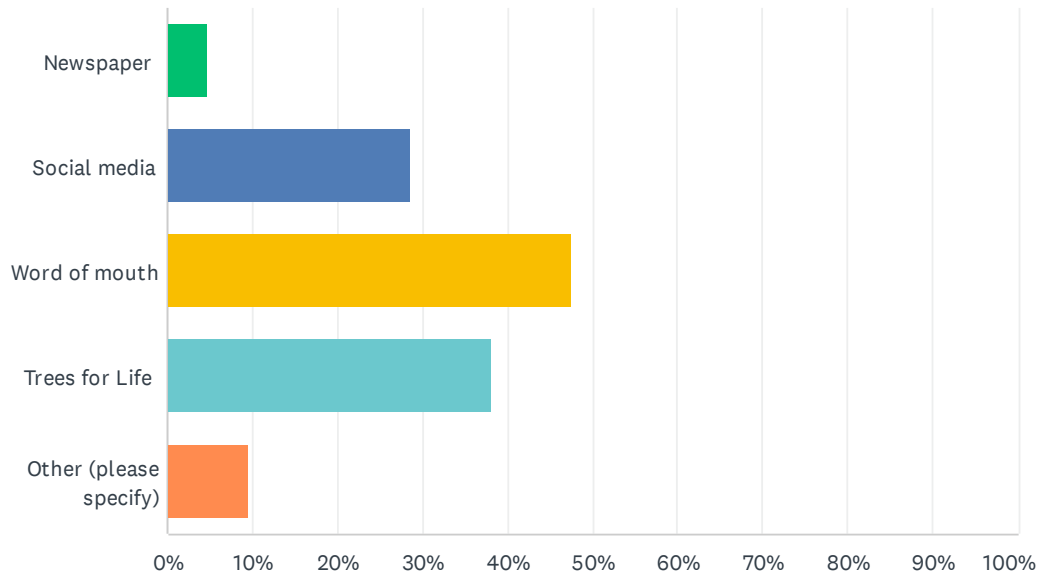
3. I am concerned about the vulnerable and valuable stands of Aspen trees along the banks of the Farrar.

4. I consider a landowner should have the absolute right to remove a beaver made obstruction to spawning salmon on his land.

Best regards,

Q1 Where did you first hear about the proposal to translocate beavers to Glen Affric and Strathglass?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0

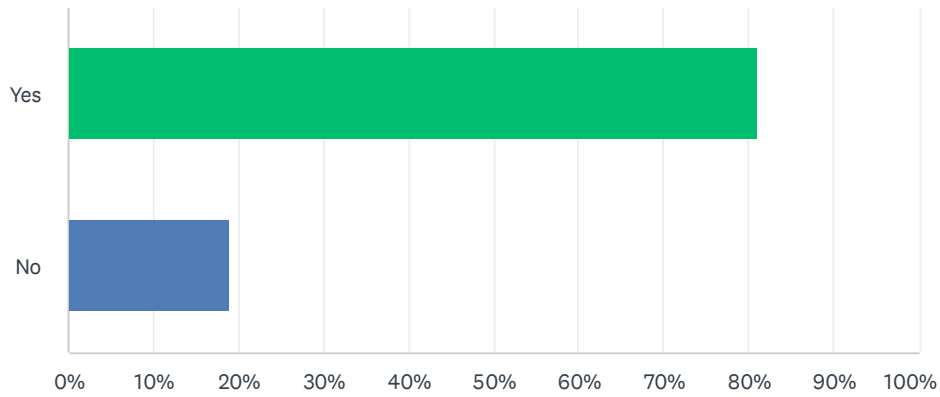


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Newspaper | 4.76% 1 |
| Social media | 28.57% 6 |
| Word of mouth | 47.62% 10 |
| Trees for Life | 38.10% 8 |
| Other (please specify) | 9.52% 2 |
| Total Respondents: 21 | |

| # | OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY) | DATE |
|---|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | email | 10/3/2022 7:16 PM |
| 2 | Rewilding Britain | 9/26/2022 9:07 PM |

Q2 Have you read the Affric & Strathglass beaver proposal and frequently asked questions on the Trees for Life website?

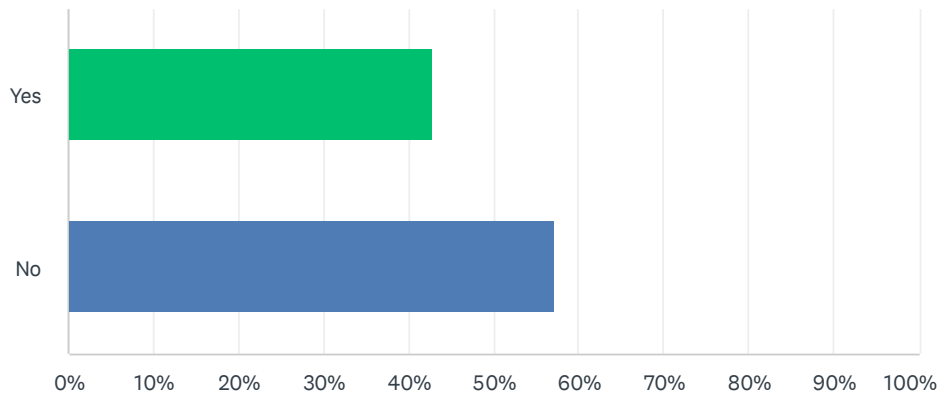
Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|----|
| Yes | 80.95% | 17 |
| No | 19.05% | 4 |
| TOTAL | | 21 |

Q3 Do you live in Glen Affric or Strathglass?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|----|
| Yes | 42.86% | 9 |
| No | 57.14% | 12 |
| TOTAL | | 21 |

Q4 To help understand the locations of responses, please enter the first part of your postcode.

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|----|-----------|--------------------|
| 1 | IV4 | 10/3/2022 11:03 PM |
| 2 | IV63 | 10/3/2022 7:49 PM |
| 3 | IV5 | 10/3/2022 7:16 PM |
| 4 | IV47JS | 10/3/2022 4:59 PM |
| 5 | IV63 | 10/3/2022 1:49 PM |
| 6 | IV2 | 10/3/2022 12:12 PM |
| 7 | IV4 | 10/3/2022 11:27 AM |
| 8 | Iv4 | 10/3/2022 11:26 AM |
| 9 | IV47LS | 10/3/2022 11:14 AM |
| 10 | IV4 | 10/3/2022 10:43 AM |
| 11 | IV4 | 10/3/2022 10:11 AM |
| 12 | IV4 | 10/3/2022 9:57 AM |
| 13 | EH4 | 9/27/2022 4:42 PM |
| 14 | DN4 | 9/26/2022 9:07 PM |
| 15 | ky11 | 9/22/2022 9:25 AM |
| 16 | IV4 7AD | 9/21/2022 9:12 PM |
| 17 | iv40 | 9/10/2022 10:16 AM |
| 18 | IV4 | 9/7/2022 11:13 AM |
| 19 | IV5 | 8/29/2022 8:55 AM |
| 20 | IV4 | 8/25/2022 9:45 PM |
| 21 | IV63 | 8/25/2022 3:55 PM |

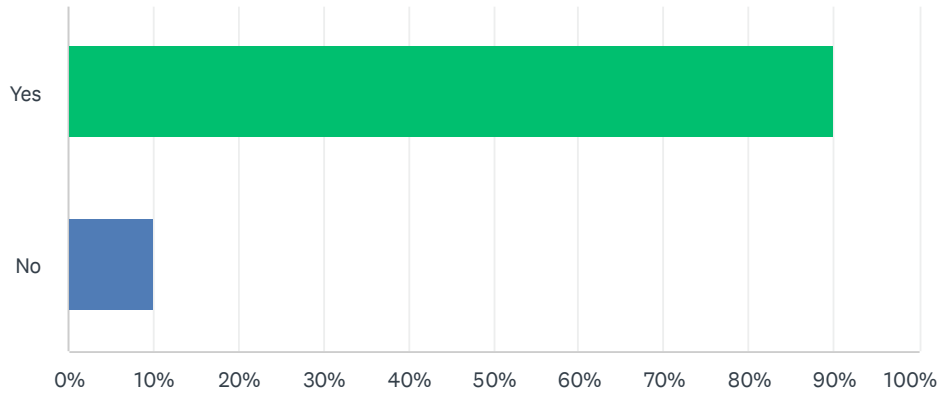
Q5 If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please share details of this below. If not, please leave blank.

Answered: 2 Skipped: 19

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|---|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | None | 10/3/2022 11:14 AM |
| 2 | Aigas Community Forest | 10/3/2022 9:57 AM |

Q6 Are you aware that a small beaver population, derived from escaped animals, has existed on the Rivers Glass and Beaully for ten years or more?

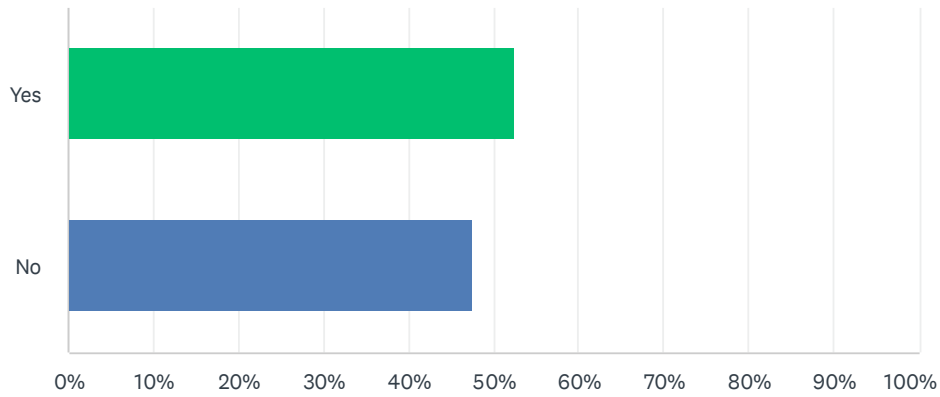
Answered: 20 Skipped: 1



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Yes | 90.00% | 18 |
| No | 10.00% | 2 |
| TOTAL | | 20 |

Q7 Have you encountered Eurasian beavers and/ or their habitat features (such as dams) first hand?

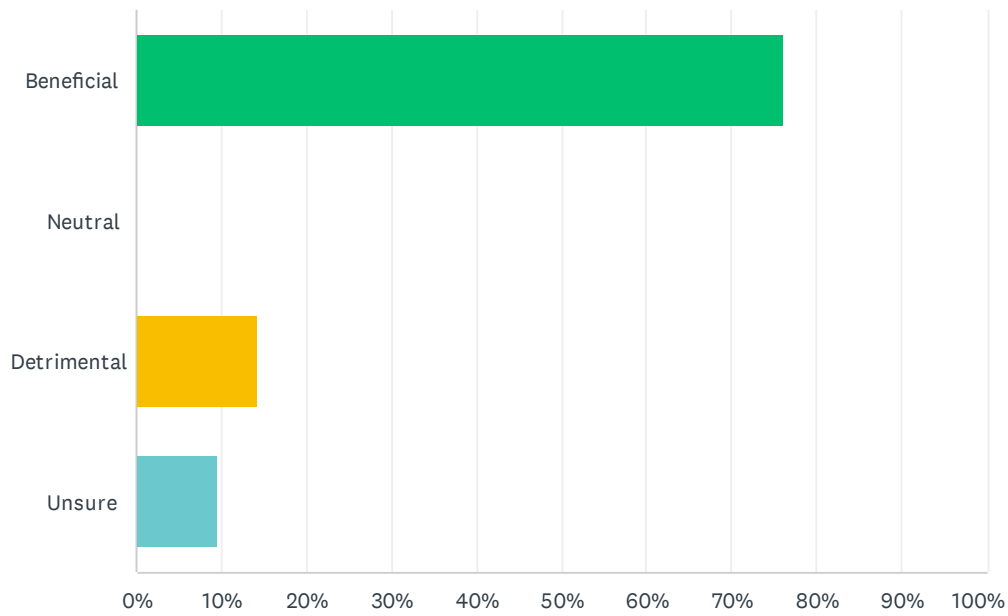
Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|----|
| Yes | 52.38% | 11 |
| No | 47.62% | 10 |
| TOTAL | | 21 |

Q8 What influence do you think the relocation of beavers to here will have on the natural environment in Glen Afric and Strathglass?

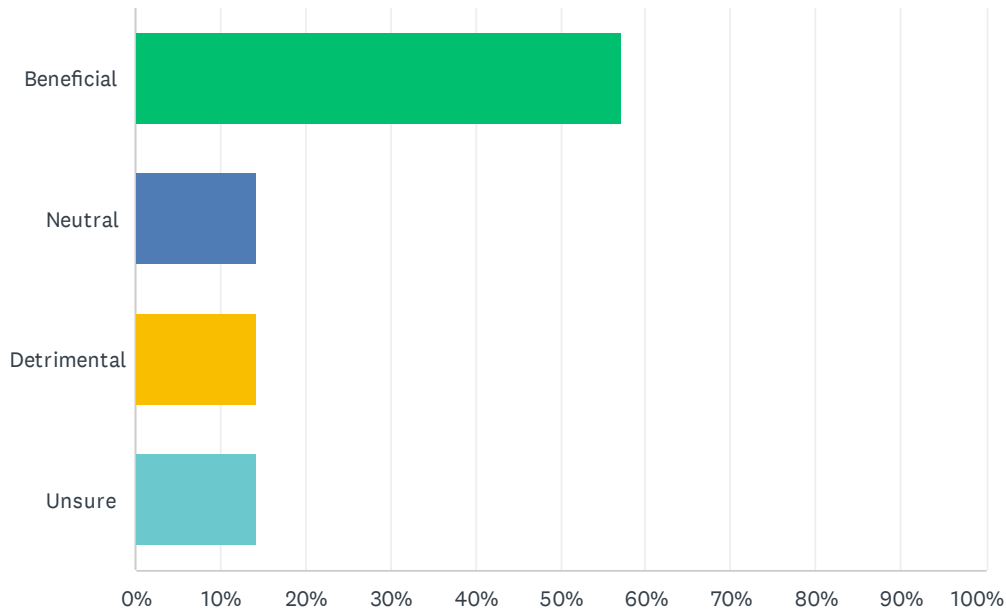
Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Beneficial | 76.19% | 16 |
| Neutral | 0.00% | 0 |
| Detrimental | 14.29% | 3 |
| Unsure | 9.52% | 2 |
| TOTAL | | 21 |

Q9 What influence do you think the relocation of beavers will have on other farming, fishing or other interests in Glen Affric and Strathglass?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Beneficial | 57.14% | 12 |
| Neutral | 14.29% | 3 |
| Detrimental | 14.29% | 3 |
| Unsure | 14.29% | 3 |
| TOTAL | | 21 |

Q10 Please provide a few short points to explain your choice of answer to Questions 8 & 9.

Answered: 20 Skipped: 1

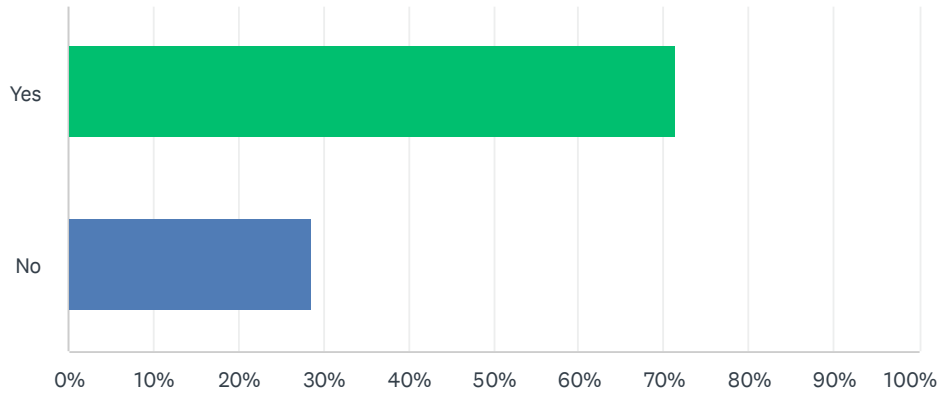
| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 1 | Beneficial to fishing (coppicing of trees will provide shade over river banks and more food for freshwater fish) & eco-tourism but burrowing into river banks may destabilise farmland along river banks bank collapse into the river unless/until trees are established along the riverbank with large roots that stabilise the riverbank; private house owners may not get permission from land owners to carryout necessary mitigation to prevent damage to their property. | 10/3/2022 11:03 PM |
| 2 | I am fully supportive of the reintroduction of beavers as a part of rewilding. However, there are some genuine concerns within the community about the possibilities of flooding - particularly if the beavers expand and migrate to upstream tributaries feeding into flood plains. The question is who will monitor the reintroduction over the coming years, and is there any guarantee that this monitoring can prevent homes being flooded before, rather than after any untoward effects. These questions from the community should be answered before reintroduction. | 10/3/2022 7:49 PM |
| 3 | Beavers should increase habitat for salmon by improving the character of the river bank. Dam building if they stay in the Glass should not be an issue. Tree felling is natural and they tend to avoid the alder which is the dominant species. It will also be beneficial for tourism in the area. Unlikely to have a significant impact on farming. | 10/3/2022 7:16 PM |
| 4 | I have lived and worked on the River Glass and Beaully as a Canoe guide for 14 years. I also spend. Lot of time guiding in the Glen Affric area. I have encountered Beaver many times on the River's Glass and Beaully and have kept an eye on Dam and burrow locations for years. In my opinion the Beaver are part of our environment and play an important role in managing the trees along the river side. They are not damming large sections of river or causing large scale damage to the trees. They are either living in burrows or trying hard to build Dams on small tributaries. | 10/3/2022 4:59 PM |
| 5 | I understand beavers to be ecosystem architects actively increasing biodiversity in and around the rivers where they are active. This is bound to have benefits for the health of river systems and the fish that depend on them. A healthy riparian woodland at higher elevations will also help to reduce the severity of future flooding in downstream farmland. | 10/3/2022 1:49 PM |
| 6 | Increased flooding and wetting of productive farmland will lead to loss of production within the farming parts of the area and lead to a loss of the benefits to the wider community of productive agriculture | 10/3/2022 12:12 PM |
| 7 | I believe beavers existed in this area naturally and are only no longer here as people eradicated them. I believe people cause far more issues in the environment than beavers would. Diverse species add to the general well being of the environment and beavers have a part to play. I don't believe they would adversely affect farming, fishing or other pursuits providing people are willing to be flexible and work with the program. Once again people bring the issue rather than beavers. I don't believe they would be beneficial to those activities either hence a response of neutral. | 10/3/2022 11:27 AM |
| 8 | Increasing biodiversity Creating pools for other wildlife | 10/3/2022 11:14 AM |
| 9 | I would like to hope they would be beneficial as I think it would be nice to have more of them, but I'm not sure if they may have any negative effects on what is a fragile ecosystem. I would be keen for some to be reintroduced and their impacts monitored. | 10/3/2022 10:43 AM |
| 10 | Relocation of beavers to the area will greatly enhance the biodiversity of the area, slowing the return of water from the catchment area to the sea and providing new habitat for other wildlife to benefit from. I think they will have minimum effect on farm land and fishing but will have a huge effect on bringing visitors to the area, which will bring money into the area for local businesses. | 10/3/2022 10:11 AM |
| 11 | ACF would principally welcome the reintroduction of the beaver to the area and has little concerns regarding potential negative impact on the forest and also the wider area. | 10/3/2022 9:57 AM |
| 12 | I am convinced that the introduction of beavers to areas such as Glen Affric will contribute | 9/27/2022 4:42 PM |

to a healthier ecosystem, revitalising plants and wildlife, as well as the health of the river itself. Additionally, the movement towards a 'wilder' Scotland with far greater biodiversity brings, I believe, a higher quality of life to those who come into contact with it.

| | | |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 13 | Beavers will have a huge impact by creating large areas of habitat for other species, which will only thrive through the creation of their dams. Local communities will benefit from natural flood management, water retention during periods of drought and increased fish stocks. Its a win-win. | 9/26/2022 9:07 PM |
| 14 | Beavers create pools which are good for young fish, beavers attract tourists which can be used to diversify income, beavers will encourage more natural management of water systems, beavers slow the flow of water reducing flooding | 9/22/2022 9:25 AM |
| 15 | Ecosystem engineer creating more freshwater pools etc | 9/21/2022 9:12 PM |
| 16 | untold damage they have caused to the tay and other rivers trees felled on small islands now eroded/ disapeared. continuous bank erosion. | 9/10/2022 10:16 AM |
| 17 | Beavers will improve water quality and increase diversity of plants and insects. In some cases their dams may slow flooding further downstream. | 9/7/2022 11:13 AM |
| 18 | Beavers are a key species in helping manage riparian ecosystems/environments. This will become more and more important with climate change. They will also help to counter the adaptation of the local environments that occurred as a consequence of all the hydro work and water abstraction etc. This historical hydro activity has contributed to for example the loss of salmon spawning areas | 8/29/2022 8:55 AM |
| 19 | Difficult to make a decision with such opposing views. Gut feeling is wildlife is more important than local farming | 8/25/2022 9:45 PM |
| 20 | damage to riverbanks, other natural habitats (king fishers, otters etc) damage to trees | 8/25/2022 3:55 PM |

Q11 Did you know that NatureScot operate a beaver management framework by which land managers can receive specialist advice and provides funding for measures to mitigate beaver impacts?

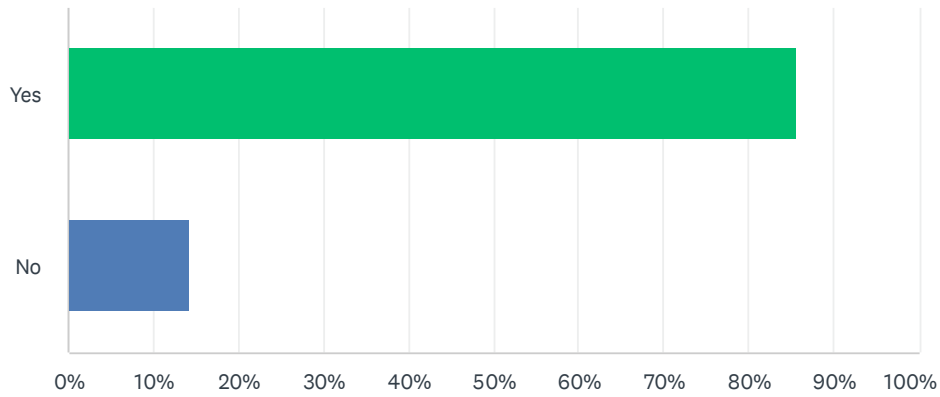
Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|----|
| Yes | 71.43% | 15 |
| No | 28.57% | 6 |
| TOTAL | | 21 |

Q12 Are you supportive of translocating beavers from conflict sites to other suitable sites in Scotland, as an alternative to killing?

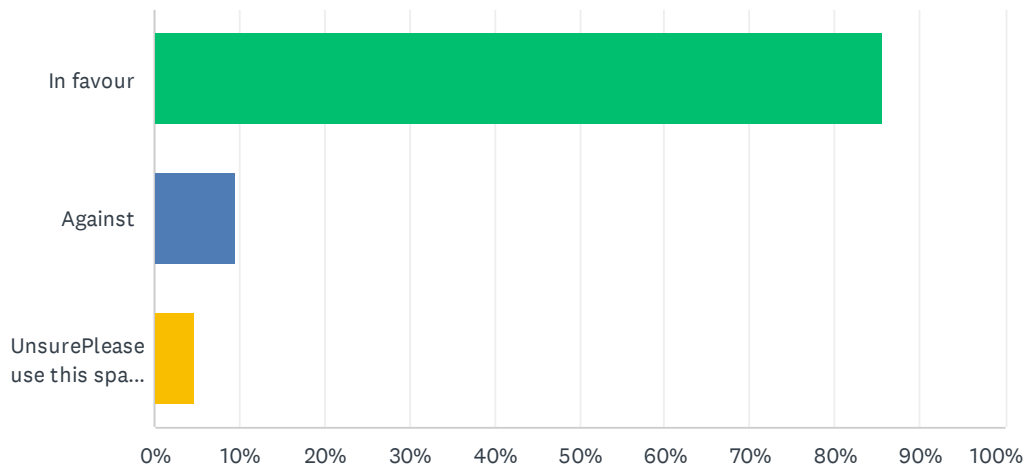
Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|----|
| Yes | 85.71% | 18 |
| No | 14.29% | 3 |
| TOTAL | | 21 |

Q13 What are your views on this proposal to relocate beavers to Glen Affric and Strathglass?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0

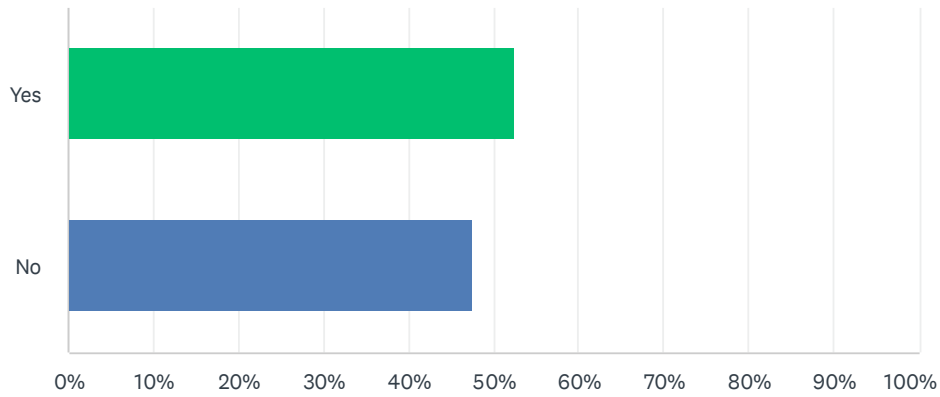


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| In favour | 85.71% | 18 |
| Against | 9.52% | 2 |
| UnsurePlease use this space to outline your reasons. | 4.76% | 1 |
| TOTAL | | 21 |

| # | UNSUREPLEASE USE THIS SPACE TO OUTLINE YOUR REASONS. | DATE |
|---|--|--------------------|
| 1 | most highland river banks kept stable by trees | 9/10/2022 10:16 AM |

Q14 If beavers were to be brought here, would you be interested in being involved with monitoring them?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|----|
| Yes | 52.38% | 11 |
| No | 47.62% | 10 |
| TOTAL | | 21 |

Q15 Is there anything else you would like to share about this beaver proposal?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 5

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 1 | Information sharing events should have taken place before the consultation. The consultation should have been much longer to enable more informed discussion and awareness raising about the benefits of beavers as well as promote understanding of available mitigation measures. | 10/3/2022 11:03 PM |
| 2 | Its about time we had beavers back across Scotland. This is a positive step towards that. Thank you for progressing this consultation. | 10/3/2022 7:16 PM |
| 3 | I can honestly say I spend more time on the Lochs and Rivers in this area than anyone else. I also take large numbers of fishermen canoeing on Sundays as they do not fish. I have been horrified by the number of highly educated and respected customers who are convinced Beaver eat fish and deplete fish stocks! I have spent hours talking about the benefits of having Beaver reintroduced but these people take a lot of convincing. A lot of these people are land owners and own fishing beats and are seriously concerned about the loss of trees. They think nothing of clear felling huge sections of their land to sell off the wood though! I believe a few educational events need to be held, information needs to be sent to fishing communities and concerns dealt with before a decision is made. I fully support the reintroduction of Beavers in my home area of Strathglass and I will actively help in any way I can. | 10/3/2022 4:59 PM |
| 4 | In addition to helping with biodiversity restoration and reducing downstream flooding, beavers will bring interest and enjoyment to local communities and visitors to the area. | 10/3/2022 1:49 PM |
| 5 | The move to translocate beavers without a proper financial plan of how damage would be compensated or any formal mitigation measures being suitably funded will have a very negative affect on those who suffer the negative consequences. This should be fully funded by anyone moving beavers to an area and to cover for the damage caused when the move further up or down stream from the release site | 10/3/2022 12:12 PM |
| 6 | No | 10/3/2022 11:27 AM |
| 7 | I think we should do all we can to ensure the preservation of the beavers. | 10/3/2022 11:26 AM |
| 8 | No. I'm very supportive. | 10/3/2022 11:14 AM |
| 9 | My name, | 10/3/2022 10:11 AM |
| 10 | If introduced I would likely holiday in the area, spending money in local businesses. | 9/26/2022 9:07 PM |
| 11 | Beavers are a protected species which at present, are easier to kill then move to alternative sites. This translocation work needs to become the norm and beavers should be established in all parts of their former range. | 9/22/2022 9:25 AM |
| 12 | there was good reason to remove them originally | 9/10/2022 10:16 AM |
| 13 | monitoring is essential to prevent damage to farmland and riverbanks, destruction to trees if population increases beyond a level the area can sustain and impact on health ecosystem. | 9/7/2022 11:13 AM |
| 14 | I hope this goes ahead as these animals should be an integral part of how environments like glen affric/strathglass could/should/must be managed in the future. | 8/29/2022 8:55 AM |
| 15 | No | 8/25/2022 9:45 PM |
| 16 | Consider the wider implications to the whole environment and look at the mess on the Tay - lets not replicate this problem here. Look at the dreadful problem with wild boar in our area - and growing which started with a Trees for Life project in Affric.... | 8/25/2022 3:55 PM |

Annex E

Beaver Habitat Index and Beaver Dam Capacity Models for Glen Affric to Crask of Aigas

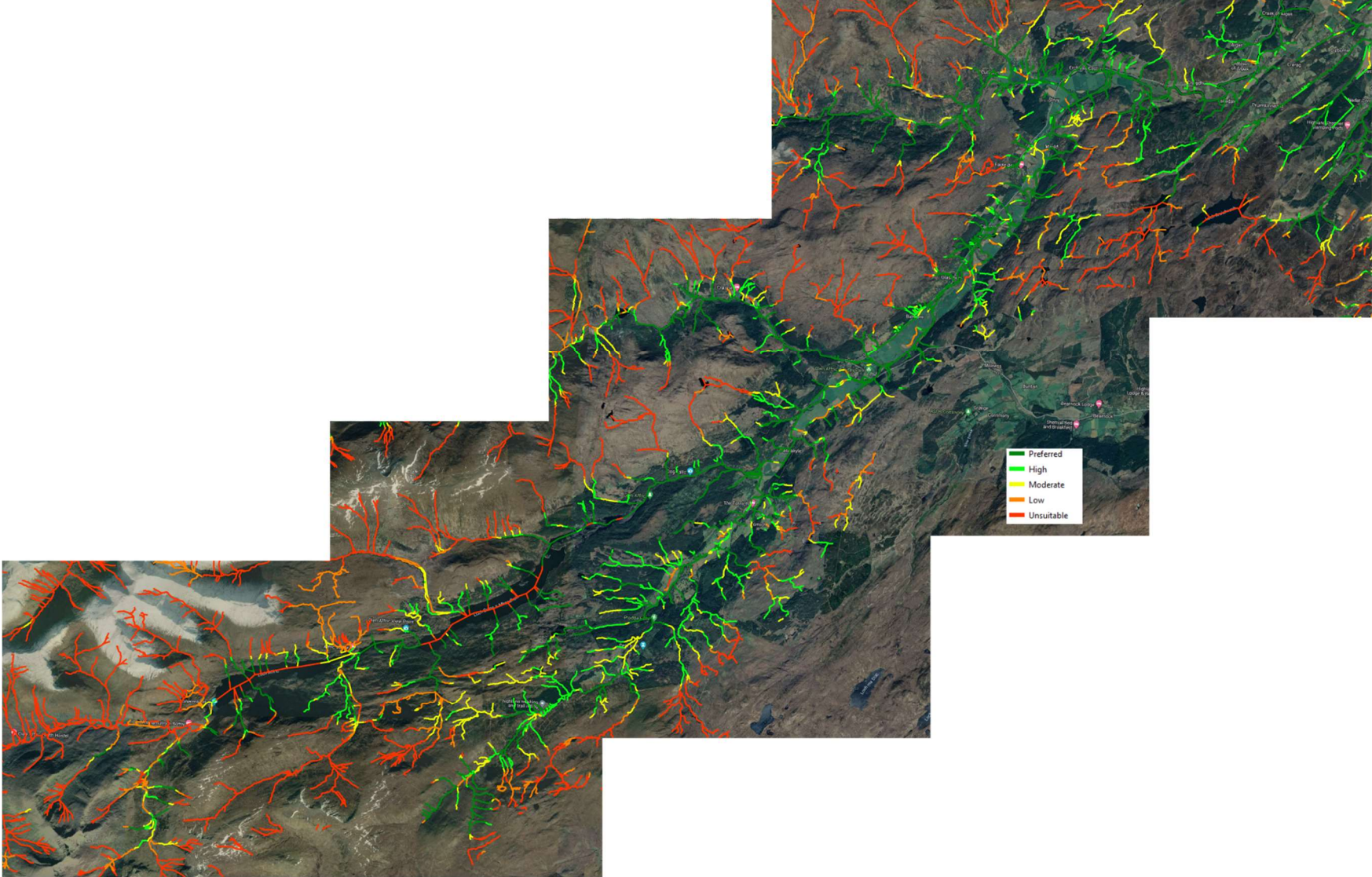
Prepared by Dr Alan Puttock from Exeter University, the maps below show the results of computer modelling of:

1. Beaver Habitat Index - the suitability of each stretch of water as beaver habitat;
2. Beaver Dam Capacity – the maximum potential prevalence of dams on a given stretch of river.

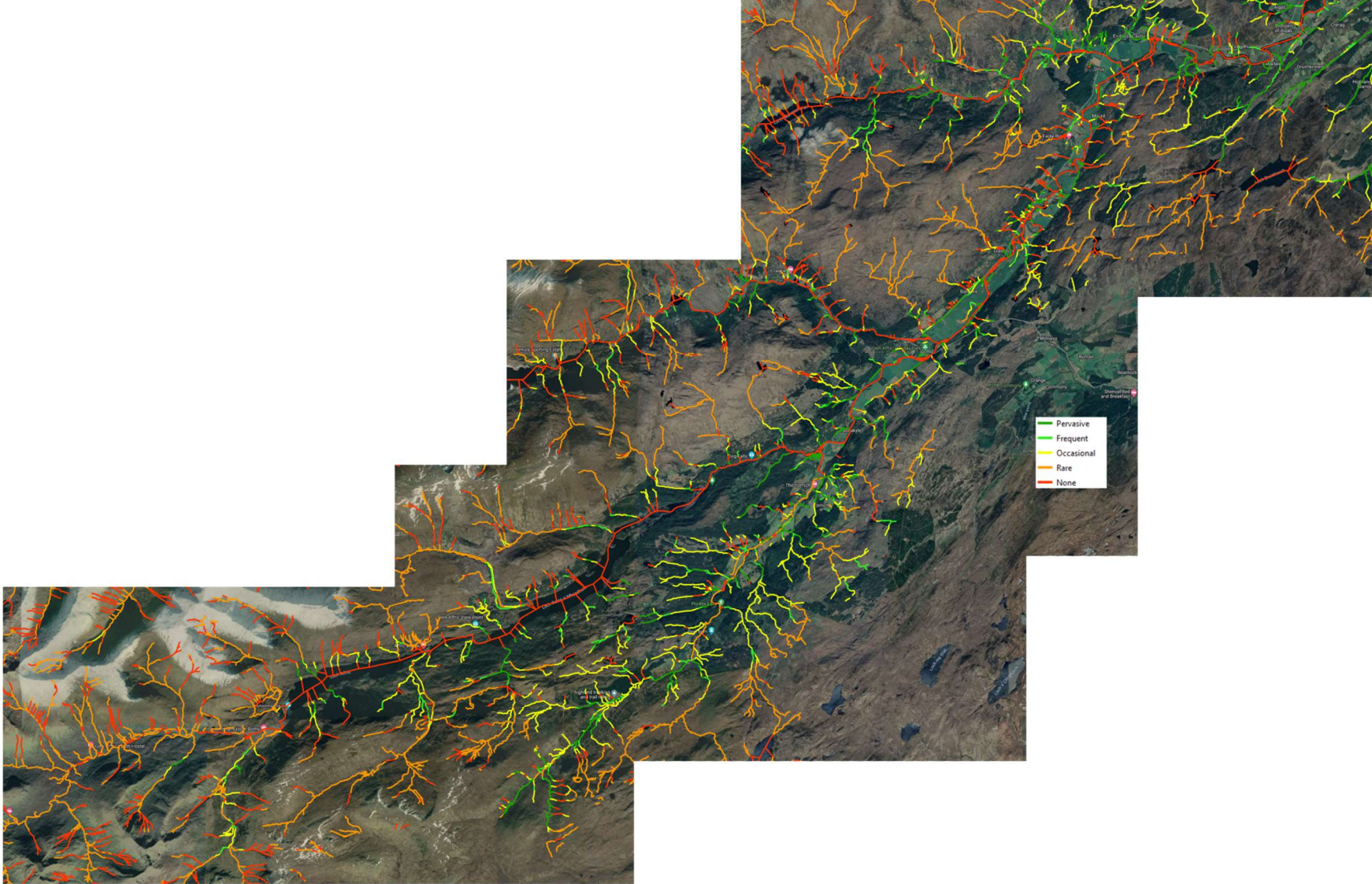
Both models use existing publicly available data for terrain and vegetation cover to provide indications of habitat suitability and damming frequency respectively. While these models are indicative, they provide a useful means of identifying areas where beaver impacts are most likely and thus where issues with land use interests might arise.

Zoom in to view closer details of each map. If you would like to view local detail at a higher resolution, please visit <https://treesforlife.org.uk/about-us/beaver-proposal/...>

Beaver Habitat Index Model for Glen Affric to Crask of Aigas



Beaver Dam Capacity Model for Glen Affric to Crask of Aigas



Annex F, Assessment of Beinn a' Mheadhoin dam in Relation to Beaver Dispersal

An additional assessment of the Beinn a' Mheadhoin dam was undertaken by Dr Roisin Campbell-Palmer, 2nd Nov 2022, to determine the potential for any released animals to traverse this infrastructure and colonise downstream.



Figure 1 & 2. Beinn a' Mheadhoin Dam, upstream.

There is no doubt this is a significant structure, spanning the river but also with significant front facing infrastructure which would make any scaling of the structure itself for successful up- or downstream dispersal impossible without significant injury or death of beaver attempting. It seems highly unlikely any beavers would even attempt direct scaling of the dam. There may be a possibility that naive individuals could get stuck or pulled into outflows at times of significant draw downs. This is infrequently reported on some human dam infrastructure across Europe. It is also reported that beavers can live successfully in the vicinity of significant human hydro-dams and these haven't been significant causes of mortality. It is very possible that any released beavers might investigate this structure but be largely deterred by the sheer vertical face with no immediate connection to downstream and are therefore likely to treat this as a significant deterrent to downstream colonisation.

This has been demonstrated over several years in the same catchment at the Aigas dam. Repeated field sign survey there has recorded mixed-age beaver field signs, some of which are several years old, to fresh signs recorded this year – clearly demonstrating that beavers utilise the area upstream of the dam. To date there is no evidence of successful dispersal past this Aigas dam, with no beaver field signs recorded in the reach between this and the next dam ~1.5km downstream at Kilmorack.



Figure 3. Beinn a' Mheadhoin Dam, downstream. Note significant vertical sides (and associated banks) and slipways would make climbing by beavers impossible to scale.



Figure 4. Looking upstream from dam, note banking is steep and rocky but could be climbed by beavers. Theoretically, beavers foraging in this area could walk into the woodland and find a way around the dam, although the gradient here is likely to be dissuasive and there is limited incentive for beavers to take this on, so this is unlikely in practice.



Figure 5. Looking downstream from dam, to right bank. This is steep ground for a beaver coming downhill, but would be navigable if any animals do circumnavigate the dam on this side in time.



Figure 6 & 7. On the upstream side of the dam, river left. Again, steep, rocky and difficult to climb banks are evident.

The most likely way beavers would disperse would be via circumnavigating the main dam structure via walking up and around, then dropping back into the river below the dam. Observations from Europe include reports of beaver traversing significant human hydroelectric dams after several years influenced by increasing population density in an occupied area, in other parts such infrastructure has indeed slowed beaver colonisation rates but not always acted as permanent obstructions.



Figure 8. Back (upstream) from the dam an expansive bay opens up in which shoreline is much lower gradient and well wooded.



Figure 9, 10 & 11. Lower gradient wooded sections on Loch Beinn a' Mheadhoin could be readily investigated by beavers.



Figure 12. Lower side of dam on left bank. Should a beaver get up the bank and around the dam to reach the hill crest, in theory it could keep going downhill in an attempt to return to water. Note that there are more fencing barriers and extensive vertical banks on this side, so the route back to the watercourse is likely to be a long way for a beaver to travel overland, but it is within their range.



Figure 13. Looking downstream from dam shows potential dispersal routes on either side if beavers could circumnavigate the dam. Theoretically this could be walked by beavers though their motivation to do so will be limited and the likelihood of beavers doing this in numbers is very questionable.

Conclusion

The Beinn a' Mheadhoin dam is likely to act as an immediate retention feature for released beavers. Beavers may not even immediately reside and utilise the area near the dam. In time, especially as the population density in Loch Beinn a' Mheadhoin and Loch Affric increases, there is likely to be greater investigation of this area by dispersing individuals, which in time may successfully circumnavigate the dam. This is only ever likely to be in low numbers and with high quality habitat immediately downstream, further onward dispersal is likely to be limited, especially with beavers already present in the river below. Therefore, it is questionable that this would be a significant issue.

The creation of a completely genetically isolated population, originating from low numbers of founding animals should be a consideration. Should beaver retention be a significant issue and resources available, short sections of strategic deterrent fencing could further secure the river

right side of the dam, though visitor access on the river left, associated with the parking loop, may be a challenge.

Annex G, Specialist Advice on the Habitat Suitability of Loch Beinn a' Mheadhoin as a Beaver Release site

Following the Glen Affric, River Glass and Beauly Catchment Beaver Feasibility Study (Campbell-Palmer, Needham & Puttock, June 2022), Trees for Life requested further detail to address specific concerns about the ecological suitability of a beaver release to Loch Beinn a' Mheadhoin in Glen Affric, above a large hydro dam. The ecological feasibility has been assessed according to habitat suitability and dam capacity modelling tools, along with a physical site visit to determine more specific features such as tree species and structure, extent and diversity of vegetation ground storey, bank composition and gradient etc, according to methods that have been widely implemented across Britain. In addition, we have consulted with two international beaver experts for their opinion on the ecological suitability of Glen Affric as a beaver release site. Wider social or political concerns if present will not be addressed by these authors.

A small number of beavers, with some breeding, are evident on the upper Beauly, however natural colonisation of Glen Affric would be considered highly unlikely given presence of significant hydrological dams. It could be considered that, in time and with population pressure motivation, low numbers of future offspring from any beavers released into Glen Affric could navigate these structures in a downstream manner. Though it should be noted this would be a difficult migration, would rely on a degree of chance (both in route finding and safe passage) and is highly unlikely for a number of years. Given the significant infrastructure, Glen Affric is likely to function as a relatively contained area.

The initial report and habitat modelling determined that suitable habitat exists, especially around the fringes of the lochs and that beavers could utilise vegetated inflows and associated lochans. Loch Beinn a Mheadhoin especially has extensive and diverse broadleaf regeneration. Winter extremes in this glen are likely to present some form of forage challenge though it should be noted beavers possess multiple adaptations for such conditions and Scotland does not present the same challenges as Scandinavia for example. Seasonal timing and siting beaver releases carefully is recommended to help any released animals establish suitable territories and shelters.

Bank composition and gradients in Glen Affric are persistently rocky and steep, however there are earthen and lower gradient sections that beavers could readily utilise. Additionally, inflow banks should be considered as suitable areas which beavers could quickly utilise and dam to provide controlled hydrological conditions and keep shelter features protected. A more significant predicted challenge at this site is likely to be related to water level management and any sudden, significant and/or prolonged drawdowns. During such periods, large sections of exposed bedrock along the shorelines could be likely. It should be noted that although beavers do not typically select such conditions, they are adapted to cope, most likely through seeking shelter opportunities that enable them to either control water levels (e.g. seeking damable situations such as inflow water courses) or modifying shelter constructions (e.g. digging deeper burrows/ construction lodges higher up the banks so that dry areas are provided across a range of water height levels). This adaptive behaviour is commonplace across the Eurasian beaver's range. This includes Scotland, where longer burrows and higher lodges with extended cover burrows have been observed on sections of the Tay catchment that are subject to significant water level fluctuation.

Dr Roisin Campbell-Palmer
Dr Alan Puttock
Gerhard Schwab
Prof Frank Rosell