

Mark Fisher

From: <Malcolm.Duce@scotland.gsi.gov.uk>
To: <mark.fisher@self-willed-land.org.uk>
Sent: 24 February 2009 10:59
Subject: EU Resolution - Wilderness in Europe

Dear Mr Fisher,

Thank you for your e-mail of 6 February 2009 to Michael Russell MSP, the former Minister for Environment, commending a Wilderness in Europe resolution that was adopted in the EU Parliament on 3 February 2009. I have been asked to reply.

The Scottish Government understands the importance of Scotland's wild places, and SNH research confirms its importance to Scotland's people. In August 2008, SNH produced a report entitled 'Public Perceptions of Wild Places and Landscapes in Scotland'. This was the first public survey to provide hard evidence of the general public's concern for issues of wilderness and landscape issues. The research used an approach designed to capture a representative sample of Scotland's population. It shows very strong public support for wild places, 91% of people thought that it was important for Scotland to have wild places.

In Scotland wildness is currently safeguarded through policy statements in NPPG14. This highlights the value and benefits wild places bring, their sensitivity to development and intrusive activity, and that they may have little or no capacity to accommodate new development. As part of NPPG14, local authorities are asked to "*include policies for protecting and enhancing the character of landscapes of regional importance, including any areas of importance for their wild land character.*" Some of NPPG14's policy advice is reflected in the parliamentary draft of the National Planning Framework 2 (paragraph 98).

You may be interested to know that SNH have prepared a policy statement on Wildness in Scotland's Countryside and has recently undertaken work with the National Park Authority to develop a methodology to map wildness in the Cairngorms National Park area. Further work will be needed to ensure that this initiative reflects the ecological, cultural and economic circumstances of Scotland.

Finally, I understand that SNH will be attending the Prague conference and looks forward to playing a constructive part in future discussions.

Malcolm Duce

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