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na Coilltearachd | Commission**
Alba | Scotland

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Dear Mr Munro

MOUNTAIN BIKING DEVELOPMENTS AT CARRON VALLEY FOREST

Thank you for your email of 27 September which you addressed to the former Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development. I have been asked to reply to you as Chief Executive of Forest Enterprise Scotland, with responsibility for management of our National forests.

Your positive comments in support of the new Laggan Wolftrax are most welcome. These trails are certainly a credit to the enthusiastic partnership that created them.

We do see mountain biking as a growth sport, in which Forestry Commission Scotland has an important role to play as a manager of large areas of potentially suitable land. This is clearly a view that is shared by groups of committed enthusiasts throughout Scotland because we are active in discussions and development of projects in almost all of our fifteen Forest Districts. In each place, supporters believe firmly in their case and show the imagination and determination needed to turn ideas into practice, just as you are doing at Carron Forest through building the first circuit.

Forestry Commission Scotland is committed to supporting the development of mountain biking and, as you know, has been a key partner in the creation of world class facilities at Fort William and in South Scotland. However, due to the number and scale of new proposals coming forward, we feel

that it is sensible to review national policy to ensure that resources are allocated in the most effective way and that trails extend, rather than replace, existing attractions. This review will take place during the next few months and discussion drafts will be circulated within the sport and associated organisations, so that we capture as wide a range and depth of opinion as possible. The Carron Valley Development Group will be included in this process.

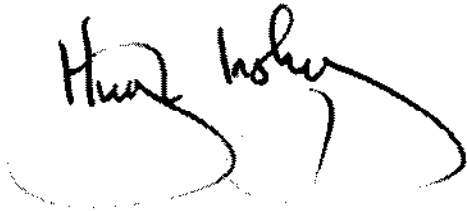
You may be aware that Stirlingshire and North Lanarkshire Councils, supported by our local staff, are planning a workshop of people and organisations interested in the development of recreation in Carron Forest and the Campsie and Touch Hills region. You have rightly pointed out that we need to include other user interests, and we certainly recognise how the forest could help support invigorated tourism activity in the wider area.

The council workshop will help our staff to frame a local strategy for recreational developments at Carron Forest, which will feed into the Forestry Commission national strategy discussion that I have mentioned. I am confident that these three processes will ensure that we collectively generate an imaginative, challenging and deliverable vision to work towards.

In the interim, we are supporting the construction, by the Carron Valley Development Group, of a loop connecting forest roads by supplying a proportion of the stone needed for surfacing, and by working with the group to identify additional routes for the future. You may also find it encouraging that District staff have highlighted Carron Forest as an area to be considered for central funds, should they be available in the short or medium term for use towards partnership recreation projects.

I appreciate that you would prefer to see more dramatic developments at an earlier stage. Nevertheless, I hope that you will be encouraged by the process outlined here and, like the Forestry Commission Scotland people in the area, will look forward to working for the promotion of tourism and outdoor activities, readily accessible to much of Central Scotland, at Carron Forest.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hugh Insley', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the typed name and title.

Hugh Insley
Chief Executive
Forest Enterprise Scotland