

6th December 2004

Hugh Insley
Chief Executive
Forest Enterprise Scotland
1 Highlander Way
Inverness Business Park
Inverness
IV2 7GB

Dear Mr Insley

Mountain Biking development at Carron Valley Forest

Many thanks for your letter of 19th October, (sent by email to Ruairidh Munro) which we read with great interest. Our committee have now instructed me revert back to you on this. There have been a number of important developments, including funding however, we have held off writing in order that we may summarise these together for you. These are enclosed on a separate page.

We firstly wish to respond to your own letter in the order written:

Paragraph 4

We assume your reference to 'extending rather than replacing' trails, alludes to the juxtaposition of Carron Valley visa vi The 7 Stanes and Fort William. CVDG understand the funding partnership issues however, we also hold the view that there is ample room to feed a growing sport with another major centre in Scotland. Quite naturally, we believe the most obvious place to locate this would be at Carron Valley. Again, we feel that its close proximity to Scotland's largest urban population speaks for itself.

We have already expanded to Michael Wall, the reasons why we believe this to be the case. The 7 Stanes is obviously doing wonders for local tourism. It is incomprehensible to assume that visitors from England, for instance, would bypass these to visit Carron Valley. Likewise, The Tweed Valley is on the doorstep of Edinburgh and is heavily attended by Edinburgh residents. The problem, as we see it, is that all these venues need cars to get to. By definition

they exclude a huge proportion of the Scottish population and they are not accessible by younger people in particular.

As you know, it is youngsters that are the lifeblood of any sport but the average man in the streets hasn't even heard of The 7 Stanes. I know this is anecdotal – but it's easily tested. We believe that Carron Valley can change this and that far from detracting from these other venues, its presence would enhance them.

As regards the policy review, Michael first raised this during our first meeting with him in June 03. We would be most interested to learn when you envisage the completion of this process and the timeframe for any action to be taken as a result thereof.

Paragraph 5

North Lanarkshire Council have now confirmed that they will host the workshop on 27th January 2005. We are firmly of the belief that CVDG were instrumental in ensuring this matter was brought to a conclusion. As you say, we do need to recognise the needs and aspirations of other user groups and the mtb community on CVDG have made strenuous efforts in this regard. Both Stirling and North Lanarkshire Councils are most keen to pursue socially inclusive projects and I now have it on the highest authority that they will wholeheartedly embrace development at Carron Valley.

Paragraph 6

We are encouraged by your comments here, particularly your choice of the words 'imaginative and challenging.' As you can see, I make no excuses for the fact this letter gives me a platform to repeat our assertion that Carron Valley is both uniquely positioned and has something fresh to bring to the mix. We look forward to the opportunity the workshop presents and to expanding on our vision.

Paragraph 7

CVDG have made huge inroads on trail construction and development. Amongst other matters, we have funded chainsaw training and certification, raised thousands for tool purchases, co opted professionals on to the group, built numerous robust bridges, formed strategic partnerships with sponsors. Given that none of us have yet ridden a bike over the trails I believe we have raised the bar in terms of the professionalism and commitment shown by a part time mtb group.

We also would wish to record that CVDG are most grateful for the assistance offered by Michael Wall, Rena Tarwinska, and their team in Lanark.

Thank you for your attention, we look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely

Niall R Thomson
Chairman
CVDG

cc: Michael Wall; Rena Tarwinska

CVDG at a glance

- Broad grass roots support.
- Properly constituted.
- Committee positions held by wide spectrum of professionals and Tradesmen.
- Highly active & self - reliant group of Trailbuilding volunteers.
- 2000+ man - hours spent on physical trail creation.
- Professional website and pro - active communication with large membership.
- Affiliated to IMBA.
- Fully insured.
- Registered as a Scottish Charity (Nov 04.)
- Supported by Scotland's 2 largest bike clubs (Glasgow and Stirling.)
- Funding & sponsorship from individual donation and local companies including Bikesops, Prudential, BP.
- Full and on going support of local MSP's.
- Engagement with local Councils at strategic level: CE, EDU, Sport & Planning.
- Strategic presence on Local Access Forums.
- Successfully obtaining funding in excess of £30,000.00 from Stirling and North Lanarkshire councils for completion of first loop by civil contractors.