



Tower House
Station Road
Pitlochry
PH16 5AN

28 September 2016

Mark Wrightham
Scottish Natural Heritage
Great Glen House
Leachkin Road
Inverness
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Dear Mark,

SCOPING FOR A STRATEGIC VISION FOR THE UPLANDS

Thank you for the invitation to respond to the initial scoping phase for development of a new upland vision for Scotland. The John Muir Trust welcomes this initiative and the opportunity to contribute to its development. We acknowledge that there are multiple and overlapping government strategies that impact on our uplands but there is no overarching agreed vision to help set the context for these and drive alignment. We see that as a key purpose but there are other advantages of investing in this process, namely the opportunity it affords to think long term and draw in a range of stakeholder interests beyond those who typically associate with land management and the environment.

The recently published Scottish Wildlife Trust Living Landscapes in the Uplands sets out some useful background definitions and policy context for ecological issues as a helpful start point. However, it ignores the role of landscape and its impact on tourism which is the most important economic driver of sustainable development associated with our uplands. Any new vision should ensure this aspect is covered.

We don't think it appropriate to be too prescriptive about what is in or out of the vision at this stage and suggest that the process is as inclusive as it can practically be from the outset. It should however not try to compete with existing strategies (Land Use, Agriculture, Forestry, Energy) but instead set out a long term aspiration for the uplands, both its ecological state and the multiple benefits that can be derived to enable us all to thrive, not least the people and communities who live and work there. Given its potential scope we believe that this initiative should be led by the Scottish Government, with support from SNH and other agencies whose remit extends there. We would suggest Visit Scotland be included from the outset.

Thank you again for instigating this process and we look forward to contributing to the conversation and how the qualities and values of wildness might be protected and enhanced in a broader vision for our uplands.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stuart Brooks".

Stuart Brooks
Chief Executive Officer