

From: Adam Smith
Sent: 14 October 2016 16:09
To: Mark Wrightham
Cc: Merlin Becker
Subject: GWCT input to scoping of Upland Vision

Dear Mark

There are a range of land use options for upland areas. Community and social activity, economic activity through recreation and forestry and climate management are increasingly being discussed and acted on. Upland sporting and farming management generate unique biodiversity benefits and income streams that Scotland cannot afford to lose.

As a key part of the uplands heather dominated moorlands form the central part of what defines Scotland's national and international image. Open heather moorland delivers many important outcomes for Scotland, only one of which is a recreational interest in shooting.

Moorland owners see driven grouse shooting as the incentive to continue to manage for these iconic habitats, species and landscape. The motives and incentives to deliver heather dominated moors revolved around a passionate enthusiasm for projects that generate a unique shooting experience and a landscape and wildlife assemblage that many owners believe cannot be replicated in any other way.

A key challenge is for driven grouse shooting and showing how it can incorporate these new land use options, and thus deliver an enhanced balance of outcomes. It was felt that an adaptive management plan approach could be beneficial, if this was part of a constructive overall vision for moorland as a key part of upland.

An upland vision could unify the management requirements to deliver these outcomes and help resolve conflicting strategies between government agencies. GWCT believe developing such a vision should take a facilitated approach using the 'Understanding Predation' type model which will allow all parties and particularly large, well informed and well co-ordinated bodies to input evidenced views.

The output should aim to clarify where commonality and differences lie in how Scotland's uplands are seen to develop. A future vision for the Scottish Uplands must incorporate: sections on balancing raptor and grouse management, identifying where the passionate interest in the uplands overlaps and varies between groups (for example how are CNPA and other bodies so sure there is such a strong passion for increased tree cover in the uplands?); how to square the management versus wildness debate; how to resolve the motivation to invest in heather moorland with the risk of losing investment if government calls for big strategic change; an employment vision to provide confidence and continuity if the vision move uplands towards more climate change related outcomes (peat and forestry).

I hope you find this submission useful in scoping for SNH the opportunity of an upland vision.

Yours

Adam Smith