



Scottish Campaign for National Parks

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Mr Gordon Watson
Director of Planning
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park
Carrochan
Carrochan Road
Balloch
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6 December 2009

Dear Mr Watson

Application Number: LT/2009/0235/PAC/S
Development Proposed: Proposed Gold Mine with associated service and production buildings, plant, tailings storage area, pond and gauging station, access roads and bridges and diversion of burn.

We have received consultation documents from Dalgliesh Associates via our sister organization, the Campaign for National Parks (England and Wales) and have taken the opportunity to attend the two exhibition days at Tyndrum Community Hall and visit the site. The outcome was discussed at our Executive Committee on 24 November and I have been asked to write to lodge a formal objection to the planning application for the proposed gold mine.

As you will be aware, there is a long and checkered history to attempts to extract gold in commercial quantities from this area. The remains of the old mine which looks abandoned but is claimed to be on a 'care and maintenance basis', is a classic example of an unsatisfactory scheme which has created unsightly dereliction totally inappropriate to a national park or indeed, any rural location.

The present interest in opening up the mine on a much grander scale appears to have been stimulated by what might prove a temporary surge in world gold prices brought about by the current financial crisis. Whilst the new applicants have made a much greater effort to demonstrate a better organised and ordered approach to mineral extraction, the end product would be completely inappropriate within the national park. The scheme involves massive earthmoving operations to divert a stream and create an area for tipping the tailings from the extraction operation. This will involve creating embankments up to 42m high containing about 1,000,000 tons of waste tailing material. The landform would be unnatural and the effect would be to create within the national park, something akin to a major opencast operation for a period of up to 10 years.

The plant on site will include a massive rock crushing operation and a smelter to deal with 25% of the gold that is extracted on site. It is proposed that the plant would be screened by a major earth bund presumably for landscape as well as noise reasons. There would, however, be no hiding the chimney and its flume which would introduce a further industrial element into the landscape. There is also the risk of the flue gases damaging woodland and forestry for some distance.

Because of the nature of the earthmoving operations and the value of material which would be dealt with on site, the area would have to be secure



on grounds of both public safety and security of the valuables. All this would be happening on what is currently an attractive route through the glen up to Ben Lui and beyond and from where it would very visible.

The road up the glen to the site would have to be much improved to allow access for major plant and building construction operations resulting in urbanization of what is currently quite a wild, remote, mountain and valley landscape.

The applicants have suggested that about 50-60 jobs will be created of which 13 would be specialist operatives brought in from outside the area. They do however claim that the remainder could provide employment for local people. We consider this to be highly unlikely because there are insufficient people locally to carry out this tough and rugged work and past experience suggests that many people wishing to invest and develop in the highland areas have found it necessary to import staff in order to keep operations going.

In the light of the foregoing, the Scottish Campaign for National Parks considers that the application should be refused for reasons including the following:

1. gold mining on this scale is an inappropriate use in a national park whose prime purpose is the conservation of the landscape and environment of the area;
2. the nature of the operation would have the effect of creating something akin to an opencast mine for a period of 10 years or more, doing serious damage to the landscape which, when restored, would be in an alien form;
3. the earthmoving operations and the plant and machinery would exclude the public from the whole of the site throughout the life of the mine thus removing access rights so recently achieved through the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003;
4. the introduction of a significant mining operation would do serious damage to the reputation of the park and hence the tourism industry on which the area depends so heavily;
5. any pollution as a result of draining the tailings could threaten the Ben Lui and River Tay SACs;
6. there are no overriding reasons in the public interest to depart from the major purpose of the national park which requires greatest weight to be given to conservation in circumstances where there is an irreconcilable conflict between it and other proposed activity.

We urge the Park Authority to refuse this application and take the necessary enforcement action to restore the damaged landscape created by the earlier mining activity and for which a bond was deposited with the former Stirling District Council.

Yours sincerely

Chairman