

**From:** [Hymers M \(Michael\)](#)  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] [Forestry FLS Corporate](#); [Prest G \(Graeme\)](#); [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** For Information: Parliamentary Correspondence - Glen Affric Beavers (Case Ref: KF15803)  
**Date:** 28 June 2023 17:23:56  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)  
[image007.png](#)

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[REDACTED]

Thank you for your e-mail and the heads up.

I fully support the approach being taken, and at least we are forearmed, should Trees for Life, choose to escalate to Simon and/or Ministers.

Regards

**Michael Hymers | Director of Corporate Services**

Forestry and Land Scotland, Head Office, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness, IV3 8NW  
m: [REDACTED] | e: [michael.hymers@forestryandland.gov.scot](mailto:michael.hymers@forestryandland.gov.scot)



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**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 28, 2023 12:55 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>; Hymers M (Michael) <Michael.Hymers@forestryandland.gov.scot>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>; Forestry FLS Corporate <corporate@forestryandland.gov.scot>; Prest G (Graeme) <Graeme.Prest@forestryandland.gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: (Case Ref: KF15803)

Thanks [REDACTED]

I'm happy with the revised lines so content for [REDACTED] to reply to Ms Forbes on behalf of the Region if the Corporate Team are OK with this. As discussed [REDACTED] and I are meeting with Steve Micklewright and [REDACTED] of TFL tomorrow so we will relay a similar message but grateful for sight of your briefing note when you have it.

Michael

Likely that TFL will see our engagement on this as being over cautious so its

possible that this could be escalated again as TFL did in the Autumn of last year when they wrote to Simon if I recall correctly.

Kind Regards



**██████████ | Regional Manager - North**

Forestry and Land Scotland, Tower Road, 1 Smithton, Inverness, IV2 7NL

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**From:** ██████████ <██████████@forestryandland.gov.scot>

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 27, 2023 7:50 PM

**To:** ██████████ <██████████@forestryandland.gov.scot>; ██████████  
<██████████@forestryandland.gov.scot>

**Cc:** ██████████ <██████████@forestryandland.gov.scot>; Hymers M (Michael)  
<[Michael.Hymers@forestryandland.gov.scot](mailto:Michael.Hymers@forestryandland.gov.scot)>; Forestry FLS Corporate  
<[corporate@forestryandland.gov.scot](mailto:corporate@forestryandland.gov.scot)>

**Subject:** RE: (Case Ref: KF15803)

Hi ██████████,

Thanks for copying me into this thread, and good to catch-up with you today and talk through the background. I had not been aware of any discussion with Ms Forbes and I am not sighted on the most recent TFL proposals, so it was good to clarify on where we now are.

As it happens Simon has also been approached separately by an MSP today and has agreed to meet and discuss FLS's position with respect to accepting beavers across the wider land holding. I will be preparing a briefing note for that which may also be helpful for you. I am CC'ing corporate into this so that they are aware of both ongoing discussions.

As we discussed the original draft (below) did not suitably answer the original request from Ms Forbes. Subject to agreement from ██████████ and yourself I have suggested the reply is edited along the following lines.

Thanks.

Dear Ms Forbes,

Case Ref: KF15803

I apologise for the delay in reply to your request for clarification on the draft "Post-release Monitoring Plan for Beavers in Glen Affric" document, which suggests that Forestry & Land Scotland (FLS) will be applying for a species release licence from NatureScot.

The aforementioned draft report, written by Trees for Life (TfL), does correctly report that FLS is highly supportive of the project in principle.

Throughout the process however we have always maintained with TfL that before agreeing to apply for a licence we would obtain agreement from local communities and individuals potentially affected by the proposed releases.

We feel that consensus has not yet been built with the local community, and we are not confident the community is broadly supportive of the current proposal.

At present we are not ready to submit a license application for the release of beavers for Glen Affric for release in 2023.

With Thanks,

██████████

██████████ | FLS Environment Manager  
Forestry and Land Scotland, Silvan House  
m: ██████████ e: ██████████@forestryandland.gov.scot



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**From:** ██████████ <██████████@forestryandland.gov.scot>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 26, 2023 1:29 PM  
**To:** ██████████ <██████████@forestryandland.gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: (Case Ref: KF15803)

Hello ██████████,

Could you have a look at the revised and much briefer proposed response to send to Ms Forbes regarding beaver release in the Cairngorms? ██████████ had written a much more expansive version, but ██████████ and I feel something more succinct is

appropriate.

██████████

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Dear Ms Forbes,

Thanks for finding the time to get in touch on these matters. The draft report written by Trees for Life (TfL) does indeed suggest that FLS is highly supportive, however this is not an accurate reflection of the position of Forestry and Land Scotland.

We are having some difficulty with editorial control of draft TfL documents where FLS' intentions, motivations or ambitions is mentioned, however, we are continuing to work with them in partnership and hope to achieve landscape-scale goals with them in future. At this time, we don't share TfL's level of enthusiasm for the release of beaver in the catchments mentioned – we are seeking to reflect the wider consensus across communities affected by the proposed releases, the wider public, eNGOs (such as TfL) and neighbouring landowners. We do not feel the consensus has been built at this time and until we are confident that it has, we will not be submitting a license application for the release of beavers.

With Thanks,

██████████

██████████ MICFOR BScFOR(Hons) | Planning Manager

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**From:** ██████████ <██████████@forestryandland.gov.scot>

**Sent:** Thursday, June 15, 2023 12:56 PM

**To:** ██████████ <██████████@forestryandland.gov.scot>

**Cc:** ██████████ <██████████@forestryandland.gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: (Case Ref: KF15803)

Thanks ██████████

Great, much appreciated. [REDACTED] confirmed in a phone call yesterday morning that we're in a position to take a more proactive stance - expressing support for the proposal to introduce beavers to Glen Affric but emphasising that we're mindful of the importance of working closely with communities and other stakeholders at each stage of the process.

Cheers

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | North Region Environment Advisor

Forestry and Land Scotland, Tower Road, Smithton, Inverness, IV2 7NL

t: +44 (0) 3000676100 m: [REDACTED] e: [REDACTED] [@forestryandland.gov.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot)



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**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>

**Sent:** 15 June 2023 11:59

**To:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>

**Cc:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: (Case Ref: KF15803)

Hello [REDACTED],

Thanks for getting this back to me so promptly. We've had a few queries in from Ms. Forbes, so we'll collate the information requested and ensure we're not duplicating or returning contradictory information to her. I'll make sure that you're kept in the loop when we're going to send this back.

With Thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] MICFOR BScFOR(Hons) | Planning Manager

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**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 14, 2023 9:03 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: (Case Ref: KF15803)

Hi [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

Please see below my draft response to Kate Forbes MSP. Will fill in dates and titles of docs referenced when I get time. Very rushed, but it's a start. Hope to discuss the background I've gleaned on this when we have time soon.

Dear Kate

Thanks for finding the time to get in touch on these matters. The draft report written by Trees for Life does indeed suggest that FLS is highly supportive. Throughout our discussions with Trees for Life regarding the proposals, I and other colleagues in FLS have emphasised to TfL that FLS must remain neutral in our stance. FLS has requested of TfL that all documents and media content they produce, which reference FLS's role in these proposals, should not imply or state that FLS is taking a particular position. It's been emphasised that it's accurate for TfL to simply state that FLS are participating in the scoping process.

On some occasions, I've had to ask [REDACTED] (TfL) to remove reference to any implied or stated position from FLS in documents, information sheets, press releases, online content etc. that TfL produces. I had thought we'd established a routine where TfL provides FLS with a draft of any text referencing our involvement, and that FLS would be given the opportunity to approve the final wording before it's circulated or goes live online.

This particular draft report 'Post-release Monitoring Plan for Beavers in Glen Affric' was circulated by [REDACTED] at a time when I was on sick leave, so this one slipped through the net and I can only apologise for that. I've since re-emphasised to [REDACTED] that TfL allow FLS to preview, comment and suggest edits to any texts they produce referencing FLS's role. I've also discussed with [REDACTED] that moving on to discuss monitoring at this time implies a predetermined outcome as far as the likelihood of beaver translocation taking place in Glen Affric, at a point when no decision has yet been taken on whether this is going ahead.

[REDACTED] has organised and held 2 workshops now on this topic at Cannich Village Hall. I attended the first one in April and was to attend the second one too (on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May). As it happened, I was working next door in the fire station that evening, co-ordinating the FLS response to the wildfire, in support of the fire service. Despite reservations that the chosen topic of the TfL workshops could be construed as jumping the gun, it was felt that FLS should attend, so we could present FLS's position directly to the community and begin to have a more prominent involvement in local discussions on these matters.

A bit of background at this point on FLS North Region's participation thus far in the

scoping exercise on beaver translocation may be helpful. FLS's environment teams throughout Scotland were tasked last year with scoping the potential for introducing beavers onto suitable areas of the national forest estate, under the direction of NatureScot, via Lorna Slater's request of **date**. In the months which followed, a small number of potentially suitable locations were identified on FLS managed land, both in the Beaully catchment and the Spey catchment.

In both catchments, the suitable habitat extends across multiple landholdings and multiple villages. It was recognised from the outset that a thorough consultation with communities, landowners, tenants, local businesses and a wide range of other stakeholders should take place before any specific proposals to translocate beavers would progress any further.

NatureScot requested that the FLS Environment teams undertake that consultation. However, details of the locations in the Beaully catchment which might be considered for translocation of beavers were not confirmed until a survey report by The Beaver Trust (commissioned by Trees for Life) was passed on to FLS on **date**. This report is entitled "**.....**".

You may recall, the timescale set by Ms Slater for translocation of beavers to begin was by end of 2022. In the circumstances, it became clear that the environment team in FLS North Region would not have the capacity to undertake a meaningful and thorough consultation within the requested timescale.

At this time, Trees for Life put the proposal to FLS and NatureScot that TfL would undertake the community and stakeholder consultation for areas of the Beaully catchment under consideration for translocation. TfL had by this point already been invited to undertake a consultation on behalf of 4 private landowners in Glen Affric and Strathglass. The consultation took place between **date** and **date**, and I understand members of your team in the constituency office were in contact with Trees for Life during the consultation period. The Trees for Life consultation report is entitled '**.....**'. A series of research activities were also commissioned by NatureScot in relation to the scoping exercise. As part of that, UHI were tasked with a further exercise in community engagement as part of their sociological research, which has yet to be published. Please let me know if you would like me to forward on the 2 documents commissioned/produced by Trees for Life referred to above, if not already provided by **.....**.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you further at your convenience and hope the above proves useful in the meantime. As a Leodhasach, I feel I should also sign off with a suitable salutation to a fellow Gael.

Le deagh dhùrachd agus an dòchas cothrom fhaighinn coinneachadh gu pearsanta.

**.....**

**.....** | North Region Environment Advisor

Forestry and Land Scotland, Tower Road, Smithton, Inverness, IV2 7NL

t: +44 (0) 3000676100 m: **.....** e: **.....** [@forestryandland.gov.scot](mailto:.....@forestryandland.gov.scot)



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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 12 June 2023 12:02  
**To:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: (Case Ref: KF15803)

Hi [REDACTED]  
Would be great to get in touch with Kate Forbes about this, a fellow Gael and we have plenty to catch up on as far as briefing Kate about land management challenges and opportunities in her constituency. There's been many things I thought to reach out to her about in recent years, to brief her and discuss the issues, but she's been way too busy to expect her to engage, until relatively recently.

Happy to discuss this with Kate directly, once we have clarified [REDACTED]/FLS position on this. TfL's document is accurate as far as the discussions TfL have had with [REDACTED] so far, but it's an evolving process, influenced by consultations with neighbouring landowners, tenants, community residents, businesses and a range of stakeholders including the NFU, Beaulieu District Fishery Board and many others.

[REDACTED] and I will hopefully catch up with you about this [REDACTED], when you can spare the time. I'll explain the background either later today or tomorrow when we meet [REDACTED], whichever works for you.

Looks like we'll have a meeting about moving peat for the next phase of the A9 dualling to fit in tomorrow afternoon as well. Can come to Smithton for that.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

**[REDACTED] | North Region Environment Advisor**  
Forestry and Land Scotland, Tower Road, Smithton, Inverness, IV2 7NL  
**t:** +44 (0) 3000676100 **m:** [REDACTED] **e:** [REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot



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**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 12 June 2023 11:41  
**To:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>  
**Subject:** FW: (Case Ref: KF15803)

Morning [REDACTED],

Is Ms. Forbes interpretation of the Trees for Life document accurate? I don't have a copy of the document referenced as it hasn't been published (?) but I'm thinking that either yourself or [REDACTED] have contributed to this I can catch up with you later today (after around 4) or tomorrow if you'd prefer to have a conversation rather than email.

With Thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] MICFOR BScFOR(Hons) | Planning Manager

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**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 2, 2023 8:52 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>; Forestry FLS Corporate <corporate@forestryandland.gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: (Case Ref: KF15803)

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for sending the holding reply – that will suffice for a few days at least as the workshop looks like it's already gone by (in future please let our corporate mailbox know of any MSP enquiries, copied in here).

I'd agree that we don't add to [REDACTED] workload just now. [REDACTED] – could you please

pick up with [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] when possible.

thank you

[REDACTED] | Regional Visitor Services Manager

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t: +44 (0)131 370 5918 m: [REDACTED] e: [REDACTED] [@forestryandland.gov.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot)

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**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>

**Sent:** 02 June 2023 08:44

**To:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
<[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>

**Subject:** FW: (Case Ref: KF15803)

**Importance:** High

Hi both,

I have sent a holding reply to Kate Forbes explaining that [REDACTED] has been busy with the fire all week. I hesitate to send this to [REDACTED] yet as she is still busy and looks like she has been working all hours.

Would you like to respond or send to [REDACTED] when you think the time is right? I'm happy to send a reply but unsure what is best to say.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Kate Forbes MSP <[Kate.Forbes.msp@parliament.scot](mailto:Kate.Forbes.msp@parliament.scot)>

**Sent:** 30 May 2023 17:06

**To:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>

**Subject:** (Case Ref: KF15803)

Dear [REDACTED],

I am writing to you following the draft "Post-release Monitoring Plan for Beavers in Glen Affric" document, which suggests that Forestry & Land Scotland (FLS) will be applying to NatureScot for a licence which would allow beavers to be released in Loch Beinn a'Mhedahoin. The document, sent on by the charity Trees for Life, suggests FLS is highly supportive.

While this is only a draft, I understand there is a further workshop in Glen Affric this evening to discuss the document and I would therefore be grateful if you would be able to clarify FLS' position on this matter.

Thank you for giving this your consideration and I welcome your response.

Kind regards,

Kate

Kate Forbes, MSP  
Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch

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