

## **Moriston Wind Farm proposed by EON**

### **Statement of Concern from Trees for Life**

Trees for Life is very concerned about the planned wind farm of up to 30 turbines proposed by the company EON for Glenmoriston, and if/when the proposal is submitted for planning permission, we will lodge an objection against it.

The reasons for our concern include:

1. Glen Moriston is a relatively unspoilt Highland glen, and a major scenic tourist route, for visitors travelling between the top destinations of Loch Ness and Skye. The glen is already blighted visually by the newly upgraded Beaully-Denny transmission line and by the Millennium Wind Farm, to the west of that proposed now by EON. Another wind farm project, at Balaraidh on the north side of Glen Moriston, has just been approved by the Scottish Government, and although no plans have yet been submitted for how that scheme will connect to the National Grid, it is highly likely this will involve further pylons in Glen Moriston. Adding the EON proposal to this will result in Glen Moriston becoming an 'industrial alley', ringed by the steel of numerous highly visually intrusive turbines and pylons, and totally inappropriate for a major tourist route.
2. As we pointed out in our formal objection to the Bhlaraidh Wind Farm, the A887 road in Glen Moriston is unsuitable for the transport of turbines, being a single track road for parts of its length.
3. The proposed wind farm includes part of the area of Inverwick that is covered in forest. This area includes some of the last remnants of the original Caledonian Forest, and has been subject to restoration measures by Forestry Commission Scotland in recent years. Trees for Life has been a partner in this process, and it is unacceptable that these restored areas will be damaged and seriously impacted by the tracks, powerlines and turbine bases of this project, all of which will require clearance of the trees. With the Scots pine having recently been declared the National tree of Scotland, and the Inverwick area being targeted by FCS for restoration to Caledonian pinewood ( a priority habitat under the EU's Habitat and Species directive), it is completely incompatible with those objectives for this wind farm to be proposed here now.
4. At Dundreggan, just across the glen from the proposed wind farm, we have a population of brown long-eared bats, a species which is listed in the UK's Biodiversity Action Plan as a priority for conservation. Recent evidence has

demonstrated that wind turbines pose a real danger for bats, with individuals being drawn upwards by the swirling air currents around the turbines and killed. If the wind farm were to be constructed, the bats at Dundreggan would undoubtedly be at risk from the turbines, and the proposal there is at complete odds with the government's commitment to protecting and enhancing the brown long eared bat, through its listing on the UK BAP.

5. Above the existing trees, where much of the wind farm is proposed to be sited, there is a significant population of dwarf birch plants, an important species in the very rare montane shrub community in Scotland. Dwarf birch plants on Dundreggan have recently been shown to be hosts for two species of sawflies never recorded in the UK before, and are also the only food source for a rare micro-moth (*Swammerdamia passerella*) that is included on the Scottish Biodiversity Action Plan list. It is likely the two sawflies also occur on the site of the proposed wind farm, and their abundance and survival, and that of the micro-moth, are likely to be compromised if the wind farm were to be constructed.

6. The access tracks and roads associated with the wind farm will provide an invasion route for non-native species of plants and trees into the area. This is already the case for hydro roads on the north side of Glen Moriston, and would undermine the work being carried out by FCS and Trees for Life to restore the area to native woodland.

7. At a time when great emphasis is being placed by the Scottish government on community empowerment, and taking account of local communities in planning projects (and for every grant application to organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund), it is imperative that the views of the local community about this proposed wind farm are taken account of. This does not appear to be the case at present, and is a matter of considerable concern to Trees for Life.

Alan Watson Featherstone, February 2014