

The TENT Consultation Paper

Please reply to:

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Community Land Scotland

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Proposal for a Highland Wilderness Reserve – Consultation

The European Nature Trust (TENT) has developed a detailed vision for *a fenced wilderness reserve in the Scottish Highlands*. TENT has commissioned Conservation Capital, an impartial organisation with expertise in nature-based business development around the world, to carry out a stakeholder consultation.

We would like to meet with you to explain more about the vision and gather your important feedback. This will help TENT to understand the feasibility of the vision and determine a suitable location for the Highland Wilderness Reserve.

About the Highland Wilderness Reserve Proposal

Due to centuries of human pressure, the Scottish Highlands has lost most of its original native forest cover and several key native species have disappeared. Despite strong efforts by government, landowners and NGOs in recent decades, biodiversity remains low and ecosystem services are failing – a situation exacerbated by climate change.

The Highland Wilderness Reserve proposal seeks to restore a defined area of the Scottish Highlands to its former natural splendour, representing a model that is both ecologically and financially self-sustainable and which might serve as a pilot initiative.

Key aspects of the Highland Wilderness Reserve would include:

- ✦ Significant tree planting and peatland restoration to aid the recovery of natural processes and ecosystems.

- ✦ Controlled release of missing native species into a fenced reserve.

- ✦ Development of a complementary mix of nature-based businesses, including:
 - Nature and wildlife tourism: wildlife watching, adventure activity and photography/arts
 - Accommodation: luxury, medium-range and camping options
 - Nature-friendly consumer products: reserve-branded merchandise and local products

Initial business planning for a 50,000 acre reserve suggests that significant economic returns could be generated for the local area:

- ✦ Over £6,000,000 in annual revenues by Year 10 depending upon the scale of initial investment (plus indirect revenue opportunities for the wider economy).

- ✦ Significant job creation: an estimated 37 full time and 26 seasonal job opportunities (plus many indirect job opportunities in the wider economy).

- ✦ Through a school experiences programme, general communication and community involvement, the Highland Wilderness Reserve will be able to educate and inform local communities and visitors about the importance of ecological preservation and restoration.

Your Views

TENT understands the vital importance of hearing from all relevant stakeholders. We are presently consulting government representatives, local community organisations, nature conservation organisations, landowner organisations, outdoor access organisations and other opinion leaders. Moving forward, TENT is keen to potentially explore partnerships with private landowners, local

communities, national organisations and the public sector in order to fulfil the vision for a Highland Wilderness Reserve.

Would you or, alternatively a colleague, be available to schedule a telephone call with Conservation Capital to discuss the proposal? We envisage this call would last no longer than 45 minutes.

We would be grateful if you could provide your response to this request to g.jeffries@conservation-capital.com. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me through the same email address.

Yours sincerely,

Glen Jeffries

Conservation Capital – on behalf of The European Nature Trust

About TENT

TENT was founded to support and fund initiatives designed to preserve and restore Europe's wild places and the rich biodiversity that exists within them. TENT maintains a Europe-wide view, acting to support diverse projects in the areas that need it most. For further information about TENT's work, please visit: <https://theeuropenaturetrust.com/our-work/>.

About Conservation Capital

Conservation Capital is a specialist practitioner in the field of conservation enterprise. For over a decade we have been working to support organisations unlock the potential of business as a tool for conserving critical conservation landscapes, primarily in Europe and Africa. We have operating hubs in St Andrews, London and Nairobi. Conservation Capital is leading the consultation on an independent and impartial basis. Please visit: <http://www.conservation-capital.com>.