

From: [Kathy MacKinnon](#)
To: [ePlanning](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Reference: Planning Application 17/04601/FUL for Golf Course at Coul Links - Objection from IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas
Date: 22 November 2017 08:43:20
Attachments: [Planning Application 17-04601-FUL for Golf Course at Coul Links – Objection from the WCPA.pdf](#)

Dear Highland Council

Please accept this revised version of the Objection letter from the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas. As stated previously the Commission concerns relate to damage and loss of rare mature dune habitat with irreversible biodiversity loss at a site of international and national conservation importance. Thank you for your consideration.

Dr Kathy MacKinnon
Chair, IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas



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To The Highland Council

Reference: *Planning Application 17/04601/FUL for Golf Course at Coul Links – Objection from the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas*

Dear Members of the Highland Council

I write as Chair of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), a global network of protected area professionals with over 2,000 members, spanning 140 countries.

WCPA works by helping governments and other partners plan and manage protected areas as part of national conservation and development strategies; by providing strategic advice to policy makers; by strengthening capacity and investment in protected areas; and by convening the diverse constituency of protected area stakeholders to address challenging global issues. For more than 50 years, IUCN and WCPA have been at the forefront of global conservation action on protected and conserved areas.

WCPA has looked at the proposal to construct a golf course on Coul Links. The site includes important areas of mature coastal sand dunes that are designated as being of international and national conservation importance (a Ramsar site under the Ramsar Convention, as well as a Special Protection Area and Site of Special Scientific Interest). We have also considered the detailed evidence-based objection and draft objection by IUCN members, the Scottish Wildlife Trust and the RSPB. My view, and the view of the Commission, is that if consent is given for this development it will destroy the integrity of rare dune habitats and lead to irreversible biodiversity loss. The case is of significant concern to WCPA, particularly as Scotland, through the UK, is a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, both of which include commitments on the protection of areas of high biodiversity value.

The World Commission on Protected Areas therefore wishes to object to this proposal. We urge the Highland Council to reject the application in order to protect this important biodiversity and to ensure that Scotland's international reputation as a nation that cares for its natural assets remains undiminished.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Kathy MacKinnon
Chair, IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas

cc Trevor Sandwith, Director, Global Protected Areas Programme, IUCN