

Boyd Brothers Limited – Marine Licence Application to Repair Coastal Erosion

STATEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Coastal erosion occurs when the waves that lap at the coast slowly wear away at the shoreline. As these waves wash over the shore, they carry sand and sediment with them and redistribute it to the Loch floor or to other areas. Erosion can be worsened by factors such as high winds, wave currents, and tidal currents.

Coastal erosion repairs can have benefits to the environment. According to the UK government's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management appraisal guidance manual, the benefits of coastal erosion repairs typically result from reducing the rate of erosion so that it postpones significant impacts into the future.

In addition, managing coastlines is important to help preserve and protect wildlife and natural habitats from destruction. By slowing down or preventing coastal erosion, the input of sediment into the system is reduced, which has implications for beach size, depositional features and transfers to neighbouring sub-systems.

We understand from local people that this area is not environmentally sensitive. It is not classed as a SSSI and there are no constraints regarding any works being undertaken here.

The works will be carried out from the land and all precautions will be carried out as per the Method Statement and in particular the section entitled "Environmental Controls" to minimise the impact on the environment.

As there are no works being carried out in the water there will be no impact on the cetaceans such as porpoises and whales and sea mammals such as seals which frequent lower Loch Linnhe but not so much in this area. It is appreciated that they are very sensitive to noise transmitted under water and any such noise would scare such creatures but no works like this will be carried out.

There are no otter holts in this specific area but we know it is a hunting ground for otters. Should any otters be seen during the works then the works will be halted until the otter moves away.

By carrying out this work we hope to be able to save the trees and vegetation along this stretch of the coast as it is currently being eroded and the trees have been falling into the Loch. By creating a proper bank up to the level of the land it will encourage further vegetation growth and provide habitats for small mammals and birds along the shoreline. It is also Boyd Brothers intention to plant further native trees to replace those lost from the coastal erosion which will be a great benefit both visually from the Loch and also for the environment.

The plan is to create a hybrid living shoreline to control erosion and flooding the benefits of which include provision of erosion control and flood protection while increasing tidal connectivity with minimal disruption to normal coastal processes. The benefits of a hybrid living shoreline are that it will:

- Protect, restore, and enhance shorelines, beaches, and habitat in the littoral zone.
- Provide continuous habitat (or corridors) between land and water environments for migratory fish and wildlife.
- Protect or create habitat for semi submerged aquatic vegetation, invertebrates, and other estuarine species.
- Provide food resources and roost sites for waterbirds.
- Improve water quality through water filtration when native plants are used.

Living shorelines further protect coastal ecosystem services, benefiting human communities by:

- Enhancing and protecting important commercial fisheries and thus local economies.
- Providing critical natural storm defenses by helping to dissipate storm surge and waves and reducing damage from floods, which can further increase real estate values for protected properties.
- Reducing repair and maintenance costs after storm events, since natural systems often have some capacity to self-repair following disturbances.
- Contributing to carbon sequestration and storage (blue carbon), if the approach is vegetation-based.
- Improving water quality.
- Supporting eco-tourism through fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing activities.
- Enhancing overall coastal resilience.

Vegetative shorelines provide multiple ecosystem benefits, including improved water quality, aquatic habitat, and carbon sequestration. This is the aim of Boyd Brothers with this project as well as to repair the damage caused by the coastal erosion and mitigate any future erosion that may happen.

We have every confidence that relevant controls will be in place to ensure the impact of this project on our environment is minimal.