

Scottish Natural Heritage

Parks and reserves – places managed for people and nature



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Parks and reserves – places managed for people and nature

Summary

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There is a wide spectrum of parks, reserves and other places specifically managed for people and nature in Scotland. This includes both designated and non-designated parks and reserves owned and managed by local authorities or national agencies, as well as some of the properties and estates of NGOs and private businesses. These places are popular destinations for enjoying the outdoors and experiencing Scotland's nature and landscapes. They therefore contribute to the Scottish Government's priorities on health, wellbeing and tourism. In many parts of Scotland, they are an important asset for sustainable economic growth.

This statement sets out a vision for the future role and management of these places, the action required to achieve it and the role of Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) in supporting this work. Key outcomes sought include:

- a range of attractive and accessible places managed for people and nature, meeting local and national needs of users;
- regular use by people from all walks of life and by visitors to Scotland, boosting the economy and supporting local skills and jobs;
- well managed landscapes, wildlife and visitor facilities, maintaining the value of these places for outdoor recreation and enjoying nature;
- existing and new provision developed as part of a strategic approach to increasing participation to promote health, tourism and more sustainable places; and
- sufficient and targeted funding to support this.

In the short-to-medium term, the main emphasis should be on improving the contribution of existing parks and reserves. New provision may have a role to play, though this should only be considered as part of a strategic review of current and future needs. A key focus for action will be on developing the contribution of parks and reserves to the development of the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN).

Achieving these outcomes in the face of current public sector budget cuts will require new thinking and greater collaborative working by Scottish Government and its agencies, local authorities, communities, and land managers and other key partners. SNH will work with these bodies to take this agenda forward, by undertaking research and developing new thinking, sharing good practice, and championing and promoting these places and the benefits they provide for people and nature.

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Parks and reserves – places managed for people and nature

Section 1 – SNH statement



- 1 Government policy aims to encourage more people to enjoy the outdoors, which can contribute to national outcomes for health, the economy and the environment. Scotland's parks, reserves and other places which are managed actively for people and nature have a key role in this task. This statement sets out a vision for the future role and management of these places, the action required to achieve it, and the role of Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) in supporting this work.

Scotland's parks and reserves

- 2 There is a wide spectrum of parks, reserves and other places specifically managed for people and nature in Scotland. This includes both designated and non-designated parks and reserves owned and managed by local authorities or national agencies, as well as some of the properties and estates of NGOs and private businesses. Collectively, these places typically share the following characteristics:
 - an area of countryside or greenspace managed actively for people and nature as a visitor destination;
 - the provision of paths and trails, together with a range of visitor information, to encourage all who visit the area to explore it and learn more about its heritage;
 - a visible staff presence – either permanently or regularly – providing help and advice to visitors and specific activities and events to take part in;
 - regular upkeep and improvement activity as part of a management planning process;

- on-going action to maintain or enhance the area's landscape qualities and wildlife interest; and
- active promotion to visitors, and listed on a visitor information website.

While a small number of parks and reserves may charge for specific facilities or activities, most are also generally free to use and enjoy.

- 3 A common element of all parks and reserves is their strong natural character, with many also having special features of natural or cultural heritage interest, including wildlife, viewpoints and historic buildings. Such places can therefore provide a wide and exciting range of opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism, from daily use to more specialised activities. They also have an important role in encouraging families and children to be physically active and experience nature, as well as supporting less confident or new participants more generally. Important here is the good extent and accessibility of these existing resources across many parts of both urban and rural Scotland.
- 4 Collectively, Scotland's parks and reserves contribute to the Scottish Government's priorities on health, wellbeing and tourism and, in many parts of Scotland, are an important asset for sustainable economic growth. For example:
 - half of the estimated 384 million recreational visits to the outdoors, with associated expenditure of £2.8 billion¹, involve public parks and gardens, country, regional and national parks, forest parks or local and national nature reserves:
 - Scotland two National Parks currently attract some 8.5 million day visits each year, generating over £300 million in revenue and supporting some 2,700 jobs in this sector. The total value of the goods and services provided by these two Park areas is estimated to be over £1.2 billion per year²;
 - visits to the Lomond Hills Regional Park and Lochore Meadows Country Park in Fife grew by over 30% between 2000 and 2009 to over 700,000, leading to additional economic expenditure of £2.6 million and supporting the equivalent of 54 jobs³; and
 - an economic study of the Loch Lomond, Bein Eighe, Forvie and St Abbs Head National Nature Reserves (NNRs) found that collectively these reserves directly contributed £1.5 million a year and supported 27 full-time equivalent jobs to the local economy alone⁴, with their total economic contribution much more significant.

Vision and outcomes

- 5 Our vision is for everyone in Scotland to be able to be physically active and experience nature as part of their daily lives, through improved opportunities for participation in outdoor recreation, volunteering and learning⁵. We believe this change will bring many benefits to Scotland in terms of: improved quality of life; better health and well-being; greater understanding and care of the natural world; increased tourism, skills and jobs; more sustainable patterns of travel; and stronger communities.
- 6 Scotland's parks and reserves have an important part to play in realising this vision. Key outcomes sought include:
 - a range of attractive and accessible places managed for people and nature, meeting local and national needs of users;
 - regular use by people from all walks of life and by visitors to Scotland, boosting the economy and supporting local skills and jobs;

1 Scottish Recreation Survey (SNH, 2008)

2 See Moffat Centre, Cogentsi and Grid Economics (2011) Loch Lomond & the Trossachs - Valuing the park and Cogentsi and Rocket Science Ltd (2011) The Economic and Social Health of the Cairngorms National Park 2010

3 Paper to the Lomond Hills Regional Park Partnership Management Committee, 4th May 2010

4 See Moffat Centre (2010). The Natural Heritage as an Economic Driver: Protected Areas Case Studies. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No.368 (ROAME No. F05AC701).

5 See SNH's 2007 statement on Enjoying the Outdoors and related statements on Rangers in Scotland (2008) and Paths – linking people, places and nature (2010).

- well managed landscapes, wildlife and visitor facilities, maintaining the value of these places for outdoor recreation and enjoying nature;
- existing and new provision developed as part of a strategic approach to increasing participation to promote health, tourism and more sustainable places; and
- sufficient and targeted funding to support this.

Key priorities for action

- 7 Achieving these outcomes in the face of current public sector budget cuts will require new thinking and greater collaborative working by the Scottish Government and its agencies, local authorities, communities, land managers and other key partners. Within this challenging environment, the key priorities are:
- maximise the use and enjoyment of parks and reserves through better promotion and marketing;
 - increase the use of parks and reserves by developing initiatives to encourage more physical activity and experience of nature through outdoor recreation, volunteering and learning;
 - improve management for people and nature by developing and demonstrating best practice in visitor and heritage management;
 - maintain the range of existing provision, exploring new sources of funding, ownership and management where needed;
 - develop the contribution of parks and reserves to multi-functional green networks and open space strategies; and
 - identify and keep under review priorities for provision to meet current and future needs.

Further background on these priorities is provided in Section 2 of this statement.

- 8 In the short-to-medium term, the main emphasis should be on improving the contribution of existing parks and reserves to the Scottish Government priorities on health, wellbeing and tourism. New provision may have a role to play, though this should only be considered as part of a strategic review of current and future needs, both locally and nationally.

SNH role and action

- 9 Parks and reserves are the responsibility of many organisations, though a key role is played by local authorities. The planning, management and investment in these places also requires the active support of many others.
- 10 SNH will work with these managing bodies and other partners to take the priorities identified in paragraph 7 forward, undertaking research and developing new thinking, sharing good practice, and championing and promoting these places and the benefits they provide for people and nature. Our main roles and activities which will contribute to these priorities are summarised in Table 1.
- 11 A key focus for action will be on developing the contribution of parks and reserves to the development of the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN). We will also continue to use the NNRs we directly manage to develop and demonstrate good practice, and to support the work of National and Regional Park Authorities through advice and action.
- 12 Through this policy and follow-up action, we will continue to champion these places and promote the important contribution they make to Scottish Government priorities on health, wellbeing and tourism.

Scottish Natural Heritage

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Table 1 – Strategic priorities for parks and reserves – SNH roles and main activities

Strategic priorities	SNH roles and main activities 2011-2014
Maximise the use and enjoyment of parks and reserves through better promotion and marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide better information about places for people and nature in different areas. – Promote places and participation through the SNH 'NNR' and 'Simple Pleasures Easily Found' Campaigns and other marketing activity with SEARs partners and Visit Scotland.
Increase the use of parks and reserves by developing initiatives to encourage more physical activity and experience of nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Promote use of these places for green gyms, health walks and as a resource for green prescription – Encourage a wider range of visitors to NNRs, including action to implement the findings of the SNH study on <i>Health Walks in NNRs</i>. – Provide support and funding to increase opportunities for environmental volunteering and outdoor learning.
Improve management for people and nature by developing and demonstrating best practice in visitor and heritage management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Collate existing survey and other information and undertake further research to develop the knowledge base. – Provide guidance and advice on management issues using resources such as <i>Management for People</i> and the <i>Visitor Monitoring Manual</i>. – Support new pilot studies and demonstration projects to develop and promote good practice in conjunction with local authorities and others through the SGP series and other networking events.
Maintain the range of existing provision, exploring new sources of funding, ownership and management where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Advise national and local government on policies and plans with implications for parks and reserves. – Work with local authority partners and others to ensure appropriate recognition and support for existing provision within the framework of Single Outcome Agreements and other relevant plans and strategies. – Provide targeted support to voluntary and private sector partners to help improve provision. – Help to explore, with managing authorities, new models for the funding and management of parks and reserves.
Develop the contribution of parks and reserves to multi-functional green networks and open space strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop and promote the role of parks and reserves as part of multi-functional green networks and open space strategies. – Work with partners to better link existing parks and reserves with strategic routes and habitat networks to develop the Central Scotland Green Network and the National Ecological Network.
Identify and keep under review priorities for provision to meet current and future needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Keep under review the contribution of SNH managed NNRs and provide advice to Scottish Government, local authorities and others on issues regarding other types of provision. – Work with partners to develop new provision that may be needed to support the strategic delivery of the Central Scotland Green Network.

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Section 2 – Key priorities for action



- 1 This section provides further background and SNH thinking on the key priorities for action identified in this statement.

Improving promotion and marketing

- 2 Parks and reserves are a key tool for increasing participation, and can play an important role in establishing outdoor recreation and experience of nature as part of everyday life. They are also key tourist assets. There is a need to promote greater awareness of opportunities to enjoy the outdoors in these places to new audiences, including disadvantaged communities and equalities groups. Promotional activity may also help to maintain and increase participation by those people who already visit these places, and to attract tourists.
- 3 Stronger and more consistent branding and engagement in wider participation campaigns will be important, in particular through the Scotland's Protected Places brand and website developed by SNH and Historic Scotland, The Scottish Government's themed campaigns as well as SNH's *Simple Pleasures Easily Found* Campaign also provide important opportunities to managing bodies to enhance the profile of parks and reserves. Better destination-based marketing which brings together the promotion of natural and cultural heritage attractions, and formal sports facilities, should also be developed to encourage more use of these places, longer visits and year round tourism.

Developing new initiatives and projects to increase participation

- 4 Parks and reserves can provide important test-beds for new initiatives to encourage wider participation in outdoor recreation, environmental volunteering and outdoor learning. Good, well maintained infrastructure, a visible ranger presence and provision for active play for families with younger children are critical for encouraging a wide range of users, including the less confident. They also provide the setting for active outreach projects to engage new audiences which do not currently take part in outdoor activities.
- 5 Where the facilities or the ranger services can support it, more effort could be made to develop the role of local conservation or path groups, and to encourage the use of these places for green exercise including green gyms and health walks. There is also considerable scope to involve young people by making links to local active schools programmes and uniformed groups such as Scouts or Guides, and to develop junior ranger schemes.

Improving management for people and nature

- 6 An important part of the appeal of most parks and reserves is their relatively natural character⁶ and this key 'selling point' differentiates them from other leisure facilities. People derive a wide range of physical and psychological benefits from natural environments⁷, often regarding 'opportunities to see nature' as a key function of greenspace⁸. 'Natural play' is also important to children's social development⁹ and relatively wild, unmanaged places can allow people of all ages to experience the sense of freedom and escape that underpins informal outdoor recreation, helping to sow the seed of a longer-term commitment.
- 7 The planning system has a key role in providing suitable land for parks and reserves and safeguarding or increasing its value for people and nature through development management. Similarly, the management plans and strategies prepared for these places should identify a range of positive action for wildlife and landscape in keeping with local biodiversity action plans and the Scotland's Landscape Charter.
- 8 In sensitive locations of particular importance for their natural or cultural heritage, positive visitor management and the promotion of high standards of behaviour by members of the public may be needed to balance visitor use with the protection of key habitats and species or elements of the historic environment. While important in widening the appeal and use of parks and reserves, opportunities to link the provision and management of these places with formal sports facilities or commercial initiatives should take due care to ensure that these activities are only developed if they are compatible with the natural character and quality of these settings.
- 9 A number of common principles for good visitor and site management apply across the range of parks and reserves and the challenge for managers is to apply these appropriately in order to continue to improving the quality of provision for people and nature. Greater use of recognised accreditation schemes such as Green Flag could play an important role in this, especially if applied more widely and if the costs of such schemes are minimised. Visitor monitoring and reporting will also be increasingly important both to measure success and inform future funding and management, both locally and nationally

6 Experiencing Landscapes: capturing the *cultural services* and *experiential qualities* of landscape. Natural England Commissioned Report NECR024 (2009)

7 Reviewed in Health and the Natural Heritage: the evidence base - <http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/strategy/Healthevidence.pdf>

8 State of Scotland's Greenspace 2009 (Greenspace Scotland, Stirling)

9 Evidence from a variety of sources including Lester, S and Maudsley, M (2007); Play, Naturally: A review of children's natural play (London, Play England and National Children's Bureau) and Wood, P and Yearley, D (2007); Growing Spaces for Play: The value of playing in the natural environment (Faringdon: RoSPA)

Maintaining the range of existing provision

- 10 Scotland's parks and reserves are currently funded in various ways, with local authorities playing the key role for many places in and around towns and cities. Other nationally important places are supported by public bodies such as the National Park Authorities, Forestry Commission Scotland and SNH. Some parks and reserves are managed by private and third sector bodies, often with the aid of public grants for various aspects of visitor provision.
- 11 Adequate future funding will be essential to maintain the existing range and quality of sites, including visitor provision. This may be difficult to ensure when public finances are constrained, although there is a strong case for continued support based on the economic and social benefits these places can provide and the important contribution they make to a range of Scottish Government objectives. Nevertheless, there remains an outstanding need to develop approaches which provide both short-term capital and longer-term revenue funding. While the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 ensures that most parks and reserves are 'free to use and enjoy', charging for specific services or facilities such as car parks may become increasingly necessary as a source of revenue required to maintain these places. Such schemes need to be developed carefully and equitably in consultation with existing users.
- 12 Planning gain can sometimes help to support new provision, although this may be harder to achieve in times of economic constraint. For areas under agricultural and forestry management, good stewardship also has an important role to play in maintaining and enhancing their nature and landscapes, and there may be opportunities to use land management support mechanisms for this purpose. Other forms of funding and management will also need to be considered. Where capacity exists, this might include stronger roles for communities, trusts, NGOs and the private sector. There may also be opportunities to obtain funding through sponsorship and local businesses which benefit from these places.

Developing the contribution of parks and reserves to multi-functional green networks

- 13 Developing better physical links between parks and reserves, nearby communities and areas of greenspace and countryside is important for encouraging active travel to them and helping their wildlife to flourish. National Planning Policy encourages local authorities to develop green networks and to prepare open space strategies to guide future provision within their areas. The on-going effort to develop local paths networks and establish longer distance routes can also provide opportunities to increase the accessibility of managed places for walking and cycling.
- 14 The National Planning Framework outlines ambitious proposals for a Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN), a large-scale interconnected system of natural spaces and linking routes or corridors, which will enhance landscapes, wildlife and opportunities for recreation and active travel. This will provide an important framework for better provision to enjoy the outdoors in the Central Belt, and existing or new places managed for people and nature could form key nodes within the network. The CSGN will be a major focus of future activity.

Identifying future needs to support increased participation

- 15 The current range of parks and reserves has been established under various legislative frameworks and by different organisations. This has resulted in a mix of provision which is not necessarily suited to present-day objectives or changing patterns of participation. Recent research has suggested that local destinations will be increasingly important in supporting regular participation. Rural destinations for day visits will also retain a significant role, although their accessibility by active travel on foot, bicycle and public transport will become a more important factor¹⁰. There is also greater recognition in policy and practice of the need for a more targeted approach to tackling social and health inequalities. To consider these issues, a stronger strategic overview by local authorities and other relevant bodies is needed to guide decisions about existing and future provision.
- 16 In recent years, investment by a range of organisations has led to new facilities being developed across Scotland to support existing activities, or to develop the potential of new ones. Examples include the growing number of local nature reserves in various parts of Scotland, the 7stanes project in Southern Scotland and the Heritage Trail at Loch Leven National Nature Reserve (NNR) in Perth and Kinross. Such developments have encouraged new participants and can make substantial contributions to tourism and the local economy. They also enhance Scotland's reputation as a leading destination for outdoor activities and tourism. While financial constraints will limit new investment in coming years, opportunities to enhance existing facilities or develop new ones should be considered where these will make an important contribution to increasing participation or supporting the local economy. In all cases where new provision is being considered, local support for the proposal and active engagement of communities will be important.

¹⁰ Assessing Future Recreational Demand, Macaulay Land Use Research Institute & Countryside and Community Research Institute (SNH research report 2010)

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Section 3 – Background and context



- 1 This section provides further information on the main types of parks and reserves in Scotland. Organised sports and other leisure facilities make an important and complementary contribution to health and quality of life. Although the two types of activity sometimes take place side by side, competitive sports that depend on built facilities such as pitches, tennis courts or golf courses are beyond the scope of this document.

Formal management mechanisms for people and nature

- 2 Scotland has a number of formal management mechanisms for informal outdoor recreation in various settings, and the main roles and status of each from a national perspective are described further below.

Setting	Description	Main role/s		
		Everyday use	Day visits	Special interest activities
Public Parks and Gardens	Areas of land managed for outdoor recreation, usually in local authority ownership.	✓	✓	
Country Parks	Areas of land managed for outdoor recreation, usually in local authority ownership.	✓	✓	
Local Nature Reserves	Areas of land managed for the care and enjoyment of particular wildlife and habitats. May be owned and managed by local authorities, communities, NGOs or other bodies.	✓	✓	
Woodland Parks	Areas of land close to settlements of more than 2000 people managed for outdoor recreation, usually in community, trust or FCS ownership.	✓	✓	
Regional Parks	Extensive areas of land designated and managed for outdoor recreation, usually by a Park Authority established by one or more local authorities. Most land remains in private ownership with a variety of primary land uses.	✓	✓	✓
National Parks	Extensive areas of outstanding national importance for the natural and cultural heritage, designated and managed for a variety of purposes, including enjoyment, by a National Park Authority. Most land remains in private ownership with a variety of primary land uses.		✓	✓
Forest Parks	Extensive, predominantly forested areas managed for a variety of purposes, including enjoyment, by FCS.		✓	✓
National Nature Reserves	Areas of national importance for nature, designated by SNH and managed for the care and enjoyment of particular wildlife and habitats. May be owned and managed by SNH or approved bodies such as FCS, local authorities or NGOs.		✓	✓

- 3 **Public Parks and Gardens** are areas of land which are enclosed, designed and constructed, managed and maintained for public access and enjoyment, usually within an urban area. Most are owned or managed by local authorities. They range in size from just a couple of hectares to more than 40ha, and usually comprise a mix of facilities and spaces which may include play areas and sports fields, gardens and civic spaces, as well as less intensively managed areas like woods and avenues, lakes and ponds. The gardens span a broad range of functions, from greenhouses and winter gardens through to formal flower beds and rose gardens, to wildlife and special interest gardens, and formal botanic gardens. Parks and gardens generally support quite intensive and regular use, and are of considerable importance to the communities that surround them. Notable examples include Kelvingrove, Bellahouston, Queens Park and Glasgow Green in Glasgow; Princes St Gardens and Inverleith Park in Edinburgh; Belleisle Park in Ayr; Beveridge Park in Kirkcaldy; and Baxter Park in Dundee.
- 4 **Country Parks** range from 30 to 700 hectares in area, are mainly in local authority ownership, focus on management for recreation, and commonly provide for everyday use and day visits. The key strengths of Country Parks lie in their frequent proximity to population centres and the relatively broad range of facilities that they provide, including cafes and toilets. They often provide a focus for ranger activity and are consequently particularly well placed, in several respects, to engage and support a wide range of potential new participants. Not all Country Parks are ideally located and some require new investment to upgrade their infrastructure. The need for new investment has sometimes been addressed by the introduction of more commercial attractions. These can help to draw new audiences but can also erode their natural character and appeal to many visitors.
- 5 **Regional Parks** are comparatively extensive areas which are popular for outdoor recreation and include a range of land ownership and use. There are currently three such Parks in Scotland: Clyde Muirshiel (28,000ha); the Pentland Hills (10,000ha); and the Lomond Hills in Fife (6,500ha). These parks provide the oversight and resources needed to integrate recreation with other activities, to undertake wider landscape and habitat management, and to promote the area for the benefit of residents and visitors. Their scale and diversity allows them to appeal to 'day visit' audiences and to some 'special interest' users from further afield. Their administrative structure, and the availability of ranger services, means that they are also very well placed to work with and support groups who are new to outdoor recreation. Their main limitations are the relatively low recognition of the Regional Park brand and the vulnerability of their partnership funding arrangements which, in two of the three Parks, involve more than one local authority. However, the mechanism seems to have continued relevance, as suggested by the consideration of a new Regional Park in the Campsies.
- 6 **Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)** are quite diverse and generally small, with varying degrees of emphasis on management for wildlife alongside the needs of people. They are usually around 10 – 60 ha in area, but the smallest may be only a couple of hectares, while the largest coastal LNRs are over 600 ha. They can provide convenient resources for everyday use, although the range of recreational opportunity is sometimes limited, and typically have a simple management structure. The statutory LNR designation is well recognised and relatively dynamic, with new reserves still being created, and these sites are often much valued locally.
- 7 **National Parks** provide integrated management of large areas of outstanding national importance for their natural and cultural heritage, for environmental, economic and social benefits – including outdoor recreation. This approach brings considerable resources to bear to develop best practice in visitor and heritage management, including ranger services, administrative support through a dedicated National Park Authority and statutory requirements on others bodies through the National Park Plan approved by Scottish Ministers. These Parks are therefore particularly well placed to increase participation in special interest recreational activities and tourism, although they also provide for everyday use and family day visits by those who live locally. The main practical limitations of this approach are the associated resource requirements and the likelihood that potential new National Parks will not be easily accessible from the major cities.

- 8 **Forest Parks** are established by the Forestry Commission on the national forest estate as a resource for outdoor recreation. They cover forest landscapes and, in some instances, extensive areas of open land. All have recreational day visitor and tourist facilities and service provision to assist access and improve visitor experience. Some also include or overlap with National Nature Reserves and National Parks. There are currently six Forest Parks in Scotland – Glenmore, Tay, Queen Elizabeth, Argyll, Galloway and Tweed Valley. The Forest Park brand is well recognised, though the overlap with National Parks and National Nature Reserves can be confusing to the public.
- 9 **National Nature Reserves (NNRs)** are managed to safeguard and enhance wildlife and habitats of national or international importance, and for public enjoyment – in particular through activities which are linked to and raise awareness of the natural environment. Some existing NNRs are well placed to cater for day visits and, for local residents, everyday use. However, many are sited in relatively remote parts of Scotland and are not necessarily easy to access, restricting their recreational value to special interest activities. There is potential for new more accessible sites for NNRs to be identified and developed as part of the implementation of the Central Scotland Green Network.
- 10 There are a number of other important places for enjoying the outdoors managed by NGOs such as the nature reserves managed by the **Scottish Wildlife Trust**, the **Woodland Trust**, **RSPB** or communities and the estates managed by **NTS** or the **John Muir Trust** or private landowners. FCS has also established a number of Woodland Parks throughout Scotland, though this mechanism is currently under review. Many places of importance for enjoying the outdoors are also designated as **National Scenic Areas** and **GeoParks**, although these are not generally managed in order to meet specific recreational needs.

Greenspace and greenspace networks

- 11 The formal management mechanisms described above are complemented by a range of informal provision where outdoor recreation takes place under the general framework of Scottish outdoor access rights – including greenspace and countryside near towns. In some areas these provide the majority of readily available opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, although they are not always well suited to new, less confident or less mobile users. The importance of a spectrum of formal and informal provision is recognised by a new emphasis on open space strategies, core paths and green networks. Such approaches provide greater linkage between individual sites and increase the cumulative benefit that they provide. Such networks can also extend close into and around communities, providing better accessibility, and can provide important wildlife corridors. The CSGN provides a major opportunity to improve provision in the Central Belt and is a key focus for current work on this policy topic.



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All of nature for all of Scotland
Nàdar air fad airson Alba air fad

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Page 1: Canoeists at Monikie country park, Angus;

Page 3: Ranger led school group at the Eden Estuary LNR, Fife;

Page 7: View east over Loch Leven NNR to the Lomond hills;

Page 11: Family walking in Kelvingrove Park, Glasgow.