



Scotland's  
National Nature  
Reserves

## The Management Plan for Loch Leven National Nature Reserve 2016-2026



Early One Morning. © Stewart Niven

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**Scottish Natural Heritage**  
**Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba**

All of nature for all of Scotland  
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## The Management Plan for Loch Leven NNR 2016-2026

### Foreword

Brimming with wildlife and history, Loch Leven is the largest natural shallow water body in lowland Britain and is home to more breeding ducks than anywhere else in inland Europe. From late summer until spring, tens of thousands of other wildfowl from many different countries use it for short and long-term stopovers. Their presence gives Loch Leven year round interest and a global importance. However, it's not just the birds that make this such a special place. It also boasts a rich mix of wet grasslands, raised bog, willow and reed beds with an amazing range of plants. The loch also supports a natural brown trout population which supports a famous trout fishery. The rod fishery has been popular since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and trout offspring have been exported worldwide.

Loch Leven is one of a suite of National Nature Reserves (NNRs) in Scotland. Scotland's NNRs are special places where some of the best examples of Scotland's wildlife are managed. Every NNR is carefully managed both for nature and for people, giving visitors the opportunity to experience our rich natural heritage. Loch Leven NNR is managed by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) through an agreement with the owners Kinross Estate and in partnership with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Our management plan sets out the overall direction and our aspirations for managing Loch Leven for the next ten years. The plan sets out our vision and objectives, and the tasks we have identified as being needed to deliver those. We will review progress with the plan after 5-years to ensure our management is delivering the right outcomes and will complete a final review before producing our next plan.

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## Maps of Loch Leven NNR

### Regional map



# Boundary map



## Our Vision for Loch Leven NNR

Loch Leven National Nature Reserve is special; the aim is to keep it that way. The Management Plan 2016 -2026 sets out our vision for the reserve describing how we would like the reserve to be in 2026. The management we plan to carry out over the next 10 years has been framed with this vision in mind

### **Vision**

A beautiful, tranquil and diverse loch surrounded by extensive wetlands, with abundant wildlife, set in a farmed landscape against an impressive backdrop of hills.

It is a place where nature comes first and where people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities are encouraged to enjoy nature.

Loch Leven is the best freshwater reserve in Scotland and is recognised as an internationally important wildlife site. Together with the local community and our partners, we continue to work hard to ensure that locals and visitors alike treasure this immensely valuable asset.

The loch offers a quality visitor experience with a sense of calmness and closeness to the natural world for everyone to enjoy. Near to large centres of population, it offers large numbers of people of all abilities a variety of experiences. A network of easy access trails, visitor centre, viewing points and other facilities provide opportunities for visitors to marvel at and learn about the variety of wildlife which can be seen throughout the year. With over 250,000 visitors a year, the loch is recognised as a destination that generates significant economic activity, social and health benefits for Kinross-shire.

Our extensive programme of volunteering encourages people of all ages to get involved. Student placements support young people in developing skills for their future employment. Outdoor learning provides first-hand experience of nature and encourages ongoing participation and engagement.

The loch, its islands, reed beds, carr and grazing marshes offer abundant food and shelter for the thousands of birds visiting the site throughout the year. Managed in partnership with a variety of stakeholders, the reserve is an exemplar for integrating people and nature. The loch is the heart of a healthy and productive ecosystem. The successful project to restore water quality has meant that the loch is again clear and resilient, providing the necessary conditions for a sustainable resource and an abundance of characteristic wildlife. It is internationally famous as an example of sustainable management.

## Protected areas and special features

Loch Leven NNR was first declared in 1964 by agreement with the owners of the loch, Kinross Estate.

In recognition of its international wildlife importance Loch Leven has a number of conservation designations. Because of the internationally important bird populations, the loch is part of the European Natura 2000 network classified as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and is also designated as a Ramsar site for its wetlands and bird interest. Under Scottish legislation it is notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for birds, plants, and insects. Table 1 summarises the features for which Loch Leven has been designated.

In addition to the wildlife designations, the local planning authority has designated approximately two thirds of the shore as an Area of Great Landscape Value. Scheduled Monuments within the NNR include Loch Leven Castle and St Serf's Priory. The Kinross House Designed Landscape includes Kirkgate Park and Kirkgate Point, both within the boundaries of the NNR.

**Table 1: Protected areas and features and overlapping Loch Leven NNR**

Feature	Protected Area
Beetle assemblage	Loch Leven SSSI
Breeding bird assemblage	Loch Leven SSSI
Cormorant ( <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> ), non-breeding	Loch Leven SPA Loch Leven SSSI
Eutrophic loch	Loch Leven Ramsar Loch Leven SSSI
Gadwall ( <i>Anas strepera</i> ), breeding	Loch Leven SSSI
Gadwall ( <i>Anas strepera</i> ), non-breeding	Loch Leven SPA Loch Leven SSSI
Goldeneye ( <i>Bucephala clangula</i> ), non-breeding	Loch Leven SPA Loch Leven SSSI
Greylag goose ( <i>Anser anser</i> ), non-breeding	Loch Leven SSSI
Hydromorphological mire range	Loch Leven SSSI
Pink-footed goose ( <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i> ), non-breeding	Loch Leven Ramsar Loch Leven SPA Loch Leven SSSI
Pochard ( <i>Aythya ferina</i> ), non-breeding	Loch Leven SPA Loch Leven SSSI
Shoveler ( <i>Anas clypeata</i> ), non-breeding	Loch Leven Ramsar Loch Leven SPA Loch Leven SSSI

Feature	Protected Area
Teal ( <i>Anas crecca</i> ), non-breeding	Loch Leven SPA Loch Leven SSSI
Tufted duck ( <i>Aythya fuligula</i> ), breeding	Loch Leven SSSI
Tufted duck ( <i>Aythya fuligula</i> ), non-breeding	Loch Leven SSSI Loch Leven SPA
Vascular plant assemblage	Loch Leven SSSI
Waterfowl assemblage, non-breeding	Loch Leven Ramsar Loch Leven SPA
Whooper swan ( <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> ), non-breeding	Loch Leven SPA Loch Leven SSSI

Whilst managing Loch Leven NNR we have to take account of our legal obligations and Government policy to manage the features that are listed as important in a European or international context. This management plan has been appraised accordingly, and where a project listed in the plan is likely to have a significant effect on one or more of the qualifying features of the Special Protection Area or Ramsar site, we will carry out an 'appropriate assessment'. This includes all projects, whether they are direct habitat management or providing a new visitor facility on the reserve. We will only proceed if they do not adversely affect the integrity of the site. Likewise, we will also take account of obligations to manage features that are valued as important in a British context, as well as features that are locally important.

# 1 Natural Heritage Management (NH)

**Objective NH1:** To maintain and enhance the loch and surrounds for wintering birds, birds on migration, especially waterfowl and breeding waterfowl.

## Objective description

Loch Leven is important for birds throughout the year. A large number and diversity of birds greatly benefit from this safe haven; characterised by being a quiet place free from excessive disturbance and predators.

The continued increase in numbers of most wintering bird species during the previous plan period indicates the success of our approach to protecting these special characteristics.

In addition, statistical monitoring of the fortnightly bird counts demonstrates that the mitigation work completed to minimise the impact of the Loch Leven Heritage Trail has worked and resulted in no detrimental change in numbers or distribution of birds on the loch.

With increased numbers of visitors to the reserve, appropriate mitigation measures to reduce disturbance will continue to be implemented. Our Local Access Guidance has now successfully been in place for over 10 years. Reviews during this period confirm the need to continue to advocate low levels of access to the water by certain types of craft during summer months and avoiding use of any craft during autumn and winter.

Our conservation management focus will continue to be to maximise the available duck and brood habitat, by extending existing wetland habitats and creating complementary areas beyond the current NNR boundary. This will include investigating opportunities for working with land managers to establish corridors on farmland, creating connectivity to other wetland sites. This should create more robust habitats and make species more resilient to changes; improving their survival during flood events for example by providing alternative feeding areas if the water depth around the loch is too high. In addition, we will focus on restoring and enhancing habitats for waders and migratory birds on the site.

Breeding bird numbers declined catastrophically on St Serf's during the early part of the last plan period. This is most likely due to foxes gaining access in two winters. These short severe events seem to have had a long term impact. However, duck breeding numbers are starting to rise again and predator control will be undertaken if necessary. Work will continue to evaluate this.

**Projects planned to deliver Objective NH1 during life of plan:**

<b>Task No.</b>	<b>Task description</b>
NH1.1	Maintain and increase duck nest and brood rearing habitat on the reserve. (St Serfs & Factory Bay)
NH1.2	Maintain and increase nest habitat for key species on St Serfs. (Black-headed gull and ground nesting species i.e. curlew& oystercatcher).
NH1.3	Investigate opportunities for increasing breeding potential through creating artificial nest habitats.
NH1.4	Restore and maintain areas of wetland at Levenmouth to improve conditions for migrating birds and nesting wildfowl and waders.
NH1.5	Investigate opportunities for extending wetland habitats and complementary areas beyond the NNR
NH1.6	Assess potential for partnership working with landowners and communities around the loch to improve ecological connectivity. (climate change, robust site etc).
NH1.7	Ensure the effectiveness of the Local Access Guidance and promote guidance on water borne access and review mid-plan.
NH1.8	Ensure the effectiveness of mitigation measures on the Heritage trail, reviewing and upgrading where necessary to minimise disturbance.
NH1.9	Develop and promote a code of conduct for fisherman.
NH1.10	Control foxes, corvids, rat and mink on St Serfs and other islands to protect breeding waterfowl.
NH1.11	Continue with a programme of bird monitoring.
NH1.12	Contribute to delivery of favourable condition for notified and listed interests.

**Objective NH2:** Continue to restore the water quality of the loch and associated plant and animal communities to 1910 condition.

### **Objective description**

The water quality in Loch Leven has improved significantly in the last decade and we intend to sustain this recovery. Collaborative projects, such as the nutrient source apportionment study which began in the summer of 2015, demonstrate that the passion to sustain the loch ecosystem is still at the fore of our work and that of our partners. We will work in partnership with a wide range of relevant stakeholders to ensure restoration measures are well informed and maintained.

These management measures have to be underpinned by robust science. We will work with CEH, SEPA and other research establishments so that Loch Leven continues to be a globally important research site which is an exemplar of integrated research and management activities. We will assist by providing robust monitoring data.

A number of high priority Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) such as Himalayan balsam are associated with water margins and could pose a threat. We will need to continue to effectively control invasive species ideally reducing the risk of introduction from populations upstream by managing at a catchment scale. The loch is also at risk from colonisation by introduced aquatic species. We will be an exemplar of good practice management of INNS through assessment of risk and early and appropriate control. Working with others to raise awareness and encourage good practice in reducing risk through for example cleaning canoes or fishing equipment used on multiple sites.

### **Projects planned to deliver Objective NH2 during life of plan:**

<b>Task No.</b>	<b>Task description</b>
NH2.1	Work with partners to evaluate opportunities for water level management through liaison with Leven Trustees.
NH2.2	Work with and support partners to implement projects within the catchment area to enhance water quality.
NH2.3	Support work to monitor water quality and the abundance and distribution of aquatic plants.
NH2.4	Produce a risk plan for managing against introduction of aquatic species and support users in raising awareness and reducing risk
NH 2.5	Maintain riparian habitats through control of non-native invasive.

**Objective NH3:** To maintain, extend and enhance habitats around the loch.

### **Objective description**

Most of the margins around Loch Leven comprise a narrow strip of willow carr, reed bed or grassland, backed by mainly arable fields with some cattle grazing. At RSPB Loch Leven, Levenmouth, Carsehall Bog and Burleigh the wetland habitats are more extensive. We want to explore opportunities to extend and increase the range and area of the wetland habitats around and close to the loch. As well as aspirations to link along water courses to other wetlands in the catchment, we would like to consider Portmoak Moss for inclusion to the reserve. Portmoak Moss is owned and managed by Woodland Trust Scotland who work closely with the Portmoak Community Woodland Group regarding management of the site, Portmoak Moss is already being managed in a way which is complementary to the NNR and reflects the wetland management of the NNR; including it would enhance the overall biodiversity of the reserve.

In addition, there are wetlands on the edge of the golf course by Kinross House where the natural heritage interest could benefit from conservation mowing or grazing. During the last plan period we restored an additional 50 hectares (ha) of wetland which had historically been grazed but where grazing had ceased. We are now managing 150ha of habitat by grazing or mowing to maintain an open sward and greater species diversity.

We consider there to be further areas which would benefit from remedial work or habitat enhancement. These include some of the conifer blocks between Kirkgate Point and Mary's Knowe, the small area of lowland dry heath at Levenmouth and the grassland at Kirkgate point.

### **Projects planned to deliver Objective NH3 during life of plan:**

<b>Task No.</b>	<b>Task description</b>
NH3.1	Restore lowland heath at Levenmouth.
NH3.2	Produce and implement a plan for managing Carsehall bog to further improve habitat condition and biodiversity.
NH3.3	Maintain wetland and grassland areas through grazing, mowing and scrub cutting. Including Mary's Knowe, Findatie, Classloch and Burleigh. Consider options for expansion.
NH3.4	Investigate opportunities for extending wetland habitats and complementary areas beyond the NNR.
NH3.5	Explore opportunity for extending NNR to include Portmoak Moss
NH3.6	Manage woodland around the reserve to enhance biodiversity and native plantations to provide natural screening from the heritage trail
NH3.7	Produce a deer monitoring and management plan to aid decision on controlling or excluding deer to allow woodland regeneration.

**Objective NH4:** To maintain, extend and enhance notable species on the reserve.

### **Objective description**

Scottish Natural Heritage has a published a Wildlife Management Framework. We currently control some species, such as foxes, where it is clear that this will be effective and will benefit the special interest of the site or form part of wider initiatives.

Our current management is in line with the framework and future management which involves the control of other species will be carried out using it. We will control introduced and invasive species around the loch in line with national policy. Grey squirrels are controlled to protect the native population of red squirrels. Mink are controlled to protect the bird populations.

Enhancement and expansion of native and semi-native habitats around the reserve will increase resilience in these areas, which may be isolated in a relatively intensively managed landscape, and connecting them up should allow flow of mobile species from one to another. There may also be other benefits such as enhanced flood resilience or carbon capture.

Because the reserve is managed with nature at its core we can carry out some management which might be constrained elsewhere. The lessons learned from this can be transferred to managing land elsewhere.

### **Projects planned to deliver Objective NH4 during life of plan:**

<b>Task no.</b>	<b>Task description</b>
NH4.1	Monitor and control mink and grey squirrel to protect ground nesting birds and enhance red squirrel population.
NH4.2	Manage woodland at Mary's Knowe through removal of non-native plantation to benefit red squirrels.
NH4.3	Provide nesting sites for sand martin.
NH4.4	Create a list of notable species for Loch Leven and their management requirements (to prevent conflicting management).
NH4.5	Compile a list of research opportunities and promote to academic institutions.

**Objective NH5:** Demonstrate good practice and innovative conservation and visitor management.

### **Objective description**

Repeat visitor surveys have demonstrated the high number of visitors who continue to value the peace and tranquillity and scenic qualities offered by the loch. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code was introduced in 2005 on the back of the Land Reform Act 2003. The Act gives everyone statutory access rights to most land and inland water. People only have these rights if they exercise them responsibly by respecting people's privacy, safety and livelihoods, and Scotland's environment. Equally, land managers have to manage their land and water responsibly in relation to access rights. This legislation had significant impacts on our work and during the last plan we established projects associated with visitor behaviour surveys, installed electronic people counters and supported TRACKS (The Rural Access Committee of Kinross-shire) with a series of visitor surveys. In addition to this we provide site specific local access guidance for dog walkers and water borne access.

Visitor numbers continue to rise and as the trail is now established we will look at visitor feedback through the management planning process and sources such as the Scotinform visitor survey carried out in 2015 to guide the way ahead. With the popularity of the trail, managing the pressures on the reserve will need to be guided by objective understanding of the issues. Management decisions will be informed by our visitor monitoring so that lessons learned can be shared with other sites. We will provide signage and face to face advice which engenders mutual respect between different types of trail users.

We will build upon the catchment management work and facilitate and support partnership working to investigate opportunities for increasing benefits provided by the reserve and raising awareness of them. Benefits could include resilience to climate change, cycling of nutrients, buffering against flooding, access to nature for improving health and well-being or as an asset providing socio-economic benefits for the local community.

### **Projects planned to deliver Objective NH5 during life of plan:**

<b>Task No.</b>	<b>Task description</b>
NH5.1	Review, promote and monitor local access guidance for trail users to assess impact on natural heritage.
NH5.2	Continue to monitor visitor numbers.
NH5.3	Promote mutual respect between trail users through signage and advice
NH5.4	Support further research into ecosystem services features and promotion of the broad scale benefits of the reserve.
NH5.5	Disseminate examples of good practice for conservation and visitor management

## 2 Management for People

**Objective VM1:** To provide a positive visitor experience of Loch Leven's nature through provision of high quality visitor facilities.

### Objective description

During the last plan there were major investments in visitor facilities on the reserve, largely associated with the establishment of the 13.5 mile Loch Leven Heritage Trail (LLHT) and associated visitor infrastructure. This has changed the ways in which people can access and experience the reserve.

We will roll forward our rationale for visitor management planning established in the last plan period. A series of discovery points will provide access and good quality visitor infrastructure and these will be complemented by tranquil zones relatively free of infrastructure.

Our focus will be to maintain and, where necessary, update signage, benches and hides. When planning new facilities we will aim to design and select options which will not impact on the wildlife, will enhance visitors' experiences of the natural heritage and will be based on least restrictive access (meeting obligations under the 2010 Equality Act). Other than as agreed between the partners, the RSPB will maintain facilities on their own land and the Council will maintain the track itself.

In partnership with other key stakeholders we will prepare and implement a master plan for major improvements to visitor facilities, especially at main entry points around the reserve and at locations where some of the best views of birds can be had. Initial ideas include improvements and orientation at Kinross Pier and, a tower hide at Grahamstone and upgrade of facilities at RSPB Loch Leven.

We have a key proposal for a partnership project at Kinross Pier which will see a collective approach to improving the visitor experience; creating a focal point in Kinross with shared facilities to maximise socio-economic benefits of the reserve.

### Projects planned to deliver Objective VM1 during life of plan:

Task No.	Task description
VM1.1	Work with key partners to develop and implement large scale and high quality visitor facilities including a shared facility for orientation and information at Kinross Pier.
VM1.2	Work with partners to develop short easy access routes including links to other paths and provide more seating around the trails.
VM1.3	Work with partners to carry out maintenance of all access facilities to at least easy access and key sections to all abilities standard.
VM1.4	Review potential for further viewing facilities around the trail.
VM1.5	Work closely with RSPB to provide a positive visitor experience and a high quality gateway to the whole NNR.

**Objective VM2:** To provide opportunities for visitor engagement and learning to improve awareness and understanding of the special qualities of the reserve.

### **Objective description**

Our preferred approaches to raising awareness are by providing interpretation, using mixed media, which can reach a wide audience at all times, and through face to face engagement between visitors, staff and volunteers.

As part of the proposals for improving the visitor facilities at Loch Leven we will first produce an interpretation plan to ensure a cohesive approach. We aim to produce innovative and high quality material about the special wildlife features of the site and to explore the cultural heritage.

Ideas for interpretation might include updates to current materials or additional interpretive media near discovery points. We will also look at incorporating interpretation, possibly including art works, close to existing infrastructure on the wider reserve.

While developing interpretation and communication projects we will look for opportunities to engage with the local community to share ideas, learn from their knowledge or develop joint projects.

We have reviewed our audiences for face to face engagement. We will continue to use the reserve to deliver health and well-being for everyone but have re-defined our priority target audiences as i) families, ii) less-abled and iii) disadvantaged groups. We will provide family orientated events and promote led events during school holidays. We will support non-commercial groups who deliver events for our target audiences.

### **Projects planned to deliver Objective VM2 during life of plan:**

<b>Task No.</b>	<b>Task description</b>
VM2.1	Engage with communities to prepare an interpretation plan and provide high quality interpretive material/art work at gateways and hides ahead of the large scale project (see VM1.1).
VM2.2	Promote led events to non-commercial special interest groups, particularly health and well-being related sector.
VM2.3	Promote family orientated events and open days, including guided cycle safaris around the loch.

**Objective VM3:** To work in partnership to develop "Destination Loch Leven" to ensure this natural asset is valued and provides economic benefit.

### **Objective description**

We aim to promote the benefits offered by Loch Leven for outdoor access and as a Scottish tourism destination based on the quality of its natural assets so as to both ensure the site is valued and generates socio-economic benefits. SNH does not have the resources, remit or skills to undertake this on its own and we aim to work in partnership to raise the profile of the site and market its special qualities and facilities effectively.

Loch Leven is a diverse site offering visitors lots of opportunities. Whether you are looking for a short visit or a full day out, have a specific interest in the natural heritage or history, or want to enjoy the scenery; there is something to do here. Complemented by local businesses in the surrounding areas you can have a great visitor experience. By working with partners under the 'Destination Loch Leven' banner we can promote the whole experience and appeal to a wider audience. We will work with the existing local tourism forum to deliver these aspects of our plan.

We aim to work in partnership to provide familiarisation training for businesses and to work with existing partnerships to help make the most of the site's contribution to local social and economic priorities. We aim to do this in a manner that would complement and enhance existing commercial and other provision.

We will promote the reserve through a variety of media. We will explore the use of social media to ensure people are enthused about the possibility of visiting by high quality visuals and sufficient detail to plan their visit and to keep regular visitors up to date with our latest news.

### **Projects planned to deliver Objective VM3 during life of plan:**

<b>Task No.</b>	<b>Task description</b>
VM3.1	Work in partnership to support promotion of Loch Leven, including with the local tourism forum.
VM3.2	Produce and implement a communication and promotion strategy identifying the key facts and issues about the reserve we wish to publicise and the most effective ways of doing this.
VM3.3	In partnership with other Loch Leven interests, market the loch to non-visitors through campaigns, tourism opportunities and production of high quality promotional AV material.
VM3.4	In partnership with other Loch Leven interests, provide familiarisation training to tourism providers.
VM3.5	Support visitor surveys to inform on-going development and management of visitor facilities and socio-economic benefits.
VM3.6	Promote the NNR to visitors and local residents through a mix of media.
VM3.7	Hold regular key managers meetings with Kinross Estate, RSPB, Perth and Kinross Council and Historic Environment Scotland.

**Objective VM4:** To increase opportunities for first hand learning and skills development through volunteering, student placements and citizen science and continued delivery of "Growing up with Loch Leven" and "Teaching in Nature " .

### **Objective description**

During the life of the last plan we developed a successful formal volunteer programme averaging a core group of 20, who have both developed skills in and delivered scientific survey and practical conservation tasks. These volunteers have provided valuable work on the reserve, giving their time and allowing us to do things that would not otherwise have been possible. Volunteers are also powerful ambassadors for our work with a different perspective to our paid staff. We will continue to encourage and support volunteering; and will look to improve the facilities for volunteers as our current office does not provide suitable space.

We aim to build on our success with volunteers through local citizen science initiatives so that local people become more connected with Loch Leven.

We will focus on helping young people to learn about the outdoors; and by helping to build their knowledge, skills and confidence improve their employability.

We will do this by increasing involvement of target groups such as The Princes Trust and Community Pay Back, by involvement in the Youth Initiative and student placement programme.

The loch is a learning resource that is used by all levels. While we are proud of the contribution the site makes to tertiary education this is largely self-led and the focus of our resources will be on school age visits.

Our focus for formal education will continue to be to work in partnership with other stakeholders to promote and support exciting first hand experiences at Loch Leven for local cluster schools. We will continue to support further CPD opportunities in Outdoor Learning for teachers. Where appropriate we will target this towards young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We will continue to deliver the Growing up with Loch Leven project in partnership with RSPB and Perth and Kinross Council (PKC), to promote understanding of what makes Loch Leven a special place. Through this project we will work with the Kinross cluster of schools and teachers to encourage repeat first hand learning experiences and foster a sense of pride and engagement with Loch Leven NNR.

We will maintain and continue to improve the accessibility of the site for all users which will also benefit educational groups e.g. the new platforms at Burleigh ponds.

We will investigate the demand for further facilities and site specific educational resources that would enhance educational experiences and/or further enable self-led groups at any level.

**Projects planned to deliver Objective VM4 during life of plan:**

<b>Task No.</b>	<b>Task description</b>
VM4.1	Improve facilities for volunteers and students.
VM4.2	Encourage more people to become volunteers on the reserve and run a volunteer programme for scientific survey and practical conservation tasks.
VM4.3	Develop opportunities with partners for citizen science on the reserve.
VM4.4	Continue working with the RSPB to deliver GuWLL projects relating to special features of the reserve and promote site for Teaching in Nature and Forest Schools.
VM4.5	Maintain initiatives that contribute to building skills and employability.

**Objective VM5:** To promote outdoor recreation and physical activity opportunities to enhance the experience of nature by recreation users and promote responsible access and mutual respect.

### **Objective description**

The natural heritage is a key health-promoting asset and we wish to encourage more people to participate in enjoying the outdoors in a way that respects the wildlife of Loch Leven as well as others users. The LLHT provides 13.5 mile of easy access within or overlooking the NNR and within easy reach of several refreshment stops, villages, Kinross and also links with local bus routes and the M9. The easy access of the trail and its proximity to the landscape and wildlife of Loch Leven attracted in excess of 200,000 visits in 2013/14.

We will take opportunities engage with visitors to raise awareness of and positive attitudes to protection of the natural heritage.

The success of the Trail has also brought challenges of different users (walkers, dog walkers, school groups, cyclists etc.) all using the same trail. We have also seen a slight increase in demand for water borne access. In order for everyone to have a positive experience there needs to be respect both between users and for the natural heritage itself. We will look for opportunities to promote responsible access by all users of the reserve and will work with other stakeholders to address specific access issues and responsible behaviour. We will continue to monitor and review the local access guidance for water borne users (tasks for this are listed under objective NH1).

We will seek to remove barriers to participation by making more stretches of the Trail “all-abilities” and will look for opportunities to improve connections and loop routes around the Trail.

We will provide pre-visit information so people can easily plan their visit. We will promote the accessibility of the site, particularly to disadvantaged groups, one of our key audiences. We will work with others to promote use of the Trail for health and well-being initiatives such as Medal routes and green prescription.

### **Projects planned to deliver Objective VM5 during life of plan:**

<b>Task No.</b>	<b>Task description</b>
VM5.1	Develop and promote guidance to encourage mutual respect between trail users.
VM5.2	Support a green dog walker’s scheme for the area.
VM5.3	Work with partner organisations to develop activities which promote health and well-being.
VM5.4	Work with stakeholders to promote responsible access and mutual respect on the reserve.

### 3 Property Management

**Objective PM1:** Property Management: To manage the reserve property responsibly following best practice

SNH shares responsibility for property maintenance with Perth and Kinross Council, Kinross Estate Company and the RSPB. With these partners, we need to look for efficiencies of scale and opportunities to fund maintenance work, particularly of the Loch Leven Heritage Trail.

**Projects planned to deliver Objective PM1 during life of plan:**

<b>Task No.</b>	<b>Task description</b>
PM1.1	Maintain the reserve and all visitor infrastructure (trails, car park, toilets, viewpoint etc.) in good condition for visitors.
PM1.2	Carry out quarterly safety and condition assessments of all visitor infrastructure and keep accurate records.
PM1.3	Ensure the property is maintained and conforms to Health & Safety Regulations including risk assessment and fire plan reviews.
PM1.4	Ensure payments made for Nature Reserve Agreement and other annual payments to estate.

## 4 Planning and reporting

**Objective PR1:** Planning & reporting: Ensure management planning is adaptive and effective.

The reserve plan provides valuable continuity however it is only part of the process and will be monitored and reviewed on an on-going basis with formal milestones at regular intervals.

An interim review will be completed mid-plan unless there are significant changes that require an earlier review. We will review the plan in the final year to inform preparation of the next management plan.

We will continue to deliver our activities as efficiently as possible maximising the benefit of public funds. Where appropriate we will seek to access external funding and support for our programme of work.

We recognise the importance of community empowerment and providing the support to communities of place and of interest to allow them to participate in decisions and will engage with them on issues which affect them throughout the period of the plan.

<b>Task No.</b>	<b>Task description</b>
PR1.1	Update annual budget in Q3 for bidding.
PR1.2	Report on finance and projects in corporate systems.
PR1.3	Update annual report at least every quarter and finalise by end of Q1 of following financial year.
PR1.4	Do interim review of management plan.
PR1.5	Review current reserve plan and complete new management plan.
PR1.6	Natural Heritage and management data will be stored and shared in line with SNH's policies and procedures
PR1.7	Mechanisms will be put in place to facilitate engagement with stakeholders.

## **5 Summary**

During this 10-year plan we will focus on the continued restoration of water quality at Loch Leven. We aim to extend the area and diversity of wetlands around the loch being managed to improve their condition and to create areas suitable for breeding and wintering birds. We will focus on creating wildlife corridors to connect areas together; creating a more cohesive series of wetlands which allow wildlife to move over a wider area. Over time this will create a more robust wetland where both habitats and species are more resilient to change.

Our focus for visitors will be to improve the orientation and interpretation at discovery points around the loch. We will also look for opportunities to incorporate interpretation close to existing infrastructure. To provide for a wider audience we will aim to improve opportunities for short, circular routes connecting with the main trail.

A key project will be to work with partners to create a more cohesive welcome and focus for visitors at Kinross Pier. We hope this will improve the connection between the reserve and the Kinross community and bring socio-economic benefits for the area.

## 6 Document properties

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### Links

For information about Scotland's National Nature Reserves and further information about Loch Leven NNR please visit [Scotland's NNR website](#).

Other useful links:

Scottish Natural Heritage [www.snh.org.uk](http://www.snh.org.uk)

Joint Nature Conservation Committee [www.jncc.gov.uk](http://www.jncc.gov.uk)