

Section 6: Events and initiatives for young people

Introduction

- 6-1 Special efforts were made during the consultation exercise to involve young people in the debate about the proposed National Park and to find out their views. In planning the series of events and opportunities, we endeavoured to build on the work, which had been carried out to involve young people in the management of the area over the last few years through the Cairngorms Partnership.

School Visits

- 6-2 Two day-long seminars, which had been organised for March with the aim of bringing together school pupils from throughout the area, were cancelled due to the outbreak of foot and mouth disease. In their place, a programme of visits by SNH staff to Secondary schools in and around the Cairngorms area was arranged, and participants were given the opportunity to take part in a number of awareness-raising and capacity-building workshops about National Parks. These workshops were organised in association with Cairngorms Partnership and run in seven schools, involving almost 240 pupils (Table 6.1). The programme for each visit included presentations from SNH staff and activities in small groups focussing on each of the issues.

Table 6-1: Participation of school pupils in the discussions

School	Number of participants
Charleston Academy, Inverness	45
Aboyne Academy	19
Pitlochry High School	23
Websters High School, Kirriemuir	19
Brechin High School	40
Kingussie High School	35
Banchory Academy	23
Gordons High School, Huntly	35
Total	239

Should a National Park be designated?

Participants identified that the Cairngorms area is special because:

- it is a beautiful area with important protected sites;
- there is a lot of wildlife;
- there is a lot of different types of land with special qualities;
- there are special cultural heritage characteristics;
- there are many leisure activities to participate in; and
- there are a variety of land uses such as farming, forestry and shooting.

Participants concluded that the Cairngorms and surrounding area is also important for people who live and work within the area for enjoyment, recreation and the economy. They identified that the Cairngorms area supports the economy through tourism and other land uses such as farming, forestry and hunting.

The young people were asked to think about what opportunities and threats of a National Park might be. Responses are summarised in Tables 6-2 and 6-3

Table 6-2: Opportunities arising from the establishment of a National Park in the Cairngorms

Social	Economic	Environment	Recreation
More amenities for communities and local people	Attracts more tourism to the area bringing more money through B&Bs, restaurants and hotels	Conservation of the environment	More nature walks
Less depopulation; helping small places to survive e.g. Dinnet	Heightens international profile of area	Preservation of some land and wildlife	More recreation for locals opportunities activities (e.g. walking, fishing, social events)
More jobs for youngsters	Brings more money into local community	Reduces river pollution by pesticides, etc.	Protection of environment Better planning
Children more educated about environment	Better economy	Protects flora and fauna	Visitors will enjoy the area without destroying the very thing they came to see
Better housing	Grants for farmers	Preserves natural and cultural heritage for future generations	Could stop large and ungainly projects, i.e. large housing estates, ski resorts, Aviemore (old hotels, etc).

Table 6-3: The threats arising from the establishment of a National Park in the Cairngorms

Social	Economic	Environment	Recreation	Other
Overcrowding population i.e. as tourist numbers rise, space for locals reduces	Initial costs	Increase litter/pollution	Leisure restrictions	Adds extra layer of bureaucracy
Land conflicts	It would cost the Government too much money	Traffic congestion on roads	Too many walkers. Farmers may disagree to people going through their land	Begins with a consultation and ends with small minority making final decisions.
Need permission to build	House prices will increase	Nature (animals) get scared off. Some animals could be threatened by numbers of people	Land Managers have tourists eroding their land	It would take a lot of time to look after
More people moving to area means more land taken up by buildings	Land prices rise	More erosion	You may not be allowed to ride motor vehicles over the land	Dilution of local culture
Unwanted visitors (e.g. neds, boy racers, etc)	Too many restrictions for local businesses and people	More people leading to more sewage	Loss of natural wildlife and vegetation (due to too many people)	Not enough existing visitor infrastructure

What area should a National Park cover?

There was a range of different views about which of the three options were preferable. Many thought that Option A, the smallest option, was the most appropriate size for the Park because it would be more manageable and it contained the majority of important characteristics within it. Comments supporting a small Park included:

- all the nice scenery, animals and plants are within the smallest area.
- Aviemore will benefit most, Kingussie/Newtonmore have nothing to offer so should not have anything to do with it;
- Aviemore should be the only benefactor because it is nearest the area and offers the best services;
- Aviemore originated because of the Cairngorms, therefore they should get all the benefits;
- Banchory should not be considered because it is too far away from the Cairngorms area.

Some participants also proposed that Option B would be better because many areas within Option C do not meet the criteria for making an area a National Park.

However, there was also significant support for a larger Park, possibly the size of Option C, because it would spread the benefits of being located within a National Park over a wide area. Common reasons for expressions of support for Option C included :

- it contains some special places which are situated abutting the boundaries of Options A and B;
- it encompasses the greatest number of sites of importance;
- Kirriemuir should be included because it has a lot of places of interest for tourists;
- it brings benefits for more people; and
- it increases the amount of money entering outlying areas.

Participants also considered it a positive factor for a large Park that property values would rise within the Park's boundaries and thus benefit those who live there.

What Powers and Functions should the National Park Authority have?

Participants were asked what functions they thought the National Park Authority should carry out. They identified several broad categories and a number of functions for the Authority:

Education

- Provide field centres
- Organise school/club visits
- Provide Park rangers
- Organise foreign exchange with foreign National Parks e.g. Canada
- Promote understanding of the area

Recreation

- Manage ski resorts
- Provide water-sports, rock climbing, mountain biking and paintball games
- Set up leisure activities
- Restrict access to areas under threat

Social/Economic

- Manage the tourist influx to benefit hotels
- Restrict second home ownership
- Keep locals in the area
- Keep traditional employment
- Expand the job prospects for youth
- Promote local produce from the area

Environment

- Restrict access to fragile areas of land
- Protect endangered animals (e.g. the capercaillie)
- Run native forest regeneration schemes
- Prevention of footpath erosion
- Restrict unattractive developments
- Screen quarries and ugly houses with trees, etc
- Restrict the number of holiday homes
- Set up nature reserves for endangered species

Other

- Give grants
- Improve local facilities
- Raise funds for the upkeep of the National Park

Membership of the Board of the Park Authority?

As a result of activities designed to promote discussion about membership of the Board, participants made suggestions about the knowledge, expertise and the skills required by the Board members (Table 6-4).

Table 6-4: Examples of the Board membership suggested by young people

Board Member	Representation	Skills and knowledge
Gamekeepers	Wildlife management	Knowledge of local ecosystems
Botanists	Plants	Know how to manage plants and identify species
Tourist Boards	Management of tourism and the local environment. Cater for tourists' 'wants'	Knowledge of the local area and natural resources and the tourism sector
Geologist/ Geographer	Morphology of rocks	Changes in the mountains
Environmentalists	The environment	Know how to manage the environment
Businessmen	Financial management	Know how to manage money
Meteorologists	Weather	Knowledge of mountain weather patterns. Can warn mountaineers of adverse weather conditions.
Farming and Agriculture	Farming	Agricultural land use
Architects	Building	Knowledge of local designs
Biologists	Biology	Recognising plants and wildlife
Planners	Planning	Local knowledge and natural resources
Archaeologists	Excavation	Cultural heritage
Geologists	The local environment	Local knowledge and natural resources
Estate Agents	House pricing	Property costs
Community	Community development	Local area, local people, local problems
Lawyer	Conflicts	Local knowledge, environmental law
Rangers		Knows the area
Local community representatives	People	Aware of local people's needs.
Town Planners	People, politics	Planning
Youth	Young People	What future population of area wants
Land-owners	Management	Know the area
Forestry	Native woodland Knowledge	Working for Forestry Commission.

University of Aberdeen Student Seminar

- 6-3 A conference for Scottish University and College students from throughout Scotland was planned in association with a group of postgraduate students from the Department of Geography and the Environment at the University of Aberdeen. Unfortunately, despite weeks of careful preparation by the students, including participation in a special training-course in consultation and facilitation methods paid for by SNH, the event had to be cancelled at short notice due to the outbreak of foot and mouth disease. However, the students organised a replacement event for Aberdeen University students and this was held in March 2001, involving almost 40 students (Table 6-5) and representatives from Aberdeenshire Council, University of St Andrews and SNH.

Table: 6-5: Participation of students in the event

Department or Club	Number of participants
Agriculture	9
Forestry	6
Geography and the Environment	15
History	2
Law	4
Land Economy	1
Lairig Club (Mountaineering Club)	1
Total	38

Should a National Park be designated?

The group considered that the general area does meet the legislative requirements to be designated as a National Park. The area is one of the last great “wilderness” areas of Britain and as such is of great biological and scientific importance. Although not sharing a coherent identity, the communities of the Cairngorms are quite distinctive in character from those of other parts of Scotland. A National Park Authority would help to pursue the aims of a National Park in a more co-ordinated manner than the current arrangements, where responsibilities are split between a number of local authorities. However, the group also reported there had been considerable debate about the potential for degradation which might be brought about by the National Park. Comparisons were made with English National Parks and their visitor management problems such as path erosion. It was felt that with careful management would be required to minimise any negative consequences of designation.

What area should a National Park cover?

Selection of the area is critical to the success of the National Park Authority. Too large an area would spread resources too thinly. Too small an area would make achieving the aims of National Park Authority too difficult. Option A neatly encompasses the Cairngorms massif – the “true” Cairngorms landscape – and some of the most fragile landscapes in Britain. It is argued that resources should be targeted on this area in order to conserve the valuable natural heritage within the massif. However, focussing on this area alone may concentrate visitors on the most sensitive areas. Option C was considered too large for efficient and effective management and includes

areas quite different in character to the settlements within and adjacent to the Cairngorms massif. Caution should be exercised in looking at experience of Cairngorms Partnership boundary – there is now an opportunity to look afresh at the opportunities and threats for the Cairngorms area.

In conclusion the group decided that the preferred area for the Park should be centred on Option A but with a buffer zone so that the area of the National Park should be similar to, or slightly smaller than, Option B. The principles suggested by SNH for definition of the detailed boundary were satisfactory.

What Powers and Functions should the National Park Authority have?

The powers conveyed by National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 are wide-ranging and essentially cover all the aspects required for the successful management of the National Park. It will be important not to burden residents with additional bureaucracy. The ability to establish a Park-wide ranger service is to be welcomed. A single Park ranger service would be readily identifiable by the public and would hopefully facilitate greater interaction with the public.

Ministers' proposal to maintain planning function principally with local authorities has the support of many sectors. However the area will face new pressures as result of becoming a National Park, and the potential to desecrate an area as result of tourism is to be seen in Aviemore. It was felt that by making the NPA a statutory consultee, sufficient power would be given to avoid unsuitable development. It was considered that there was no need for a single local plan for the Park as the present system had been demonstrated to work well. The National Park Authority should, however, be consulted on all development proposals as the cumulative effect of even small developments could adversely affect key settlements.

Membership of the Board of the Park Authority?

A Board of 25 members would seem to be appropriate, with members representing a range of knowledge and expertise. There was support for involvement of more local people than was currently indicated in the proposals, to promote a sense of local involvement amongst local communities. The allocation of Board places between the participating Local Authorities should be based on a compromise of area of their territory within the Park and resident population with a bias towards the latter.

Consideration of the areas of knowledge and expertise of Board members should bear in mind the four aims of National Parks. Both Historic Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage should be able to provide expertise on cultural and natural heritage, while Forestry Commission and Scottish Tourist Board should be involved for their specialist skills. Board membership should also reflect all aspects of communities including the Gaelic heritage, young people, special needs, etc. Scottish Universities should be involved for their relevant research interests, knowledge and expertise.

Elections for local members should be held after the appointments process to prevent experts living in the area standing for election when he or she could become appointed.

Name of the Park and other issues?

The name of the National Park should be "Cairngorms National Park". It was considered that it was generally understood that a National Park was different from a public parks with their manicured lawns and flowerbeds.

University of Dundee Student Seminar

- 6-4 The School of Town and Regional Planning at the University of Dundee invited SNH to present Ministers' proposals for a National Park in the Cairngorms at a seminar on 20 April 2001. The purpose of the event was to allow students and staff the opportunity to discuss the proposals and to give their views on the issues during the wider programme of consultation events. A report was prepared by SNH staff on behalf of the participants.

Should a National Park be designated?

There was general agreement that the Cairngorms area met the legislative condition from the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000.

What area should a National Park cover?

A range of views were expressed about the area of the proposed National Park. Some participants felt that the Park should be as large as possible including "gateways" such as Kirriemuir/Brechin. Others considered that the Park should not include Angus Glens as this particular area does not match the criteria. Option C was generally preferred as it was considered that this would spread the benefits which may be brought by National Parks most widely. It was considered that Option C or an area similar to that of the Cairngorms Partnership Boundary would allow the zoning of pressure and avoid creating honeypot around the sensitive core defined by Option A. However, the potential problems of achieving effective and efficient administration over such a large area were recognised. There may also be difficulties achieving adequate representation of all interests on the Park Authority Board if a large Park area is chosen.

The diversity of the natural and cultural heritage of the area should be celebrated. The need for the designated area to have a distinctive and coherent identity was questioned by some, as coherent was considered to be the same as homogenous. It was suggested that the importance of the area was directly linked to its natural and cultural diversity. Water catchments should generally be included within the Park's boundary.

What Powers and Functions should the National Park Authority have?

The group considered that it would be important for the National Park Authority to have powers and functions which would allow it to undertake the following tasks and activities:

- identification of current management regimes (e.g. NNR, SSSI, etc.) and review to ensure that they continue to be effective and appropriate;
- formulation of forestry strategy;
- ensure that social equity is maintained and promoted – e.g. affordable housing, employment diversity, access to services over whole National Park area;
- creation of Ranger Services for environmental education, forest management, paths and tourism;
- provision and management of paths and tracks;
- woodland management and habitat enhancement;

- grants and incentives to and managers and farmers;
- land and property management and leasing;
- facilitation of community development;
- co-ordination of existing functions;
- long term and self sustaining research, e.g. CDP;
- co-ordination of fund raising from the EU and other sources; and
- all settlements within the Park should be considered equally rather than a focus be put on specific key settlements, the Park Authority should be proactive about the management challenges in settlements such as Aviemore

In the discussion about how the Town and Country Planning function should be administered within the Park, there was considerable discussion and strong views were expressed. The final consensus was that the National Park Authority should become the planning authority, with the Local Authorities given the status of statutory consultees. There was some acknowledgement that planning functions could remain with the Local Authorities but this was generally not considered to have many advantages.

Membership of the Board of the Park Authority?

The group considered that representation of local people was required and this should be more than 20% of the Board of 25 members. Local representation should be maximised through increasing the number of directly elected members. There should also be high level of local representation amongst nominated members from Local Authorities.

There was support for the concept of advisory groups and the use of peer groups. Some suggested that there should be a local veto, so that elected members could have the possibility to veto any proposals.

The expertise and knowledge of the Board members should include ecology, tourism, land management; local business/LECs; recreational use of the area; local young people; landscape architecture; planning and environmental management. In addition, the group worked on table of skills, knowledge and experience that National Park Board members appointed by the Scottish Ministers should hold.

Table 6-6: Skills, knowledge and experience of Board appointees

The group also considered that it was important to strengthen the relationship between the aims of National Parks and the people who live there by endorsing partnership working. The National Park Authority should invest in the knowledge of the local people but with a national perspective.

Name of the Park and other issues?

The name of the National Park should be “Cairngorms National Park” or the “The Grampians National Park”.

“Born in Born” International Student Environment Conference

6-5 The Born in Born International Student Environment is an annual event organised for and by European students of Environmental Sciences and Engineering. It has been running for six years, following the first meeting in Rostock, Germany in 1994. The idea for an annual meeting was conceived at the second meeting in the town of Born, in north-east Germany in 1995, giving rise to the conference name ‘Born in Born’. At the conference in Moscow in 2000, Scotland was nominated as the host of the event in 2001 with the theme ‘Industry and the environment’. The organisers approached Scottish Natural Heritage in March 2001 and it was agreed that they should become involved in the consultation exercise on the proposed National Park for the Cairngorms.

A group of around eighty students from Italy, France, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, Siberia, Russia, Spain, Portugal and Scotland came together over a period of eight days in early April. The programme included a combination of lectures, seminars and site visits including excursions to Speyside and Glenmore Forest Park. At the beginning of the conference Scottish Natural Heritage gave a presentation on the Cairngorms area and distributed information material on the proposals for a National Park. This was followed by a discussion workshop several days later, which aimed to stimulate discussion and gain feedback from participants on the proposed National Park. A report was prepared on behalf of the students by SNH staff.

Should a National Park be designated?

There was general agreement that there should be a National Park in the area of the Cairngorms. However, it was considered important to note that the success of a National Park in the area would be conditional on the involvement of local people. Delegates advised that ample opportunities should be given for the participation of local people in the decision making process. The group considered that the proposal presented an opportunity to develop a showcase of good practice for the rest of Scotland, and possibly the world.

The opportunities or benefits arising from the proposal might be:

- integrated management between local authorities;
- interaction and coexistence between natural areas and human operations;
- promotion of cultural promotion and social development;
- promotion of environmental education;

- promotion of sustainable economic and social development;
- enhancement of biodiversity;
- management of tourism and leisure for their economic benefits;
- management of all resources to reduce pollution.

The threats or disadvantages arising from the proposal might be:

- increase in tourist visitors, which may lead to negative impacts on the landscape;
- alienation of local people in the decision making process;
- promotion of social and economic development to the detriment of the very resource the designation aims to protect; and
- high operating and implementation costs.

What area should a National Park cover?

Participants considered a Park the size of Option C would be appropriate to provide the largest possible protected area, protecting the core environment of Option A, while promoting the local economies of Cairngorms. Participants agreed that the economy and social development of the area could be strengthened through local enterprises and industries such as tourism, organic agriculture and renewable energy. It was thought that Option C would be suitable for integrated management, linking natural and cultural heritage designations. It was agreed there should be different levels of protection across the area through zoning and that, on balance, a Park defined by Option C would be the best way forward.

What Powers and Functions should the National Park Authority have?

Managing the area in zones would help to manage the special needs of the various landscapes - for example, the wild areas should be managed for protection and enhancement, while built up areas should be managed for economic and social needs. The natural heritage should be protected against the impact of tourism.

The group considered that the Park Authority should:

- manage a Cairngorms Ranger Service and have the power to enforce restrictions, perhaps through some form of policing, ranger services should have increased powers under the National Park Authority;
- implement standards and restrictions to find a sustainable way forward, particularly for tourism promotion and its management;
- manage maintenance of footpaths, environmental education and information, and visitor services;
- co-ordinate research programmes;
- promote economic development, underpinned by a waste minimisation policy and renewable energy initiatives; and
- set high standards which should be achieved by empowering both residents and visitors.

Membership of the Board of the Park Authority?

Assuming the Board is made up of 25 members it was considered that local people should directly elect more than five members. Community participation

and inclusion of local people was considered to be extremely important to make the National Park function and work effectively. In order to enhance the integrated land management of the area there should be “councils of discussion” to represent rangers, farmers, land managers and local people.

Name of the Park and other issues?

The group considered that a good name would be “Scotland’s National Park” as this would be good from an international marketing perspective. However, the group also recognised that there may be other Parks being designated in Scotland so this name may not be so appropriate and that residents may prefer a more local name such as the “Cairngorms National Park.”

In taking forward the proposals the group recommended that the government in Scotland should:

- raise awareness of the National Park, especially with the young people in the area;
- keep residents informed of processes and plans effecting the area of the Park;
- build on the existing levels of support; and
- aim to make the initiative an example of sustainable development.

Cairngorms Youth National Park Manifesto

6-6 Staff from the Cairngorms Partnership worked with a group of young people during the consultation period to develop a Youth National Park Manifesto. The manifesto set out what young people in the area would like to see or gain from living in the proposed National Park, and how they would like to be involved in its establishment and management. The sort of benefits that young people would like to see were group under the following headings:

- training, jobs and support;
- transport, facilities and social opportunities;
- housing;
- cultural and natural heritage; and
- education;

The manifesto was presented to Sam Galbraith, the Minister responsible for the National Park proposal at a meeting on 29 January 2001. The full text of the Manifesto is presented in Annex B.