

Original description of the NSA from the publication *Scotland's Scenic Heritage* published by the Countryside Commission for Scotland in 1978, and available on the Scottish Natural Heritage website at <http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/B464646.pdf> (6.52mb)

KNAPDALE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA *Argyll and Bute*

Description from *Scotland's Scenic Heritage* 1978

The strongly grained topography of Knapdale, with long parallel ridges and glens aligned on a north-west south-east axis, presents a miniature 'Appalachian' type landscape. Heavily wooded now, the glacially overdeepened glens either have narrow ribbon lakes in their bottoms or else have been invaded by the sea. Loch Sween is a complex series of parallel channels intruding long narrow fingers of sea into the coniferous forests of Knapdale.

This ever present combination of fresh and sea water with their different plant life, small waterside meadows, and heavily wooded ridges makes up a series of narrow enclosed landscapes gradually opening out to the lower, more open, and mixed land uses of the wider topography at the mouth of Loch Sween, from where there are fine views to the Paps of Jura. By contrast Loch Caolisport is a wide sea loch. It is contained by sufficient amplitude of relief to frame the views of Jura, and in this more open loch basin there is a pleasing mixture of forestry and well kept farmland, with moorland on the high land, and some deciduous woodlands on the hillsides.

To the north the flat moss, meadow and arable land of the Moine Mhor, the finely curving meanders of the River Add, and the abruptly upstanding heights of Dunadd and Cnoc na Moine, the former rocky and bare, the latter heavily mantled in oakwoods, provide a sharp contrast to the tightly grained and forested hills of Knapdale. Loch Crinan, with its wide expanse of flats, continues this character seawards, and is enclosed on its north side by a series of miniature glens and hills, echoing the scale of Knapdale to the south, but offering a gentle, open, cultivated contrast to the forest. The historic and cultural interest of this landscape adds a further dimension to the scene.