

The Special Qualities of the Lynn of Lorn National Scenic Area

- A long-inhabited, green oasis
- A small scale, low-lying landscape within a vast highland backdrop
- A landscape strongly orientated northeast-southwest
- The coastline of great variety and diversity
- A strategic location, rich in history
- A place of retreat and seclusion
- Castle Stalker, one of Scotland's iconic romantic images

Special Quality	Further Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A long-inhabited, green oasis</i> 	
<p>Set where Loch Linnhe opens out to the Firth of Lorn and the Sound of Mull, the islands of Lismore and Shuna are low, fertile, emerald green oases of limestone amongst a wider and wilder landscape of hill and mountain.</p> <p>The neighbouring mainland of Appin and Benderloch is a picturesque landscape of small, wooded ridges and sheltered meadows.</p> <p>The rich soils together with a climate kept mild by the surrounding seas, has resulted in the area being long inhabited.</p>	<p>Lismore translates from the Gaelic as 'great garden or enclosure'. It is formed of Dalradian limestone, providing rich, fertile soils. The surrounding rock of the mainland is less fertile, primarily consisting of schist and quartzite.</p> <p>Evidence of a lime industry is seen in the remains of old lime kilns on both Lismore and Shuna, where lime was exported as fertiliser to many parts of western Scotland. There is a former grain mill at Achnacroish.</p> <p>The Appin mainland part of the NSA supports a rich vegetation of damp meadows, thick luxuriant oak woodlands, and policy woodlands. It contains both designed landscapes and crofting settlements.</p> <p>The area is still well inhabited, in spite of the desertion of many late 19th century townships.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A small scale, low-lying landscape within a vast highland backdrop</i> 	
<p>The pattern of the land is intimate, with small, walled fields, woods and lush meadows. Even the natural features of hill and crag tend to be of the small scale. It is a distinctive landscape, an area of lowland set within a backdrop of high mountains.</p> <p>Lismore is a green and settled island of rich farmland, good for both crops and livestock, and containing a profusion of wild flowers.</p>	<p>On Appin, a patterned landscape of small hilly parallel ridges and crags emerges, often with deciduous wooded sides and small glens of meadows, and some mossland at the centre leading out to small bays or beaches.</p> <p>Lismore is an island of small knolls and horizontal, uneven limestone crags, and enclosed irregular, undulating, walled fields rich in wildflowers. The land is mainly used for grazing, but a variety of crops are also grown, including flax in the past. Shuna to the north has one farm.</p> <p>The area supports numerous small woods and copses, including hazel coppice. Native birch and oak woodland and scrub are common on the mainland and Shuna.</p> <p>In contrast to this fertile oasis are the rugged mountains beyond the NSA. There are glimpses out to a large-scale, vast landscape beyond: Kingairloch, Morvern, Mull, and the mountains of Lochaber and Glen Coe – their massive,</p>

	conical and angular profiles dominating the backdrop to the NSA in many areas.
<p>• <i>A landscape strongly orientated northeast-southwest</i></p>	
<p>The pattern of ridges and valleys, of crags and slopes, of islands and promontories is particularly distinctive, the uniform orientation lending a sense of coherence to the land.</p> <p>The strong northeast-southwest direction mirrors the far shore of Loch Linnhe and the Great Glen to the north.</p>	<p>The orientation follows that of the rift valley of the Great Glen. It is particularly obvious when the narrow, southern end of Lismore is viewed from the Oban-Craignure ferry.</p>
<p>• <i>The coastline of great variety and diversity</i></p>	
<p>The array of islands and islets, horseshoe bays, shingle beaches, geometric cliffs, rocky shores and tidal flats, together with the narrow mouth of Loch Creran, provide continual interest to the eye. The natural rock arch of Clach Tholl is particularly striking.</p> <p>In places sheltered woods extend right down to the tideline, in others there are cliffs that bear the brunt of the gales that whip up the Firth of Lorn. The enclosed Lynn, long a sheltered sea route and a place of anchorage, contrasts markedly with the open and exposed Loch Linnhe.</p> <p>This great variety within a small area results in unparalleled, intimate coastal scenery. However, views over the sea to the distant mountains of Mull or the mainland, can bring a vastness of scale to the scene.</p>	<p>The NSA lies at the confluence and mouths of many waterways. The coastline is complex and broken, with sounds, skerries, islets, islands, cliffs, horseshoe bays, coves, shingle beaches, rocky shores, tidal mud flats, raised beaches, firths, and sea loch mouths. Landform varies from the highly sinuous Loch Creran to the geometric cliffs and rocky shore of Lismore.</p> <p>The Lynn itself, with Loch Creran, Ardmucknish bay, Camas Nathais and Loch Etive, provides relatively calm waters compared to the broad, expansive Loch Linnhe and Firth of Lorn.</p> <p>Loch Creran is one of the richest lochs in Britain for its underwater life.</p> <p>The importance of the geology of Lismore and the rock arch of Clach Tholl on the mainland, is recognised by both being part of the Isle of Lismore, The Dog Stone, Clach Tholl Geological Conservation Review Site.</p>
<p>• <i>A strategic location, rich in history</i></p>	
<p>The Lynn of Lorn and Lismore occupy a key strategic position on the west coast of Scotland, with commanding views of surrounding mountains, sounds and sea lochs. They are situated on what was a major sea route linking Ireland to the lands of the north and west.</p>	<p>Lismore lies at the confluence of the Sound of Mull, Loch Etive, Loch Linnhe, and the Lynn of Lorn. It is also at the mouth of Loch Creran and Loch Laich. Beyond lie the mountainous areas of Glen Coe and Lochaber. Across from Loch Linnhe is Morvern and Kingairloch, to the southwest the highlands of Mull, and to the southeast the hills of Argyll.</p> <p>Historically it was an important trading and transport route by sea and coast from the head of Loch Linnhe (now Fort</p>

<p>Throughout history this area has been a place of both defence and religion, as shown by the numerous historic remains found throughout the area.</p>	<p>William) to the sea and west coast of Scotland.</p> <p>This has led to many defensible installations such as brochs, duns and numerous castles. These include Tirefour Castle Broch, Castle Coeffin (of Norse origin) and Achadun on Lismore; Castle Shuna, the Black Castle at Barcaldine; and, most famous, Castle Stalker, with the original fort dating from around 1320. Defensive installations date right through to the 20th century, with five World War II sites on Lismore.</p> <p>Its strategic location was also recognised by the church, with Lismore having the seat of the Bishopric of Argyll until the 16th century. Appin itself translates from the Gaelic <i>Apuin</i> (Abbey Lands). One of the largest Bronze Age Cairns in Argyll is also found on Lismore.</p>
<p>• <i>A place of retreat and seclusion</i></p>	
<p>From early religious settlements to present-day, secluded estates, the area has long been an important place of retreat, quiet and seclusion.</p> <p>This perhaps reflects the intimate nature of the land, with its low hills, sheltered hollows and wooded slopes.</p>	<p>A turn off the busy Fort William to Oban road leads to a quiet, hidden world of single track roads, small walled meadows and fields and copses and woods, opening onto small bays; the same is repeated on Lismore.</p> <p>St. Moulag was the first Christian to establish himself on Lismore (arriving in 561AD) and was reported to have spent much time meditating on a small mound now known as Moulag's Chair.</p> <p>St. Columba was believed to have spent time on Bernera isle and preached under a large yew tree.</p> <p>The area contains several estates, some well hidden and secluded such as Lochnell which is almost surrounded by woodland and water and Eriska an island hotel. There are also houses and cottages almost hidden in the well-wooded landscape.</p>
<p><i>Location-specific quality</i></p>	
<p>• <i>Castle Stalker, one of Scotland's iconic romantic images</i></p>	
<p>Castle Stalker, standing prominent on an islet guarding the entrance to Loch Laich, and with its dramatic backdrop of island, sea and mountain, is one of the most recognisable and romantic of Scottish castles.</p>	<p><i>'As you turn off the main A828 towards Port Appin your attention is immediately caught by Castle Stalker, set on its own very small islet in Loch Laich. Castle Stalker was built in about 1495 by Duncan Stewart of Appin who was granted lands in the area by James IV for his support in destroying the power of the Lords of the Isles. The castle was taken by the Campbells in 1620, before being recaptured by the Stewarts after a siege in 1685. The castle was abandoned in the late 1700s and roofless by 1830. What you see today has been restored since the 1960s.'</i></p> <p>www.undiscoveredscotland.</p>

Selected Bibliography

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