

Unfinished Business

A National Parks Strategy for Scotland

PRESS RELEASE

MORE NATIONAL PARKS BEST WAY TO HONOUR

JOHN MUIR'S OUTSTANDING LEGACY

As we approach the centenary of John Muir's death on 24 December 2014, the Scottish Campaign for National Parks (SCNP) and The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland (APRS) have called on the Scottish Government to honour his memory by creating more National Parks in Scotland. John Muir (1838-1914) is undoubtedly one of Scotland's most famous sons, who made an immense contribution to the worldwide National Parks movement. In particular his campaigning efforts in the United States in the 19th Century eventually led to the creation of over 400 National Parks, which have been described as "America's best ever idea".

Ross Anderson, Chairman of SCNP, said: "As a nation we are currently near the bottom of the world league in terms of our number of National Parks. This is unfinished business in Scotland, so we have published a well-argued strategy for seven more National Parks to join the two existing ones covering the Cairngorms and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs."

John Mayhew, Director of APRS, said: "It would be the best possible way to honour the memory of John Muir for the Scottish Government to create more National Parks. This would help to protect and promote more of Scotland's magnificent landscapes and to regenerate some of the more economically fragile parts of rural Scotland."

In 2013 SCNP and APRS published their joint report *Unfinished Business*, calling up on the Scottish Government to create up to seven more National Parks.

The Scottish Government has however rejected the call for more National Parks, breaking its 2011 manifesto commitment to "work with communities to explore the creation of new National Parks". The community of Harris voted overwhelmingly in favour of the creation of Scotland's third National Park, but even this was rejected by the Scottish Government.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. John Muir (1838-1914) was the founder of the modern conservation movement and the first person to call for practical action to safeguard and cherish the world's wild places. Born in the fishing port of Dunbar in East Lothian, he developed an early awareness of the value of wild nature. At the age of eleven he emigrated with his family to the wilds of Wisconsin in the American mid-west, where he spent his teenage years. Arriving in California at the age of 30, he achieved fame as a botanist, geologist and glaciologist, and pioneered what is now known as ecology. During his explorations of the High Sierra and Alaska (1870-1890), Muir became aware of the threats to such wild places, and was the first to clearly call for their conservation. He led the campaign for the protection of Yosemite, and deeply influenced Presidents

Roosevelt and Wilson in designating over 50 areas and 200 national monuments. To campaign for wild places Muir helped set up the Sierra Club, now one of the world's leading environmental campaigning organisations.

2. For more information please contact John Mayhew on 07787 195690, 0131 225 7012 or scnp-aprs@btconnect.com

3. SCNP promotes the protection, enhancement and enjoyment of National Parks, potential National Parks and other nationally outstanding areas worthy of special protection. SCNP is a registered Scottish charity, No SC031008. www.scnp.org.uk

4 APRS promotes the care of all of Scotland's rural landscapes. APRS is a registered Scottish charity, No SC016139. www.ruralscotland.btck.co.uk

5. The Unfinished Business report calls for more National Parks to be established covering Ben Nevis/Glen Coe/Black Mount; a coastal Marine National Park, centred around Mull; The Cheviots; Galloway; Glen Affric; Harris; and Wester Ross.

6. Copies of Unfinished Business are available from John Mayhew – see contact details above. It can also be read on the SCNP website or the APRS website.