

PRESS RELEASE

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SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT BLOCK ON NEW NATIONAL PARKS CRITICISED

At a time when Scotland is celebrating the contribution of a great Scot, John Muir, to the worldwide National Park movement over 100 years ago, the Scottish Government has been heavily criticised by some conservation bodies for placing more roadblocks in the way of the creation of more National Parks, ensuring Scotland remains anchored near the bottom of the National Park world league table, with only two National Parks covering the Cairngorms and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs.

In recent weeks the Scottish Campaign for National Parks (SCNP) and The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland (APRS) have stepped up their calls for more National Parks to be considered as part of a push to protect more of Scotland's outstanding landscapes and to provide an economic boost to some of the more economically fragile parts of rural Scotland. However, the Scottish Government's Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Paul Wheelhouse MSP, has firmly rejected these calls and has introduced more barriers which consign the prospects for creating more National Parks to the long grass.

Ross Anderson, Chairman of SCNP said: "The Minister's response is hugely disappointing and demonstrates there is a vacuum in forward planning for the future protection and regeneration of many National Park candidate areas at Scottish Government level. The introduction of new criteria, such as demonstrating the financial sustainability of prospective new National Parks, is also disappointing and simply adds to a growing list of barriers being placed in the way of the creation of new National Parks.

"If the list of hoops to be jumped through that the Scottish Government has introduced now, before they will consider new National Parks, had existed in the early years of the new Scottish Parliament, we would have no National Parks at all in Scotland, as both the Cairngorms and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs would have failed the tests at the first hurdle."

Charles Millar, Chairman of APRS added: "Scotland is fortunate in having some spectacular landscapes and seascapes. The designation of more National Parks would help to protect them for future generations and ensure that their special scenic values are recognised more on the international stage as well as boosting local economies. We are looking to the Scottish Government to adopt a bolder and more visionary approach to protect and promote these special areas, and the National Park model is a well tried and tested mechanism for doing this in an effective way that makes a real difference."

SCNP and APRS have welcomed the recent support for the recommendations in their *Unfinished Business* National Parks Strategy report from various quarters, including Claire Baker MSP, Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Environment and David Stewart MSP who has backed the call to reinstate the spirit of John Muir by exploring the creation of more National Parks in Scotland.

SCNP and APRS also plan to work more closely with local communities in National Park candidate areas to garner more support.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

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1. 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
2. APRS promotes the care of all of Scotland's rural landscapes. APRS is a registered Scottish charity, No SC016139. www.ruralscotland.btck.co.uk
3. 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.
4. *Unfinished Business* can be read on the [APRS website](#) or the [SCNP website](#). Hard copies are available from John Mayhew (contact details above).