

PROTECTING SCOTLAND'S FINEST LANDSCAPES

A Call for Action on National Parks for Scotland



A Discussion Paper

Published by
Scottish Wildlife and Countryside Link
May 1997

PROTECTING SCOTLAND'S FINEST LANDSCAPES

A Call for Action on National Parks for Scotland

Published by Scottish Wildlife and Countryside Link (SWCL)
on behalf of the organisations and individuals
listed on pages 2/10

© SWCL 1997

ISBN 0 9518582 7 0

Illustration on front cover: Head of Loch Shiel *R Aitken*

For their support towards publication of this report SWCL is grateful to the following:

World Wide Fund for Nature Scotland
Scottish Council for National Parks
Mountaineering Council of Scotland (Henry
Hindmarch Access and Conservation Fund)
North East Mountain Trust
Scottish Wild Land Group
Ramblers' Association Scotland
Scottish Wildlife Trust
Scottish Countryside Activities Council
Cairngorms Campaign

SWCL is the liaison body for voluntary organisations concerned with the environment. The purposes of the network are to provide an information service to member bodies and a forum through which they can bring together views on issues affecting mutual interests.

Subscriber/Supporter status is open to individuals and bodies not eligible for full membership.
For details contact SWCL, PO Box 64, Perth PH2 0TF, Scotland.

Further copies of this discussion paper are available at £2 (inc p & p) from:
SWCL, PO Box 64, Perth PH2 0TF, Scotland
Tel 01738 630804 Fax 01738 643290
E-mail: jen@swcl.demon.co.uk

A CALL FOR ACTION ON NATIONAL PARKS FOR SCOTLAND

WHEREAS, Scotland's natural heritage is world renowned, well-loved, and a central element in the identity and culture of the nation...

- ◆ We in Scotland are blessed with some of the finest landscapes and most important wildlife resources in the UK and in Europe;
- ◆ The people of Scotland have a long-standing tradition of freedom of access to countryside of high quality for peaceful enjoyment, recreation and spiritual refreshment,

AND WHEREAS, this heritage has suffered long attrition and continues to be exposed to damaging development and mismanagement of the land...

- ◆ The history of our use of the natural environment in Scotland has too often been dominated by single-purpose activities that have proved unsustainable and damaging to landscape and wildlife, while providing a fragile social and economic base for rural communities;
- ◆ Our land and landscape have too often been exploited and marred by inappropriate or insensitive development, generating scant and very short-lived local benefit,

AND WHEREAS, the system of protected areas that should conserve and enhance Scotland's natural heritage remains incomplete and deeply flawed...

- ◆ Scotland lacks any adequate protective mechanism that provides for the integrated, positive management and enhancement of wide areas of our best countryside;
- ◆ Despite decades of pressure from within Scotland and from international bodies, we still have no protected areas in Scotland that meet the highest international standards;
- ◆ Voluntary mechanisms are too weak and inadequate for areas of international and national importance, are no substitute for legally-established and properly funded National Parks, and are inappropriate for areas proposed as World Heritage Sites,

AND WHEREAS, National Parks throughout the world benefit natural heritage and local communities...

- ◆ National Parks play a key role in protected area systems to conserve global biodiversity;
- ◆ They seize the public imagination and engender strong public support for the protection of the environment, both in the Parks and more generally;
- ◆ They provide for sustainable management and protection of landscapes, wildlife and habitats in perpetuity;
- ◆ They secure for present and future generations rich opportunities for appropriate access to these areas and enjoyment of their landscape and wildlife;
- ◆ They provide real economic benefit - through tourism and through employment in positive management - both to the communities within them, and to the nation as a whole,

We, the non-Governmental organisations and individuals listed over, call upon the new Government to commit itself to the establishment of a network of NATIONAL PARKS. These should be designed to meet Scotland's specific needs, to cover both terrestrial and marine areas, to deliver significant social and economic benefits to local communities and to meet international criteria as defined by IUCN (World Conservation Union) Categories II and IV and V.

This Call for Action is supported by the following non-governmental organisations and individuals:

Avonside Conservation Group
Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group
British Association of Nature Conservationists Scotland
Butterfly Conservation
Cairngorms Campaign
Friends of the Earth Scotland
Friends of Loch Lomond
Marine Conservation Society
Mountaineering Council of Scotland
North East Mountain Trust
Plantlife
Ramblers' Association Scotland
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Scottish Conservation Project Trust
Scottish Council for National Parks
Scottish Countryside Activities Council
Scottish Field Studies Association
Scottish Ornithologists' Club
Scottish Wild Land Group
Scottish Wildlife Trust
Scottish Youth Hostels Association
Sustrans Scotland
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust
World Wide Fund for Nature Scotland

J Roger Carr CBE (Former Chairman, CCS)
Cllr Duncan Mills MBE

May 1997

PROTECTING SCOTLAND'S FINEST LANDSCAPES¹

1 TIME TO ACT

1.1 The following is essential supporting material to the Call for Action on National Parks for Scotland by many member bodies of Scottish Wildlife & Countryside Link and others. It asserts that there is a pressing need to make good a serious omission in Scotland's system of protected areas by the addition of a 'top-tier' designation providing strong protection and integrated management for the country's best land- and sea-scapes.

1.2 A Scottish Office review of natural heritage designations was announced in the 1995 Rural White Paper and a discussion paper was subsequently released for consultation (December 1996). Despite Ministers' repeated assurances that the review would include a proper consideration of National Parks, the issue was not addressed. This paper aims to ensure that the powerful case for the creation of a form of National Parks designation in Scotland is given a full airing, especially in view of the strong resonance of this issue with the general public who have consistently recorded an overwhelmingly positive response to the idea in public opinion polls (see Appendix 2).

2 A VISION FOR SCOTLAND'S BEST COUNTRYSIDE

2.1 This small nation has some of the finest and most celebrated landscapes in the world, combining wild character and important biodiversity with exceptional qualities of grandeur, diversity, and relative freedom from the damaging impacts of development. For such

areas we should aspire to the world's best systems of protection, ensuring that their quality is secured and enhanced for generations which follow.

2.2 This does not necessarily mean returning them to their fully natural state (even if such a state existed). Most of these landscapes have accommodated human settlement and sustained livelihoods for millennia; the influence of these activities is a part of their character. However there should be a system in place which guarantees for the best of these landscapes that increasing pressures of settlement, use and enjoyment do not prevail at the expense of future quality. Some loss of environmental quality may be an accepted condition of development in less exceptional settings, but Scotland's finest landscapes should not be compromised in this way.

2.3 Most important of all, the standard of resource management in these special areas should be exemplary. There is no excuse for poor or even indifferent husbandry such as overstocking or excessive burning of heather, failures in regulation such as poor housing design, or inadequate integration between different interests such as forestry, agriculture and river catchment management. The way these areas are treated should be testimony to the immense respect and affection which we owe to the natural world, and their status should be a key element of Scotland's pride and identity in its natural heritage.

3 WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

3.1 In reality, the quality of our finest country

¹The word 'landscape' is used in this text to denote the full range of physical, biological, human and historical features and artefacts which together contribute to the material and aesthetic values associated with a particular geographical area.

and of fragile marine and coastal environments has been suffering attrition for many centuries, and this process continues in a range of new and

3.2 Overgrazing by sheep and deer continues to damage our decimated native forest, and Scotland's finest landscapes are unnecessarily blighted by inappropriate forestry, the construction of hill roads, poorly planned or designed energy generation, quarrying, mining, tourism, and ski developments, holiday houses and other buildings. Special marine and coastal environments have suffered also, visibly or otherwise, through over-fishing, pollution, the poor control of fish-farms, and of coastal development such as housing and caravan parks. National concerns for the protection of wild nature have not been accorded the precedence they deserve. Good protection measures can enhance, rather than jeopardise, the economic development needs of the local community. Meanwhile much of our countryside has been so long degraded by unsustainable development that most people are hardly aware of the extent of the damage.

3.3 There is a strong argument for a widespread improvement in the standards of land management and development control, since these changes would contribute to the long term sustainability of rural development, but it is often in the finest areas of country and coast where rising pressures of development and use place the highly prized quality of acutely sensitive environments at greatest risk.

4 WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE EXISTING SYSTEM?

A weak system of Protected Areas

4.1 Scotland's system of protection is widely regarded as woefully inadequate, criticised repeatedly in the international arena for its failure to protect the country's finest landscapes. The Government's own actions in setting up working parties to address the crisis in two special areas is an admission of failure in the system to date, and the outcomes have generated little hope of effective change without more radical measures.

4.2 The apparently complex designation system

unpredictable forms.

is an expensive failure in practice. This results from a heavy reliance on the voluntary principle (using incentives to persuade owners/occupiers to comply with conservation policies instead of using compulsory measures) and a lack of permanence in the deal done. Even widespread and chronic damage seems to be tolerated without redress.

4.3 In response to this, many conservation bodies pursue acquisition as the only permanently secure means of protection. However there is still nothing to guarantee that areas of Scotland's most cherished landscapes, sold on the open market, are managed for the benefit of the nation as a whole.

4.4 Appendix 1 details the categories of protected areas put forward as an international model by IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature). No areas in Scotland enjoy statutory protection in accordance with the requirements of IUCN Management Categories I (Areas protected mainly for science and wilderness protection), II (Areas managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation) or III (Areas managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features), and less than 1% of Scotland is covered by Category IV protection (Areas managed mainly for conservation through management intervention). As a result, Scotland lacks a mechanism for management on a landscape scale, to protect and enhance the biodiversity of special areas.

4.5 The weakest mechanisms are those for protection of marine areas and outstanding scenery, and positive provision for recreation. The proposed Natural Heritage Area - on which no real action has been taken for five years - is potentially appropriate for situations where integration is the only issue, but is wholly inadequate with its present statutory base for protecting areas of international and national importance (eg. IUCN 1994). Elsewhere, given stronger mechanisms of statutory enforcement, it could become a powerful tool.

A lack of integrated powers and resources

4.6 The powers and finance available to agencies and local authorities are both inadequate and insufficiently integrated to achieve positive conservation and management of large tracts of land. The problem is worst where communities in surrounding areas experience acute social and economic difficulties and concern is understandably focussed on short term employment issues. Attempts to aggregate the roles and resources of agencies and local authorities into a coherent strategy, as in the Cairngorms Partnership, have little hope of success in the absence of appropriate powers and resources. National treasures need nationally-supported mechanisms for protection and positive management.

A history of conflict

4.7 Wasteful and damaging conflicts (eg. three successive development proposals in the Northern Corries of the Cairngorms) actually result from government equivocation on policy, the lack of appropriate national standards, a reliance on the voluntary principle and a failure to co-ordinate the powers and resources of relevant agencies and authorities. Such extremely costly conflicts have served no-one's interests.

5 WHAT IS PROPOSED?

5.1 A new mechanism is required for Scotland, in the form of a top-tier designation, to secure biodiversity and landscape conservation as well as recreational provision, and to encourage appropriate rural development and cultural revival in this special category of landscape where the very quality of the environment attracts the forces which threaten it most.

5.2 The new mechanism should stand comparison with the highest international standards of protected areas, accord with IUCN Management Categories II, IV and V (exemplified by areas designated as National Parks worldwide), and be used to achieve positive integrated management over large areas, including areas of the coastal and marine environments. The guideline target for the nation should be a minimum of 10% of our land area so designated by the time of the next IUCN

World Parks Congress (2002), with a further 10% of corresponding marine protected areas. This would be consistent with the recommendations of "Parks for Life" launched by John Gummer MP, Secretary of State for the Environment in October 1994 and supported by Sir Hector Monro MP as Environment Minister at the Scottish Office (Hansard 15/3/95). See the statement at Appendix 3 by Adrian Phillips, Chair of the World Commission on Protected Areas of IUCN (The World Conservation Union).

5.3 This would not on its own require changes to existing designations (such as SPA, SAC, SSSI, NSA); rather these would form part of a zoned approach in which stronger powers would be deployed in the core areas. The effectiveness of existing designations would be enhanced by the existence of the new encompassing measures, resources and powers (including those of integration).

6 HOW WOULD THIS WORK?

6.1 This paper does not attempt to deal with the detail of actual structures, as there are a number of models which could be considered. However, certain key principles should apply for any effective top-tier designation of this kind. These include issues of:

- a legal and permanent basis in statute
- a framework of national standards
- management through partnership
- local implementation
- zoning
- funding
- integration with other designations and policies.

These are considered in turn below.

A legal and permanent basis in statute

6.2 The IUCN report Parks for Life (1994) makes the key recommendation that countries should pass legislation to allow the establishment of protected areas in a range of categories, and should encourage the use of these categories in combination.

A Framework of national standards

6.3 Central government should have powers to set and regulate standards of development control and land management in the designated area, for implementation by the appropriate authorities. These authorities would use special planning and bye-law making powers, including powers of traffic control. Land management issues include grazing, heather burning, forestry, agriculture, watercourse management, use of vehicles, recreational use, and road- path- and bridge-building. The powers of last resort should also include compulsory Land Management Orders to deal with land use matters outwith planning control. Compulsory Purchase powers should also be available, to be used as last resort only, with the approval of the Secretary of State (as provided in the legislation implementing the EU Species and Habitats Directive in the UK). Just as within any control framework, land use and development standards would of course be encouraged through voluntary measures, but recognition of the national and international commitments at stake requires that the powers include fall-back measures to guarantee protection if persuasion fails. Standards could be based on the principles of Limits of Acceptable Change - an approach successfully used in other countries.

Management through Partnership

6.4 Within the framework set by the national standards, public bodies should be required to exercise their rights and responsibilities co-operatively, involving representatives of all other legitimate interests. Suitably strengthened with powers and resources to influence the policies of other public bodies, the Cairngorms Partnership Board with its representation of a full range of interests could offer a useful model for this partnership function.

Local implementation

6.5 Where national interests place special demands on local infrastructure, national resources should be available to ensure that these can be met without imposing an unfair burden. Designation should aim to provide national endorsement and support for the local implementation of policies and standards which reconcile local needs with national priorities. It will aim to protect and promote the most harmonious expression of the relationship

between people and place, and the successful delivery of this special status should be a matter of local pride and benefit.

Zoning

6.6 This would allow different measures of control and management in core (Category II) areas where nature conservation and quiet recreation objectives are prioritised, and in peripheral or buffer (Category V) zones where low intensity land use and appropriate development protects, enhances and benefits from the core to which this category of protected area relates.

Funding

6.7 Central government resources are inevitably needed to support the structures, processes and positive management assistance necessary to achieve full realisation of the potential of this designation. Some of this funding can be achieved by a redirection of existing funds currently spent on poorly integrated activities, especially forestry and agriculture, both of which attract huge sums of public support in rural land use. Evidence elsewhere suggests that this investment of public money can have very positive multiplier effects in the local economy. (See also 9.9)

Integration with other designations and policies

6.8 The top-tier designation should relate strongly to - and enhance the identity of - the other forms of designation which protect particular interests. This integration should apply to the purposes of the designations; different designations apply to different interests but together they can reinforce each other's effects. Also, integration in the way they are applied can deliver wider strategic objectives such as representative networks within biogeographic zones. It is also of crucial importance that delivery of the objectives of policy in designated areas should be incorporated in the duties of relevant agencies as a responsibility rather than a constraint.

6.9 It is around these principles that a new designation should be created to deal with the problems of integrated protection in harmony with local economic needs where weak,

underfunded, temporary, and poorly integrated measures currently offer very inadequate control.

7.1 The proposal is for a designation which represents the elite of landscapes in Scotland, placing them on a level with the best of protected landscapes internationally. The most important requirement is for an initial commitment to the establishment of the ‘top-tier’ designation meeting international criteria as defined by IUCN to achieve the objectives set out above.

7.2 However, the long history of this debate guarantees that it is impossible to discuss the principle of a new designation without raising the question of its name. Whilst the title of “National Park” is not a fundamental management requirement, it has considerable advantages. This is the generic title which

- enjoys global recognition for the status it confers, including prospects of special EU funding;
- has a proven international record of success and endorsement by affected interests;
- can, in its best form, embrace the principles of natural and cultural heritage protection, accommodating the interests of the local community, celebration of nature’s best features, and the management of appropriate recreational use;
- is recommended by IUCN (the World Conservation Union);
- commands the overwhelming support of the Scottish people in opinion surveys (see Appendix 2);
- has been adopted by every nation in Europe (and most in the world) except Scotland;
- was popularised by John Muir, born in Dunbar, the father of the National Parks movement world-wide.

7.3 The final choice of name, and the precise design of a model which best suits Scotland’s special circumstances, can be made in due course. Many protected area models have been developed throughout the world, including in England and other European countries. All of

7 WHAT SHOULD THEY BE CALLED?

these have lessons for Scotland, providing an opportunity to draw from this experience and place Scotland at the forefront of the international community as we enter the third Millennium. It is the nature of the mechanism itself, and its effectiveness in tackling Scotland’s particular needs, which is of paramount importance.

8 WHICH AREAS SHOULD BE DESIGNATED?

8.1 Areas should be selected on the basis of clear criteria, which should include:

- status as a vulnerable landscape affected by visitor pressure and/or other conflicts;
- international significance of natural heritage values;
- status as a focus of national interest and pride;
- adequate scale to allow realisation of full potential of this designation.

8.2 Two obvious initial candidates - the Cairngorms, and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs - are already widely recognised as of suitably high quality and suffering from severe pressures; other such areas showing increasing signs of pressure may also need to be considered in due course on the basis of the above criteria.

9 HOW WILL NATIONAL PARKS BENEFIT SCOTLAND?

9.1 Future generations will be assured the opportunity to enjoy these areas, and to know that they are protected for others that follow, in at least as good condition as we have them now - preferably much restored.

9.2 Scotland will be better able to meet its national and international obligations, and will enjoy international recognition of its conservation achievements.

9.3 The local community will more than match any constraints by capitalising on the funding

and other advantages conferred by special status and national endorsement, and the relief of current pressures and debilitating conflicts.

9.4 The visiting public will gain from higher standards of resource management, integration

9.5 Local businesses will benefit from the appeal of National Parks to the general public as this offers an opportunity to emphasise quality in products and services; also from the clarity and national endorsement provided by a firm government commitment; and from the removal of the present uncertainty where numerous disparate departments, agencies and local authorities pursue overlapping and often conflicting objectives.

9.6 The tourist industry will benefit from the quality reputation of National Park status. Enhanced resources will assist the conservation of those qualities which attract visitors in the first place. Visitors should therefore be assured of an enhanced quality experience, on the basis of which an increased spend per head and return trips could be anticipated, but within limits which could be set and controlled. At a wider scale, an improving reputation of environmental care should only increase the reputation of Scotland as a quality destination for discerning tourists.

9.7 The owners and managers of land will benefit from:

- the opportunity and privilege to participate in pioneering land management projects which will attract considerable prestige;
- the more integrated system of regulation and incentives resulting from the partnership approach;
- the relative security of future support in the face of a strongly declining trend in public support for rural land use;
- the greater clarity of policy inevitably resulting from a firm commitment;
- the degree of support available for high standards of resource management; and the assistance available for dealing with pressures (such as recreation) over which they otherwise have no control.

9.8 Employment in visitor management,

and investment of public funds in provisions for the visitor.

education, interpretation, ranger services, and resource maintenance will be enhanced. A classic example, amongst many different examples worldwide, from which Scotland could benefit in terms of support and experience, is the European example of the Abruzzo National Park in Italy, where the National Park brought strong economic benefits to the region. One small village, Civitella Alfedena, lay almost abandoned 20 years ago. It has now a strong economy and emigrants are returning. A park budget of US\$4.2M developed local economic activity worth US\$170M, creating over 100 jobs in the park itself and about 1000 more in related activities. (Tassi F 1994).

9.9 All interests will benefit from the financial implications of a government commitment to National Parks. (In 1992 the Government confirmed that the future of National Parks (in England and Wales) was "secure" and that "the proper protection and management of Britain's [sic] finest landscapes will be ensured"). Experience has also demonstrated that the existence of National Parks generates an increasing level of loyalty and commitment from the state. For example, in 1997/1998, UK government has allocated £20m of UK taxpayers' money to 10 National Parks in England and Wales. There are also increasing prospects of funding from Europe for National Parks. IUCN has called on the European Union to increase the funding available for nature conservation and protected areas in Member States (IUCN 1994).

10 WHY DOES SCOTLAND NOT HAVE NATIONAL PARKS ALREADY?

10.1 Despite overwhelming public support for the concept, successive governments have chosen not to implement a National Parks system in Scotland. What objections have been raised in the past?

10.2 The “honey pot” syndrome

The single argument most frequently deployed amongst the small minority of the population not declaring themselves in favour of National Parks concerns the fear that designation would

- Evidence suggests that designation itself does not bring about major visitor pressure (eg. Northumberland National Park is not affected). Pressure on areas like the Lake District has owed far more to their special reputation in their own right, their special quality in contrast to surrounding areas, their accessibility to large numbers of people, and the growth of specific forms of popular recreation, than to designation. (See Countryside Commission 1996 report on visitor surveys which show National Park status as only 6% of the mix of reasons given for visiting the Lake District.)
- Areas like the Cairngorms or Loch Lomond and the Trossachs are already subject to significant visitor pressures for which they are unprotected by current mechanisms.
- A new designation in Scotland would create the opportunity to provide powers to manage such pressures in whatever way necessary to protect the resource and the interests of the local community.

10.3 Neglect of the wider countryside

It is feared by some that the act of designating certain areas with ‘top-tier’ status automatically implies a lower status for the rest of the country, leading to neglect and inadequate resourcing. However:

- Experience abroad has shown that this is not the case - on the contrary, National Park designation is a positive act, energising conservation, land use, recreation and rural development policies throughout the country by its "greenprint" effect;
- As signatory to a range of international conventions, the UK government accepts responsibility not just for specific types of site but for conservation and sustainable development in all sectors, in all geographical areas;

encourage increased visitor pressure, and by implication cause serious damage to the values which led to designation in the first place. However, this supposed causal link is not supported by the evidence.

- The awareness-raising and educational role of National Parks is one of their many successes worldwide, helping to develop understanding of the needs of conservation amongst the population as a whole.

10.4 Eroding the powers of existing bodies

Some concerns have related to a weakening or interfering with the powers of existing agencies or local authorities. However:

- National priorities are already used as a framework for reasonable constraints on local authority and government agency activities; the introduction of a new designation with concomitant resources represents a significant new opportunity for these bodies, in effect strengthening their potential to deliver local benefits;
- COSLA has already approved the proposal that National Park designation should involve national influence on planning and development control powers.

10.5 ‘Nationalisation’

The possibility of land nationalisation has been raised by some opponents of National Parks in the past. However, public ownership of land is not a precondition of a National Park system in Scotland.

- The whole ethos of the designation is concerned not with expropriating land but with reconciling local needs and national priorities through empowering local people with the help of national resources.
- A National Parks system in Scotland would be concerned with securing the provision of public benefits with the help of public money, and by local people to their own advantage.

10.6 Interference with private rights

Inevitably there will be some citizens who feel that their rights are constrained by this designation. However:

- Every planning and policy measure impinges on private rights in the public interest;
- Many public undertakings (eg. major road building) go further than National Parks by involving compulsory surrender of property rights for hundreds or thousands of citizens;
- There is no justification for governments to subordinate the public interest to the small number of private individuals affected in this one instance, provided that reasonable arrangements are made to assist in the case of serious burdens.

11 CONCLUSION

11.1 Scotland is in extreme need of a National Park-type designation to provide a level of protection for finest country regarded as essential in most other parts of the world. In the absence of such measures, the processes of attrition, decline and conflict will continue. In the Cairngorms, the expectations generated by an exhaustive, and in many ways admirable, process of consultation will be damagingly frustrated (and the expense wasted) in the absence of appropriate powers. The current lack of effective protection disqualifies the area from official nomination as a World Heritage Site, for which it was proposed by Government more than 5 years ago.

11.2 National Parks are a powerful symbol. Experience all over the world shows that they become a focus of pride and identity for both the national and the local community in a way that other less powerful and less clearly labelled designations never can (see R Aitken 1996). As one of the most urbanised nations in Europe, Scotland needs that focus to help restore the relationship between the country and its people.

11.3 It is now around 100 years since the worldwide movement for National Parks was initiated in America by a Scotsman, John Muir, from Dunbar. After a century which has seen the greatest wars, the fastest technological changes, the most accentuated urbanisation, and the worst environmental degradation in history, the case for National Parks has won the support of the vast majority of the population. Recent surveys confirm this trend. (See Appendix 2)

12 WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

12.1 We are calling on the new Government to make a commitment in 1997 to establish National Parks for Scotland in time for launch at the World Parks Congress in 2002. This should be a designation which takes the best from experience all over the world to provide Scotland with its own distinctive model of National Park to meet Scotland's particular needs and circumstances. The benefits of such a system would massively outweigh the objections which have hindered progress throughout this century, leaving Scotland alone in Europe as the only nation without such a focus for national pride in its natural heritage.

This paper is published on behalf of the following member bodies of Scottish Wildlife and Countryside Link, other non-governmental organisations and individuals:

Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group
 British Association of Nature Conservationists
 Scotland
 Butterfly Conservation
 Cairngorms Campaign
 Friends of the Earth Scotland
 Friends of Loch Lomond
 Marine Conservation Society
 Mountaineering Council of Scotland
 North East Mountain Trust
 Plantlife
 Ramblers' Association Scotland
 Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
 Scottish Conservation Projects Trust
 Scottish Council for National Parks
 Scottish Countryside Activities Council
 Scottish Field Studies Association
 Scottish Ornithologists' Club
 Scottish Wild Land Group
 Scottish Wildlife Trust
 Sustrans Scotland

Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust
World Wide Fund for Nature Scotland

Avonside Conservation Group
Scottish Youth Hostels Association

J Roger Carr CBE (Former Chairman, CCS)
Cllr Duncan Mills MBE

REFERENCES

- Aitken R 1996, National Parks for Scotland - A paper for Scottish Wildlife & Countryside Link
- Countryside Commission 1996, 1994 All Parks Visitor Survey
- CCS 1991, The Mountain Areas of Scotland: A Report on Public Consultation, Countryside Commission for Scotland, Battleby, Scotland.
- DoE 1990, This Common Inheritance: Britain's Environmental Strategy, HMSO, London.
- Fit for the Future, Report of the Edwards National Parks Review Panel, 1991
- Gubbay, S 1993, Fisheries and Marine Protected Areas: A UK Perspective, in Marine Protected Areas and Sustainable Fisheries, eds Nancy L Shackell & JH Martin Willison, Science and Management of Protected Areas Association, 1995, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada.
- IUCN 1994, Parks for Life: Action for Protected Areas in Europe, IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.
- Market Research Scotland Ltd 1996, WWF Scotland: Summary of Research, October 1996 (see footnote, Appendix 2 of this paper).
- Scottish Office 1996, Natural Heritage Designations Review: A Discussion Paper, Scottish Office, Edinburgh.
- Tassi F 1994 'Protecting Nature: Regional Reviews of Protected Areas' IUCN.

APPENDIX 1

Protected Area Management Categories of the IUCN (World Conservation Union)

IUCN - The World Conservation Union

Founded in 1948, the World Conservation Union brings together States, government agencies and a diverse range of non-governmental organisations in a unique world partnership. There are over 800 members in all, spread across some 125 countries. The UK is a State Member. With its Headquarters in Switzerland, IUCN seeks to encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

An integral part of IUCN are its six Commissions of experts worldwide. One of these, the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), is recognised as the world's leading source of expertise on protected area issues. With over 1000 of the world's foremost experts in protected area planning and management, WCPA has - inter alia - developed a widely used system of categorising protected areas by their management objectives, which has been adopted by IUCN.

IUCN Protected Area Management Categories:

(Extracted from 'Guidelines for Protected Area Management Categories' IUCN 1994.)

Category I: Strict Nature Reserve/Wilderness Area: protected area managed mainly for science or wilderness protection. An area of land and/or sea possessing some outstanding ecosystems, geological or physiological features and/or species, available primarily for scientific research and/or environmental monitoring.

Category II: National Park: protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation. Natural area of land and/or sea, designated to (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations, (b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area and (c) provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible.

Category III: Natural Monument: protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features. Area containing one, or more, specific natural or natural/cultural feature which is of outstanding or unique value because of its inherent rarity, representative or aesthetic qualities or cultural significance.

Category IV: Habitat/Species Management Area: protected. Area of land and/or sea subject to active intervention for management purposes so as to ensure the maintenance of habitats and/or to meet the requirements of specific species.

Category V: Protected Landscape/Seascape: protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation. Area of land, with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area.

Category VI: Managed Resource Protected Area: protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems. Area containing predominantly unmodified natural systems, managed to ensure long term protection and maintenance of biological diversity, while providing at the same time a sustainable flow of natural products and services to meet community needs.

Applicability to Scotland

The IUCN's Category V Protected Landscape/Seascape Category is seen as an increasingly important means of balancing the needs of conservation with local needs for sustainable forms of development. This Category could, in Scotland, provide the wider "envelope" within which Category II "true" National Parks and Category IV (Nature Reserves) could exist as core protected areas within a larger National Park boundary. The wider Category V area, in a zoned National Park system which is seen as appropriate to Scotland's needs, also offers opportunities for sustainable development in surrounding communities - and tourism in this surrounding zone is regarded internationally as a positive management tool in the protection of more sensitive core protected areas. Hence, this type of National Park can offer effective long-term legal protection of core areas while also offering distinct social and economic benefits to local communities - and there are numerous examples of these benefits to be found in many parts of the world.

IUCN has previously noted that the Category V Protected Landscape/Seascape would also be a very useful category in its own right in Scotland, whether or not it is also used to buffer more highly protected areas. This type of National Park often presents a mosaic of both public and private land ownerships.

Legislation would be required to provide the legal powers for integrated management, planning, protection and funding of National Parks - but the partnership approach and the involvement of local people is vital to success, as has been demonstrated worldwide.

APPENDIX 2

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL PARKS

Approximately 90% of the Scottish population think that we should have National Parks in Scotland. Public opinion polls commissioned by the Countryside Commission for Scotland in 1991, by the Scottish Office in 1991 and by WWF Scotland in 1996² have all indicated support in the region of 85-90% for National Parks in Scotland. Many visitors and residents are astonished at the lack of National Parks in Scotland, given the outstanding qualities of its natural environment. The English and Welsh countryside has enjoyed the protection and accolade of a rather different model of National Parks for over 40 years, referred to by Government in its White Paper for the environment as "the jewels in the countryside's crown" (DoE 1990).

The public view accords with international expert opinion.

- In 1980 the World Conservation Strategy identified the Scottish Highlands as a priority area in which protection by National Park or equivalent status was required.
- In 1991 the IUCN (World Conservation Union) and the Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe called upon Government to make a strong and positive statement about the need for National Parks in Scotland;
- The IUCN's 1994 report, Parks for Life, makes a particular example of Scotland as a country needing to put in place an effective protected areas system;
- IUCN repeated this call in their triennial report to the World Conservation Congress in Montreal in 1996.

²In a survey conducted by Market research Scotland Ltd in October 1996 for WWF Scotland, a representative sample of the Scottish population was asked:

Internationally, National Parks are defined as large areas of natural or near natural land where the main aim of management is for nature conservation and where quiet outdoor recreation is also allowed. Some have argued that such National Parks are an unfair restriction on economic development and local employment in the countryside.

At present, there are no National Parks in Scotland. Do you think it would be appropriate for some areas in Scotland to be designated as National Parks?

Answers: Yes: 85% No: 7% Don't know: 8%

APPENDIX 3

A STATEMENT FROM PROFESSOR ADRIAN PHILLIPS, CHAIR, WORLD COMMISSION ON PROTECTED AREAS OF IUCN (THE WORLD CONSERVATION UNION), NOVEMBER 1996

The initiative by the consortium of NGOs in Scotland is welcome and timely.

In our 1994 report, Parks for Life: Action for Protected Areas in Europe, IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (formerly CNPPA) said that action was urgently needed to identify the areas in Scotland most in need of protection, listing in particular those which had been previously proposed by the Countryside Commission for Scotland for national park status. We also recommended the development and strengthening of the Natural Heritage Area concept, observing that if the NHA concept and the voluntary principle were considered inappropriate, an alternative and stronger mechanism would be needed.

There is no doubt, from examples around the world, that the designation of national parks can provide that stronger mechanism for identifying key areas of landscape and biodiversity importance. National parks have also been effective in securing public support for protecting key natural areas and providing them with the needed resources. I am sure that Scotland is no different in that respect from other countries.

However, national parks are only one kind of protected area. A range of other protective designations are needed to match the diverse needs of a country like Scotland, including of course several designations which already exist (though some may need to be strengthened). Also, all protected areas need to be complemented by policies for conservation in the wider countryside and for the protection of the environment as a whole.

I therefore hope that the declaration will help to bring forward the day when national parks are set up in Scotland - but this campaign should be part of a broader effort to raise the standards of conservation in this particularly beautiful part of Europe.