



More National Parks for Scotland

[Scottish National Parks
Strategy Project](#)



SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS MAY 2021 MANIFESTO PROPOSALS – NATIONAL PARKS

Proposed Manifesto Wording

"Our National Parks lead the way in tackling the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis, promoting mental and physical health and well-being, boosting rural employment and celebrating the beauty of our world-class landscapes. We will extend these benefits to other parts of Scotland through a national strategy to designate at least seven more National Parks, starting with Galloway and the Borders, as part of a wider network of protected landscapes."

Rural Recovery

The purposes of National Parks include healthy outdoor recreation and sustainable economic and social development, and they have built up substantial expertise in these areas. They are therefore ideally placed to lead the recovery of rural Scotland following the coronavirus epidemic. New National Parks would provide exactly the type of stimulus needed to lead remote rural areas out of the current crisis towards future prosperity.

What are National Parks?

- 'National Park' is the leading internationally-recognised designation for places of the highest national importance for natural or cultural heritage – including landscape, wildlife, recreation, historic environment and cultural traditions
- National Parks are exemplars of rural development which help to create jobs in remote rural areas alongside best-practice custodianship of natural assets
- There are over 3,500 National Parks in the world, including for example 29 in Norway and 14 in New Zealand, but only two in Scotland
- Some are truly wild places; many, including in Scotland, are working landscapes, where some of their special qualities derive from the ways in which land managers have cared for the landscape over the centuries
- The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 enables the Scottish Government to propose areas as National Parks; it allows great flexibility in National Park Authority functions and powers, which can be tailored to local circumstances
- The Act requires Scottish National Parks to pursue the sustainable economic and social development of local communities alongside conservation and recreation

Existing National Parks

- Scotland has only two National Parks: Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, established in 2002, and Cairngorms National Park, established in 2003
- They are playing leading roles in tackling the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis, eg through peatland restoration and species recovery programmes
- They have brought great benefits to their areas, by repairing mountain paths, conserving native woodlands, supporting local businesses, generating jobs for young people, enabling affordable housing, investing in sustainable rural development and growing the tourism industry – whilst protecting the beauty of the landscapes for both local people and visitors

Unfinished Business?

- The [Scottish Campaign for National Parks](#) (SCNP) and the [Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland](#) (APRS) have campaigned for more National Parks since 2010; our overall case is set out in our 2013 report [Unfinished Business](#)

- We have proposed at least [seven further areas](#) as National Parks: Galloway; the Scottish Borders; Ben Nevis/Glen Coe/Black Mount, a Coastal and Marine National Park centred on Mull; Glen Affric; Harris; and Wester Ross
- In a debate on 31/10/19 to mark the centenary of the Forestry Act, MSPs agreed to an amendment recognising National Parks' contribution to forestry, including: "the Parliament ... believes that new national parks should be designated."

Governance, Investment and Planning

- National Parks in Scotland are governed by boards made up of directly-elected local people, local councillors and national experts
- Based on the running costs of the first two National Parks, seven more would require an investment of about £44m per annum; this is equivalent to about 21% of the Scottish Government's average underspend over the last 10 years
- However, the actual investment required would be less than this, because future National Parks would not be as complex or costly as the first two, as they would mostly cover smaller areas and only one or two local Councils
- This would represent a highly effective investment of public funds; for example, US National Parks return over \$10 for every \$1 invested in the National Park Service¹
- The 2000 Act allows flexibility over planning – National Park Authorities can have powers over development planning, development management, both or neither

Why Should Scotland Have More National Parks?

- World class scenery – Scotland has some of the world's finest scenery, so would benefit if more of its countryside was recognised with the National Park brand
- Management and protection – areas with significant natural beauty and habitats need protection, appropriate management, sympathetic access and development
- Sustainable tourism – this is vital to Scotland's rural economy; the National Park brand attracts visitor spending, so more National Parks would boost the rural economy
- Rural development – National Parks are also good for small businesses based on sustainable use of natural resources such as timber, fish, wildlife or geology
- National identity – more National Parks would boost Scotland's global image by demonstrating positive action to protect and enhance the environment

National Support

- The SCNP/APRS campaign is also supported by John Muir Trust, Marine Conservation Society, Mountaineering Scotland, National Trust for Scotland, Ramblers Scotland, RSPB Scotland, Scottish Wild Land Group, Scottish Wildlife Trust and Woodland Trust Scotland

Local Campaigns

- The [Campaign for a Scottish Borders National Park](#) has published a comprehensive professionally-researched [feasibility study](#); responses to a recent Scottish Borders Council planning consultation showed clear local support
- The [Galloway National Park Association](#) has carried out extensive local consultation demonstrating widespread public support, and submitted a [detailed report](#) to the Scottish Government calling for a full official feasibility study

Further Information

For further information please contact Campaign Manager John Mayhew on scnp.aprs@gmail.com or 07787 195690

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

APRS promotes the care of **all** of Scotland's rural landscapes. APRS is a registered Scottish charity, No SC016139. www.aprs.scot

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¹ <https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/news/release.htm?id=1440>