



# Scottish National Parks Strategy Project



## **The National Parks (Scotland) Act – 20th Anniversary**

### **Press Release**

Embargoed until Sunday 5 July 2020

#### **Introduction**

On 5 July 2000 the Scottish Parliament passed the National Parks (Scotland) Act, so today 5 July 2020 marks twenty years since that significant occasion. The Act enabled the designation of National Parks in Scotland and set out their aims, functions and powers. Two National Parks have been designated under the Act: the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park in 2002 and the Cairngorms National Park in 2003.

#### **Two Decades of Achievement**

The Act has proved its worth through the achievements of our first two National Parks. 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; all this whilst protecting the beauty of the landscapes for both local people and visitors. Increasingly, they play leading roles in tackling the climate emergency and nature crisis, for example through peatland restoration and species recovery programmes.

#### **National Parks and Rural Recovery**

National Parks and our other protected landscapes have built up expertise over the years in encouraging and facilitating healthy outdoor recreation and sustainable economic and social development. They are therefore ideally placed to lead the recovery of rural Scotland following the coronavirus epidemic, including by encouraging domestic tourism. New National Parks would provide exactly the type of stimulus needed to lead fragile

rural areas out of the current crisis towards future prosperity. More details can be found in our recent blog [Leading The Way – Protected Landscapes and Rural Recovery](#).

### **Unfinished Business**

In 2006-2007 the then Scottish Executive prepared proposals for a Coastal and Marine National Park, which would have been Scotland's third. In 2008 Harris residents voted in favour of their island becoming a National Park. In 2013 The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland (APRS) and the Scottish Campaign for National Parks (SCNP) published our landmark report [Unfinished Business](#) which set out why Scotland should have more National Parks and proposed at least seven more: Galloway; the Borders; Ben Nevis/Glen Coe/Black Mount, a Coastal and Marine National Park centred on Mull; Glen Affric; Harris; and Wester Ross.

### **Local and National Support**

Since 2017 lively community-based campaigns in the Borders and Galloway have called for National Parks in their areas and demonstrated clear local 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. In a debate on 31 October 2019 marking 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."

**Scottish Labour** MSP Sarah Boyack, who was Environment Minister when the Act was passed in July 2000, said: "It was a great privilege to lead the National Parks Act through Parliament 20 years ago and it has been fantastic to see the impact of our first two National Parks since they were established".

**Scottish Conservatives** shadow Environment Minister Finlay Carson MSP said: "National Parks have a good record of generating sustainable jobs in rural communities".

**Scottish Greens** former MSP Robin Harper OBE, who also took part in the debate when the Act was passed in July 2000, said: "The setting up of National Parks twenty years ago must be the beginning of a process, not an end in itself. We need to see our countryside as a place where biodiversity and the environment are enhanced – our rural communities and their survival are essential to the conservation of wild Scotland."

**Scottish Liberal Democrats** MSP Mike Rumbles, who also took part in the debate when the Act was passed in July 2000, said: “National Parks are good for sustainable tourism and offer real opportunities for rural businesses”.

**Scottish Campaign for National Parks** Chairman John Thomson said: “Scotland has an incredible wealth of world-class landscapes; to make the most of these, many more should be National Parks”.

**The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland** Director John Mayhew said: “National Parks are ideally placed to lead the way out of the current health crisis towards a better, more prosperous Scotland. This 20th anniversary would be the perfect time to create more National Parks as a brilliant way to tackle the climate emergency and the nature crisis”.

ENDS

### **Editors’ Notes**

1. ‘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. There are over 3,500 National Parks in the world, including for example 29 in Norway and 14 in New Zealand.
2. 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.
3. The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 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.
4. For further information please contact Project Manager John Mayhew on [scnp.aprs@gmail.com](mailto:scnp.aprs@gmail.com) or 07787 195690
5. 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](http://www.scnp.org.uk)
6. APRS promotes the care of all of Scotland’s rural landscapes. APRS is a registered Scottish charity, No SC016139. [www.aprs.scot](http://www.aprs.scot)