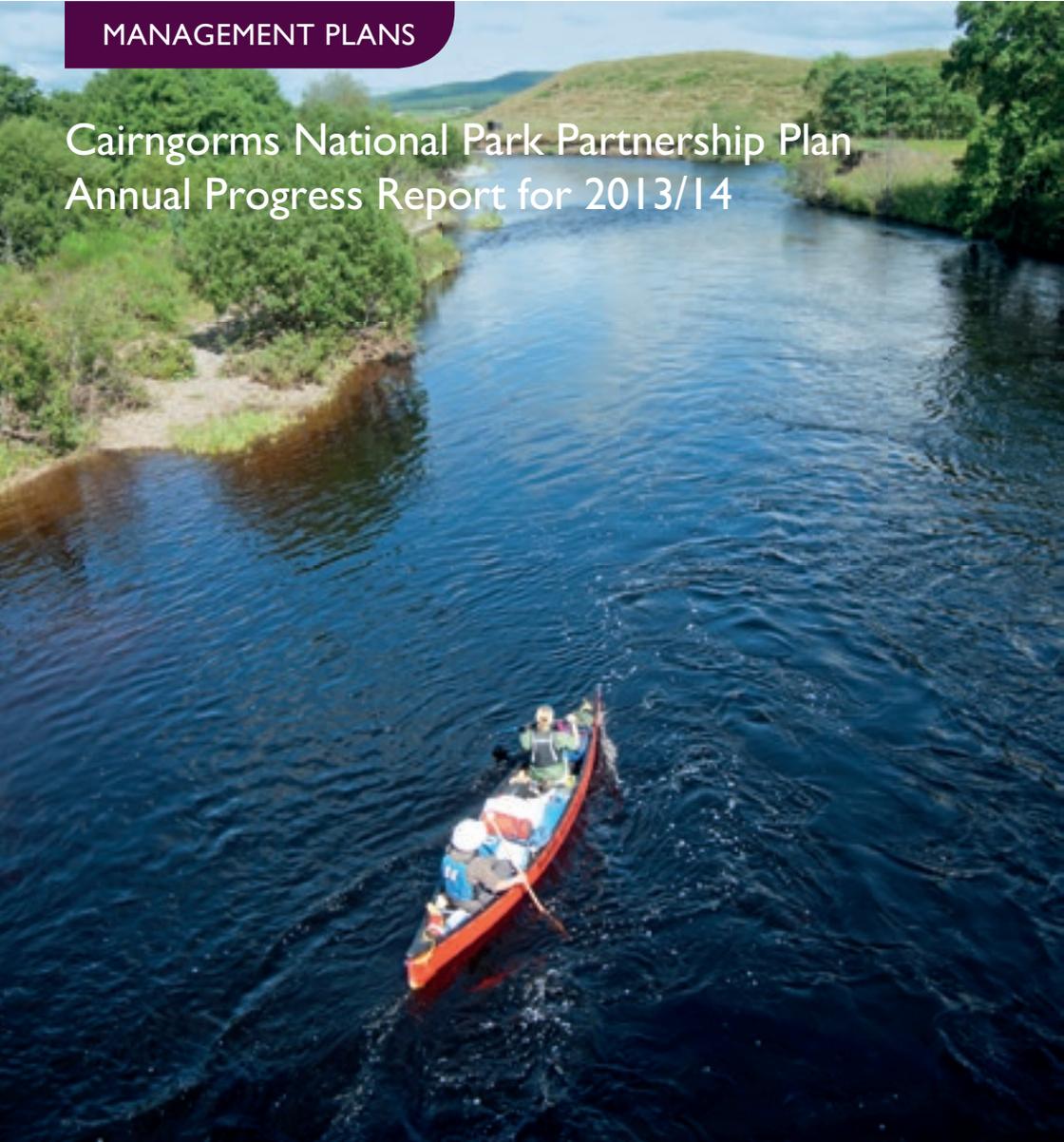




Cairngorms
NATIONAL PARK
Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaìdh Ruaidh

MANAGEMENT PLANS

Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan
Annual Progress Report for 2013/14



THE NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP

- > Aberdeenshire Council
- > Angus Council
- > Cairngorms Business Partnership
- > Cairngorms LEADER
- > Cairngorms National Park Authority
- > Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust
- > Community Development and Support Organisations throughout the Park
- > Community Energy Scotland
- > Education Scotland
- > Forestry Commission Scotland
- > Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- > Historic Scotland
- > James Hutton Institute
- > John Muir Trust
- > Keep Scotland Beautiful
- > LANTRA
- > Moray Council
- > National Farmers Union Scotland
- > National Health Service for Scotland
- > National Trust for Scotland
- > Perth & Kinross Council
- > Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland
- > Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- > Scotland Food and Drink
- > Scottish Enterprise
- > Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- > Scottish Government
- > Scottish Land and Estates
- > Scottish Natural Heritage
- > Skills Development Scotland
- > Soil Association
- > SportScotland
- > The Highland Council
- > Transport Scotland
- > University of the Highlands and Islands
- > Visit Royal Deeside
- > VisitScotland
- > Zero Waste Scotland

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Front cover photo:
 Canoeing on the River Spey

Welcome to our update on progress in delivering the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan

Together, our National Park Partnership is delivering:

- > Conservation of an internationally important place for nature
- > Support for thriving rural communities and businesses
- > An outstanding visitor experience for all to enjoy

Overall our progress in all three themes of the Plan has been significant this year. 2013/14 saw the delivery of substantial capital investment projects enhancing community and visitor facilities and progress in our long term conservation work. Together we have started work this year to address some of the most significant long term challenges in the Park. This includes looking at the long term interaction of conservation and development, sustainable moorland management, and bringing together a wide range of work into a coherent approach to conserve the capercaillie in its remaining UK stronghold. This work will continue to develop significantly over the next year.

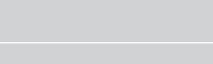
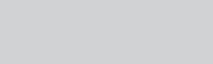


Highlights in 2013/14 include:

- > Launch of a new partnership for the long term management of publicly owned land at Cairngorm and Glenmore;
- > Capital investment of £1.5million in community and visitor facilities;
- > Capital investment of £117k in peatland restoration projects;
- > A design competition for the Scottish Scenic Routes Initiative with a design for Corgarff on the A939;
- > Completion of the Cairngorms National Park Research Strategy and the Cairngorms Economic Diversification and Development Strategy;
- > The John Muir Conference 2014 raised the profile of Scottish National Parks and management of wild and special places as part of Scotland's Year of Homecoming celebrations.

Loch Pityoulish

Our indicators show:

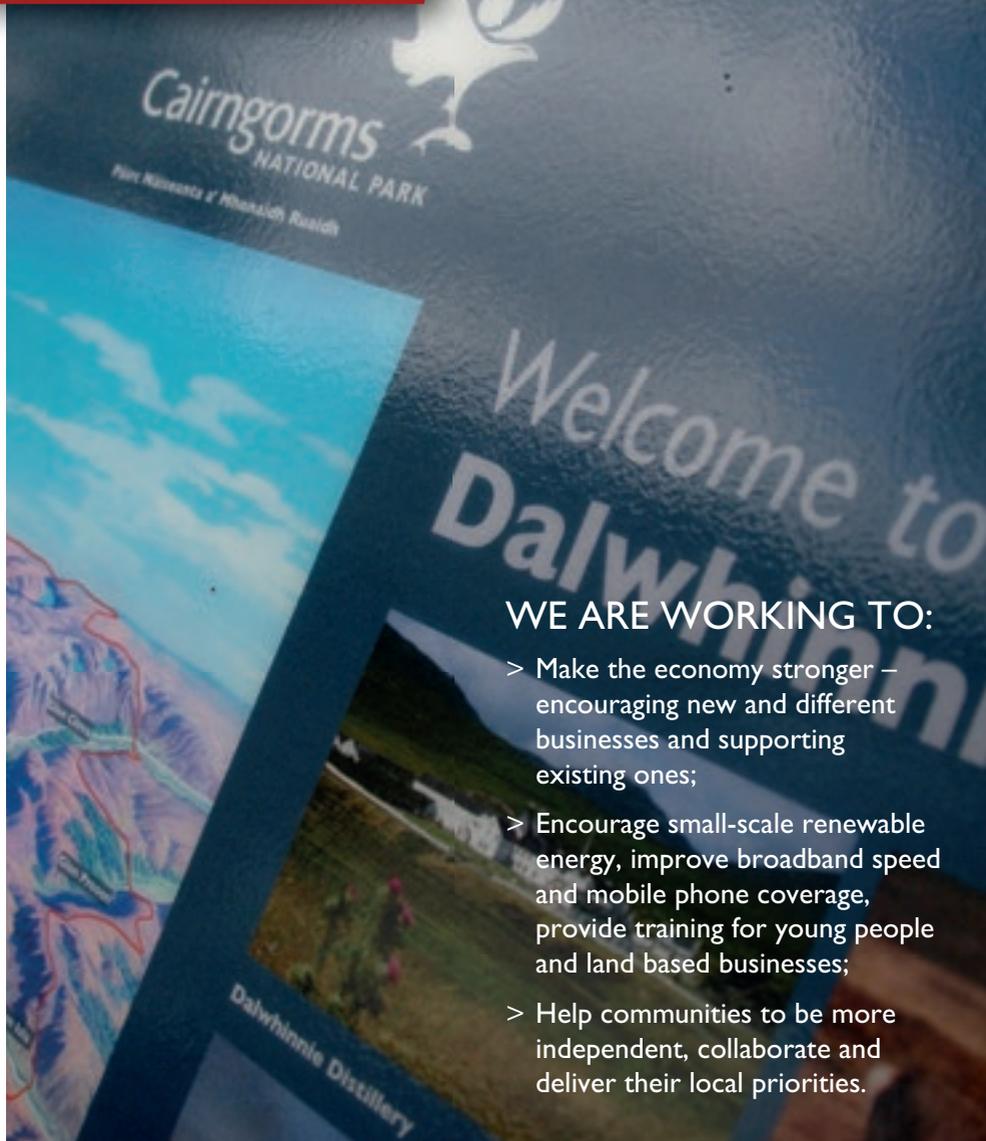
FIVE YEAR OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	TARGETS	PROGRESS TO 2017 TARGETS	EXPLANATION
The economy of the Park will have grown and diversified, drawing on the Park's special qualities	Business confidence reported through Cairngorms Business Barometer	Increase		Business confidence improved throughout 2013, though fell slightly in Q4 2013/14
	Number of jobs created in the Park	To have grown by more than the rate of population growth		400 new jobs created between 2010 and 2013
Businesses and communities will be successfully adapting to a low carbon economy	% population living within connection of high speed broadband or equivalent	75%		No change from 0% 2013. Expected to start in 2015
	Renewable energy production	To increase year on year		Increase of 20% in generating capacity to 2014
Communities will be more empowered and able to develop their own models of sustainability	The number of community enterprises generating income	Increase by at least 50%		New community enterprises formed and further income generation activity expected each year
The quality and connectivity of habitats is enhanced	Area of woodland	Increase of 6% (c.4,000 ha) in total woodland area		Over 2000 ha new woodland planting schemes planned by 2014
	Water quality	Maintenance or increase in water quality status		69% of water bodies at 'high' or 'good' status in 2014
The species for which the Park is most important are in better conservation status	Active conservation for LBAP priority species	Targets identified in Cairngorms Nature Plan achieved		12 of 26 priority species with active conservation projects
	Estates participating in Wildlife Estates Initiative	75% of estates in the Park		20 estates (26%) covering 85% of area of the Park
The special landscape qualities, including wildness, are conserved and enhanced	Qualities of wildness	Equivalent or increased area of the Park characterised as high or medium wildness		New data expected by 2017
Settlements and built development will retain and enhance the distinct sense of place and identity in the Park	Number of conservation area improvement projects	To cover all conservation areas		Alternative indicator required
More people will enjoy, learn about and help to conserve and enhance the Park	Number of volunteer days spent caring for the Park per year	Increase by 50% by 2017		900 in 2011/12 1200 in 2012/13 2400 in 2013/14
The expectations of visitors are met or exceeded	Visitor satisfaction reported in Cairngorms Visitor Survey	Increase		Next Visitor Survey results due 2014/15
The Park's recreation opportunities have improved the health and enjoyment of residents and visitors	Number of people using promoted core paths	Increased path use overall and more even spread throughout year		27% increase in use of sample core paths with people counters

 Indicator unlikely to meet 2017 target

 Indicator showing progress but unlikely to meet 2017 target at present

 Indicator on track to meet 2017 target

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESS



WE ARE WORKING TO:

- > Make the economy stronger – encouraging new and different businesses and supporting existing ones;
- > Encourage small-scale renewable energy, improve broadband speed and mobile phone coverage, provide training for young people and land based businesses;
- > Help communities to be more independent, collaborate and deliver their local priorities.

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERSHIPS, IN 2013/14...

- > The Cairngorms Economic Forum completed the Economic Diversification and Development Strategy for the Park;
- > The Cairngorms Food and Drink Trail was launched, the Cairngorms Food for Life project completed the Cairngorms Community Orchards project, and a successful 'Hens in Schools' project;
- > Telecoms provider EE's network went 3G in the Park and Badenoch Broadband and Communications based at Laggan reached its 100th connection in August 2014;



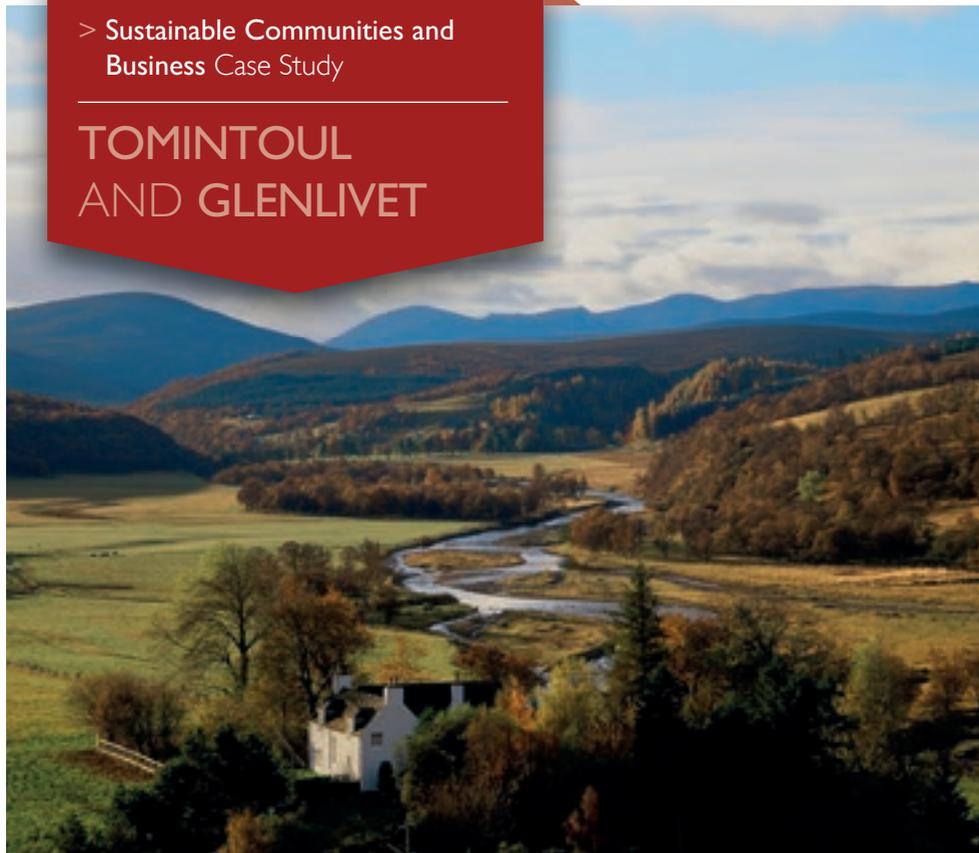
OPPOSITE:
Welcome to Dalwhinnie

ABOVE:
Nethy Bridge

RIGHT:
Launch of Cairngorms Community Orchards

- > Strengthening Communities project led to formation of community companies in all the main villages in Badenoch & Strathspey as well as 'Team Towns' and 'Team Badenoch' initiatives;
- > 2013 saw around 400 trainees attending rural skills training courses on topics ranging from habitat assessment to cattle and sheep management;
- > The Proposed Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan Examination took place over summer 2014.

TOMINTOUL AND GLENLIVET



Established 'to develop, inspire and embrace a vibrant future for the Tomintoul and Glenlivet area', the Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust, like many communities across the Park, has been extremely active in organising events to bring more visitors to the area and raise the profile of their community as a destination.

ABOVE:
Looking over the river Avon near Tomintoul

OPPOSITE:
Glenlivet Mountain Bike Trail Centre

The Trust have seen their first successful year running The Smugglers Hostel, part of their long term plan to generate income, and are putting together a business case for a Community Asset Transfer of the building. The same process is also underway for the Visitor Information Centre, which houses the Museum, providing a unique collection celebrating the local natural and cultural heritage. This will provide an upgraded hub for visitors and the Trust in the heart of the village's impressive Square.

At Glenlivet the Crown Estate's new mountain bike trails centre was officially opened this year and has already attracted substantial visitors and plaudits in its first year. The Coffee Still, which provides refreshments on-site is successfully run by a locally based couple using local produce.

The community has developed a new brand identity 'Open for Adventure'. The installation of new entry signs together with significant landscaping works to improve the eastern entry into Tomintoul is part of broader regeneration work, to encourage more people to stop and enjoy the village.

Looking ahead, a wide range of partners have come together to develop a £3.6m Landscape Partnership Programme for the area, now with Stage I funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, to enhance conservation, tourism and skills in this distinctive part of the National Park.



PEOPLE AND NATURE



WE ARE WORKING TO:

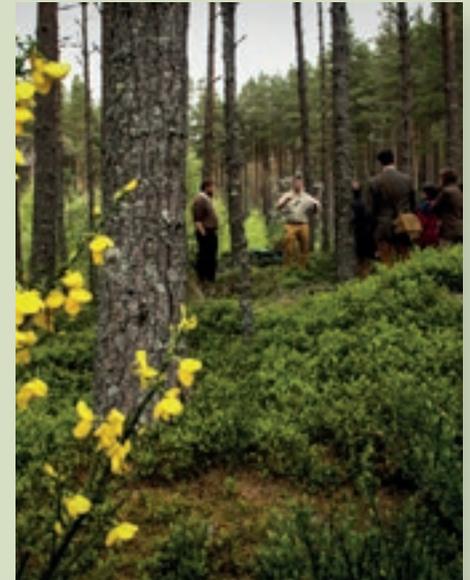
- > Conserve and enhance some of the UK's biggest and best habitats and the rare and endangered species found here;
- > Help those managing the land by bringing people together across estate boundaries and realising the potential for wildlife, enjoyment and the economy;
- > Improve the quality and sense of place in our towns and villages;
- > Prepare for how climate change will affect the way we live and the places we live in.

ABOVETOP:
Mountain hare

ABOVE:
Damselfly

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERSHIPS, IN 2013/14 ...

- > The Cairngorms Nature Festival was held in May 2014 with 770 people attending 56 events over two days;
- > Over 800 ha of new native woodlands were approved;
- > 23 km of river restoration and riparian planting with plans for re-naturalising extensive floodplains on the Dee and Spey;
- > Cairngorms Wildcat Project won the 2013 *Nature of Scotland Innovation Award* and three of Scotland's six national wildcat priority action areas announced are in the Cairngorms National Park;
- > Cairngorms Caledonian Pinewoods and Farmed Floodplains Futurescapes projects continue to deliver enhanced management;



- > The Tomintoul and Glenlivet Landscape Partnership developed a £3.6m investment programme with a funding application to the Heritage Lottery Fund;
- > The Wildlife Estates Scotland initiative continues to grow with Cairngorms estates gaining accreditation;
- > The Cairngorms Peatland Project launched with project officer and first phase of £117k capital investment in 300 ha of peatland restoration.

ABOVE:
Peatland restoration at Inshriach

RIGHT:
Cairngorms Nature Festival

CAIRNGORMS NATURE



Cairngorms Nature is now well established as a partnership delivering an ambitious agenda for nature conservation in the Cairngorms National Park. It brings together organisations delivering conservation on the ground and engages a wide range of people in nature, particularly through the annual Cairngorms Nature Festival.

The Cairngorms National Park is one of the best places in the UK to deliver landscape scale conservation: current Cairngorms Nature priorities include woodland expansion, wetland enhancement, capercaillie and raptor conservation.

There is an exciting scale of connected woodland expansion taking place from Abernethy, round the central Cairngorms to Mar Lodge and the early stages of a montane woodland project are being developed.



ABOVE:
Geese over Morven

LEFT:
Crested tit



This year also saw work begin on the Cairngorms capercaillie framework. With around 80% of the national capercaillie population in the National Park, what happens here is critical to the species future survival and expansion in Scotland.

ABOVE:
Capercaillie

BELOW:
Near Carr-Bridge



Some highlights of the partnership's current work include:

- > Woodland expansion – over 1600 ha of new native woodland now approved since 2012 with further expansion in development;
- > Woodland enhancement – work underway through an ambitious UK wide programme of ancient woodland site restoration with a Cairngorms project officer;
- > Peatland restoration – more than 300 ha of peatland restoration at four project sites;
- > Biodiversity recording – more than 18,000 new plant records across the Park this year;
- > Nearly 2,500 ha of land now under management for the benefit of farmland waders;
- > Targeted and innovative action for some of the UK's rarest species like twinflower and Scottish wildcat.

ENJOYING THE PARK

WE ARE WORKING TO:

- > Make the Cairngorms National Park an inspiration – a place for creativity, for outdoor learning and for developing new skills;
- > Make it as easy as possible for people of all abilities and from all backgrounds to enjoy the Park, without affecting what makes it special;
- > Provide a great welcome and an authentic, high quality visitor experience.



ABOVE:
Festival for All, Blair Atholl
Granttown-on-Spey Golf Course

OPPOSITE:
Strathspey Steam Railway
Feeding the Cairngorm reindeer herd

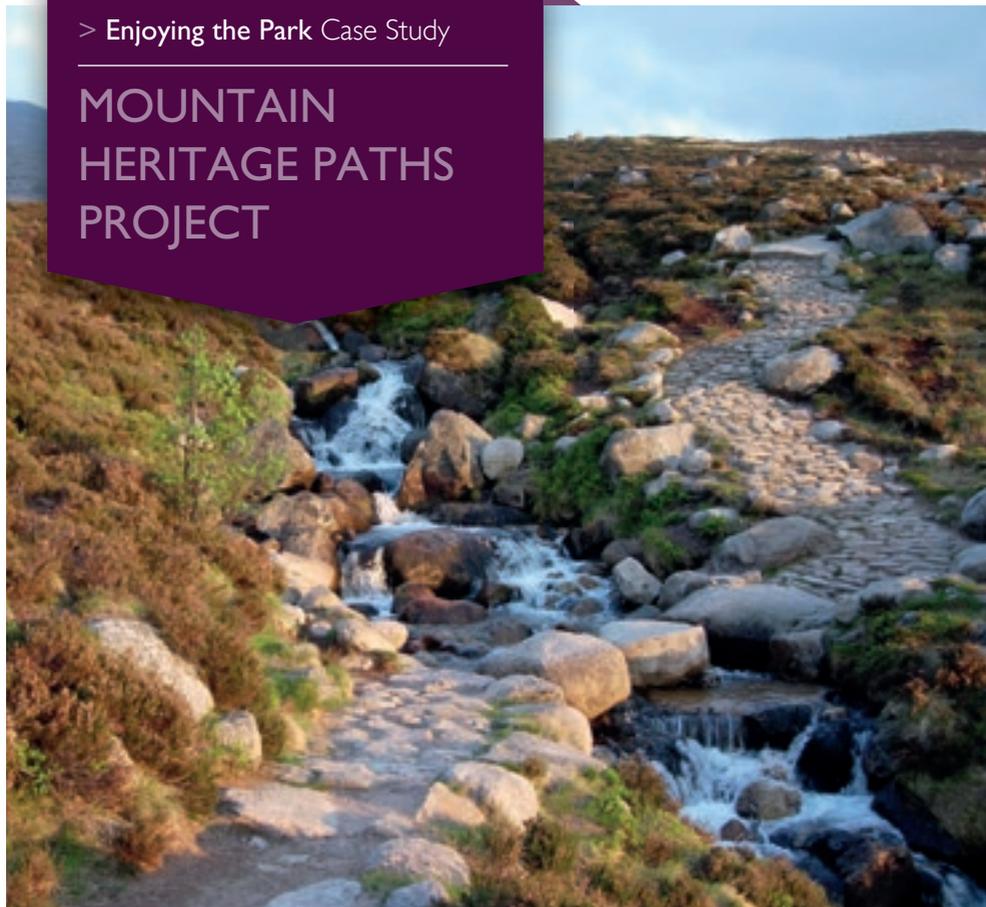


THANKS TO OUR PARTNERSHIPS, IN 2013/14...

- > The National Nature Reserve visitor centres at Nethy Bridge (Abernethy and Dell Wood NNR) and Glenmore (Glenmore NNR) were both refurbished;
- > Forestry Commission Scotland and the CNPA started long term work to enhance the visitor experience at Glenmore;
- > Natural Retreats won the contract for operation of Cairngorm Mountain, bringing investment to the facility and contributing to developing a long term strategy for Cairngorm and Glenmore;
- > The first sections of the Speyside Way extension at Kinrara were completed with further sections to Kinraig in development;
- > The new mountain bike trails on Crown Estate, Glenlivet were opened and have received good reviews in cycle press; a new mountain bike skills facility at Carr-Bridge was completed; and a new Laggan Wolftrax Forest visitor centre planned for 2014/15;
- > The Outdoor Learning in National Parks competition was held;
- > The John Muir conference 2014 raised the profile of Scottish National Parks and management of wild and special places as part of Scotland's Year of Homecoming celebrations;
- > A design competition for the Scottish Scenic Routes Initiative resulted in a design for Corgarff on the A939;
- > The Cairngorms Community Heritage Project led by RCAHMS supported communities in Badenoch explore their heritage through historical and archaeological discovery and recording.



MOUNTAIN HERITAGE PATHS PROJECT



This year sees the successful conclusion of the Cairngorms Mountain Heritage Project, a four year, £2.1m capital path improvement project delivering the conservation, tourism and skills benefits associated with investment in outdoors access.

Led by the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT), the capital works include upland path enhancement contracts covering prioritised paths in the Highland part of the Cairngorms National Park. The project will have completed repairs on 17 footpaths totalling 94.26kms by December 2014.

ABOVE:
Path to Coire an Lochain

OPPOSITE:
Mountain path maintenance

The project not only delivered path improvements but developed and delivered a pilot training programme for 8 trainees in the specialised skills required to deliver this work. The course was accredited to SVQ Level 2 standards in Environmental Conservation, and successful completers went on to take advantage of the employment opportunities generated through this project and related work. Three of the graduates formed a new company in the area and they are now an employer. The project generated a superb legacy, with COAT subsequently delivering a three year £390k training project to train a further 20 people with support from the European Social Fund (ESF).



Volunteers were engaged through the pilot 'Adopt a Path' scheme. Each volunteer takes responsibility to monitor a path's condition and carry out basic maintenance tasks. Information gained is fed into the maintenance regime to make best use of resources.

The success of this work is now shaping a major mountain paths project in both of Scotland's National Parks which has received Stage 1 approval for Heritage Lottery Funding.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2014/15

In 2014/15 we will continue to deliver exciting progress, including:

Sustainable Communities and Business

- > Implementing the Economic Diversification and Development Strategy;
- > Digital Scotland superfast broadband project likely to start bringing new superfast broadband connections to the Park;
- > Community Action Plan to be developed for Strathdon and review of community action plans in Ballater and Boat of Garten;
- > Cairngorms celebrations and promotion of Scotland's year of food and drink;
- > Developing the next LEADER Local Development Strategy – both LEADER and SRDP programmes likely to start during 2015;
- > Adopting the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan.

People and Nature

- > Further developing riparian and catchment planting projects on upper Dee and River South Esk;
- > Peatland restoration projects across the Park;
- > Developing the Capercaillie Framework for the Park to secure the long term future of the bird's UK stronghold;
- > Working to enhance the sustainability of moorland management;
- > Developing Stage 2 funding proposals for a Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership for Tomintoul and Glenlivet;
- > Developing a landscape change monitoring project across the Park.

Enjoying the Park

- > Consulting on the Active Cairngorms strategy;
- > Developing the long term Cairngorm and Glenmore strategy;
- > Completing the Cairngorms Visitor Survey 2014/15;
- > 'Make it Yours' training and support to be rolled out after summer 2014;
- > Completing Laggan Wolftrax Forest Centre and Nethy Bridge Visitor Centre;
- > Continuing to implement the Speyside Way extension;
- > Installing the Scenic Routes project at Corgarff.

Spittal of Glenshee

This document is available in large print, and other formats, on request. Contact us on 01479 873535. It is also available to view at www.cairngorms.co.uk

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