

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: **The John Muir Award in the Cairngorms**

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Purpose

The purpose of this information paper is to report the progress made by the John Muir Award in contributing to the aims of the Cairngorms National Park.

Recommendations

The Board is invited to:

- Note the contribution made by the John Muir Award to meeting the aims of the National Park to date.
- Note how the John Muir Award can contribute to the delivery of the strategic and cross-cutting themes and the goals of the Corporate Plan.

Executive Summary

Progress to date indicates that the John Muir Award is starting to achieve it's potential for promoting the aims of the Park to a large and varied audience. This information paper sets out some of the ways this is being achieved and also how the Award contributes to the themes and goals of the Corporate Plan.

THE JOHN MUIR AWARD IN THE CAIRNGORMS

Background

1. The John Muir Award in the Cairngorms was set up in response to the ongoing challenge of involving people in the natural heritage of the Cairngorms area, particularly groups of young people. It was envisaged that using the John Muir Award would provide long term opportunities to engage people in understanding the aims of the National Park.
2. The John Muir Award is an environmental award scheme focused on wild places. The Award's four challenges encourage the discovery, exploration and conservation of wild places and the sharing of experiences all in a spirit of fun and adventure. An integral part of the Award in the Cairngorms is promoting the National Park and its aims.
3. The project is jointly funded by LEADER+ (45%), Scottish Natural Heritage (45%) and the CNPA (10%). The project is due to come to an end in October 2006, having run for an initial period of 3 years.
4. The John Muir Award is delivered mainly through partnerships with youth organisations, schools, clubs, community groups, councils and outdoor centres. With advice and assistance from John Muir Award staff, these 'Award Providers' integrate the Award structure with their own educational, environmental and outdoor programmes and activities.

John Muir Award contribution to meeting the aims of the National Park

5. At the start of the Project in 2003 there were 5 Award Providers in the Cairngorms and during the year 35 John Muir Award certificates were presented.
In 2004 - 19 Award Providers and 191 certificates presented.
In 2005 (to March) - 22 Award Providers and 300 people currently registered indicates a strong groundswell of support for the Award in the Cairngorms.
6. Targets for 2005 are for 30 Award Providers to be in place in the Cairngorms and 600 certificates presented. This would mean: 30 local organisations introducing people of all ages and backgrounds to the National Park and its aims; 600 people actively involved in contributing to the protection and enhancement of the natural heritage of the Cairngorms. Interest so far in 2005 would indicate that these targets will be met and may be exceeded.
7. Award activity and partnerships are spread across the Cairngorms, both geographically and in terms of user groups. The following examples are involved in the Award, some are highly active, others just starting out or expressed an interest:-

SCHOOLS	REGION
Moray Active School Co-ordinators	Moray
Glenlivet Primary School	Moray

SCHOOLS	REGION
Tomintoul Primary School	Moray
Strathdon Primary School	Aberdeenshire
Logie Coldstone Primary School	Aberdeenshire
Aboyne Primary School	Aberdeenshire
Aboyne Academy	Aberdeenshire
Grantown Primary School	Highland
Gergask Primary School	Highland
Kingussie High School	Highland
Tarfside Primary School	Angus
OUTDOOR CENTRES	
Lagganlia Outdoor Education Centre	Highland
Active Outdoor Pursuits	Highland
Scripture Union Alltnacriche	Highland
Kindrogan Field Studies Centre	Perthshire
YOUTH ORGANISATIONS	
1st Aviemore & Rothiemurchus Guides	Highland
1st Alford Scouts	Aberdeenshire
RANGER SERVICES	
Aberdeenshire Council	
Highland Council	
Angus Council	
Perth & Kinross Council	
Glen Tanar	Aberdeenshire
Cairngorm Estate	Highland
Atholl Estates	Perth & Kinross
Crown Estate Glenlivet	Moray

ORGANISATIONS BRINGING GROUPS INTO THE PARK	REGION
WEA Reachout Project	Aberdeen City
Princes Trust Volunteers	Throughout Scotland
Scottish Youth Hostel Association	Throughout Scotland
Kellands School	Aberdeenshire

8. There has been a wide variety of activity in differing habitats including moorlands, the Caledonian forest, salmon rivers, local burns, montane areas, school grounds and community woodlands. All of this activity contributes to meeting the aims of the National Park, through the understanding, enjoyment, enhancement and protection of the natural heritage.
9. Participants have come from all sectors of society. The majority are of school age but an increasing number of adults are getting involved in the John Muir Award (currently 21% of all participants are adults). Deeside Community Education through WalkDeeside and in conjunction with LEADER+ have organised 6 adult education courses entitled 'Conserving Deeside'. These courses have targeted the general public, adults with mental health difficulties, the long term unemployed, single mothers and women's groups. All participants on these courses are undertaking the John Muir Award and learning about the National Park is an integral part of the courses. This activity contributes to the 'Park for All' theme.

10. John Muir Award activity has utilised and promoted other CNPA initiatives and projects:
 - a) The Moorland Project has worked with Grantown PS and Kingussie HS on Award activity.
 - b) A John Muir Award and Outdoor Access workshop was run in conjunction with SNH at Glenmore Lodge.
 - c) A John Muir Award and Biodiversity workshop is planned for May, run in conjunction with the Local Biodiversity Action Plan Officer for the Cairngorms.

11. Leader Training events for people interested in using the Award are a regular part of John Muir Award activity with twice yearly weekend courses. 'Tailored training' is also available e.g. a workshop on the John Muir Award was run for Glenmore Lodge instructors, this included input on raising the awareness of the Cairngorms natural heritage with their clients. As well as detailed information on providing the Award, all training highlights the aims of the National Park, the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and Biodiversity as themes to be included Award activity. Participants come from all sectors of the community.

Recommendation

12. **The Board is invited to note the contribution that is increasingly being made by the John Muir Award to meeting the aims of the National Park to date.**

How the John Muir Award can contribute to the delivery of the strategic and cross-cutting themes and goals of the Corporate Plan.

13. The John Muir Award encourages people of all ages and backgrounds to understand, enjoy and enhance their natural heritage. Consequently any group taking part in the John Muir Award in the Cairngorms is contributing to the aims of the National Park, and helping to deliver some of the strategic and cross-cutting themes as laid out in the Corporate Plan.

14. The John Muir Award is most closely associated with the delivery of three strategic themes:
 - a) Theme 1 - To enable current and future generations to understand and enjoy the special qualities of the Park in a way that fosters those qualities and supports the activities of others.
 - b) Theme 2 - To promote sustainable land and water management; and to protect and enhance our wildlife and landscapes.
 - c) Theme 3 - To support and stimulate economic and social development within the Park that sustains and is sustained by its special natural and cultural qualities.

15. The John Muir Award is particularly effective in delivering the cross-cutting themes of 'Sustainability' and 'A Park for All'. Social inclusion, sustainability and appropriate use of natural resources are central to all John Muir Award activity and involvement.

16. The John Muir Award in the Cairngorms has led on a number of initiatives that are particularly relevant to the 'Park for All' theme.
- a) 5 Prince's Trust Volunteer teams use the John Muir Award to give an environmental focus to their 12-week programme. The PTV Teams have been using Badaguish as a base for their residential experience, which is run by Active Outdoor Pursuits from Newtonmore. Learning about the National Park and its aims is a key theme throughout this week.
 - b) Princes Trust teams from Banff, Peterhead, Kilmarnock, Saltcoats and Dundee have based their residential experience in the Cairngorms.
 - c) The John Muir Award in the Cairngorms is working in partnership with the Scottish Youth Hostels Association's 'Give Us a Break!' project to bring young people from disadvantaged areas of Scotland to the Cairngorms and other wild areas of Scotland. As part of their experience the young people will be involved in learning about the special qualities of the National Park.
17. The goals to which the John Muir Award can make a considerable contribution are:-
- a) Goal 1 - Duties as the outdoor access authority effectively and efficiently delivered.
 - b) Goal 9 - Arrangements in place to meet the needs of visitors, land managers and communities for information and management of access (equivalent of ranger svc).
 - c) Goal 10 - Wide range of opportunities to experience the special qualities of the Park in a sustainable manner that is available to all.
 - d) Goal 13 - Residents, businesses, organisations and visitors contribute to protection and enhancement of wildlife, landscapes, cultural heritage and natural resources.
 - e) Goal 18 - High levels of understanding and appreciation of the Park, and of the role, of the CNPA and partners.

Recommendation

- 18. The Board notes how the John Muir Award can contribute to the strategic and cross-cutting themes and goals of the Corporate Plan.**

Conclusion

19. The John Muir Award is an educational initiative that encourages people of all ages to discover, explore and conserve the natural environment and share these experiences. Progress to date shows that it is very effective at promoting the aims of the National Park and contributing to the delivery of the themes and goals of the Corporate Plan. As one Award Provider stated '...the John Muir Award, it brings the Park to the people'.

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