
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: CEO REPORT

Prepared by: Grant Moir, Chief Executive

Purpose

To highlight to Board members the main strategic areas of work that are being directed by Management Team. These are areas where significant staff resources are being directed to deliver with partners the aspirations of the National Park Partnership Plan.

Strategic Context

Conservation:

- a) **Peatland Management** – The NPA, through its dedicated Peatland Officer, has secured funding for 3 peatland projects worth £117,000 in the National Park. This has been funded through the Peatland Action Fund administered through SNH.
- b) **SRDP** – The CNPA continues to be involved in the targeting work for the agri-environment and forestry part of the SRDP. This includes leading on work to join up the public sector delivery of priorities.
- c) **Rare Plants Project** – The Cairngorms Rare Plant Project has been shortlisted for the species champion award in the 2014 Nature of Scotland Awards.
- d) **Land Management** – The biannual meeting was held with landowners in the National Park covering topics, such as, hilltracks, upland management etc.
- e) **Hilltracks** – The Ministerial announcement on hilltracks is a significant and welcome change and we will work with SG to try and ensure that the specific context of planning in the Cairngorms is taken into account.

Visitor Experience:

- a) **HLF Mountain Paths** – The COAT led bid for funding for mountain paths has successfully passed stage 1 with HLF. The project totals around £6.2m covering both National Parks.
- b) **Glenmore and Cairngorm Mountain** – The NPA has been working with partners on the development of a masterplan and a public open day is being held on 25 September
- c) **Visitor Survey** – The visitor survey is ongoing in the Park with initial results giving good evidence on attitudes to the visitor experience in the National Park. 925 of the 2500 surveys had been carried out by the end of July.

Rural Development:

- a) **Development Management** – There are a number of significant cases that will be coming to planning committee over the next 3 to 6 months.
- b) **An Camas Mòr** – A significant amount of staff time has been spent working on the detail of the planning application and specifically the Recreational Management Plan.

- c) **Local Development Plan** – The Reporters Unit final report and recommendations will be issued by 26 September 2014.
- d) **Tourism** – The CNPA team have been working to develop a new approach to tourism in the National Park. See Board paper for update.
- e) **Tourism and State Aid** – A number of meetings have been held around state aid issues within the Park.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- a) The CNPA has attended a number of the local festivals and events around the Park this summer and presented the Pride of the Park awards at the Grantown Show.
- b) The first regional event for the Scottish Rural Parliament was held at the Lecht on 26 August. It was attended by around 50 people and focussed on how the Cairngorms can contribute to the upcoming parliament in November.
- c) Meetings were held at a senior level with SEPA, SNH, LTTNPA, LDNP & SG.
- d) The CEO attended Highland Council Ward meeting on economic development.

Communications:

- a) **Digital Communications Review** – The revamping of the Park Authorities website has started and should be completed by March 2015.
- b) **Merchandising and Sponsorship** – The CNPA have worked with the Brand Development Group and a decision has been taken to push back the trial of branded merchandise until Spring 2015.

Organisational Development:

- a) **Organisational Development Strategy** – The implementation of the Organisational Development Strategy has started (see board paper).
- b) **Accommodation** – The business case for accommodation changes is being discussed with Scottish Government.

Upcoming Issues of Note:

- a) **NPPP Ministerial Meeting** – The partnership meeting chaired by the Minister is likely to be in the second half of November.
- b) **Europarc Conference** – This takes place in Ireland from 28 September – 2 October
- c) **Upland Path Conference** – This takes place from 6-8 October at Glenmore. Hamish Trench is one of the speakers.
- d) **Outdoor Festival for All** - 11 October at Atholl Estate. 350 people have already booked onto the event representing a huge range of groups – ethnic minorities, young people, disabled people, health walk participants etc, from the main urban centres around the Park.
- e) **IUCN Peatland Conference** – This takes place in Inverness on 20-22 October and some of the study tours will be to the Park.
- f) **CBP Annual Business Conference** – Scheduled for 5 November.
- g) **Nature of Scotland Awards** – This takes place on 20 November in Edinburgh.

**Grant Moir
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