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## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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**Title: CEO REPORT**

**Prepared by: Grant Moir, Chief Executive**

### **Purpose**

1. 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**

2. Aileen McLeod has been appointed as Minister for Environment, Climate Change & Land Reform. The Programme for Government has been announced on the following themes:
  - Creating More, Better Paid Jobs in a Strong, Sustainable Economy.
  - Building a Fairer Scotland and Tackling Inequality.
  - Passing Power to People and Communities.

We will look to invite our Minister to the Cairngorms National Park in the New Year.

### **Conservation:**

- a) **HLF Tomintoul / Glenlivet** – The stage 1 bid for HLF Funding for the Tomintoul / Glenlivet Landscape Partnership was successful. The total bid to HLF for project development (one year) and project delivery (four years) is for £2.5m out of a total projected cost of £3.6m.
- b) **Peatland Restoration** – Work continues on a range of peatland projects across the Park. Further detail can be sought from Stephen Corcoran, Peatland Officer.
- c) **Wildlife Crime** – The CNPA has received confirmation of a meeting with the Minister. This has been scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and we are in the process of sending out invites to attend.
- d) **Nature of Scotland Awards** – The Cairngorms Rare Plants Project was nominated for an award in the Species Champion category but unfortunately did not win.
- e) **Moorland Management** – Significant discussions with a range of organisations and estates – see board paper
- f) **Montane scrub project** – CNPA met with partners from Norway, Iceland and Ireland and are looking to establish Cairngorm as a demonstration site as part of a proposal to the EU Horizon 2020 funds. The project looks to restore scrub in and around the ski resort and would attract a significant portion of the 5-7 million euro

total bid. In conjunction we are holding the first of a series of meetings with landowners from Abernethy to Mar Lodge, establishing the scope for restoration on a landscape scale.

### Visitor Experience:

- a) **John Muir Award** - Continues to be very popular heading for 25,000<sup>th</sup> Award in Cairngorms in 2015. This is something that we should celebrate and we will engage JMT and SG in this.
- b) **Cycling** - Kingussie awarded Cycling Friendly Community Grant of £19,000 by Cycling Scotland. CNPA awarded Cycling Friendly Employer status by Cycling Scotland.
- c) **Scottish Scenic Routes Project** – Planning application and installation prepared for 2014 competition winning design on A939 near Corgarff, and two sites going forward into 2015 competition at Glenshee and Tomintoul.
- d) **Laggan Wolfrax Centre** - Development now well underway with building wind and watertight and on schedule for a formal opening in spring 2015.
- e) **Glenmore** – Visitor Improvement Plan being refined following the informal consultation in autumn. This work is part of preparing for the public consultation in 2015.
- f) **Speyside Way** – Three planning applications have been submitted for Speyside Way Extension and £200,000 of funding has been secured from Sustrans Community Links and Commonwealth Games Legacy.

### Rural Development:

- a) **Cairngorms Tourism Partnership** – The first meeting of the CTP was held on 14<sup>th</sup> November along with a Marketing Workshop led by VisitScotland. There will be a follow-up event in the Spring building on the current visitor survey.
- b) **Development Management** – There are a number of high profile planning cases being dealt with by the CNPA including Nathey Bridge, Carrbridge and Dalfaber housing sites.
- c) **An Camas Mòr** – Significant staff time is being spent in discussion with the developer in anticipation of the masterplan being submitted.
- d) **Local Development Plan** – The LDP will be submitted to Scottish Government before 8 December following Board approval on 21 November. Expect to have the LDP in place in Feb/March 2015.
- e) **Local Plan Court Case** – The CNPA awaits further developments in this case. The Protected Expenses Order for the appellants has been refused by the Supreme Court.

### Stakeholder Engagement:

- a) A joint Management Team meeting has been held with THC. A series of ENFOR meeting has also been held looking at closer strategic alignment.
- b) Meetings at a senior level have also been held with a range of organisations, such as, UHI, Scottish Water, SNH, CBP, Aberdeen & Grampian COfC.
- c) MT have spoken at a range of events including Carbon Clever Conference, CBP Annual Conference, TGDT AGM, Land Use Strategy etc
- d) The UK ANPA CEO meeting was held on 4 November to discuss the opportunities around commercial sponsorship.

**Communications:**

- a) **Festival For All** – A fantastic event took place at Blair Castle on 11 October. The event was organised by Backbone with support from CNPA & FCS and attracted over 300 people from communities all around Scotland.
- b) **Cairngorms Nature Festival** – Steering group established for Cairngorms Nature Festival 2015 & events programme being developed (16 & 17 May)
- c) **Social Media** - Activity has increased our followers to over 4000 on twitter and facebook with a 57% engagement rate. 52,000 people saw a recent post to Facebook on Cairngorms Nature.
- d) **'Make it Yours'** - Support materials produced and meetings with key visitor attractions/partners arranged for next 3 months - Glenmore, Cairngorm Mountain, Glenlivet, VisitScotland VICs, SNH, Braemar Tourist Association (including Mar Estate); Glenshee Pottery; Highland Wildlife Park; Strathspey Steam Railway; Dalwhinnie Distillery; Highland Folk Museum; Laggan Wolftrax.

**Organisational Development:**

- a) **Organisational Development Strategy** – The Staff Awayday in November was a great success looking at the development of the new Corporate Plan.
- b) **Staffing** – The NPA have recently recruited 2 Development Planning and 1 Development Management posts. These will start in the New Year and brings the team up to full complement.
- c) **Accommodation** –The business case for accommodation changes is with Scottish Government. The pre-application planning discussions are ongoing.

**Upcoming Issues of Note:**

- a) **Land Reform** – The Scottish Government has started a 'Consultation on the Future of Land Reform in Scotland. The consultation runs until 10 February 2015. The MT will look at the potential implications for the Park and will develop any consultation response for discussion with Board.

**Grant Moir**  
**December 2014**