



Cairngorms National Park Plan
Progress 2007/08



The range of partners who helped implement the Cairngorms National Park Plan during 2007-2008.

- Aberdeenshire Council
- Aberdeenshire Rural Housing Enabler
- Angus Council
- Association of Cairngorms Communities and all the Community Councils and Community Associations in the National Park
- Aviemore & Cairngorms Destination Management Organisation
- British Geological Survey
- Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce
- Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group
- Cairngorms Farmers Market
- Cairngorms Hostels
- Cairngorms LEADER
- Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan Project
- Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Cairngorms Water Vole Project
- Creative Cairngorms
- Crofters Commission
- Dee Catchment Management Partnership
- Deer Commission Scotland
- Deer Management Groups in the Cairngorms
- Forest Research Services
- Forestry Commission Scotland
- Highland and Moray House Builders
- Highland Council
- Highland Foundation for Wildlife
- Highland Housing Alliance
- Highland Small Communities Housing Trust
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- Historic Scotland
- Homes for Scotland
- John Muir Trust
- Lantra Scotland
- Macaulay Institute
- Moray Council
- National Farmers Union Scotland
- National Trust for Scotland
- North East Mountain Trust
- North East Scotland Biological Records Centre
- Royal Commission on Ancient & Historic Monuments Scotland
- Royal Deeside Destination Management Organisation
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society
- Scottish Enterprise
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Scottish Federation of Housing Associations
- Scottish Government Housing and Regeneration Directorate
- Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Rural Property and Business Association
- Scottish Water
- SportScotland
- The Cairngorms National Park Advisory Forums
- The estates, farmers and other land managers in the Cairngorms National Park - in particular, Alvie & Dalraddy, The Crown Estate Glenlivet, Glen Feshie, Kinveachy, Lynaberack and Rothiemurchus Estates, and those estates who are part of the Caenlochan Glen Section 7 Control Agreement
- The Heather Trust
- UHI Millennium Institute
- VisitScotland
- Wild Scotland

Published by Cairngorms National Park Authority

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ISBN 978-0-9548782-8-3

www.cairngorms.co.uk

Photography by: Albyn Housing Society Ltd, Anke Addy, Cairngorm Landscapes, CNPA, David Gowans, Stewart Grant, Neil McIntyre, Mick Pawley, Paul Tomkins, VisitScotland/Scottish Viewpoint

Front cover photo: Linn of Quoich, Deeside

Foreword

The last year has been an exciting one for the Cairngorms National Park. All the Cairngorms National Park Plan's partners have been working together to start delivering the Park Plan's five year outcomes and the Scottish Government's strategic outcomes. The Scottish Government has announced both the strategic review of National Parks, and support for an extension of the Park's southern boundary to include part of Perth and Kinross.

This report of progress on the Cairngorms National Park Plan summarises the range of achievements we have made this year in delivering the Park Plan as well as what more to expect in the next year. This progress is a collective effort and demonstrates the commitment everyone has shown in working more closely together to deliver the National Park Plan's actions and outcomes.

The report is focussed only on the achievements in delivering the Cairngorms National Park Plan. However, we all know that the management and actions of those living in it and managing it each day made the Cairngorms a special place before the National Park was established. So, for all the achievements set out in this report, the organisations, communities, businesses and individuals who live, work and manage the Park daily contribute even more to its success and to keeping it a special place.

The implementation of the Park Plan is a great opportunity for the public sector to work in partnership with the private, community and voluntary sectors and to collectively join-up and provide more efficient services to its customers. I believe that over the next year we will all see even more progress in delivering the Park Plan and clear evidence that we are moving towards its five year outcomes. I also hope that having learnt from the process of implementing the Cairngorms National Park Plan, we will have more effective organisations and partnerships working within the Cairngorms National Park, demonstrating good practice for others in Scotland.



David Green/Daibhidh Green
Convener/Neach-gairm

Cairngorms National Park Authority
Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh

Facal-toisich

Tha a' bhliadhna a chaidh seachad air a bhith air leth brosnachail do Phàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh. Tha com-pàirtichean Plana a' Phàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh air fad air a bhith ag obair còmhla gu libhrigeadh nam builean còig bliadhna aig a' Phlana agus builean ro-innleachdail Riaghaltas na h-Alba. Tha Riaghaltas na h-Alba air ainmeachadh gu bheil a' dol a dhèanamh an dà chuid leirmheas ro-innleachdail air na Pàircean Nàiseanta agus dol a thoirt taic airson leudachadh crìoch a deas na Pàirce gus a bhith a' gabhail a-steach pàirt de Pheairt agus Ceann Rois.

Tha an aithisg adhartais seo air Plana Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh a' toirt mion-chunntais air an raon de nithean a tha sinn air a choileanadh sa bhliadhna seo ann a bhith a' libhrigeadh Plana Pàirc agus cuideachd na thathar an dùil a dhèanamh sa bhliadhna a tha romhainn. Chaidh an adhartas seo a dhèanamh mar thoradh air obair com-pàirteachais agus tha e a' sealltainn cho dealasach 's a tha daoine air a bhith gus obrachadh còmhla gu libhrigeadh builean agus gnìomhan Plana a' Phàirc Nàiseanta.

Tha an aithisg seo ag amas a-mhàin air na thathar air a choileanadh ann a bhith a' libhrigeadh builean Plana Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh. Ach, tha fios againn uile gun robh an stiùireadh agus na gnìomhan a bha na daoine a bha a' fuireach innte is ga stiùireadh gach là a' dèanamh a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh na h-àite sònraichte fìus mus robh a' Phàirc Nàiseanta air a stèidheachadh. Mar sin, cho math ris gach gnìomh a tha air a shònrachadh san aithisg seo, tha buidhnean, a' choimhearsnachd, gnìomhachasan is daoine fa-leth a tha a' fuireach, ag obair agus a' rianachd na Pàirce gach là a' cur gu mòr ris an t-soirbheachadh seo agus ri bhith ga cumail mar àite sònraichte.

Tha buileachadh Plana na Pàirce na chothrom fìor mhath don roinn phoblach a bhith ag obair ann an com-pàirteachas leis na roinnean prìobhaideach, coimhearsnachd agus saor-thoileach gu bhith a' tighinn ri chèile gus obrachadh còmhla airson seirbheis nas èifeachdaich a thoirt don luchd-dèilig. Tha mise a' creidsinn thar na bliadhna a tha romhainn gum faic sinn eadhoin tuilleadh adhartais ann an bhith a' libhrigeadh Plana na Pàirce le teisteanas soilleir gu bheil sinn a' gluasad nas fhaisge air na builean còig bliadhna. Tha mi cuideachd an dòchas an dèidh ionnsachadh bhon phròiseas ann a bhith a' cur Plana na Pàirce Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh an cèill gum bi buidhnean is com-pàirteachasan ag obair nas èifeachdaich taobh a-staigh Pàirce Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh, a' shònrachadh deagh dhòighean-obrach do dh'àiteachan eile ann an Alba.

Introduction



The Cairngorms National Park Plan was prepared to co-ordinate and prioritise the additional, different or special management needs of the Cairngorms National Park. It was approved by the Scottish Executive in March 2007 and is the blueprint for how the Cairngorms National Park will be managed over the next 25

years. The Cairngorms National Park Plan was prepared by the Cairngorms National Park Authority in partnership with all those groups, organisations and individuals already managing the Park. It sets out the long-term vision (25 years) for the Park and the priorities for action for the first five years of the Plan from 2007 – 2012.

The Vision

Imagine a world class National Park.

An outstanding environment in which the natural and cultural resources are cared for by the people who live there and visit; a renowned international destination with fantastic opportunities for all to enjoy its special places; an exemplar of sustainable development showing how people and place thrive together. A National Park that makes a significant contribution to our local, regional and national identity.

This is our vision for the Cairngorms National Park in 2030.



Ptarmigan

The Cairngorms National Park Plan and the Progress Report 2007/08



Shepherd at lambing

This first progress report for the Cairngorms National Park Plan has been prepared by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) on behalf of all the partners who implement it. It summarises what has been achieved for the Park Plan's seven priorities for action in the first year of implementing it and highlights future work and milestones.

The Cairngorms National Park was designated in 2003 because it was recognised that it was a special place that should be managed differently to make the most of its special qualities. The Cairngorms National Park Plan was prepared to co-ordinate and prioritise the additional, different or special management needs of the Park. The Park Plan is implemented by a wide range of partners from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.

This progress report is about the achievements that have been made by all the partners in delivering the Park Plan's seven priorities for action over the past year. The day to day management of the Cairngorms National Park continues to be carried out by the organisations, land managers, businesses, communities and individuals who did so before the area became a National Park. Many of them also deliver services, manage and contribute to the Park's special qualities in ways that the Cairngorms National Park Plan does not need to prioritise or co-ordinate. Their work remains vital to the Cairngorms National Park's success but is not reported here.

Progress 2007/08



River Dee

This report is an update on progress with delivery of the Cairngorms National Park Plan across its seven priorities for action (see box below). The report has a section dedicated to each of the seven priorities for action. We have reported the achievements in 2007/08 as well as highlighting the milestones we expect during 2008/09. Each priority also incorporates a case study to illustrate the range of achievements and activities in more depth.

At the end of the first year of implementation of the Park Plan, clear progress is being made. Each priority for action has a range of achievements that will contribute to the outcomes for 2012 as well as work planned to deliver more. Many organisations,

businesses and individuals have helped to implement the Cairngorms National Park Plan throughout the past year. We have not named all of them individually in this report, but the list of partners inside the front cover of the report gives an indication of the range of organisations and groups who helped to implement the Park Plan during 2007/08.

Much of the work has been co-ordinated through priority for action delivery teams. These are made up of the partners who are best placed to co-ordinate and fund work on each priority for action. Their commitment over the past year has provided the building blocks for improved delivery of the Park Plan over the coming years.

The seven Priorities for Action for 2007 – 2012 are:

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Future Developments



Woodchip energy centre, Aviemore



Landing a salmon

This year's progress report reflects the early stage of implementation of the Cairngorms National Park Plan. Over the next year (2008/09), we expect the Park Plan and the priorities for action to become more embedded in all of our ways of working. This will drive a step-up of delivery that will contribute to the outcomes for 2012 for each priority for action.

Over the next year we will monitor whether our work is having the effects we collectively want it to have and will be able to report whether it is taking us towards the outcomes for 2012. The Cairngorms National Park Advisory Forums that consider the three strategic themes of the Park Plan will be meeting regularly and providing advice on options for delivery, on pressures facing the Park, and an overview of progress towards the outcomes.

When the Cairngorms National Park Plan was being prepared, one of the biggest tasks was to collate the relevant information about the characteristics of the Park, its management, and the pressures on it. This was reported in the 'State of the Park' report that was published with the Park Plan. The State of the Park report also highlighted gaps in the availability of information and our understanding of what it meant for the Park's management. Over the next few years we will target research at filling those gaps so that we will be able to say more about the State of the Park and about how and why it changes.

We realise that some people will want to know more about the implementation of the Cairngorms National Park Plan than this progress report provides. We will provide quarterly updates on the ongoing implementation of the Park Plan on the CNPA website (www.cairngorms.co.uk) from September 2008. These updates will give more detail about the work and achievements for each priority for action.

Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Landscapes



This priority for action is intended to ensure that the important geology, wildlife, habitats, diverse landscapes and human history of the Cairngorms National Park are at least maintained and wherever possible strengthened. It recognises that many of these features are important because of the way people have lived and managed the land in the past, and that current and future management holds the key to their continued health.

Surveys were established in 2007/08 and started in/continued into 2008/09 for wildcat; twinflower; inbye semi-natural grasslands; wetlands; riparian woodlands; Arctostaphylos heath; and aspen woodland in Strathspey.

Projects to undertake active management were established in 2007/08 or continued/started in 2008/09 for: water vole; capercaillie; black grouse; red squirrel; wildcat; semi-natural grasslands; native woodlands; water bodies/water courses; non-native plants; pine hoverfly; freshwater pearl mussels; wetland restoration; goldeneye; mink; grey squirrel and twinflower.

Achievements during 2007/08

- Research into public perceptions and view of landscape changes undertaken
- Research into qualities of wildness and attitudes to wildness undertaken
- Greater understanding and awareness of habitat use by young golden eagles
- New edition of 'Cairngorms Landscape Fashioned by Geology' booklet published
- Geodiversity issues incorporated in Cairngorms National Park Deposit Local Plan
- RaptorWatch extended across the east of the Park
- Further development of Grampian Partnership against Wildlife Crime

Milestones for 2008/09

- A Landscape Framework for the Cairngorms National Park to inform management and planning decisions will be started
- The Landscape Character Assessment for the Park will be updated
- Research into qualities of wildness and attitudes to wildness will be completed and inform the development of planning policy
- A Sustainable Design Guide for the Park will be consulted on
- A Park-wide resource to contribute to and access biodiversity information will be established
- The Cairngorms Forest Habitat Network project to target the restoration and expansion of all native woodlands will be launched
- Potential candidate species (that once lived here but are now absent) for restoration to the Park will be identified
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) research into the economic value of Scotland's natural heritage, with the Park as a case study, will be completed



Goldeneye ringing

Ensuring that the important geology, wildlife, habitats, diverse landscapes and human history are at least maintained and wherever possible strengthened.

- A local geodiversity group will be established to guide the preparation of a comprehensive geodiversity audit and action plan
- A unified approach to tackling wildlife crime across the Park will be developed

Case Study

The value and characteristics of wildness in the Park

One of the special qualities of the Cairngorms National Park is the sense of wildness that people experience in it. For many, the mountains are wild in every sense and yet even the most remote and rugged places in the Park have been influenced by human management of the land. For others, readily accessible areas such as community woodlands provide a strong sense of wildness and are an important refuge for both people and wildlife.

So what is wildness, and what is the answer to protecting and managing this special quality of the Park that is so difficult to define?

The Cairngorms National Park Authority and Scottish Natural Heritage jointly commissioned two important and innovative pieces of work to inform the future protection and management of the wild places in the Cairngorms National Park. The research should also help others seeking to manage land and characteristics of wildness elsewhere in Scotland.

First, people's views about wildness both in the Park and across Scotland were surveyed. There was an overwhelming support for the protection of wildness, with 96 per cent of the people surveyed in the Park and 92 per cent across Scotland considering wildness to be a valuable quality.

Second, a Geographic Information System was used to map four key areas that contribute to a sense of wildness – remoteness, ruggedness, naturalness and an absence of modern structures. The maps will be a useful tool for highlighting the degree to which any location in the Park is particularly sensitive to new development or land uses, and for identifying opportunities to enhance the characteristics of wildness.



Glen Tanar

Integrating Public Support for Land Management



This priority for action is intended to support a diverse, viable and productive land management sector that continues to provide high quality primary produce such as food and timber, while delivering public benefits that are compatible with the Park's special qualities and make a growing contribution to employment and the local economy.

The priority seeks to move to a simpler system of support that is more integrated across sectors, more clearly linked to the tangible delivery of public benefits, and is more closely linked to the needs and priorities of the Park.

Many key activities were started or developed under this priority in 2007/08 and will continue to be relevant through 2008/09 and beyond. This list therefore amalgamates current achievements and future milestones together.

Achievements and Milestones for 2007-2009

- Involvement in the development of the Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP) through the CNPA and partner membership of the three Regional Proposal Assessment Committees and the inclusion of criteria that are consistent with the Cairngorms National Park Plan in the regional priorities
- Two land management support officer posts for the Cairngorms National Park were created to help land managers make high quality applications under the SRDP rural priorities and LEADER funds that deliver public benefits to support the Park Plan
- Agreement with partners that 'Action on Climate Change' is a high priority public benefit
- Development and implementation of the Knowledge Transfer Research project which aims to capture and transfer knowledge and research on adaptation to and mitigation of climate change into practical action by land managers
- Inclusion of the Cairngorms National Park as the Scottish case study in the international northern periphery Clim-ATIC project, will explore the potential for rural communities to adapt to climate change under the themes of sustainable transport; secure, local and sustainable energy; tourism; and risk and response management
- The Cairngorms Wood Fuel Group and a feasibility study for a Park-wide wood fuel co-operative are being developed
- The 'Green Farm' pilot project was operated in partnership with the Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society (SAOS) to help farmers take action on climate change and help deliver a lower carbon economy in the Park – the project will be evaluated in 2008 and may be expanded
- A demonstration project for sustainable land management is being established with the Crown Estate, Macaulay Institute and other land managers



Supporting a diverse, viable and productive land management sector that continues to produce high quality primary produce while delivering public benefits.

- Projects on diffuse pollution and a landscape-scale approach to the upper catchment are being developed through the Dee Catchment Management Partnership and there is a possibility of a further demonstration project for sustainable flood management being developed
- Delivery of a wide range of training and advice through the Cairngorms Land Based Business Training courses
- Development of a Sustainability Fund for the Park that helps organisations and businesses improve their environmental sustainability for launch in 2008

Case Study

A co-ordinated approach to support for public benefits

Rothiemurchus is well-known as a family owned working estate which reflects many of the special qualities of the Cairngorms National Park with wide-ranging opportunities for public appreciation and enjoyment.

The spectacular landscapes of Rothiemurchus demonstrate the influence of hundreds of years of committed, careful management for long term commercial objectives. As a result, the special qualities of the estate, including internationally important designated sites, rare species and traditional settlements, attract hundreds of thousands of visitors throughout the year. The management encourages a diverse range of market led enterprises from traditional farming, forestry, and country sports to innovative activities that help visitors enjoy and safeguard the fragile environment.

Rothiemurchus provides multiple public benefits, with many businesses and government bodies committed to a partnership approach towards their delivery. Through the Rothiemurchus Concordat, the estate and public sector agencies prioritise the public benefits that the estate is able to deliver. These form the basis for payment by the public sector and the public benefits range from management to protect, enhance and monitor biodiversity, to information and interpretation about the estate and environment. This integrated approach to the provision of public benefits is now being taken across Scotland as part of the Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP).

Johnnie Grant of Rothiemurchus said: "Rothiemurchus represents such an important part of our national heritage that all the land and much of the built environment has received multiple public designations – for example National Scenic Area, Natura 2000, SACs, SSSIs, Ancient Monuments and Listed buildings. On average, every hectare of the estate has five designations – each has a set of legally binding commitments to provide benefits desired by the public. Turning these wide-ranging requirements into an integrated delivery plan that achieves social and economic obligations and meets the expectations of visitors is a major challenge. At Rothiemurchus we welcome the new SRDP and plan to use this to achieve the co-ordinated approach needed to help meet and exceed public aspirations for a National Park."



Sheep farming

Supporting Sustainable Deer Management



Herd of stags

This priority for action is intended to help balance the social, economic and recreational benefits that deer bring to the Park with the ecological processes in which deer are a natural part. The Cairngorms National Park Plan includes the objective of increasing the value of the deer resource.

Achievements during 2007/08

- Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group (CDAG) continued to bring land managers, public agencies and communities together for information sharing and advice on deer management
- Research into the socio-economic effects of large-scale deer population reductions were carried out
- The idea of venison as part of a cultural experience for visitors was promoted at the Cairngorms National Park tourism conference
- A pilot event to test the feasibility of public deer viewing was completed with the Highland Council and Lynaberack Estate (see case study opposite)
- National strategy for wild deer consulted on by Deer Commission Scotland
- Joint agency working on the Cairngorms Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is beginning to address the effects of deer on designated sites

Milestones for 2008/09

- CDAG will review its purpose and remit
- Development of an inclusive deer management framework within the Park
- Inclusive deer management plans will be complete or in development over the whole Park
- Cairngorms National Park venison products will be promoted in schools, restaurants and the catering industry
- The tourism opportunities of wild deer will be developed with Wild Scotland
- Muntjac and fallow deer will be absent from the Park and Sika deer will not be resident as a breeding species east of the river Spey
- Combined impacts of sheep and deer will be considered in deer management plans on both designated and non-designated sites
- Joint agency working will continue to bring designated sites into favourable condition



Red deer hind

Balancing the social, economic and recreational benefits that deer bring with the ecological processes in which deer are a natural part.



Deer stalker

Case Study

Deer watching success at Lynaberack Estate

Deer are an important part of the rural economy, generating income and supporting jobs through deer stalking, the value of venison and the enjoyment people get from seeing deer. Deer are therefore seen as a potential tourism resource but there is little information available on the value of deer to wildlife tourism. A pilot deer watching study was therefore carried out with help from Lynaberack Estate near Kingussie.

Owner Michael Hone explains: "We were happy to help with investigating the feasibility of deer watching events. On summer evenings deer regularly feed outside Lynaberack Lodge and viewing is therefore possible from a big window in the Lodge. We hosted a free event in partnership with the CNPA and Highland Council rangers to let people see new born deer calves coming down to feed on good grass with their mothers.

"The event was publicised by the Highland Council ranger service who run a wide range of nature-based events in the Park. A booking process was set up and a total of 17 people attended the event which gave guests a brief presentation about deer and their management.

"People spent an enchanting two hours watching as many as 100 deer graze and interact with each other and we provided commentary and anecdotes, explaining both the importance of deer for the estate and also the problems they can cause.

"Participants indicated they would be happy to pay £10-15 for an evening deer-viewing session and we felt the event would also have been suitable for older children. Events like this can also help estates explain their management to the public, improve people's understanding and appreciation of our role and the challenges we face, as well as generate a modest income."

Providing High Quality Opportunities for Outdoor Access



This priority for action is intended to help more people enjoy even higher quality outdoor access to benefit their health, wellbeing and understanding of the Park.

Achievements during 2007/08

- Draft Core Paths Plan completed within statutory deadline
- Initial Park-wide survey of upland paths and popular set-off points completed
- A Park-wide access trust – Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) – was created to help improve and maintain path condition and quality
- The construction of the final sections of the Glenmore off-road route was commenced
- Deeside Way routes between Ballater and Aboyne were completed
- The Scottish Outdoor Access Code was promoted throughout the Park
- The Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum (LOAF) was used by the CNPA for advice
- Liaison between land managers, rangers and police is reducing camping along public roads at key locations
- Technical guidance for waymarking of paths in the Park was commissioned

- Cairngorms Explorer travel timetables were produced
- Heather Hopper bus service was maintained and further branding and marketing, along with cycle carriage service for 2008, agreed

Milestones for 2008/09

- Core Paths Plan process will move to completion
- The Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust will finalise a work programme and implement projects
- Guidance on the organisation of outdoor events in the Park will be published to help organisers
- The CNPA to take on funding role for most ranger services in the Park
- Responsible access opportunities will be promoted through the Cairngorms Visitor Guide, Explorer timetable and other visitor information
- Design guidelines for path leaflets in the Park to be produced



Canoeing on the Spey

Helping more people enjoy even higher quality outdoor access to benefit their health, wellbeing and understanding of the Park.

- Grant schemes will be used to encourage paths groups to renew guides
- Destination Management Organisations (DMO's) will package attraction ticketing with transport operators
- New 'Health Walks' schemes will start to operate in Glenlivet, Tomintoul and Upper Badenoch and Strathspey
- Active Schools co-ordinators, outdoor education teams and schools will together identify opportunities to broaden the range of outdoor activities included in physical education strategies

Case Study

Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust

The Cairngorms National Park offers many excellent opportunities for outdoor access and over recent years, the economic importance of this as well as its health and wellbeing benefits for communities have become widely recognised. The public sector now actively promotes responsible outdoor access in Scotland, and has a duty to ensure people have opportunities to enjoy it.

An Outdoor Access Strategy for the Cairngorms National Park showed that access projects to build, maintain or promote paths had been delivered very differently in various parts of the Park.

Much high quality work had been undertaken through the Upper Deeside Access Trust (UDAT) which collated and secured funds to then establish and maintain projects. In other parts of the Park, some good quality projects were completed, but often without long-term plans to pay for their promotion or maintenance.

The Cairngorms National Park Authority needs to ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach to the management of outdoor access across the whole Park. After considering the methods of outdoor access management that were available and had been used in the past, the CNPA decided that an access trust like UDAT would work best. With the agreement of UDAT, a process of transition was therefore completed which saw the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust coming into effect in April 2008.

The new trust is overseen by a Board of Trustees that includes land owners, public sector agencies, and two representatives of the Cairngorms National Park Authority. In its first three years, the Trust's work will include:

- Maintenance, improvements and promotion of path networks around communities, mountain paths and strategic routes;
- Maintenance, improvements and promotion of visitor infrastructure such as car parks, countryside furniture and interpretation boards;
- Promotion, marketing, and the development of business opportunities to generate sustainable economic benefits; and
- Promotion of health and wellbeing.



Walkers

Making Tourism and Business More Sustainable



This priority for action is intended to increase the diversity, vibrancy and sustainability of the economy of the Cairngorms National Park.

Achievements during 2007/08

- A conference linking food and tourism was delivered to around 80 businesses
- Cairngorms Heather Hopper bus service commissioned, with bike-carrying facility for some routes
- Cairngorms Community Investment Programme fully committed. £920,000 of LEADER funding secured for the Park area
- 100 businesses accredited through the Green Tourism Business Scheme
- The range of Cairngorms National Park family brands was extended to include Aviemore and the Cairngorms Destination Management Organisation, the Cairngorms Farmers Market, Cairngorms on a Shoestring and Cairngorms Hostels
- Creative Cairngorms directory produced and craft trail established. Baseline survey on use of local produce conducted as part of tourism conference (see above)
- 813 people participated in training courses delivered by the Land Based Business Training project and 17 young people supported (via

the CATS bursary scheme) to access Park related vocational training

- Continuation of Schools Liaison Officer project to promote training and employment opportunities relevant to the Cairngorms National Park
- Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce acquired 'Parki' visitor publication thus achieving greater financial self-sufficiency
- Aviemore and the Cairngorms DMO 'business barometer' commenced to measure business confidence and identify forward investment plans in the tourism sector
- Cairngorms National Park section created on visitscotland.com
- Cairngorms National Park content developed with VisitScotland for key markets such as walking and cycling

Milestones for 2008/09

- Tourism Conference for November 2008 planned
- Omnibus business enterprise survey to be completed by March 2009



Bike transportation by train

Increasing the diversity, vibrancy and sustainability of the economy of the Cairngorms National Park.

- Assessment of visitor payback schemes planned to inform development of additional payback opportunities
- Co-ordination of advice about the Cairngorms National Park brand and environmental quality schemes
- All Chamber of Commerce members to sign up to appropriate accreditation schemes
- The Rural Skills Apprenticeship for land based industries will be launched late 2008, with service elements that link to sustainable tourism
- Customer feedback surveys will be piloted in the Park and the Cairngorms National Park Visitor Survey 2009/10 will be designed and commissioned
- Scotland's National Parks will be integrated into the promotional work of all agencies

Case Study

Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce and the National Park Brand

The Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce is an enthusiastic partner in the delivery of the Cairngorms National Park Plan and is an example of the importance and benefits of strong partnership between the public and private sectors. The Chamber recognises how important the environment is and the need to conserve it – both for the sustainability of its businesses and for the benefit of both the residents and visitors to the Park.

During 2007/08, the Chamber has therefore developed a family brand based on the Cairngorms National Park brand. This will help to promote the work of the Chamber in the context of the National Park and will also require its members to meet the environmental best practice standards that are part of the brand. The number of businesses in the Park with environmental accreditation and following environmental best practice will be significantly increased by this work – both reinforcing the image and value of the Park brand and further strengthening the environmental sustainability of businesses across the Park.

The process to achieve full branding will include the provision of guidance and advice to members, with help being provided via the Business Environment Partnership's Environmental Placement Programme. This will ensure that businesses can make informed choices about their business practices, potential economic savings and the 'Green Bottom Line' through increased marketing potential and improved efficiency.

The Chamber will also be part of the team organising the Cairngorms National Park Tourism Conference in November 2008 which will have a strong environmental theme. It will aim to demonstrate solutions, products and services that can support tourism businesses in their environmental business needs. The conference will also give small to medium businesses that are looking for energy savings and efficiency improvements, an opportunity to explore best practice and business management tools.

Making Housing More Affordable and Sustainable



This Priority for Action is intended to improve access to good quality, sustainably designed, and affordable housing to help maintain sustainable communities in the long-term.

Several key activities were progressed and completed under this priority during 2007/08 but others will continue to be relevant and ongoing through 2008/09 and possibly beyond. These include:

- Co-ordination of housing work and sharing of housing information between partners;
- A commitment to ensure the Cairngorms National Park Plan's priorities are incorporated in Local Authorities' Strategic Housing Investment Plans;
- Dialogue towards agreement of consistent and comparable approaches to tracking housing system trends in different local authority areas; and
- Development of the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan and the Cairngorms National Park Sustainable Design Guide.

Achievements during 2007/08

- Completion and evaluation of a pilot community needs project in Grantown-on-Spey, Cromdale and Advie, and Dulnain Bridge
- Completion of a housing needs study in Braemar
- Suitable empty properties to be brought back into use were identified through the Rural Empty Property Grant Scheme
- New Supply Shared Equity (previously the Open Market Homestake) pilot project was established over all local authorities covering the Park
- Three training courses on housing management practice and grant mechanisms for private landlords were delivered

Milestones for 2008/09

- Community needs assessment projects to be established in other locations
- Implementation of actions from pilot community needs assessment
- Establish and complete a housing needs study for Ballater
- Rural Empty Property Grants projects to be approved
- Publication of a developer's opportunities guide for private landlords in the Park to be progressed
- Provision of housing information links through a Park-based website
- Undertake research to identify the impact of Park housing supply on businesses
- An innovative activities programme to promote awareness and understanding of sustainable and energy efficient housing design will be prepared and funding to support it identified
- Training courses will be delivered on changes in housing legislation and good practice



Aviemore housing. Photo courtesy of Albyn Housing Society Ltd

Improving access to good quality, sustainably designed, and affordable housing to help maintain sustainable communities in the long-term.



Striking architecture

Case Study Community conversations

'Our Community – A Way Forward' is a multi-funded project that helped the communities of Grantown-on-Spey, Cromdale and Advie, and Dulnain Bridge have direct influence over their future development. The overall purpose of the project was to ensure local communities had their voice heard when important decisions are taken about local services and projects and they have influence on how funding and resources are spent.

Householder surveys in the form of 'community conversations' were undertaken with communities, voluntary bodies and business organisations. A target audience ranging from the elderly and young people to parents and toddlers and people with disabilities provided a diverse range of community opinion. An internet forum was also used to encourage as many people as possible to make their views known.

By bringing agencies and communities together, the work aimed to prepare detailed information on housing, tourism, economic and social issues in the area; identify community assets and positive initiatives; and prioritise the main issues and opportunities for action in each community. An action plan was then formulated detailing how, when, and by whom these issues will be taken forward.

The work resulted in a priority list of future projects and developments in each community including local needs and priorities for housing, with commitment from the public sector organisations to help fund the priorities where possible.

The project was supported by Grantown-on-Spey, Cromdale and Advie, and Dulnain Bridge community councils, the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Highland Council, HIE Inverness and East Highland, Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey and the Association of Cairngorms Communities.

Beth Grant from Dulnain Bridge Community Council said: "The project is not just about consultation, it is about action and a longer-term process where local people can get involved in prioritising ideas and actually taking them forward. That's partly why we called it a conversation – because we wanted to have a two-way discussion between the community and local agencies, not just about the issues facing this community, but what we are actually going to do about them."

Raising Awareness and Understanding of the Park



This priority for action is intended to increase awareness of the Cairngorms National Park and its special qualities throughout the Park and Scotland. It will help people to understand and appreciate why it is special and why it is managed in particular ways.

Several key activities were progressed and completed under this priority during 2007/08 but others will continue to be relevant through 2008/09 and beyond. These include:

- Building on the delivery of 17 training courses to 250 participants through the Cairngorms Awareness and Pride project in 2007/08 to running 20 courses to a further 300 attendees in 2008/09; and
- Ongoing promotion of the John Muir Award with 1858 participants during 2007. 2008 will see the 5,000th Award in the Park, since the Park was established in 2003.

Achievements during 2007/08

- Installation of major entry point sign markers to the Park neared completion
- Interpretation strategies completed for Glenmore Forest Park and The Deeside Way
- Frank Bruce Sculpture Collection opened at Feshiebridge
- Laggan Forest Trust Visitor Centre feasibility study completed
- Panannich Ballater – installation of new signage and interpretation at Dalmochie Newfoundlanders Camp
- Completion of 'Eastern Gateway' project at Strathdon – new access network, signage and interpretation
- Design template produced for community boards using panoramic maps and information installed at Nethy Bridge Community Notice Boards
- SNH Management Strategy for the Cairngorms National Nature Reserves (NNRs) completed
- Two youth conferences held
- Cairngorms National Park web portal in development

- 'Cairngorms on a Shoestring' promoted for people living on low incomes
- Continue brand uptake programme, broadening target business base

Milestones for 2008/09

- Brown pre-arrival tourist signs to the Cairngorms National Park installed on trunk roads and Highland Tourist Route re-signed
- Angus Glens Ranger Base completed and information and interpretation to be installed
- Glenmore Visitor Centre exhibit upgraded and Glenmore Forest Park Outdoor Exhibition held
- Interpretation guidance for the Cairngorms National Park to be published and distributed
- Information and interpretation reviews undertaken at locations across the Park including Insh Marshes NNR
- Market research to determine effectiveness of the Cairngorms National Park brand will be undertaken



Construction of Angus Glens Ranger Base

Increasing awareness of the Cairngorms National Park and its special qualities throughout the Park and Scotland.

- Some existing Tourist Information Centres will be jointly branded as Cairngorms National Park Information Centres and criteria will be developed for formal partnerships with other Park information providers
- Further production and distribution of a range of Cairngorms National Park branded leaflet racks
- Panoramic map panels to be installed at Dinnet and Drumochter
- Junior Ranger scheme developed as part of John Muir Award accreditation – a Europarc Junior Ranger event will be held in the Park
- A 'Park for All' conference will be held to encourage more opportunities for traditionally excluded groups
- A programme for secondary school teachers will be developed and an SVQ in rural skills (piloted in the Park) will be launched
- Development of the Cairngorms National Park web portal for wider interest groups including communities and education

Case Study Angus Glens Ranger Base

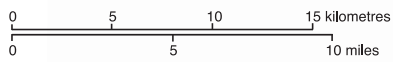
The Angus Glens are a popular destination for many visitors and lie within easy access of Perth, Dundee and Fife. More than 300,000 people live within 90 minutes drive of this part of the Park and Glen Clova – the most popular of the Glens – receives around 65,000 visitors each year.

Angus Council have been operating a ranger service in the glens for a decade with support from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and latterly the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA). The ranger service enhances the experience of visitors, and helps with the day to day management of the nearby Corrie Fee National Nature Reserve.

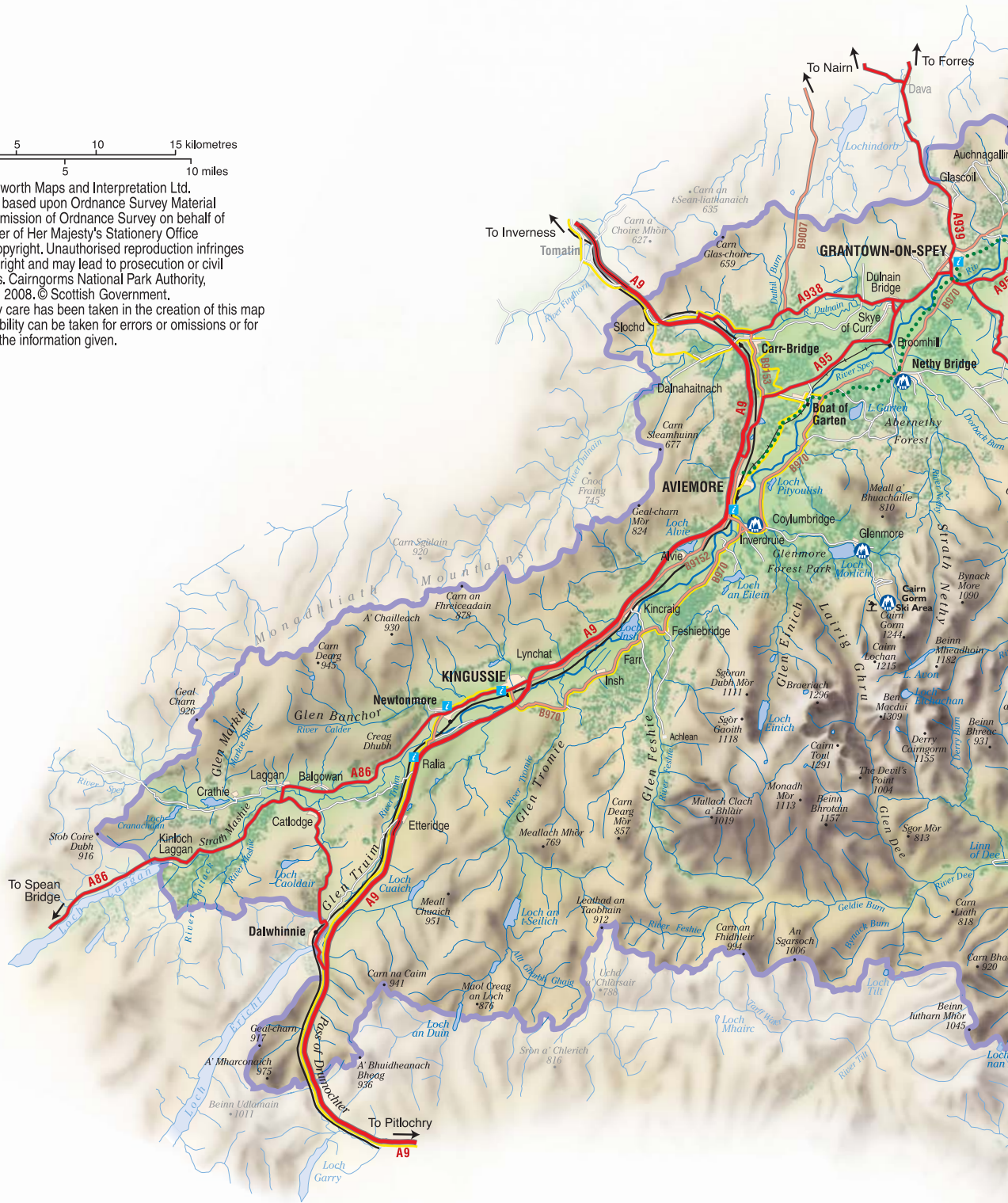
In 2004, after several years of working out of temporary accommodation, Angus Council decided there was an opportunity to build a new base for the rangers. It will provide a better welcome to visitors and improve opportunities to inform people about the special qualities of the area.

The council brought together partners and managed the process of developing a new ranger base from feasibility studies through to detailed design and construction. The base is designed to high quality environmental standards and provides offices for the ranger service, a place to meet visitors, interpretation about the Cairngorms National Park and the National Nature Reserve, a 'classroom' for visiting education groups, and public toilets.

















The four main partners, Angus Council, FCS, SNH and CNPA agreed to contribute equally to funding the £394,000 base from the summer of 2007. Work started in September 2007 and is due to be completed in summer 2008. The project is an excellent example of partnership working that is helping to deliver key outcomes in the Cairngorms National Park Plan, for the public sector partners, and for the visitors to the Angus Glens.



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- Tourist information centre 
- Ranger base 
- Ski centre 
- Speyside Way Long Distance Route 
- National cycle route 
- Cairngorms National Park Boundary 
- Dual carriageway 
- Trunk road 
- A road 
- B road 
- Other road 
- Railway/station 
- Steam railway/station 
- Woodland 
- River 
- Built up area 

Heights shown are in metres

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ISBN 978-0-9548782-8-3

For a large print version of this publication, please contact the
Cairngorms National Park Authority at the above address or telephone 01479 873535.

This brochure is printed on Revive 100 Uncoated which contains 100% post consumer reclaimed material and
has been produced at a mill which is certified with the ISO14001 environmental management standard.

Design: **2b**creative.co.uk Print: J. Thomson Colour Printers