

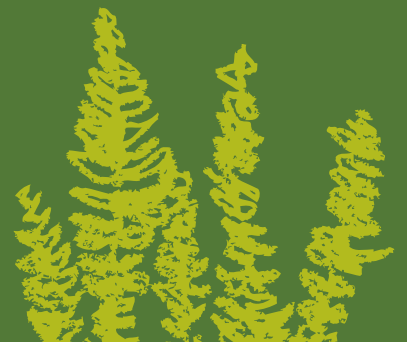
SECTION TWO

Resource Sheets



“Its easy to think about the National Parks as just being places of wonderful natural beauty, and they are that, but for our organisation and the young people we work with they have become places where they can get involved in all sorts of projects and volunteering – places for them to develop and pick up great new skills. They’ve learned to work together and to see that what they’ve done has been of benefit to them and others. Doing all that and learning about the Parks has been a wonderful opportunity.”

JAN MCKERROW, TULLOCHAN TRUST STAFF MEMBER



I. Packaging the Experience



BARRIERS SOME QUESTIONS...

I AM NOT SURE WHAT THERE IS TO DO IN THE NATIONAL PARKS THAT IS SUITABLE FOR MY PARTICULAR GROUP'S NEEDS?

WOULD WE NEED TO HAVE SPECIFIC EXPERTISE TO TAKE PART IN ACTIVITIES IN NATIONAL PARKS?

HOW CAN I SELL THE IDEA TO POTENTIALLY RELUCTANT PARTICIPANTS – GROUP MEMBERS AND STAFF?

HOW CAN I TELL IF THE EXPERIENCE CAN DELIVER WHAT MY ORGANISATION WANTS TO ACHIEVE FOR ITS PARTICIPANTS?

ARE THERE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NATIONAL PARKS?

SOLUTIONS

SOME ANSWERS...



All sorts of packaged activities help make it easy for group leaders. These offer various levels of support both ahead of time and for when you are on site.

They include activities suitable for the young and old, the fit and not so fit! Those with health considerations, mobility difficulties, tight budgets and varied experience of the outdoors. It also includes those looking for a very formal educational or developmental experience as well as those with a simple desire to have fun, or be stimulated by the myriad of experiences available in a National Park.

Programmes & Providers

Packaged programmes have proved popular and they continue to be developed. These include those offering opportunities to develop participants' skills and confidence. For example, The John Muir and Duke of Edinburgh's Awards, The Prince's Trust, the Venture Trust, The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and Fairbridge Scotland all offer popular programmes for young people in the National Parks.

Information & Activities

National Park Authorities and their partner agencies can provide information that link activities on offer to what your organisation wants to achieve through participation in the Park. For example if you are interested in healthy outcomes, or specific skills development they can offer suggestions about how certain activities are likely to deliver these.

If you feel your group has the confidence and skills to organise your own activity, National Park Authorities and other organisations can provide information packs and activity sheets. Also check out the Park websites or telephone/ e-mail National Park Staff/Rangers services.

Volunteering

Within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs volunteering experiences are also supported through the Park Authority's Volunteer Development Officer who can assist groups and individuals to participate in volunteering opportunities within the Park. Volunteering opportunities are also available in the Cairngorms National Park.

» Remember to check out the **Contacts and Resources Section** at the end of the pack for more information.



HOW OTHERS DID IT

SOME EXAMPLES...

- > A number of National Park Authorities across the UK have successfully used a range of packaged learning experiences when working with groups; something also developed with some success in the NNR's in Scotland. This approach provides more structured opportunities that are readily accessed and understood by those considering activities in the Parks. An example of how dedicated staff can help this is the appointment of a Programme Manager for the John Muir Award by the Cairngorms National Park Authority. The Escape Group in Inverness (supporting lone parents) and Tullochan Trust group from Dunbartonshire (working with excluded young people) both had good experiences in National Parks using packaged programmes. The Tullochan Trust for example, made use of Millennium Volunteer and Duke of Edinburgh's Award Programmes to involve young people in volunteering within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. This got young people involved in a three month path building project with formal recognition for their efforts.
- > If people do not normally take part in outdoor activities, an outdoor instructor such as a Ranger can help people get more out of the experience. This is when their support goes beyond group supervision and they are actively involved in providing opportunities for learning. The Prince's Trust Team Programme based in Faifley made use of Ranger Service support to undertake a visit to Inchcailloch NNR. The visit was used to help the group recognise and develop their team building, group-work and communication skills - key elements of the Team Programme.

'It was important for us that young people received proper recognition for their efforts. Using the path building project as a means of completing the service element of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award proved really popular, gave young people the recognition they deserved and allowed them to spend time enjoying and learning about The National Park.'

TULLOCHAN TRUST STAFF MEMBER





- > Mobile phone technology at Craigellachie NNR (near Aviemore in the Cairngorms National Park) and resource packs provided by the Ranger services on Inchcailloch (Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park) proved a great way of providing engaging information whilst in the Parks.
- > The Cairngorms National Park developed a very successful EUROPARC Junior Ranger Camp Programme. Working with 20 young people (13-16 years) from Europe and 11 from Scotland, the camp promoted inclusion and connection to protected areas. From this, further international links have been fostered and 5-day programmes offered during the summer months.
- > Groups involved in the National Parks have found that when they reflect on their experience it gives them a better understanding of how and why things did not meet expectations. The 'why' is often down to highly practical things (such as improved signage, access to equipment or information packs), that have been easily addressed and motivated people to return with good results.

“The Rangers were really good, not what I expected. I thought they would be really heavy about tree hugging and all that but they were good and told us lots of things that were dead interesting.”

PRINCE'S TRUST PARTICIPANT



2. Practicalities



BARRIERS SOME QUESTIONS...

WILL I FACE SOME PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES?

HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

WHEN WE ARE THERE WILL WE NEED SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT,
TRAINING OR EXPERTISE?

AND COSTS – WHAT WILL THEY BE AND HOW CAN I MEET THEM?





SOLUTIONS

SOME ANSWERS...

2

The 'Contacts and Information' section of this Pack will help give details of some contacts that can help guide you to the kind of resources mentioned below.

Let us bust the first myth - you do not need the latest Gore-tex jackets, trousers or fancy hiking boots to enjoy a visit to the National Parks and NNR's. Sensible footwear (including wellies), a decent waterproof and you are ready to go! Being warm and dry are the priorities, it is not about fashion!

Cost

There are a range of activities on offer in the National Parks with varying cost implications. Activities offered by National Park Authorities are generally free of charge so you only need to cover the cost of travelling to the site and providing lunch and refreshments if required. Even that might be a struggle, so more money always helps. The good news is that there are funders keen to help support engagement with the outdoors. This is easiest when you can demonstrate how your activities fit with their funding priorities.

Funding

Applying for funding can be quick and easy. Some National Park partners have small grant programmes that are easily accessed and the CNPA runs a similar scheme. Local community workers or CVS¹ staff can identify other funders and help you with an application. Some funders will also have staff happy to help you. Many Local Authorities also have small pots of funding that you can tap into. Visit your Local Authority's website for more information or call their Communities Teams.

Giving some thought to the kind of benefits that will be achieved from your visit to the National Park or NNR should help you identify the most appropriate funding source. For example if you think that the benefits will be more educational than health related then it is best to link potential funders to this outcome. National Park Authority and other staff can help you frame a proposal.

Transportation

Community transport schemes can be a great help. They know how to find suitable local mini-buses, qualified drivers and funding to help with the costs. Getting to and from the Parks by public transport is also much easier than you think and national help-lines will give you timetabling and cost information. The Cairngorms Explorer will give you information on getting around the Cairngorms National Park and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park has a booklet – exploring the National Park by ferry, bus or train.

The development of equipment loan schemes and resource banks is another good way of accessing what you need. Local authority Outdoor Education and Community workers, National Park Authority staff and outdoor education bodies can help advise.

Training

Many activities in the Parks do not need qualified staff; but when they do, Park staff can offer direct help or point you to others that can. Training for leaders has in the past been available for those keen to develop specialist skills. For example, Cairngorms National Park Authority supported the Backbone project to train staff working with black and minority ethnic organisations to support their engagement with the Park.

One of the benefits that National Park Authorities and NNR's have over other parks and outdoor spaces is the availability of resources, through their own organisations and those they work with- staff, buildings, transport and access to funding streams. They can not help with everything and should not be the only place you look for support (or always the first), but if they can help they will and if not, they may know someone that can.

¹Council for Voluntary Service

HOW OTHERS DID IT

SOME EXAMPLES...

- > Sources of funding that have been accessed by those using the National Parks include: the Big Lottery Awards For All scheme, the European Union LEADER programme, Community Planning Partnership targeted regeneration funding, Paths To Health Funds, Landfill Tax Funds, Young Scot Awards, sponsorship and discounts from local businesses and group fundraising.
- > The Tulloch Trust worked really hard to make a path building project for young people possible, securing funding from Landfill Tax Grants as well as discounts from local outdoor shops who provided footwear and waterproof clothing.
- > The Escape Group in Inverness (working with lone parents) have been involved in a wide range of local fundraising - securing funds from Awards for All (lottery), as well as through the local radio station. They demonstrated that a little imagination and hard work can reap fantastic results.

“Getting access to the mini bus has been a real bonus as it gives us the freedom to meet every week during term times and get out and back again in time to pick up the kids, without the minibus that just wouldn’t be possible.”

ESCAPE GROUP PARTICIPANT



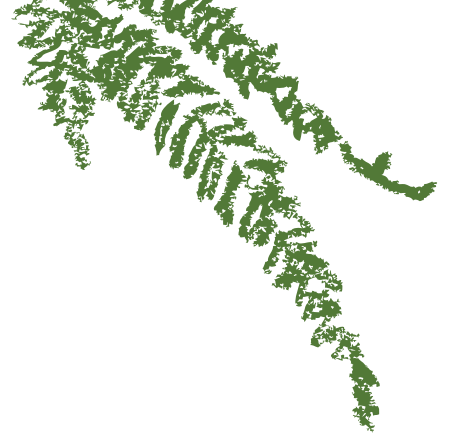
- > The Escape Group also make great use of local community transport with the local community centre mini bus a major asset for completing weekly trips to the Cairngorms National Park and other outdoor areas. One of the group members drives the bus having completed their minibus driver test.
- > Individuals from Capability Scotland's Upper Springland's Centre in Perth benefited from adapted transport available through the centre, which made it possible for wheelchair users to access the outdoors.
- > The Mosaic project in England supports the participation of people from minority ethnic backgrounds in National Parks. It also develops Community Champions for National Parks within black and minority ethnic groups in 20 cities across England. Initiated by the Council for National Parks and the Black Environment Network (BEN), Mosaic was promoted by the Campaign for National Parks (CNP). The project provides training to enable local Champions to organise visits to National Parks, promote the National Parks in their communities and establish cultural events and other activities to develop an interest in natural environments.

“The mini bus is a real life line and just makes it so much more manageable to get out and about, especially with the limitations of some forms of public transport for those in wheelchairs.”

**CAPABILITY SCOTLAND
STAFF MEMBER**



3. Assessing and Managing Risk



BARRIERS SOME QUESTIONS...

HOW DO WE MAKE SURE THAT ACTIVITIES ARE SAFE AND ENJOYABLE?

IS A RISK ASSESSMENT NEEDED AND WHO DOES IT?

WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE IS AN ACCIDENT?
WILL STAFF GET BLAMED?

HOW CAN I GET HELP WITH MY ORGANISATIONS RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS?

DO WE NEED SPECIAL INSURANCE?

SOLUTIONS

SOME ANSWERS...

3

What is a Risk Assessment?

The key to managing risk in the outdoors is to think about what you need to do to make sure that your visit/activity is going to be a safe enjoyable experience for the participants. Each trip will be different but it will involve planning; arranging transport, food and possibly accommodation. You will need to decide on where you are going and what you are going to do. You may book specialists to work with – Rangers or outdoor instructors. In arranging the visit you simply need to think what are you doing to make sure that each part of the trip is going to be safe and enjoyable for your group – that is risk assessment. It is all part of the normal planning of a visit and will involve some research, some phone calls or even a pre-visit.

You will need to work out what hazards you are likely to come across, how they might affect your group and what you are going to do to make sure the risks posed by these hazards do not spoil your day. Then all you need to do is write it down and make sure you follow your own plan. Your organisation will have a standard way of doing this and often this involves filling out an unfamiliar and often scary table but this is still just you saying what you have done to make the visit safe and enjoyable.

Help with Risk Assessments

You can not do risk assessments for things you know only a little about or for things that are other people's responsibility. So if you are doing conservation work with a Ranger service you simply need to find out that they are competent to supervise the work and ask for a copy of their risk assessment.

Many employers make it easier by having generic assessments for common activities such as minibus driving etc.

If you have never completed a risk assessment before ask for training and even after that get help from a colleague who is familiar with the system.

The vast majority of visits to the countryside are safe and enjoyable. People often get wet or cold or slip over but that is part of being outdoors.

Very occasionally someone gets seriously injured but even then the most likely incidents occur on the drive to a place. Your job is to plan the trip so that it is safe and enjoyable and in that way you will massively reduce the chance of any serious accidents.

Understanding Insurance

Insurance falls in to two categories; personal insurance and organisational insurance. Personal accident insurance is a matter for the individual. Specialist companies will provide individuals with activity insurance but the cover and the premium are best left to individual choice. However, it is really important that any organisation that you work with has insurance to cover the activities they are doing.

A Ranger service needs to be insured to do conservation work with the public and you need to check that they are covered. Some organisations have annual contracts or agreements with partners. Again your organisation may have guidelines on the level of cover required.

Planning a safe enjoyable trip should never stop anyone going to the countryside. Having to put that plan into a risk assessment can be daunting at first but if you approach it with a positive attitude and ask for help it gets easier.



HOW OTHERS DID IT

SOME EXAMPLES...

- > The Tulloch Trust, supporting excluded young people find that some young people can be attracted to and excited by 'risk'. That made it easier to get young people along to the Parks, but it could have been off-putting for the staff. Instead, the team worked with the young people and the British Trust Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), to assess and manage risks associated with their project, which was in the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. Everyone had a great time and the staff are keen to continue to use the Parks for their work.
- > The Escape Group, working with lone parents found that planning and risk assessment was best done by an experienced walk leader who also had access to supportive Park staff.



- > Schools love to visit the National Parks and NNR's and have found that getting prior approval for activities in line with their local authority's requirements makes visits administratively light; while the use of support organisation's form templates has eased the whole process. Generic Risk Assessments covering the majority of risks associated with visiting the outdoors can be used again and again, simply changing the detail depending on the site and location for the activity. One school using Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park found that Park staff would complete all the risk assessment requirements covering the activities they delivered.
- > Staff from Capability Scotland made use of information provided by Cairngorms National Park through its 'Cairngorms on a Shoestring' publication to help identify a more suitable location for taking a group of wheelchair users out into the Park.

“Cairngorms on a Shoestring” was really helpful. Having that type of information makes it easier to just plan something and get out there relatively quickly’.

CAPABILITY SCOTLAND

STAFF MEMBER



4. Building Commitment



BARRIERS SOME QUESTIONS...

SOME PEOPLE DO NOT SEE THEMSELVES AS 'OUTDOOR TYPES', THINKING THEY WILL NOT 'FIT IN' WITH PEOPLE WHO DO THAT KIND OF THING – HOW CAN WE GET ROUND THAT?

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT NATIONAL PARKS AND NNR'S – DO OTHER OUTDOOR SPACES NOT HAVE SIMILAR KINDS OF EXPERIENCES?

I LOVE THE OUTDOORS AND WOULD LIKE TO SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT THE BENEFITS BUT I AM A LONE VOICE IN MY ORGANISATION. I NEED TIME TO PLAN AND RESOURCES TO DELIVER, BUT I WILL NEVER GET THESE WHILE MY COLLEAGUES AND MANAGERS CANNOT SEE THE MERIT IN WORKING OUTDOORS. HOW CAN I WIN THEM OVER?

SOLUTIONS

SOME ANSWERS...

4

Helping people to experience the outdoors is as much down to the commitment of key individuals as it is to organisational priorities and resources. Without these people the work flounders. Use opportunities to train leaders in becoming more skilled and confident when taking people outdoors.

Support

Find out about 'champions groups' (for example Inclusive Cairngorms) which nurture those keen to promote work with the National Parks and NNR's. These provide opportunities for shared experiences, helping to promote work in this field, while also supporting isolated staff.

Demonstrating the Value

Parks offer promotional material, activities packages and evaluation evidence that clearly demonstrate the connection between activities available and the difference that they make to individuals, groups and communities e.g. Health, Education, Heritage and Conservation outcomes. Think about how that matches to what your organisation is trying to achieve. In schools and community learning settings for example, the Curriculum for Excellence and associated Delivering Change frameworks can all be clearly linked to the kind of changes for individuals and groups that are possible through work in the National Parks.

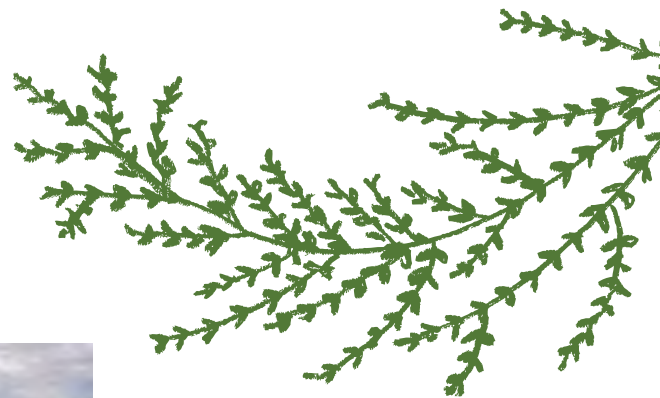
Training

Managers and other workers can develop staff and volunteer training opportunities for those interested in supporting work within the National Parks and NNR's. This includes for example support for teachers or youth workers/volunteers to acquire appropriate qualifications.

Encouraging Visits

Parks and NNR's offer support and encouragement that can build the confidence and commitment in leaders, encouraging them to create more opportunities for visiting local wild places. The "wow" factor of a National Park and NNR can instill a sense of wonder and intrigue leading to increased use of the outdoors at a local level.

Use the range of marketing material available from the Park Authorities and other outdoor support organisations to help groups visualise and understand the great opportunities available in the Parks. Include testimonials or case study examples from those that will relate well to your group.



HOW OTHERS DID IT

SOME EXAMPLES...

- > Staff involved in The Tulloch and Prince's Trust projects (working with challenging young people), as well as teachers who have had placements with external organisations, all valued working alongside National Park staff whose skills and experience were different to their own. They picked up ideas and new skills from these staff, as well as developing a keen interest in and commitment to working in the outdoors.
- > The Highland Environmental Network established a shared continuing personal and professional development programme for staff and board members across agencies. This has developed skills, knowledge and resources and as a result has given staff, their managers and governors, confidence to undertake work in the National Parks. It has also promoted team working leading to improved and shared understanding of how best to engage and support their target groups. Relevant partnership projects have also sprung up from this initiative.
- > Capability Scotland staff at Upper Springlands are members of the Inclusive Cairngorms Forum which brings together organisations involved in supporting minority and hard to reach groups with the National Park. The knowledge and resources available from this kind of specialist voluntary organisation has benefited the work of the Forum.



- > The Langdale Youth Involvement Project took place in the Lake District, and included a primary school group and an older teenage group. The primary school group were given opportunities to explore the special qualities of the National Park and develop an understanding of the differences between urban and rural life. It included twinning the local Langdale Primary School with Medlock School in inner-city Manchester through the outdoor education centre for a joint day out. The older group project worked with local (to the Park) teenagers in the Youth Club to identify their desire to engage in more activities in the countryside and to learn mountain craft skills.
- > There are a range of organisations already out there who can help you to learn and build commitment within your organisation by offering mentoring type schemes and workshops such as Continuing Professional Development (e.g. www.realworldlearning-scotland.org.uk).



5. Schools



BARRIERS SOME QUESTIONS...

HOW CAN I FIND SPACE IN A SCHOOL TIMETABLE FOR A VISIT TO NATIONAL PARKS OR NNR'S?

I CANNOT GET MY IDEA OFF THE GROUND AS I AM SURROUNDED BY COLLEAGUES AND A SENIOR TEAM WHO DO NOT SEE THE MERIT IN LEARNING OUTDOORS. HOW DO I OVERCOME THAT?

HOW CAN I GET THROUGH THE MINEFIELD OF ADMINISTRATION NEEDED TO TAKE STUDENTS OUT OF SCHOOL TO ENGAGE IN OUTDOOR ACTIVITY?



SOLUTIONS

SOME ANSWERS...

5

The good news is that lots of schools from across the country already use Scotland's National Parks and NNR's as an outdoor learning resource.

So there is a huge wealth of experience about how to motivate reluctant teachers (and managers), as well as how to deal with the myriad of practical barriers that need to be overcome. Some of these are dealt with in the previous resource sheets (see for example the sheets on packaging the experiences, risks and building commitment).

Curriculum Links

Teachers want to know that the activity will deliver in line with the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). National Parks offer a range of activities that can be accessed by schools and support the delivery of CfE. There is a body of evidence about the kind of benefits achieved for students that justify the investment of time and resources by schools. Park Authorities, Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) and other national bodies mentioned in the Contacts section will provide information on this aspect.

Resources

Using evidence for the development and educational achievements of students can also make outdoor learning a priority. Make use of national intermediary websites that provide this, including GLOW (if you are a teacher/student) and LTS². They offer access to educational resources and packages that can be used in the National Parks, as well as ideas on how to evidence the benefits in line with CfE.

Support

Peer support for teachers, promoting positive experiences and offering the opportunity for information exchanges all help to build teacher confidence in undertaking outdoor activities; while also offering practical information for use in persuading managers of the benefits of the work.

Teachers warm to the idea of outdoor activity if they know that there is support from inside the school and from other organisations. Support is available from the Park Authorities as well as partner agencies keen to engage young people in the outdoors.

Getting your senior team on board is essential. You will not get far without their support. Persuading them about the benefits of the work is the key.

Accessing the information mentioned above will help, which can include case studies to show the excellent learning opportunities young people have had and how outdoor learning can support cross-curricular activities.

CPD

Investing in CPD programmes for teachers has been shown to make a big difference to the understanding and commitment of teachers to work in the outdoors. You and your colleagues will be more motivated, skilled, knowledgeable and confident about working in the outdoors with this kind of investment. Check out the Contacts section for information on this kind of programme.

CONTINUED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE...

SOLUTIONS (CONT.)

SOME ANSWERS...

Information

It is also helpful to display leaflets and resources in the school that support learning opportunities in National Parks and NNR's. Colleagues viewing these will have a better understanding of what it is possible to do and the associated benefits. These are available from some of the websites listed in the Contacts section.

Also, ask someone from the National Parks or NNR's to visit your school to talk to colleagues about the different learning opportunities that are available. This could be done over lunch time.

Time to Prepare and Deliver

Flexible or collapsed timetables can offer opportunities to teach outdoors and for project based work. They can also be used to prepare for visits and for work following the visit. Suggest to head teachers that they offer a collapsed timetable to enable visits to take place.

Investigate the opportunities for a field visit well in advance. This allows plenty of time to create cross-curricular activities and complete any administration required by the school (e.g. permission slips, booking transport and completing risk assessments).

Consider visiting the National Park or NNR for a familiarisation visit. Park Staff or Park Rangers services can discuss potential activities and sites. They have expert knowledge of the area.

Remember activities offered by National Park Authorities are generally free of charge so the school will only need to cover the cost of travelling to the site and potentially the cost of teaching cover in school.

² GLOW is the national schools intranet. LTS are developing an online resource to support outdoor learning to be launched in 2010.



HOW OTHERS DID IT

SOME EXAMPLES...

5

- > Cairngorms National Park Authority (CPNA) has worked successfully with Grantown Grammar School embedding the John Muir Award within the school's curriculum. One-day per week has been factored into timetables for senior 1 and senior 2 pupils, which will offer a cross-curricular outdoor education programme.
- > CNPA officers helped support the teachers and pupils to make the programme a success. The vision, commitment and engagement of the teaching staff, including notably the head teacher were crucial in the success of the programme. Teachers acted as role models and positive promoters of the programme to peers and pupils in the school.
- > The collaborative approach between Grantown Grammar School and CNPA worked well and has set a great example for other local education authorities to develop programmes of a similar nature.
- > Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park held a CPD day for Geography Teachers in partnership with Strathclyde University. Teaching packs were created, ideas for cross curricular activities were presented and site visits were incorporated into the day. Teachers could see the sites for potential school visits and Rangers were available to answer questions. This has led to follow up visits from many of the schools who sent their teachers on the course.
- > One school suspended the curriculum for S3 pupils over a week in May to carry out an environmental week. This allowed pupils to get involved in a range of activities, including some within Cairngorms National Park, that gave them great opportunities for learning as well as giving something back to their local communities.
- > A biology staff member who spent a week at The Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh raved about how much learning they got from the experience and how it brought her back enthused and re-energised for working with her classes; and following this up with visits to the National Parks to see some rare species in their natural habitat.
- > The availability and benefits of educational support material is promoted on a number of other UK National Park websites, including The Peak District and North York Moors, and is an area that is currently supported by the education lead officers group within the Association of National Park Authorities (ANPA).



» See the **Contacts and Information** section specific for schools.

