



Cairngorms National Park Plan
Progress 2010/11



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www.cairngorms.co.uk

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Front cover photo: River South Esk © David Gowans

The range of partners who helped implement the Cairngorms National Park Plan during 2010-2011.

- 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 and the Cairngorms Destination Management Organisation
- Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group
- British Geological Survey
- Cairngorms Business Partnership
- Cairngorms Campaign
- Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce
- Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group
- Cairngorms Farmers Forum
- Cairngorms Farmers Market
- Cairngorms Hostels
- Cairngorms Land Management Forum
- Cairngorms LEADER
- Cairngorms Learning Network
- Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan Project
- Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust
- 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
- Grampian Wildfire Group
- 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
- Learning and Teaching Scotland
- Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority
- Macaulay Institute
- Marr Area Partnership
- Moray Council
- National Farmers Union Scotland
- National Trust for Scotland
- Natural Research
- North East Mountain Trust
- North East Scotland Biological Records Centre
- Perth & Kinross Council
- River Spey Catchment Management Partnership
- Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland
- Royal Deeside and the Cairngorms Destination Management Organisation
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Rural Environment Action Programme
- Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society
- Scottish Country Sports Tourism Group
- Scottish Enterprise
- Scottish Environment Link
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Scottish Federation of Housing Associations
- Scottish Government Housing and Regeneration Directorate
- Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate
- Scottish Mountaineering Trust
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Rural Property and Business Association
- Scottish Water
- Speyside Wildfire Group
- SportScotland
- Sustainable Tourism Forum
- The Cairngorms National Park Advisory Forums
- The estates, farmers and other land managers in the Cairngorms National Park - in particular, Alvie & Dalraddy, Balmoral, The Crown Estate Glenlivet, Glen Feshie, Kinveachy, Lynaberack, Mar Lodge and Rothiemurchus estates, and those estates who are part of the Caenlochan Glen Section 7 Control Agreement
- The Heather Trust
- The Partnership Against Wildlife Crime
- UHI Millennium Institute
- VisitScotland
- Voluntary Action in Badenoch and Strathspey
- Wild Scotland

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Red squirrel

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.

Foreword

We are now in the final year of delivery for the current five-year Cairngorms National Park Plan, so this report for 2010/11 provides a good record of progress for the Plan as a whole. I'm pleased that we have already achieved significant progress and that around 80 per cent of our outcomes are expected to be complete with the ongoing work already in hand by 2012. This progress, across all seven of the priorities, is down to the continued enthusiasm of our partners for helping to make a success of the opportunities the National Park presents.

Some highlights for me include the 'Our Community – A Way Forward' work, the Food for Life project, the River Spey Catchment Initiative, the Cairngorms Mountain Heritage Project, and the great steps the Cairngorms Business Partnership has taken to develop a co-ordinated approach to marketing the Park. We also adopted the Cairngorms Local Plan to guide development in the Park, and I was delighted to welcome the Atholl and Glenshee areas into the National Park too.

We are now consulting on the next National Park Plan for 2012-2017. I hope some of the progress reported here will inspire you to think about the opportunities ahead. There is much good progress to report, but still some big challenges for our partners and ourselves to address in making sure this special area of Scotland truly thrives as a National Park.



David Green/Daibhidh Green
Convener/Neach-gairm

Cairngorms National Park Authority
Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh

Facal-toisich

Tha sinn a-nis sa bhliadhna mu dheireadh ann a bhith a' libhrigeadh Plana còig bliadhna Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh, mar sin tha an aithisg seo airson 2010/11 a' toirt seachad cunntas math air mar a tha am Plana a' tighinn air adhart. Tha mi toilichte gu bheil sinn mar-thà air deagh adhartas a dhèanamh agus tha dùil ann gun tèid mu 80 às a' cheud de na toraidhean againn a libhrigeadh le obair leantainneach air a ghabhail os làimh air a libhrigeadh ann an 2012. Tha an adhartas seo, thairis air seachd de na prìomhachasan uile, ri linn cho dealasach sa tha ar com-pàirtichean ann a bhith a' cuideachadh gus cothroman a tha am Pàirc Nàiseanta a' toirt seachad a shoirbhicheadh.

Cuid de na rudan as fheàrr leam, 's e 'Ar Coimhearsnachd – Dòigh air Adhart', pròiseact Biadh do Bheatha, Iomairt Sgìre-glacaidh an Uisge Spè, Pròiseact Dualchais a' Chàrn Gorm, agus an adhartas mòr a tha Com-pàirteachadh Gnìomhachasan a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh a dhèanamh ann a bhith ag obair còmhla airson na Pàirce a mhargaidheachd. Cuideachd, ghabh sinn ri Plana Ionadail a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh gus stiùireadh a thoirt air leasachadh na Pàirce, agus bha mi air mo dhòigh fàilte a chur air sgìrean Athaill agus Gleann Sìdh a bhith mar phàirt den Phàirce.

Tha sinn a-nis a' dèanamh co-chomhairleachadh air an ath Phlana Pàirce Nàiseanta airson 2012-2017. Tha mi an dòchas gun toir an adhartas a tha san aithris seo, brosnachadh dhut gus smaoineachadh mu dheidhinn na cothroman a tha roghainn. Tha tòrr adhartas math ri aithris, ach tha fhathast cuid dùbhlanan mòra roghainn fhèin agus ro ar com-pàirtichean gus a bhith cinnteach gum bi an sgìre sònraichte seo de dh'Alba a shoirbheachadh mar Phàirc Nàiseanta.

Introduction



The Cairngorms National Park Plan was developed to co-ordinate and prioritise the special management needs of the Cairngorms National Park. It 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 (CNPA) in partnership with all those groups, organisations and individuals from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors 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.

This annual 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.

The report summarises what has been achieved for each of the Park Plan's seven priorities for action in 2010/11; where we think we are in delivering the Plan's five-year outcomes; and also highlights future work and milestones. Each priority also incorporates a case study to practically illustrate the range of achievements and activities in more depth.

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.

Monitoring the progress of each priority is reported to the Cairngorms National Park Authority board every four months. These reports can be viewed on the Cairngorms National Park Authority's website (www.cairngorms.co.uk).

The seven Priorities for Action for 2007–2012 are:

- Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Landscapes
- Integrating Public Support for Land Management
- Supporting Sustainable Deer Management
- Providing High Quality Opportunities for Outdoor Access
- Making Tourism and Business More Sustainable
- Making Housing More Affordable and Sustainable
- Raising Awareness and Understanding of the Park



School children in the National Park

The Cairngorms National Park Plan and the Progress Report 2010/11

Progress in 2010/11

Although the overall picture of delivery in this progress report for 2010/11 appears similar to that shown in 2009/10, a lot of work has in fact been consolidated and built upon achievements of previous years. For the first time, we think that we have achieved some of the Park Plan's outcomes for 2012, and we have had to acknowledge that one (2 per cent) cannot be achieved by 2012.

Figure 1 shows that we think 10 per cent of the priority for action outcomes highlighted in the original plan have now been achieved. It also

shows that a further 68 per cent are expected to be achieved over the next year with the work that is already planned and committed. We are still uncertain about 20 per cent of the outcomes, but expect a number of them to be achieved over the next year. Some will take longer to achieve and may be taken forward into the next Park Plan.

Next steps

2011/2012 is the final year of delivery of the current National Park Plan. From September to December 2011,

the CNPA will consult on what the next National Park Plan, from 2012-2017, should do and how it should do it. Following the consultation, the CNPA will finalise the next Park Plan and submit it to Scottish Ministers in early 2012 for approval.

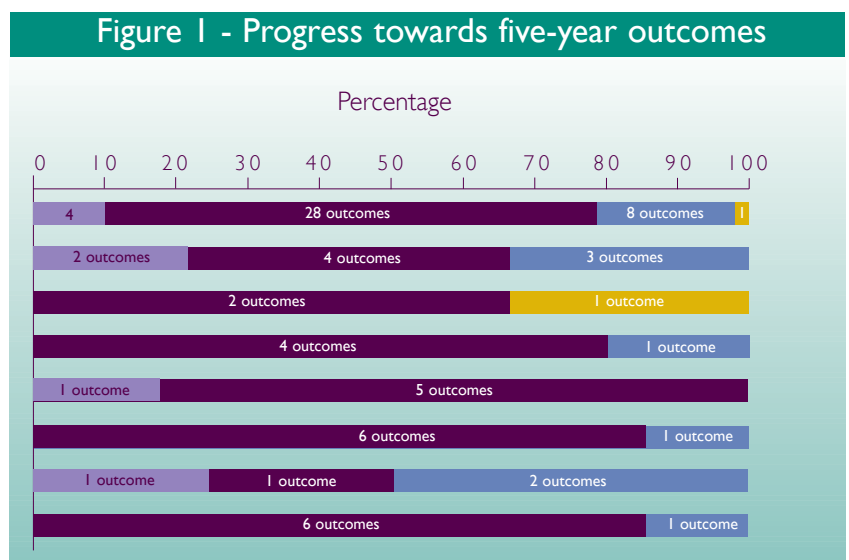
Next year's progress report on the National Park Plan will provide a final assessment of how well the five-year outcomes in each priority for action have been achieved. It will also give a much fuller picture of the achievements in the Park through the current National Park Plan's life.

- Achieved
- Should be achieved with existing work
- Needs more work but expected to be achieved
- Will not be achieved

Figure 1 - Progress towards five-year outcomes

Priorities for Action

- All National Park Plan Five-Year Outcomes
- Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Landscapes
- Integrating Public Support for Land Management
- Supporting Sustainable Deer Management
- Providing High Quality Opportunities for Outdoor Access
- Making Tourism and Business More Sustainable
- Making Housing More Affordable and Sustainable
- Raising Awareness and Understanding of the Park



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.

It is likely that the outcomes for this priority for action should be substantially achieved by 2012 with work that is programmed. The 2010 International Year of Biodiversity provided a major platform in achieving biodiversity targets in the last year.

Achievements during 2010/11

- The Cairngorms Rare Plants Project has surveyed many sites with the four target species (twinline, intermediate wintergreen, lesser butterfly orchid and small cow-wheat)
- The Cairngorms Wildcat Project worked with estates and volunteers to help identify existing wildcat populations as well as manage feral cat numbers. The Scottish wildcat and the project have received significant national media coverage through TV, radio and magazines, helping to raise public awareness of this rare animal
- The Cairngorms Big BioBuzz Day involved people in Ballater, Grantown-on-Spey and Kingussie taking part in Scotland's biggest 24 hour biodiversity recording day
- The third Strathspey wader survey was completed, giving tailored feedback to around 100 farmers and land managers about wading bird numbers and distribution on their land through the Strathspey Wetland and Waders Initiative
- The Cairngorms Cultural Heritage Conference gave communities in the Park the opportunity to make connections and share experiences, and to learn about resources available to assist them with their own cultural heritage projects
- Over 30 community cultural heritage projects were developed including the Shinty Heritage Project between Kingussie and Newtonmore shinty clubs, and cultural heritage 'Taster' days in Braemar and Ballater
- The Raptor Track project was extended to include more birds and raptor species
- The 'Views from the Road' Project that identifies the best views of the special landscapes of the Park from main roads was developed

Milestones for 2011/12

- The Cairngorms Rare Plants Project will produce site-specific management plans for places where the rare plants are found
- Development of further community heritage projects
- Ongoing development of the 'Views from the Road' project to help more people enjoy some of the best views in the Park



Woodland planting

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

Raptor Tracking Project

A partnership project in the Cairngorms National Park saw satellite tags put on several species of raptors enabling them to be followed 24 hours a day on the internet. The tags were put on two peregrine falcons, a hobby and a merlin – species that have never been satellite tagged in the UK before.

Two hen harriers, young golden eagles and ospreys were also tagged in the National Park during 2010, following earlier satellite tagging of golden eagles and ospreys. With 18 species of raptors, the Park is a very important place in global terms for these birds.

Raptor Track (www.raptortrack.org) aims to raise awareness of the movements of raptors within the National Park, as well as their travels into other parts of Scotland and further afield.

The project gathers information on the lives and movements of these individual birds, which will help with future protection and conservation efforts, including deterring wildlife crime. The information will also help the Park Authority make the right decisions and ensure these key species can be enjoyed by future generations.

The project involves Roy Dennis of the Highland Foundation for Wildlife, the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Scottish Natural Heritage, Natural Research and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds as well as local land managers across the National Park. Additional funding came from the Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan and the Partnership Against Wildlife Crime.

Roy Dennis explains: "Tracking by state-of-the-art satellite transmitters adds enormously to our knowledge of raptors gained from field study and ringing.

"We can follow them as individuals and understand much more about their daily lives and the problems they face. Using the web is an exciting way for people to learn about and enjoy the raptors of the Cairngorms National Park."



Satellite tagged chick

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, clearly linked to the tangible delivery of public benefits, and is more closely linked to the needs and priorities of the Park.

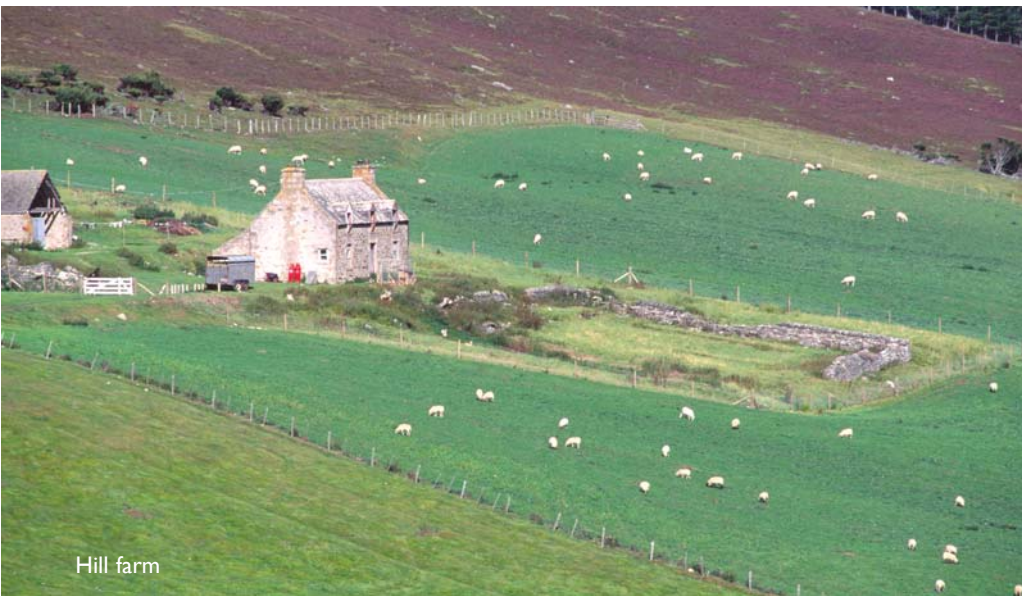
It is now acknowledged that the outcome about the way the Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP) support is co-ordinated and targeted in the Park will not be achieved by 2012. It has been agreed to focus efforts on improving the next programme of SRDP support from 2013 and beyond. In the meantime individual and collaborative SRDP applications will continue to be targeted to deliver Park Plan priorities as much as possible.

Achievements during 2010/11

- Successful implementation of the woodfuel action plan
- A biomass development officer has been appointed to increase the use of woodfuel as a heat and energy source in the Park, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City
- Continued operation and support for the Cairngorms Farmers Forum which engages with land management communities to enable collaborative working
- Establishment of a Cairngorms Land Management Forum
- Continued training and support for land based businesses through the delivery of 300 courses
- Increased use of the Low Carbon Cairngorms website and registration by woodfuel businesses who supply fuel, and supply and maintain heating systems
- Approval of around £3m was made for land management and public benefits under the SRDP, including extensive areas of native woodland expansion
- Catchment management groups are now in place for three of the Park's major rivers
- The River Dee Catchment Management Partnership has developed the Upper Dee Riparian Scheme that hopes to plant riparian woodland in order to adapt to future increases in water temperature and to help flood management
- Continued operation of the Grampian Wildfire Group and the re-establishment of the Speyside Wildfire Group
- Recruitment of a project officer for the River Spey Catchment Initiative

Milestones for 2011/12

- Continued implementation of the woodfuel action plan
- Continued operation and support for the Cairngorms Farmers Forum and Cairngorms Land Management Forum
- Continued training and support for land based businesses
- Development of projects by the River Spey Catchment Management Partnership



Hill farm

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

The River Spey Catchment Initiative

The River Spey Catchment Initiative is a new project that helps enhance, protect and understand the River Spey and its catchment that covers a vast area of about 3,000km² – two thirds of this is in the Cairngorms National Park.

The initiative hopes to copy and build on the successes of other catchment management partnerships in the Park such as those covering the River Dee and the River South Esk.

Catchment management planning brings land managers, agencies, and communities who manage, effect, and are affected by rivers, streams and open waters in a river system together to effectively manage these important resources.

From burns and rivers coming from the Cairngorm and Monadhliath mountains, to the Spey itself, the catchment holds many of the Park's outstanding landscapes, species and habitats, and is home to around 12,500 Park inhabitants.

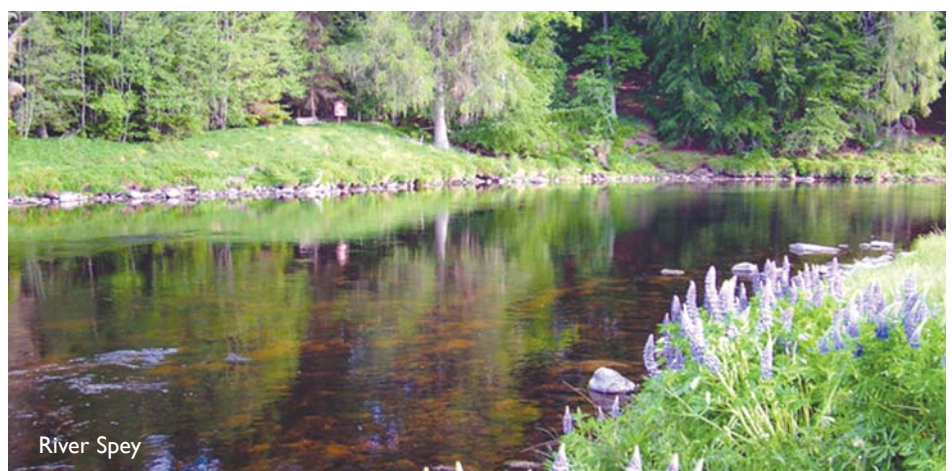
Thanks to LEADER, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Forestry Commission funding, the initiative has appointed Christine Skene as project officer until October 2012. She has already brought together many of the key people and organisations in three themed working groups. These include:

- a woodlands and wetlands group;
- a natural flood management group; and
- the natural catchment processes group.

More work is planned around a wider education and awareness-raising theme.

Christine says: "The key to the initiative is looking at the catchment as a whole and understanding how the entire river system functions.

"For example, riparian (river) habitats will have more value if they form networks through the catchment; natural flood management techniques in the upper catchment could help flood risk further downstream; and water abstraction in one section of the catchment can have an impact elsewhere."



River Spey

Supporting Sustainable Deer Management



Roe deer

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.

The continued operation of the Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group (CDAG) has been fundamental in supporting good communication and understanding between deer managers, agencies, the public, community interests and NGOs. The development of the Cairngorms Deer Framework in 2010 is the culmination of a major piece of work by CDAG that will have positive impacts on the deer resource for many years to come.

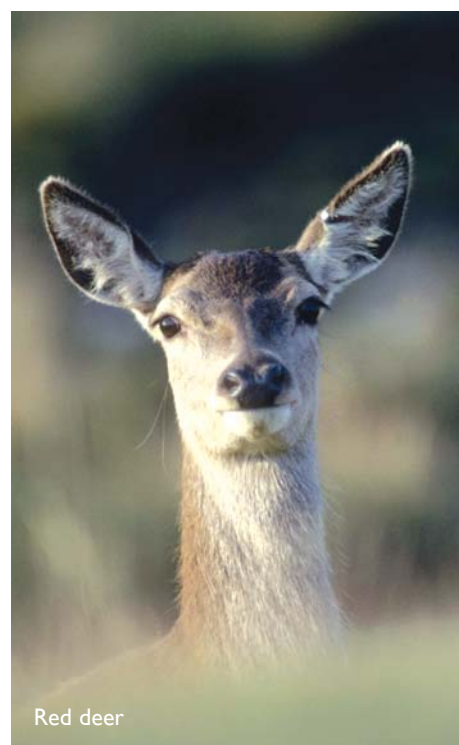
Four of the five 5-year outcomes are considered achievable by 2012. The other – helping a wider range of people enjoy deer stalking – is considered to need more work, although the Scotland-wide Scottish Country Sports Tourism Group is taking forward a number of initiatives to increase the accessibility of deer stalking.

Achievements during 2010/11

- Completion of the Cairngorms Deer Framework through continued support of the Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group (CDAG)
- Continued progress made on 'Joint Agency Working' on designated sites with the aim of ensuring their management brings them into or keeps them in 'favourable condition'
- Piloting ways of mapping deer managers' aspirations in the Cairngorms Speyside Deer Management Group area
- Support for training towards a deer stalking certificate to encourage a wider range of people to participate in deer stalking
- Development of venison as a local food product through the 'Food for Life' initiative
- A 'Celebrating Cairngorms Venison Day' was held at Glen Tanar to inspire cooks, chefs and those working in the catering industry in and around the National Park to use Cairngorms venison more

Milestones for 2011/12

- Delivery of the Cairngorms Deer Framework
- Extension of the work to map deer manager's aspirations across the National Park



Red deer



Red deer

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

Cairngorms Deer Framework

The Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group (CDAG) finalised and approved a deer framework during 2010/11 that provides a link between national deer policy and local deer management.

CDAG exists to promote better communication and understanding between all organisations with an interest in deer and their management in the Park, and has been instrumental in assisting the Cairngorms National Park Authority to draft the framework.

The document which provides a locally based and locally led focus for delivering national policy sets out a number of forward looking principles for working with deer in the Park. It will help underline the key influence that deer has on the Park's habitats as well as the important role that deer have on the Park's economy.

Senior land management officer with the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Will Boyd-Wallis explained: "The new deer framework has been successful at bringing together the views of local deer managers and the local community in a national context.

"Building on these positive foundations, cohesion and understanding of those with an interest in deer will hopefully develop further, ensuring the Park's deer resource and special environment are sustained for the benefit of future generations."

The deer framework also aims to:

- promote protection of the deer population and the habitat upon which they depend;
- promote wider involvement in the management of deer;
- promote the value of deer as a management tool for maintaining a high quality environment;
- promote the value of deer/sporting related tourism; and
- promote deer welfare and the marketing of venison.



Deer mapping

Providing High Quality Opportunities for Outdoor Access



Young walkers

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.

This priority for action has six 5-year outcomes, all of which are considered likely to have been substantially achieved by 2012. This priority for action is closely linked to the development and management of the core paths plan for the National Park and implementation of associated access legislation.

Work will continue during 2011/12 to further improve path networks in the National Park and ensure effective countryside access management. The health walks initiative will continue to grow.

Achievements during 2010/11

- Seven new community paths have been completed in Insh, Dulnain Bridge, Ballater, Strathdon, Cambus o May, Dinnet and Boat of Garten
- The Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust undertook the groundwork for the Cairngorms Mountain Heritage Project, utilising £2.1m of partner funding to repair 94km of eroded paths in the mountains over the next four years
- Eight trainee path workers will take part in a full-time training course in upland and lowland path skills within the Cairngorms National Park. Trainees will work towards a level 2 Scottish Vocational Qualification in Environmental Conservation
- Promoting messages about responsible dog ownership was furthered including the establishment of a Green Dog Walkers scheme in Grantown-on-Spey
- New community path leaflets have been completed for Nethy Bridge, Boat of Garten, Kingussie, Ballater and Carr-Bridge.
- 10 communities in the National Park now have health walk groups operating and participation levels have nearly doubled in the last two years

Milestones for 2011/12

- Ongoing implementation of the Cairngorms Mountain Heritage Project
- Improvements to more community path networks
- Further growth of health walk groups



Winter walkers



Glenshee

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

Cairngorms Mountain Heritage Project

During 2010, the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) embarked on a four year partnership project to improve 94km of upland paths in the Cairngorms National Park. COAT is a multi-funded, innovative environmental charity that has been created to promote sustainable access to the Cairngorms National Park.

Improvements to 17 of the Park's upland paths, with some routes dating as far back as the Middle Ages, when they were used as droving tracks moving cattle from Aberdeen to the West of Scotland, are set to gain from the investment of £2.1m.

Funding for the project has come from a range of partners including the Heritage Lottery Fund, European Regional Development Fund, Scottish Natural Heritage, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, RSPB and the Scottish Mountaineering Trust.

Manager at the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust, Dougie Baird commented: "The Cairngorms Mountain Heritage Project will allow us to make a huge difference to the Cairngorm mountains. It is great that so many people come and enjoy our mountains, but it is really important that they also understand that this can create damage, through path erosion. This needs to be managed so that people can experience a pristine mountain environment now, and for future generations.

"The project will deliver important conservation work, create employment and involve people in

the care of some of Scotland's most valuable heritage assets."

The project has seen the creation of three new jobs at COAT to ensure it stands the best chance of success. Up to 20 FTE jobs in specialist contract teams engaged on the project will also be protected. Furthermore, eight traineeships in conservation will help bring important skills to the area and schools, volunteers and communities will get a better chance to understand the natural heritage on their doorstep through a range of interpretation projects.



Hill walkers on path

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. The Park's special qualities provide an increasing basis for economic activity and business use of the Cairngorms National Park brand improves commercial advantage and quality standards.

The creation of a marketing framework by The Cairngorms Business Partnership during 2010/11 will be rolled out during 2011. This will have several positive impacts including ensuring a more even distribution of visitor numbers throughout the year. A food and drink action plan for the Park will also be taken forward through the 'Food for Life' Project.

Achievements during 2010/11

- A review of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy was carried out by the Sustainable Tourism Forum
- The Visit Cairngorms website www.visitcairngorms.com was launched by the Cairngorms Business Partnership
- The Cairngorms Business Partnership launched the world's first National Park iPhone app that provides free, up to date information on what to see, do, and where to stay in the National Park
- The Cairngorms 'business barometer' continued to develop and now covers the whole National Park
- A marketing framework and business plan was developed by the Cairngorms Business Partnership
- The Adventure Travel Trade Association's Adventure Travel World Summit was held in Aviemore
- The Cairngorms 'Food for Life' Project was developed and included the approval of LEADER funding to ensure its successful delivery; the appointment of a

development officer; the production of a visitor food guide and chef's food guide; and research to produce a comprehensive food and drink audit

- 49 projects were approved by the Cairngorms Local Action Group under the European LEADER programme

Milestones for 2011/12

- The delivery of the Cairngorms Marketing Framework and roll out of marketing campaigns
- Continued implementation of the Food and Drink Action Plan under 'Food for Life' with particular focus on schools and communities





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

Marketing the Park

Supported and funded by several public and private sector partners, the Cairngorms Business Partnership (CBP) – a not for profit, member based, private sector organisation – has developed a marketing plan for the Cairngorms National Park and is now taking the lead in its delivery.

The marketing plan aims to bring new visitors to the area as well as encouraging existing visitors to return. It identifies who to market to, what messages to send and how to send them.

It will raise the profile of the Cairngorms National Park by using a variety of both traditional marketing techniques and new technologies. The plan has four key objectives for the National Park:

- to grow the value of tourism;
- to ensure visitor expectations and needs are fully understood and addressed;
- to strengthen awareness and understanding of its special qualities; and
- to recognise and promote the individual qualities of its different areas.

Producing a strong brand for the area is vital in delivering these objectives and a strap-line has been developed to accompany the brand in all marketing communications. The 'Make it Yours' strap-line is the 'call to action' to engage people with the brand and connect them with the area. It is designed to work on many levels – whether marketing the area for its castles and gardens or for its high adrenaline outdoor sports.

'Make it Yours' has already started to appear on new visitor leaflets and guides about the National Park and will be central to any marketing campaigns, featuring on the visitor website, in adverts, social media, publications, displays and the like.

Alan Rankin, chief executive of the CBP said: "We are excited to be delivering the first ever marketing plan for the Cairngorms National Park.

"The campaign provides a massive opportunity to put the Park on the map and to raise awareness of this special place as a world class destination."



National Park iPhone app

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.

Although current economic conditions are still providing widespread social and economic challenges, there is a programme of housing investment in the pipeline subject to planning permission and funds being available.

Partners therefore will work together closely to realise the value of this investment within the Park. The newly approved Local Plan will help maximise the level of affordable housing being achieved.



Achievements during 2010/11

- The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan was adopted
- Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Sustainable Design and Affordable Housing was adopted
- A Development Appraisal Toolkit was published with the Affordable Housing Guidance to help identify the amount of affordable housing that should be part of housing developments
- An apprentice training scheme to help young local people train in the construction industry was developed
- There was continued roll out of the 'Our Community – A Way Forward' initiative throughout communities of the Park
- All communities in the Park prepared 'Visions' for the future to help them plan for their longer term needs. These visions are informing the work of agencies in the Park and will help communities develop even more effective plans in the future
- Four Community Planning Awareness Sessions were held to help communities find out more about the planning system and how they can effectively be involved in it
- Under the CNPA's Planning Service Improvement Plan, two planning forums were held in Aviemore and Ballater to ask customers of the planning service what they think could improve it

Milestones for 2011/12

- The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan to be used to maximise the level of affordable housing being achieved in consented housing developments
- Partners will continue to work together to identify new, affordable housing opportunities



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

Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance

The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan – the first Local Plan for a Scottish National Park – was adopted during 2010. It sets out detailed planning policies to guide development in the Park over the coming years.

The Plan replaced those covering the four original local authority areas within the Park – Aberdeenshire, Angus, Highland and Moray. The newly included Perth and Kinross part of the Park will be included in the subsequent Local Development Plan.

Following adoption of the Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance was also adopted, including a Sustainable Design Guide and Affordable Housing Guidance.

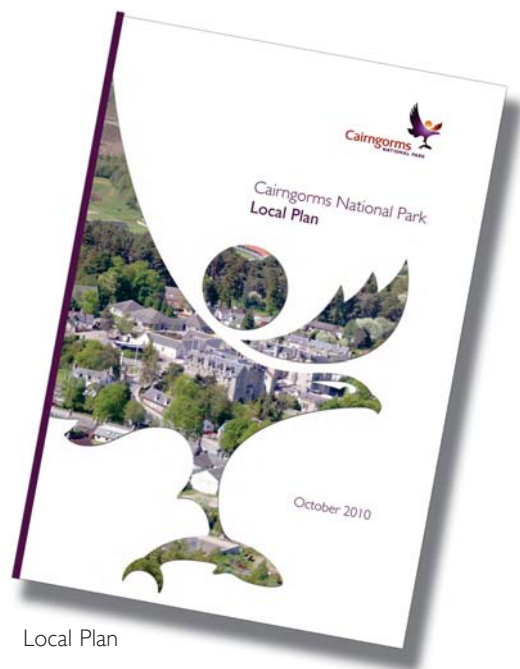
The adoption of all these planning documents is a significant step to delivering the four aims of the Park. They mean that for the first time since the Park was established, most of it is covered by a consistent set of planning policies that have been tailored to the needs of the National Park.

The Sustainable Design Guide sets out how careful planning and good design can make energy efficient, sustainable and attractive homes that add to the special qualities of the Park.

The Affordable Housing Guidance on the other hand expands on the Local Plan policy that requires up to 40 per cent of houses in new developments to be affordable. The guidance explains more about why it is required; what affordable housing is for different people; and how the amount required will be calculated on individual housing developments.

CNPA Planning Committee Convener Duncan Bryden said: “We were delighted to be able to say that we now have our own Local Plan – the first for a Scottish National Park.

“The journey to get there began in 2004. Although it was long and not always straightforward, we listened to what people said and as a result feel we have a Local Plan which aims to achieve a consensus between people's needs for housing, recreation, economic development and the special environment of the Park.”



Local Plan

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.

An outcome relating to the opportunities for people to be involved in practical caring for the Park and its special qualities continues to require extra work. Further work on adding value to existing initiatives and publicising opportunities more within the Park is required to deliver that outcome.

However, there has been recent progress in this priority thanks to the monitoring of volunteering activity, the Cairngorms Learning Network and growth of the Junior Rangers programme amongst others.

Achievements during 2010/11

- The 'Economic and Social Health of the Park' report and information was promoted as well as the completion of the second Cairngorms Visitor Survey
- The installation of boundary markers on the extended Highland Perthshire boundary of the Park was completed
- Visitor Information Centres at Crathie and Tomintoul, and ranger bases at Blair Atholl and Glen Tanar were refurbished
- Global promotion of the Park following the Adventure Travel World Summit in Aviemore and National Geographic magazine's listing of the Park as one of the top twenty worldwide places to visit in 2011
- The 10,000th John Muir Award in the Park was awarded
- National Parks became increasingly embedded within the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence
- The Cairngorms Learning Zone education website was launched
- A knowledge exchange event for researchers and practitioners in the Park was organised by the Centre for Mountain Studies UHI
- A support network for the voluntary and community sector has been established across the Park. Several partners are involved who provide advice and support to community and voluntary groups and play an important role in local Community Planning Partnerships

Milestones for 2011/12

- Agreement on a three-year policy and support for ranger services in the Park
- Completion of refurbishment and upgrading works to ranger bases and Visitor Information Centres, and of interpretation at Park entry points





Children at Abernethy Trust

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

National Parks Outdoor Learning Conference

The first National Parks Outdoor Learning Conference in 2010 saw around 80 delegates from local authorities and schools come together in Balloch in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park.

The conference was delivered as part of the Joint National Parks and Curriculum for Excellence project which aims to promote both the Cairngorms and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Parks as unique and accessible destinations for outdoor learning, and highlights the need to share good practice across local authority outdoor learning networks.

The event showcased the best examples of outdoor learning in Scotland's National Parks, highlighting how pupils across Scotland can explore, experience and be inspired by the special qualities of the National Parks.

During the conference, delegates from across the two National Park areas attended a series of workshops and left with an increased awareness of the accessibility of outdoor learning programmes in National Parks and the value of outdoor learning in supporting the Curriculum for Excellence.

Brian Wood from the board of the Cairngorms National Park Authority is a former head teacher who is enthusiastic about outdoor learning in National Parks.

He said: "Our National Parks provide the ideal setting for children to learn about nature and wildlife, our culture and the environment.

"We have great confidence in the advantages to both the children and our Parks that the Curriculum for Excellence offers and this is why we're so committed to it.

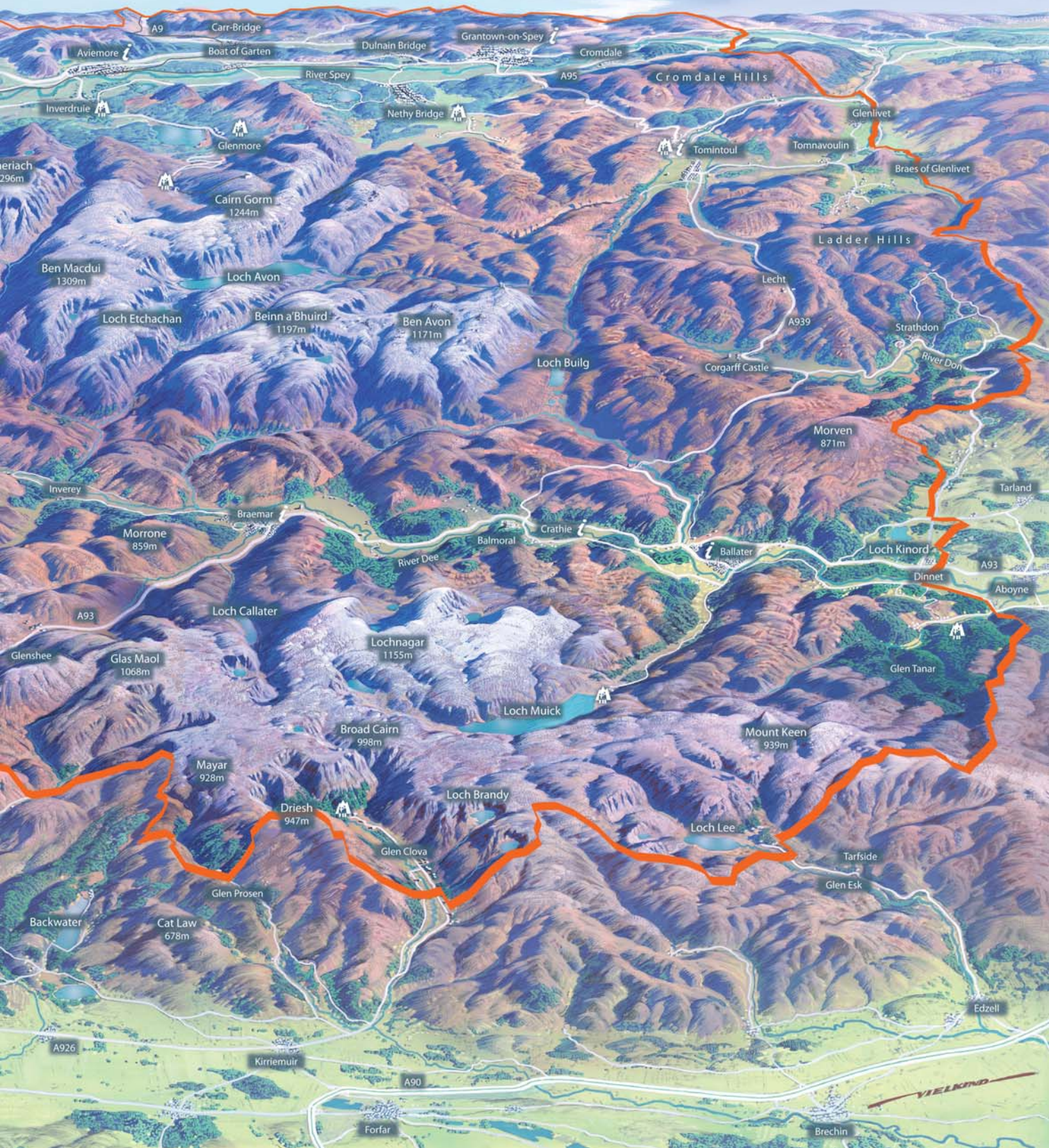
"It's so important that our children learn how vital these areas are so they can be protected and enjoyed by generations to come."



Learning in the National Park



This panorama is one of several views of the Cairngorms National Park commissioned by the CNPA. It is from the southern boundary of the Park, looking north.





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