Stepping up for Scotland’s National Parks

With some of the most impressive landscapes, historic towns and unique wildlife, it’s no wonder that the Cairngorms National Park plays host to over 1.8m visitors each year. But huge numbers of visitors and the Scottish weather takes its toll in the form of mountain path erosion and the destruction of nearby habitats.

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The algae habitats of the Cairngorms are world renowned but fragile and have a very short annual growing season meaning repair of erosion can take generations.

The Mountains & The People Project is a unique charity-led partnership project, which aims to involve the people of Scotland, and beyond, in the enhancement, protection of the wild and special qualities of the mountains within Scotland’s National Parks.

The Trust was formed in 1998, originally known as the Upper Deeside Access Trust and then as the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust. In 2017 the name changed to Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland which reflects our success in delivering projects such as The Mountains and The People across both of Scotland’s National Parks and surrounding area.

The project will deliver a wide range of projects and schemes and, as providing opportunities for people to get involved in conserving and learning about the mountains.

The activities will focus on:

- Respecting the natural heritage of our mountain landscapes.
- Reskilling the conservation workforce of tomorrow.
- Responding to the conservation needs of our fragile landscapes.
- Providing an active role in conserving these landscapes then get in touch to find out more about:
  - Conservation Volunteering
  - Adopt a Path
  - Path Skills Training

Play your Part

When visiting the Cairngorms and experiencing the wonders made accessible through the network of footpaths you can play your part in protecting the landscape by keeping to the path to help minimise erosion in fragile areas. Please refer to the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Get hands on

If you or someone you know wants to play a more active role in conserving these landscapes then get in touch to find out more about:

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The Mountains & The People

www.cairngorms.co.uk
The Cairngorms National Park

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The Cairngorms National Park
We will only achieve our Vision if we work together.

Our Vision for the Cairngorms National Park is “an outstanding natural and cultural heritage that needs special management. At 4528 sq km, it is the largest National Park in Britain with about half of the area designated for nature conservation. Some 18,000 people live in the area and it is owned and managed by many different people including businesses, estate owners, farmers, charities, public bodies, groups and individuals from local communities.

Our Vision for the Cairngorms National Park is “An outstanding National Park, enjoyed and valued by everyone, where nature and people thrive together”.

We will only achieve our Vision if we work together.

The Cairngorms National Park

The Cairngorms National Park covers an area with a distinct geography featuring very mountainous terrain and long river systems. Its landscape has acted as a significant constraint to people travelling through the area and has prevented free movement, penetrating far into the Cairngorms National Park, making it particularly rich in long-distance historic paths and roads.

These routes include the Lairg an Laoigh (route 207), the Mingiey (203) in the west, and Ladder Road (189) in the east. The Cairngorms National Park is also the Access Authority with specific responsibilities to:

• Promote responsible access
• Uphold access rights

As well as hill tracks, there are also 1000kms of waymarked paths close to towns and villages that allow you to explore the area. Look out for the 17 community footpaths leaflets as well as two easy access guides; one in Badenoch and Strathspey and one in Deeside.

All of these leaflets are available at various outlets including visitor information centres around the Park. You can also find leaflets close to towns and villages, on the website above to find out how you can help.

In 1947 ScotWays published the first edition of Scottish Hill Tracks, a guide to hill paths, old roads and rights of way throughout Scotland including the Cairngorms. The route numbers in the latest edition correspond to the old routes used for a specific purpose and include Roman roads, medieval roads, coffin, kirk and pilgrimage routes, drove roads, trade routes, and military roads.

The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (ScotWays) is a charity dependent on voluntary support. It was formed in 1885 and has its primary objectives: “the preservation, defence, restoration and enhancement of the public benefits of rights of access including public right of way, and their amenity.”

It is believed to be one of the world’s oldest access bodies, and its legislation was made in the 19th century and remains some public battles against major landowners. Some of the key victories were in Glen Tilt (route 202) and Jack’s Rake Track (route 201), where the case went to the House of Lords.

In the later 19th century the Society introduced green signs, warning people throughout the Park. At the beginning of the Lairg Ghlin (route 204), Lairg an Laoigh (route 207), Lewis Path (route 205) and Tromie (route 203).

Nowadays, ScotWays achieves much by negotiation and mediation rather than confrontation but is still recognised for its expertise on legal issues. ScotWays also maintains the National Catalogue of Rights of Way (CROWN) and responds to over a thousand access issues annually.

Heritage Paths are classified as old routes used for a specific purpose and include Roman roads, medieval roads, coffin, kirk and pilgrimage routes, drove roads, trade routes, and military roads.

The project’s aim is to identify as many old paths across Scotland as possible, to research these old paths in order to encourage more people to use them and learn about them, hopefully helping to ensure that the cultural heritage value of these paths is not lost. The main objectives to secure the long-term care of this aspect of our heritage and to raise awareness of its cultural importance.

The Heritage Paths Project

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There is also the Place Names leaflet which gives an introduction to the linguistic heritage of the Park.

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The Heritage Paths Project is run by the Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society and has been researching historic paths throughout Scotland since 2007.

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The Heritage Paths Project
Hill Tracks in the Cairngorms National Park

This map shows the main walking routes over hill passes in the Cairngorms National Park. It is not suitable for detailed route finding so please use a more detailed map for navigation. It is intended to assist route planning.

The routes shown on the map are numbered and these numbers correspond to the routes featured in the book, Scottish Hill Tracks, ISBN 978-1-907233-16-6. This gives distances, grid references and a description for each route.

Remember these routes are not waymarked; use a more detailed map – at a scale of 1:50,000 or larger – and a compass for navigation. Some of them are signed and follow the lines of existing paths – but others are not even shown on large-scale maps.

There are few bridges in the core mountain area and at times river crossings will be difficult and potentially dangerous.

Remember to respect the livelihoods of those who make a living in these hills – be they shepherds, stalkers or foresters – and care for the environment. Much of the area has been designated as of European importance for animals, birds, flora and geology and should be respected as such.

Please take your litter home and respect the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot

Before you set out:

- Study a map and the route description to make sure that the proposed route is suitable for the fitness and the competence of your party.
- Get a weather forecast.
- Make sure you are properly equipped with a compass, map, footwear, clothing and food appropriate for the time of year (it can snow even in June).
- Make sure that someone else knows where you are going and when you expect to arrive.
- Plan accordingly and err on the side of caution in estimating times. In much of the terrain it is unrealistic to expect to cover more than 3-4km per hour and in poor weather possibly less even for a fit party.

WARNING

Many of the routes cross high remote country far from human habitation and lives have been lost on them at all times of the year. Routes 185, 188, 202-207, 211 and 216 are particularly demanding.

Enjoy Scotland’s outdoors responsibly

- take responsibility for your own actions
- respect the interests of other people
- care for the environment.

www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot

MAP NOT SUITABLE FOR DETAILED ROUTE FINDING