



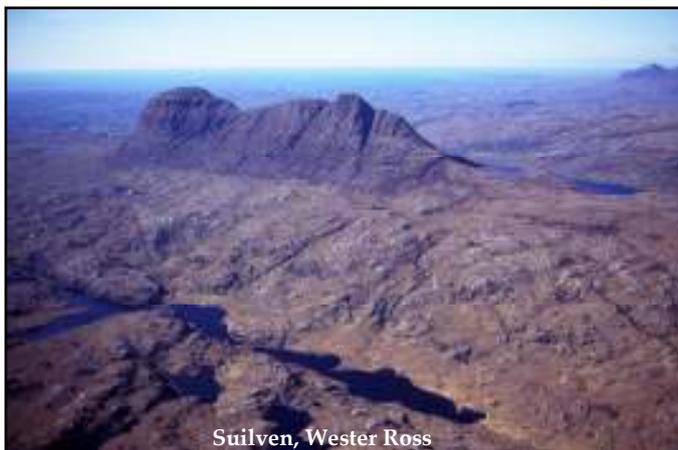
# A National Parks Strategy for Scotland



A three-year project to promote a National Parks Strategy for Scotland has been launched by a partnership between the Scottish Campaign for National Parks (SCNP) and the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland (APRS). The aim of the project is to promote a strategy for developing a comprehensive network of National Parks across Scotland. The aspiration is that this could result in at least three new National Parks being designated by 2015, including Scotland's first coastal and marine National Park.

## Background

Scotland's landscapes rank amongst the best in the world, including wild mountains, pristine rivers and lochs, ancient forests, stunning coastline and islands, all rich in wildlife and history. However, Scotland has been relatively slow to realise the potential of National Park designation. The National Parks (Scotland) Act was only passed in 2000 and only two National Parks have been designated so far: Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park in 2002 and Cairngorms National Park in 2003. An extensive consultation exercise into the possibility of establishing one or more coastal and marine National Parks, carried out by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Scottish Executive in 2006-2007, has so far not led to any firm proposals.



Suilven, Wester Ross

There appears to be a lack of political will towards the further development of National Parks in Scotland; certainly the Scottish Government has no overall strategy in this regard. However, SCNP and APRS consider that there are further areas of outstanding importance for landscape and recreation in Scotland that are worthy of NP designation, and that this would best be done in the context of an overall agreed national strategy. We believe that it is well worth planning now for such an important long-term priority, despite the tight control of public finances likely over the next few years.

## Project Outline

The joint project consists of the following elements:

- Research the benefits brought by the two existing National Parks, including to landscape conservation, business development and local community aspiration
- Raise public awareness of these benefits and of the other issues concerned
- Engage with local communities in potential National Park areas and national communities of interest
- Consult relevant people in the Scottish Government, SNH and other agencies, non-governmental organisations and local Councils
- Establish criteria for selecting the most appropriate areas for designation
- Prepare a draft strategy including proposing priority areas for designation and promote it to all concerned

## What are National Parks?

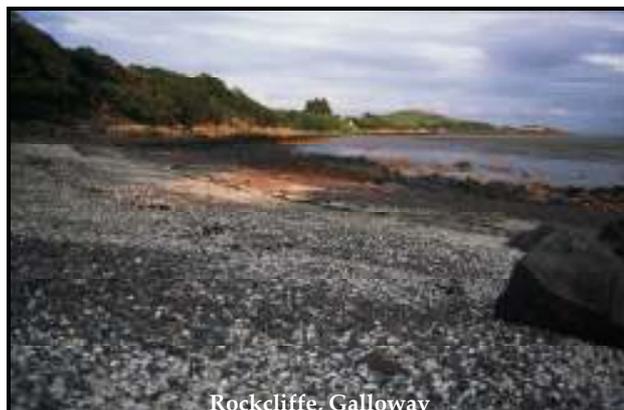
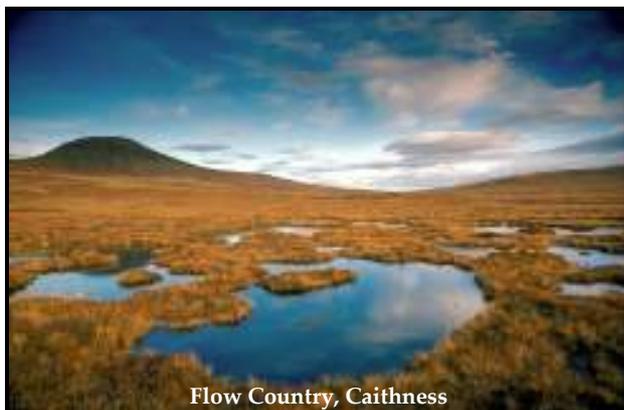
'National Park' is the leading internationally-recognised designation for places of the highest national importance for natural or cultural heritage, including landscape, wildlife and recreation. Across the world, National Park

status is recognised as the highest accolade which can be given to a place. There are about 7,000 NPs worldwide, including such well-known places as Jotunheimen in Norway, Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, the Galapagos in Ecuador, Cradle Mountain in Tasmania, the Karakoram in Pakistan and Yosemite in the USA. National Parks often bring visitors to remote areas, benefit farming and fishing interests and generate new commercial and marketing opportunities. National Parks normally benefit from additional national funding and from an agreed plan which encourages the positive integrated management of competing pressures, including tourism, transport, energy, agriculture, forestry and fishing, aiming to safeguard the area's special qualities for future generations.

In Scotland, a National Park can be designated for an area of outstanding national importance for its natural and cultural heritage which has a distinctive character and coherent identity, where this would be the best means of ensuring that National Park aims are collectively achieved in relation to the area in a co-ordinated way. National Park aims in Scotland are to:

- conserve and enhance natural and cultural heritage
- promote sustainable use of natural resources
- promote public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area
- promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities

If there is a conflict between the first of these aims and the others, the National Park Authority must give greater weight to the first aim.



### Further information

The project is initially being managed by John Mayhew, who is also part-time Director of APRS – please contact him on [scnp-aprs@btconnect.com](mailto:scnp-aprs@btconnect.com) or 0131 225 7012. Subject to funding, it is hoped to expand this work to a full-time basis. Donations towards this project are most welcome and should be sent to SCNP.

APRS promotes the care of **all** of Scotland's rural landscapes. APRS is a registered Scottish charity, No: SC016139. SCNP promotes the protection, enhancement and enjoyment of National Parks, potential National Parks and other nationally outstanding areas worthy of special protection. SCNP is a registered Scottish charity, No: SC031008.