

**SCOTTISH COUNCIL FOR
NATIONAL PARKS
IUCN
NEWSLETTER
AUTUMN 2004**

Following the questionnaire to members, we have decided to go ahead with next year's AGM on a Saturday. Whilst the support for the idea was greater than any reservation, it couldn't be described as statistically significant! However, there were others who expressed no particular preference and said they would do either Friday or Saturday, so we have decided to experiment in the hope of encouraging those who cannot get off work, to join us.

Please make a note now:

**AGM: Saturday, 16 April 2005.
10.30am at
Stirling Baptists Church
(availability to be confirmed)**

Details of speakers etc., will be settled and notified as soon as possible.

Facelift.

With this newsletter is enclosed a leaflet which we are using to encourage new members and friends to join us. It is the first document to test our new house style. We hope you like it.

The brief to Stonecircle Design was:

- * to provide a house style that could be used for all our publications, stationery, web page etc., and be capable of registering with people at a variety of scales;*
- * acknowledging that we only have two NPs at present, to consider symbols that could be reminiscent of mountains, water, rivers, coast, countryside/nature and consider colours which told people that we are a "green" organisation;*
- * to try for something that would be timeless rather than trendy;*
- * to look at options using our initials, our full title or possibly both.*

Please use the leaflet to try and sign up a friend - we need as many people as possible to get involved.

Yours
Robert Maund - Chairman

Meeting the Minister.

Our meeting with the Minister responsible for National Parks, Allan Wilson, was put back from 10 August to 30 August and we met in Glasgow.

Just to remind you, we had asked to discuss four matters:

- 1. The need for a strategy for future National Parks in Scotland;*
 - 2. The future of National Scenic Areas in relation to a NP Strategy;*
 - 3. Ministers approach to marine/coastal National Parks;*
- and last but not least,*
- 4. The possibility of some core funding for SCNP as happens with CNP south of the border.*

Mr Wilson was generous with his time (we had about an hour and a quarter) for which we were grateful. For his own part, he had no quarrel with the arguments we had put in our paper on the need for a strategy for future National Parks and he was very open and frank about the problems of taking the National Park issue forward at a time when there was not a unified view within Labour MSPs or the ruling coalition.

It looks as though some work has now started on resolving the issue of NSAs and their relationship to National Parks and we hope to set up a meeting with the National Parks unit within the Executive before the end of the year where we should learn more about the approach that they hope to adopt.

It was apparent that Mr Wilson's personal preference was to see the next National Park being a marine/coastal one although the reasons for this were not immediately apparent to us. Any such proposal had to be seen in the context of the UK wide consultation on the Marine Environment. The civil servants present stressed the complications inherent in the recent UK consultation on a topic over which responsibility was divided between the Westminster and Scottish Parliaments.

Finally, we were left with the impression that Mr Wilson was not unsympathetic to our request for some financial assistance and the

matter is now to be pursued with the officials where we will be seeking a format that can fit in with current funding regimes!

At the end of our discussion, we were very pleased at the Minister's willingness to meet us on an annual basis. We are very keen to make a constructive contribution to the National Park scene in Scotland. To understand his perspective on matters at a point in time and to be able to offer views would, we believe, be beneficial all round.

Since our meeting, there has been a cabinet reshuffle and the Minister responsible is now Lewis Macdonald MSP. We have written to Mr Macdonald to congratulate him on his appointment and to seek a similar working arrangement to that agreed with Mr Wilson.

Cairngorms National Park.

During September, we had two meetings on the Cairngorms, one with Andrew Thin, the Chairman and the other with Jane Hope, Chief Executive. Andrew Thin came to Stirling and spent two hours with us talking about the approach to setting up their staff team, the progress that is being made on developing policy and their strong wish to work with and through the local communities in seeking the best way forward.

Two of our Executive went to Grantown-on-Spey to meet with Jane Hope at the Park headquarters. We had a very useful discussion and will now meet with Ms Hope and other colleagues as necessary twice a year. We have also been accepted as formal consultees in relation to development control and policy issues.

We are still seeking Members or Friends living in the Cairngorms or close by willing to monitor what is afoot in the area and keep our Executive informed. Any likely names, anyone?

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs NP.

The National Park Plan was due to go out to consultation in January and it is clearly very important that as many people as possible read it and make a response. This means not only local people because they are directly affected but all those with a concern for Scotland's best loved and sensitive environmental areas and reflecting the wider national interest.

Members of our Executive met with Bill

Dalrymple, Chief Executive on 22 October at one of our regular meetings but timed to have an opportunity to hear about the Plan as well as discussing other current issues. Unfortunately, the Park Plan has slipped again and it is now anticipated that it will be available for a 12 week consultation period starting in mid-March.

The control of float planes discussed in earlier Newsletters seems to have become increasingly complex. However, the preparation of a byelaw to exert control is underway and the CAA now appear to have accepted that there is an issue to be addressed and are issuing a consultation paper. In the meantime however, there now appear to be three different float planes at different points on the Loch.

SCNP Executive

Since the Summer 2004 Newsletter, the Executive has met on three occasions, 21 July, 14 August and 9 September. A special meeting was held on 20 September when Andrew Thin, Chairman of Cairngorms National Park Authority addressed us and joined a useful question and answer session. A further Executive is set for 28 October.

Formal responses have been sent to three more consultations, all of which will be available on our web site as follows:

Making Development Plans Deliver;
Rights of Appeal in Planning;
Taking it on : developing UK sustainable strategy together;
CNPA: Interim Planning Policy 2: Radio Telecommunications;
CNPA: Interim Planning Policy 3: Vehicle Hill Tracks;

In addition, we are working on responses to the *Draft Planning Policy on Opencast Coal*, *Extending Planning Controls to Marine Fish Farming* and a further *Cairngorms NPA consultation on Mineral Workings*.

The Chairman gave a talk about SCNP and the need for a strategic approach to further NPs to the Garnock Valley Rotary on 25 October to help widen the audience. Some confessed to being unaware that we had any NPs in Scotland! More work to be done.

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