

SCOTLAND'S NATURE AND LANDSCAPES AND THE WORK OF SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE

A. What does Scottish Natural Heritage do?

<p>What is Scottish Natural Heritage?</p>	<p>The natural heritage is one of Scotland's biggest assets. The role of Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) is to look after the natural heritage, help people to enjoy and value it, and encourage people to use it sustainably.</p> <p>SNH was established in 1992 through the Natural Heritage (Scotland) Act 1991. SNH is a Government body responsible to Scottish Government Ministers and through them to the Scottish Parliament.</p> <p>Much of our work is done in partnership with others – local authorities, Government bodies, businesses, community groups, farmers and other land managers, and a wide range of representative bodies.</p> <p>We work nationally and locally through a number of “units”, with much of our day-to-day work being done through 11 Area teams. We have offices throughout Scotland.</p> <p>Our priorities are set out in a corporate strategy. A new version covering the period 2008-2013 will be published in autumn 2008. In working for people and the natural heritage, we develop policy, provide grants, carry out research, provide advice and information, handle a wide range of casework, look after designated sites, produce publications, provide licences and support interpretation.</p> <p>We also help to implement a number of national strategies, such as the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy which seeks to reverse biodiversity loss in Scotland.</p>
<p>What is the natural heritage?</p>	<p>Nature (wildlife, habitats, rocks), landscapes and natural beauty make up the natural heritage of Scotland. The natural heritage can be found throughout Scotland: from the parks and open spaces in our towns to the remote and wild areas of the Highlands and Islands and to the seas around our shores. It is a nationally and internationally renowned part of Scotland's national identity. It contributes greatly to our well-being and quality of life.</p>
<p>Why are Scotland's nature and landscapes important?</p>	<p>Scotland's nature and landscapes are unique and they make a big contribution to national and local character. Our nature and landscapes have great intrinsic value, they enrich our lives, are a foundation for economic and social</p>

activity, and provide huge opportunities for leisure and learning. To continue doing this, they need to be looked after, improved and used sustainably.

Scotland's nature and landscapes are important for many reasons, including:

- **Their contribution to Scotland's economy.** Around 93,000 jobs are directly dependent on it and it generates more than £2 billion in GVA (gross value added), of which over three-quarters comes from tourism. About 87% of visitors to Scotland say that our fine scenery is one of the things that draws them to Scotland.
- **Providing places for people to visit and enjoy, and through outdoor recreation, to get and stay healthy.** In 2007, 80% of the Scottish adult population made at least one visit to the outdoors for leisure and recreation purposes. Some 291 million trips were made to the outdoors. The Paths to Health initiative, started in 2001, now extends to 200 community-based health walks schemes and involve over 20,000 people.
- **Supporting stronger communities.** Attractive and safe green spaces, path networks and local landscapes in and around our towns help to improve people's quality of life and provide opportunities for volunteering on local community projects. We established Greenspace Scotland to promote improvements in green spaces in towns and cities, with these providing the space for healthier and more relaxing lifestyles. We fund BTCV and CSV to provide volunteer opportunities to people and communities across Scotland.
- **Providing places for learning and inspiration to our young people,** which will help Scotland adapt to major challenges, such as climate change and sustainable development.
- **Their role in helping people to adapt to climate change.** Climate change is the biggest threat to the natural heritage over coming decades – nature may not be able to adjust quickly enough to the changing temperatures and rainfall. However, the natural environment can play a key role in catchment management, natural flood control and soft coastal defences, and this can help us to adapt to these changes.
- **Their role in maintaining Scotland's international reputation and our quality of life.** The quality of our nature and landscapes are a key factor in

	<p>making Scotland competitive in attracting or retaining jobs.</p> <p>For further information contact bill.band@snh.gov.uk 01738 458635</p>
<p>Our starting point: statutory duties and Ministerial priorities</p>	<p>SNHs work is mainly determined by a range of statutory duties and Ministers' priorities.</p> <p>Our statutory purposes are set out in the Natural Heritage (Scotland) Act 1991. They are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ secure the conservation and enhancement of Scotland's natural heritage; ○ foster understanding and facilitate enjoyment of it; and ○ encourage its sustainable use. <p>In carrying our work, when it is appropriate to do so, we have to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ actual or possible changes to the natural heritage; ○ the needs of agriculture, fisheries and forestry; ○ the need for social and economic development; ○ the need to look after places of archaeological or historical interest; ○ the interests of landowners; ○ the interests of local communities. <p>We also have duties under other legislation, including the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. These duties include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ notifying Sites of Special Scientific Interest; ○ responsibility for supporting several other national designations including National Nature Reserves and National Scenic Areas; ○ promoting awareness and understanding of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code and Scottish Fossil Code. <p>We also play a key role in helping the Scottish Government meet its responsibilities under European environmental laws, particularly in relation to the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives.</p> <p>We also deliver a range of Ministerial priorities. These are usually set out, each year, in a "grant-in-aid" letter from the Scottish Government. We also report on 3 of the Scottish Government's national performance indicators: nature sites; biodiversity and visits to the outdoors.</p> <p>To fulfil our role, we act as an advisory body to Ministers, particularly in contributing to policy development, and more widely in providing strategic advice. We also support</p>

	<p>delivery on the ground through practical action and influencing land management.</p> <p>We regularly report to the Scottish Government on our progress in meeting a set of agreed high-level targets and in implementing our Corporate Plan.</p> <p>For further information contact Andy.Dorin@snh.gov.uk 01463 725185</p>
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