

B. How does Scottish Natural Heritage work?

B.1 Being open and accountable

Boards & Committees	<p>Being open and accountable is central to the way in which SNH works.</p> <p>Some of the ways in which we do this are described below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Our Board meetings are open to the public and papers and minutes are available on our website. Our Board Members also play a key role in networking with the wider public and partners at a strategic and political level.○ The Scientific Advisory Committee, which provides scientific advice and expertise to the Board and staff, meets twice a year and these meetings are open to the public. Papers and minutes are available on our website.○ We have a group of 11 Local Advisers from across Scotland who actively engage with the public on relevant issues. They help to promote SNH's views and priorities and provide feedback to the Board on the effectiveness of our work. The advisers are: Sandy Kerr - Northern Isles Robert Wemyss - Western Isles Ian Ross - North Highland Sheila Nairn - West Highland Una Lee - East Highland Alister Scott - Grampian Alison Anderson - Tayside & Clackmannanshire Dorothy Breckenridge - Argyll & Stirling David Hughes Hallett - Forth & Borders Sue Evans - Strathclyde & Ayrshire Gordon Mann - Dumfries & Galloway○ The Advisory Committee on Sites of Special Scientific Interest looks at the notification and confirmation of these sites and can hear the views of objectors in person.○ We hold a number of 'Open Events' throughout the year at which our staff mix informally with members of the public to share information and discuss topical issues.○ We host a number of 'Listening' dinners to help improve our links with senior officials in the private, public and voluntary sectors. These dinners provide opportunities to promote
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	<p>our key messages and to listen to the views of other bodies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We also carry out a number of public consultations to help inform the development of new policies and the future management of our National Nature Reserves. <p>For further information contact Carole.wells@snh.gov.uk Tel 01463 725004</p>
<p>Customer care</p>	<p>Our customers are the people of Scotland and anybody who visits, works in or takes an interest in Scotland's nature and landscapes. This includes public and private organisations and the government as well as individuals. We are committed to providing an efficient, effective, high-quality service to all our customers.</p> <p>We have a set of customer standards and we review our performance on these throughout the year. We also carry out regular customer surveys to help us improve the service we provide.</p> <p>For further information contact Martin.Stubbs.Partridge@snh.gov.uk 01463 725077</p>

B.2 Doing research and providing information

Carrying out research and gathering evidence

SNH carries out original research to create an evidence base for our work. Our priorities are set out in a [research and development strategy](#), which covers the period 2007- 2012.

The strategy links the environmental agenda with health, education and tourism, and has five broad themes:

- Involving Scotland's People
- Climate Change
- Sustainable Management
- Scotland's Natural Diversity
- Reporting and Data

An [action plan](#) outlines the planned programme in greater detail, including indicative funding levels for each programme area.

SNH undertakes much of its research with partner organisations, notably within the Scottish Government, local authorities, universities and a wide range of public, private and voluntary bodies. In 2008/09, we plan to spend about £4.5 million on research, including site surveys and monitoring.

Making the completed research available externally is very important. We produce [Commissioned Research reports](#), and also promote the results through activities like [Sharing Good Practice](#) and the [Trends](#) project.

For further information contact Rob.Threadgould@snh.gov.uk
01463 725262

Providing information about Scotland's nature and landscapes

SNH has a web-based information service, called [SNHi](#). Through this service you can:

- search for species information by place name, grid reference or postcode in the [WIMBY](#) (this stands for "What's In My Back Yard") section;
- find out about sites of national and international importance, including site documents, management agreements, site condition monitoring support and support for the new Rural Development Contract scheme, in the [SiteLink](#) section;
- get constantly updated facts and statistics about our work and Scotland's nature and landscapes in the [Interactive Facts and Figures](#) section;
- access our geographic datasets, which are particularly useful for supporting Strategic Environmental Assessment,

	<p>in the Natural Spaces section;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ learn about the changing state of Scotland’s nature and landscapes in the Trends section. <p>We will soon be launching a new section, called SpeciesLink, which will provide access to our data on Scotland’s species, including information on distribution, conservation status, sightings and photographs.</p> <p>For further information contact Alan.McKirdy@snh.gov.uk 01738 458568</p>
<p>Providing advice and guidance</p>	<p>One of SNHs key roles is to provide good advice and guidance on issues relating to nature and landscapes to a wide range of people and organisations in Scotland and beyond. We do this through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Our Natural Heritage Management Series of publications, which provide practical advice with an emphasis on ‘best practice’ in promoting sustainable use. These publications are particularly relevant to people working in land management, planning, tourism and environmental management. ○ Our Sharing Good Practice programme. ○ The ‘Working with You’ part of our website, which is aimed at communities, land managers, planners and landscape architects. This also provides links to other guidance and to recent advice SNH has prepared in response to Government and other public consultations. <p>For further information contact erica.knott@snh.gov.uk 01738 458674</p>

B.3 Looking after special sites and wildlife

<p>Looking after special sites</p>	<p>Many of the best examples of Scotland’s nature and landscapes are designated as protected areas. These areas form about 20% of Scotland’s land area.</p> <p>These areas are protected to help conserve and enhance our most important habitats, species and landscapes, and to ensure that any proposed changes to them can be considered in advance and, if necessary, action taken to prevent damage or manage change.</p> <p>There are three levels of protected area:</p> <p>Internationally important, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Natura 2000 sites, which are designated under European
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	<p>legislation; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ramsar sites, which are designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. <p>Our role is to designate these sites on behalf of Scottish Ministers and to act as an advisor on the protective regime required by the Habitats Regulations.</p> <p>Nationally important, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Nature Reserves, which are designated by SNH. There are 58 National Nature Reserves throughout Scotland and these offer some of the best of Scotland's nature and landscapes. They are managed primarily for wildlife and for people to enjoy. Ten National Nature Reserves are owned and managed by Approved Bodies, including Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Scotland, the National Trust for Scotland, and Forestry Commission Scotland. ○ Sites of Special Scientific Interest, which are designated by SNH. All Scottish public bodies, including SNH, have a responsibility for protecting these sites. ○ National Scenic Areas, which are designated by Scottish Ministers. Local authorities lead on the care of these areas through the planning system. SNH advises on their designation and on some development proposals. ○ National Parks are designated by Scottish Ministers to help manage large areas of outstanding national natural and cultural heritage importance. They are managed by separate authorities reporting directly to Scottish Ministers <p>Locally important, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local Nature Reserves, Country Parks and Regional Parks, which are designated by local authorities, who consult SNH on their natural heritage interest, development and use ; ○ Local landscape designations can play an important role in promoting awareness, pride and care of our most valued local landscapes, and also in looking after those which are most vulnerable. <p>We work closely with managers of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Natura sites. Since 2001, our Natural Care schemes have offered financial support for the management of these sites. From 2009, Natural Care will be integrated into the Scotland Rural Development Programme.</p> <p>You can find out more about protected areas through SNHi, including access to site documentation through Sitelink and information on each site through Facts and Figures.</p>
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	<p>For further information contact John.Burlison@snh.gov.uk 01555 665928</p>
Licensing	<p>Scottish wildlife is protected under three main pieces of legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) ○ The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended), and; ○ The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (as amended) <p>These pieces of legislation set out specific offences in relation to protected species of animal, birds and plants. There are, however, a number of exceptions or defences against these offences and one of these is licensing.</p> <p>Licences can be issued to permit actions that would otherwise be illegal. Each piece of legislation gives specific purposes for which licences can be granted. For these pieces of legislation, the Scottish Government or SNH can issue licences.</p> <p>The specific purposes for which licences can be granted under each piece of legislation, and the appropriate licensing authorities, can be found via the link below. However, as a general rule, SNH is responsible for issuing licences for scientific, educational and conservation-related purposes.</p> <p>We issue nearly 1000 licences each year and provide advice to the Scottish Government on virtually all licences for which they are the appropriate authority. Our advice is focused on the conservation implications of proposals.</p> <p>Further advice and guidance on licensing, including application forms for licences from SNH, can be found on our website.</p> <p>For further information contact Ben.Ross@snh.gov.uk 01463 725245</p>

B.4 Raising people's awareness of Scotland's nature and landscapes

Increasing people's awareness of Scotland's nature and landscapes	<p>Encouraging people to enjoy, understand and look after Scotland's nature and landscapes is key to its future.</p> <p>SNH has a general purpose of fostering awareness and facilitating enjoyment of the natural heritage. We also have specific duties to promote awareness and understanding of the:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scottish Outdoor Access Code; ○ Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code; and ○ Scottish Fossil Code. <p>To do this, we use TV and radio advertising, provide leaflets and other information, and encourage local authorities, ranger services and many others to promote the Codes through their work.</p> <p>A key area of work has been promoting awareness of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. Since 2004, we have increased awareness from under 7% of the Scottish population to over 60%.</p> <p>We have recently launched the Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code and the Scottish Fossil Code.</p> <p>We're also working with the Scottish Government to develop better communications aimed at helping to increase people's awareness of biodiversity issues. We also promote Scotland's 58 National Nature Reserves as they offer wonderful opportunities to discover and learn more about Scotland's amazing wildlife.</p> <p>For further information contact Dougie.Pollok@snh.gov.uk 01738 458536</p>
<p>Helping people to learn about Scotland's nature and landscapes</p>	<p>Our role in helping people to enjoy, understand and value Scotland's nature and landscapes through major communication campaigns is supported by our work on formal education, informal learning (interpretation) and Sharing Good Practice.</p> <p>Our work on formal education includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ working with Learning and Teaching Scotland, the Scottish Government and other partners to support A Curriculum for Excellence through promoting outdoor learning; ○ developing the TeachingSpace website, to give information on where to go and what to do to learn outdoors; ○ helping schools to develop their school grounds with Grounds for Learning; ○ working with Ecoschools to develop their biodiversity module; ○ offering student teachers the chance to find out the potential of outdoor learning from a range of practitioners at two annual events, 'Biodiversity at the Chalkface'. <p>Our work on informal learning includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ improving standards of interpretation through Interpret

	<p>Scotland;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o promoting good practice guidance on interpretation planning; o developing good interpretation at our National Nature Reserves, such as Knockan Crag and Beinn Eighe. <p>Through Sharing Good Practice we are helping to make sure that sharing ideas and good practice becomes a routine part of the way we all work.</p> <p>For further information contact Julie.forrest@snh.gov.uk (01738 458535) or Rachel.hellings@snh.gov.uk (01738 458638).</p>
Gaelic	<p>Sine 2001, SNH has had a Gaelic policy and this seeks to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o ensure that our policy of openness extends to communications in Gaelic; o improve communication and mutual understanding with Gaelic speaking communities; o enable us to benefit from increased use of Gaelic in media and publications; and o encourage the use of Gaelic in communications relating to the natural heritage. <p>Since 2001, we have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o recruited a Gaelic communications officer with responsibility for working with Gaelic media and for promoting natural heritage issues in Gaelic speaking areas; o developed a Gaelic SNH website; o developed a database of relevant terms and names of species; o developed a Gaelic language plan in line with the Gaelic Language Act 2005; o supported knowledge of Gaelic amongst our staff; o produced bilingual publications, advertising and signage in appropriate places (such as signage at some National Nature Reserves). <p>For further information contact Shona.Sloan@snh.gov.uk Tel 01463 725038</p>

B.5 Responding to development proposals and consultations

Planning casework	<p>SNH engages with the planning system at three levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing advice to government on national policies; • advising local authorities on their development plans;
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	<p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responding to consultations about specific development proposals. <p>Most of our planning casework arises from consultations about specific development proposals. We receive over 3,000 planning consultation cases each year. Our 11 Area teams are at the ‘front line’ for handling these cases, and they receive support and advice from other parts of SNH.</p> <p>Our policy statement, SNH and the Town and Country Planning System, and our planning webpage provides more information about our role. In responding to consultations, we aim to minimise impacts on the natural heritage and maximise the benefits.</p> <p>We can be consulted about any kind of development proposal which might affect natural heritage interests. However, there is a statutory requirement for local authorities to consult SNH on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ proposals in or affecting a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Protection Area, a Special Area of Conservation or a Ramsar Site; ○ some types of development (generally those of larger scale) in National Scenic Areas; ○ proposals affecting European Protected Species or species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; ○ cases which are subject to Environmental Impact Assessment regulations; and ○ proposals for commercial peat extraction. <p>We are also a “consultation authority” under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and play an important role as a source of environmental information for these assessments. Our geographic datasets are available through the Natural Spaces section of our website.</p> <p>We are currently changing our approach to involvement in the town and country planning system. This change is in line with the Government’s commitment to modernise the planning system to assist delivery of sustainable economic growth. The revised approach will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ greater ‘upstream’ engagement – by contributing more to development planning and by engaging in pre-application discussions with developers; ○ closer alignment with the practice of other statutory consultees; ○ adjustments to the style and format of responses to planning consultations; and ○ adoption of a constructive and helpful attitude in staff’s
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	<p>dealings with stakeholders.</p> <p>Through this new approach, we aim to help developers bring forward environmentally sound proposals and decision-makers within the planning system to make the judgements required of them. This change will help the planning system to operate speedily and efficiently, whilst at the same time delivering the degree of environmental care required if the economic development that it facilitates is to be truly sustainable. We aim to implement our new approach in 2008.</p> <p>For further information contact richard.ferguson@snh.gov.uk 01738 458540</p>
<p>Non- planning casework</p>	<p>We also respond to casework on many other issues, including changes of land use which may impact on nature and landscapes, "Operations Requiring Consent" on Sites of Special Scientific Interest, consultations from the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, consultations on proposals affecting the marine environment, proposals for new high voltage transmission lines, and proposals affecting European protected species and badgers.</p> <p>Our 11 Area teams are at the 'front line' for handling these cases, and they receive support and advice from other parts of SNH and by a range of continually reviewed guidance.</p> <p>We work closely with other agencies to streamline consultation procedures, with the aim of reducing overlap of effort and simplifying procedures for our customers.</p> <p>For further information contact David.Law@snh.gov.uk 01463 725220</p>

B.6 Providing grants

Providing grants

We empower people to do what's best for Scotland's nature and landscapes by sharing our passion, our knowledge, our advice and our funding. SNH provides around 500 grants per year to help people and a range of organisations, primarily in the Third Sector, to protect and improve Scotland's nature and landscapes, and to encourage people to understand, enjoy and look after these. Around £8m will be spent in 2009-10 on a wide range of urban and rural projects that deliver outcomes linked to the [SNH Corporate Strategy](#). You can find out about the grants we have provided on our website.

SNH is currently reviewing how we deliver grants and our grant programme will be revised to reflect changes resulting from the implementation of the SRDP and other SNH and Scottish Government policies. The [Scottish Rural Development Programme](#) is the Scottish Government's main programme for financial support to rural Scotland. SNH continues to be able to offer grant support for projects not covered by SRDP.

From April 2009, SNH will no longer offer grant to Scottish local authorities for the majority of routine and recurring activities we have previously funded. Instead, this money will be provided directly by the Scottish Government for local authorities to determine local priorities for investment through the Single Outcome Agreements drawn up with Community Planning Partnerships. SNH would like to see the level of spend on the natural heritage maintained.

We currently have [8 grant schemes](#):

- managing special places;
- supporting biodiversity;
- raising awareness and understanding of the new access rights and responsibilities;
- developing paths and routes that help more people to get out and enjoy the natural heritage;
- making our towns and cities more attractive places to live;
- involving more people in looking after the natural heritage;
- promoting sustainable land management;
- promoting sustainable management of water.

A grants pack is available for applicants from SNH offices and you can download the [application form](#). Applications for grant of less than £10,000 can be made at any time. We have two application rounds for grants of £10,000 and over. The closing dates are 1 September and 15 April.

Rates of grant vary but are rarely more than 50% of the total project costs. SNH can fund projects over more than one year, with a maximum of three years.

	For further information contact gillian.macdonald@snh.gov.uk . 01851 705258
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B.7 Improving our efficiency and effectiveness

A continuous programme of improvement	<p>SNH is committed to continuous improvement – considering new needs and requirements, reflecting on experiences and learning from good practice, and making changes to maximise its impact in shaping the future of the natural heritage.</p> <p>Our ability to help conserve and encourage enjoyment of the natural heritage is improved by being more efficient and effective, by providing modern public services and by our aspiration to be a flagship public body.</p> <p>We have set ourselves nine challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ respond to change; ○ balance resources against demands; ○ be more joined up; ○ understand & use information better; ○ save time by sharing good practice; ○ acquire & retain the right skills; ○ provide clear guidance to managers; ○ develop management confidence & competence; and ○ have an enhanced profile & reputation. <p>To meet these challenges, our Development Programme has advanced activities to:</p> <p>a) achieve an outward focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ through collaboration, for example as part of Scotland's Environmental and Rural Services initiative; ○ by improving our external communications, including the establishment of a new Strategy and Communication Directorate and an External Relations Unit; <p>b) increase our internal capacity and capability to deliver efficiently and effectively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ through the implementation of a <i>People Strategy</i>; ○ through improvements to how we work, including the Business Process Improvements, Efficient Government Initiative and a review of our Information Systems and information management. <p>Our Development Programme is scheduled to end in 2008 and we are currently considering other ways of managing change,</p>
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	<p>development and continuous improvement. Our aim is to introduce a mechanism that can secure cross-SNH coordination of change management. This mechanism will align with corresponding change in the wider public service and be framed by the nine Best Value characteristics.</p> <p>For further information contact Peter.Hutchinson@snh.gov.uk 01738 458517</p>
<p>Scotland's Environmental and Rural Services</p>	<p>Scotland's Environmental and Rural Services is a partnership of nine public bodies aiming to provide Scotland's rural land managers with an efficient and effective service by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ co-ordinating when they need to contact and visit rural land managers; ○ providing rural land managers with easy access to information and advice; ○ providing a consistent and responsive service; and ○ delivering a service which focuses on the needs of rural land managers. <p>The nine public bodies involved with SEARS are:</p> <p>Scottish Natural Heritage Scottish Environment Protection Agency Cairngorms National Park Authority Crofters Commission Deer Commission for Scotland Forestry Commission Scotland Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority State Veterinary Service Scottish Government Rural Directorate</p> <p>For further information contact: alan.mowle@snh.gov.uk 0131 316 2603</p>
<p>Environmental Management Programme</p>	<p>Given our role in encouraging sustainable development and safeguarding Scotland's nature and landscapes, it's very important that we set a good example in making sustainability a key part of how SNH operates.</p> <p>How we do this is set out in our Environmental Management Programme with its three corporate aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ manage our resources more sustainably; ○ reduce the CO2 emissions from our own operations; ○ make our corporate processes more sustainable. <p>Key actions in the programme include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ reducing our use of energy and installing renewable energy systems wherever possible; ○ reducing, reusing and recycling waste wherever possible and buying recycled products;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ increasing biodiversity at our own properties;○ taking environmental factors into account when writing and awarding contracts;○ planning our work travel to encouraging car sharing, the use of public transport and video-conferencing;○ setting Green targets for each office and reporting internally on quarterly progress, and publishing an Annual Green Report;○ making sure that any new offices meet best practice in sustainable building – building on the achievements of our corporate office in Inverness, Great Glen House;○ working with Scottish Government and other public bodies to promote good practice and raise standards. <p>For further information contact Sheila.Currie@snh.gov.uk 01463 725073</p>
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