

‘The Future of National Parks in Scotland’ Scottish Government consultation

Thoughts from the John Muir Trust

1. What do you value most about Scotland's National Parks?
 - They protect some of our most precious and special wild places.
 - They provide beautiful places for people to live and work and sustainable economic opportunities for local communities to thrive.
 - They provide recreational and outdoor learning opportunities to enable all to access and enjoy the natural environment.
2. How can National Parks help the environment?
 - They can lead the way in exemplary land management for biodiversity and climate change.
 - They can let nature have freedom to naturally lock up carbon and boost biodiversity by promoting and delivering land management that creates natural fully functioning ecosystems – regenerating woodlands, natural tree lines, healthy peatlands, self-sustaining water catchments etc.
 - They can reduce unnaturally high herbivore densities and move away from intensive monocultures of deer, sheep, grouse or exotic conifers, instead allowing natural diverse ecosystems to develop.
3. How can we better manage visitor pressures in National Parks?
 - Consult and listen to local community views to understand pressures and inform visitor management solutions.
 - Invest more in National Park Ranger Services and interpretation.
 - Provide more facilities throughout the park to spread the load away from honeypots. These should be appropriately and sensitively sited in consultation with local communities and provide a wide range of options from campsites; campervan pitches; toilets; paths; bothies; huts; cabins as well as B&B and hotel accommodation.
 - Plan for and facilitate free or cheap low carbon transport connections.
 - Provide opportunities for sections of society that are not currently able to access our parks.
4. What criteria should we use to decide where the next new National Parks in Scotland should be?
 - The potential for the land to be managed in an exemplary way to protect and restore our finest wild places. The park must be based on a thriving natural ecosystem.
 - The strength of interest and support from the local community for the area to be designated based on an appreciation of the added visitor numbers and associated economic opportunities that the designation would bring.
 - The number of people in Scotland who are likely to benefit from the designation – particularly from communities and sections of society currently not able to access our National Parks.