



Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba

Nàdar air fad airson Alba air fad

This site uses cookies. By continuing to browse the site you are agreeing to our use of cookies. See Privacy and Cookies.

News

SNH: Cairngorms National Park paths network will have 'major community benefits'

30-AUG-2011

Outdoor access projects to encourage more people to walk and enjoy leisure activities in the Cairngorms National Park have received continued backing from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).

SNH has announced further support for the Cairngorm Mountain Heritage Project a four-year, £2.1million upland path construction initiative. The funds will be used to repair the remaining high priority eroded mountain paths in the Cairngorms and run a path skills training course for eight trainees.

SNH's involvement will help implement a novel approach to engaging keen hillwalkers to help care for paths in the Cairngorms via the adopt-a-path scheme. It means volunteers from local walking and mountaineering clubs are trained to carry out basic maintenance on many repaired paths.

Another initiative is increasing health and well-being by providing or upgrading key path links around communities including Newtonmore, Strathdon and Ballater. Fixing these key missing' links will ensure the path networks are more accessible for local people and visitors.

Continued support from SNH will also further develop and expand the successful Healthwalks scheme in the Cairngorms. These are local volunteer-led walking groups designed to improve participants' health. Monitoring has shown the scheme delivers huge benefits particularly for people with physical and mental health needs or social isolation issues.

And the initiative includes a community path monitoring and maintenance scheme to cover path networks at Kingussie and Grantown with up to 12 volunteers recruited in each by March 2013.

The projects are being run by Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) an environmental charity promoting sustainable access to the Cairngorms area. The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) is another key funder and is overseeing the work.

COAT has also attracted funds in the form of £722,000 from the European Structural Fund Programmes for the Highlands and Islands 20072013 (HIPP Ltd); £720,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund with the remainder of the funding coming from Highlands and Islands Enterprise; RSPB Scotland; the Scottish Mountaineering Trust; Cairngorms LEADER; Aberdeenshire LEADER and the Browne Forbes Memorial Trust.

"It is clear that providing improved links in the path network within the National Park and the construction of new paths will have major community benefits," Debbie Greene of SNH confirmed.

"Not least among them is a new path which will greatly improve access from Aviemore to Craigellachie National Nature Reserve (NNR). We are delighted to be helping more locals and visitors enjoy these beautiful woods just a few minutes from the village centre.

"These projects will help us deliver our commitment to increasing the number of people visiting the outdoors and becoming actively involved in and engaged with Scotland's nature and landscapes in a responsible way.

"This work allows our paths network locally to be refreshed and completed to a high standard and by providing local jobs in the area. In both cases the work will be channelled into projects which will deliver priorities for action in the Cairngorms National Park Plan, and we are delighted to be working with COAT and the CNPA on them."

The path regeneration work is necessary to tackle continued deterioration of some paths particularly with the predicted change to warmer, wetter winters with less snow cover.

COAT manager Dougie Baird said: "We are delighted to welcome the SNH contribution to these projects, which represents part of a total commitment from our partners in excess of £2.5 million.

"These projects also contribute strongly to Scotland's health and well-being and providing local employment. In one project we will see an expansion from supporting 23 weekly walks and 40 volunteer walk leaders to a target total of 74

volunteer walk leaders running 37 weekly health walks across the Cairngorms by March 2013.

"It is also encouraging to have seen the inception of health condition specific' walks over 2009-2011 comprising smoking cessation; Alzheimers disease, and diabetes, and their success will be built upon by establishing new groups as advised by community health practitioners.

"And we are committed to expanding the geographic scope of the scheme to cover more of the Cairngorms and west Aberdeenshire communities.

"We will, with this SNH and partner funding, have two part-time project officers to coordinate the project, organise volunteer walk leader training, and support walk leaders, and the costs of the volunteers' PPE and externally-provided training."

David Green, CNPA Convener added: "The Cairngorms Mountain Heritage Project and the many other areas of work being delivered by COAT are making a massive difference to people living in the Park and visitors to the area with real opportunities for improving health through recreation on the on the Cairngorms path network. None of this would be possible without an effective partnership approach."

The projects involve total funding of £171,086 from SNH.

ENDS

Media inquiries: Fergus Macneill, SNH Public Relations: 01463 725021

NOTES TO EDITORS

COAT came into existence on 1 April 2008 after it evolved from the former Upper Deeside Access Trust to cover the whole park.

Scottish Natural Heritage is the Government's advisor on all aspects of nature and landscape across Scotland. Our role is to help everyone understand, value and enjoy Scotland's nature now and in the future. For further information visit www.snh.gov.uk

Author: Fergus Macneill
Contact: SNH Press Office

[Click here to comment on this page](#)