

INVESTING IN BETTER ACCESS IN THE NATIONAL PARK

Published on: May 14, 2012



The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) has affirmed its commitment to making it easier for people to enjoy the National Park.

The Board (meeting on Friday 11 May), agreed to continue to provide funding to the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) – a charitable trust set up in 2008 to improve paths in, around and between settlements and in the mountains of the Park.

Overall funding of £590,000 will be made available over three years 2012-2015. The money will be spent on meeting objectives in the new National Park Partnership Plan around providing high quality access and recreation opportunities and will build on COAT's achievements to date which include:

- large scale improvements to community path networks
- maintaining and improving sections of the Speyside Way
- the Park wide Health Walks Scheme which provides opportunities to meet people, explore the Park and exercise
- a 4 year £2.1m Mountain Heritage Project to repair mountain paths
- running a training skills project where trainees gain skills in path maintenance and recognised qualifications leading to employment in the Park

Getting people more active will be one of the major pieces of work over the next three years and fits well with the improvements to the path network.

CNPA Recreation and Access Programme Manager Bob Grant said: “We want to continue to see paths in and around communities improved so more people feel they can walk or cycle in the Park either for pure enjoyment or to get about more safely or without the need to take a car journey. Ultimately people will have more freedom, more fun and be fitter.”

COAT Chief Executive, Dougie Baird, said: “We welcome CNPA’s commitment to our innovative programme scheduled for the next 3 years. It does represent a cut in the level of funding from that provided by CNPA in previous years, and we understand in the current times why this is necessary. We may have to prioritise some areas of work but we are determined to use this invaluable support to help lever in funds from an ever widening range of partners to achieve all of our objectives in the coming years. In a difficult economic climate this is a great level of commitment to offer and we do appreciate it.”

CNPA Deputy Convener Brian Wood said: “COAT has done an exceptional job towards improving the lifestyle and health of people in the Park and it is impressive how far our money goes. The Trust has been able to apply for and gain European funding which matches what we contribute and with partner support as well, more projects are happening and at a much faster rate all over the Park. We are committed to continuing to support this work.”

Tags: [Cairngorms National Park](#), [CNPA](#), [COAT](#), [Outdoor Access](#)