



BEFS WORKSHOP REPORT

A COASTAL & MARINE NATIONAL PARK FOR SCOTLAND – INTEGRATING CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES

INTRODUCTION

This workshop took place on Friday 4 November 2005 and was attended by 26 individuals representing various groups with an interest in aspects of Scotland's cultural heritage. Organisations represented are listed at the end of this report.

The purpose of the workshop was:

- to explore the cultural heritage values associated with Scotland's coastal and marine environment;
- to consider the issues associated with defining the boundary of a new national park focussed on the coastal and marine environment and
- to start to consider possible locations for the park.

WORKSHOP INTRODUCTION

Key points raised in introducing the workshop were as follows:

- Cultural heritage is enshrined in Scotland's legislation on national parks.
- Existing national park authorities have embraced the cultural heritage as a key issue.
- It is important that those interested in the cultural heritage ensure that it is taken into account in developing proposals for a coastal and marine national park.
- The cultural heritage has tangible (physical) and intangible associations (folklore, language, literature and so on). It is important to recognise the value of whole landscapes or cultural systems rather than thinking simply in terms of specific sites of value.

WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

Presentations were made by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS).

Developing Proposals for Coastal and Marine National Parks – Process and Practice

Presentation by Pete Rawcliffe, SNH

SNH has been asked by the Scottish Executive to provide advice on:

- The statutory and policy framework for a coastal and marine National Park, including the aims, powers and governance structure which would be appropriate for a National Park Authority and its likely running costs;
- Recommendations on which area or areas Ministers should consider as leading candidates for designation.

Further information on the process of designating in Coastal and Marine National Park can be found on the SNH website at:

<http://www.snh.org.uk/strategy/sr-adnp01.asp>

This workshop forms part of the information gathering process – formal consultation will take place in 2006. A number of issues were highlighted to workshop participants for consideration:

- Whether the National Park should be a planning authority or an access authority
- Governance structure – distribution between directly elected, local authority nominated and ministerial appointments
- Role of the park below water
- Ensuring that those working (as opposed to living) in the area have a say in the park

- Landward and seaward extent of the park
- Scale of the park
- Implication of ministerial steers
- Degree of local support

- Added value for the cultural heritage of a coastal and marine national park
- Identification of cultural heritage values that should underpin the assessment
- Identification of data to inform the assessment of values
- Scope for consensus over possible areas

Monument to Historic Environment: the Archaeology of Landscape and Seascape

Presentation by Jack Stevenson, RCAHMS

Key points made included:

- Welcome of the focus on the inter-tidal zone
- Observation that the park should include a significant landward strip
- Identification of historic landuse types and features associated with the sea
- Explanation of current RCAHMS survey work in the coastal zone, with reference to the SNH landscape character assessment, the Historic Landuse Assessment programme, and recording of maritime sites
- Observation that RCAHMS would direct its survey work towards the new National Park area.

WORKSHOP BREAK OUT SESSION

Break out groups considered the following questions:

Identification of cultural heritage values to inform the national assessment

What cultural heritage is important in our coasts and seas, and why?

What are the vulnerabilities?

Identification of potential areas (including boundary issues)

What aspects of cultural heritage might influence the location/boundaries of a park?

Should anything else be taken into account?

Added value of having a national park – in cultural heritage terms

What difference would a CMNP make in cultural heritage terms?

GROUP A

Cultural Heritage Values

Intangible values were identified as follows:

- language
- folklore
- place names
- social history
- art and craft
- literature
- identity
- traditions
- Cultural systems:
 - settlement (according to chronology)
 - fishing
 - transport and trade
 - recreation and tourism
 - industry
 - military
 - aquaculture.

Vulnerability

Large scale may lead to lack of awareness, lack of knowledge, boundary vulnerability, social exclusion.

Specific threats may arise from:

- development (coastal)
- development (offshore)
- access impact
- aquaculture + bottom trawling fishing techniques.

Threats relating to intangible values include:

- adequacy of recognition of cultural cohesivity
- adequacy of consideration of specific cultural patterns
- adequacy of consideration of existing designations
- heritage base of recreation.

Added value of having a park

Benefits of a national park in cultural heritage terms would be as follows:

- tourism
- social inclusivity
- increased recording of cultural assets

- greater awareness and appreciation of cultural assets
- re-engage people (local and visitors) with their past and their cultural landscapes
- identifying gaps in knowledge.

GROUP B

Cultural Heritage Values

The group identified the historical significance of Scotland as a maritime nation: Scotland is a mountainous country; historically transport routes and settlements were on the coast. Historically ports were very important - people came to Scotland by sea and people could only exploit natural materials via the coast.

References were made to specific cultural values: archaeological finds at Cramond; hunter gatherer communities on Rum and Eigg; the Clyde for its ship building; the Firth of Forth for its industrial heritage and royal burghs; traditional fishing practices in the Solway Firth.

Intangible associations with the sea were identified:

- traditional fishing practices – still a way of life in the Solway Firth but a way of life that is under threat
- place names have significance in the maritime context – for example the names given to sandbanks illustrate meanings associated with the environment for mariners (there is a wealth of written information that illustrates these types of intangible associations)
- musical associations with fishing industry
- in Leith there is a strong sense of community despite the fact that it is no longer a working port
- the significance of language – eg use of the word ‘Firth’.

Physical/tangible assets were identified:

- rock carvings
- whale bones
- submerged prehistoric landscapes
- wrecks
- listed buildings
- scheduled ancient monuments.

It was noted that the legislation is site and monument focussed. MUCH IS NOT DESIGNATED therefore designated sites should not be relied upon as sole indicators of importance. In relation to wrecks in particular, there is an element of chance involved in understanding significance.

Vulnerability

The following threats were mentioned:

- coastal erosion
- unrecorded assets (eg fish traps – but same applies right across cultural heritage assets – see above)
- shoreline development (eg marinas)
- disappearance of small scale (labour intensive) industry (eg impact of stake netting).

Boundary Issues

The following issues should be considered in determining park boundaries:

- the importance of sense of ownership by local communities to maritime history and the association between people and sea
- what time period should be illustrated? For example, should the park aim to cover remaining eighteenth century fishing ports or nineteenth century shipbuilding?
- should the focus be on the scale of industry, or diversity of what could be represented (ie through demonstration of continuity of habitation over time)
- the park should aim to embrace maritime interaction – there should be views in from the sea
- the park should aim to cover historical relationships with resources
- need to consider whether the park should cover an area where there is still an ongoing/living relationship between the land and the sea – ie where cultural associations are still 'live'
- the link between the community and resource is very important
- need to achieve a balance between accessibility and being too accessible
- the boundaries should not be set at fixed arbitrary distances – boundaries have to have meaning
- it was noted that the perception is that a national park is natural – the park cannot therefore be completely urban.

Added value of having a park

Benefits of a national park in cultural heritage terms would be as follows:

- better protection of shipwrecks
- deal with the 'grey area' of inter-tidal zone
- better protection of all assets under threat in this zone - statutory duty to take care of *all* cultural heritage, not just designated sites
- increased focus and attention on, and resourcing of, the cultural heritage
- maintenance of social fabric currently under threat
- more control of what goes on in national park – conflict resolution.

GROUP C

Cultural Heritage Values

The group identified access as a linchpin:

- access to seascape – sea should not be just something 'out there'
- range of levels of access will present different degrees of challenge

- different types of access were highlighted eg intellectual access as well as physical.

The group stressed the importance of intangible values. While stressing the importance of the coastal zone, the context/setting is important. Intangibles could be covered by larger park?

The group discussed whether the park should cover an area with existing recognition(s) (eg World Heritage Site), or cover an area with little existing recognition/designation?

This led the group on to consider 'what is the national park for?' The group identified a number of drivers ie social, community benefits, social history (manifest to greater extent in urban environments), economic drivers.

The group stressed the importance of cultural roots and the ongoing importance of links between past and present.

Vulnerabilities

The following threats were mentioned:

- coastal erosion
- infrastructure
- visitor erosion (must be a key element in management plan - consider varying the level of publicity for different sites)
- direct visitors into different areas to provide interest/variety, protect asset, address capacity issues
- safety issues on sea.

Added value

Benefits of a national park in cultural heritage terms would be as follows:

- enhance the idea of maritime Scotland
- improved access to the area
- highlight the importance of intangible qualities associated with the cultural heritage
- could help develop best practice in terms of visitor management and access issues
- attraction of wider or different audience
- Holistic management of change over the longer term change.

Boundary Issues

The following issues should be considered in determining park boundaries:

- size and layout – needs to be reasonably compact
- transport mentioned as a theme
- strong economic and social links with the sea considered importance – illustrative of maritime history
- need to incorporate industrial element

- conventional idea of a national park is 'pretty natural rural idyll' – but there may be considerable value in attracting attention to urban/industrial/transport
- group endorsed the combination of marine and land elements
- the process of selecting an area must be entirely collaborative
- park must have sense of coherence
- the key is to have an inclusive sense of heritage – incorporating social history with natural environment issues
- areas mentioned included: Mull and sea lochs; the Small Isles.

WORKSHOP PLENERY SESSION

The following points were noted in the course of discussion:

- The identification of an asset does not provide information on its value as such. This is an opportunity to evaluate as well as identify the cultural heritage relating to the coastal and marine environment. The Historic Landuse Assessment is useful for evaluation work.
- It is important to build on the work of existing national parks.
- Strong linkage visually to the sea is important. This will be easier to achieve if the park includes an estuary.
- Control of underwater heritage assets is required.
- Participants were urged to engage with current and future consultation processes.

PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

Cairngorms National Park Authority

Council for Scottish Archaeology

Crown Estate

Dumfries and Galloway Council

Forth Estuary Forum

Glasgow Caledonian University - Heritage Futures

Historic Scotland

Institute of Field Archaeologists - Scottish Group

International Journal of Nautical Archaeology

Morvern Maritime Centre

National Trust for Scotland

Nautical Archaeology Society

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of
Scotland

SCAPE Trust

Scottish Coastal Forum

Scottish Natural Heritage

Scottish Trust for Underwater Archaeology

Solway Firth Partnership

University of Aberdeen