

**Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1
on the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008
at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)¹*

Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports

Annual report for the year 2023

Annual reports should describe the changes that have taken place since the previous year in dynamic terms of management and function and not be limited to basic data. Any new text or map introducing a change in the situation of the area should be attached to the annual report.

State: Scotland, United Kingdom

Name of the area: Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas:

Year 6 – renewal from 4 July 2018

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¹ As amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.
Internet : <http://www.coe.int/cm>

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

N/A

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. make a comprehensive mid-term assessment of the implementation of the Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve Management Plan (2015-2026) in 2020 and revise the relevant parts of the plan as appropriate;

Completed in 2020.

2. prepare a revised management plan, taking an appropriately long-term view based on adaptation to the effects of climate change, by the end of 2026;

This recommendation is due in 2026. However, we are starting to consider options for the review of the management plan. In 2024 we are planning to engage experts to consider a landscape-scale wildfire management strategy, due to the increasing risk of wildfire with climate change. This will build on our existing wildfire management plans, which are reactive, to create a more strategic approach to wildfire management, and would be an important part of the next management plan. This will include mapping risk and impact, and considering nature-based solutions to mitigate those impacts and risks, while still protecting the important habitats and species on site. We are also hoping to link this work with the international wildfire conference being held in Aberdeen in 2024 <https://wildfire2024.co.uk/>.

3. ensure the continuance of monitoring of, and research on, the flora and fauna for the conservation of the native species, to derive appropriate performance and conservation indicators, and to assess the effects of climate change;

This year we completed a repeat of around 80 fixed-point photographs on Beinn Eighe NNR. This was a project set up 10 years ago in 2013, to monitor and demonstrate habitat change and ecological restoration, with some locations based on old photographs, and others set up in new areas. We are in the process of creating a public-facing report on this work which will be available online.

We have continued to do our annual habitat impact monitoring to ensure that herbivore impacts are within the acceptable range to allow natural processes to occur in the woodlands. This year 88% of impact scores were in the 'Low' or 'no impact' categories. 96% of impact scores were moderate or below, which is within our target (90%). We have also bid for money to undertake a more detailed, independent impact assessment in 2024, which we do every 5 years to make sure we are on track with our habitat objectives.

We have completed a baseline regeneration survey on the woodland edge. This is to allow us to monitor 'outputs' as well as herbivore impacts. As these plots get repeated over the coming years, we will be able to see any change in stem density in the regeneration areas, as well as monitoring the progression of existing seedlings to saplings and eventually trees.

This year we have also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with 4 neighbouring Estates to set up a landscape-scale ecological restoration project called the Glen Torridon Partnership. Beinn Eighe NNR will play a strong roll in this partnership in sharing our experience for ecological protection and restoration across our partnership area. The partnership will be funding baseline surveys to understand the extent and restoration potential of the area, and to develop projects which can help to restore nature at a landscape scale.

4. devise and implement with local stakeholders a tourism development strategy and a prioritised action plan so that the infrastructure of facilities can be developed for the benefit of both the national nature reserve and the economic well-being of the people who live in the area;

We continue to be working to our Visitor Management Plan, providing accessible walking routes, and a Visitor Centre for tourists to enjoy and understand more about our special nature. Tourism in the area has benefited recently largely from the popularity of the North Coast 500 route which passes the NNR. The Wester Ross Biosphere Reserve have also been focusing much of their work recently on promoting tourism in the area. We have re-surfaced 2.4km of waymarked footpath to a high standard this year, including a 300m section of mountain path.

5. develop further awareness-raising and educational activities on the role of biodiversity and ecosystem services, particularly targeting children and youths.

We continue to engage in local activities to promote the NNR and nature protection and restoration. This includes attending local events including school career events and community events.

We have recently started a Community Deer Stalking Initiative. This is one of the first initiatives of this kind on public land in Scotland. It is only open to permanent residents in a defined local area, and creates an opportunity for them to engage in the NNR management at a practical level. As we need to manage the wild deer on the NNR in order to meet our habitat objectives (deer have no longer have any natural predators), this initiative will allow local members of the community to be involved in that activity and to take the venison away for their personal consumption. In order to shoot deer on the NNR the individuals require to meet our standards to ensure safety and animal welfare, so initially this will be a series of theoretical and practical training sessions to get them to the required standards. As it develops they will be able to go out deer stalking on the NNR and take the venison home (up to 2 carcasses), to provide a local, low-food-miles source of meat.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There have been a few staff changes in the last year, with one member of staff retiring, and another moving on to a promotion in NatureScot. A replacement has been recruited for both of these permanent roles. We have been supporting a student placement/apprentice on Beinn Eighe NNR for the last 6 years on 1 or 2 year placements. These have been paid roles designed to develop skill and experience in land and conservation management. Unfortunately these posts have not been extended, meaning they have come to an end in 2023.

In 2023 we were able to support a '[New to Nature](#)' placement at Beinn Eighe NNR. These externally funded positions, are designed to provide life-changing experiences for people who might not normally have access to a career in the environmental sector, with young people who are from an ethnic minority, who are disabled or who are from low-income homes. Our placement has recently secured a job in NatureScot, so will be moving on in the new year.

Our budgets are likely to be reduced further again in 24/25, which may influence what we can deliver on the ground.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes to land ownership or the NNR boundary.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

As mentioned previously we have now signed a Memorandum of Understanding for a landscape scale ecological restoration project with 4 large land owners adjacent to Beinn Eighe NNR. This project has recently employed a development officer who will be able to drive the project forward. Although in the early stages we hope this will be a long-term approach that will improve the biodiversity and resilience of habitats and species in the area.

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma for Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal.

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

- 6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated
- 6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes
- 6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

- 7.1. Cultural heritage
 - 7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage
- 7.2. Socio-economic context
 - 7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

8. Education and scientific interest

- 8.1. Visitors – Information policy
 - 8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)
 - 8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)
 - 8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)
- 8.2. Scientific research
 - 8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)
 - 8.2.2. Scientific publications

9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

- 9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations
- 9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)
- 9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

- 10.1. Improvements made
 - 10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna
 - 10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)
 - 10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)
 - 10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)
 - 10.1.5. Waste management
 - 10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems
- 10.2. Management
 - 10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made
 - 10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made
 - 10.2.3. Internal policing measures
 - 10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas