

**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 2019

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 2 – 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;

This recommendation is due in 2020 and we aim to complete a comprehensive assessment in that year. In 2019 we have reviewed our operational habitat management plan to bring it up to date. At the start of each year we set targets on the objectives of the Management Plan to ensure they are appropriate and achievable.

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 and will follow the mid-term assessment in 2020 and the annual reviews of the plan.

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;

Fieldwork is now completed for a detailed assessment of the deer usage and herbivore impacts of the NNR. We are awaiting the results from our independent contractors which we expect in December 2019. This will inform our habitat management, including our herbivore management without deer fences, on the reserve for the following 5 years. Our adaptive management will help to improve important habitat and species resilience to climate change.

This year, we have monitored key species such as black grouse and black-throated divers and supported volunteers to undertake other species surveys. We continued to support PHD research into distribution of Ticks and Limes Disease

Beinn Eighe was registered as Scotland's first Gene Conservation Unit in March 2019, which recognises the special genetic composition of the Scots pine, *Pinus sylvestris*, as being truly distinct. This new status for the NNR is a vitally important contribution to the care of the core biodiversity of Scotland. Genetic diversity is essential for resilience to pressures such as climate change and tree diseases, allowing populations to adapt as conditions change, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-47633399>.

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;

Our Centre was visited by 19,095 visitors between April and September inclusive, and many more thousands of people visit the other parts of the Nature Reserve. Our visitor centre is focused on promoting the NNR, but it also supports wider tourism in Wester Ross, which is vital for the local rural economy. We are continuing to work with the UNESCO Wester Ross Biosphere to strengthen local economies and connect people with natural and cultural heritage. This action will be best delivered in partnership with the Biosphere.

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

This year we held monthly guided walks (150 participants) to raise awareness about the ancient woodland and why we feel that expanding the woodland is essential, especially in this climate emergency. We also held specific events to highlight our specific management and share best practice on both woodland management and deer management. Other specific events focused on wild food and dragonflies. We also engaged with several schools and university groups (over 220 students), both locally and further afield, and were a remote base for a school outreach programme. We hope to build relationships with the local High School, and recently attended a careers fair.

We supported 14 residential volunteers who contributed 467 days work, plus three student placements working between Beinn Eighe and two other NNRs in the Highlands.

Scottish Parliament – NNR staff and students took part in a Scottish Parliamentary event on 19th November sponsored by Jenny Gilruth MSP and attended by Members of the Scottish Parliament and the Cabinet Secretary Roseanna Cunningham.

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.

We have lost one member of staff – we are looking for approval through our internal processes to fill the vacancy before April 2020.

We are experiencing increasing pressure from our neighbours who want us to change our management and stop reducing the number of red deer *Cervus elaphus*. Management of deer is the most important management prescription to enable us to achieve our objectives - to reduce deer impacts on local communities, reduce vehicle collisions and enhance habitat on the NNR. We have been working with neighbours through the Deer Management Group highlighting the public interest we deliver and discussing solutions over the wider area including the land of neighbours. We will use the independent Habitat Impact Assessment to inform the discussions once the report has been finalised.

No changes finances. Management continues as planned, with specific information included below in section 5 below.

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.

N/A

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.

We have commissioned a comprehensive habitat impact survey, that will inform our future deer management and we will engaged more closely with the local Deer Management Group, with another meeting planned in January 2020 to discuss the results of the survey and our resulting actions.

We completed the repeat fixed point photography which shows the changes in woodland expansion.

5ha of enrichment planting in old pine plantations.

Mounding completed over 10.5ha in preparation for planting of 25,000 local origin trees in 2020 and 2021.

First cycle of woodland restructuring complete on schedule. This work will continue into the next cycle to ensure there is a continuing supply of different aged deadwood.

1.08 hectares of ground cleared from non-native *Rhododendron ponticum*, *Western Red Cedar* and *Lodgepole pine*. Including sweeping for seeded plants spreading onto the reserve.

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