

SCOTLAND'S FINEST LANDSCAPES

DEFINING THE QUALITIES OF NATIONAL SCENIC AREAS

*A summary of the work being carried out by Scottish Natural Heritage
November 2007 to November 2008*

In 1980, the 40 National Scenic Areas (NSAs) in Scotland were created. Recent legislation defines them as being areas of "outstanding scenic value in a national context"¹.

The Countryside Commission for Scotland's 1978 report *Scotland's Scenic Heritage* details how they were chosen and gives maps and descriptions of each one. This document has long been out of print, although the SiteLink pages of SNH's website contains a map of each NSA together with the original brief description.

Thirty years on from this original work, it is now time to revisit the descriptions and to identify the qualities that make each NSA special. An up-to-date description of the special qualities will clarify what features of each area we want to safeguard for future generations to experience and enjoy.

Such a description will also help planners and land managers ensure that development is sensitively planned so as not to damage the qualities of NSAs; will be the starting point for locally-produced NSA management strategies; and will help to raise awareness of the designation generally.

Ensuring our finest landscapes are well cared for is now seen as an essential part of attracting people to Scotland, whether as tourists or businesses, and for ensuring a high quality of life for its residents.



The special qualities team

SNH has recruited a small team of two people who, over a year, will be visiting all NSAs (excepting those in National Parks) and will identify the qualities that make each one special in scenery and landscape terms. They will be using a standard method produced by David Tyldesley & Associates in 2006². The descriptions produced are only the first step: thereafter, they will be need to be confirmed or enhanced when, through an inclusive process, management strategies are being produced for individual NSAs.

The team is based at SNH's Great Glen House office in Inverness and comprises:

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¹ Extract from Planning Etc. (Scotland) Act 2006, Section 263A.

² David Tyldesley & Associates (2006). *Identifying the Special Qualities of Scotland's National Scenic Areas*. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No.255.

