

Sustainable Development and Management of Protected Areas



ALFRED TOEPFER NATURAL HERITAGE SCHOLARSHIP 2018 STUDY TOUR REPORT

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Vilnius, 2019



ALFRED
TOEPFER
STIFTUNG
F.V.S.



„I felt like a hedgehog in the labyrinth of hedges of Albion...”

S.D.

Acknowledgements

First time when I was participating in the EUROPARC Conference in Switzerland I dreamed to be part of this huge protected areas family. So now I could say loud “Dream carefully, because dreams come true” and I would like to thank for making this dream come true to the Alfred Toepfer Foundation and the EUROPARC Federation for giving me the opportunity to carry on this incredible experience!

The Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarship has been great opportunity for networking, for visiting protected areas in United Kingdom and to get more best practice for managing landscape in protected areas. The visits to the parks and the study would not have been possible without the help of many people.

I really appreciate help of the protected areas staff for their support regarding my study trip. Sorry if I forgot to thank to someone. I have met lot of people with a big inspiration about working in and with protected areas.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to special people which made my study trips meaningful and very rewarding for me as an environmental personality.

Phil Holden. Our communication since the beginning of my study trip planning has been special. Thank you for your time visiting Shropshire Hills AONB and thanks for a really tasty pudding!

Matthew Hawkins - your experience working in protected areas and making landscape protection decisions is truly impressive. Thank you very much for your time and great journey through one of the most beautiful national parks I have ever visited – Cairngorms National Park. Hope one day you will visit Lithuania and will meet with bisons.

Roger de Freitas nice to know you since 2016 when The Europarc Conference was in Switzerland and these years we were checking gravity in London. Thank you for your advices and new interesting books in my home library.

I am grateful to all the people I met on my journey. Without your help, travel would not be as rich as it was! I sincerely invite you to visit Lithuania!

I cannot forget my family! I would first like to thank my family, for the continuous support they have given me throughout my time in with their big support and love they always, who help me reach to this point. I admire my mom and aunt's patience and confidence in my driving skills for the first time on the left side of the road!

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Summary

The landscape is one of the most important elements of the identity of state parks, and the richness and conservation potential of ecosystems, species, all biodiversity also depends on the quality of its conservation and management. Many different types of landscapes and biotopes have developed in Europe, along with the associated flora and fauna, whose survival depends considerably on continued use.

Most of the protected areas are unique landscapes that make up the character and richness of their regions. However, they are also large-scale protected areas, managed by a responsible administrative body and by different tools.

To preserve the landscape values of protected areas it is necessary to strengthen the implementation of the principles of landscape protection in municipal and local level spatial planning, methodological justification in state park landscape management projects, principles of rational use.

Lithuania have integrated systems of protected areas. The main goals of these territories are to protect natural and cultural heritage and to provide recreational opportunities, primarily for ecotourism. Today we face with challenges in balancing protection and use.

This report after study trips in United Kingdom shows various landscape perception and policy tools for management in different categories of protected areas which are under pressure from various drivers of change such as urbanization, infrastructure development, intensive recreation, etc. Also, how these large-scale protected areas are managed and monitored.

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction of author's curriculum, motivations and expectations

"It is never too late to learn something. The future is the only thing we can change"



I am Agnė Jasinavičiūtė 31 years old geographer from Lithuanian, who cannot calm down and is always taking on a new challenge, such as apply to The Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarship and then embark on undiscovered destinations.

From the very beginning of my studies I was interested in protected areas (PA), their principles of management and benefits. Both bachelor's and master's thesis were dealt with the prospects for the establishment of new PAs in Lithuania. After university I got the job in State Service for the Protected Areas under the Ministry of Environment, where I am able to put my theoretical knowledge into practice.

Over 6 years of work experience I have grown as a specialist and am currently as a head of Landscape protection division where my working area is based on protection, management and sustainable development and planning of PAs. Decision-making in the most sensitive areas of the country inspired to look even higher standards and more convenient management tools and this also requires raising personal knowledge. Despite the fact that main aim of the PA's in Lithuania is the exceptional landscape - we still know too little about it.

I teach the subject of the protected areas at Vilnius University. The purpose of this lecture is to develop competences in the field of geography studies - understanding of the relationship between territorial environment and geography, understanding of landscape protection as a land management activity, constructive approach to the protection of landscape and biodiversity. These days, students are very curious and ordinary foreign knowledge is not enough. They need more information than just national protected areas to interest them. In

order for our future generations to acquire the knowledge and responsibilities about the importance of the landscape, we want to communicate as much information as possible to them.

My interests are focused on landscape management, so where was no doubt to visit United Kingdom, which has the oldest and deepest traditions of the landscape protection. More over our system of protected areas is very similar to United Kingdom. Study trips in National parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in United Kingdom (England and Scotland) where is an interesting range of protected landscapes that are under pressure from different drivers of change such as urbanization/development, intensive recreation helped me to broaden my knowledge. Also, I am motivated to learn new ideas how to manage and monitor these large-scale areas. Another important aspect of the study trips was to collect different examples about raising awareness and understanding of protected areas nature and landscapes and bring it back home.

It is big challenge to take all the best practice of landscape protection and management in United Kingdom and bring it to Lithuania, but small steps also could make big changes.

As my motto says it is never too late to learn something, I would like to leave here short message about my country Lithuania for people who will read this report and maybe one day we will meet in my country - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WH9mTk1mxkl>.

1.2. Protected areas in Lithuania and home institution

Lithuania has its very own system of protected areas, and long-standing traditions of the protection of natural and cultural heritage. Protected areas are established not only for the protection of natural and cultural values, but also for their adaptation to allow public use and access, be it for educational, recreational or other purposes.

The system of Lithuania's protected areas has been developed for over three decades, and now 82 years have passed since the first protected area was established (first protected area was established on 1937 Žuvintas strict nature reserve). Today protected areas in Lithuania cover 17,64 % of the total area (excluding marine protected areas) (figure 3). Lithuania's complete system of protected areas consists of 5 strict reserves (two of which are cultural), around 400 reserves of different types, 5 national parks, 30 regional parks, 1 biosphere reserve, 30 biosphere polygons, 3 recuperative plots and many natural and cultural heritage objects.

Natura 2000 network covers about 14 % of the total country territory. Lithuania has four properties of outstanding universal value that have been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Probably the most popular site of UNESCO World Heritage List in Lithuania is Curonian Spit (national park), which is an outstanding example of a landscape of sand dunes that is under constant threat from natural forces like wind and tide.

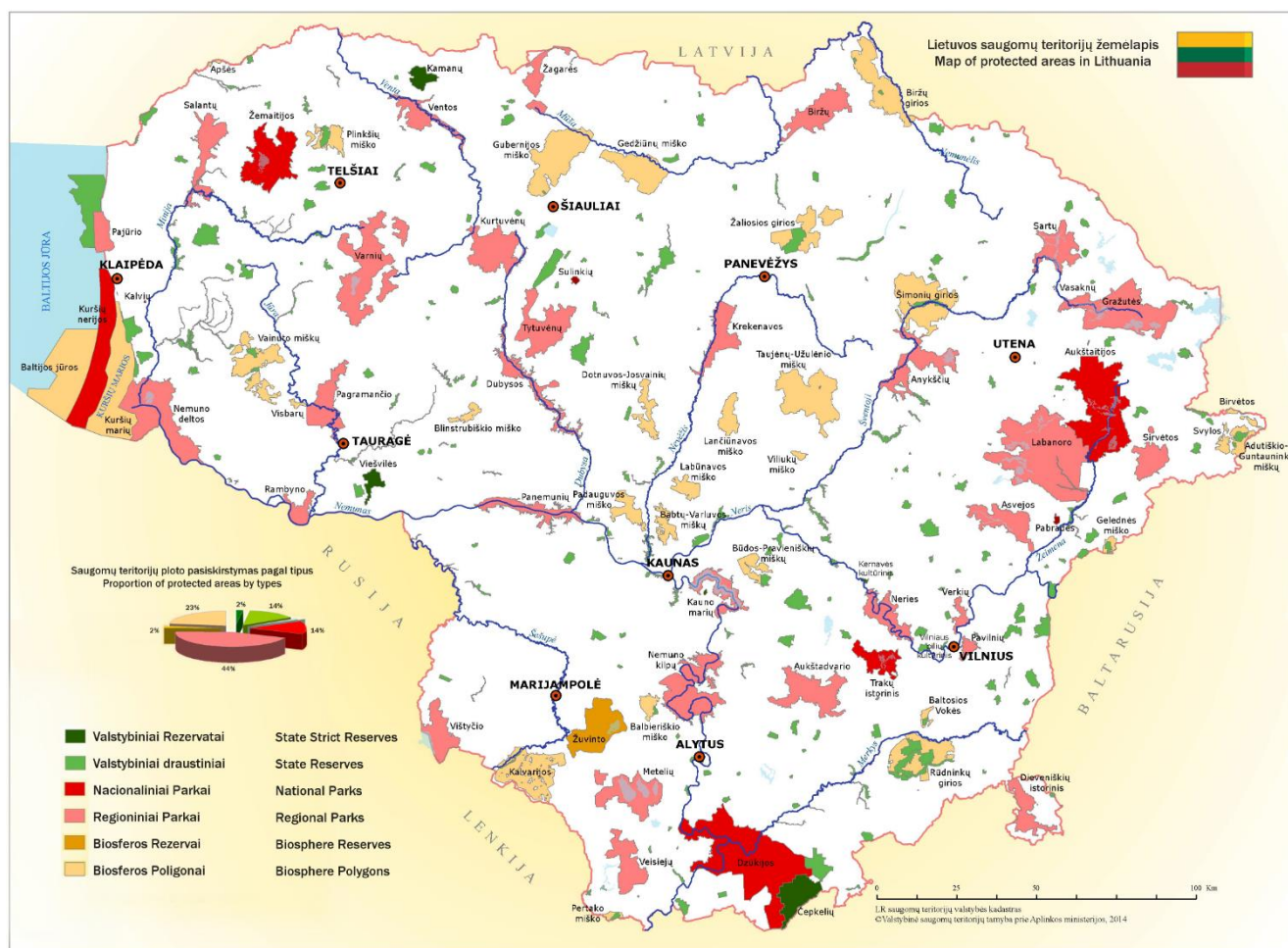


Figure 1 System of Protected Areas in Lithuania, 2017 (State Service for the Protected Areas).

It would be impossible to meet the set goals and objectives of protected areas without institutions that are directly responsible for the protection of natural and cultural landscape and biological diversity. In fact, several institutions are needed for this task, including the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of culture. The State Service for the Protected Areas under the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of culture (SSPA) is the main body responsible for the conservation of these values, as implemented by the administrations. The mission of the SSPA is to realize state policies related to the protection and management of protected areas. It does this by establishing protected areas administrations, controlling their activities, ensuring that regimes

for the protection and use of protected areas are followed, organizing, coordinating and controlling special protected areas management programs, managing the protected areas and natural heritage objects records, registering new protected areas, managing the State Cadaster of Protected Areas, and other functions as needed.

1.3. General introduction to the topic

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be the driving force behind much of the global work on sustainable development and conservation for the next decade, until 2030. It is important to align protected area policies within SDGs. **Protected areas, far from only being important for nature conservation, are increasingly recognized as key tools in achieving a number of these goals.**

Protected areas are probably the most effective tools for conserving species and natural habitats. They are essential for preserving forests' ecosystems, while also contributing to the livelihoods and wellbeing of local communities. For example, well-planned and well-managed protected areas can help safeguard freshwater and food supplies thus reducing poverty, as well as minimize the impact of climate change. Pristine lands help conserve traditional customs (which take place in the heart of the forests), while meeting the vital needs of the communities. The traditional patterns of land use that have created many of the world's cultural landscapes contribute to biodiversity, support ecological processes, provide important environmental services, and have proven sustainable over the centuries. Protected landscapes can serve as living models of sustainable use of land and resources, and offer important lessons for sustainable development.

IUCN Category V - Protected Landscape or Seascape – protected area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value: and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values. This category plays an important role in conservation at the landscape/seascape scale, particularly as part of a mosaic of management patterns, protected area designations. Protected landscapes provide a framework when conservation objectives need to be met over a large area (e.g., for top predators) in crowded landscapes with a range of ownership patterns, governance models and land use. In addition, traditional systems of

management are often associated with important components of agrobiodiversity or aquatic biodiversity, which can be conserved only by maintaining those systems.

Landscape protection is one of the most challenging areas in balancing use and protection goals, so professionals working in the field need to be well versed in not only the specifics of the area, but also the various methods and tools to achieve those goals.

One of the legal cornerstones in the landscape sector is **the European Landscape Convention** which stresses that great importance in the conservation of the diversity of landscape is attributed to the **integration of provisions on landscape protection, use, management and planning** in the environmental, territorial planning, agricultural, social and other policy areas with direct or indirect impact on landscape as this allows ensuring that landscape issues are excluded from the narrow sphere of public administration and that more consideration is shown for landscape objectives when making various decisions in other sectors. However, the provisions of these documents are not always transposed to national legislation which makes it difficult to ensure the targeted formation of the national landscape policy and the integration of its provisions in other sectors.

The formation of sustainable landscape is inseparable from high quality planning that is intended to ensure the maintenance of stability of landscape ecosystems, the development of the urbanization process by restricting its extensive character and of the harmony of the landscape architectural spatial composition, and conserve natural and cultural values of landscape.

The visual expressiveness and aesthetic potential of landscape decline due to objects of visual pollution in distinctive landscape areas sensitive to such pollution, and due to irrational urbanization processes.

Public participation is one of the key factors that determine the successful implementation of the national landscape policy; therefore it is very important to increase the environmental awareness and activity of the public and develop competences in the fields of landscape protection, management and use through the education and information of the population on their impact on the environment and the opportunities for choosing more environmentally-friendly processes or solutions. **Protected areas only work when they are supported by nearby communities.** Occasionally, their creation inadvertently incites conflict when conservation goals clash with the immediate needs of people.

1.4. Objectives of the study visit

The aim of my study trips was to gain more experience and knowledge about landscape management of protected areas (via spatial planning, communication with local communities), collect new tools and best practices better for Environmental impact assessment (EIA) and strategic environmental assessment (SEA) in order to improve process of landscape management in SSPA and Lithuanian protected areas.

To achieve my aim my plan was to visit several National parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in United Kingdom where is an interesting range of protected landscapes that are under pressure from different drivers of change such as urbanization, development of infrastructure, intensive recreation, climate change.

Thereby the objective was to collect and compare examples how different protected areas are managed and monitored, and how these data are used in decision making for nature conservation in England and Scotland.

In order to reach the aim and objective of this study visit, several activities were implemented:

- Analysis of literature on planned visits to protected areas;
- Discussion with specialists who are responsible for landscape protection planning on a national perspective (e.g. Natural England, National Parks England, and National Association of AONBs);
- Visit of the protected areas' headquarters and discuss with them about the management, operational plans of protected areas, monitoring activities, decision making;
- Field trip on chosen areas – Cairngorms National Park, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park in Scotland, Shropshire Hills AONB, South Downs National park and High Weald AONB in England;
- Presentations about landscape protection and conservation in Lithuania.

1.5. Overview of the tour

In fact, my study trip began even before I received The Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarship. The Europarc Federation Conference on 2018 was held in Scotland, in Cairngorms National Park. So, I had opportunity to visit my first area of interest. Of course, during few days, it is not possible to know the biggest national park in United Kingdom. But

during the workshop “Changing Landscapes – Managing perceptions and expectation of natural and anthropogenic changes in protected landscapes” and few field trips I got the first impression that my second trip to the area would be really impressive and exciting.



Discovering the hidden landscape of Tomintoul and Glenlivet (Jasinaviciute, 2018)

The tour of my study trip supposed to consist of three parts due to work and university issues. So, during three rounds and I had to visit protected areas in Scotland, England and France where is an interesting range of protected landscapes. Unfortunately, the third trip to France (Montagne de Reims Regional Natural Park) did not take place because of the failure to contact local experts who could provide a more extensive presentation of the characteristics of the French protected areas. Hope, that maybe one day there will be other options to visit this area. Last week of the May (May 25 - June1) I have started my tour to **Scotland**. There I had plan to visit Cairngorms National Park and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park.

I have spent three days in Cairngorms National Park. With a great support of Matthew Hawkins, Conservation Manager in Cairngorms National Park authority I have opportunity to visit the most actual places for my study trips. First day was very intensive with meeting with team of Cairngorms National Park authority, travel to Glenfeshie to meet Thomas McDonell the director of conservation in this area and exploring Badenoch – Ruthven, Insh Marshes, Kingussie. Second day was even more spectacular with the views of the areas, which Queen Victoria had

acquired for millions more historically vacant. We have visited Braemar, Lecht Ski centre, Mar Lodge Estate and Derry lodge. During traveling we have discussed about landscape character assessment of national park, photo posts, Snow Roads, Ski recreation, mountain biking and wind turbines, Mar Lodge Estate and Derry lodge.

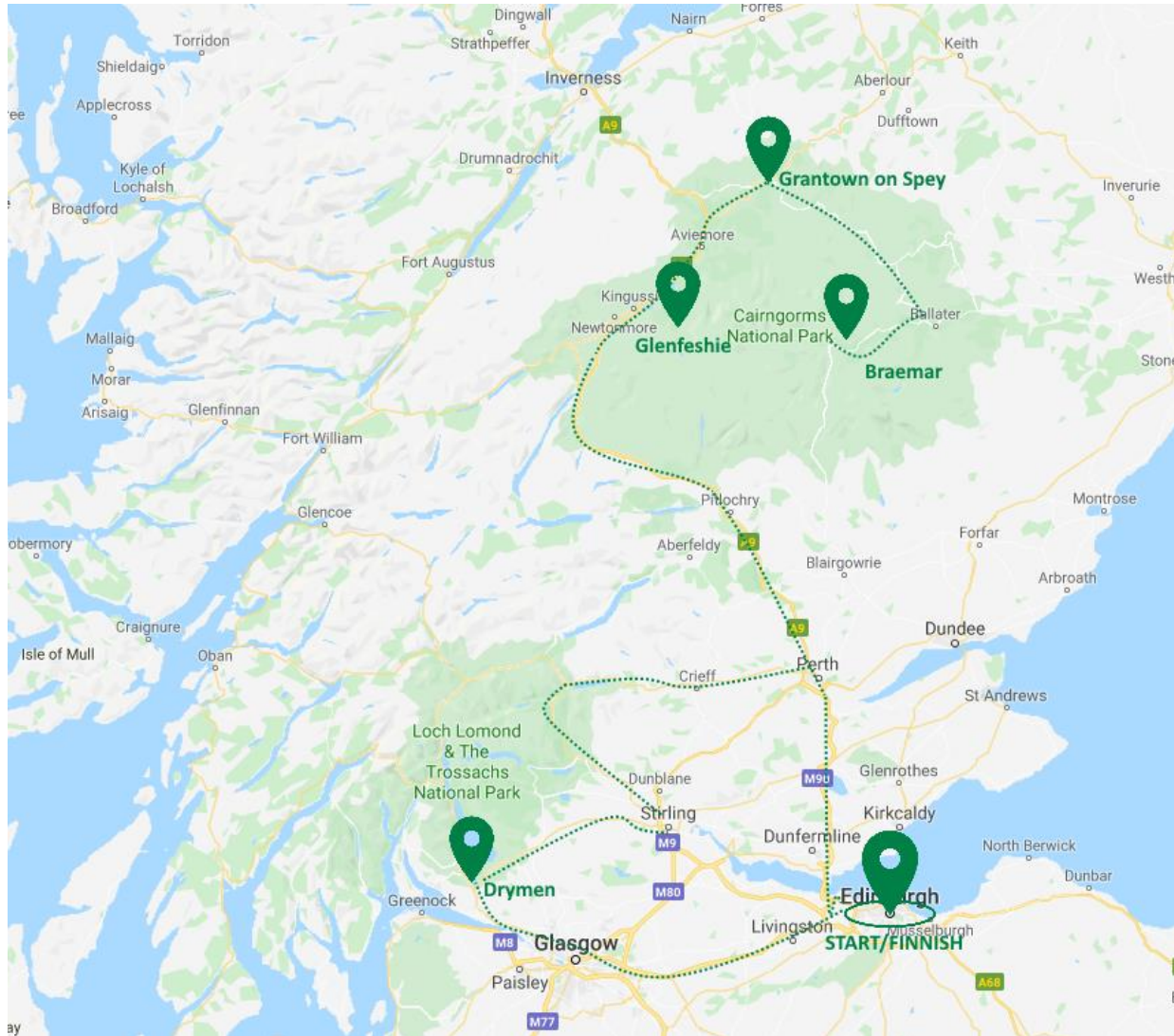


Figure 3 Study trip route in Scotland, 2019

Unfortunately, the other half of the trip was less successful. The scheduled appointment with the specialist from Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority did not took place. However, it was good opportunity to understand the second national park on my own. I have meet ranger in the visitor centre which is based in the pretty village of Balmaha, one of the most popular locations in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. Set on the east side of the iconic Loch Lomond and at the foot of Conic Hill on the famous West Highland Way,

it offers stunning woodlands, water and mountains. Ranger told about the biggest challenges in their jobs and the specifics of the area.

August 6-13th were delegated to explore protected areas in England. 7 days and 1000km to visit Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, South Downs National park and High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. While traveling to planned areas, several unscheduled protected areas were visited along the way – Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

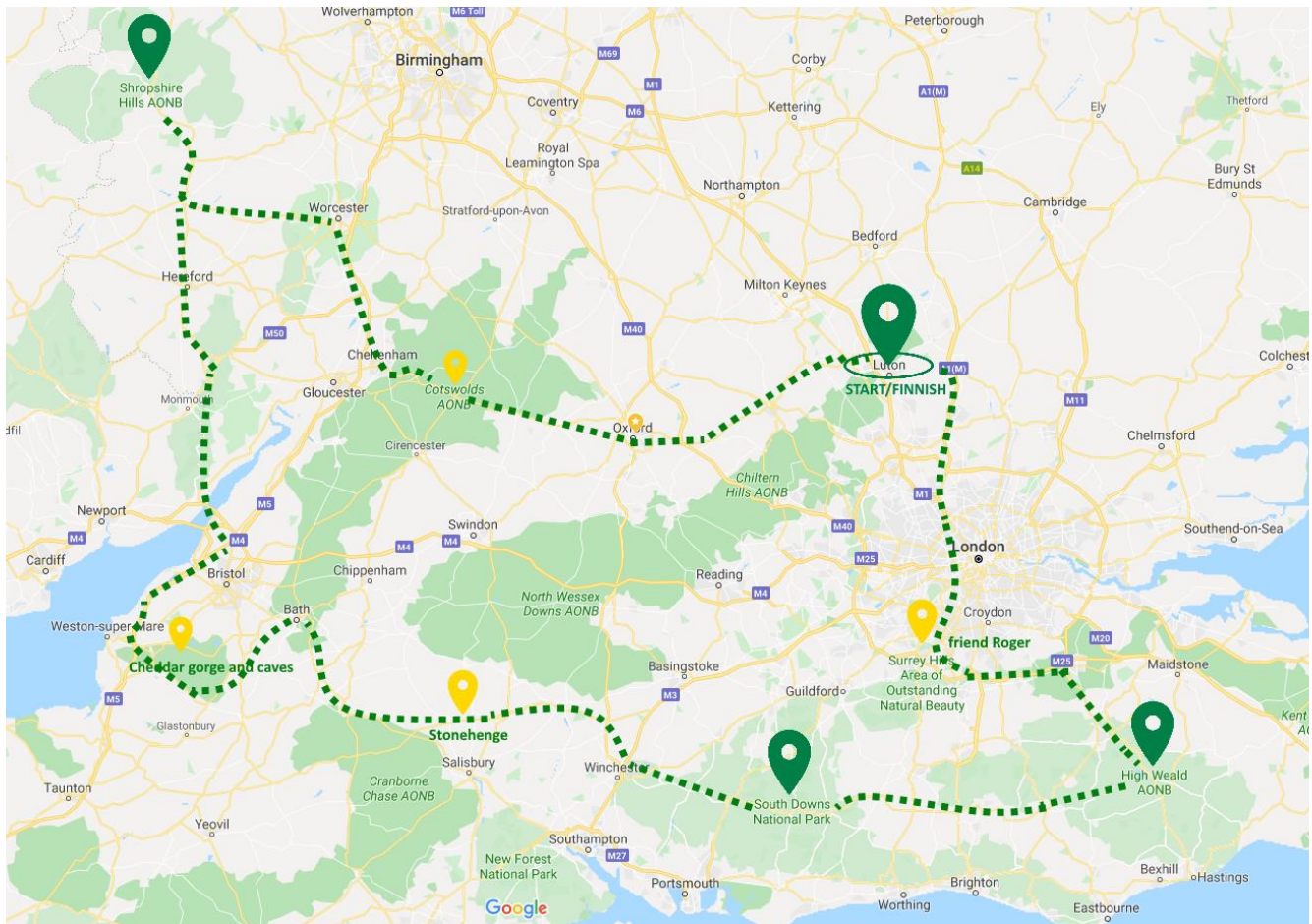


Figure 4 Study trip route in England, 2019

1.6. Short description of visited protected areas

Main reason for choosing these protected areas in general was because National parks and AONB (or Scotland's NSA) in United Kingdom are well known for their strong laws and firmly established framework to protect, manage and monitor the landscape. What is more England has very strong national perspective on how they are implementing the European Landscape

Convention for all landscapes in England (for me it's very interesting how they adopt National Character Area (NCA) profiles in the management of protected areas).

When I was choosing protected areas for my study visit another very important reason was landscape type. It should be as more as possible similar to Lithuanian state parks. Also, the main challenges for protected areas administration (new infrastructure, urban development, intensive recreation etc.). What type of tools, skills, financial resources staff is using for management of protected areas. Moreover, how they are implementing awareness-raising tools of landscape in practice.

1.6.1.Scotland, Cairngorms National Park

Breathtaking...if there is one word to sum up the landscape, wildlife, views and experiences of the Cairngorms National Park, then this would be it.

Cairngorms National Park is a national park in northeast Scotland, established in 2003. It was the second of two national parks established by the Scottish Parliament, after Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, set up in 2002. It is the largest national park in the United Kingdom and is bigger than Luxembourg. The park covers the Cairngorms range of mountains, and surrounding hills.

The Cairngorms National Park covers an area of 4,528 km². The mountain range of the Cairngorms lies at the heart of the national park, but forms only one part of it, alongside other hill ranges such as the Angus Glens and the Monadhliath, and lower areas like Strathspey and upper Deeside. Three major rivers rise in the park: the Spey (the second longest river in Scotland), the Dee, and the Don. The Cairngorms themselves are a spectacular landscape having a large area of upland plateau. National Park area is home to four of the five highest mountains in the United Kingdom.

The national park is classified as a Category V protected area by the IUCN. It is little bit different than IUCN defined "National Parks" because since historical time human activity is visible, including agriculture, historical deforestation, overgrazing by sheep and deer, and extensive 20th century afforestation with introduced tree species (particularly conifers), have resulted in landscapes which are best described as semi-natural.

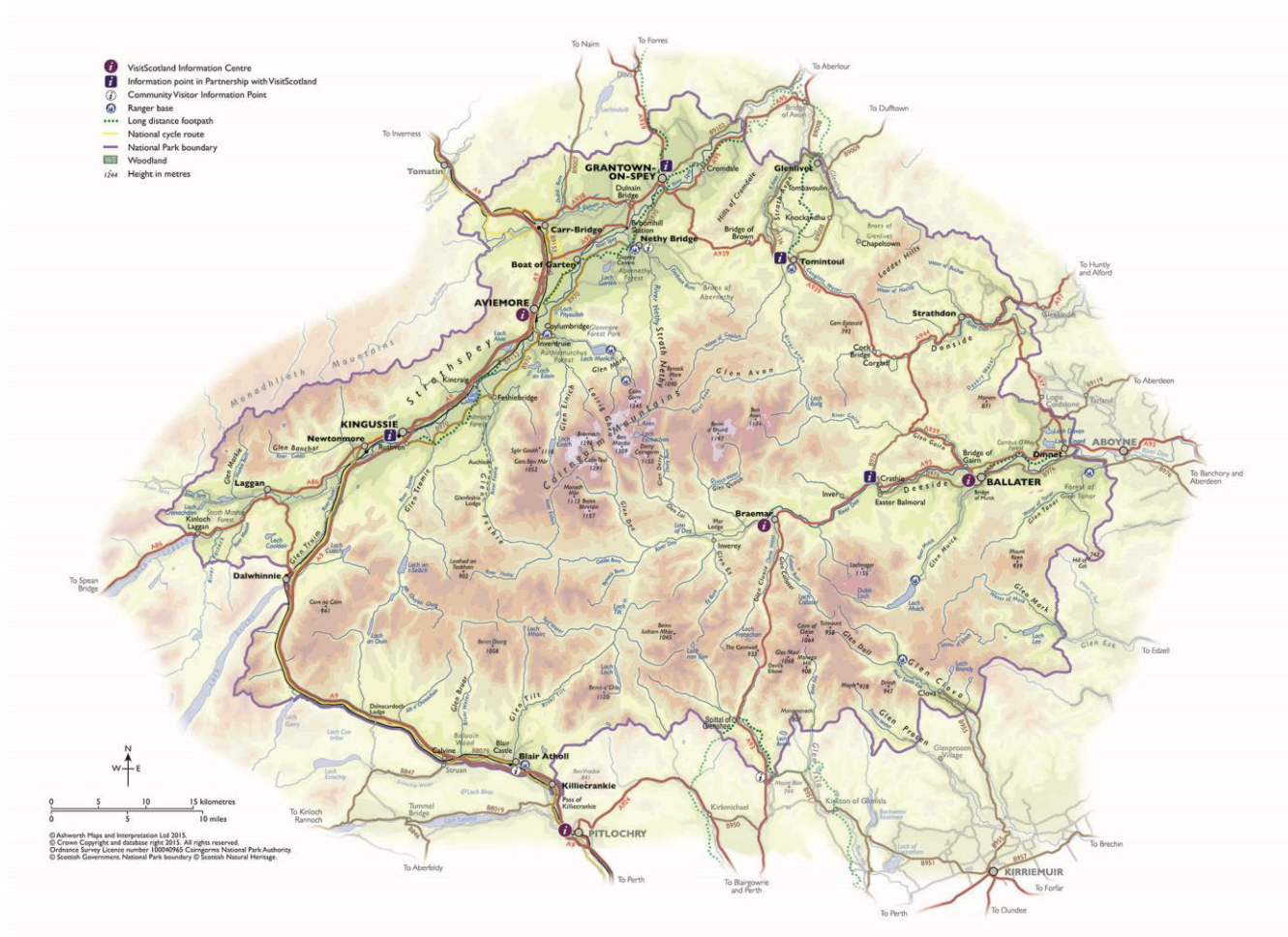


Figure 5 Cairngorms National Park Map (<https://blog.visitcairngorms.com/>)

The Cairngorm mountains provide a unique alpine semi-tundra moorland habitat, home to many rare plants, birds and animals. The straths and glens of the national park feature a type of ancient woodland known as the Caledonian forest. The expanse of pinewood that stretches from Glen Feshie to Abernethy forms the largest single area of this habitat remaining in Scotland. In these forests can be found bird species such as capercaillie, black grouse, Scottish crossbill etc.

The national park is administered by a national park authority, which is an executive non-departmental public body of the Scottish Government. Under the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, national parks in Scotland have four aims:

- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
- To promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;
- To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public;

-
- To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

The Park Authority works with partners, defined as "business, land owners, communities and charities". The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017 - 2022 includes three long-term goals: conservation, visitor experience and rural development.

1.6.2.Scotland. Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National is a national park in Scotland centred on Loch Lomond and the hills and glens of the Trossachs, along with several other ranges of hills. It was the first of the two national parks established by the Scottish Parliament in 2002. The park consists of many mountains and lochs, and the principal attractions are scenery, walking, and wildlife. The park straddles the Highland Boundary Fault which divides it into two distinct regions - lowland and highland - which differ in underlying geology, soil types and topography. The area has long been popular with tourists, with the Trossachs being one of the first parts of Scotland to become a recognized tourist destination due to its position on the southern edge of the Highlands and to the quality of the scenery, which may be considered to represent a microcosm of a typical Highland landscape. In 2017 there were 2.9 million visits to the park. The park is popular with walkers, with routes ranging from easy family strolls through to hillwalking on the park's highest summits.

The national park is administered by a national park authority, which is an executive non-departmental public body of the Scottish Government. The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority is a full planning authority, exercising powers that would otherwise be exercised by local authorities, and also takes responsibility for managing access to the countryside that elsewhere falls to local authorities. Aside from the planning and access function, the national parks authority has considerable flexibility as to how the four aims are achieved. It can, for example, acquire land, make bylaws and management agreements, provide grants, offer advice, and undertake or commission research. The national park authority is run by a board, consisting of 17 members.

1.6.3.England. Shropshire Hills AONB

We value tranquility. We need quiet places to recharge our batteries. And yet they are growing fewer by the year. There may be just three remaining rural idylls in England. The Shropshire Hills is one.

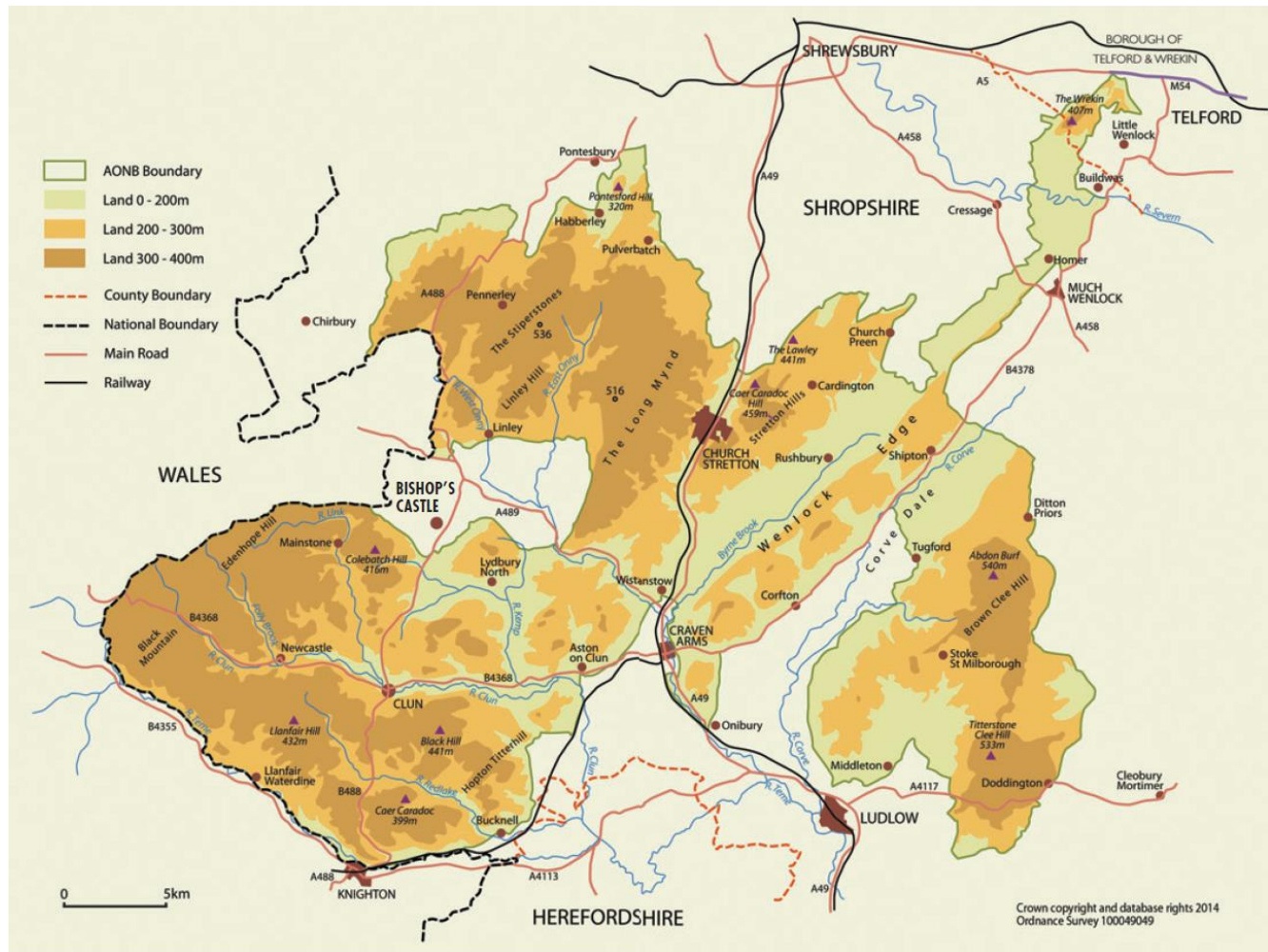


Figure 6 Shropshire Hills AONB map (www.bishopscastle.co.uk/tourism/).

The Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located in the south of the county, extending to its border with Wales. Designated in 1958 the area encompasses 802 km² of land primarily in south-west Shropshire, taking its name from the upland region of the Shropshire Hills.

The Shropshire Hills provide a dramatic link between the Midlands and the Welsh mountains. There is no single dominant feature or landform. Instead it's a landscape of contrast due to the variety of geology unequalled in any area of comparable size in Britain. This diverse landscape

has shaped the character of the Shropshire Hills as a patchwork of hills, farmland, woods and rivers. Along with wildlife, heritage, scenic views, tranquility, culture and opportunities for enjoyment, this is why the area was designated over sixty years ago, in 1958. The main purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance these special qualities.

Centuries of farming have shaped the landscape. 70% of the AONB is grazing land, and below the moorland and rough grass hilltops and commons lies a patchwork of fields rich in hedgerows and veteran trees. Ancient woodlands, wildflower meadows and orchards also survive, each habitat with its characteristic wildlife plants and invertebrates. Red grouse, skylark and dormouse are among the great variety of birds and mammals.

The largest town in the AONB is Church Stretton (sometimes known as "Little Switzerland"), with a population of about 3,000. The only other town within the boundaries of the AONB is Clun, with fewer than 1,000 people, in the Clun Valley. Ludlow, the largest town in South Shropshire, lies just south of the AONB.

1.6.4. England. South Downs National Park

The South Downs National Park is England's newest national park, having become fully operational on 1 April 2011. The park, covering an area of 1,627 km² in southern England, stretches for 140 km from Winchester in the west to Eastbourne in the east through the counties of Hampshire, West Sussex and East Sussex. The national park covers the chalk hills of the South Downs (which on the English Channel coast form the white cliffs of the Seven Sisters and Beachy Head) and a substantial part of a separate physiographic region, the western Weald, with its heavily wooded sandstone and clay hills and vales. The South Downs Way spans the entire length of the park and is the only National Trail that lies wholly within a national park.

The South Downs National Park is a living, working and ever-changing landscape, shaped by its underlying geology and its human history. It has many special qualities which together define its sense of place and attract people to live and work in the area and visit the National Park. These special qualities need to be understood, appreciated, conserved and enhanced. The special qualities reflect both the engagement with stakeholders of the National Park and technical evidence.

The idea of a South Downs National Park goes back to the 1920s, when public concern was mounting about increasing threats to the beautiful down land environment, particularly the impact of indiscriminate speculative housing development on the eastern Sussex Downs. The South Downs was the last of the original twelve recommended national parks to be designated. Extensive damage to the chalk down land from 1940 onwards through arable farming, and a resulting decline in sheep grazing, militated at an early stage against further work on designation. When in 1956 the National Parks Commission came to consider the case for the South Downs as a national park, it found designation no longer appropriate, noting that the value of the South Downs as a potential national park had been reduced by cultivation.



Figure 7 South Downs National Park map, South Downs National Park Management Plan.

On 31 March 2009 the Secretary of State, Hilary Benn, announced that the South Downs would be designated a national park and on 12 November 2009 he signed the order confirming the designation. The new national park came into full operation on 1 April 2011 when the new South Downs National Park Authority assumed statutory responsibility for it.

The national park is administered by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA). It is responsible for promoting the statutory purposes of the national park and the interests of the

people who live and work within it. The SDNPA is a public body, funded by central government, and run by a board of twenty-seven members. The board consists of 7 national members, appointed by the environment secretary by means of an open recruitment process; 14 local authority nominees drawn from the 15 local authorities covering the park area with Adur and Worthing opting to share a place; and 6 parish council representatives, two for each county.

1.6.5.England. High Weald AONB

The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is in south-east England. Covering an area of 1,450 km². It is the fourth largest Area of Outstanding Beauty in England and Wales. It is characterised by an attractive landscape containing a mosaic of small farms and woodlands, historic parks, sunken lanes and ridge-top villages.



Figure 8 High Weald AONB map

The High Weald is one of England's Finest Landscapes – a historic countryside with a surprise around each corner. Rolling hills give ever-changing views as you move from ridge-top to secluded valley; through shady woods and fields of grazing animals – passing isolated farms and cottages along the way.

At the time of the Domesday Book, 1086, the High Weald was the most wooded natural area in England. Today, 24.6% of the AONB is woodland, compared with a national average of about 9%. Of this, 17.6% is ancient woodland; in other words, over half the area's woodlands are ancient. The area of the High Weald AONB represents only 1% of England yet it has 3.4% of England's woodlands, making it one of the most densely wooded landscapes.

All this gives the High Weald a wooded appearance when viewed from a distance from a hilltop, but on closer inspection a close patchwork of small fields, hedges and woods connected by sunken lanes created by centuries of transportation which patterns the rolling wooded ridges and valleys becomes apparent.

The High Weald AONB was designated under the National Park and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 in October 1983. Designation as an AONB gave official recognition to the unique landscape of the High Weald, strengthened the ability of government agencies and local authorities to conserve and enhance the landscape, and provided priority for financial support for these objectives from the principal government agency responsible for AONBs, the Countryside Agency (now Natural England).

1.6.6.England. Unplanned protected areas

The Cotswolds was designated an **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** in 1966 in recognition of its rich, diverse and high-quality landscape. It is the largest of 46 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and the second largest protected landscape in England after the Lake District National Park. The area has a strong geological foundation as it lies upon one of the best-known sections of an outcrop of oolitic limestone that extends across England from Lyme Bay in Dorset to the North Sea coast.

The Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was designated in 1972. It covers 198 km² of the Mendip Hills from Bleadon in the west to the A39 in the east. There are over 400 km of drystone walls in the Mendip Hills AONB. They can all be considered vital and vulnerable, but some are more vulnerable and vital than others. The special qualities that create the Mendip Hills sense of place and identity are: evidence of human settlement; A tough landscape famous for adventure and getting in touch with nature; Distinctive limestone ridge; the cave; diverse and visible geology; views towards.

2. Analysis

In this section, I will review key aspects of the study trip through the main topics like planning and management of protected areas in Scotland and England. I will also compare the peculiarities of Lithuanian protected areas and the countries visited. It is worth noting that the duration of the trip may not have led to a complete understanding of the protected areas visited. Whenever you are traveling, you focus on the positive and professionals want to present good practice first. However, getting a first impression is enough with document analysis and a few days in the field with professionals. Of course, as I have already mentioned, the plan was not fully implemented due to busyness of the specialists from selected protected areas authorities. As a result, some protected areas were visited more independently and detailed analyzes failed.

It is very valuable to meet not only professionals working in protected areas but also local people who live in protected areas. Unfortunately, there were not many such meetings due to lack of time. Despite some problems, all my trips have been valuable to me, both as specialists in protected areas and as geographer who wants to discover the world.

During my trip, I visited only a small part of the United Kingdom protected areas and it was only in Scotland and England. There are slight differences depending on the country protected area e.g. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are only in England (they are as a separate protected areas) and in Scotland there are National Scenic Areas. Despite the differences national parks are in a unified system throughout the all United Kingdom.

In the United Kingdom there are 15 members in the National Park family, which are protected areas because of their beautiful countryside, wildlife and cultural heritage. People live and work in the National Parks and the farms, villages and towns are protected along with the landscape and wildlife. National Parks welcome visitors and provide opportunities for everyone to experience, enjoy and learn about their special qualities. There are 15 members in the United Kingdom National Park family: 10 in England (cover 9.3% of the land area), 2 in Scotland (cover 7.2% of the land area) and 3 in Wales (cover 19.9.% of the land area).

The aims and purposes of national parks are laid out by law. The 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, was a law made by parliament that set out what our national parks would be like. There are slightly different aims and purposes for the national parks in Scotland, compared to other national parks in England and Wales. When the aims and

Between 1951 and 2000 national parks only existed in England and Wales. However, the National Parks (Scotland) Act led to the designation of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs and Cairngorms National Park.

National Parks, The Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (England)

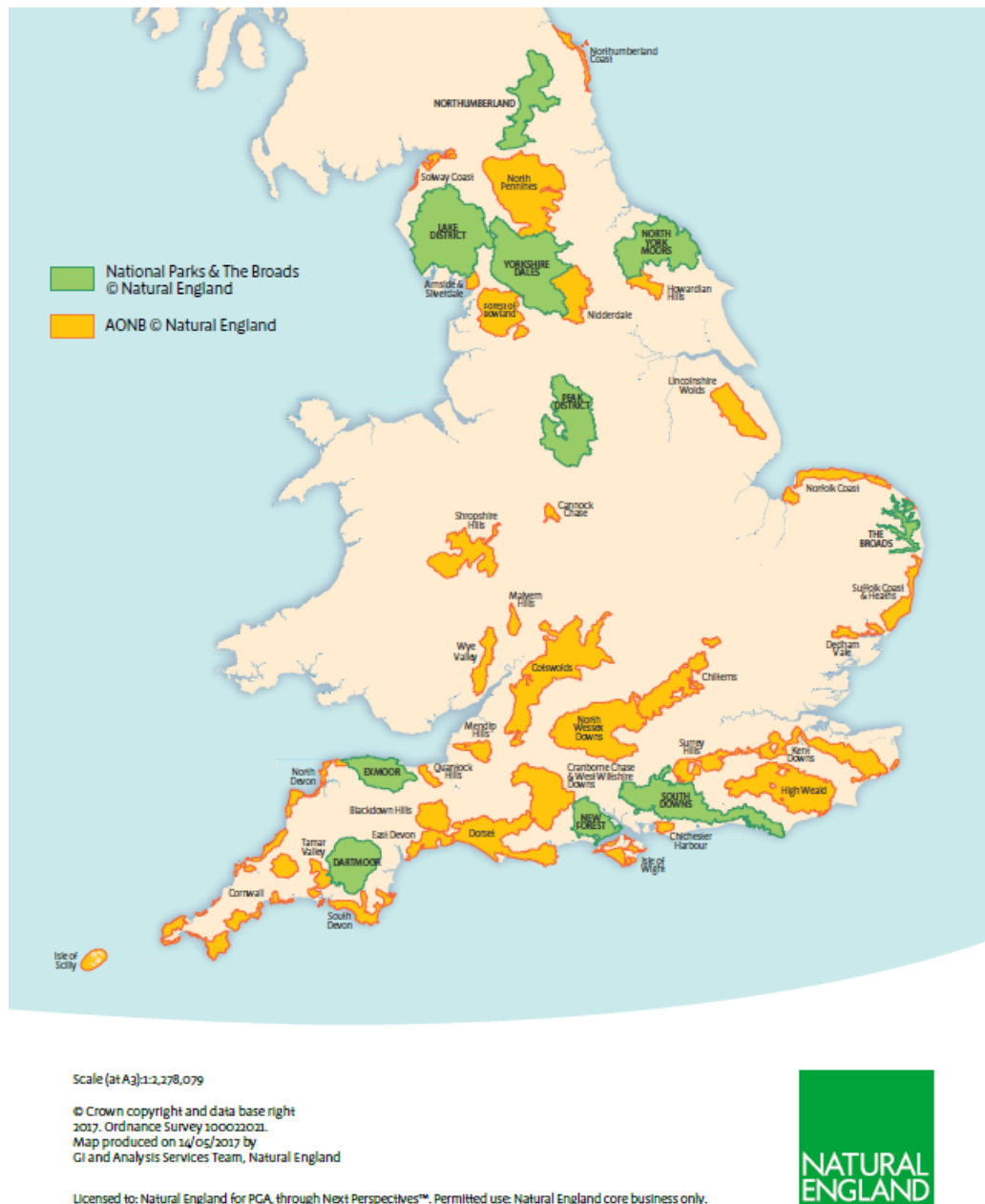


Figure 9 National Parks, The Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (England)

Also, in United Kingdom there is different type of Protected Areas - An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which is a designated exceptional landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are precious enough to be safeguarded in the national interest. AONBs are protected and enhanced for nature, people, business and culture.

No other country in the world has Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – it is a uniquely British designation that belongs to a worldwide Protected Landscape Family. There are 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the United Kingdom. AONBs cover about 18% of the United Kingdom countryside. AONBs protect some of the United Kingdom's most important and sensitive habitats.

2.1. Management Plans of Protected Areas

2.1.1. Partnership Plans of National Parks in Scotland

Scotland's landscapes rank amongst the best in the world, including wild mountains, pristine rivers and lochs, ancient forests, stunning coastline and islands, all rich in wildlife and history. With landscapes of such quality it would be reasonable to expect to see them recognized, celebrated and protected according to international best practice. However, out of 3500 National Parks in the world, Scotland has only two - Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, established in 2002 and Cairngorms National Park, established in 2003 and extended in 2010. Both national parks serve as models of sustainable development and with that are central to rural economic development and recreation, sustainability, and conservation efforts.

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority and the Cairngorms National Park Authority were established as executive non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) under the provisions of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000.

The Scottish Government provides annual funding to the Park Authorities in the form of Grant in Aid, with which to deliver the 2000 Act's statutory aims as well as other functions and duties conferred on them by the Act.

Under the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, national parks in Scotland have four aims:

- to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage;
- to promote the sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;
- to promote understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public;

- to promote sustainable social and economic development of the communities of the area.

The Park Authorities' role is to co-ordinate the delivery of these four statutory National Park aims, and in this way ensure a sustainable future for these areas.

The 2000 Act requires each of the Park Authorities to prepare a five-year National Park Partnership Plan to serve as an overarching management plan. These plans set out how all those with a responsibility in each park, across public, private and voluntary organizations, will co-ordinate their work to address the most important issues in relation to conservation, visitor experience and rural development.

The Park Authorities are responsible for leading the delivery of their respective plans and for ensuring the National Parks' activities continue to align with our national strategies and aims.



Figure 10. The Partnership Plans of National Parks in Scotland.

The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017 to 2022 was launched on 1 June 2017. The planning system in the Cairngorms National Park is managed by the Cairngorms National Park Authority and the five local authorities which operate in the National Park, with the Park Authority 'calling in' and deciding those applications which are big or important to the National Park.

There are three long-term outcomes set up in the Partnership Plan of The Cairngorms National Park:

-
- **Conservation.** A special place for people and nature with natural and cultural heritage enhanced
 - **Visitor Experience.** People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences
 - **Rural Development.** A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities

The plan is being prepared with long and public consultations with the public and the local communities. The result of the planning process is 9 priorities (3 priorities in each long-term outcome). These 9 priorities are real action which provide a framework for delivering the priorities and actions. In implementing the plan, the Cairngorms National Park authority is working to ensure collaboration between the public and private sectors.

The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan provides strategic direction for five key strategies and plans, which helps to deliver the Partnership Plan's long-term outcomes through close partnership working with different sectors:

- **Active Cairngorms.** The outdoor access strategy for the National Park;
- **Cairngorms Nature.** Sets out the National Park's conservation priorities;
- **Economic Strategy.** Sets out the economic priorities for the National Park;
- **Local Development Plan.** Sets out the policies for land use planning within the National Park;
- **LEADER Local Development Strategy.** Sets out the priorities for promoting community led local development to support a sustainable rural economy in the National Park;

There are well-established partnerships and delivery mechanisms in the National Park. The National Park Partnership brings together all organizations with a responsibility for delivery across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Now, on 2019 Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan has almost reached the half way mark and the Park Authority could discuss progress with the partners for the near future. The current plan which was launched in 2017 now is valued with a good progress across the main areas of work in conservation, visitor experience and rural development. The Heritage Lottery funded Tomintoul and Glenlivet Landscape Partnership Project, supported by the Cairngorms National Park Authority, is delivering a number of visitors facing projects such as a new visitor center and bird hide, as well as the area being awarded Dark Skies status.



Tomintoul and Glenlivet Discovery Centre and Bird hide in Moray village (Jasinaviciute, 2018)

The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Partnership Plan 2018 to 2023 was launched on 8 March 2018. Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority is responsible for deciding all planning applications in the National Park area.

The geographical conditions of the area are different than The Cairngorms National Park. The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park is close to the largest city of Glasgow, which means that the park is heavily loaded with more pressure due to the natural nature of the area and intensive use of recreational resources. The directions of the Partnership plan are focused on overcoming these challenges:

- Conserving and enhancing the area's special landscape.
- Facilitating better integrated management of land and water to provide wider benefits for people and nature.
- Encouraging people of all abilities and backgrounds to enjoy the outdoors.
- Supporting a thriving visitor economy.
- Investing in towns and villages built and historic environment, public spaces and infrastructure.
- Pressure on available resources to invest across all communities and landscapes.

- Building capacity in local communities to support their development.



Discussion with Tom Weir in Balmaha about his active campaigns for the protection of the Scottish environment and in particular his beloved Loch Lomond (Jasinaviciute, 2019).

2.1.3. Management Plans of National Parks in England

National Parks cover almost 10% of England. They contain stunning landscapes, are home to important wildlife and are rich in cultural heritage. Thousands of people live within the National Parks and care for them on a daily basis, whilst the Parks continue to be a huge draw for millions of people seeking enjoyment, adventure, inspiration or sheer relaxation. The National Park Management Plan is the place where all the differing needs and aspirations for these areas come together.

Under Section 66(1) of the Environment Act 1995, it is the National Park Authority that adopts the National Park Management Plan. However, many other actors are involved in the process of developing the National Park Management plan – local communities, or communities of interest, business companies. Indeed, in many cases it will be others, not the National Park Authority that will be leading on the actions in the Plan. And that is as it should be – these are shared plans.

The National Park Management Plan helps shape the planning policies adopted within the National Park. Guidance accompanying the Government's National Planning Policy Framework explains key issues in implementing policy to protect and enhance the natural environment, including local requirements.

The preparation of any National Park Management Plan will be the product of drawing on and considering local and national priorities, from a wide range of people and organizations and topics. **Involving people in the process is key to ensure the Plan reflects what people want.** Gathering local information or evidence on current conditions within the National Park – for example by using the data contained in State of the Park reports, helps inform decisions.

There are also national priorities that the National Park Authority will need to take into account:

- the purposes of National Parks as enshrined in legislation;
- the shared Vision for National Parks that was agreed between Government and National Parks England by 2030;
- other policy guidance contained in the Defra Circular and Vision for National Parks;
- and key Government policy documents (such as the Biodiversity 2020 Strategy; the Government's Rural Growth Review; or National Heritage Protection Plan).

Because the preparation of the Plan involves a combination of national and local priorities – and is responding to the circumstances of the particular National Park in question, the National Park Management Plans can look quite different. Critical to its success, however, is the way multiple objectives are integrated into the future management of the National Park.

National Park Management Plans are many things, but they are not the document by which all decisions are made up:

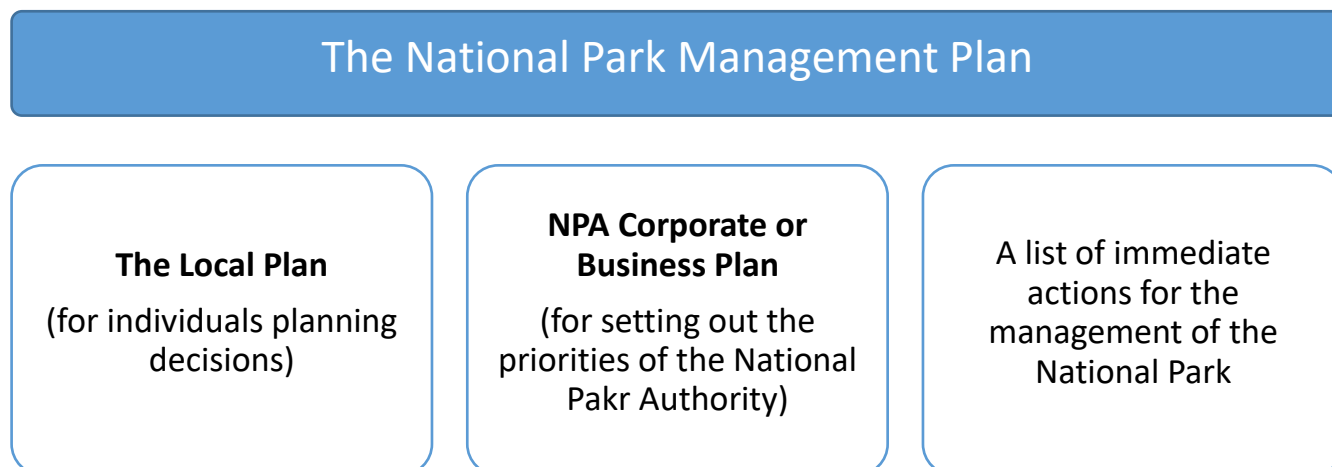


Figure 11. Scheme of the planning documents which need to be prepared for the National Park.

The preparation of the Local Plan and National Park Authority Corporate Plans will be heavily influenced by the National Park Management Plan, but they perform slightly different functions. **The National Park Management Plans are strategic documents that need to look 5-10 years ahead and though some may contain actions for the near future, the emphasis is on the longer term.**

The South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan 2014 to 2019 was launched in order to shape the future of the South Downs National Park. It brings together and coordinates the aspirations of many different partners who help contribute towards the purposes for which it was designated. The Plan is the single most important policy document for the National Park. It consists of a vision, three linked strategic themes and 11 outcomes which set where we would like to get to by 2050. The themes and outcomes work together and have equal importance. The Plan provides a framework for the emerging Park-wide Local Plan.



Discussion with Director of Countryside Policy and Management Andrew Lee and Countryside & Policy Manager Nick Heasman from the South Downs National Park Authority about South Downs National Park Management Plan. (Jasinaviciute, 2019).

Since the plan was developed a lot of things have changed and new challenges about the management of protected landscape came. In order to know how these new challenges and

opportunities influencing life in the National Park on 2019 the review the Plan was made. Also, as a result a new 2019–2024 Priority Action Plan was produced.

As part of the Plan reviewing process the drivers for change as an external factor which influence the actions in the National park were evaluated. There were three groups of the drivers assessed – policy, institutional, economic/ financial. Assessing drivers helps to make the decision to change the outcomes in the Plan and on the areas where the priorities were identified for the next 5 years.

The National Park Authority is responsible for producing the Plan. Of course, the Plan will influence things that happen in the National Park so everyone who cares for, or benefits from, the National Park will have a responsibility to help deliver it.

2.1.4. Management Plans of AONB in England

An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is an area of countryside in England, Wales or Northern Ireland which has been designated for conservation due to its significant landscape value. Areas are designated in recognition of their national importance, by the relevant public body: Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, or the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. In place of AONB, Scotland uses the similar National Scenic Area (NSA) designation. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty enjoy levels of protection from development similar to those of United Kingdom national parks, but unlike with national parks **the responsible bodies do not have their own planning powers**. They also differ from national parks in their more limited opportunities for extensive outdoor recreation.



The Management Plans of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England.

The purpose of **an AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the designated landscape**. There are two secondary aims: meeting the need for quiet enjoyment of the countryside and having regard for the interests of those who live and work there. To achieve these aims, AONBs rely on planning controls and practical countryside management. As they have the same landscape quality, AONBs may be compared to the national parks of England and Wales. National parks are well known to many inhabitants of the UK. However, the National Association of AONBs is working to increase awareness of AONBs in local communities.

It is believed that our countryside will always stay the same, but often this is not true. Perhaps the most vulnerable areas are not the wild, open, high places but the gentle, smaller-scale landscapes. These include hedgerows, spinneys and bluebell woods; heath, marsh and meadow. Under pressure for change, much of this traditional countryside has already vanished. AONB status protects the finest examples which remain. AONBs work - with due care for the rural way of life - to conserve the landscape's outstanding natural beauty and ensure its survival for future generations.



"A millionaire couldn't buy these views and they're yours for free". Landscape of the Shropshire Hills AONB. (Jasinaviciute, 2019).

Most AONBs continue to function as traditional, but well-farmed landscapes - it is accepted that the countryside is not a museum and supports a distinct and traditional rural way of life.

The planning and management approach in each individual AONB can vary considerably. Most AONBs fall within more than one local authority area (city, district and/or county). To encourage consistent policies and positive coordination, AONBs have undertaken the following actions:

- The formation of Joint Advisory Committees (or similar bodies - including an experimental Conservation Board established for the Sussex Downs AONB in 1992). These include representatives of not only the different local authorities, but also of landowners, farmers, residents and conservation and informal recreation interests.
- The appointment of AONB officers to coordinate local management operation.
- The preparation of Statements of Intent (or Commitment) and Management Plans.

The Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan. The key components of the Shropshire Hills landscape are the hills, farmed countryside, woodlands, rivers and river valleys. Other special qualities are found in different ways across the whole area, including geology, wildlife, heritage, environmental and scenic quality, tranquility, culture and opportunities for enjoyment.

The 2019-2024 Management Plan aims to influence and guide landowners, organizations and individuals on a wide range of topics by setting out how to best manage the Shropshire Hills landscape. The Plan is divided into three broad sections, and includes local area sections to highlight key issues and priorities:

- Land management supporting natural beauty and landscape;
- Planning for a sustainable economy and communities;
- People enjoying and caring about the landscape.

The Vision for the Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 remains the same as in the previous Plan: The natural beauty of the Shropshire Hills landscape is conserved, enhanced and helped to adapt - by sympathetic land management, by coordinated action and by sustainable communities; and is valued for its richness of geology, wildlife and heritage, and its contribution to prosperity and wellbeing.

The main challenges for which the Plan includes measures:

- Reduce the level of the pressure to the character and quality of the Shropshire Hills landscape (the condition of some of the special qualities of the AONB is declining);
- New ideas for preventing declining of the wildlife;
- Raise the quality of the water and catchment management targets;

- Decrease the pressure of development and increase resources for positive management of the landscape.

The 2019-24 Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan sets out policies for the local authorities, and proposed actions for a wide variety of partners. It was approved by Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council in June 2019.



With Sally Marsh Co-Director from High Weald AONB Partnership about the challenges of managing AONB (Jasinaviciute, 2019).

The High Weald AONB Management Plan.

Over 53% of Wealden District falls within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - a landscape of national importance which was designated as an AONB in 1983. The Plan 2019- 2024 sets out long term objectives for conserving this nationally important landscape and the local authorities' ambitions for how the High Weald will be looked after for the next 5 years. It identifies the components of the character of the High Weald that provide the basis for its national landscape value, sets out a vision for the Area and, crucially, some of the activities that a range of bodies and local people could take to achieve that vision.

Five defining components of character that have made the High Weald a recognizably distinct and homogenous area are - Geol-

ogy, landform and water systems; Settlement; Routeways; Woodland; Field and Heath. Additional components are - Land-based economy and related rural life. Due to intensive life all the communities focus on mixed farming (particularly family farms and smallholdings), woodland management and rural crafts. If this process is not controlled and regulated, the protected landscape may be lost irreversibly.

2.2. Management Measures of Protected Areas

2.2.1. Private Initiative of Rewilding in the Cairngorms National Park

Glenfeshie Estate is very special area of 45.000 acres in the Cairngorms National Park. The landscape of this area is the landscape of superlatives: Ancient Caledonian woodlands intersected by sparkling rivers and lochs, encircled by a mountain-massif which is the most extensive and wildest of its kind in Britain.

Glenfeshie Estate belongs to WildLand Limited, privately held organisation owned by Anders Holch Povlsen. He bought Glenfeshie in 2006. A company based in Aviemore with significant landholdings in Scotland, committed to delivering habitat enhancement at a scale unparalleled in its scope, scale and timeframe, in the UK. Since then he has continued to buy designated sites where there is little obvious commercial opportunity, along with the lands connecting them to create the ability to approach environmental rehabilitation on a landscape scale.

The objective of the organisation is to purchase wild land to protect it against exploitation and to preserve as much wild nature and its beauty as possible for future generations. Over the coming years WildLand plans to re-establish native woodlands to their natural limits, including high-altitude montane woodland. To restore peatlands, wetlands and rivers and at the same time build support and understanding locally, nationally and internationally in Glenfeshie.



A view of Glen Feshie, with the River Feshie in the center (Jasinaviciute, 2019).

Glenfeshie Estate has its own management plan, which is approved of course with the board of the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA). On 2011 Glenfeshie's management team represented the 200-year vision for the whole 43,000 acre internationally designated estate, woodland regeneration, deer, archaeology and outdoor access as well as economics.

WildLand Limited is implementing a lot of activities in Glenfeshie Estate and all these activities are financed by the owner.

Glenfeshie represents one of the most dramatic examples of rewilding in the United Kingdom. Not long ago, it was a deer forest. Under traditional deer management, it emphasized the deer and not the forest. The result across its 17,000 hectares was dying remnants of ancient Caledonian pine forest. High densities of deer were eating every tree seedling trying to grow here.

In 2004, the then Deer Commission for Scotland took action to reduce deer numbers at the request of the new Danish owners. They deployed stalkers in helicopters to reach the furthest points of the glen and remove deer carcasses. This was the start of a concerted cull, which ten years on has resulted in a transformation of the ecosystem. Following the decision in 2006 to restore the forest to its former glory, a deer management plan was introduced aimed at reducing red deer numbers from the current density of around 35 deer km⁻² to less than 5 deer km⁻², the density considered to be compatible with rapidly kickstarting tree seedling regeneration. Scots pine, birch and juniper seedlings now carpet the glen. The woodland is creeping up the mountainsides after hundreds of years in retreat.

The owners of Glenfeshie are now exploring the possibility of reintroducing the long-lost



Birch seedlings are prepared for replanting. At the same time, the specialists are regulating the deer population (Jasinaviciute, 2019).

montane scrub habitats. At Glenfeshie, a decade after taking charge, deer numbers have been reduced to levels that are more in balance with the land's capacity to support them, and new trees emerge every year. Instead of being browsed, they are allowed to gain a foothold, with new Scots pine, birch and juniper thriving.

Glenfeshie's management team is a part of the "Cairngorms Connect" project, during which Glenfeshie's expanding ecosystem will eventually link with Abernethy Forest.

While there is a perception in many countries around the world that private initiatives are not particularly environmentally friendly, but WildLand Limite team is doing really amazing work. All the measures which are implemented in the area are very thoughtful that the most important values will not be compromised.



*A new path is being formed to maintain an open landscape.
(Jasinaviciute, 2019).*

One example where biodiversity is more important than the monetary value of the project is the construction of a new road. The design road has a wetland, but it will be preserved because of the importance of biodiversity and the road design will be adjusted. The forest deck is removed and later used to cover the embankment to give the landscape as natural a view as possible. The width of the road is just enough to accommodate passage clearing machinery. All path parameters are tuned to the location, not vice versa

The owner of the Glenfeshie Estate is taking care not only about place, but also about the people. Conservation capital simply isn't sustainable unless it involves people and delivers the health, well-being and economic benefits that the Scottish Government quite rightly aspires to in its policy ambitions. For Wildland Limited conservation and landscape restoration go hand in hand with investment in a high value, low impact tourism business that seeks to draw in new vitality to the rural economy, along with the visitors who are a growing source of income in the Highlands. Creating and protecting places for people to visit and stay yields economic and employment opportunities in areas that otherwise lack such prospects.



Renovated Ruigh Aiteachain bothy in Glenfeshie (Jasinaviciute, 2019).

When visiting Glenfeshie Estate you have the opportunity to experience a wild landscape in the making. While you are traveling through the area you could stay in the Ruigh Aiteachain bothy. The Glenfeshies Estate invested more than £200,000 in the bothy. A part of the house was introduced to install stairs to the sleeping quarters on the first floor and to meet fire requirements. The stone walls were retained. It has been open to the public and will remain open to the public.

Behind the wheel of Glenfeshie Estate is Thomas MacDonell, who is driving his boss's vision for the land. The next few years will be crucial for the regeneration of Glen Feshie. There's no certainty, of course, that Holch Povlsen will be able to maintain his support for the estate. In a recession, even Denmark's second-richest family could find pouring money into a Highland estate is not the best use of resources. But if the current policy continues the next factor, or maybe the one after that, will really see the benefits of the current work. MacDonell might not be around to see it but it's clear his vision and that of those he works with is shaping the future of the glen.



With Thomas MacDonell, Director of Conservation, Wildland Limited after visiting Glen Feshie Estate (Hawkins, 2019).

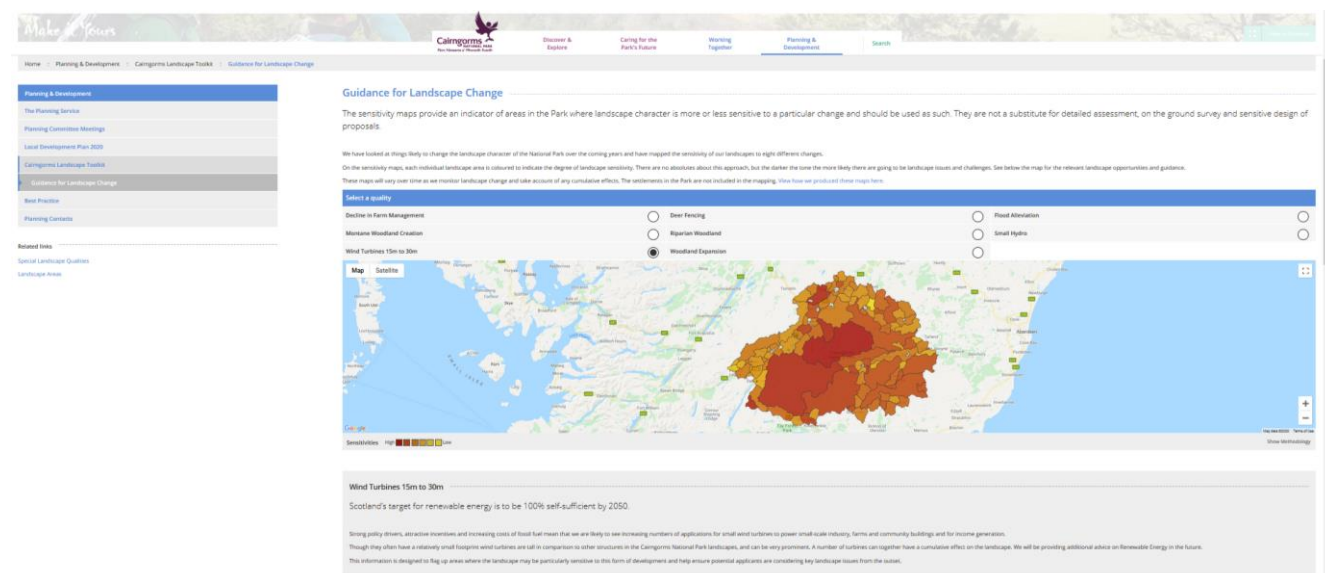
2.2.2. Visual impact assessment tools in the Cairngorms National Park

The landscapes of the Cairngorms National Park are important and development should fit with and enhance the landscape. Landscape evaluation is one of the most challenging tasks. In order to find strong arguments against investors' goals for infrastructure development, specialists of protected areas must have very convenient and valid valuation tools. The Cairngorms National Park authority have really useful tools for decision making:

Cairngorms Landscape Toolkit

The landscape toolkit is a resource to help developers and professionals as well as anyone with a keen interest in learning more about Cairngorms landscapes.

In the Landscape Toolkit there are three sections: baseline landscape character information in the Landscape Areas section; the sensitivity of landscape character to some forms of development, and development-specific guidance in the Landscape Sensitivity section; Descriptions and maps of the characteristics and qualities in the Special Landscape Qualities section.



Cairngorms Landscape Toolkit section "Guidance for landscape change". The map of landscape sensitivity for wind turbines.

Cairngorms Landscape Toolkit is available in the Cairngorms National Park authority (CNPA) website - <https://cairngorms.co.uk/planning-development/landscape-toolkit/>. Also, the Methodology of the Landscape Toolkit is available so it is great opportunity to use good practice and adopt it to your country case. The CNPA has developed a set of Landscape Principles for the Park. 10 principles have been used in the development of the Landscape Toolkit.



The only one wind turbine in the Cairngorms National park (Jasinaviciute, 2019).

The Lecht Ski Centre in the Cairngorms National Park is to generate its own power by installing a wind turbine. Permission for the single, 150kw turbine was approved by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Planning Committee on 2011. The tri-blade turbine, measuring 43.4m to the tip of the blade when vertical, is located on the edge of the car park at the south facing side of the ski centre on a degraded area of moorland. CNPA supports small-scale renewable schemes in the National Park that fit with the local landscape and do not adversely affect the wildlife or enjoyment of others who live nearby.

Landscape Character Assessment.

The Cairngorms National Park Landscape Framework is a tool for conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the Park.

The basic structure of the Framework is provided by the Landscape Character Assessment study, which was commissioned by the CNPA in partnership with the British Geological Survey and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. This study contains detailed descriptions of the Landscape Character Areas with the Park – all of which are formed by the topography, land use history, settlement and development pattern and the way in which people experience the landscape. Such a tool is very handy when preparing spatial planning documents or deciding on possible activities in the area.

2.2.3. Understand the landscape in the Cairngorms National Park

Whether travelling by bike or car, there are plenty of places to stop and take in the natural beauty of the landscape in the Cairngorms National Park. There are a lot of places where you could take a moment to be held and understand the landscape.

Scenic routes.

The Snow Roads Scenic Route is a 90-mile journey from Blairgowrie to Grantown-on-Spey traversing the highest public road in Britain and travelling through the outstanding landscapes of the eastern Cairngorms. Three stunning Scenic Route Installations provide new opportunities to stop and explore this wild and beautiful highland countryside. A Cairngorms photo-post is also located at each installation to allow you to capture changes in the landscape.



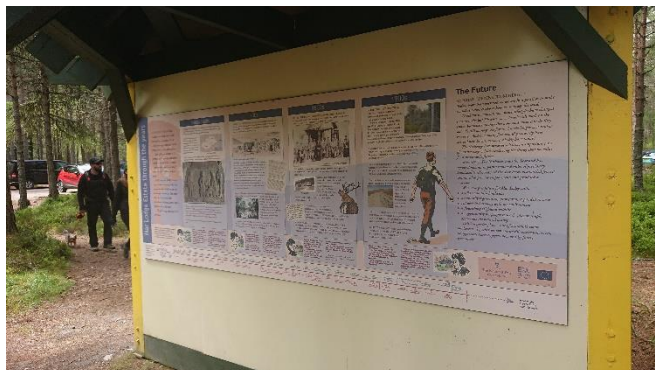
Scenic Route Installations and photo posts in the Cairngorms National park (Jasinaviciute, 2019).

Cognitive paths with informational boards.

Much of the territory is under surveillance by The National Trust for Scotland. It is a Scottish conservation organisation, the largest membership organisation in Scotland and describes itself as "the conservation charity that protects and promotes Scotland's natural and cultural heritage for present and future generations to enjoy".

One of the great examples of The National Trust for Scotland is the trail of Linn of Dee. This short waymarked walk begins with a visit to the beautiful Linn of Dee, where the river cascades

through a narrow chasm, topped by an old stone bridge. It then heads up the lower reaches of Glen Luibeg, passing more waterfalls and through beautiful old pinewoods.



In the trail of Linn of Dee with Matthew Hawkins, Landscapes Manager of the Cairngorms National Park Authority (Jasinaviciute, 2019).

Linn O' Dee is a famous beauty spot, much favoured by Queen Victoria. The River Dee runs through a narrow channel and drops into rocky pools below. The walking trail is going through the woods and picnic spots beside the falls.

There are information boards with more information about the area, so people could enjoy the landscape without the guides.

Cairngorms Scenic Photo Posts.

The Cairngorms Scenic Photo Posts project is a long-term initiative designed and set up by the CNPA with support and funding from the Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage. Citizen science and our future landscapes. This is a citizen science project with the public gathering photographic information that will help better to understand and track landscape and habitat change in the National Park. The project is set to run for ten years from 2015. If you have found the photo-post, you pop your camera, phone or tablet into the bracket, take a photo and then you can register and upload the image on to the Photo Posts website and contribute to a visual record of our changing landscape. CNPA have chosen a variety of locations and some are a short walk away from settlements, others require a bit more of a hike.



Scenic photo-post #5 River Dee view, Braemar in the Cairngorms National park (Jasinaviciute, 2019).

2.2.4. Visual impact assessment in the The Shropshire Hills AONB

The Shropshire Hills is one of England's finest landscapes, designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1958. The protected landscape has no boundaries, it is very important to evaluate the impact wider than just inside the boundaries of the protected area.



The Ironbridge power stations refers to a series of two power stations that occupied a site on the banks of the River Severn at Buildwas in Shropshire, England. It is out of the Shropshire Hills AONB but it has (already had) big visual impact on the aesthetic view of the landscape. In the end of the

2019 these Ironbridge cooling towers were demolished. But new plans of the Ironbridge Power Station site redevelopment are coming.



The Ironbridge Cooling Tower visible from the Shropshire Hills AONB The Wrekin Summit before the demolition (Jasinaviciute, 2019).

After the demolition of the Ironbridge Power Station site the owners of the area are preparing redevelopment plan with new housing area. Despite the fact that the former Ironbridge Power station site is wholly outside the AONB development in the area around the AONB should be assessed for its impacts on the special qualities of the AONB itself, and also take account of the special qualities and landscape quality of the setting of the AONB. Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership now is taking consultations and trying to reduce the possible impacts. According to the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments it is very important to take care over orientation, site layout, height and scale of structures and buildings; consideration of the landscape, land uses and heritage assets around and beyond the development site; careful use of colours, materials and non-reflective surfaces; restraint and care in the and use of lighting.

2.2.5.Sustainable Tourism in the Shropshire Hills AONB

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership is working to promote environmentally positive tourism in the Shropshire Hills. The Shropshire Hills AONB was re-awarded the Charter in October 2018. It is one of a small number of AONBs in England and Wales to hold this international accreditation award for sustainable tourism. The Shropshire Hills Destination Partnership approved a new Shropshire Hills Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2018-2023. It is guided by the ethics of green tourism and builds on the work of the last five years.



Meeting with Phil Holden, Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Manager (Jasinaviciute, 2019).

It would be very hard only for Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership to take care of all tourism issues due to lack of staff, finance. There are lot of projects implemented by the The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty, commonly known as the National Trust. It is an independent charity and membership organisation for environmental and heritage conservation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

One of the beautiful walks in Shropshire Hills is at Carding Mill Valley. This walk takes you to the head of Carding Mill Valley and up to the highest point of the Long Mynd. From the top you can take in fantastic views across Shropshire and beyond. The Long Mynd is a heath and moorland plateau that forms part of the Shropshire Hills in Shropshire. The high ground, which is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, lies between the Stiperstones range to the west and the Stretton Hills and Wenlock Edge to the east. The National Trust is taking care of the signs in the path, also provides informational houses about this special place.



The Long Mynd walk in the Shropshire Hills AONB with Phil Holden and Nigel McDonald (Jasinaviciute, 2019).

The Shropshire Hills AONB has lot of good landscape interpretation cases. In geographical research, the interpretation of landscape has been theorized in a number of ways. The mining heritage of the Stiperstones and Corndon area is one of the most distinctive and characteristic



elements of this landscape, with a history extending back to at least the Roman period. Some of the remains can be quickly identified – but significantly more are hidden, obscured or disguised. Within the project area, echoes of the mining story have a powerful cultural and social relevance. Working with Shropshire’s Landscape Partnership Scheme there were designed a number of interpretation panels which provide context for visitors to three historic metal mining sites. Informational panels provide insight into what can no longer be seen in the landscape. Content and text were developed from research, including a wealth of assets provided by volunteers such as archive photography, maps and illustrations. Using the only clues left of the Barytes Mill that once stood here, some of the panels are designed as etched stainless-steel arcs which are mounted to millstones.



Uncovering the History of Lead and Barytes Mining in the Shropshire Hills AONB (Jasinaviciute, 2019).

2.2.6.Challenges of the newest South Downs National Park

The South Downs is the UK’s newest National Park, covering a wide variety of landscapes, historic monuments, archeological features and living, working communities. Around 2 million people live within or close to the national park – the highest local population among all the national parks – and day visits reach 46 million a year. With such high user numbers, the Authority must maintain a delicate balance between conserving and protecting the unique landscape, promoting opportunities for the public to enjoy it, and fostering the well-being of local communities.



One of the main tasks of protected areas is to provide information to visitors and local people. This is done well by the visitor centers. As well as being a new home for the National Park Authority, the South Downs Centre in Midhurst is a community hub, an exhibition about the National Park and a green

conference centre. Local visitor information is provided as well as leaflets providing walking routes throughout the Park.

South Downs National Park Exhibition designed to be a jumping off point for exploring the National Park, the exhibition introduces visitors to the South Downs' landscapes, geology, produce and heritage. There's a small interactive area where children can discover more about our wildlife and 'brass-rub' their own vision for the National Park.



Meeting with Director of Countryside Policy and Management Andrew Lee and Countryside & Policy Manager Nick Heasman from the South Downs National Park Authority in the South Downs Centre. (Jasinaviciute, 2019).



Interactive exposition on wheels is also provided for more effective communication. During events in the park, the bus can come to any location and present the most important values of the protected area.

Another challenge is funding. Since the national park creation in 2010, the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) has been heavily dependent on government funding to carry out its work. But government funding is at increasing risk of cuts across the public sector. The South Downs National Park has lost more than a million pounds of Government funding in the past four years, figures show. The information emerged as part of an investigation into funding for national parks around the country.

To offset this risk, SDNPA decided to explore opportunities to earn or fundraise income from other sources. To help them do this, they asked consultants to work with them to look at the options and to develop a strategy for both voluntary and earned income generation. The SDNPA have considerable scope for voluntary income generation from their visitor base and local residents, and now have a map to explore this market. With government funding confirmed for four more years, they have time to test and embed new fundraising practices and be ready to scale up. SDNPA is also exploring a selection of earned income ideas, using their assets and relationships to generate additional income where this is cost-effective.

Everything is changing fast and national parks getting more challenges every year. Another challenge is devising and securing new countryside stewardship arrangements or ecosystem services systems for national parks that will sustain the vitality of the types of land management



that are themselves vital to the landscapes of national parks. National parks need a well-funded ranger service with a visible presence on the ground and the ability for the rangers themselves to provide small grants and match-funding for land managers, and organise volunteers, to enable projects that might otherwise never get off the ground.

Discussing with Nick Heasman Countryside & Policy Manager from the SDNPA about the management of the National Park (Jasinaviciute, 2019).

Conclusions

Protected areas are a vital part of our current world as we talk more and more about global warming, the rapidly changing landscape, the loss of biodiversity.

Lithuania, like other states, establishes protected areas for the preservation of values: nature reserves and strict nature reserves, national and regional (nature) parks, etc. Like other countries, Lithuania have authorities (directorates). With their responsibilities they seek to reveal the nature of the landscape, its unique values and human life, and not just to raise awareness of the importance of preserving biodiversity.

Lithuanian National Parks are similar to the United Kingdom National Parks, where people also live and operate. Not only protection, management or restoration programs, but also educational programs are implemented in protected areas in both countries.

Traveling in protected areas in Scotland and England has been very rewarding, not only broadening my horizons as a specialist working in protected areas, but also providing many new contacts.

The results and main ideas which I will take home from the study trips inspired by the Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarship:

- The challenge we all face is preserving the landscape for future generations. So, it is very important to have right tools to make your decisions.
- Man is an integral part of the landscape. It is important that local communities and visitors to value protected areas. While the natural landscape is the inspiration for the protected areas, it is the people that provide both the greatest strength and challenge for the park's future.
- The main challenge in protected areas is to conserve biodiversity while providing the basis for the social and economic development of local residents. Ecological knowledge and economic feasibility are key to the further advancement of initiatives designed to increase the biodiversity of agricultural landscapes within protected areas. More importantly, collaborative management between both local communities and sectoral policy makers (e.g. agriculture, environment, tourism) is a pre-condition for success.
- Nature conservation is always about lack of funding, because there are different priorities. We need to demonstrate both the existing and future benefits of the protected areas, what they can provide. We need to connect protected areas with people across the

country so that they appreciate the value for money which protected areas provide and the benefits of not just maintaining but of extending their operations and remit.

If there will be a possibility the Europarc Federation could organize more seminars on landscape impact assessment in and close to the protected areas. Moreover, I wish that one day there will be a network “Landscape 2000” – the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world which could offer a haven to Europe's most valuable landscapes. At present, too little attention is paid to protecting the landscape as a home for the nation.

I hope that my study trips and the report will be useful not only for my personal use but also for my colleagues in my country. The best experience of the Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarship study trips is that you are starting to think out of the box. You gain more courage and confidence to consider different solutions and methods for reaching your desired outcome. Otherwise, if you only do your routine work without looking at what is happening to protected areas in other countries, you will think that this is the only way to solve these challenges in your country.

My best regard to others who are just planning to apply the Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarship - “It is never too late to learn something. The future is the only thing we can change”. Experience and meeting new people – are an invaluable thing that can change your future.



The South Downs and the magnificent Seven Sisters Cliffs (Jasinaviciute, 2019).

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The Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024

The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024

The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Partnership Plan 2018 - 2023

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Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park - <https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/>

South Downs National Park - <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/>

Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - <https://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/>

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Annexes

System of protected areas in Lithuania

Regional Parks in Lithuania are integrated protected areas. They comprise unique landscapes and ecosystems, natural and cultural treasures and regional recreational resources, as well as settlements and villages. The main goals of these territories are to protect natural and cultural heritage and to provide recreational opportunities, primarily for ecotourism.

Management Plans of protected areas. The system coordinating the legal and administrative aspects of protected areas has been created, yet a significant amount of time and funding is still needed to complete a system of planning documents. The creation of a territorial and strategic planning system is a very important step in effectively regulating the activities in protected areas, ensuring the protection of natural and cultural heritage values and landscape and biological diversity, and the rational use of natural resources.

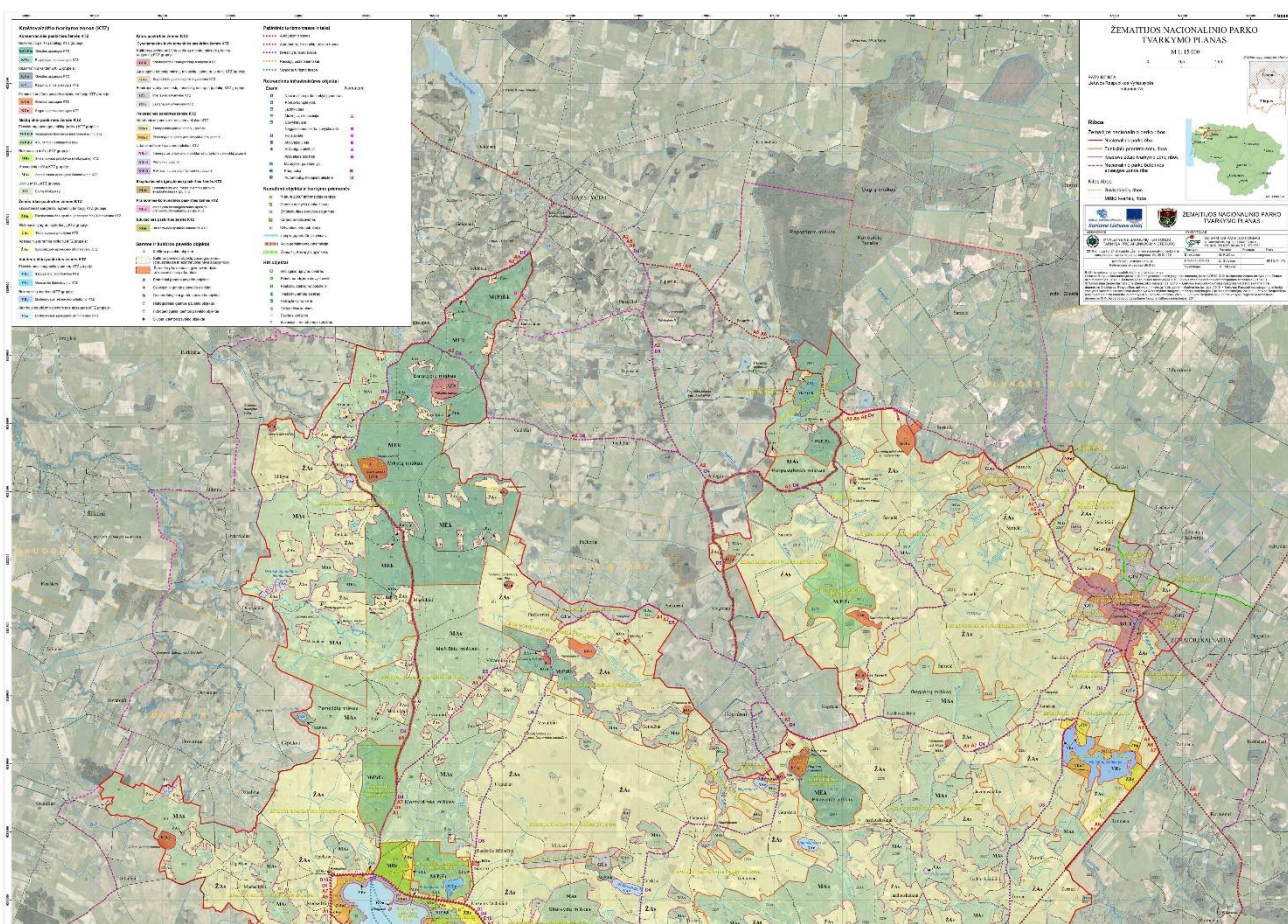
Lithuania has its own territorial planning traditions and experience. The preparation of planning documents is regulated by the corresponding legal acts, primarily the Law on Protected Areas, the Law on Territorial Planning, and other post-legislative acts, and must also take into account the requirements set out in European Union directives regulating bird and habitats protection. Territorial planning documents are an integral part of every protected area. Most necessary are protected area and/or functional zone boundary plans, as well as management and nature management plans and projects.

Each state park has a planning scheme. All state parks have directorates which have developed management maps in order to set priorities for their activities and identify specific management needs. This is necessary in order to ensure purposeful activities, to focus on the main goals, and to understand the arrangements and adaptations that are needed to accommodate visitors' needs. In addition to programmes aimed at conservation, management and restoration, educational programmes are also implemented, and the right conditions for developing ecotourism are promoted in Regional Parks.

Plans of state parks and other boundaries distinguish the following functional priority zones: conservational (strict reserves and reserves), ecological protection, recreational and economical priority, and zones with other purposes. Other planning documents (territorial or strategic) are necessary protection and management measures in protected areas.

All conservational priority and integrated protected areas have plans outlining their boundaries that are authorized by the Government. All state parks have authorized management plans. Thus, it is state parks that need planning documents, such as management plans and planning schemes, the most. Without management plans many necessary protection and management measures cannot be implemented, nor can activities in protected areas be adequately regulated or create the premises for permissible business development.

Special planning documents (state parks and reserves, state strict reserves and biosphere reserve management plans, nature management and heritage management project) are absolutely necessary to distinguish landscape management zones and to set specific measures for landscape formation, recreational infrastructure creation and other management measures in certain areas.



Part of the Management plan of Žemaitija national park.

The highest-priority goal for state parks is to preserve the country's unique landscape, biodiversity, and treasures of natural and cultural heritage, and to ensure their conservation and management, as well as adapting the areas to the needs of visitors. Lithuania has a great

tradition of planning for protected areas – not only for individual State Parks, but also for the entire network of protected areas. It is on this basis that the available planning schemes are consistently improved. Lithuania has yet to establish how State Parks will be considered in the general plans of the territories and districts of the Republic of Lithuania. It is very important that the citizens of Lithuania are aware of the importance of State Parks for the state and society and understand their benefits. The State Parks in Lithuania and the State Service for Protected Areas work together to bring the natural and cultural value of their regions closer to the people, to communicate responsible behaviour in nature and to create opportunities for recreation. The country's inhabitants should have the opportunity to visit its natural treasures and to enjoy nature and the landscape, thus enabling them to experience the value of the protected areas first-hand.



Values of protected areas in Lithuania (Jasinaviciute, 2018).

We value benefits of protected areas as: high-quality natural resources, including clean water, soil and air; natural resources for local communities; climate balance; conditions for all forms of live creatures to exist; information on living and non-living nature structures; cognitive tourism (ecological, cultural, etc.); traditional activities, business.