



Position Statement

NATIONAL PARKS WALES
Britain's breathing spaces

"(Sustainable Tourism) is any form of development, management or tourist activity which ensures the long-term protection and preservation of natural, cultural and social resources and contributes in a positive and equitable manner to the economic development and well-being of individuals living, working or staying in protected areas."

European Charter for Sustainable Tourism

"We support the promotion of sustainable tourism principles within Wales' National Parks and their adoption"

National Parks Wales: Champions of Sustainable Tourism

Introduction

The National Parks of Wales are breathing spaces for the physical and mental wellbeing of the nation. They enable millions of people to experience and appreciate unique outdoor environments worthy of national protection. The iconic landscapes and heritage sites within our National Parks attract visitors from the UK and around the world.

The funding and remit of National Park Authorities does not cover the direct marketing of tourism within National Parks. Indeed, there are situations where tourism can damage the environment if not properly managed. However, we recognise the value of genuinely sustainable tourism to the statutory purposes of National Parks and support the continued development of the sector. We view sustainable tourism as the future of tourism, not an accessory; and we consider partnership working the most effective method of promoting this approach.

National Park Authorities collectively possess many years experience of managing large numbers of visitors. We employ expert staff capable of interpreting the special qualities within National Parks they are increasingly employed to promote sustainability. By making the visitor experience enjoyable and memorable tourists take home our messages that promote sustainable living.

Datganiad Sefyllfa



Parciau Cenedlaethol Bannau Brycheiniog, Arfordir Penfro ac Eryri yn gweithio mewn partneriaeth Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast, and Snowdonia National Parks. Working in Partnership.

Cymdeithas Awdurdodau
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Welsh Association of
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The National Parks of Wales

Around 20% of Wales can be found within one of three National Parks, the Brecon Beacons, the Pembrokeshire Coast or Snowdonia. Their special qualities have led to these areas being designated as areas of national importance, worthy of legal protection. They are living landscapes shaped by humanity over millennia. Local communities continue to play a significant role shaping the modern environmental, historic and cultural landscape.

National Parks have two statutory purposes, to

- conserve and enhance their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and
- promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of National Parks by the public.

Each National Park is managed by an independent National Park Authority. In meeting these two purposes, National Park Authorities have a duty:

- to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities" within the National Park.

Sustainable tourism can play an important role achieving the two statutory purposes and delivering this duty

Sustainable Tourism Matters

There are four principal factors driving the development of genuinely sustainable tourism within National Parks:

- To reduce the loss of tranquility, environmental erosion and pressure on the man-made infrastructure that was originally built for small populations;
- To resolve transportation problems – carbon emissions from vehicles, disturbance or damage caused by numbers of vehicles exceeding the capacity of specific locations, parking issues, charging for access or parking, lack of access by public transport in many areas;
- To reduce the negative impacts of large-scale development, including disturbance to local communities, loss of local services and the leakage of funding away from small-scale local operators to support large-scale developments.

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- To resolve conflicts, real or perceived, between the National Park purposes and tourism-related activities. The nature of open country and coastal tourism makes certain activities very hard to manage directly. To be sustainable, the capacity of an area to maintain an activity needs to be given suitable consideration by tourism and activity companies.

Benefits to Wales

The National Parks contribution to Wales' economy is substantial. STEAM visitor research suggests that visitors spend around £1 billion, supporting in the region of 27,500 jobs. With the development of sustainable approaches to tourism, we can ensure that this income still contributes to the health of our communities whilst protecting and enhancing the environment upon which they depend.

However, the benefits to Wales' National Parks are not just economic. A move towards sustainable tourism would deliver social benefits as well:

- Increased and improved environmental education through the enhanced understanding of the natural environment, climate change and sustainability;
- The promotion of local goods and services, encouraging the flow of money into local rural economies, acting as a stimulus to the local economy;
- The improved viability of rural services, facilities and communities such as rural public transport, Post Offices, pubs, shops, cultural, sports and visitor facilities;
- Support for diversification of farm and rural businesses;
- Rural regeneration. An area's profile is raised, providing opportunities for retraining a resident workforce. Derelict land or buildings can also be brought back into use;
- Increased physical recreation that enhances the experience of the natural environment, making a positive contribution to the mental and physical wellbeing of the general public;
- Support for a range of cultural and community activities including arts, heritage events and physical activities;
- Investment in the protection of the cultural landscape, which can often be better justified when it is considered a key resource for tourism, and,

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- Rising standards in the quality of local goods and services to meet market demands for better quality, especially in terms of environmental standards. A 2002 survey by Visit Britain found that 84% of consumers would choose an attraction or accommodation provider that is part of a green accreditation scheme over one that was not.

Creating a Sustainable Tourism Industry

The Welsh National Park Authorities seek to influence tourism and visitor management through close collaboration with each other and through existing tourism partnerships at the local, regional, national and international level.

The National Park partnerships within Wales are:

The Brecon Beacons Sustainable Tourism Partnership
The Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter and Marine Code Groups
The Snowdonia Upland Path Partnership

At the local level the National Parks Authorities will -

- Continue to inform visitors so that they can enjoy, appreciate and respect the special qualities of Wales' National Parks, positively contributing to the local economy and environment;
- Promote quality design, on a scale which respects the landscape and its communities;
- Work towards developing a tourism sector which supports National Park purposes; with an emphasis on quality, environmental best practice, use of local labour skills, use of local materials and the re-use of buildings – maximising the economic benefits to local communities;
- Embrace and manage changes that deliver sustainable tourism and achieve a high quality visitor experience; and
- Promote conditions, policies and incentives for sustainable tourism businesses
- Work with local businesses to help to ensure that their activities are increasingly sustainable and in harmony with the special qualities of the National Park;
- Promote the provision and use of high quality, sustainable public transport to and within Wales' National Parks, including the promotion of appropriate recreational methods of transportation, such as walking and cycling

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