



Scottish  
Environment  
LINK

# Still Delivering the Goods

## Case Study 1



COMPLETED

### Cairngorms Wild Plants Project Plantlife Scotland



Photo: Plantlife

Read the full report, with the 15 case studies here:

<https://www.scotlink.org/publication/still-delivering-the-goods/>

# 1

## Cairngorms Wild Plants Project Plantlife Scotland



### Background

The Cairngorms Wild Plants project was led by Plantlife Scotland, with funding provided by Cairngorms LEADER and the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA), with in-kind support from Scottish Natural Heritage (now NatureScot). The project was overseen by a steering group made up of Plantlife Scotland, SNH and CNPA.



### Project aims

The project aimed to deliver a 3-year programme to secure the habitats of arctic alpine flora and Caledonian pinewood in response to direct loss, fragmentation and unsuitable management practices, which are isolating and threatening the future of these plant communities.



### Project Timescale

November 2016 to September 2020.



### SBS Objectives

The aims from the *2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity*:

1

To protect and restore biodiversity on land and in our seas, and to support healthier ecosystems.

Specific tailored advice was offered to land managers. Feasibility studies for further conservation interventions, such as translocations, were carried out.

2

To connect people with the natural world, for their health and wellbeing and to involve them more in decisions about their environment.

Volunteers were trained, mountain leaders and guides developed skills in understanding and interpreting wild plants, communities took part in events and volunteering activities, and the importance of the Cairngorms National Park for wild plant conservation was communicated widely and with lasting results for communities and visitors.

3

To maximise the benefits for Scotland of a diverse natural environment and the services it provides, contributing to sustainable economic growth.

The project contributed to highlighting, protecting, and enhancing the biodiversity for National Park's visitors and tourists. It also encouraged land management businesses to operate sustainably.





### Project Summary

- > More land managers understanding and adopting land management options that deliver for plants, which promotes the conservation and increased resilience of plant communities in the Cairngorms.
- > A self-sustaining volunteer network to improve plant monitoring and contribute data to increase knowledge on distribution and health of key plant communities.
- > Land managers are better supported by local communities and have access to resources and advice.
- > Rangers, mountain leaders and instructors are more aware about the plant communities of the Cairngorms and confident in delivering activities to the groups they lead.
- > Local communities and visitors identify new understanding and enjoyment of the habitats. This leads to increased awareness of wild plants and people gaining benefits through knowledge, training, and leading active lifestyles.



### Climate Impacts

Project advisory work has increased the resilience of key habitats to climate change. Translocation feasibility studies are now a major part of a subsequent project, which reduce species population fragmentation and increase their resilience to change. Increased understanding amongst mountain users of the fragility of mountain plant communities in the face of climate change through diverse communications channels supported behaviour change.



### People Information

Direct employment: **1 full time project officer**

Wider engagement:

Land Managers: **230**

Flora Guardians (Volunteers): **35**

Volunteers (other): **51**

Group Leaders: **128**

General Public: **474**

First-time Volunteers: **7**

The number of unique participants is recorded as **889** (far exceeding the original target of 500).





### Successes and achievements

- > 84 events, engaging with 889 people across the Park, equivalent of 5% of the entire population of the Cairngorms National Park
- > Participants included land managers, outdoor leaders, volunteers, and those with a general interest in conservation.
- > Events included general awareness raising, volunteer recruitment, training individuals in the identification and management of arctic alpine flora and Caledonian pinewoods, and plant monitoring and survey activity.
- > Event partners included Mountains and the People, University of Highlands & Islands, Anagach Wood Trust & Ranger Services
- > The volunteer programme engaged 35 individuals, 7 as first-time volunteers.
- > Volunteer skills gained in a training environment were transferred directly into conservation work, interpretation activities and leading groups.
- > 18 sub-projects provided support and advice with land managers, which enabled meaningful knowledge transfer and practical support throughout the National Park.
- > Species and habitats covered included twinflower but also covered pinewoods and grasslands.
- > Community capacity and knowledge was strengthened through the creation of complementary resources, including three guided walk leaflets, two outdoor leader resources, land management toolkits, a project film and volunteer resources.

Photo: Plantlife



### Issues and challenges

A small staffing resource meant that dealing with volunteer enquiries and accommodating volunteer requests was challenging and restricted ongoing land management advice to landowners. The project achieved a huge amount with little in the way of budget or resources and demonstrated the need for further work.



### Next steps

NLHF funding, with match funding from CNPA, for a new project in the Cairngorms, Cairngorms Rare Plants and Wild Connections, will take forward the work started by this project. This will employ a project manager and a project officer and will build on the successes of Cairngorms Wild Plants.



### Funding

The project had a total budget of over **£200,000**, with contributions including:

LEADER:	<b>£140,507</b>
CNPA:	<b>£18,027</b>
Plantlife in-kind:	<b>£28,487</b>
Scottish Natural Heritage in-kind:	<b>£4,680</b>
Volunteers in-kind:	<b>£9,400</b>



### Further information

<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/blog/cairngorms-wild-plants-project-update>

<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/scotland/our-work-scotland/projects-scotland/cairngorm-wildflowers-project>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ws8V7WlmS\\_A&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ws8V7WlmS_A&feature=youtu.be)