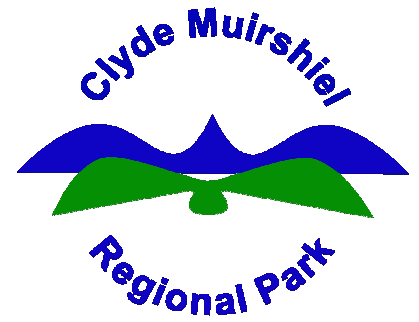

CLYDE MUIRSHIEL PARK AUTHORITY



Annual Report 2010-11



Prepared for the Park Authority Joint Committee
August 2011.

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1.0 Executive Summary

The past year has seen the Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority deliver on its aim to provide services that meet the needs of visitors and the communities within the Clyde Muirshiel area.

The achievements and setbacks are summarised below and described more fully in the main report that follows. The full report is available from Park HQ or as a downloadable document on www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk.

Over the year visitor numbers increased at all centres, reversing a downward trend from the two previous years (see section 4.03). A visitor survey, was conducted which gave the Park a 99% positive rating overall, but some areas for improvement were identified (see section 7.11). The Park is supporting the Castle Semple based sports clubs as they seek to develop their clubs and premises (see section 4.09).

Our outdoor activities team delivered 718 courses to 5,077 children and 1,267 adults. There is an observed downturn in educational and social work spending in outdoor experiences, especially in school groups attending for multi-activity courses and our staff are broadening the range of activities and marketing them to a wider potential customer base (see section 8.04).

The Semple Trail Heritage Project being delivered by the SRANI partnership achieved significant funding to develop broad based proposals for access improvements, biodiversity improvements, built heritage conservation and interpretation (see section 4.07). The externally funded development officer has again been key to these achievements.

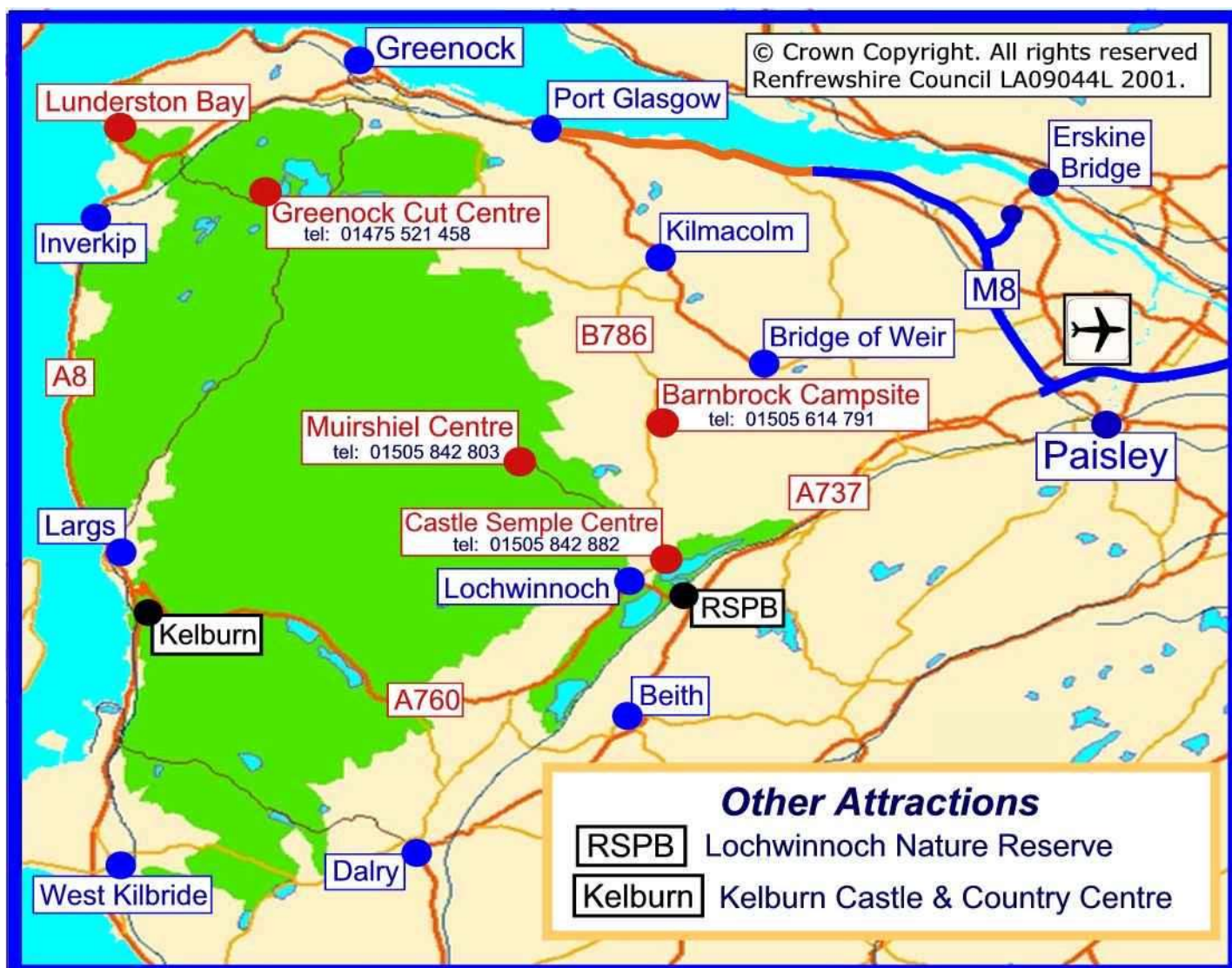
The Park continues to deliver conservation projects on a range of species including Juniper and Hen Harrier, together with woodland management programmes at Muirshiel, Parkhill and Greenock Cut. The Parkhill Woodland Plan, which will guide management of this area for many years, was approved by the Park Authority.

The Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Countryside Ranger Service is the largest staff unit in the Park. The Park's management has again used Scottish Natural Heritage's annual reporting format as a monitoring and reporting tool. The service outputs are reproduced in full in section 11 of this annual report.

A new website was launched in the year. This is expected to build on the 10 million hits per year achieved by the previous website. The Park now provides information and services on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

The Park made an operational surplus of £47,257 in the year, overturning the deficit of £28,842 from the previous year.

2.0 Location of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park



The Park Authority is a Joint Committee
of Inverclyde, North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire Councils.

3.0 Introduction

Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park is an internationally designated landscape of 265 sq. km adjacent to the Firth of Clyde. Its coastal zone, river valleys, hills and high moors have been shaped by man over the centuries. Today the area is still actively farmed by hill farmers. On the boundaries of the Park are the urban settlements of Inverclyde, the Garnock Valley, Paisley and the coastal town of Largs. The area is easily accessible to over 2 million people in west central Scotland. We attract an estimated 1.5 million visitors annually who tell us that they visit because it is a special place with beautiful landscapes and views, a diversity of wildlife and easily accessible facilities for informal recreation, leisure and tourism. The Park is a rich resource for formal education and lifelong learning. It contributes to visitors' physical and mental well-being. The management of the Park provides a cohesive force and is an economic driver for the rural communities. To many people it is the only countryside they ever visit.

Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority is a public body providing recreation, conservation and tourism services across the Regional Park. It owns no land but directly manages sites at Muirshiel, Greenock Cut, Lunderston Bay, Barnbrock and Castle Semple. The Park Authority is a Joint Committee of Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and North Ayrshire Councils.

The Park's original Aims were revised with the intention of having a new set of Aims approved for the 10th anniversary of the signing of the original Park Charter. After public consultation the following were adopted by the Park Authority in September 2006: -

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, biodiversity and cultural heritage of Clyde Muirshiel Park
- To encourage and enable learning, understanding and enjoyment of Clyde Muirshiel Park
- To promote and foster environmentally sustainable development for the social and economic well being of the people and communities within the Clyde Muirshiel Park area

Increasingly the benefits delivered by the Park Authority are recognised as making a positive contribution to wider national and local agendas in the areas of health improvement, active lifestyles, community engagement, environmental justice and inclusion.

This report will present the work of the Park Authority and its staff in the year 2010 to 2011. The activities described will show how, and to what degree the Park has fulfilled these aims.

4.0 RECREATION AND ACCESS

4.01 Access Legislation and the Code

The Ranger Service in particular has been at the forefront of disseminating the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and its key messages to landowners/managers and recreational users of the Park.

The Park is represented on access forums or officer working groups covering the three local authority areas, bringing its experience and knowledge for the benefit of the forums and the implementation of responsible access. Core Path Plans have been adopted in the three partner council areas.

4.02 People and Car Counters

The year saw a programme of installation and updating of car and people counters at Park sites.

Car counters.

- Entrance to C Semple Car Park; installed in Aug 2008 and recorded 126,067 cars in 2009/10. A slight decrease this year to 123,268. This was mainly due to Jan 2011 figures being 2,300 down on Jan 2010.
- A replacement was installed at the entrance to Muirshiel early in 2010 and 11 months data showed 13,226 cars.
- A new counter was installed at the Greenock Cut Centre which recorded 20,701 cars from May 2010 to the end of March 2011.
- Similarly a new unit was installed at Lunderston Bay. This recorded 9,630 cars in the month of August. A flooding incident during the winter resulted in all other data being lost. Drainage at the location has been improved and a repaired unit is in place.

People counters.

People counters are located in the centre at Castle Semple and on paths around the Park.

- Muirshiel Mine track. 11,438 in the first full year of the counter's operation.
- Windy Hill path at Muirshiel. 17,381 in the first full year of recording.
- Johnshill, Lochwinnoch. 10,387 in the first full year of recording.
- On Greenock Cut, 30,639 near centre and 33,407 at the Overton end (first full year)
- Locherwood Community Woodland. 24,101 in the first full year of recording.
- Path near to pedestrian bridge over the Calder, Lochwinnoch. 66,225 were recorded in this year an increase of 7% over last year.
- The Semple Trail link between the National Cycle Route and Howwood (near to the "Temple" on Kenmuir Hill) recorded 7,714 in its first full year.
- A unit set up on the main entrance to Parkhill Wood beside the Blackditch Burn recorded 12,000 in the last 6 months of the year.

- The unit between the eastern end of Parkhill Wood and the Collegiate Church recorded 8,816 in its first full year.
- There were problems with the unit on the Lochshore path. The total for July, Aug and Sept 2010 was 30,000.

4.03 Visitor Numbers 2006 to 2010

The Park has been recording visitor numbers to centres; numbers taking part and spectating at events and numbers of pupils in our schools programmes. These figures are detailed below and elsewhere in this report. It is recognised, though, that these are only a fraction of our users and visitors in the Park. Extrapolations from actual counts, sample surveys and estimates suggest that the Park has about 1.5 million users per year.

Previous years had seen dramatic increases in visitor numbers to our sites, which had in recent years stabilised. These increases were the result of the marketing and promotional efforts together with the improvement in the range of facilities, activities, catering services and retail stock. Whilst these efforts have continued, the visitor numbers into centres decreased for the last two years.

The visitor figures have returned to an upward trend this year.

At Castle Semple Centre visitor numbers increased in the 10/11 year by 5% to 82,550 from 78,506.

Muirshiel visitor numbers increased by 26% to 11,087 after dropping by 24% last year. In part this was due to the fact that there was no Hen Harrier TV viewing project during the 2009 season.

This year, 2010/11, at the Greenock Cut Centre there has been an increase of 5% to 10,337.

4.03.1 Castle Semple Centre

Centre open daily.

Month	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
January	3432	3518	3905	5211	4845
February	5042	5367	4525	5178	5872
March	5779	5334	6165	6816	6410
April	9838	7209	8856	10469	
May	7632	10042	8850	9479	
June	8044	7880	8313	8390	
July	10678	10678	8680	7252	
August	8823	9227	7431	9436	
September	6944	6611	6379	7423	
October	6325	4710	6069	5864	
November	4067	4447	3869	4051	
December	4151	4559	2854	3059	
Totals	80755	79582	75896	82628	

4.03.2 Muirshiel Centre

Month	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
January	231*	352*	425*	278*	434*
February	457*	457*	452*	302*	345*
March	687*	906*	573*	365*	359*
April	2603	1534	1298	1410	
May	1934	1831	1343	1676	
June	1485	1258	935	1094	
July	2211	1605	1132	1362	
August	1485	1130	1081	1920	
September	1298	926	787	1082	
October	1027	809	814	1079	
November	378*	467*	278*	301*	
December	431*	279*	192*	25*	
Totals	14227	11556	9310	10894	

*weekend opening only

4.03.3 Greenock Cut Centre

After being closed for more than two years the Greenock Cut Centre opened on 5 April 2003.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
January	221*	264*	147*	189*	355*
February	374*	380*	Nil	255*	327*
March	656*	1259*	201*	301*	269*
April	2482	1217	1575	1700	
May	1304	1969	1303	1559	
June	1368	1398	1172	1290	
July	2036	1597	1360	1091	
August	1514	1304	1122	1686	
September	1637	973	1561	1070	
October	1092	604	732	830	
November	380*	369*	187*	145	
December	264*	72*	61*	15*	
Totals	13328	11406	9421	10131	

*weekend opening only

**closed weekends

5 Jan- 20 Mar09 closed for GC Exhibition installation

22 Dec 09 heavy snow, limited access for 19 days

Unexpectedly and for the second year running there was severe winter weather. This impacts on visitors and visitor numbers in several ways. Road conditions and cold deter some visitors, whilst the frozen loch at Castle Semple was very popular. The higher altitude centres were occasionally closed over the winter due to bad weather.

4.04 Greenock Cut

The long term £1 million project of the Greenock Cut has reached fruition with the completion of the exhibition within the Cornalees Visitor Centre and the formal opening of the project on 26 March 2010. The occasion was also used to announce the re-naming of the centre as the Greenock Cut Visitor Centre.

The route has been well used since restoration and a people counter has been installed.

4.05 Activities

The Park continues to offer a range of outdoor recreational activities, mostly at Castle Semple. Monthly “what’s on” and activity course posters are produced. For the more serious water-sports participant we offer a range of courses, some certificated, as described in section 8.04.

4.06 Access Initiatives

Park staff continue to offer assistance and advice to the various access forums and groups as they develop. The Park contributed to access festivals in the three council areas.

Responding to concerns about responsible dog ownership the Park held a one day “Pawsativity” event to give advice and highlight positive actions.

4.07 South Renfrewshire Access Network Initiative (SRANI)

This multi agency project has, since 2002, made dramatic improvements to the access infrastructure in the Castle Semple area. The developments have advanced in phases with strong community consultation and involvement at all stages.

The Park Authority has played a key role in SRANI and has helped to obtain more than £1.3 million in external funding so far.

A part time Path Development Officer has been in post since June 2005. The postholder provides a point of contact for the communities, partners and funders and has developed funding strategies for projects as required. Following external funding, the post has now been extended for further months to allow submission of additional applications for funding for the next stages of the project. It is hoped the next steps in development of the main route (now called Semple Trail) will involve creation and upgrade of additional route options, conservation of heritage features, biodiversity enhancements and provision of signage and interpretation.

4.08 Recreation Events

The Park develops and delivers a range of recreational events, devised by Rangers, Activity staff and others. Many of these are described throughout this document. The Park is also a resource utilised by outside agencies. Local Authority Outdoor Education units, Sports Development units, Outward Bound, commercial organisations, sports clubs, Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and Boys Brigade groups for example use the Park frequently.

The Park hosts a number of active watersports clubs who run regattas, training sessions and provide social as well as sporting opportunities to all ages.

4.09 Sports club developments

The sports Clubs at Castle Semple have, with the support of the Park Authority, been successful and wish to develop facilities, membership and premises. The Park Authority initially had individual approaches from the Rowing and Sailing Clubs, but it has involved other clubs and supported the formation of Semple Sports Access Partnership (SSAP). The Park has assisted this new initiative by promotion, advice and hosting the partnership meetings.

5.0 Biodiversity & Nature Conservation

5.01 Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP's)

The Park staff continue to implement actions in the Ayrshire and Renfrewshire (including Inverclyde and East Renfrewshire) Action Plans.

- Monitoring of birds of prey such as hen harriers and other important birds is ongoing. Six sites were monitored for peregrines with three sites fledging eight young. Seabirds and wetland birds were counted as part of national initiatives.
- The fenced 17 hectare moorland site at the Cample Burn continues to have volunteer groups planting young juniper brought on by various propagation techniques. The juniper restoration scheme has been grant aided by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Scottish Natural Heritage and Hunterston Estates. Although funding has been completed it is planned that propagation and planting of juniper at this site will continue till the target of one thousand shrubs is achieved.
- Seasonal Ranger staff have contributed a variety of reports including green hairstreak butterflies at Muirshiel, reptiles and amphibians at Muirshiel, a butterfly survey of Shielhill Glen, a breeding bird survey at Castle Semple Loch and a water vole survey in Parkhill wood.
- Following the discovery of the invasive non-native weed *Crassula helmsii* sites close to Castle Semple Loch have been monitored. One site has been fitted with two screening meshes to prevent any transmission of plant material and it is planned to cover the site to eradicate the *Crassula* in the autumn of 2011. A site in Inverclyde is currently untreated and will be monitored yearly.
- In the Special Protection Area monthly field vole surveys were conducted at ten sites due to their importance for establishing hen harrier breeding territories. The results suggested that field vole's numbers were low and the same areas will be surveyed in 2011 to compare the vole numbers.
- Support from the Heritage Lottery Fund enabled interpretation (panels, pop-ups, leaflets and a jigsaw) at Muirshiel about the hen harriers and the Special Protection Area. Additional grant was secured from Leader and HLF to improve the camera and monitors to view the hen harriers.
- A polytunnel was constructed at Barnbrock to grow on a limited range of plants such as juniper and spignel (both LBAP species).
- For the third year volunteers were involved in clearing willowherb from a site near Barnbrock to prevent spignel from being shaded out on a 240 metre embankment.
- In conjunction with the marketing officer a successful application was submitted to LEADER for a schools programme linking the use of digital technology (cameras, microscopes, computers and websites) with identification of species.

5.02 Woodland Plans

At Muirshiel Country Park the first phase of improvements is coming to an end after 6 years. New paths, bridges and picnic sites have been constructed and sculptures and other art works have been created. Woodland management has continued across the whole area as part of the Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme. Fixed point photography and plant surveys undertaken each year provide the means of comparison of tree growth and other slow processes.

Following public consultation on plans for Parkhill Wood the Park Authority approved a Parkhill Woodland Management Plan. Implementation is programmed to take many years but has already begun. Staff have quantified the main work required to remove bracken and sycamore and to improve the path network. An application has been submitted to the Scottish Rural Development Programme for funding.

At Greenock Cut Visitor Centre this year has seen the clear felling of all the conifers in the plantation behind the centre. Detailed proposals have been prepared to re-plant with broadleaved trees. The small pond will be enlarged to improve the area as a resource for visiting schools and to increase the diversity of habitat. The site and the proposed works will be an ideal location for volunteer groups and health programmes. Progress has been delayed by uncertainty of land ownership and lease arrangements.

Discussions with the landowner, agent and interested parties for the proposed 149 hectare Calder Wildwood project have taken place. Staff have surveyed potential fence lines, evaluated tree species and entered this data to the Geographic Information System.

5.03 Water Quality at Castle Semple Loch

At Castle Semple Loch (part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest) the Park Authority has monitored water quality in detail since 1997 and now has an unrivalled knowledge of the water quality. The loch has a eutrophic standard of water quality with relatively high levels of total phosphate and chlorophyll-a. As part of ongoing water quality management of Castle Semple Loch, Park staff have continued the programme of sampling, recording, reporting and implementing action on water quality.

The results of the summer 2010 monitoring programme were reported to the Park Authority in February 2011. A large variety of parameters are measured. Although, the overall water chemistry and measurement of algae have generally improved there has been a gradual increase in the levels of intestinal enterococci at the loch site close to the Sewage Treatment Works.

Monitoring of water quality is required to assist the safe operation of water based activities and is also an important determinant of biodiversity

5.04 Volunteers

Volunteers continue to make a major contribution to biodiversity and nature conservation in the Park. Many of the tasks they achieve for example control of invasive species, establish native species and develop habitats are identified in the Local Biodiversity Action Plans. Volunteers are discussed further in Education and Understanding (section 8.02).

6.0 Landscape and Built Heritage

6.01 Renewable Energy

There is considerable wind resource across the Park and as a result much commercial pressure to build windfarms in and adjacent to the Park.

The preparation of a Framework Guidance Document was completed in February 2005. This has been updated and approved at the Park Authority meeting in December 2010. Essentially the guidance uses the Park's aims and objectives to construct a landscape value and sensitivity map. The quantitative assessment is presented as tables and maps. The updated document draws on the study by Anderson and Grant in 2009 which has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by North Ayrshire Council

The Ardrossan windfarm of twelve turbines at Haupland Moor was constructed in late 2003. This site is just outside the Park. An additional 3 turbines have been constructed in an extension of this site into the Park. The Wardlaw Wood Windfarm (6 turbines) within the Park (north-west of Dalry) was opened in June 2006. .

The development of the Kelburn Windfarm (14 turbines) at Blaeloch Hill was approved, following a Public Local Inquiry, in Feb 2009 and construction work began this year. The re-submitted proposals for the Millour Hill Windfarm (6 turbines adjacent to the Wardlaw Wood Windfarm) were approved in December 2009.

The application for the Wings Law Windfarm (24 turbines) was refused by North Ayrshire Council February 2009 and an appeal was lodged. A Public Local Inquiry was timetabled for Jan 2011, but the applicant withdrew in December 2010 after all parties had utilised considerable staff resources and finance in preparing their cases. The Park Authority applied for costs against the developer but, along with all other parties, was unsuccessful

A longstanding application for a windfarm at Waterhead Moor produced an Environmental Statement in September 2010 and an objection to the proposal was submitted by the Park Authority in October.

6.02 Monitoring of Planning Applications

Staff continue to respond to planning applications and scoping reports in or adjacent to the Park. We have responded to scoping reports and consultations on a variety of developments including windfarm proposals and an anaerobic digester.

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of applications for individual wind turbines, or small groups of two or three. The heights of these are variable, between 15m and 200m. The Park Authority has supported those applications where the impacts on the Regional Park have been assessed to be acceptable. Each application continues to be assessed on its merits and the criteria the Park Authority uses to form its opinion are consistent in the face of this increased complexity of proposals.

7.0 Tourism

7.01 Tourism Partnerships

Linkages with national activities & campaigns continued with Visit Scotland -. The Park Authority has become active in the new Local Area Tourism Partnerships developing in the Park area. Membership of Ayrshire and Arran Visitor Attractions Association (AAVAA) continues providing joint marketing, promotion, training, communication channels and networking opportunities helping to meet Park Strategy objectives. The “International Year of Biodiversity 2010” led initiatives in the Park and we are considering how to use and support “International Year of Forests 2011” and “Year of the Bat 2011/12”.

7.02 Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (“STEAM”)

The Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) is a report produced annually, giving information on the economic impacts (primary and secondary) of tourism within a given area. The report’s authors calculate tourist numbers and expenditure from both overnight and day visitors. Since 2001 there has been a STEAM report for the Clyde Muirshiel Park influence area.

The STEAM reports 2009 and 2010 are still in draft but indicate ongoing small reductions in expenditure with very small reductions in visitors. The 2008 study reported that that there was an expenditure of £67.52 million and that there were 1.2 million visitors which is in general agreement with Park derived estimates of 1.5 million visitors annually.

7.03 Retail and Catering

Following the cessation of the catering franchise in 2001 at Castle Semple an integrated service of reception, retail sales and limited catering has been provided by Visitor Centre Assistant staff. The continued improvement in these services has meant that the rising targets in retail income have been met.

In 2010/11 turnover increased by 5.1%, after increasing by 0.5% the previous year.

A consultation paper on retail and catering was approved by the Park Authority and this is informing discussions on the way forward for this important income generator and visitor service.

7.04 Marketing and Promotional Activity

The Park continues its promotional activity utilising the Park activities programme and special events. The production of a quality seasonal “What’s
Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

On” for both summer and winter has undoubtedly contributed. The summer edition has a print run of 15,000 and was twelve page full colour. The winter publication with a print run of 3000, eight page full colour, is a timely reminder that the countryside is open throughout the year although, unfortunately our opening hours at some centres have reduced. These publications are now in their ninth year and are supported by posters and the Park website.

An increase in the quality and number of local free newspapers and magazines has led to a further improvement in opportunities to promote the park.

The information for the press releases, leaflets and posters comes from many areas of staff, particularly Rangers.

7.05 International Year of Biodiversity.

Several events were developed, including a photographic competition. The entries formed an attractive exhibition which was circulated around the visitor centres. A similar competition linking to the “International Year of Forests” has been launched.

7.06 Visitor Centres

Actual opening hours remained as last year. Visitor numbers into Visitor Centres reflect this. The smaller centres Muirshiel and Greenock Cut were closed on winter (Nov – Mar) weekdays and Castle Semple closed at 17.00 hrs throughout the summer.

Numbers at all sites have increased. At the Greenock Cut centre the exhibition is popular and some signage improvements around the centre have taken place.

Muirshiel Centre visitor numbers have recovered after being badly effected by the lack of a Hen Harrier on TV project in 2009.

Calendar Year: Visitor Centre Numbers

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Castle Semple	83,070	81,190	80,755	79,592	75,896	82,628
Muirshiel	16,229	14,892	14,227	11,514	9,310	10,894
Greenock Cut	21,104	17,706	13,328	11,406	9,421	10,131

7.07 Events

The operation of the Park Authority and in particular the expenditure of Park budgets has a continued positive economic impact to businesses and communities in the Park area. Events like the National Radio Boat Championships and the club regattas bring significant sums of money into the area.

Farmers' markets, a new venture in 2000/01, have continued this year. Local producers were to the fore at markets held on the first Sunday of June, September, December and March.

Stargazing nights, in partnership with Paisley Observatory were held throughout the winter.

Green Woodworking demonstrations took place and the Park hosted a Fairtrade Fortnight stall.

7.08 Website

A new website went live in May and has been seen as a significant improvement. Even before the new website the Park's previous site was receiving over 10 million hits per year and 50,000 unique visitors. There has been increased use of the "blogs" facility, which comprises short, often illustrated news items. These serve to provide fresh content for regular web-users and "human interest" stories. The Park also started "Twitter" and "Facebook" pages and anticipates greater involvement with social media. Video content has been loaded onto "YouTube"

The creation of interesting, useful and up to date web content is a continual task, with time and effort going into the website throughout the year.

All Park users are encouraged to use the website to get detailed information on activity courses. All printed materials and electronic communications continue to go out with the web address.

Visit the website at www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk.

7.09 Largs Information Bureau

A local initiative in Largs led by Lord Glasgow of Kelburn has led to the conversion of a shop in the Main Street into a facility providing community and visitor advice services. The Park has purchased a section of the front window display for Park promotion. This is good value for money and demonstrates partnership. The Park was advertised for 6 months of the year during 2010.

7.10 Campsite

The campsite has 8 shielings (including two large ones with ramped access and wider doors to assist those with mobility impairment). These larger two and a new facilities block were possible through a grant from the New Opportunities Fund, following applications led by Renfrewshire Council. These facilities opened for use in July 2007, part way through the summer season. When linked to our activities provision, mostly at Castle Semple, the site is now attractive to groups and special arrangements and charges for “sole use” have been developed.

The campsite opened on Friday 2 April for the 2010 season and closed on Sun 24 October. There were 208 camping bed nights (432 in 2009, 191 in 2008, 370 in 2007 and 99 in 2006) and 67 shieling bed nights (200 in 2009, 307 in 2008, 355 in 2007 and 243 in 2006). In addition there were 24 youth group visits (18 in 2009, 20 in 2008, 16 in 2007 and 5 in 2006) generating 804 bed nights (686 in 2009, 643 in 2008, 443 in 2007 and 166 in 2006). Total Bed Nights for the site is 1079 (1318 in 2009, 1141 in 2008, 1168 in 2007 and 454 in 2006).

Income was £5,817 (£5,691 in 2009, £8412 in 2008, £4243 in 2007 and £3136 in 2006).

7.11 Visitor Survey

A visitor survey was conducted with 544 people at park sites. Overall the facilities and services of the Park Authority were praised. Range and quality of facilities both achieved 81% positive responses. Similarly staff knowledge and helpfulness were praised with only 1% giving this a negative response. In line with the results from previous surveys “Scenery”, “Accessibility”, “paths and Trails” and “Wildlife” were the top “likes” by our respondents. In decreasing order the “dislikes” were “road conditions”, “dog related problems”, “toilets” and “cycling related problems”.

When scoring the Park overall, 99% gave the Park a positive rating. Full results and analysis were presented to the Park Authority in Feb 2011.

8.0 Education and Understanding

The contribution of the Ranger Service to events, volunteering and formal educational opportunities is quantified in the Ranger Output Measures (see section 11).

8.01 Ranger Events

The Park Ranger Service continues to offer a wide variety of activities to encourage use, appreciation and enjoyment of the Park. Bat walks, star gazing, Semple estate exhibitions, poetry walks, adopt a beach, rock-pooling and a host more have joined the ever-popular Green Woodworking. Rangers have added storytelling, wool preparation and shadow puppetry to their interpretive skills.

Ranger led walks, talks and events continue to be free to all.

The Output Measures report identifies 566 events/activities during the year (469 last year) with an audience of 10,697 (11,047 last year). Rangers also contribute to events organised by other staff, for example Farmers' Markets and Art Club shows. In 2010/11 Rangers met an increased demand for events and delivered their programme as advertised in the "What's On" publications.

8.02 Volunteers

The Park continues to offer volunteering opportunities. Adopt - a - Beach took place quarterly at Lunderston Bay. Supervised Adult Training Centre groups worked at Muirshiel on tree planting and woodland maintenance. The Green Gym initiative continued doing regular voluntary work. The Prince's Trust, together with restorative justice programmes and special needs groups have continued to be significant partners. Work experience pupils were taken on our week-long programme developed for S4 pupils.

685 volunteer days (597 in 2009/10; 223 in 2008/09, 150 in 2007/08) were recorded on projects like those above.

The continued increase in volunteering in the Park this year is the result of increased commitment, the continuing partnership with Johnstone High School and the recruitment, towards the end of the year, of a Volunteer Development Officer. As in previous years we facilitated some of the volunteer effort into the Lochwinnoch Community garden.

For the second year a partnership with Xchange Scotland brought a group of 12 foreign young people to a two week residential experience in the Park.

8.03 Work with Schools

The Park continues to offer a range of services and opportunities for formal education. 340 formal educational activities (same as last year) were delivered to 6,554 pupils at our centres or at schools (8,534 last year, 9,308 pupils in 2008/09, 4,820 pupils in 2007/08).

Eco Schools are a way of interesting children in their natural surroundings and sustainability. Ranger staff have assisted in many Eco School projects in all three council areas.

Following a request by the Partner councils, detailed information has been gathered on the services provided to schools in the three council areas by our Ranger and Activities teams.

8.04 Activities

The centre has delivered more courses to more people resulting in more activity promoting health and skills. This is a significant achievement in these difficult financial times. We have further developed outreach projects and partnership working with other agencies to keep the numbers of participants up, increasing turnover.

The Park provided an extensive programme of courses, including kayaking, sailing, archery and multi-activity courses, principally at Castle Semple. The advertised courses and activity sessions are developed to meet the needs of participants. Accordingly we run everything from “Multi-activity” sessions to certificated coaching courses. Two leaflets a year are produced to promote the courses and list dates, with these details also available on the website. A summary is included below:

Activity	No. of courses	No. of participants	
		Child	Adult
Archery	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Powerboat, Level 2	22 (14)	-	68 (12)
Kayak/canoe	38 (50)	228 (41)	44 (88)
Kayak Rainbow Award	NA (0)	NA (0)	-
Map & compass	0 (6)	0 (0)	0 (8)
Multi-activity	18 (18)	262 (90)	0 (0)
Sailing	58 (58)	141 (66)	81 (46)
Totals	136 (146)	631 (197)	193 (154)

(Last year's figures in brackets)

Increasingly our activities staff are working with young adults, frequently individuals with special needs or from socially disadvantaged sections of communities. In this we work with charitable organisations, social workers, sports development workers and Community Police officers to provide outdoor recreation experiences. There is no “one size fits all” and bespoke courses are developed for each booking. A summary is provided below:

Bespoke courses Activity	No. of courses	No. of participants	
		Child	Adult
Archery	118 (16)	210 (84)	35 (50)
Trail cycling	101(66)	542 (102)	152 (122)
Canadian canoe	26(36)	200 (50)	60 (111)
Kayak	62 (64)	675 (410)	100 (116)
Map & compass	6 (28)	0 (80)	43 (62)
Multi-activity	129 (105)	1816 (1202)	200 (426)
Rafting	7 (37)	61 (85)	22 (47)
Team building	86 (47)	846 (67)	336 (185)
Birthday Parties	12 (3)	96 (29)	-
Wheelchair accessible boat	35 (28)	-	126 (82)
Totals	582 (430)	4446 (2109)	1074 (1201)

(Last year's figures in brackets)

We continue to provide “tailor-made” services and activities. The bespoke service, tailored to the needs of users, is increasing our customer base and is growing in its importance. The delivery of activities in schools, working with Active School Sport Coordinators, has continued.

This year participation has increased because of concerted efforts to acquire new business. This is despite the downturn observed in educational and social work spending in outdoor experiences. The largest increase is in a small number of educational groups attending for lengthy programmes featuring several activities.

Colleges and universities are approaching us for more provision in the form of larger Groups. This will be further developed in 2011

Activities offered to these groups included – canoeing, kayaking, sailing, mountain biking, orienteering, team building challenges and other similar opportunities.

Park staff have been trained as delivery agents for the John Muir Award and have run several longer programmes for groups.

Since becoming a BCU Registered centre, regular BCU courses are now run at the centre.

The Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) certification was renewed this year recognising the continued high standard of procedures and training and delivery.

We have continued to offer activities away from Castle Semple Loch to retain the clients who wish to move on to more challenging activities. These outreach activities and expeditions continued to develop this year after a successful introduction. For example, two day Map and Compass courses are now run with the second day being delivered in the Loch Lomond area. Other areas are available on request.

The development of the campsite at Barnbrock Farm has enabled residential activity sessions to be accommodated. This year several groups booked multiple days activities with overnight stays at Barnbrock campsite.

Park staff continue to provide training at cost to the local clubs eg. powerboat training. Several groups benefit from Ranger and Activities staff delivering free training for first aid, manual handling and club coach awards. Colleges and universities are approaching us for more provision in the form of larger Groups. This will be further developed in 2010.

8.05 Hen harriers on TV

The core area of the Park is fortunate to have several nesting pairs of Hen Harriers. The importance of the species is recognised in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. Over the previous six years projects seeks to raise awareness and understanding of these spectacular birds of prey have brought live pictures of nesting harriers to the centre at Muirshiel.

The live televising of a Hen Harrier nest was again possible this year, using new equipment purchased with support from LEADER European funding

9.0 Management

9.01 Management Team

The Senior Management Team comprising the Regional Park Manager, two Assistant Managers (Job-share) and the Development & Marketing Officer continues to manage the Park “day to day”, implementing Park Authority policy.

9.02 Consultative Forum

The Consultative Forum met twice in the year, during April and October (see section 9.10).

9.03 Strategic Planning

The Park Strategy 2008/11 was adopted at the Park Authority meeting December 2007. It directs and informs the establishment of workplans and programmes for three years. During the year the Park Authority approved an extension to the Park Strategy and a timetable for a full strategy consultation and renewal.

The preparation of the Park’s annual Workplan included consultation with a variety of partners and stakeholders. The continuation of the Park Consultative Forum, established five years ago, has provided a mechanism for greater consultation on the Workplan.

9.04 Staff Establishment

In order to achieve savings targets some vacant posts were not filled. This included the Chief Ranger who retired in November 2006. Establishment staff levels are expected to continue to drop. The totals (in Full Time Equivalents, FTE) for each team were:-

Management	3.0
Administration inc cleaners	5.1
Ranger	13.5
Activities	5.62
Visitor Services	5.49
Estates	3.86
Cleaning	2.88
Total	39.45 FTE (40.74 in 2009/10)

In addition there is a 0.67 FTE fully externally funded Paths Development Officer.

The Park Authority has previously approved the seasonal post of Site Attendant as a trial but this position has not yet been filled.

9.05 Personnel Management

The Estate Team members continue to work modified hours during British Summer Time. This has meant that they start and finish an hour earlier each day. These flexible working arrangements benefit the Park and its visitors as much maintenance, like grass cutting, can now take place before visitors arrive.

The personnel policies of the lead partner, Renfrewshire Council, continue to be applied.

9.06 Incident reports

Staff routinely monitor incidents using a system developed many years ago, although care should be taken when reading trends over time into the tables. The system complements other statutory reporting systems. Part of the system is that the reports are available to the Senior Management Team on a weekly basis. A summary of this year's reports together with previous years' is:-

2005-06 2006-07 2007-08 2008-09 2009-10 2010-11

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Vandalism	86	76	30	57	42	26
Theft	9	9	3	5	1	4
Abandoned Vehicles	16	11	1	7	5	2
Fire/Alarm Call Out	12	13	3	33	10	11
Health & Safety	73	53	17	43	34	23
Law & Country Code	63	50	32	33	49	26
Maintenance	57	28	11	29	33	12
Accident Assistance	19	9	6	7	14	13
Other	77	46	19	34	23	21
Total	412	295	122	248	203	138

Health and Safety incidents continue on the previous downwards trend after an abnormally low incidence in 2007-08. There was one serious incident involving tree-felling during the year.

9.07 Feedback & Complaints.

Nine people (2 in 2009/10, 9 in 2008/09, 13 in 2007/08 and 42 in 2006/07) specifically completed a customer feedback/complaints form or otherwise registered a complaint during the year. The breakdown is:-

Signage	2
Roads (potholes)	2
Paths	0
Service	1
Facilities	1
Dog fouling	0
Litter	0
Midges	1
Other users	2.

Several letters of thanks for good service have been received.

9.08 Lunderston Bay.

The Park Authority has, for some time, recognised that the facilities for staff and visitors are poor since the visitor centre was destroyed by fire. The Joint Committee receives regular updates on progress on aspects of the difficulties. The local authority, Inverclyde Council, has confirmed its commitment to this key recreational site and has allocated capital resources for the construction of new facilities in the future.

9.09 Park Authority

Cllr. David Arthur is the Chair of the Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority Joint Committee. There have been 4 Joint Committee meetings and 2 meetings of the Consultative Forum in the period of this Annual Report and papers have been considered on:

Joint Committee

11 June 2010

- *Annual Accounts 2009/10*
- *Lunderston Bay Update*
- *Preparation of a Park Strategy 2011/16*
- *Water Weed Crassula Helmsii: Update*
- *Parkhill Woodland Plan*
- *Proposed extension to Castle Semple Rowing Club Clubhouse*
- *Local Development Plans and Scottish Planning Policy*
- *RSPB Development Proposals at the Reserve, Lochwinnoch*
- *Update Financial Regulations*

Joint Committee

3 September 2010

- *Revenue Budget Monitoring Report*
- *Internal Audit Annual Report*
- *Lunderston Bay Update*
- *Retail and Catering Discussion Paper*
- *Public Local Inquiry for Wings Law Windfarm Proposals*
- *Heritage Lottery Fund Award to Semple Trail Project*
- *Preparation of a Park Strategy 2011/16*
- *Park Workplan 2011/2012*

**Joint Committee
3 December 2010**

- *Revenue Budget Monitoring Report*
- *Audited Annual Accounts 2009/10*
- *Lunderston Bay Update*
- *Park Workplan 2011/12*
- *Ranger Service Output Measures 2009/10*
- *Revised Framework Guidance Document on Windfarms*
- *Waterhead Moor Windfarm Proposals*
- *Review of Charges for Services 2011*
- *Park Authority Meetings Timetable 2011*
- *Sailing Clubhouse Development Proposals*

**Joint Committee
18 February 2010**

- *Revenue Budget Monitoring Report*
- *Revenue Estimates 2011/12*
- *Annual Report 2009/10*
- *Lunderston Bay Update*
- *Visitor Survey 2010*
- *Water Quality at Castle Semple Loch 2010*
- *Temporary Closure of Castle Semple Loch 2010*
- *Celebration of 40th Birthday of Castle Semple*
- *Discover Clyde Muirshiel Wildlife on Screen Project*
- *Website statistics and Social Media*

**Consultative Forum
14 May 2010**

The meeting was inquorate

**Consultative Forum
22 October 2010**

- *Verbal Update from Regional Park Manager*
- *Preparation of a Park Strategy 2011/16*
- *Retail and Catering Discussion Paper*
- *Heritage Lottery Fund Award to Semple Trail Project*
- *Park Workplan 2011/2012*
- *Scottish Natural Heritage's Consultation on "Places Managed for People and Nature"*

The Park Authority members and their supporting officers have been:

Cllr David Arthur	Renfrewshire Council
Cllr Neil Bibby	Renfrewshire Council
Cllr Marie McGurk	Renfrewshire Council
Cllr Iain Nicolson	Renfrewshire Council
Cllr Jean Highgate	North Ayrshire Council
Cllr Anthea Dickson	North Ayrshire Council
Cllr David Wilson	Inverclyde Council
Cllr Innes Nelson	Inverclyde Council

Officers

Stuart McMillan	Renfrewshire Council
Derek Bell	Renfrewshire Council
Martin McNab	Inverclyde Council
Jim Leckie	North Ayrshire Council
Cameron Sharp	North Ayrshire Council
John Imlach	Renfrewshire Council
Jean Wilson	Renfrewshire Council
Sandra Black	Renfrewshire Council
Paul Maguire	Renfrewshire Council

9.10 Park Authority Review

Following a meeting of the Park Chair and the Leaders of the three partner councils a review has been set up. Led by Renfrewshire Council, this will review the Park Authority's activity and ongoing investment opportunities. The review will consider ongoing management and funding options and reports will be brought to the relevant committees in the three councils in due course.

10.0 Financial Summary

The Park Authority is supported financially by the 3 founding Local Authorities; Inverclyde, North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire councils.

The Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2011 have been confirmed by Audit Scotland. Extracts from the accounts are shown below.

10.01 Expenditure

	2010/11	2009/10
• Employee costs	1,020,529	1,168,804
• Property costs	52,650	70,753
• Supplies and Services	203,820	263,149
• Contractors	19,240	10,387
• Transport and Plant	69,689	44,276
• Admin Costs	83,250	68,816
• Payments to other Bodies	1,021	2,806
Total	1,450,199	1,628,991

10.02 Income

	2008/09	2009/10
• Grants	11,927	3,399
• Sales fees and Charges	145,244	140,827
• Retail and catering	177,813	169,138
• Miscellaneous	60,473	98,179
• Requisition from member authorities	1,102,000	1,102,000

10.03 Annual Accounts

Following the significant impacts of “Single Status” in the previous few years, this has been fairly “normal” year. The Park management strive to reduce expenditure, principally through actions to reduce employee costs eg non-filling of vacancies, whilst at the same time increasing income. Significantly more grant income than is shown has been raised, but some of this has not directly gone into Park accounts, but into partner accounts for joint projects.

The deficit of £28,842 carried forward into 2010/11 has been turned into a credit due to an operational surplus for the year of £47,257.

11.0 Ranger Service Output Measures

Below are the Ranger Service Output measures as collated by the Park's Countryside Ranger Service. These are submitted annually to Scottish Natural Heritage and form an important part of the Park's annual report.

Annual Reporting Table 2009/10

Name of Ranger Service	Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park				Reporting Year 2010/2011	2010/2011
Number of Rangers Posts & FTEs	Posts	18.5	FTE's	14	Contact details in case of query	David Gatherer 01505842882
Area of land and water that the Ranger Service operates over:	28100 hectares	Area of land and water with a national or international natural heritage designation*:	9514 hectares	Area of land and water with a local natural heritage designation**:	28100 hectares	

Ranger Aim	National output measures	<i>Please write your answers against the points A – S below (continue on a separate sheet if necessary).</i>
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Ranger Aim	National output measures	<i>Please write your answers against the points A – S below (continue on a separate sheet if necessary).</i>
1. To ensure a warm welcome and provide support for people to enjoy the outdoors	1. What did your Ranger Service do to promote opportunities to enjoy the outdoors?	<p>A. Number of promotional opportunities = 176 + (including local events /shows What's on events, Health initiative open days. Social Networking – twitter etc. Coverage in local and national press.</p> <p>B. Key actions to promote opportunities (<i>list max.10 main examples</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Park-wide promotion of all activities at all centres 2. Two What's on leaflets produced Spring and Autumn.. These delivered to local outlets twice annually. Print run of 15000. 3. Local promotion of Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) posters etc throughout the park. 4. Updating of website information and ranger blog regularly promoting park activities. 5. A full programme of varied events throughout the year for all including ranger stand at GO Renfrewshire Finale and Diageo staff events. 6. Social network presence developed – Twitter and Facebook. 7. Regular press coverage in local papers and coverage in national press for events and activities. 8. Swallowcam Initiative showing live footage at GCVC with interpretation. 9. Change of name to centre to reflect upgrading of historic Greenock Cut and subsequent promotion of improved access for all. 10. AA road signage for events.
	2. How many people did your Ranger Service welcome ?	<p>C. Number of people welcomed = 99,840 people visited centres (counters). 123,269 cars visited Castle Semple Visitor Centre (counter) normally 2.3 people per car equates to 283,519 people. 14,726 cars visited Muirshiel Country Park, 13998 cars visited Greenock Cut visitor centre in eight months and 9,630 cars visited Lunderston Bay in one month. The total estimated visitors to the park is 1.5 million based on accurate people counters (see above), car counters (see above) sample counts extrapolated out and best guestimates.</p>

Ranger Aim	National output measures	<i>Please write your answers against the points A – S below (continue on a separate sheet if necessary).</i>
	<p>3. What did your Ranger Service do to increase participation by a broader range of people?</p>	<p>D. Audiences targeted: Adults with learning difficulties Nursery, Primary and Secondary school children. General Practitioner(GP)referral walking groups Family group events Retired people Voluntary groups Local community groups. Mental health groups. Mothers and toddlers SIMD Groups Black and Ethnic minority groups</p> <p>E. Key actions to encourage participation (<i>list max.5 main examples</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Running structured, agreed volunteer programmes for adults with learning difficulties. Eg Greenside/ Flexicare conservation volunteering. 2. Running work experience for young people with special needs. 3. Involvement with compilation of programme and leading guided walks for local GP referral group. 91 walks and 1197 participants 4. Hosting and running Branching Out (Mental Health referrals) 5. Volunteer opportunities for members of public.

Ranger Aim	National output measures	<i>Please write your answers against the points A – S below (continue on a separate sheet if necessary).</i>
2. To increase awareness, understanding and responsible use of the natural and cultural heritage	<p>4. How many events or activities that raise awareness of the natural and cultural heritage did your Ranger Service deliver? How many participants were involved?</p> <p>Of these, what was done in relation to formal education, and how many people benefitted?</p>	<p>F. Number of events/activities = 566</p> <p>G. The number of people attending the events/activities = 10,697</p> <p>H. The main events/activities (<i>list max. 5 main examples</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What's on events programme 2. Summer family events programme. 3. Bio-diversity year events including photo competition. 4. Swallow cam live footage, Hen harrier live footage and wildlife interpretation boards. 5. 3 Adopt a beach and a Beachwatch weekend recording marine litter and Irvine beach bioblitz. <p>I. Number of formal education activities delivered = 340</p> <p>J. Number of people benefiting from formal education activities in I. above = 6554</p> <p>K. The main formal education work (<i>list max. 5 main examples</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High school work experience programme for 21 pupils including 4 special needs.(practical work shadowing a ranger) 2. High school Curriculum for Excellence work (Sampling techniques, species identification ,landscape and land-use comparisons) 3. Primary school Curriculum for Excellence work (Mini-beasts, use of keys for species identification, marine life, habitats endangered species etc.) 4. Eco-schools work –planters, bird, bat and bug boxes .Involvement in eco-schools week providing expertise and practical help in their eco-schools programme. 5. Ranger staff member on Inverclyde Eco-school co-ordinating group benefiting all Inverclyde eco-school pupils.

Ranger Aim	National output measures	<i>Please write your answers against the points A – S below (continue on a separate sheet if necessary).</i>
	5. How many different people were involved in volunteering with your Ranger Service and how many volunteer days did that amount to?	<p>L. Number of people involved in volunteering = 404</p> <p>M. Number of volunteer half days = 596</p> <p>N. Number of volunteer days = 387</p> <p>O. The main volunteering opportunities (<i>list max.5 main examples</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Volunteer days for members of the public 2. Green Gym volunteers programme 3. Propagation of Juniper and Spignel via polytunnel. 4. Xchange Scotland – foreign volunteer programme 5. Johnstone High school citizen programme
3. To support the sustainable management and use of the outdoors to meet a range of social, economic and environmental objectives	6. How many different partnerships, projects and initiatives did your Ranger Service contribute to?	<p>P. Number supported = 15</p> <p>Q. Please list the key ones (<i>list max.5 main examples</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pawsitivity action day – (Dogs and Access) 2. BTO Survey training. 3. Compilation of volunteer programmes in partnership with Forestry Commission Branching Out Initiative. 4. Inverclyde Eco-schools /School grounds initiative involvement/ school citizenship programmes. 5. Compilation of information for an application to HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund) for improvements to our environmental learning zone (ELZ) at GCVC. Semple trail Heritage project.
	7. How did your Ranger Service contribute to the monitoring and management of BAP/LBAP species and habitats?	<p>R. Number of UK and Local Bio-diversity Action Plans (BAPs) contributed to = 11</p> <p>S. Please list the key plans/actions supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildfowl Counts (WeBS) British Trust for Ornithology(BTO) tetrad surveys Field vole/ water vole surveys. UK Butterfly Monitoring System(UKBMS) – transect monitoring of local butterfly species. Monitoring of hen harriers in Special Protection Area. SPA. Creation of wild flower meadow