



Galloway National Park Proposal – Update

In July 2024 the Scottish Government announced that Galloway has been chosen as the preferred site for Scotland’s next National Park. The joint bid, submitted earlier this year by the Galloway National Park Association (GNPA) and the Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Partnership (GSABP), was the winning submission from a shortlist of five really special places located across Scotland.

Why was a joint bid submitted?

Any new National Park must support economic growth; address the climate emergency; and improve public services and community wellbeing. Our joint bid for a Galloway National Park represents the intent to build on over 12 years of work led by GSABP, which continues to raise the need for better investment in southwest Scotland’s natural and cultural heritage and new socio-economic opportunities for rural communities and businesses. Our goal is for the collaborative, participatory ethos of our UNESCO Biosphere to help shape a modern National Park that empowers diverse stakeholders. Our joint bid is backed by the three relevant local authorities, tourism partners, and the regional development agency, South of Scotland Enterprise.

What happens next?

The announcement that Galloway is the preferred site for a National Park is the first step in an extensive and transparent engagement, public consultation and reporting process, led by Scottish Government’s appointed Reporter, NatureScot. This process will run until the end of April 2025. The engagement and formal consultation will give local residents, businesses, communities and land managers the opportunity to have their say in whether or not Galloway should become a National Park, where the boundary for a new park should be drawn, its proposed powers and functions, and the proposed membership of a National Park Authority for the area. NatureScot will provide advice to Ministers, who will then decide whether to proceed by issuing a

Draft Designation Order for further consultation before National Park status is approved by the Scottish Parliament.

What is the role of the Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Partnership?

The Galloway & Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere was established in 2012 and is a non-regulatory entity. It covers 9,720km² of terrestrial and marine environments. GSABP is a registered Scottish Charity (SC044137) working across the UNESCO-designated region in conservation, education, enterprise, and climate resilience. Our region's status as a UNESCO Biosphere – and the work of GSABP – exists independently of the National Park proposal, and while it will continue irrespective of whether Galloway is eventually confirmed as a National Park we would expect to have a close relationship with any new organisation.

“A key reason that the GSA Biosphere chose to be associated with the bid for National Park designation was that we wanted to make sure that any Galloway National Park was built upon the foundation of community engagement that we have painstakingly established over the past twelve years. This has involved working constructively with partners from right across society, looking for ways of bringing together differing perspectives and sectoral interests to the benefit of all. That approach must be absolutely central to the operation of a Galloway National Park.”

**John Thomson, Acting Chair, Galloway & Southern
Ayrshire Biosphere Partnership**

Further Information

More information about the process of designating Scotland's next National Park, including the local consultation process, is available at:

www.gov.scot/policies/landscape-and-outdoor-access/national-parks/
www.nature.scot/doc/new-national-park-frequently-asked-questions-faqs

You can also contact NatureScot's National Park Reporter team via NationalParkReporter@nature.scot

More information about the Galloway & Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere is available at www.gsabiosphere.org.uk

For further enquiries, media requests, or to speak to a member of our team, please contact info@gsabiosphere.org.uk