

VIEWPOINT

Campaigning for 90 years

OUR RADICAL FUTURE

Bringing our New Perspectives project to a close in style

GLYNDŴR NATIONAL PARK

Explore some of the unique and exciting places to visit

LOVING THE COUNTRYSIDE

Roger Mortlock on 100 years of CPRE




CAMPAIGN for
NATIONAL PARKS


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PARCIAU CENEDLAETHOL

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WELCOME

Welcome to our 90th anniversary edition of Viewpoint, Happy Birthday to us!

2026 is a big year, not only for Campaign for National Parks, but also for CPRE (one of our founding organisations) who are celebrating their centenary (pages 14-15), and four of the National Parks who turn 75 this year – we're going to need a bigger cake!

The celebrations don't end there, in December 2025 we brought our New Perspectives project to a close in style. We were joined by the young people who have made the project such a success over the last two years in Parliament where they shared their experiences to inspire decision makers to commit to ensuring young people from all backgrounds are heard and valued in all key decisions about National Parks to better drive nature recovery, climate resilience, and social justice. The event was a double-whammy, as not only were we celebrating New Perspectives, but we also learnt that we were successful in securing funding for a new project – National Parks Reimagined, thanks to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (pages 7-9).

Looking ahead to the rest of spring and summer of 2026, we're patiently anticipating the next steps of the Glyndŵr National Park designation in north east Wales (pages 10-13) and supporting pushes to end water pollution across the nation. I myself can't wait for the grey clouds to finally part so I can venture out to Eryri or the Peak District (my closest Parks) and absorb as much vitamin D as humanly possible.

A lot has changed in the last 90 years since Campaign for National Parks was conceived but we have achieved a lot together and don't plan on stopping any time soon (page 20).

Harriet Gardiner
Senior Communications Officer



Harriet with her family in Dunster, Exmoor

Campaign for National Parks: 90 years old and still going strong



This year marks the 90th anniversary of Campaign for National Parks, but our remarkable journey is not finished yet.

We've come a long way since 26th May 1936 when the Standing Committee on National Parks held its first meeting.

Five years before, the Government-commissioned Addison Report had recommended setting up a National Park system, and although there was no formal action it spurred into being a powerful lobbying group. The Standing Committee on National Parks was convened by the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (now called CPRE) and Wales (CPRW) and proved to be a powerful coalition of recreation and conservation interests. It was led by the likes of the Ramblers' Association, National Trust, Zoological Society, Open Spaces Society and Youth Hostels Association, but was also supported by a whole host of others, including Holiday Fellowship, Wild Plant Conservation Board, RSPB, Alpine Club and even the RAC and AA.

Politically astute and well organised, the Committee's secretary was John Dower, who would go on to write the seminal National Parks report in 1945, which in turn informed the Hobhouse Committee and eventually led to the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949.

Almost 90 years later, the broad backing that made the original Standing Committee such a powerful force was again in evidence when, in 2025, we were faced with the prospect of the present Government weakening the legal protections for Protected Landscapes. Over 200 organisations rallied to our call as, once more, Campaign for National Parks lead from the front, successfully influencing national debate and decision-making.

Of course, we remain vigilant and know that there will be more battles

ahead. Our original goal of establishing National Parks may have been successful, but the work to support and improve them has continued ever since, which was why in 1977 we changed our name to the Council (and now Campaign) for National Parks and remain an energetic independent charity.

As last year demonstrated, we need to continue sticking up for National Parks and promoting our vision of nature-rich National Parks for all, giving a platform to everyone passionate about our special landscapes. Let's be proud of our 90-year legacy and what we have accomplished, but – with your ongoing support – push on and achieve even more.

Written by Andrew McCloy,
Campaign for National Parks
Chair of Trustees

 Image: Heathersage Moor, Peak District National Park by Peakclass

NEWS

AMBASSADORS SECURE COMMITMENT TO PUT YOUTH AT THE HEART OF THE PARKS

In December, Campaign for National Parks' Young Ambassadors met with the UK's Protected Landscapes Minister Mary Creagh to discuss the future of National Parks, including reforms to governance and purposes and the vital role of young people. Armed with their 'Stepping Up' walking boot, the Ambassadors called for modern, diverse governance, and faster progress on promised reforms. At the meeting, the Minister agreed to sign a joint declaration at the Our Radical Future event in Parliament, committing to put young people at the heart of decision-making. Young leaders like our Ambassadors are very keen to work with government and help deliver greener, wilder National Parks for the future.

NEW APPG LAUNCHED TO CHAMPION NATIONAL PARKS AND LANDSCAPES

A new National Parks and National Landscapes All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) has been established in Westminster, with Campaign for National Parks serving as its secretariat. The cross-party group will champion the protection, improvement and sustainable enjoyment of England and Wales' Protected Landscapes. Labour's Barry Gardiner MP has been elected Chair, and 30 MPs and Peers attended the inaugural AGM. The APPG will focus on nature recovery, climate action, thriving rural economies and inclusive access, while supporting legislative reform of National Parks. Supporters are encouraged to write to their local MP and invite them to join the new APPG to strengthen its voice in Parliament.

Image: Jessica, Patricia, Roshni and Lucy outside Parliament with their 'Stepping Up' walking boot



Gareth and fellow runners along the River Cleddau, Pembrokeshire Coast



Watch the full film on YouTube by scanning the QR code

RUNNING OUT OF TIME: RUNNING THE LENGTH OF THE RIVER CLEDDAU

Last year our Projects and Policy Manager Gareth ran the length of the eastern Cleddau river in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. Along his route, Gareth was joined by local campaigners, runners and residents who are passionate about the river and want to protect its future.

In our Rivers at Risk report, we found that 48% of rivers in Welsh National Parks are failing. The River Cleddau is just one of our vitally important rivers at risk; deeply affected by climate change, agriculture and water industry pollution.

Time is running out, but Welsh Government are presenting a "once in a generation reset of water governance in Wales". Let's seize the opportunity and recognise National Parks at the heart of the transformation of our water systems in Wales.

Watch the film to follow Gareth's journey and find out more about the pressures facing rivers in our National Parks.

DOUBLE YOUR DONATION: THE BIG GIVE IS BACK THIS SPRING

Thank you to all of our supporters who regularly support Campaign for National Parks through The Big Give appeals, which double donations at no extra cost to you. This year the appeal returns under a new name, Earth Raise, previously known as the Green Match Fund. The week of matched giving begins at midday on Earth Day, Wednesday 22 April and runs for one week only. Your donation will go twice as far in helping us protect and champion National Parks.

Scan the QR code to donate online



STAKEHOLDERS EXPLORE THE FUTURE OF NATIONAL MARINE PARKS

Our work exploring the future of National Marine Parks in England and Wales has continued at pace in recent months with a strategic roundtable event in London, a workshop in Pembrokeshire and a roundtable at the Senedd in Cardiff.

November's roundtable in London brought together Protected Landscapes, community groups, public bodies, industry, ports, fisheries, funders, eNGOs and young people to advise on the next phase of the National

Marine Parks movement. Findings are now being drawn into exciting plans for the next phase of the project.

In Pembrokeshire, a joint statement was also agreed in November between supportive parties keen to explore the viability of a seaward extension of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park or the designation of a Marine National Park.

The appetite was further explored at a roundtable in the Senedd with members of the Senedd in attendance with other stakeholders. Campaign for National Parks are currently looking to secure funding to continue this sector-leading work into the future.

No small jobs

Amy Worley, Features Commissioning Editor at Countryside Job Service, follows the growth of the environmental job sector and the role Countryside Job Service plays in connecting people with work.

Do you remember the classified ads at the back of the daily or weekly newspaper? Well, that's more or less how Countryside Jobs Service (CJS) started, by collating all the job ads for rangers across the country from those "small ads" and sending them out to members of the Rangers Associations. Our paper bill was enormous.

CJS founders, Niall and Anthea Carson, themselves countryside rangers, took on the task of converting those snippets into a cohesive newsletter. The first edition landed on doormats in July 1994. In the following years CJS has continued to grow following the natural progression of the countryside sector with just a gentle nudge every now and then. We've seen the arrival of Local Agenda 21, a forerunner of today's Net Zero aims; the introduction of community outreach programmes to open up the countryside to everyone; the expansion of grant schemes requiring additional logos to be included in adverts; and more recently the recruiting of social media managers and blog post writers, not initially something you'd think a conservation-focused organisation needed. It takes a lot more than rangers to keep the

countryside ticking over, and looking beautiful, biodiverse and healthy.

There has also been a steady growth in the numbers of Volunteer Co-ordinators and Project Officers. Despite the large paid workforce, the sector still requires many more hands, and volunteering is, and always has been, essential for the countryside management sector to function. This last year as finances have been squeezed, those volunteer hours have been needed and appreciated even more than ever. Volunteering takes many forms from small groups with regular weeding and litter picking tasks to individuals on longer term placements acting as additional staff members whilst learning the skills of managing the countryside and hoping to join the full-time workforce one day.

CJS's growth has not only been in the range of jobs and careers but a widening of the content too. The website and newsletters now carry a wide variety of information, articles and in-depth features aimed at the profession and giving a behind the scenes look at what life's really like working in the sector, a full directory of training (long and short courses) and a daily news.

We'd like to thank Countryside Job Service for partnering with us and supporting our work with young people. Take a look around at countryside-jobs.com



Image: South Downs National Park by HerbySussex

OUR RADICAL FUTURE

In December we brought our groundbreaking New Perspectives project to a close in style

With the sounds of a rushing River Thames and the twinkling London Eye as our backdrop, we joined young people with Government, MPs, National Park leaders, charities and businesses to celebrate and say a fond farewell to New Perspectives...

“

My self-confidence has grown immensely, and I have taken action to do things I didn't believe I could achieve before.

- Project Participant

**NEW
PERSPECTIVES**



**ramble
worldwide**

NEW PERSPECTIVES

Our New Perspectives project first launched in 2021 with the aim to give young people from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to influence and connect with decision makers to change the narratives on who National Parks are for and who has a say in their future. In 2024 we were grateful to be awarded funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to grow the project and connect even more young people with National Parks.



Guests at Our Radical Future event

In two years, we worked with over 100 young people across all 13 National Parks in England and Wales, delivering three Future Leaders Courses, 30 storytelling grants and onboarding 12 Ambassadors. We know participating in the project has given these young people confidence, the opportunity to take up leadership roles and even reshaped perspectives among established leaders within the National Park movement.

“

What an amazing job the National Parks/Protected Landscapes family has done in becoming more relevant to a wider population. I think the job CNP [Campaign for National Parks] has done with the New Perspectives awards and youth leaders programme has been instrumental.

- Vanessa Rowlands, Chair of the South Downs National Park Authority

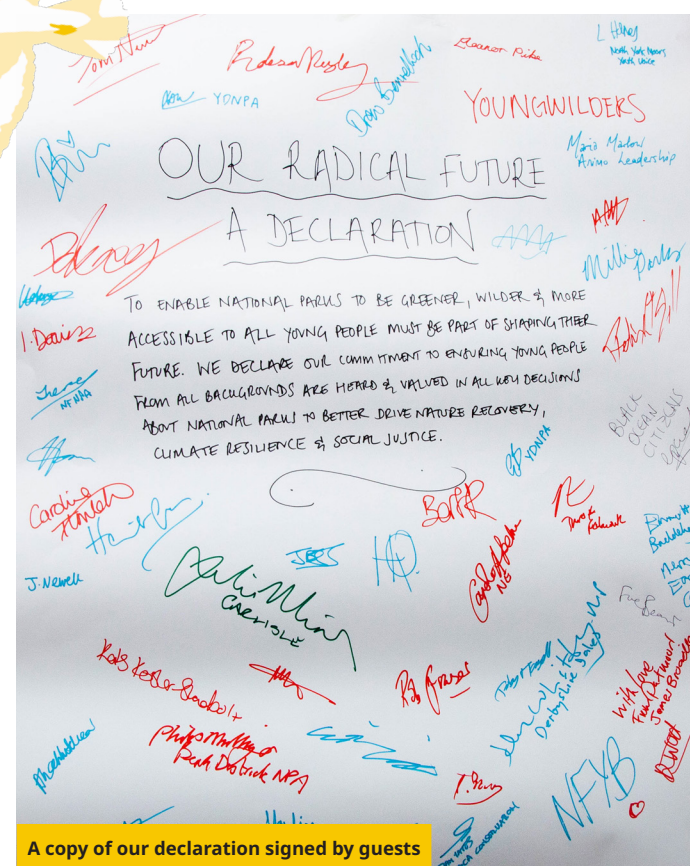
OUR RADICAL FUTURE IN PARLIAMENT

In our event co-hosted by Saskia Luqmani, Hannah Corran, Prerana Balu and Roshni Parmar-Hill, we wanted to set the scene for a future of National Parks with young people at their heart. The event was an opportunity to take the energy and ideas of the project participants and challenge those in power. We asked attendees, MPs and key decision makers to sign our declaration as well as consider how they can contribute to a radical future for National Parks.

OUR RADICAL FUTURE, A DECLARATION:

To enable National Parks to be greener, wilder and more accessible to all, young people must be part of shaping their future.

We declare our commitment to ensuring young people from all backgrounds are heard and valued in all key decisions about National Parks to better drive nature recovery, climate resilience, and social justice.



A copy of our declaration signed by guests

This event is definitely not the end of New Perspectives. In fact, we were thrilled to announce that we had been successful in applying for new funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to build on the success of our New Perspectives project and create National Parks Reimagined.

NATIONAL PARKS REIMAGINED

We know first-hand that landscape recovery at scale requires bold, inclusive and innovative leadership; better decision-making comes from listening to and learning with young people, members of the public, and those already delivering tangible change in National Parks. Thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, our new project, National Parks Reimagined, will bring these people together to reimagine what the future of National Parks could look like, re-envisioning these landscapes into places where people and nature thrive together.

National Parks Reimagined will support large-scale landscape recovery by involving a far more diverse range of people in caring for our shared natural and cultural heritage. We aim to grow confident, intergenerational leadership that drives ambitious change in how National Parks are shaped, managed and protected.

Landscape recovery at scale requires bold, inclusive and imaginative leadership. Better decisions are made when young people, communities and those already driving change are listened to and valued.

Intergenerational exchange is essential. Rather than creating separate spaces for young people, this project will support them to see themselves as leaders — creating real opportunities to lead and designing spaces where people of all ages can work together on equal terms. By embedding young leaders in the design and delivery of the project, we aim to raise ambition and deliver stronger outcomes for people, nature and National Parks.

As National Parks Reimagined gets underway, we will be bringing you updates from the project as well as how you can get involved.



WHAT IF?

Roshni Parmar-Hill, event co-host and Campaign for National Parks Ambassador, wrote and performed her poem 'What if?' at the event.

What if I could dream of a different future for the land I call my home?

What if it were built by beavers rewetting our watery isle?

And what if those rivers were muddled and meandering, beautifully messy in their self-sustaining resilience?

What if there were wolf prints by the lake leading into mossy enclaves,

within the boughs of a temperate rainforest, alive?

And what if white-tailed eagles, soaring and spanning the sun became my compass as I freely roam,

knowing that I'm home, knowing that I belong.

Watch Roshni perform her poem in Parliament by scanning the QR code



Image: Roshni Parmar-Hill speaking at our event in Parliament



GLYNDŴR NATIONAL PARK

With progress underway to create a new National Park in north east Wales, we explore some of the unique and exciting places to visit...



Image: Pontcysyllte Aqueduct by travellinglight

North East Wales is full of stunning landscapes, communities, species and heritage all worthy of inclusion in the new National Park. The special qualities and history are clear to see if you're lucky enough to spend some time exploring the area. Whether it's the vast stretches of sandy beaches in the north or dramatic mountains in the south, there's plenty to treasure and protect for future generations.

We've highlighted just a few of the sites that make the new National Park a unique and exciting place to visit:

Ceiriog Valley – South of the Vale of Llangollen and 20km in length, the Ceiriog Valley was once described by the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George as “a little bit of heaven on earth” and we're inclined to agree. Quiet villages populate the valley through which the River Ceiriog flows. Narrow drovers' roads are in abundance alongside ancient hedgerows and traditional farmland.

Gronant Dunes – A designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Gronant sits to the west of the River Dee estuary on the northern Welsh Coast. The area contains Wales' only breeding colony of little terns as well as a whole host of other species from natterjack toads and sand lizards to sea holly, marram grass and rare dune grasses. A popular spot for birders and sun-bathers alike, the dunes run along the golden sands of Gronant Beach stretching towards Prestatyn Beach to the west and Talacre Beach with the iconic Point of Ayr Lighthouse to the east.

Berwyn Range – A wild, rugged and distinct landscape covered largely in heather and bracken, the Berwyn Range is home to iconic raptors such as the hen harrier, merlin and peregrine. Much of the landscape is designated as a Special Protection Area due to the importance it has for birds. A series of summits peak at 832m on Cadair Berwyn which can feel as wild and untamed as anywhere in neighbouring Eryri National Park.

Sycharth, Llansilin – North East Wales is packed with history and stories of invasion and rebellion. Sycharth near Llansilin on the border with England is known as the birthplace of Owain Glyndŵr (Prince of Wales) in 1354. Owain Glyndŵr led a 15-year rebellion against English rule in the Medieval period, and the earthwork remains of this motte and bailey castle are just one great way to take a step back in history in the area.

Pontcysyllte Aqueduct – Situated in the existing Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape, the impressive Pontcysyllte aqueduct is a truly unique experience for those taking to the water. Built in 1805, it is the longest aqueduct in Britain and the highest in the world at 38m. Stunning views are afforded across the valley whether you're cruising or taking in the towpath by foot. The Grade 1 listed structure is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a hugely popular destination for those visiting the area.

OWAIN GLYNDŴR

The proposed Glyndŵr National Park is named after Owain Glyndŵr, the last Welsh-born Prince of Wales and a symbol of Welsh pride and resilience. Owain was a key leader in the Welsh rebellion that began in 1400 and his history is entwined with north east Wales. Most notably he spearheaded the movement at one of his residences near the village of Glyndyfrdwy in the heart of the proposed National Park.

THE FUTURE OF GLYNDŴR NATIONAL PARK

The 28-day public notice period for the Glyndŵr National Park concluded on Sunday 15 February after the Natural Resources Wales Board confirmed the designation order should be submitted in January, signalling another important step forward for the new National Park.

The final period of public consultation saw substantial opposition from local authorities raised, despite conditional public support for the National Park rising to 67%.

Welsh Government are now set to consider the proposals based on the evidence gathered and any official opposition raised during the public notice period.

The expectation remains that a public inquiry will likely be triggered, we'll be watching closely to see how things progress.



Image: Point of Ayr Lighthouse, Talacre Beach

Gyda chynnydd ar y gweill i greu Parc Cenedlaethol newydd yng ngogledd-ddwyrain Cymru, rydym yn archwilio rhai o'r lleoedd unigryw a chyffrous i ymweld â nhw...

Mae gogledd-ddwyrain Cymru yn llawn tirweddau, cymunedau, rhywogaethau a threftadaeth syfrdanol sydd i gyd yn deilwng o gael eu cynnwys yn y Parc Cenedlaethol newydd. Mae'r rhinweddau arbennig a'r hanes i'w gweld yn glir os ydych chi'n ddigon ffodus i dreulio peth amser yn crwydro'r ardal. Boed yn draethau tywodlyd helaeth yn y gogledd neu fynyddoedd dramatig yn y de, mae digon i'w drysori a'i ddiogelu ar gyfer cenedlaethau'r dyfodol.

Rydym wedi tynnu sylw at ychydig o'r safleoedd sy'n gwneud y Parc Cenedlaethol newydd yn lle unigryw a chyffrous i ymweld ag ef:

Dyffryn Ceiriog – I'r de o Ddyffryn Llangollen ac yn 20km o hyd, disgrifiwyd Dyffryn Ceiriog unwaith gan Brif Weinidog Prydain, David Lloyd George, fel “darn bach o'r nefoedd ar y ddaear” ac rydyn ni'n tueddu i gytuno. Mae pentrefi tawel yn poblogi'r dyffryn lle mae afon Ceiriog yn llifo. Mae ffyrdd cul y porthmyn yn doreithiog ochr yn ochr â gwrychoedd hynafol a thir fferm traddodiadol.

Twyni Gronant – Mae safle dynodedig o Ddiddordeb Gwyddonol Arbennig (SoDdGA) Gronant yn gorwedd i'r gorllewin o aber afon Dyfrdwy ar arfordir gogleddol Cymru. Mae'r ardal yn cynnwys unig gytref bridio Cymru o fôr-wenoliaid bach ac amrywiaeth o rywogaethau, o lyffantod y twyni, madfallod y tywod, celyn y môr, moresg a gweiriau twyni prin. Yn fan poblogaidd i adarwyr a thorwyr haul fel ei gilydd, mae'r twyni'n rhedeg ar hyd tywod euraidd Traeth Gronant gan ymestyn tuag at Draeth Prestatyn i'r gorllewin a Thraeth Talacre gyda Goleudy eiconig Trwyn Du i'r dwyrain.

Y Berwyn – tirwedd wyllt, arw ac unigryw wedi'i gorchuddio'n bennaf â grub a rhedyn. Mae'r Berwyn yn gartref i adar ysglyfaethus eiconig fel bodaod tinwyn, cudyllod bach a hebogiaid tramor. Mae llawer o'r tirwedd wedi'i dynodi'n Ardal Gwarchodaeth Arbennig oherwydd ei phwysigrwydd i adar. Mae cyfres o gopaon sy'n cyrraedd 832m ar Gadair Berwyn, a all deimlo mor wyllt a di-dof ag unrhyw le ym Mharc Cenedlaethol Eryri gerllaw.

Sycharth, Llansilin – Mae gogledd-ddwyrain Cymru yn llawn hanes a straeon am oresgyniad a gwrthryfel. Mae Sycharth ger Llansilin ar y ffin â Lloegr yn enwog fel man geni Owain Glyndŵr (Tywysog Cymru) yn 1354. Arweiniodd Owain Glyndŵr wrthryfel am 15 mlynedd yn erbyn teyrnasiad Lloegr yn yr Oesoedd Canol, ac mae olion gwaith pridd y castell mwnt a beili hwn yn un ffordd wych o gamu'n ôl mewn hanes yn yr ardal.

Traphont Ddŵr Pontcysyllte – Mae'r draphont drawiadol hon yn Nhirwedd Genedlaethol Bryniau Clwyd a Dyffryn Dyfrdwy yn brofiad gwirioneddol unigryw i'r rhai sy'n mynd ar y dŵr. Fe'i hadeiladwyd yn 1805 a dyma'r draphont ddŵr hiraf ym Mhrydain a'r uchaf yn y byd ar 38m. Ceir golygfeydd godidog o'r dyffryn p'un a ydych chi'n hwylio neu'n cerdded ar hyd y llwybr tynnu. Mae'r strwythur rhestredig Gradd I yn Safle Treftadaeth y Byd UNESCO ac yn gyrchfan hynod boblogaidd i'r rhai sy'n ymweld â'r ardal.



Loving the countryside is a radical act of care

Roger Mortlock, Chief Executive of CPRE, reflects on 100 years of the charity and how a shared vision started it all



Roger Mortlock

This year, CPRE marks its centenary; a moment that invites both reflection and renewal, as much about our future as our past. As Campaign for National Parks celebrates its own remarkable 90 years, it is a great time to acknowledge how closely our stories are entwined, and how much our shared values continue to matter.

CPRE was founded in 1926, at a time when England was changing fast. New roads, development and industry were spreading into rural areas with little regard for landscape, wildlife or the needs of local communities. From the outset, CPRE brought together campaigners, planners and citizens around a powerful idea: that the countryside matters, and that its future should be shaped in the public interest. That belief helped lay the foundations for one of the most important achievements in England's environmental history – the creation of National Parks.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, CPRE worked alongside many allies, Campaign for National Parks foremost amongst them, to make the case that some landscapes were too precious to be left to chance. The idea that places of outstanding beauty should be protected in law – not just for their scenery, but for public enjoyment, wellbeing and cultural identity – was radical at the time. But it was also compelling. After a 20-year campaign, that vision became reality with the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act.

Campaign for National Parks emerged from that same moment, originally as the Standing Committee on National Parks, helping to ensure that the promise of those new designations was realised in practice, not just in principle. Ever since, our organisations have been connected by a shared commitment to landscapes that are protected, lived in and cared for – not frozen in time, but stewarded for future generations. Today, some of that same coalition – we call ourselves the 49ers to commemorate the Act – continue to meet to think about the challenges for countryside access today. Round the table (and even better on a walk in one of our Protected Landscapes) are the Ramblers, YHA, Open Spaces Society and of course Campaign for National Parks. Looking back, it's striking how many of the debates of the early 20th century we are still discussing today. Questions of land use, access, development and stewardship remain at the heart of our business. The difference is that the pressures we now face are more complex – and more urgent. Climate change, nature loss, housing need and food security are all converging on the same finite land.

National Parks sit right at the centre of those challenges – not as museums of the past, but as living places where solutions must be found. They have a vital role to play in nature recovery, climate resilience, sustainable farming and access to green space – but only if they are properly supported and empowered to do so.

Crucially, these questions are not just rural ones. Recent polling we carried out with More in Common to launch our centenary shows how strongly people value the countryside as part of everyday life, with clear public support for better protection and a growing expectation that decisions about land should work for nature, climate and communities together. From clean water and food production to climate resilience and public health, the choices we make about land ripple far beyond rural boundaries.

“

The idea that places of outstanding beauty should be protected in law was radical at the time.

That's why CPRE's centenary is not just a celebration of what has been achieved, but a call to action for what comes next. We're using this milestone to open a national conversation about the countryside – how it's changing, what people value and how we can make better decisions for the long term.

Our vision is for a countryside that is greener, more resilient and better protected for future generations.

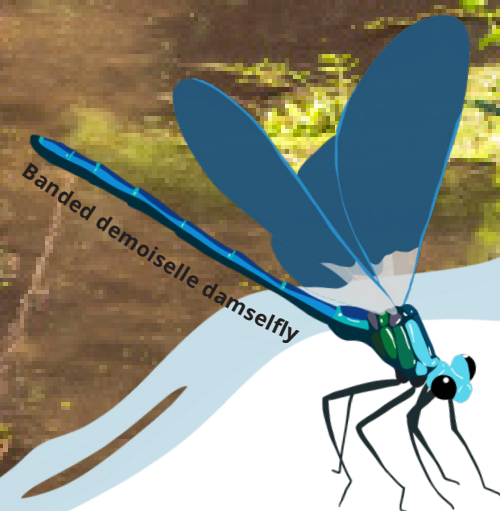
One where loss is halted, quality is restored, and more people feel a sense of connection and care for the places around them. It is about challenging poor decisions, but it's also about pushing for solutions, like National Parks, that show another way is possible. Choosing to favour economic growth over everything else is a choice, not a necessity – and one that the public simply don't buy.

That public concern is already translating into action: people are restoring hedgerows, rethinking development, growing sustainable food and making space for nature. The task now is to scale that spirit and to grow and diversify those people who care. Like Campaign for National Parks, we want to see young people at the heart of shaping the future of our countryside – and recruiting an army of young campaigners is a key part of our centenary. While we have a packed programme of events, what matters most about our centenary is telling the story of why loving the countryside is so vital to a new generation.

As Campaign for National Parks marks 90 years of advocacy, and CPRE looks to its next century, the task before us is shared. The next chapter of countryside protection will demand collaboration, courage and imagination. But if the last 100 years have taught us anything, it's that when people come together around a shared love of place, lasting change is possible.



Image: Peak Cavern, The Museum and English Rural Life (MERL) at the University of Reading



Protecting National Parks

CHALK STREAMS

Alison Matthews, Programme Manager for Chalk Streams at The Rivers Trust, explains how we're coming together to protect and restore chalk streams.



Image: River Itchen, Cheriton in the South Downs National Park by Cheriton Conservation Volunteer Group

Sir David Attenborough once described chalk streams as some of the rarest and most precious types of freshwater system in the world. While there is chalk across much of Europe, 85% of all the chalk streams in the world are in England as it only surfaces and forms chalk streams in the south and east of England and in a corner of France and Denmark.

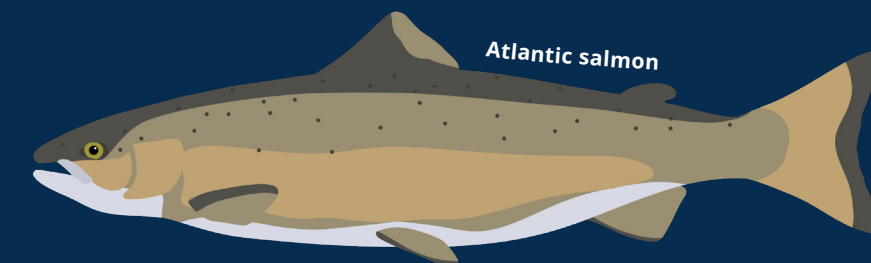
The National Park with the greatest number of chalk streams is perhaps not surprisingly the South Downs – famed for its iconic chalk landscape. The chalk streams there are varied, ranging from the River Itchen flowing through Winchester all the way to the most natural and undisturbed small chalk scarp streams. They all share the common characteristic of cool, clear, chalk groundwater upwelling through clean gravel beds, with a relatively small range of flows.

Another National Park where chalk streams are important is The Broads. The River Wensum is the principal chalk stream in the area, and it feeds into the River Yare which along with the River Bure provides flow into The Broads system. The condition and quality of these chalk-fed streams is important because they can have a direct impact on the delicate ecosystem of The Broads.

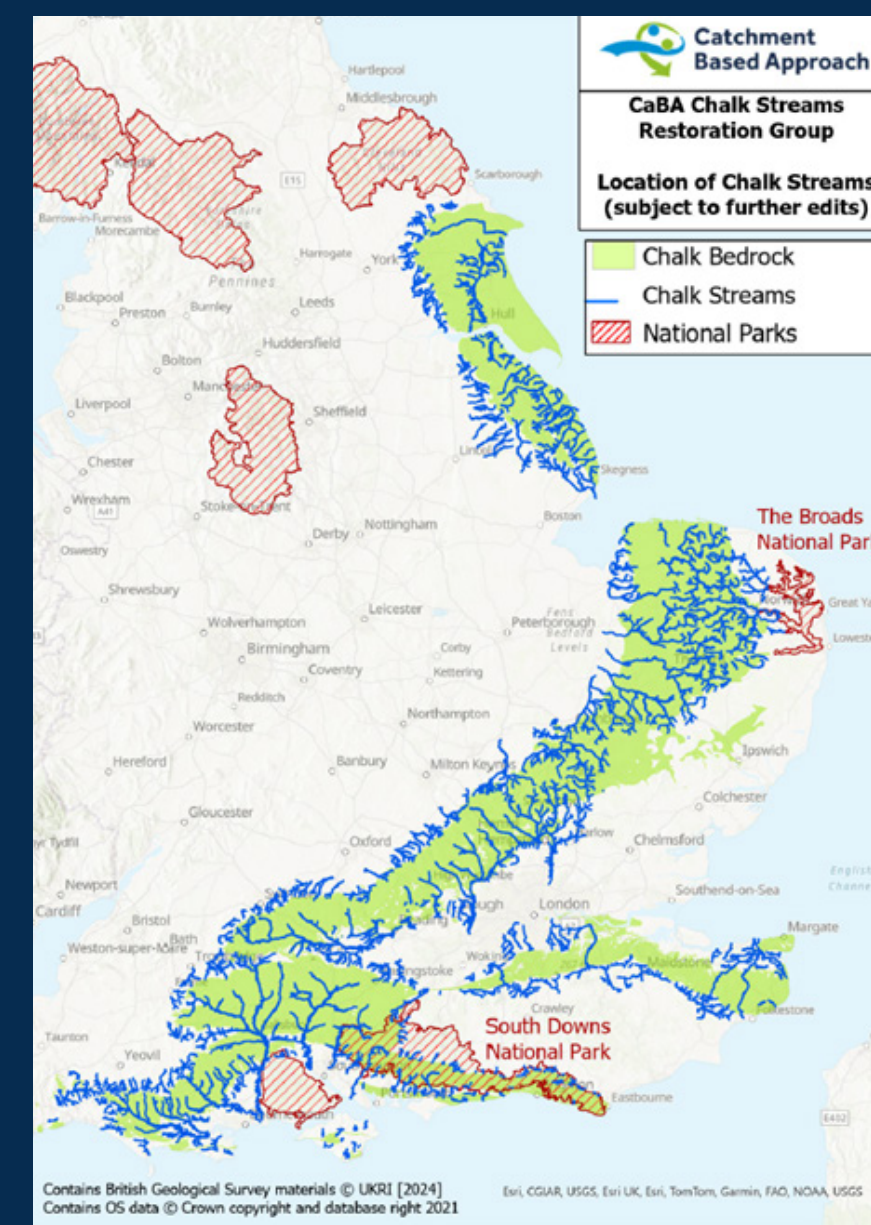


87% of chalk streams assessed as not meeting Good Ecological Status

Concerned about the state of rivers in our National Parks, Campaign for National Parks and The Rivers Trust recently released the Rivers at Risk report. It paints a stark picture showing that despite being located in some of our most protected and cherished landscapes, the rivers in our National Parks are still suffering from a combination of pressures.



Healthy chalk streams are vital for species like Atlantic salmon which rely on clean water and gravel to lay their eggs.



Map of where chalk streams can be found in England's National Parks

THE TRINITY OF ECOLOGICAL HEALTH

To keep our chalk streams healthy, they need:

- strong flow,
- good water quality and
- natural morphology.

Our poor treatment of these gentle rivers has had a pronounced impact on them with 87% of chalk streams assessed as not meeting Good Ecological Status.

Analysis of data from the Environment Agency's Catchment Data Explorer shows the activities having the biggest impact are continuous sewage discharges (rather than the less frequent storm overflows), physical modifications, abstraction of water and issues with agricultural land use.

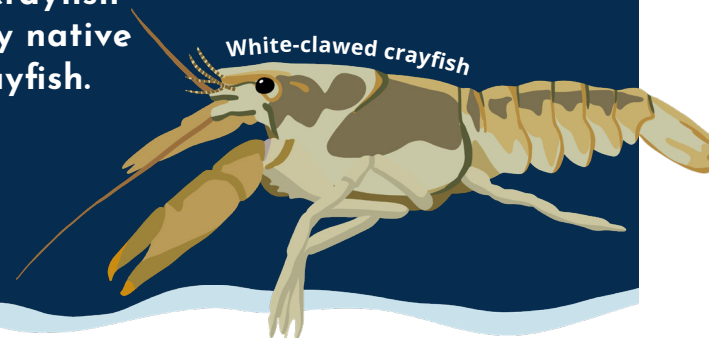
The Rivers at Risk report echoes those conclusions for the South Downs and The Broads National Parks where more than 90% of all rivers fail to meet Good Ecological Status and there is a significant impact from the water industry and agricultural and rural land management.

CHALLENGES ON THE HORIZON

With the prospect of a changing climate, it is likely that our rivers will become warmer with lower flows and this will exacerbate the impact of existing pressures. There is also concern that growth in the demand for water and any associated increase in discharges of wastewater will lead to further impacts on our chalk streams.

Some of our classic chalk stream species are already in trouble. The southern chalk stream salmon are on the verge of extinction with a mere 133 salmon ascending the River Itchen in 2022. Without healthy chalk streams, it is possible that some of the species dependent on them may become extinct.

Some chalk rivers provide a refuge for the white-clawed crayfish - the UK's only native freshwater crayfish.



WORKING TOGETHER TO RESTORE CHALK STREAMS

Despite a seemingly desperate situation there is hope. The Chalk Streams Restoration group was created in 2019 and published the Chalk Stream Strategy. A vital component of the strategy was the "One Big Wish" for proper recognition and protection of chalk streams as the rare and precious habitats they are. Actions are underway to reduce impacts from abstraction, improve water quality and restore our rivers channels.

The Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) established a network of groups delivering actions to improve the water environment. At its heart are catchment partnerships who develop and implement catchment plans and work across sectors to deliver projects. In the South Downs, these catchment partnerships are working together to share knowledge and expertise to increase the impact that they can have.

An inspiring relatively recent development is the rise in local groups getting involved in protecting their local rivers. Citizen science volunteers are collecting evidence to highlight where issues are, putting pressure on others to address them and challenging local communities to take action to protect their local rivers. The Watercress and Winterbourns initiative is a wonderful example of this type of approach.

THE FUTURE FOR CHALK STREAMS

Campaign for National Parks wants to see improvements in rivers in all National Parks. Campaign for National Parks and their supporters have written to water Minister Emma Hardy and Minister for Nature Mary Creagh to emphasise that reforms are a crucial opportunity to tackle long-standing water quality issues in National Parks.

Campaign for National Parks will be working closely with Wildlife and Countryside Link to press the importance of Protected Landscapes, urging Ministers to establish legally binding water quality standards, improve storm overflow management, and set high ecological targets for all freshwater within Protected Landscapes. This should also include a specific focus on protecting and restoring England's chalk streams for their unique biodiversity and significant cultural heritage value.



One gift. Lasting impact. Real change.

Every year, your National Parks face new pressures, from climate impacts to rising visitor demand, budget cuts and signs of nature loss. And of course, there is also the essential task of keeping these landscapes open to everyone. Behind the scenes, it is legacy giving that makes our long-term work possible.

We want to take this opportunity to acknowledge, with grateful memory, those supporters who remembered National Parks in their will and whose gifts continue to shape our work.

Across England and Wales, **over one third of all our work is funded by gifts in wills.** These gifts give us independence, stability and a strong voice, which allows us to act for nature, people and climate even when issues are politically challenging.



“All of our work in Wales is funded by gifts in wills. This support underpins work such as policy influence, partnership projects, improving access, nature recovery, community engagement, and helping shape Wales' proposed new National Park.”

- Gareth Ludkin, Policy and Projects Manager

A legacy is more than a donation. It is a decision to keep National Parks thriving long after today's challenges have passed.

If these places have shaped your life, whether through childhood adventures, family holidays or quiet moments of peace, will you help shape their future?

Please consider leaving a gift in your will. It is simple to arrange through your solicitor. All they need is our charity name and number. If you would like to talk through the impact your gift could make, we would be very glad to speak with you. To talk with us about the difference your gift could make, contact: 020 3096 7714 or info@cnp.org.uk

Campaign for National Parks, Registered Charity Number 295336, Registered Address: Campaign for National Parks, Canopi, 82 Tanner Street, London, SE1 3GN

CAMPAIGNING FOR 90 YEARS

For over the last 90 years we've been campaigning to strengthen the powers of National Parks, been vigilant in monitoring the Parks against damaging developments and promoted nature-rich National Parks for everyone.

