



Nikki Milne
Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department
Marine Management Division
G-H93
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

January 8, 2007

Dear Nikki,

Coastal and Marine National Park Consultation

The Moray Firth Partnership is grateful for the opportunity to comment on the proposals for coastal and marine national parks.

The Partnership is a voluntary coalition, responsible for the integrated coastal zone management of the Moray Firth, with a membership of 650 individuals, groups and organisations from around the Firth. The Partnership sees synergy between the proposals for coastal and marine national parks and our own aims. We have over 10 years experience of working with these aims in the wider Moray Firth, and have significant understanding of the implementation processes required.

The Partnership sees its role as supporting and co-ordinating the wide range of interest groups within our membership, and does not express its own views on behalf of members. After consideration, the Partnership Board took the decision that, at this stage, there is insufficient information upon which we can take an informed view in relation to the Moray Firth, or organise a thorough consultation of our membership.

We did however run a workshop at our annual conference on November 24, 2006, to test the water, this was addressed by a member of SNH staff. The main points from the workshop discussion are listed below. The workshop was well attended with a good mix of MFP members, local communities, industry representatives and organisations, spanning a varied range of interests. We also attach a number of questionnaires filled out by delegates to the conference, others were submitted privately.

The tone of the workshop was generally positive, though most people felt that they had insufficient understanding of the concept to provide in-depth responses.

The question posed to the workshop was “What would a coastal and marine national park have to deliver for the Moray Firth in order to get your support?” The main points raised were as follows:

- Life is complicated enough by regulations, a CMNP would have to streamline and simplify and not add to the regulatory burden
- Truly integrated management is recognised to be a good thing – a CMNP would have to deliver this successfully
- A CMNP would have to provide a genuine community voice
- A CMNP would have to provide significantly better environmental protection
- A CMNP should not be a distraction – by focusing too heavily on one area and not providing for rest of coastline

We hope these views are helpful to the consultation process. If the Executive consider further steps towards establishing coastal and marine national parks, relevant to our area, the Partnership would be pleased to assist in local stakeholder consultation and dialogue. This is a role we have successfully performed for other consultations.

Yours sincerely,

Vanessa Halhead
Joint Partnership Manager