

IUCN Protected Areas in the UK

Statement of Compliance from the National Trust

Introduction to Statements of Compliance

Statements of Compliance are an innovation of the IUCN National Committee for the United Kingdom's ***Putting Nature on the Map*** project. The project has developed guidance, within a UK context, on the use of the IUCN definition of a 'protected area' and the assignment of the associated management categories and governance types¹. The guidance suggests that short but authoritative Statements of Compliance are produced for a conservation site or group of sites.

For groups of sites designated for conservation under one overriding piece of legislation or public policy, the statements should concentrate on whether the sites meet the IUCN definition of a protected area. For statutory designations, the Statements of Compliance should review all relevant legislation, focusing on the priority given to nature conservation in the long-term. For sites not covered by legislation, the statements should review the significance for nature conservation of all relevant public policy positions that specifically affect the area or areas.

Statements should also provide a brief overview of current management objectives, in particular in relation to prioritising nature conservation, summarize examples of current management practice that demonstrate the priority given to nature conservation, and the ambition and vision for nature conservation in the future.

In addition to reviewing legislation or policy in relation to the IUCN definition of a protected area, Statements of Compliance can also assign sites to IUCN management categories and governance type. Where this is done, supporting evidence should be provided.

Statements of Compliance should be prepared with full reference to the 2008 Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories¹ as well as the Handbook produced by the UK National Committee².

This document is a Statement of Compliance prepared by the National Trust, relating to its land in England, Wales and N Ireland, and prepared in accordance with the above guidance and handbook.

Status of the National Trust

The National Trust is a registered charity, established in 1895 but is unusual in having its role formalised by Act of Parliament in 1907³, and hence having statutory purposes and powers. It operates in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, but north of the border is complemented by the National Trust for Scotland (a totally separate

¹ Dudley, N (Editor) (2008) Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. X + 86pp. <http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/PAPS-016.pdf>

² IUCN National Committee UK (2012); Putting nature on the map - identifying protected areas in the UK: A handbook to help identify protected areas in the UK and assign the IUCN management categories and governance types to them, IUCN National Committee for the United Kingdom, UK <http://www.iucn-uk.org/Portals/0/PNOTM%20Final%20January.pdf>

³ See ...for a fuller history of the Trust and details of the Act and subsequent amendments.

organisation). It is overseen by the Charity Commissioners, and publishes an Annual Report and audited Accounts.

The Trust's membership has consistently grown and it currently has just over 4 million members. Its income source is diverse, including membership, legacies, trading activities, rental from land and residential property, investment income and grants. Despite its statutory origin, it does not receive any core funding from Government.

The core purposes of the Trust, set out in the Act, are usually summarised as:

“the permanent preservation of places of historic interest or natural beauty for the benefit of the nation”.

The current expression of this core purpose in contemporary language is:

“Looking after special places, for everyone, for ever”.

The Act conferred on the Trust the power to declare land it had purchased as 'inalienable', with the intention of providing permanent protection. In simple terms this means that once it has been declared 'inalienable' the Trust has to secure specific permission from Parliament before it can dispose of the land. Being declared inalienable does not constrain the management of the land, only the Trust's ability to sell it. Land is only declared inalienable after careful consideration, and although the majority of the Trust's land has been declared inalienable, a small proportion has not.

The Trust's Strategies and policies

The Trust's current strategies and policies ⁴which provide the framework for the management of areas of land are as follows:

Going Local (2011)

Our Land, forever, for everyone (2010)

Conservation Principles (2002)

National Trust's Nature Conservation Strategy (2005)

National Trust's Woodland Management Principles (2000)

Shifting shores (2005)

From source to sea (2008)

⁴ Available from www.nationaltrust.org.uk, or from National Trust, Kemble Drive, SWINDON SN2 2NA

Do NT sites meet the IUCN definition of a protected area?

This question is answered below by reference to the criteria set out in Key A⁵

Main elements of IUCN definition	Discussion of element in relation to NT
<p>Are the sites in clearly defined geographical areas?</p>	<p>All the main areas of land owned by the Trust are recorded on the Property Database, and are digitally mapped.</p> <p>This database distinguishes land that is managed in hand from land that is tenanted or leased.</p> <p>A digital map of the land that has been declared 'inalienable' has now been completed for all three countries, based on the information recorded in the annals of the Trust.</p> <p>Conclusion: all land mapped on the Property System meet this criterion.</p>
<p>Are they recognised, dedicated and managed to achieve the long-term conservation of nature? NB 'nature' includes all levels of biodiversity as well as geodiversity, landforms and broader natural values.</p>	<p>All land declared inalienable is effectively dedicated in perpetuity to delivering the Trust's core purpose, which explicitly includes the long term conservation of nature.</p> <p>Virtually all land that is managed in hand is managed with the aim of directly delivering the Trust's core objectives of protecting places of beauty, their flora and fauna and historic interest. In practice natural beauty has always been interpreted as including biodiversity, landscapes, landforms and geodiversity.</p> <p>Sites that are designated SSSI or ASSI (including those also designated SPA or SAC) are managed under plans agreed with the relevant conservation agency, with the aim of achieving favourable ecological condition.</p> <p>The majority of woodlands are managed under Woodland Grant Scheme and agri-environment schemes are available for many of the other habitats managed in hand. Tenanted land managed under higher levels of agri-environment could qualify.</p> <p>Conclusion: the following categories of land would meet these criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all land that is inalienable and managed in hand; - all land that is inalienable and also A/SSSI but not managed in hand (i.e. tenanted)

⁵ 'Putting Nature on the Map', IUCN National Committee UK, 2012; (p.26)

Main elements of IUCN definition	Discussion of element in relation to NT
<p>Is the main management objective nature conservation? Other objectives of equal standing may be present but they do not cause conflict, i.e. nature conservation is the priority</p>	<p>The Trust's core purpose sets preservation of historic interest alongside natural beauty, but does not give any prioritisation between them. In practice conflicts between them are very rare and are managed without compromising nature.</p> <p>An implicit objective is enabling people to enjoy places of natural beauty, and there is good public access to nearly all the land managed in hand. Such access is managed, controlled and routed to avoid disturbance to sensitive species and damage to vulnerable habitats.</p> <p>Where land is tenanted but also SSSI then it is managed in accordance with SSSI legislation and management agreements to ensure that nature conservation objectives are being met and are not jeopardised by any other uses.</p> <p>Conclusion: As above i.e. All sites managed in hand would qualify, along with land designated SSSI/ASSI, whether in hand or tenanted.</p>
<p>Does the designation of the site prevent, or eliminate where necessary, any exploitation or management practice that will be harmful to the objectives of designation?</p>	<p>The Trust is assiduous in pursuing its core purposes, and there is a presumption against allowing any activity that would jeopardise the natural beauty of the site. There are mandatory instructions to Property Managers to try to prevent any harm to the assets they manage. But this would not generally constrain farming practices on tenanted land.</p> <p>Similarly there would be a presumption against any activity that would hamper achievement of the conservation objectives set for an SSSI/ASSI.</p> <p>Conclusion: Inalienable land managed in hand would qualify, along with tenanted land which is designated an A/SSSI.</p>
<p>Does the designation of the site aim to maintain, or ideally, increase the degree of naturalness of the ecosystem being protected?</p>	<p>The conservation objectives set for most sites are explicit about enhancing the habitats and species for which the site is valued. In almost all cases this will mean maintaining or increasing the degree of naturalness.</p> <p>There are some situations where conserving the historic interest also requires sustaining or reinstating past management practices.</p> <p>Conclusion: In virtually all situations the degree of naturalness will be being maintained or increased, and in all situations the long term aim will be to increase naturalness.</p>

Main elements of IUCN definition	Discussion of element in relation to NT
<p>Is the long-term nature conservation ensured through legal or other effective means? E.g. national or international statutory law/ agreement/convention, traditional rules or NGO policy.</p>	<p>Land that has been declared inalienable has additional and very strong statutory protection against being sold by the Trust.</p> <p>All SSSIs/ASSIs, SACs and SPAs are subject to the legal protection provided by these designations.</p> <p>The explicit reference in the Trust's core purpose to 'protecting in perpetuity' ensures it takes a very long term perspective in its decisions, plans and management practices. And the fact that this core purpose is established in statute gives this commitment added weight.</p> <p>Conclusion: all inalienable land and sites subject to statutory designations would definitely qualify as having additional legal protection.</p>

Overall conclusion on land qualifying as a protected area

Taking all the above criteria together it is clear that **all land that has been declared inalienable, and is either managed in-hand or is designated SSSI/ASSI** would qualify as a protected area.

National Trust

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