



National Park Position Statement

The Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere (GSAB) was awarded UNESCO Biosphere status in July 2012 after a seven year period of review and public consultation. With the accolade, Galloway joined a worldwide network of over 660 Biospheres.

Biosphere status recognises the outstanding natural and cultural interests of the region and highlights it as a model for sustainable development, and as a test site for development and conservation approaches, where communities collaborate to live better with their environment. It is the world's only internationally recognised 'badge' for demonstrating excellence in sustainable development. For GSAB and its partners this unique opportunity to brand the region with an international designation was a key reason for seeking recognition as a UNESCO Biosphere.

With renewed interest being shown in National Park status for part of South West Scotland, the GSAB Partnership Board considered a report commissioned by D&G Council that examined the pros and cons of National Park status. The Board is very conscious of the many and varied qualities of our region. From its perspective, the more that can be done to capitalise sustainably on these natural and cultural assets, the better. It therefore welcomes in principle any other designation which helps to promote the region as an exciting and inspirational place to live, work and visit and which encourages the imaginative and responsible use of its resources.

Both within the UK and internationally there are numerous examples of Biospheres and National Parks overlapping to a greater or lesser degree. Whilst the two designations differ in their rationales and ways of working, they are at one in their underlying objectives.

The GSAB Partnership Board agreed that the creation of a National Park in the region would be entirely compatible with its UNESCO Biosphere status and that the two designations could actively complement each other. In doing so, members emphasised that any National Park established should be seen as an addition to Biosphere status and should operate in accordance with Biosphere principles, particularly through seeking to emulate the "bottom up" approach that the Biosphere advocates.

Joan Mitchell

Chair of the Biosphere Partnership Board