

# The Landscape Declaration

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Landscapes define people and nations. They are constantly evolving and are valued more than ever. A growing national and international population, climate change and globalisation mean that without appropriate action the distinctiveness of landscapes will be eroded more rapidly over the next decade.

**Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, the character of which is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.**

**An appreciation and understanding of landscape encompasses perceptions from all our senses in reaction to a particular place, together with the memories it evokes and its wider natural and historical associations.**

## **We believe that:**

- Landscapes matter to individuals and communities. They are homes to return to, places of escape, places of pride. They bring belonging and sharing of experience
- People should be involved in decisions which affect landscapes they have a stake in, especially those they live in
- Landscapes should be celebrated for their contemporary value
- Wildlife, cultural heritage and the historic environment are essential elements of landscape and central to the sense of place
- The aesthetic and spiritual qualities of landscapes should be valued alongside the economic and material ones
- Landscapes have huge economic value from their aesthetic qualities as well as their productive ones
- Retaining and enhancing the distinctiveness of places should be an aim of policy across all landscapes
- Maintaining tranquil and 'wild' places is increasingly important as our population grows
- Some change in landscapes is in general both inevitable and desirable – but a good appreciation of what is there now is important before undertaking change. The nature and speed of change and the capacity to accommodate it are critical factors in its desirability

**We believe that Protected Landscapes should play their part in promoting the importance of landscape generally.**

**We believe that the following areas need further thought:**

- How to translate Landscape Character Assessments into a form which can be readily used in decision taking
- How to identify positive change in landscape, for its own sake and from the productive industries within it
- Whether such positive changes can be actively planned for or should be the result of public participation in individual decisions
- Finding new ways to help people understand and enjoy landscape
- Management of the coast - interface of sea and land - needs better integration

**We variously undertake to:**

- Consider how greater economic benefit and employment can be achieved from special landscapes without harming the things that make them special, and act on these conclusions
- Use the breadth of understanding that landscape appreciation brings to inform our decision taking on matters including recreation, forestry and planning
- Strive harder to make special landscapes and seascapes relevant to everyone.
- Manage land positively to enable tourism to operate with minimum impact
- Give greater emphasis to landscape quality and good design in decision making
- Ensure that our landscapes become richer in wildlife
- Develop our work on landscape evaluation and continue to monitor change in the landscape
- Maintain an appropriate level of skills to make good judgements on landscape
- Share our understanding and experience with all other landscapes including those valued locally
- Use our landscapes as a means of engaging people with all aspects of the natural and cultural environment
- Ask our Governments to consider carefully the importance of the settings of our Protected Landscapes.

**We urge our Governments to help promote a renewed awareness of the value of landscape in policy and decision making which affects places.**