View of Beinn A Ghlo, Perthshire

Every year almost five million people visit Scotland’s stunning National Parks. And it’s not hard to see why.

From the high mountains and straths of the Cairngorms to the lochs and woodlands of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, these areas of outstanding natural beauty offer visitors the opportunity to enjoy some of the UK’s most iconic landscapes.

But the years of popularity have taken their toll on these precious peaks. They are now at serious threat of man-made erosion, where millions of footsteps have strayed from poor quality paths, gradually damaged the surrounding natural habitats.

But there is good news afoot. £3.26million of National Lottery funding is now being invested in a project that will tackle some of the worst areas by training young people and volunteers to care for these upland landscapes and habitats.

Mountains and the People will take in iconic peaks such as Ben Lomond, Ben A’an, Beinn A Ghlo and Lochnagar. In total, a distance of 124.5km of eroded upland paths will be restored and upgraded.

[quote\]"Every year almost five milllion people visit Scotland's stunning national parks"[/quote]

The project will also give 48 young people the opportunity to learn essential countryside skills while gaining SVQ accreditation which will help them into employment. Local people can also get involved with a program to train and

support volunteers in carrying out basic construction work, maintenance and habitat management. Whilst visitors will be given information to ensure that they don't damage the special environment that they have come to enjoy.

Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, said: "Scotland's National Parks encompass some of the country's most iconic landscapes and are vital for their contribution to tourism as well as for the health and social benefits of the millions of people that enjoy them.

"Thanks to National Lottery players, we are delighted to be able to support a project which encourages people to take ownership of this rich heritage. Their newly-learned skills will not only make a positive difference to their own lives but will play an important part in looking after the future of Scotland's magnificent landscapes."

Did you know?

- Covering an area of 4,528sq km, the Cairngorms include five of the UK's highest mountains
- The Cairngorms are home to 25% of Britain's threatened species
- Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park covers an area of 1,865 sq km
- Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park is home to golden eagles, peregrines, merlin, ptarmagin and mountain ringlet butterflies as well as rare mosses and lichens

To find out more about the UK's National Parks visit their National Parks website.

Vital works undertaken on Ben Lomand

£3.2m National Lottery grant to help tackle serious path erosion on iconic Scottish peaks