

## SNH RESEARCH INTO IMPACTS OF EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS ON OPERATIONS & INFRASTRUCTURE

The objective of this project was to review the impacts of weather events on SNH business operations, properties and National Nature Reserves (NNRs) from 2005 to 2010, in order to use findings to adapt SNH activity as appropriate. The review is intended to help SNH to understand the threats and opportunities presented by climate impacts across its business operations, properties and NNRs across Scotland. It draws together information on the recent weather events of a number of chosen localities across Scotland, the impacts on SNH services and other activities, and any related actions or consequences. This information can then be used to help SNH to develop an informed response to further climate change. By improving our understanding of short-term climate impacts on SNH we will become better informed in making longer term business decisions and adaptations in the future.

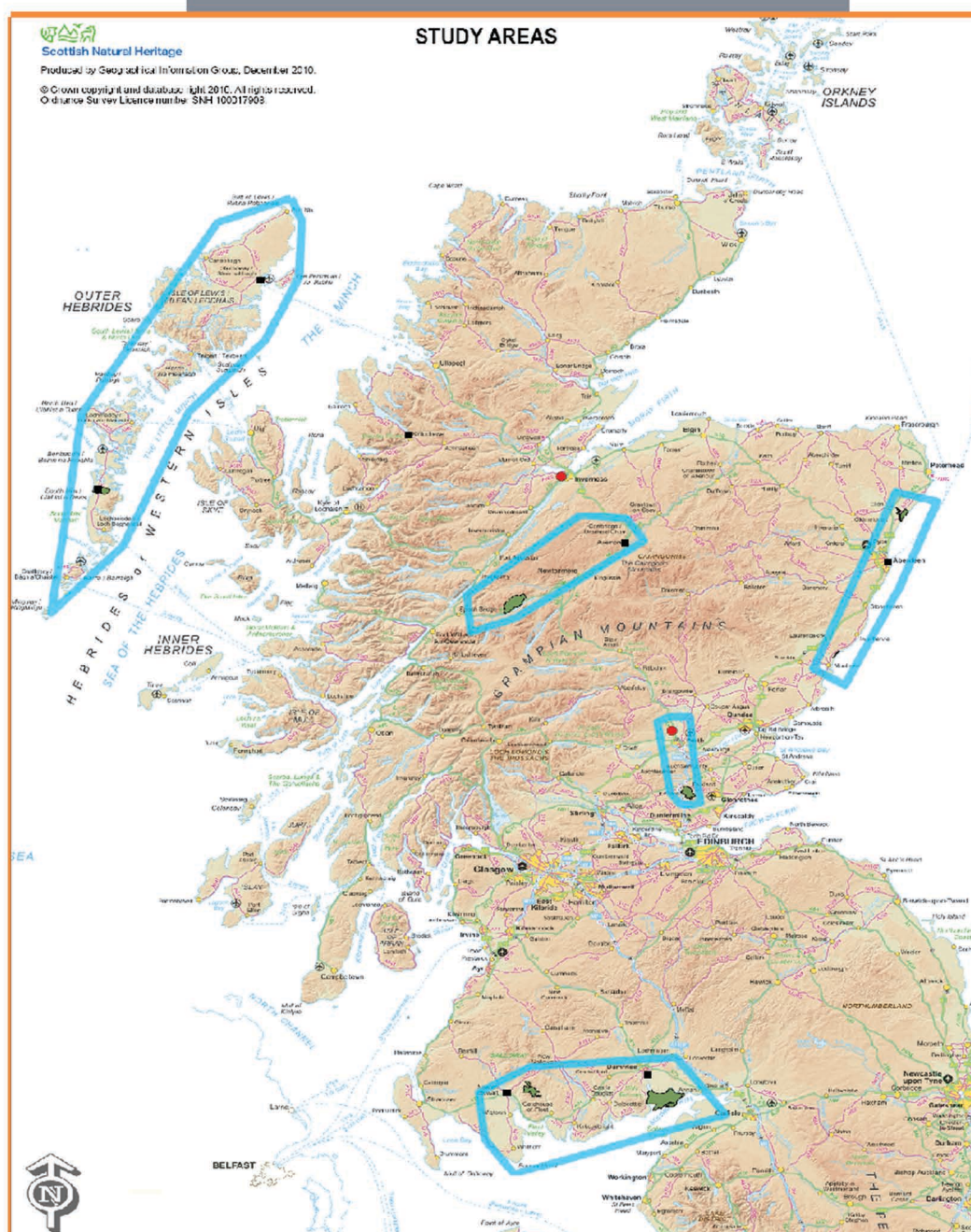
### WHAT WE DID

A Project Group was set up to drive this project comprising key staff from SNH and a representative from SCCIP. A contractor was appointed to carry out work on the project, which took place between August and November 2010 and focussed on weather events in the last 5 years. A report will be published in 2011 as part of SNH Commissioned Research series.

Five study areas were chosen to reflect the breadth of SNH interests, to make use of local authority data gathered through Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCLIP) projects; and to complement other relevant work (e.g. A9 Project).

The methodology used was similar to that set out in UKCIP's guidance on how to do an LCLIP. Methods for gathering information included a media search, interviews with SNH staff (e.g. Nature Reserve managers, area managers, IS staff, property manager, staff at Area offices and the SNH Greening Officer) and a questionnaire to other key staff. The weather events identified and their impacts and consequences were then assessed particularly in terms of SNH's corporate processes.

An assessment of the impacts of the loss of IT infrastructure caused by an extreme weather event was also carried out.



### CHALLENGES

The media trawl proved less useful to this research, because of a) the rurality of our search areas, b) staff awareness of weather events and impacts was already good, c) our operational staff are used to working in 'all weathers' and so the level of impact might have been less. The biggest challenge is going to be in turning some of the recommendations into action; some procedures are vague for a reason, in that setting firm protocols can actually hinder good practice.

### OUTCOMES & NEXT STEPS

The greatest impacts on SNH operations were from the two recent colder winters, with a lot of damage and disruption caused by snow and ice. Field-based staff tends to be more resilient and can draw on wider skill sets than office-based staff. The dependence of modern organisations on complex IT and telecoms networks can be severely compromised if those networks go down.

The report makes eleven recommendations to improve SNH processes to deliver greater resilience in property management; to enhance weather-related information and decision-making processes for staff; and to improve our incident recovery plans. One recommendation suggests that SNH use established performance management systems (e.g. risk register) for monitoring severe weather events and consequent impacts. We have already begun to implement some of these recommendations and are planning how to integrate the further recommendations to benefit our operations.

Contacts: Sheila Currie SNH Greening Officer  
 sheila.currie@snh.gov.uk 01463 725073

marion.mulholland@sng.gov.uk – Policy & Advice Officer, Climate Change – 0131 316 3612

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/climate-change/what-snh-is-doing/corporate-greening/>