Collaborative land use and management in the Pentland Hills Regional Park – Executive Summary

What is the Pentland Hills Regional Park (PHRP)? The PHRP is one of three Regional Parks across Scotland which are defined as: "large areas of attractive countryside which lie close to Scotland's larger towns and cities, and which are popular for recreation". The PHRP is located just south of Edinburgh. It encompasses different land uses and semi-natural habitats though is predominantly upland in character, the highest point being *Scald Law* at 579m.

What management issues does the PHRP face? The use and management of land in the PHRP is subject to a range of conflicts and pressures. These include: high demand for recreation from Edinburgh and other nearby settlements; the changing economics of farming and other productive land uses; development pressure; climate change; and changes in recreational use / intensity of use.
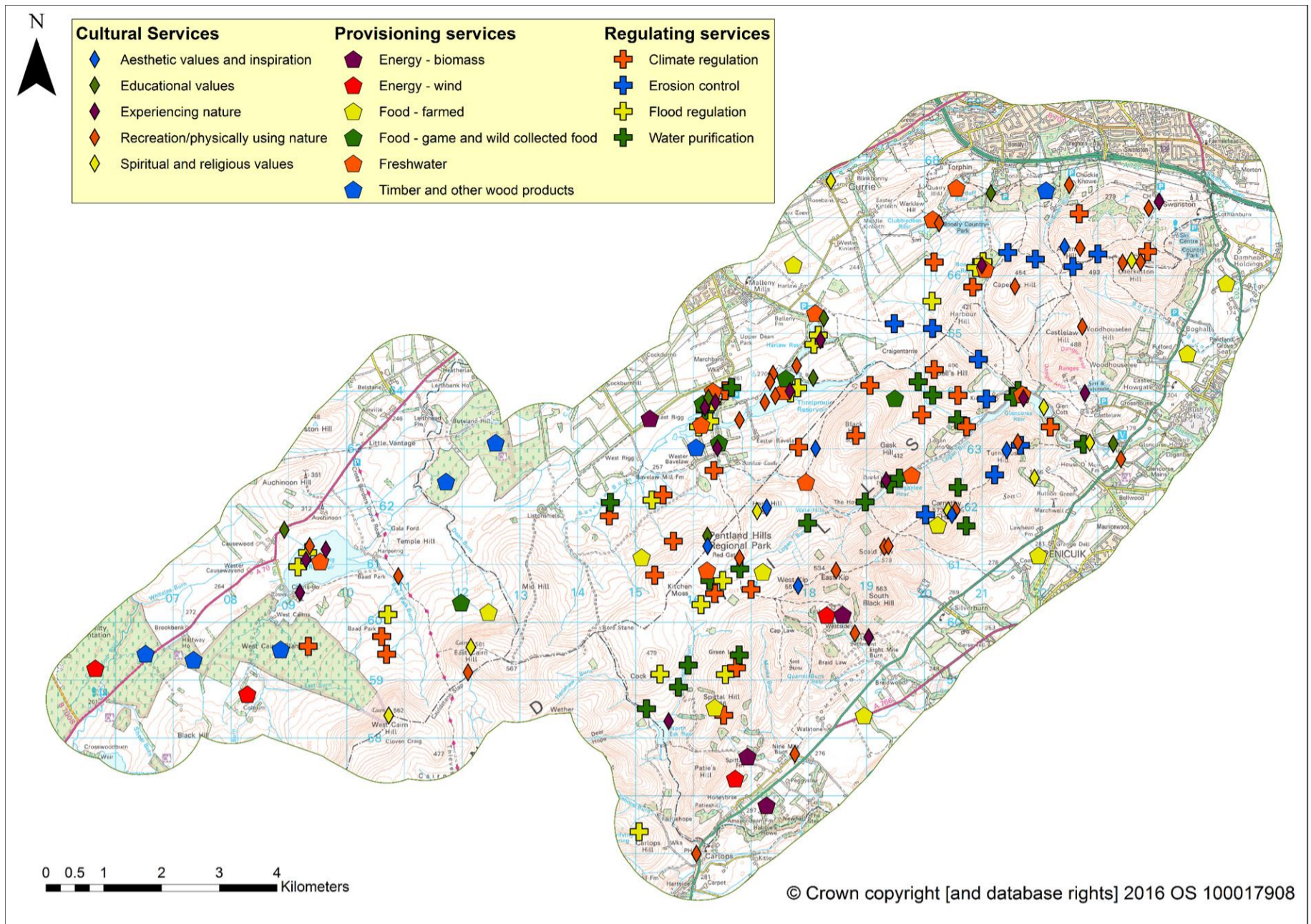
What role does the PHRP play? The PHRP provides support and helps to build consensus on shared objectives. This is facilitated by three groups which contribute to governance and land management across the PHRP: Joint Committee; Management Group; and Consultative Forum. The Consultative Forum is made up of stakeholders covering a range of interests. The Forum is important for collaborative land use and management in the PHRP by providing advice on issues and decisions.

What was done in this project? Collingwood Environmental Planning Limited (CEP) was commissioned by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to undertake a project that would support the Consultative Forum to further develop a collaborative approach to land use and management in the PHRP. Specific objectives included supporting the Forum to: 1) identify and assess the benefits they receive from the PHRP and the possible implications for these of key drivers of change; and 2) identify, discuss and as far as possible agree land use and management opportunities that sustain the PHRP's benefits. Project activity focussed on two workshops with Consultative Forum members.

What is this document for? This document summarises the final Consultative Forum Report and Technical Annex produced through the project. It outlines the land use management recommendations (the table below) and includes the maps of benefits and hotspots identified through the workshops (overleaf). There are a range of potential delivery mechanisms for the recommendations identified in the project. These are outlined in the table below and have been addressed in further detail in the main report in terms of the key next steps required to capitalise on the interest and momentum generated through this project.

Recommendations key:	Hotspot areas	Access & recreation	Links with other plans & policy	Habitats & landscape

Recommendation	Details	Potential delivery mechanisms
1. Validate hotspot areas with CF	Five "multifunctional" hotspot areas have been identified through the analysis of the benefits mapped by Forum Members (Maps 1 and 2). They show locations where multiple benefits "cluster" together. The hotspots should be validated with a representative group of CF members to confirm: 1) the broad location of the hotspots; and 2) the range of benefits provided. All relevant land owners and managers should be engaged to ensure the validity of any subsequent action taken.	CF membership; Park Ranger Service; additional facilitation.
2. Develop management plans for hotspots	Simple management plans should be developed or updated for each hotspot (Map 2) in discussion with the stakeholders responsible for each site. All relevant land owners and managers should be engaged to ensure the validity of any action taken. Plans should be designed to sustain the range of benefits provided at each site and avoid or minimise conflicts. Consideration should also be given to the diversification of access networks to promote recreational use in other parts of the Park and reduce pressure and impacts on the hotspot areas.	CF membership; Park Ranger Service; additional facilitation.
3. Path construction and maintenance	Fund and deliver sustainable path construction and maintenance in line with the COAT path survey and path management plan. Activity could be focussed in existing heavily eroded areas, sensitive areas or at / between hotspot areas where recreation and other cultural services have been identified as important. Consideration should be given to the diversification of access networks and recreational facilities to reduce pressure and impacts on the hotspot areas (e.g. promoting the path network in underutilised peripheral areas where appropriate to do so).	CF membership; land owners; Park Ranger Service; volunteers; funding streams identified in COAT survey.
4. Align relevant LDP policy with Park objectives	Relevant policies from Local Development Plans (LDP) intersecting the Park should be aligned with the Park's objectives to manage development pressure sustainably (e.g. ensuring that LDP site proposal protect natural assets in the Park). Better quality arable and pasture land in the Park's low lying peripheral areas should be protected from development, where possible. Care should be taken to ensure that all forms of development in drinking water catchments does not negatively impact water quality or interrupt supply.	LDP policy; development management; Scottish Water; CF membership; land owners.
5. Align local FWS to Park objectives	Spatial frameworks and policies in the Edinburgh and Lothians Forestry and Woodland Strategy (FWS) should be aligned to the Park's objectives and recommendations to promote the right type of forestry development in the right place. Drawing on local knowledge and a detailed understanding of constraints, small scale planting opportunities should be exploited that are sensitive to the landscape and desired balance of land uses in the Park. Planting opportunities on the north-east slopes should be undertaken in line with existing plans.	FWS / LDP policy; CF membership; ELGT; Park Ranger Service; land owners.
6. Targeted creation & restoration of native broadleaved woodland	Native broadleaved woodland is a relatively scarce habitat in the Park though it has the potential to provide many benefits. Informed by FWS and detailed local knowledge of constraints, targeted restoration and / or creation of native woodland should be undertaken using the right tree in the right place principle. Key opportunities might include planting up of "cleuchs", select riparian corridors, hedge laying and small scale farm-forestry. New planting and restoration should be spatially targeted to improve habitat connectivity. Where appropriate, access provision to and within any areas of new woodland should be made to promote sustainable recreation opportunities.	Land owners; SRDP; FWS / LDP Policy; FCS conservancies; Park Ranger Service; ELGT; CSGN; volunteers; additional facilitation.
7. Targeted restoration & management of bog habitat	Bogs are scarce habitats in the Park though they have the potential to provide many benefits (especially regulating services). Informed by up to date surveys, targeted restoration, management and enhancement of bogs should be undertaken to improve conservation status and enhance delivery of ecosystem services. Sustainable management of bog habitats in drinking water catchments can also prevent erosion and help to protect drinking water quality. Where possible, restoration should be spatially targeted to improve habitat connectivity	Land owners; SRDP; volunteers; Park Ranger Service; ELGT; additional facilitation.
8. Energy forestry (biomass development)	The targeted and appropriate expansion of biomass / energy forestry (e.g. short rotation coppice) should be undertaken as a sustainable revenue option for farms and other land based enterprises in the Park. This should be at an appropriate scale, sensitive to landscape and other constraints and designed to deliver multiple benefits. Where appropriate, access provision to and within any areas of new woodland should be made to promote sustainable recreation opportunities.	Land owners; SRDP; FWS / LDP Policy; FCS conservancies; Park Ranger Service.
9. Develop guidance on sustainable access & recreation	In partnership / consultation with key stakeholders, develop innovative tools and guidance to promote sustainable and responsible access / recreation in the Pentlands. This should be particularly targeted to help manage recreational pressure from walkers / dog-walkers, runners, cyclists, campers and horse riders (e.g. encouraging large / organised groups to use well-maintained paths). New guidance should have a distinct focus on local issues in the Park though the Scottish Outdoor Access Code should provide the overall framework.	CF Membership; Park Ranger Service; land owners; volunteers; SNH; additional funding.
10. Protect and maintain wilder areas in the Park	Wilder areas in the Park should be protected and maintained to preserve their special qualities and the key cultural services they provide. Wild(er) land in the Park should be protected by avoiding development in these areas where possible (e.g. commercial forestry, path construction, introducing unnecessary signage etc).	LDP / FWS policy; land owners; CF membership.
11. Protect and enhance access for disabled people	There are currently limited opportunities for people with a physical disability to enjoy recreation in the Park. These opportunities should be protected and where possible enhanced. Action delivered under this recommendation should also support improved access for other groups that are currently excluded / partially excluded from the Park (e.g. less active people, less frequent Park users etc).	CF Membership; Park Ranger Service; private sector / businesses; VisitScotland QA scheme.

Map 1: Natural environment benefits mapped by members of the Consultative Forum

Cultural Services
- Aesthetic values and inspiration
- Educational values
- Experiencing nature
- Recreation/physically using nature
- Spiritual and religious values

Provisioning services
- Energy - biomass
- Energy - wind
- Food - farmed
- Food - game and wild collected food
- Freshwater
- Timber and other wood products

Regulating services
- Climate regulation
- Erosion control
- Flood regulation
- Water purification

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Kilometers

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Map 2: Cluster analysis indicating where groups of natural environment benefits cluster together as "hotspots"

Cultural Services
- Aesthetic values and inspiration
- Educational values
- Experiencing nature
- Recreation/physically using nature
- Spiritual and religious values

Provisioning services
- Energy - biomass
- Energy - wind
- Food - farmed
- Food - game and wild collected food
- Freshwater
- Timber and other wood products

Regulating services
- Climate regulation
- Erosion control
- Flood regulation
- Water purification

Hotspot 3: Capelaw Hill and Caerketton Hill

Hotspot 1: Thriepmuir and Red Moss

Hotspot 5: Harperrig Reservoir

Hotspot 4: Kitchen Moss

Hotspot 2: Glen Corse, Bell's Hill and Carnethy Hill

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Kilometers

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