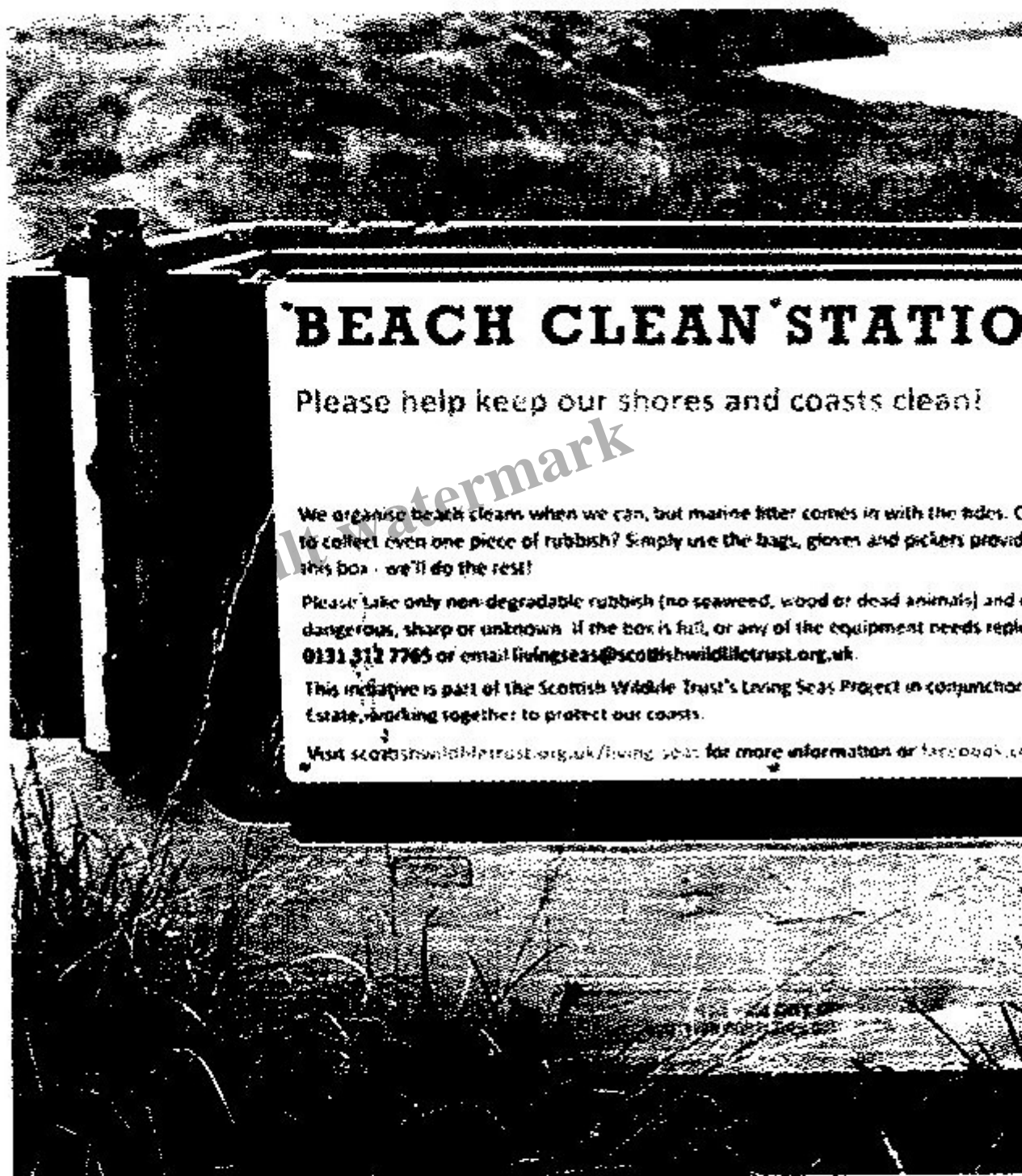


Re-thinking approaches to litter in our National Parks

Description

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'BEACH CLEAN' STATION

Please help keep our shores and coasts clean!

We organise beach cleans when we can, but marine litter comes in with the tides. Can you collect even one piece of rubbish? Simply use the bags, gloves and pickers provided in this box - we'll do the rest!

Please take only non-degradable rubbish (no seaweed, wood or dead animals) and no dangerous, sharp or unknown. If the box is full, or any of the equipment needs replacing, call 0131 312 7765 or email livingseas@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk.

This initiative is part of the Scottish Wildlife Trust's Living Seas Project in conjunction with the Scottish Government, working together to protect our coasts.

Visit scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/living-seas for more information or facebook.com/scottishwildlifetrust

Highland litter clean-up suc

Extract from Scottish Wildlife Trust magazine which dropped through my letterbox this week

While I would love our National Parks to be litter free, when litter is getting worse everywhere in Scotland ([see here](#)), any attempt to reduce litter which does not take account of the wider context is almost certainly doomed to failure.

Yet that is what the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority did when it tried to blame littering in the National Park on campers and campervanners and came up with the counter-productive idea that the way to address the litter problem was to ban and control these activities through the camping byelaws. I say counter-productive because the LLTNPA has been attacking the very people who should have been its strongest allies in tackling the litter scourge. For its the people who enjoy being out in the countryside – who camp and fish among other activities – who probably have the most developed anti-litter ethic in Scotland. Think of “leave only your footprints, take only the air”. Hillwalkers, wild campers and other such recreational visitors are not perfect, of course, but most are a great deal more litter aware than the rest of the population.

What's more a small but significant proportion of outdoor recreationists pick litter up. I bumped into two fell runners on Ben Lomond a couple of months ago and jogged down with them. Normally I don't pick up litter when running – it interrupts the flow – but these two stopped to pick up every piece of litter they saw on the way down. So, so did I. The Scottish Wildlife Trust initiative near Ullapool (see above) is a wonderful example about how our public authorities could harness this goodwill from people who enjoy the countryside and use it to make our countryside litter free.

Imagine what might have happened if instead of trying to ban campers, the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority had provided litter pickers and made it easy for responsible campers to pick up litter left by others? Litter pickers remove much of the unpleasantness and health risks associated with picking up litter and would therefore encourage more people to clean up. That might have truly helped to “transform our lochshores” as the LLTNPA claimed it wished to do. Before however the LLTNPA could copy the Highland/SWT initiative, it needs to ensure all its member local authorities follow the example of Perth and Kinross Council and not just provide adequate numbers of litter bins but ensure these are emptied regularly.

While our National Parks could probably do more to prevent the main source of litter, which is packaging, by themselves they can never change the social attitudes which makes littering acceptable to a large proportion of the population. What they could do though is set an example and harness the support of the people who do care and who are most likely to influence others. If you are an unaware member of the public walking along that beach near Ullapool and see someone using the litter picker, I suspect that might make you think twice before dropping litter. Clean places help but so does the example of your peers. Its the same in our National Parks. The LLTNPA could be leading on this but to do so credibly it will need to re-think its whole attitude to camping and other recreational visitors, start treating them as partners rather than problems and seeking their ideas. The litter picker initiative

is just one example how the National Park could make a difference.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. Litter
2. LLTNPA

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Author

nickkempe

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