

## **NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Mini rangers approve of Mar Lodge Estate upgrades**

The next generation of countryside rangers have given their expert approval to a series of footpath upgrades at the Linn of Dee at the National Trust for Scotland's Mar Lodge Estate, the UK's largest national nature reserve.

Thanks to the support of Total E&P UK Limited, the conservation charity has been able to repair paths damaged in the serious floods of 2015, added new waymarkers and updated visitor signage and information around the Linn of Dee car park where 100k visitors arrive at the Aberdeenshire estate every year.

The National Trust for Scotland's mini rangers checked over the improvements last week at their latest meeting. The group, made up of local young people under 12, meet regularly at the nature reserve and carry out a wide range of countryside and nature-inspired activities.

David Frew Operations Manager at the Mar Lodge Estate said: "We are so grateful to everyone involved in making these important upgrades possible at the Linn of Dee. As the point of arrival for many of our visitors, the new signage and repaired paths mean Mar Lodge Estate is even more welcoming. We hope this will encourage people to explore even more of the UK's biggest nature reserve that we protect, for the love of Scotland."

Sandra McLennan, Corporate Social Responsibility Leader, Total E&P UK Limited said: "Total E&P UK is proud to have supported the National Trust for Scotland with this restoration project. Our combined vision was to encourage people to venture beyond the visitors car park and delve deeper into the Mar Lodge Estate through the network of footpaths that exist but had worn away. The upgrade has helped transform this popular spot and gives visitors the opportunity to identify, plan and safely access their chosen route. With summer holidays underway, we hope that visitor numbers will increase as more people enjoy the great outdoors in this Natural Nature Reserve."

Mar Lodge Estate was named as a new nature reserve in 2017, along with fellow National Trust for Scotland property, Glencoe. Mar Lodge Estate, which has been in the protection of Scotland's largest conservation charity since 1995, takes over from the Great Trossachs Forest National Nature Reserve as the UK's largest reserve. Its landscape is very varied and includes four of Scotland's five highest mountains, a fertile river valley, heather moorland and wetlands, as well as a regenerating Caledonian Pine forest. It is rich in wildlife with red deer, golden eagles and hen harriers, grouse and many other species.

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