Scottish Wildlife Trust
Policy

Burials and Memorials on Reserves

Policy summary

Scottish Wildlife Trust will not permit burials of bodies or ashes on its wildlife reserves. However, SWT is happy to consider the scattering of ashes in a sensitive manner on reserves, and in exceptional circumstances will also consider memorials.

Policy statement

1. SWT will not permit burials, of bodies or ashes, on any of its wildlife reserves, because it may cause concern to visitors and / or local communities, and because of the potential to compromise site management objectives through ground disturbance.

2. SWT will permit the scattering of ashes on reserves according to the guidelines provided

3. In circumstances determined by Council, SWT may consider the establishment of a memorial on a reserve. On the rare occasion that this may be appropriate, the matter will be decided on a case by case basis by Council with the advice of relevant Regional Committee, Member Centre and staff as required.

4. SWT will promote tributes, dedications and living memorials to be undertaken by SWT members and others through legacies and the support of specific conservation activities on reserves.

Context

In the past, burials and scattering of ashes on SWT reserves have occurred on an 'ad-hoc' basis. A number of memorials also exist.

This policy provides clear guidance on SWT's future approach to this sensitive topic. It is essential that this policy is applied consistently across all SWT reserves and by all Committees, Member Centres and staff.

Scattering of ashes

It should be noted that there is nothing to stop people scattering ashes on whatever land they choose. However, SWT advises that these guidelines should be followed wherever possible:

If relatives wish to scatter ashes on a SWT reserve, they are encouraged to write to the relevant Scottish Wildlife Trust Conservation Manager in the first instance detailing when and where on the reserve.

The Conservation Manager should then consult with the local Members Centre and / or Regional Committee to establish agreement on the appropriateness of the site.

Depending on the circumstances of the particular request, the Conservation Manager should also inform local services of the event if this is felt necessary.

The Conservation Manager should then contact the relatives with permission and advice for the particular reserve in question.

The Conservation Manager should advise that the ashes are scattered discreetly, well dispersed, away from footpaths and if possible, at a time when few visitors are present.

Memorials

SWT will not permit the establishment of formal memorials on reserves as a matter of course, but may permit them in exceptional circumstances if the conservation value or purpose of the site is not affected in any way.

In such circumstances, any application must be considered by Council with advice from the Members Centre, Regional Committee or staff as appropriate.

Tributes, dedications and living memorials

SWT will promote the remembrance of individuals through tributes, dedications and 'living memorials' on reserves (e.g. tree planting where this is part of achieving the conservation objectives of a particular site), and though legacies. Notices of these could potentially be made at the entrance to reserves, at visitor centres and in records at SWT premises.

Development and management of any such scheme will be undertaken by the Fundraising department in consultation with committees and other staff.

Links to other SWT policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with other SWT policies on reserve management issues.

References

The Wildlife Trusts (1996) *Guidance on the scattering or burying of ashes on Trust nature reserves*.

Date of approval of policy by Council

24 March 2004