NWHG Ref. 056 — Strath Dionard

Location, grid reference

The valley of Strath Dionard extends for about 10 km in a south-easterly direction from Gualin on the A 838, 15 km south-west of Durness, Grid Ref. [NC 310 570]–[NC 360 485].

GCR site reference, block, volume and notified feature of SSSI?

Strath Dionard is not GCR-listed but lies within the Foinaven SSSI.

Description and geological significance

This very long, straight Strath is a classic example of a U-shaped glaciated valley with steeply rising high sides and a relatively flat, broad floor. It is probably one of the best examples of such a feature anywhere in UK and provides an excellent opportunity for studying this important aspect of Quaternary geology and landscape development.

Accessibility

There is a car park 200 m north of Gualin House on the north-west side of the A 838 ([NC 308 568]). Access to the Strath is via a rough unsurfaced track, heading south- eastwards from Gualin House, which eventually reaches Loch Dionard, some 8 km further up the Strath. No all abilities access off the main A 838 road, therefore.

Conservation

No conservation requirement due to the scale and location of the site.

Visibility and “clarity”

Visibility of the Strath Dionard glaciated valley is excellent from the roadside. Key features are easily seen. Due to the considerable length of the Strath, however, and the sight distances involved, features can be difficult to see, or completely obscured, during poor weather. Otherwise, Strath Dionard is a very dramatic feature and highly inspiring for all visitors, including hill-walkers, photographers/artists, students of physical geology/geomorphology as well as geologists.

Interpretation and interpretation potential

There is currently no interpretation panel. The Strath should certainly be included in a future Geopark guide and it also merits a guided walk all on its own. It provides a very important educational resource for students of geology, geomorphology and physical geography.

Key references

None.