Votes for Nature!
Politics and the Environment

Andy Marks, Parliamentary Officer, Scottish Environment LINK

Have you ever wondered how nature gets a voice in government? Environmental policy professionals work with politicians, government officials and environmental organisations to make sure decisions about our future consider wildlife, habitats and climate change.

Environmental careers are not all about working outdoors. Many people help nature through communication, policy, law, campaigning and public affairs. These roles rely on skills such as communication, teamwork, critical thinking and problem-solving.

Key Questions

As you watch the session, think about:

1. Why is it important that nature is considered when new laws are made?
2. Who influences political decisions about the environment?
3. What skills do people working in environmental policy need?
4. How can young people help decision-makers understand environmental issues?

Understanding Environmental Policy

Environmental policy is about deciding how we protect nature, tackle climate change and use natural resources responsibly.

A policy professional might:

✅ Meet with Members of Parliament (MSPs and MPs)
✅ Explain scientific evidence about environmental issues
✅ Write reports and briefings
✅ Support campaigns to improve laws and regulations
✅ Help turn international climate and biodiversity commitments into practical action

Career Pathways

There is no single route into environmental policy. People working in this field may study subjects such as:

- Geography
- Biology
- Environmental Science
- Politics
- Law
- Economics
- Communications

Green Jobs for Nature

Many also gain experience through volunteering, youth voice programmes, campaigning, apprenticeships or community projects.

Skills Spotlight
People working in environmental policy often use:

Skill	Why it Matters
Communication	Explaining complex issues clearly
Research	Finding reliable evidence
Teamwork	Working with many organisations
Critical Thinking	Understanding different viewpoints
Problem Solving	Finding solutions that work for people and nature
Writing	Preparing reports, briefings & policy recommendations
Emotional Intelligence	Understanding what people value and how they feel

Reflection
🌍 One thing I learned about environmental policy today
🏕️ One skill I already have that could help me influence change for nature
🌱 One action I could take to help nature in my community

Activity: Be Nature's Adviser
Imagine your local council is planning a new development on land near a woodland, river or greenspace.

Your Challenge
Create a short briefing (written or verbal) for an elected representative that answers:

- What is the issue?
- Why does nature matter here?
- What evidence would you present?
- What action would you recommend?