

## National Access Forum Update – February 2018

### Summary of main topics - National Access Forum meeting 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018

#### ***Core Paths and Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping –***

There has been some progress since the last NAF subgroup meeting (21/9/2017), when the option of making the Core Path data set available on public portals with an OS backdrop was identified as an interim solution. ***Core Path data is now available against an ‘open street’ backdrop on the SNH website:*** (<https://www.nature.scot/enjoying-outdoors/places-visit/routes-explore/local-path-networks>). Availability through other public portals and the overall aim of getting Core Paths on OS maps will continue to be explored, and members stressed the importance of continued working with OS to make the Core Path dataset available on their maps. Meanwhile, OS have agreed in principle to including a reference to the right of responsible access in Scotland on the 1:50,000 map legend.

#### ***Mountain Biking and Enduro Activity -***

There was a report from the second meeting of the NAF sub group (12/12/2017) and subsequent work to create guidance relating to the unauthorised construction of mountain bike trails in Scotland. This will be targeted at key stakeholders and the MTB peer group, using digital media and local campaigns to promote key messages. Draft guidance will be circulated to the NAF meeting on 16 May; wider consultation over the summer will then be a crucial part of the process of engaging stakeholders prior to presenting the final draft to the NAF meeting on 26 September. The aim is to launch the guidance at the ‘Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland’ conference in November.

#### ***LLTNP - Camping Management Byelaws 2017– Annual Update***

LLTNP presented a report on the first season’s operation of the LLTNP Camping Management Byelaws, and explained that the byelaws and associated camping provision were designed to improve the camping experience and alleviate pressures on key loch shore locations. The programme of work for the coming year will include: recruitment of more staff, facilities for motor homes at gateway centres, extra pitches at Loch Achray campsite, upgrading of existing sites, new permit areas, additional and clarification of signage, as well as looking at toilet provision more closely. Issues raised by the Forum, including potential displacement effects, facilities for the collection and removal of litter and human waste, and details of the byelaw offences, were discussed. It was noted that LLTNP is also having continuing dialogue with stakeholders. The Forum will revisit this issue again in February 2019, after the second year of the Byelaws. (Further details at: [http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/rr-content/uploads/2017/01/Board\\_20171211\\_Agenda6\\_Appendix-1-Your-Park-Annual-Update-4.pdf](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/rr-content/uploads/2017/01/Board_20171211_Agenda6_Appendix-1-Your-Park-Annual-Update-4.pdf)).

#### ***Outdoor Access Trust Scotland***

Following the discussion on parking and access at the September meeting, the Forum heard about the work of the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (OATS) on car park provision and path improvements. From their origins as the Upper Deeside Access Trust, and then as the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust, OATS have successfully used car park revenue to leverage Lottery, European and other funding for new car parks and major upland and lowland path repairs. This has included the £2.6 M East Cairngorm Access Project, Core Path delivery in the Cairngorms, volunteer led health walks, the Speyside Way LDR extension, and the Cairngorm Mountain Heritage project. Current work includes a £6 million ‘The Mountains for the People’ project in the 2 National Parks, utilising £3.2M HLF funding, car parking revenue, and funding from public and charitable trusts. OATS focus is primarily

upland path repairs but includes training, a volunteer programme and visitor engagement. Further information is available at: <https://www.outdooraccessstrustforscotland.org.uk/>

### ***Access and Stalking -***

A background paper by SNH outlined the Forum's previous work on integrating access and stalking. This paper provided context for a presentation by researchers from St Andrews University on the use of modern technology to monitor the movements of hill walkers and wildlife in Glen Lyon, for example through voluntary GPS tracking of walkers and fixed-point photography. The Forum expressed interest in the techniques that were being used, but urged caution in attempting to draw any general conclusions from results in Glen Lyon, emphasizing that the estate where the work is being carried out is atypical.

### ***Positive Benefits of Access and Recreation –***

A presentation by Paths for All reviewed progress over the 15 years since the creation of the statutory right of responsible access, concluding that there is much to celebrate. Access has become increasingly main stream, and is contributing to a wide range of important agendas such as improving health and well-being, providing sustainable transport options and strengthening communities. Local Access Fora across the country have worked hard to address local issues. The development of paths and way marked trails also help encourage access by a wider range of people. In addition, access and recreation bring significant economic benefits (£1.2B from walking tourism alone). The SG vision for 'a more active Scotland' is likely to help maintain momentum.

### ***Communications and Campaigns -***

The Forum heard about the Ramblers Scotland 3 year campaign, getting Scotland 'Out There' aimed at reducing barriers and encouraging people to get outdoors, which has strong backing from MSPs. There was an update on a number of campaigns to raise awareness among dog owners about the devastating effects of livestock worrying, including the Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime campaign to promote responsible dog walking in the countryside. An All Party (Westminster) Parliamentary working group on animal welfare had carefully examined issues relating to tackling livestock worrying and encouraging responsible dog ownership; this has relevant messages for dog ownership in Scotland.

### ***Joint NAF/LAF meeting on 16 March-***

The Convenor outlined the draft programme for the joint NAF/LAF meeting to be held at Battleby. The theme will be 'Engaging with Young People to Promote Responsible Access' and will include presentations on various success stories and experiences as well as group discussions based on the Year of Young People (YOYP) themes.

### ***Review of National Access Forum Membership –***

The Secretary reported on the first phase of the National Access Forum membership review, during which recreational, land management and public bodies were invited to confirm whether they wished to have "full" or "corresponding" membership of the Forum. The second phase will now cover other bodies, other relevant interests and professional bodies. There will be a full report to the NAF meeting in May.

### ***Future NAF meetings –***

The next Forum meeting will be the Annual Joint NAF/LAF meeting on Friday **16th March 2018** at Battleby and the subsequent Forum meeting on Wednesday **16<sup>th</sup> May 2018** and Wednesday **26th September 2018** again held at Battleby.

For more information or comment on any of the above topics, please contact the NAF Secretary – Janice Winning ([NAFsec@snh.gov.uk](mailto:NAFsec@snh.gov.uk) ; 0131 316 2639). Further information can be found on the National Access Forum pages at <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/access-forum/>.