

## National Access Forum Update – January 2019

### Summary of main topics - National Access Forum meeting 30 January 2019

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

The Forum heard about the successful launch of the 'Unauthorised Mountain Bike trails: A Guide for Land Managers and Riders' at the 'Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland' conference on 21 November attended by over 150 people. There was good media coverage of the launch resulting in enquiries from across Britain. Further promotion and communication of key messages from the guidance to the landowning and mountain biking community will take place in the spring to coincide with the 'Take care of trails' campaign.

#### ***LLTNP Camping Management Byelaws 2018 – annual update -***

LLTNP presented a report on the 2nd season's operation of the Camping Management Byelaws. There had been a huge increase in the number of visitors (25,000 campers, an increase of 50% since 2017) and overall high visitor satisfaction recorded within the camping management zones. Details of 931 people were taken in relation to a contravention of the byelaws, with only 12 being reported to the Crown Office for failing to comply. The programme of work for the coming year includes; opening of the delayed Loch Achray campsite, further improvements to the website, ongoing monitoring of environmental impacts, campervan and motor home user survey, ongoing management of littering, inappropriate toileting and fire lighting. Forum members offered support for joined up messaging to tackle some of these issues. The Forum will revisit this topic again in January 2020 after the third year of the Byelaws and provide stakeholder input to the report to Scottish Government which will be prepared at around the same time. Further details at:

[http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/rr-content/uploads/2018/01/Board\\_20181210\\_Agenda-7\\_Your-Park-Annual-Update-2018\\_Appendix-1\\_2nd-Annual-Update-for-Scottish-Ministers.pdf](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/rr-content/uploads/2018/01/Board_20181210_Agenda-7_Your-Park-Annual-Update-2018_Appendix-1_2nd-Annual-Update-for-Scottish-Ministers.pdf)

#### ***Promoting Scottish Outdoor Access –***

Forum members were invited to discuss a range of options for future SOAC promotion as outlined by SNH including proposals aimed at young people. Awareness of the SOAC now stands at 43% amongst the general public with higher awareness amongst those who regularly use the outdoors. Members therefore supported ideas to raise the profile of the SOAC website, existing guidance and resources as well as increasing social media activity. There was also strong support for greater targeted messages around responsible dog ownership, mountain biking, campervans, shared use etc. Support was given for the proposal to work with Young Scot to co-design SOAC messages aimed at young people, along with existing organisations directly engaged with young people and the outdoors.

The Forum heard that the SOAC website had now been revised in line with the earlier recommendations. Members were invited to view the new website and provide feedback to Mark Wrightham (<https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/>) ([mark.wrightham@nature.scot](mailto:mark.wrightham@nature.scot)).

#### ***Public access around livestock –***

A paper by NFUS highlighted the continued occurrence of livestock attacks by dogs (either off the leash or left to roam) and the subsequent impact on landowners both financial and emotional. The NFUS and SLE argued that the current SOAC wording was unclear and something stronger was required especially in peri-urban areas and country parks where incidents were higher. The Forum agreed that bolder messaging, greater targeting and longer campaigns were required to tackle the problem. A small working group led by SNH would look at how SOAC messaging could be strengthened and promoted.

#### ***Funding Challenges for Public Access Post Brexit -***

The Forum discussed the current funding sources available for the creation of new access routes, including the success of the Improving Public Access (IPA) scheme and the uncertainty surrounding Brexit. Some solutions could be found with a mixture of private and public funding including new EU and SG infrastructure funds and existing active travel funds. It was agreed that NAF would help share knowledge and publicise funding sources. General concern was expressed at the decline in local authority funding for managing access and upholding access rights. It was agreed that NAF would continue to play an advocacy role in making a stronger case for public funding of access and raise awareness of the many public benefits that arise from having a strong access network both nationally and locally.

### ***Mapping Scotland's Paths –***

A paper by Ramblers Scotland on their project proposal to develop a national consistent dataset of paths in Scotland was discussed. This would increase the number of publically accessible paths that are mapped, appropriately waymarked and promoted. There was general support for the project with Forum members volunteering to help further define the project brief. There was also support for revisiting the work of the 'Core Path and OS Mapping' subgroup with a review of outstanding actions and consideration of next steps.

### ***SORA Mediation Update –***

The Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance (SORA) provided an update of their investigations into using formal mediation to solve long running access disputes. Support in principle for this work was given by Forum members although questions were raised about funding support. A small working group led by SORA would develop ideas around funding and examples of requirements and report back to the NAF. Examples of stalled access cases where formal mediation could be trialled are being invited; ([eleisha\\_fahy@Scotways.com](mailto:eleisha_fahy@Scotways.com)).

### ***LAF Issues - Campervans -***

The issue of unauthorised parking of campervans and problems associated with littering and human waste had been raised by the Scottish Borders. The Forum heard that this was not an isolated issue but was also occurring on the North Coast 500 and in the National Parks. Members discussed plans to engage with key stakeholders and the tourism sector to help develop guidance and key messages which would be promoted on the SOAC website and through relevant organisations. A small working group led by SNH would take this forward.

### ***National Access Forum Membership – LAF representative vacancy***

Nominations are currently being sought for a LAF representative on the Forum to take up position in early April. For further information and discussion of the responsibilities please contact the NAF secretary ([NAFsec@nature.scot](mailto:NAFsec@nature.scot)) or the current representative Simon Pilpel ([simon.pilpel@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:simon.pilpel@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)).

### ***NAF/LAF Joint meeting 2019 –***

A draft programme for the joint NAF/LAF meeting focusing on 'Improving the NAF/LAF Network' and sharing experience was presented to the Forum for comments. Forum members approved the interactive style of day and suggested early announcement of the topics for the sharing practice groups. The final programme for the day and booking forms will be available in early March.

### ***Future NAF meetings –***

The next Forum meetings are; joint NAF/LAF meeting, **Friday 5 April 2019** at Battleby, full NAF meetings: Wednesday **29 May 2019** (Battleby), **18 September** (Oatridge College-tbc).

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