
CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

- Title:** Update and look forward for the next 3 months
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- Purpose:** This paper provides an update and flavour on the main areas of work undertaken and planned to deliver the key themes in the **Outdoor Access Strategy** by the **CNPA** staff and partners.

Advice Sought:

Forum members are asked to note the work undertaken and planned. Any questions, comments or suggestions are very welcome.

Action Theme 1: Improving path provision and quality

IMPLEMENTING THE CORE PATHS PLAN

1. **Core Paths Plan** – The Core Paths Plan is now published and available on the CNPA website. Copies were distributed to land managers, Community Councils and Objectors at the beginning of June. Key partners received a letter with a web link and lastly everybody who participated in the consultations received the last instalment of the “Paths for the Park” newsletter. For a flavour of the Plan the following might be of interest:
 - a. The total length of the Core Paths network is 932km;
 - b. Of that length 925.6km exists and;
 - c. 6.5km needs to be built and lastly;
 - d. 88km is on the water- The River Spey.

2. **Monitoring core paths (Fit for Purpose)**- The initial “fit for purpose” assessment of the core paths network has been completed and is currently being transposed into a map based format. Early indications show that only 43% of the network passes all three tests. The initial findings are presented below:

Summary

Overall Assessment	No. routes 253	% routes pass
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Fit for Purpose	108 are Fit for purpose.	43
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Analysis of passes against the three attributes

Attributes	No. routes 253	% routes pass
Barriers and obstructions	193 pass	76
Path surface	211 pass.	83
Directional Path signs	132 pass	52

Work over the remainder of this year will concentrate on increasing the overall percentage of passes with the main emphasis being targeted at improving signage in and around communities.

3. **Core path diversion protocols-** CNPA staff will be meeting shortly with Forestry Commission Scotland to discuss protocols for the temporary closure or diversion of core paths. It is anticipated that further advice will be sought from the Forum in due course on a standard set of protocols for all land management activities around core paths.
4. **Path Signs Audit-** P4 Projects has recently completed a directional paths signs audit for the core path networks around Carr Bridge, Kincaig, Aviemore and Strathdon. The findings of which will feed into the implementation plan for the Core Paths Plan. It is planned that a similar exercise will be carried out in Ballater, Braemar, Boat of Garten, Newtonmore and Laggan this financial year.
5. **Community Path Leaflets-** The leaflets for Nethybridge and Ballater have been completed, although Ballater won't be in circulation until stocks of the previous leaflet have been sold. Boat of Garten and Kingussie will be completed and published by the middle of August. Leaflets for Grantown and Carr Bridge are now in the initial planning stages with publication expected by the New Year.
6. **COAT** - have been moving projects forward very quickly as part of their current two year business plan a flavour of which is:
 - a. In Braemar the Society Bridge to Glenshee Road link (UDE9) has been completed.
 - b. Negotiations in Dulnain Bridge have been held up and it is anticipated that the CNPA will continue with these to free up COAT to deliver other projects.
 - c. The new River Dulnain Path (LBS61) in Carr Bridge has been completed.
 - d. The Mountain Heritage Project has now secured funding amounting to £ 2 million for a 4 year project commencing in July.
7. **The Speyside Way Extension** – Staff continue to negotiate with land owners along the route. This has been complicated further with new owners in Insh and Kincaig identified who now need to be contacted. The CNPA has given notice, under section 22 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, of the intention to make a Path Order on the owners of Kinrara Estate. This “draft path order” has been objected to and will result in a local inquiry, the timing of which will be determined by the Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals. Staff are currently working on the supporting

information for the Inquiry and continue to develop the background paperwork required for the ensuing planning application.

Action Theme 2: Promoting responsible outdoor access and management

8. **Managing informal camping-** CNPA staff are continuing to work with land managers in Braemar and Glenmore to support management measures for dealing with the issues around informal camping. The CNPA is supporting Invercauld Estate this year with a small grant to re-deploy estate staff to promote responsible behaviour around Clunieside.
9. **Outdoor Access Events-** The Cairngorms Business Partnership is currently in the process of recruiting an Events Co-ordinator to help support the range of event organisers across the Park. CNPA staff will be working with this new officer to co-ordinate the next biannual open meeting for land managers and event organisers on the 27 October 2010.
10. **Promoting outdoor access opportunities responsibly -** CNPA is continuing with its focus on dogs as the key message from the code most recently staff and Grantown residents held a midsummer night's dog walk, providing an opportunity to meet local dog trainers and rangers. Work is continuing with highlight dog waste in Anagach woods using spray paint, local volunteers are also trailing a new poo pod lead system. All of these initiatives are leading towards the development of a code of conduct for the woods.

Action Theme 4: Promoting sustainable transport for the enjoyment of the Cairngorms National Park

11. **Electric vehicle-** The new electric vehicle funded by the Climatic project and operated by the Badenoch and Strathspey Community Transport Company, is providing transport for residents in the Strath who don't have access to a car.

Action Theme 5: Promoting healthy lifestyles

12. **Health Walks –** A number of health walks are now operating in Braemar, Ballater, Dinnet, Strathdon, Grantown, Nethy, Carr Bridge, Aviemore, Kingussie, Newtonmore and Laggan.

Other National Park Initiatives

13. **Sustainable Tourism Strategy-** The Tourism Company has now been appointed to re-develop the strategy action plan and have undertaken direct consultation with stakeholders, including a workshop with the Cairngorms Business Partnership who are developing a marketing framework for the Park.
14. **Land Management Forum-** The CNPA will be convening, before the end of the year, a new land management forum bringing together private land owners, public bodies and NGO's to discuss and advise on issues relevant to land managers in the Park. Future topics might include the consultation on the new flooding act.

15. **Board and boundary changes-** A number of National Park Authority appointments come to an end in October so there will be a significant turnover in the Board. Subject to parliamentary approval, the boundary will be extended at that time resulting in new representation from Perth and Kinross Council. Changes in LOAF membership will also need to reflect this change in due course.
16. **Cairngorm Mountain-** Cairngorm Mountain Limited (CML) has received permission from SNH and the Highland Council to undertake a trial for guided short walks from the top station to Cairngorm summit for this summer. The trial will be monitored throughout to gauge success and any adverse impacts. These Ranger led walks will provide an excellent opportunity to discuss with the public this very special habitat and explain the purpose of the current management regime. CNPA is supportive of the trial. CML are also seeking views from groups and individuals on the current Visitor Management Plan and their consultation will run to the end of August.
17. **Aviemore Half Marathon-** Negotiations between Rothiemurchus Estate and The Speyside Trust were unable to resolve a number of issues for this year's event resulting in the race being run on the road rather than the Old logging Way. The CNPA will continue to work with both parties offering to act as a broker to secure the use of the Old logging Way in 2011 and beyond.

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August 2010

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