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## CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

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**Title:** Access Issue – Roadside Camping in Glen Clunie  
**Prepared by:** Fran Potheary – Outdoor Access Officer  
**Purpose:** To brief the Forum on the growing issue of unmanaged road side camping off the A93 in Glen Clunie

### Background

1. The information in this paper has been collated from comments and observations from local residents and the factor of Invercauld Estate, Simon Blackett.
2. For many years people have camped in Glen Clunie by the river off the A93. The land is owned by Invercauld Estate and consists of short attractive grass sward which is flat and relatively dry. Cars can easily be parked off road and the site lends itself to informal camping. The camping is mainly sandwiched between the river and the old road leading out of Braemar.
3. There has also been an increased amount of camping at Monega Bridge, further up towards the Glenshee ski area.
4. Most of the camping is vehicle based – i.e. straight off the road and tents placed in close proximity to a car or other vehicle. As the site has become more established there is greater evidence of people meeting to camp here. For example one weekend saw the arrival of a group of 20 motorcyclists in Glen Clunie and on three recent weekends in a row a regular group have settled at Monega Bridge with gazebos/ car battery lights and music. There is also evidence of other high tech camping equipment in use - for example, a small marquee and a generator were in evidence over the weekend of July 16/17 2005. More commonplace, people are having barbeques, setting up family size tents, windbreaks, tables and chairs. According to one source there are at least 4 campfires a night when there are campers there, in addition some people have been spotted cutting down trees on the Golf Course and destroying sheep-fank fencing at Monega Bridge to burn on camp fires. Apparently, a fridge was even abandoned on site at the end of last year.

### An Example of numbers counted by local residents:

Friday 15 July 2005 @ 17:30 - 48 tents, 4 caravans and 2 motor homes  
Saturday 16 July - 74 tents/ campervans/caravans  
Tuesday 26 July 2005 @ 08:30 - 23 tents and 3 motor-homes/ caravans  
Tuesday 26 July @21:30 - 27 tents and 3 motor-homes/caravans

### An estimate of overall numbers

5. One resident estimates that since July 23 there have been 1200 people using the area. He further estimates that ,taking into consideration the main fortnight and two months leading up to then, there has been about 3000 person/nights so far this year.

**The concerns raised are several:**

- The community belief that the image of the village is tarnished
- The environmental impact of human waste and rubbish - both from an aesthetic point of view, but also concerning potential pollution to Braemar's water supply which is taken from a shallow borehole further downstream
- Use of campfires – including cutting down live trees and use of fencing
- Knowledge of the site spreading and being promoted amongst and beyond current users
- Dogs off the lead/ running loose

**Wild camping**

6. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code allows for wild camping which is defined as that which is "lightweight, done in small numbers and only for two or three nights in any one place". Responsible camping is defined as that that "doesn't cause pollution, removes all trace of a tent pitch or open fire and removes all litter". It appears that on the whole, the camping in Glen Clunie is neither lightweight – involving as it does major frame tents, barbeques and cars – nor is it always undertaken in a responsible manner.

**Question 1: Does the Forum conclude that, generally, what has been occurring at Glen Clunie is not "wild camping" as described in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code?**

**The Way Forward**

7. It is proposed that the CNPA will work with Invercauld Estate to convene a meeting of local interested parties and public agencies in mid-October to discuss what can be done about the issue. The Estate has been requested to collate further information to bring to this meeting. There will be a need to assess the options for change, the timescale for implementation and the resources available, and to look at the issue in a wider context, certainly beyond that of the immediate site.

**Question 2: Does the Forum support the need for a community meeting with all interested parties to find a long term effective solution to this problem?**

8. Forum members are invited to consider and discuss the above two questions

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