
CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

Title: **The Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum- a way forward**

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Purpose

The attached draft research brief is a summary of the findings for the 5 year study undertaken into the Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum by the James Hutton Institute. It highlights a number of creative tensions and key challenges for the future effectiveness of the Forum.

Advice Sought

Members are invited to discuss the findings and consider the following questions:

- a) Does the Forum feel there is any work required to address the creative tensions highlighted in section 6 of the brief:
- b) What's the Forums view on the challenges (p26) highlighted in the brief and how might these be taken forward?

Background

1. Since October 2006 the James Hutton Institute (formally the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute) as part of a wider study into the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 has been observing the Forum. The overall research question for the study into the CLOAF was "*How do the structures, practices and relationships constituting the CLOAF shape its functioning and future challenges*". The study identified a number of creative tensions and challenges for the CLOAF.
2. Creative Challenges- The following creative challenges were identified:
 - a. Strategic v. practical;
 - b. Proactive v. reactive;
 - c. Consensus v. difference.

Does the Forum feel there is any work required to address the creative tensions highlighted in section 6 of the brief?

3. Challenges – The following challenges were also identified:
 - a. To strike a balance between reactive and proactive modes, and in turn between standardising procedures and maintaining context specificity.
 - b. To manage a balance between advising the access authority and other parties seeking advice, whilst recognising the value of the latter in creating better links with broader stakeholders, and potentially more effective and lasting solutions to problems.

- c. To keep under review the appropriate level of practical involvement of Forum members in conflict resolution.
- d. To clarify and address Forum objectives relating to public awareness and understanding of what LAFs generally and the CLOAF in particular do.
- e. To build on the largely invisible role Forum members play in educating people about the Code through their informal social networks. This is very difficult to measure but potentially of significant value.
- f. To continue to improve knowledge and capacity – especially as regards the legislation and the Code - on specific issues identified by the Forum as needing more work (e.g. commercialisation, bye-laws).
- g. To find ways to address issues created by tensions between CNPA's dual role as enabling, collaborative body and enforcement authority.
- h. To maintain awareness of the function of Forum (and CNPA) objectivity and legitimacy, and what generates and sustains them in the context of the CLOAF.
- i. To recognise the significance of representativeness of process as well as structure (even if at informal level) in maintaining legitimacy and effective problem resolution/prevention. It is possible that the presence and 'airtime' of particular stakeholder perspectives could be more usefully balanced with regard to particular issues, such as through actively seeking to 'round off' perspectives on issues rather than emulate a quasi-judicial body.

What's the Forums view on the challenges (p26) highlighted in the brief and how might these be taken forward?

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