
CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

Title: Update and look forward

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Purpose: This paper provides an update on the main areas of work both undertaken and planned which will deliver the five year outcomes from the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-17.

Long term outcome: People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences

Key work package 9 - Active Cairngorms

1. **Promoting Active Enjoyment:** The Walking to Health programme has continued to grow with active groups operating in Glen Tanar, Braemar, Ballater, Strathdon, Aviemore, Carr-bridge, Boat of Garten, Dulnain Bridge, Grantown on Spey, Nethybridge, Kingussie, Newtonmore and Dalwhinnie. There is now an average of 331 walkers taking part every week with 88 trained volunteers delivering the walks.
2. **Promoting the Scottish Outdoor Access Code –** A seasonal Ranger has been employed by Boat of Garten Community Company, with financial support from CNPA, to help manage visitors to the woods during the sensitive period for Capercaillie. More Estates and land agents have taken up temporary signage for Capercaillie. A press campaign took place to support land managers through the lambing period and this was assisted by ranger services undertaking spring dog patrols to target dog walkers and promote responsible dog ownership.
3. **Community Path Leaflets –** The suite of community path leaflets is progressing with development discussions with the communities of Aviemore and Laggan taking place at present. This will leave only two communities remaining to be covered.

Key work package 12 - Visitor and access infrastructure

4. **Management of core paths and outdoor access:**
 - a. **Low ground path development –** The following paths have been completed in the last financial year: Cemetery path Carr-bridge, Creag Bheag Kingussie, Kinraig hill path, Cinder path Ballater, 7 bridges Ballater, Speyside Way at Aviemore, Tamnavoulin Bridge and Glenfeshie path from Achlean. Future works are planned to take the Speyside Way extension across Kinrara Estate, replace the Bachnagairn bridge in Glen Clova and improve the Speyside Way between Boat of Garten and Nethy bridge.

- b. **Path Signs** - The path signs for Braemar and Kingussie are now in place with minor way marking issues to be addressed. Early discussions are taking place to revise and update the path signs in and around Aviemore in conjunction with the development of the new path leaflet.
- c. **Upland paths** – The fourth year of the Heritage Lottery Funded (HLF) programme of works will be commencing once the snow melts from the high tops. A remote camping system will be deployed again to provide an efficient mechanism for delivery of the repairs scheduled on Braeriach. Other works will be on Coire Raibeirt, the Northern Corries rim, Ben Macdhui and Lairig an Laoigh. The training programme has recruited 6 new trainees who will be working towards their SVQ in Environmental Conservation. The award was in some doubt but has now been confirmed and secured in the longer term thanks to some significant lobbying by CNPA, COAT and others. Preparatory work has taken place on developing a further HLF bid in partnership with Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority. This will cover the hills in Atholl and others in the Eastern Cairngorms. A Stage 1 application will be submitted later this year.

Other National Park Initiatives

5. **Junior Ranger Programme**- The next round of a 5 day junior ranger programme starts in May and June for secondary school children in the Park. With Groups from Strathspey, Deeside and Angus Glens venturing out in the Park.
6. **Cairngorms Nature** - Cairngorms Nature partnership, and its accompanying Action Plan, will be launched by the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment at the Celebrating Cairngorms Nature event in Aviemore on 18th May 2013. The Action Plan contains pieces of work that will become the foundations for further actions to be delivered, for example, a spatial targeting exercise to identify priority and strategic opportunities for expansion and enhancement.
7. **Sustainable Tourism Forum**- The Sustainable Tourism Forum has been looking at the delivery of actions in the action plan for the Sustainable Tourism Strategy. Of interest to the LOAF is the view from the STF that *opportunities for promoting water borne access* shouldn't be a priority.
8. **Rangers**- Head rangers have recently been trained as champions for the National Park as per Communications and Engagement Strategy; a key area of work will be supporting and delivering the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan. This includes developing volunteering, practical work and education programmes.

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7th May 2013

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