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## CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

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**Title:** Wild and road side camping in the National Park

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**Purpose** This paper highlights a number of issues associated with camping at two prominent sites and seeks advice on how the adverse impacts from these activities can be managed.

### Advice Sought

Forum members are asked to:

- a) Comment on the actions that have been implemented to date,
- b) Agree that the specific nature of the two sites identified means any form of camping is irresponsible;
- c) Comment on the proposed monitoring system; and
- d) Advise on any other factors that should be considered in working towards an effective solution to this problem.

### Background

1. Negative impacts associated with camping are increasingly becoming an issue for a small number of land managers. Media interest in this issue has been heightened by anti-social behaviour problems experienced elsewhere in Scotland e.g. Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. The same scale of problem does not exist within the Cairngorms National Park but the CNPA, along with relevant partners, is keen to address these issues before they escalate.
2. There are two specific sites in the Park where the problem is acute - south of Braemar and in Glenmore. There may be other sites but we lack any information on these. There are similarities in the nature of these sites namely proximity to roads. However there is a distinction between Braemar and Glenmore in that there is a lack of formal provision at Braemar and conversely it would seem that some of the issues at Glenmore could be attributed to overspill from the formal sites. The problems at each of these sites are explored below.

### Clunie Flats, Braemar

#### Issue

3. Clunie Flats south of Braemar is a site close to the road, flat and relatively close to a settlement. Camping at this location is frequently outwith of access rights as it is close to the road, not lightweight and frequently campers stay for more than three days. Excessive consumption of alcohol often associated with large groups can lead to anti-social behaviour and confrontation. Aside from the behaviour issue, other problems can be littering, fires and human sanitation. Annex 1 details the background to date.

## In and around Loch Morlich

### Issue

4. Around Loch Morlich it may be within access rights to camp provided it is small numbers, discreetly hidden from popular areas and with little to no impact from issues such as litter or fires. Its increasing popularity however, close to the formal campsite, is creating problems such as sanitation, littering, fires and anti-social behaviour. There is a real danger that this may escalate if left unchecked. Appendix I details the background to date.

### **Developing a management process**

5. Access rights extend to wild camping which is defined in the code as *a type of camping that is lightweight, done in small numbers and only for two or three nights in any one place*. It goes on to say that *you can camp in this way wherever access rights apply*. It caveats this by then stating *but help to avoid causing problems for local people and land managers by not camping in enclosed fields of crops or farm animals and by keeping well away from buildings, roads or historic structures*.
6. In tackling any issue to do with irresponsible access there is an incremental process by which different measures are used to tackle the issues and these are escalated when existing mechanisms fail to address the problem. There is therefore a continuum beginning with encouraging responsible behaviour through education and ending with the removal of particular access rights by bylaw or other legal sanction.
7. In assisting land managers to put in place a management regime the Park Authority needs to be clear and consistent about the thresholds for when camping at any given site is or is not within access rights and the likely indicators that the different regimes are not working.
8. There are a number of factors that taken either individually or collectively assist in defining the thresholds by which any form of camping is irresponsible behaviour. The CNPA has judged that the nature of the two sites, proximity to the public road and other facilities, combined with the scale and impacts of camping, such as human waste, means that any form of camping at these two locations is irresponsible.

### **Management Response**

9. Regardless of whether or not the behaviour can be deemed irresponsible there is a continuum of actions as highlight in paragraph 6 to deal directly with the public on the problem sites. The Park Authority anticipates recommending the following in table A:

Table A- Management response

	<b>Small scale</b> (on or two small tents discreetly hidden)	<b>Medium scale</b> (larger groups in occupying and significant part of the site)	<b>Large scale</b> (large groups of a more permanent nature , significant impact on site)
Management response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face to face contact</li> <li>• Notices on cars and tents*</li> <li>• Move on after one night and not come back</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face to face contact</li> <li>• Move to site after one night and not come back</li> <li>• Supply of items such a bin bags to remove litter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face to face contact requesting immediate removal</li> </ul>
Who would be involved	Rangers, Estate Staff	Rangers, Estate Staff, Police notified	Police with support from Rangers and Estate Staff

\*The CNPA will work with partners to produce these

**Does the Forum agree that the specific nature of these two sites, such as proximity to public roads, and their impacts means any form of camping is irresponsible?**

### Monitoring

10. A simple monitoring system, see Table B below, carried out by those in direct contact with the issue, such as rangers, estate staff and any other interested party gathered at problem sites over the course of the year will help build an accurate picture of the scale of the problem. Monitoring will also determine if there is a decrease in the number and scale of issues.

Table B- An example of a monitoring system

Date	No. tents/people	Impact/problem
14.02.20...	4 large tents and a camper van	Large bonfire create using wood from old fence Litter Damage to gate

11. The data gathered would be shared with key agencies such as the police who would analyse the data in conjunction with incident records and arrests. This data would be fed into a “problem profile” giving a clear picture of when, where, who and what factors contribute to incidents associated with camping. The data would be used to co-ordinate publicity campaigns tackling the issues and direct resources such as staff time.

**The Forum is invited to discuss and give their comments and observations on the proposed monitoring system**

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**February 2010**

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14/01/10

## Annex I

Site	Issues	Frequency	Actions to date	Proposed actions by Land manager
Glenmore	Overnight parking / fouling/ litter / noise nuisance to people who have paid for a site just meters away / unofficial use of campsite toilets/ washing facilities Blocking access for snow ploughing Campfires / smoke drifting into the official campsite/ generators going till the wee sma' hours Alcohol related high jinks/rowdyism	All year / even in the past snowy conditions	Asked to move on after 1 night	A note to be left on their windscreen rather than a confrontational approach
Loch Morlich Beach area	Overnight parking / fouling/ litter / noise nuisance to people who have paid for site space just meters away / unofficial use of campsite toilets/ washing facilities Blocking access for snow ploughing	All year / even in the past snowy conditions	Asked to move on or pay for a pitch on the Forest Holiday site	A note to be left on their windscreen rather than a confrontational approach
Clunie Flats – 5 miles adjacent to the A93 on minor road south of Braemar.	Timber theft for fires, damage to property, litter, human waste. Not just tents caravans and campervans as well.	History going back 15 years, peaking in 2006/7. Peak times June through to August.	Reduced options for parking using boulders and trenches, in 2008 two new signs were erected with text agree by the CNPA.	Move to make the minor road one way thus making access the site harder. Involve the police more in the matter.

	Numbers up to 90 have been recorded		Some development towards developing a new campsite but challenges have been identifying a site and putting together a business case	
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