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**CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM**

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**Title:** Managing informal camping update

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**Purpose:** To report back on the measures taken in 2010 to address informal camping issues around Clunie Flats, Braemar and Loch Morlich, Glenmore.

**Advice Sought**

The Forum is invited to comment on the steps that have been taken to date and to provide advice on the management of informal camping in the future.

**Background**

1. In February 2010 the Forum agreed that negative impacts associated with informal camping by the roadside are increasingly becoming an issue for a small number of land managers. Media interest in this issue was heightened by anti-social behaviour problems experienced elsewhere in Scotland e.g. Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. It was agreed that within the Cairngorms National Park the scale of the problem is not the same but that the CNPA, along with relevant partners, should address these issues before they escalate.
2. It was agreed that there are two specific sites in the Park where the problem is acute - south of Braemar and Loch Morlich in Glenmore. There are similarities in the nature of these sites, namely the proximity to roads. However there is a distinction between Braemar and Glenmore in that there is a lack of formal camping provision at Braemar whereas it would seem that some of the issues at Loch Morlich could be attributed to overspill from the formal camp sites.
3. Both the Forum and the CNPA Board agreed that we proceed on the basis of a broad approach defined by the following principles. CNPA should assist the relevant land managers to:
  - a) Draw together the relevant parties to review periodically best practice and encourage an effective partnership approach to the management of each site or area;
  - b) Improve the quantitative and qualitative information available to CNPA and others about the nature and scale of the problems encountered with informal camping so that comparisons can be made between different locations within the National Park and over time.
  - c) Develop and implement an appropriate suite of management approaches in a management plan for each site, based on the guidance available from the National Access Forum which would reduce camping-related problems to an acceptable level;
  - d) Develop suitable alternative formal and informal campsites (if not already available in the area) to which people can be directed (if appropriate)

- e) Develop appropriate targeted resources for persuasive communication (leaflets, car stickers, signs, etc) for use by ranger services and others.
- f) Improve support and liaison arrangements with the police.

**Implementing the principles**

4. In 2010 the CNPA focused its efforts on the following principles.

Improving the quantitative and qualitative information available about the nature and scale of the problems.

5. In February 2010 the Forum supported the view that a simple monitoring system would help to determine if there is an increase or decrease in the scale of issues over time. Both Invercauld Estate and the Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) adopted this approach the results of which can be seen in table A.

Site	Recorded days out of a possible 183	Tents	Campervans	Cars	Key instances
Loch Morlich	88	68	121	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 fire instances;</li> <li>• 8 instances of people staying more than 2 nights.</li> </ul>
Clunieside	34	278	29	274	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One instance of criminal damage;</li> <li>• 3 abandoned camps.</li> </ul>

**Table A - Totals for April to September monitoring period.**

Develop and implement an appropriate suite of management approaches.

- 6. From June to October the CNPA granted aided Invercauld Estate to deliver a programme of works to encourage responsible access at Clunieside. This included regular site visits with face-to-face contact with campers, litter picking and the promotion of responsible camping through local businesses.
- 7. FCS continued with their existing visitor management plan but enlisted the help of Loch Morlich Watersports to monitor camping at weekends, undertake litter picks and speak with the public.

Develop suitable alternative formal and informal campsites

- 8. The main focus for this line of work was Braemar which has a lack of formal campsite provision. In November 2010 the CNPA, with support from Scottish Enterprise and Invercauld Estate, commissioned a feasibility study. The purpose was to identify current and potential demand, identify possible campsites and provide an indication of start up

costs and likely revenue. The final report is awaited but there is a reasonable likelihood that a site for an informal campsite will be identified near Braemar.

### **Reflections on informal camping issues in 2010**

9. CNPA staff spent some time with FCS and Invercauld Estate to review 2010 and establish what actions would be undertaken in 2011. Both Estates held the view that 2010 was not a bad year for informal camping problems as both felt numbers were down with poor weather being a key contributing factor. Only repeated monitoring over number of years will show the trends in numbers. Anecdotally, Invercauld Estate highlighted that a run of good weather tended to exacerbate the problem as it leads to repeated visits by problem groups. Twenty four (24) was the highest number of tents recorded on the 25<sup>th</sup> July at Clunieside.
10. Litter is still a key concern for both Estates and can range from beer cans right up to abandoned tents. Invercauld Estate calculated that around 1.5 tonnes of litter had to be removed from Clunieside. Both Estates will continue to pick up litter as well as ask people to clean up after themselves.
11. In 2011 the CNPA will continue to support the Estates in tackling the issues i.e. promoting SOAC, improve support and liaison arrangements with the local police and collate the monitoring data.

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