



Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum

Held online on Wednesday 13th September 2023

Present: Hilary Quick(HQ)	LOAF
Ben Dolphin (BD)	LOAF/NTS Mar Lodge
Eleanor Mackintosh (EM)	Park Authority Board
John Grierson (JG)	LOAF – Chair
Trevor Thornley (TT)	LOAF
Adam Streeter-Smith (AQSS)	Park Authority
Colin Simpson (CS)	Park Authority
Vicky Hilton (VH)	Park Authority

Apologies: Mark Johnston

Welcome and Minutes of last meeting on 8th February 2023

Discussed

- JG welcomed all to the meeting
- Minutes of the last meeting approved
- VH to develop fire guidance for groups. (Since actioned and circulated to rangers)

Action

1. Active Cairngorms action plan

Discussed

- AQSS gave strategic overview of action plan, relationship to other plans and content. Some content re- Cairngorms2030 around Green Health to be added.
JG on project board, working on detail just now, aim is to circulate draft end this month. Going to Board 24th November. Environmental impact assessment and equalities assessment on plan being carried out.
- Key points AQSS highlighted - Quiet areas for nature (next agenda item):

Action



- Paths & trails section. Core path plan review, monitoring, people centric. Will be some future discussion / update on related items for LOAF group.
- Managing for visitors work - Colin will update.
- Opened for questions Active Cairngorms - no feedback from LOAF members.
- Colin updated on the Managing for Visitors discussion at board last week.
 - Mostly around fires and potential to consult regarding byelaws. Board had no strong preference either for or against a byelaw, more information required. Likely to be a very open consultation around fires, not specifically recommending byelaws.
 - May be implications for Active Cairngorms regarding enforcement / ranger role etc
- BD raised point regarding leaflets (fire one useful) and signage / SOAC (the need to be consistent with Code but flexible).
- Next steps - final draft end month, circulate to loaf members for comment.

AQSS

2. Quiet areas for Nature

Discussed

- AQSS- Key point - not just Capercaillie, reference to Loch Kinnord golden eye breeding impacted by recreation that LOAF been involved in agreeing voluntary management agreements.
- NPPP - action anyway to reduce disturbance but brought forward by Caper work. but would have been done anyway
- Initially work will focus on Caper, but ultimately be more wide ranging. eg Dotterel at Cairngorm Mountain, mountain bike damage on plateau etc.
- Will support national biodiversity plan - focus halting decline sensitive species.
- Will largely be voluntary - can monitor, if catastrophic failure, can collectively take more action (last resort, ideally avoid).

Action



- Will be based on spatial maps (not yet done), AQSS showed mocked up example of small loch and associated woodland. NB maps will be a management tool - will not be a published set of maps for public to see. Will be to guide management activity and support decision making eg more ranger patrols or no large scale event permissions. Not about excluding people from areas or reducing visitor numbers.
- Aim - draft maps to take to board meeting in November.

EM left the meeting (connection issues)

- Short discussion - mainly around monitoring timescales, what success looks like, evidence needed to justify quiet area.
- LOAF members confirmed support for development of quiet areas.

3. Caper dog season

Discussed

- VH gave a quick update on the paper
- JG queried beginning of season being earlier
- LOAF members confirmed support for extending dog on leads sign to 31st Aug.

Action

4. Update paper

Discussed

- a) *Speyside Way*: New path from bridge to Loch Insh in Kincaig, works due to start shortly to remove crash barrier to allow official opening of path and new section of SW.
- b) *Braemar to Keiloch path*: Raised path via gabion baskets. Eventually hoped this will form part of Deeside way extension. Impt for Braemar community network.
- c) *Community Path leaflets*: Might come back to LOAF with regard to advice for new maps and accessibility.
- *Dog friendly Cairngorms* - new intern Wendy Mitchell in post.

Action



AOCB

Discussed

- AQSS - 8-10 Nov National Parks UK access officers meeting to be held in the Cairngorms this year - invite for couple of members to join on any site visits / dinner. AQSS will email around when have further details.
- AQSS - Dalwhinnie railway crossing. Park Authority and Highland Council meeting with Scotways soon. Reassurance to LOAF work progressing and ongoing.
- BD - Noted appreciation of Police Scotland patrolling on Deeside. Review coming up, suspicion might not get again as was quieter period when out. CS also noted membership of PS on Managing for Visitors group and constructive input there too.
- AQSS - Quick ski touring update. Access team investigated legal position of ski tourers using downhill pisted slopes. Mainly issues at Glenshee.

Action

AQSS

Date of next meeting

January/February 2024

Meeting closed 20:00