

Promoting recreational opportunities responsibly within the Cairngorms National Park

1. We all want people to enjoy the Cairngorms National Park by getting out and about. The provision of information to promote activities in particular areas can really help people do that. There have never been more ways in which to draw such information to the attention of potential visitors – for example, through books, magazines, photos, leaflets, activity-specific maps, websites and blogs.
2. A number of issues have come to light over the last few years which give some cause for concern:
 - Promotion of suggested routes for bikes on paths which may be unsustainable or where it would not be possible to comply with Scottish Outdoor Access Code;
 - Promotion of recreation opportunities in areas or sites that are important for species which are sensitive to disturbance;
 - Promotion of activities with lack of information about how to behave responsibly;
 - Potential for dissatisfied visitors if they have been pointed towards places where they have inadvertently caused a problem;
 - Land managers are sometimes unaware of recreation opportunities promoted on their ground and the first indication of such promotion may only occur when a problem arises on the ground; and
 - Lack of clarity about what to do if things go wrong – for visitors, for land managers or for the providers of information.
3. A combination of circumstances in the National Park means that it is especially important that people promote such activities in a way that is responsible:
 - everyone has access rights which mean that they can visit almost all of the Park as long as they do so responsibly;
 - new channels of communication are now easily available; and
 - significant areas of the Park are environmentally sensitive .

Draft policy for inclusion in the Outdoor Access Strategy

4. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code defines how to manage and exercise access rights responsibly but does not cover this particular issue so we have developed this policy for the Cairngorms National Park to set out what is expected in terms of best practice.

Outdoor Access Strategy Policy X: Responsible Promotion of recreation opportunities

It is important that anyone providing information about recreation opportunities in the Park should do so responsibly as set out below.

If you are providing information you should:

- Consider carefully whether promotion of the recreation opportunity will potentially cause environmental damage, problems for land managers or other users;
- Make contact the land manager (or their representative groups) if you are in any doubt about the above point – many land managers will welcome such contact as a matter of courtesy;
- Promote responsible behavior as described in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (<http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com>), drawing particular attention to any issues likely to be faced in the area or route you are promoting;
- If you are using paths and tracks, accurately describe the types of surface likely to be encountered and other users who are likely to be on these routes;
- Provide a contact point and invite feedback about the information provided;
- Respond constructively to any feedback received;
- Contact the National Park Authority if you require further assistance.

If you are concerned about information provided by others you should:

- Make direct contact with the source of the information, expressing your concerns and, if appropriate, suggesting reasonable changes;
- Contact the National Park Authority if you require further assistance.

The Cairngorms National Park Authority encourages responsible enjoyment of the outdoors and will:

- Promote best practice in promotion of recreation opportunities;
- Investigate complaints from recreational users or land managers and seek to reach a satisfactory outcome, taking advice from the Local Outdoor Access Forum if necessary.
- Assist information providers by providing contact details for land managers and offering general advice;
- Placing conditions on anyone receiving grant aid or wishing to use the National Park Brand that they follow this best practice guidance.

Cairngorms National Park Authority

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