
CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

Title: Scottish Outdoor Access Code Promotion – the dogs campaign

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Purpose: To inform the Forum of a CNPA initiative to promote responsible dog ownership and dog management in the National Park, in line with the duty of the CNPA to publicise the Scottish Outdoor Access Code

Background:

1. The CNPA has decided to focus its attention on the issue of responsible dog ownership and dog walking in the countryside. This has been precipitated by several factors:
 - a) The Park Authority has a duty to publicise the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and recognises the need for a more focused and targeted approach based on specific topics of interest
 - b) Responsible dog walking has been one of the primary targets of the national SNH led campaign
 - c) General concerns expressed by land owners and conservationists and the public focused on three main areas: dog waste; farming and stock issues and natural heritage issues e.g. ground nesting birds and disturbance
 - d) Support from the Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum for reinforcement of the dogs' message (through the Participatory Video Project)
2. The aim of the project is to run a publicity and events campaign to raise awareness amongst the general public about responsible dog walking and management and influence people's behaviour to ensure greater compliance with the Code. We hope to piggyback on other people's events in the summer calendar (see (c) below) to ensure access to larger audiences, and share resources/costs etc.
3. The campaign will be based around key messages about dogs that we want to promote within the CNP e.g. pick up after your dog; what close and proper control means; sensitive times of year (spring and early summer) and sites (caper woods, grouse leks and the upland plateau).
4. The key outputs of the project will be:
 - a) A media campaign utilising TV, radio and press, to convey the CNPA responsible dog ownership messages. Programmes such as Landward and Out of Doors and a 'celebrity' will be approached to help launch the campaign

- b) The development, branding and distribution of new and existing resources e.g. posters, dog poo bags, Poopods and life-sized dog models (like the “ambient” sheep) for ranger bases, Visitor Centres and events
 - c) Setting up opportunities to meet with the public and promote the messages through fun and educational activities at events – for example, piggybacking on specific events such as Farmers Market, Junior Games, local Gatherings and Games; Sheep Dog trials; and other specialist events e.g. porridge making championships!
 - d) The involvement of each Park funded Ranger service in contributing to the above events and opportunities
 - e) Promotion of the Green Dog Walkers scheme amongst local residents and regular users at habitual dog walking areas
 - f) Building on the successful February 2009 event, organising and delivering one (or more) LBBT “Dogs and the Code” courses for the general public on Deeside (and Strathspey)
5. The campaign will be a key piece of work for the temporary Outdoor Access Officer. It is envisaged that the press campaign and events will have a timeline linked closely to seasonal considerations – for example late winter/early spring for lambing and livestock messages; early to mid spring for woodland ground nesting birds and late spring for upland issues. It is likely that the main part of the campaign will be completed early next summer, to allow a focus on further promotional work directed at responsible camping over the summer period 2010.

The Forum is invited to comment on the outline project and suggest opportunities for publicity and events.

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