
CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

- Title:** Upland Path Audit
- Prepared by:** Bob Grant, Senior Outdoor Access Officer
- Purpose:** To advise the Forum of the proposed work to assess and prioritise upland path repair.
- Advice sought:** That the Forum notes the proposals and considers Forum representation at the workshop.

Background

1. There are 7 Priorities for Action within the National Park Plan, one of which is Providing High Quality Opportunities for Outdoor Access. To achieve this, 6 outcomes have been identified that require to be achieved by 2012. These are as follows:

Outdoor Access Outcomes for 2012	
1	A wider range of people will have the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors.
2	Land managers and those enjoying the outdoors will have a better understanding of their respective rights and responsibilities which will positively influence behaviour and enable all to enjoy the special qualities of the National Park.
3	There will be a more extensive, high quality, well maintained and clearly promoted path network so that everyone can enjoy the outdoors and move around the Park in a way that minimises reliance on motor vehicles.
4	There will be greater involvement of communities, land managers and visitors in the management and maintenance of the paths.
5	There will be more effective connections between public transport and places with outdoor access opportunities.
6	There will be locally based healthy walking groups throughout the National Park and active promotion of outdoor activity by health professionals in order to contribute positively to the physical, mental and social health of residents and visitors.

2. One of the actions that will enable these outcomes to be achieved is to *“Complete a Park wide survey of upland paths and popular setting off points, using both field survey and stakeholder input, to develop a targeted repair and maintenance programme”*. This is expanded upon within the Outdoor Access Strategy which confirms that *“Investment in upland path repair and maintenance will be prioritised on the basis of periodic Park-wide surveys, drawing on both field survey and stakeholder input”*

3. To take this work forward the Upper Deeside Access Trust has been asked to:-
 - a. Develop an initial list of promoted upland paths within the Cairngorms National Park. Where available, data will be included on known levels of use, path condition and existing maintenance regimes;
 - b. Organise and run a workshop which will present the information gathered to an audience of key stakeholders. The audience will include relevant land managers, recreational bodies, representatives of the Local Outdoor Access Forum, public bodies and the Upland Path Advisory Group. The workshop will seek to agree a prioritised list of paths that require early intervention and consider the costs and potential solutions to ensure the path resource is managed in an acceptable condition;
 - c. A report will be prepared highlighting the outputs from the preceding two tasks. The report will form a key part of the business plan of the access trust.

The Workshop

4. It is envisaged that the preparatory work (first bullet point above) will be completed in the next few months and the workshop would be held in January or February 2008. The results from the survey will be presented to the workshop and advice from the workshop will help shape the future work on upland paths within the Cairngorms National Park. It is therefore important that the workshop audience has a sound knowledge of the relevant issues, and preferably, a reasonable knowledge of upland paths within the Cairngorms.
5. Members of the Forum are asked to consider who they would wish to nominate to attend the workshop.

Next Steps

6. It is envisaged that an update of the workshop will be presented to the Forum on 26 February 2008 and a copy of the final report will be forwarded to all Forum members when complete.

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