
CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

Title: Organised outdoor access events in the Park

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Purpose

This paper highlights progress, both within the National Park and nationally, towards the development of effective guidance for land managers and event organisers.

Recommendations

The Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum is asked to note progress with the requirement for detailed guidance for both land managers and event organisers and to comment on the proposals for the further development of the guidance.

Background

1. Outdoor access events, when organised and run efficiently, provide the opportunity for participants to enjoy the special qualities of the National Park and can provide significant benefits to the local economy. The Cairngorms National Park is a popular venue for staging outdoor access events. These can range from adventurous triathlons to small scale sponsored walks. The number of such events appears to be escalating and there is a tendency for such events to be focussed in the Glenmore corridor through to the tops of the Northern Cairngorms.
2. During the development and consultation on the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Strategy – Enjoying the Cairngorms, a number of related issues came to the fore.
 - The Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC) (paragraphs 3.60 and 3.61) provides good practice advice for event organisers. It is framed to ensure that negative impacts on land management, the environment and safety are managed effectively. The guidance is however, open to interpretation and more detailed supporting guidance is required.
 - The National Access Forum has also recognised this deficiency and a sub group of the National Access Forum has been charged with taking this forward;
 - There is a wealth of experience in managing and running events and a recent workshop hosted by the National Trust for Scotland in Glencoe highlighted a range of pertinent issues that need to be addressed through more detailed guidance. (Simon Blackett attended the workshop and his report of that meeting is shown in Annex 1);
 - There is a varied approach to the co-ordination of events. This results in some land units having a significant number of events planned over their ground with organisers having no knowledge of other proposed events;

- There is a concentration of events based in and around the Aviemore area with very few taking part in other areas of the National Park.
3. To address these issues the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Strategy highlights the need for more detailed guidance to complement the SOAC. The policy on Outdoor Access Events is shown in Annex 2.

Future Developments

4. The need for better guidance is compelling and the checklist of issues that were identified by the National Access Forum is equally pertinent to the Cairngorms National Park. These are:

Liaison between organisers and land managers

- Need to ensure that organisers allow adequate lead-in time when consulting land managers and other interests, with a timescale proportionate to the size of the event.
- Need to provide more convenient and up to date contact information to allow event organisers to identify land managers responsible for particular areas.
- Need to ensure liaison with all land management interests where certain activities, such as angling or stalking, are under the control of different individuals or bodies.
- Need to clarify the threshold above which *permission*, as opposed to *liaison*, is required – as indicated in para. 3.60.
- Need to clarify who should advise on potential impacts on other recreational users or the environment and, where appropriate, grant permission with respect to these impacts.
- Where the prerogative in granting permission rests with the land manager, need to clarify the terms on which this takes place – in particular the question of payment.

Assessing impacts

- Need to clarify how potential impacts should be evaluated and thresholds of acceptability – particularly with regard to recreation and conservation impacts.
 - Need to clarify relationship between assessments of environmental impacts under para. 3.60 and existing statutory processes under the Habitats Regulations and Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act.
5. The sub group of the National Access Forum that has been charged with taking this forward has made some initial progress by meeting with event organisers but, due to competing workload pressures, is currently looking for an organisation to take a lead on this work. The Cairngorms National Park Authority has been asked to consider taking on this lead role.
6. It is envisaged that the work of this sub group would be completed in a relatively short period of time with final advice being presented to the National Access Forum in the late autumn. In developing guidance that is relevant at a national level, there is the

opportunity to use the issues within the Cairngorms National Park to ensure the Park-wide relevance of the guidance. As a first stage in the process, a workshop bringing together all the interested parties, both locally and nationally, may prove to be an effective means of initial engagement.

7. The Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum is asked to note how the Cairngorms National Park specific guidance will be taken forward and to comment on these proposals.

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Annex 1

LARGE SCALE OUTDOOR EVENTS

Meeting hosted by NTS at Glencoe 14th February 2007

Examples were given of large scale outdoor events, which included T in the Park, the STORR light show, Caledonia Challenge, orienteering events. In CNPA area events would include Lairig Ghru sponsored walk, orienteering, concerts and various sponsored walks/runs.

The following issues were raised:

- Benefit to the local economy of hosting events
- Donations to charity should stay locally if possible and certainly the spend on events should be distributed as locally as possible
- Certain honey pot areas e.g. Ben Nevis and Lairig Ghru are very popular for these events and need priority booking system/quota?
- Possible to apply for exemption under Section 11 but this route should be avoided if at all possible
- Important for organisers to consult the local access authority and the appropriate land managers as early as possible
- The event should respect other users, respect the environment and participants should take responsibility for their own actions
- Access rights do not permit provision of services etc e.g. car parks, marquees etc and permission should be obtained for these
- Important to respect reasonable ongoing land management activities e.g. stalking, forestry or farming etc
- Local access authority can assist organisers to identify land holdings
- There is a need for regular liaison between all interested land managers to share experiences and best practice
- Need to clarify the threshold for permission rather than pure liaison
- Not clear who should advise/grant consent if there is potential impact on the environment or other users. Evaluation of impact after event?
- It might be helpful to suggest indicative terms for land managers consent which could include payment for information/services, particularly for car parking or lengthy negotiations with Estate personnel
- “Who owns Scotland?” was considered the best available data base of land holdings. Within CNPA presumably the boundaries are largely known?

Advice was given regarding the insurance element of events:

- Event organisers should consider cancellation/abandonment/damage/liability insurance
- Ensure adequate insurance for contractors and that the appropriate cover is available which matches the host land holding. Food poisoning from 200 burgers could come to £5,000,000 and the burger bar operator may only have cover for £1,000,000
- Important for all parties, including host land holding, to notify own insurers of activities taking place

J S Blckett
Invercauld Estate
14.2.07

Annex 2

OAS Policy 7: Organised Outdoor Access Events

The National Park provides an excellent location for organised outdoor access events, recognising that the area offers unrivalled opportunities for participants to enjoy the special qualities of the National Park. The Park Authority can facilitate meetings between the interested parties and, in conjunction with partners, will develop and keep up to date specific guidelines for outdoor access event organisers and land managers, complementing the national guidance already available in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, and which will aim to:

- guide events away from the most environmentally sensitive sites and other areas which suffer from excessive pressure;
- minimise conflict regarding environmental and land management sensitivities by planning events on robust sites (those that are able to sustain the impacts of organised events) and at suitable times of the year;
- encourage the use of environmental impact studies to help assess the impacts of events on the environment in order to guide future decision making;
- minimise conflicts with other recreational users and their enjoyment of the National Park's special qualities;
- promote early dialogue between event organisers, land managers and all other interested parties so that appropriate mitigation measures can be adopted; and
- encourage participants in events to behave responsibly and to use the events to actively promote the Scottish Outdoor Access Code;