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**CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM**

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**Title:** Engagement with Land Managers

**Prepared by:** Fran Potheary, Outdoor Access Officer

**Purpose**

To outline to the Forum the steps that have been taken to engage with land managers over a range of issues from assisting with resolving access issues to educational initiatives.

**Recommendations**

The Forum is asked to note the work undertaken and the main areas of work anticipated over the next few months. Questions, comments and suggestions are all welcome.

**Engaging with Land Managers**

**Outdoor Access Issues**

1. In a paper to the Board in July 2005 it was noted that the Park Authority has an important role to play in the resolution of outdoor access issues concerning repeated irresponsible behaviour that may be brought to the Authority's attention by land managers. It was noted that the Authority does not have any powers under the Act to take action against individual access takers, although it can use powers under Section 11 and 12 to limit access rights. In practice the action taken to resolve the sort of outdoor access issues raised by land managers varies considerably depending on the specific context of the situation and an appropriate combination of the following approaches is used:
  - a) Investigating the issues by talking to stakeholders, carrying out site visits or by undertaking further research;
  - b) Bringing conflicting interested parties together;
  - c) Drawing upon the expertise and powers of other agencies, authorities and governing bodies;
  - d) Deploying of ranger services;
  - e) Involving the Local Outdoor Access Forum in access issues of strategic importance or on matters of principle;
  - f) Promoting the development of appropriate information and infrastructure for visitors;
  - g) Promoting changes to vehicle management arrangements;
  - h) Involving users, land managers and communities in the development and review of the core paths plan;
  - i) Using management solutions such as byelaws and exemption orders where appropriate

**Cases brought by land managers to date**

2. Of all outdoor access related cases brought to the CNPA to date, 17 have emanated from land managers. The issues raised are wide-ranging and involve the following:
  - a) Requesting clarification of access rights – what's 'in' and what's 'out' of rights
  - b) Requesting information and interpretation of the Code on what constitutes (ir)responsible behaviour
  - c) Advice over specific signage for managing access, maintaining privacy
  - d) Advice over Section 11 orders
  - e) Advice and assistance with managing different types of recreational use
  - f) Advice over criminal activities and issues covered by other legislation

### **Reporting of access issues by land managers**

3. At a national level land manager's representative bodies have indicated that they believe there is an under-recording of issues. The reasons given are twofold. The first is that many issues happen over the weekend or in the evening when there are no access officers working to whom they can report the problem. The second is a reluctance to engage with access officers as they view them as being partial in dealing with such cases. A proposal has been put to the National Access Forum that a national helpline should be set up to make reporting easier. (The example of the "dumb dumpers" helpline has been suggested as a useful model to follow.) The National Access Forum has agreed to explore the advantages and disadvantages of this through a sub group.
4. To try and encourage full reporting of access issues and to break down the perception of partiality, greater publicity will be given to the on-line reporting form that exists on the Park Authority's website. This will feature in the Land Managers' leaflet (see below).

### **Land Based Business Training**

5. CNPA have run a variety of courses under the auspices of the Land Based Business Training Project. These have included Communication and the Code; Taking Strides with Access and Signage for Land Managers. Each course was held in two locations in the east and the west of the Park and was run co-jointly between access staff and external trainers.

### **Golf Course Managers Workshop**

6. The outdoor access staff also organised a golf course managers' workshop held on 6 December 2006 in Nethybridge. This was attended by 4 golf courses in the Park and there has been follow up work on the ground with Spey Valley Golf Course to assist with signage.

### **Spey Users Group Meeting**

7. CNPA has taken on the responsibility for organising, chairing and administering the Spey Users Group meeting which brings together paddling and angling interests on the Spey to an annual meeting. The last meeting was held at the end of October 2006 and was attended by over 40 people – a note of the meeting was circulated to all attendees and other interested parties.

### **Standardised land management signage**

8. Earlier this year, R. Ching and Son were commissioned to produce 500 of the standardised temporary land management signs. The signage templates cover a variety of different types of land management activities including shooting, lambing, young livestock, woodland and land management operations, working farmyard and farm traffic. There are also standardised sign templates for fire risk, wildlife breeding sites and field margins. These signs are available for use by land managers in conjunction with advice from the access staff as to their appropriate placement and deployment.

### **Land Management Leaflet**

9. This project was forestalled last year in light of other information coming forward from land management bodies e.g. the NFUS leaflet “Public Access to Farmland”; the SRPBA guidance on managing land for access; and staff priorities being directed towards other key access duties. However it is proposed to complete by the end of the second quarter of next year.

### **Land Management Contracts**

10. To date we have been contacted by nine land managers regarding Option 15 “Improving Public Access” of the Land Management Contract Menu. All have received telephone advice and five have been visited by a member of the outdoor access staff, and backed up by further written advice.

### **Liaison with land-manager governing bodies**

11. Meetings have been held between the access officers of the SPBA and NFUS to discuss their access remit and that of the National Park Authority staff. Information about the total number of land management contracts under Option 15 in the Park is still extremely sketchy but as an example in the Highland area of the Park it appears as if 37 contracts relate to public access. Clearly we are being contacted by a very small proportion of land managers

### **Core Path planning engagement**

12. Two meetings with land managing interests were held prior to a wider scale initial engagement with the public. The purpose was to inform land managers of the process and how they could be involved. The second round of public consultations will commence in April and early contact will be made with land managers where proposed core paths have been identified over their land.

**Fran Potheary**  
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[franpotheary@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:franpotheary@cairngorms.co.uk)