

Paths for the Park



Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan Newsletter

Issue 1 - September 2007



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Welcome to the first issue of 'Paths for the Park', a newsletter to keep you up to date with core paths planning in the Cairngorms National Park. Your involvement so far has been vital and we want to let you know how we are developing the Draft Core Paths Plan.

The Story so far

Back in September, October and November 2006 the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) spoke to a wide range of people across the Park and beyond about the paths that are important to them and why. This information was then used to draw up an Interim Draft Core Paths Plan. We didn't expect to get it right first time so throughout April, May and June 2007 we asked people to tell us what they thought of it - and over 550 of you did! A full report on the consultation summarising what was said can be found on our website.

We have now logged and analysed all of the comments that were made on the Plan and identified the big issues that need to be resolved for the next draft. The Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access



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Forum (an independent forum made up of 24 individuals representing land managers, communities, recreational users and public agencies) have been helping us by providing advice and guidance on how best to tackle these issues.

So what happens next?

We are making changes to the way in which we select the core paths network as a result of what you said in the consultation. We will also be looking at the maps and making changes to them based on the information you provided and also checking out many of the paths on the ground.

The Draft Core Paths Plan will be submitted to Scottish Ministers in February 2008. We must then carry out a formal consultation on the Draft Plan to see if there are any objections to it.



Keeping up to date

We will be posting proposed changes to the core paths plan on our website over the coming months. Keep up to date by contacting us or logging on to:

www.cairngorms.co.uk/access/corepaths

Contact us

Email: corepathsplan@cairngorms.co.uk

Telephone: 01479 873535

Or write to: Cairngorms National Park Authority,
14 The Square, Grantown-on-Spey,
Morayshire, PH26 3HG

Please read on to find out more...



Uchragas Fhac Nàisanta & Bliadhna Blàidh

The six big issues identified during the consultation period are explained below along with the advice that the Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum (LOAF) has given to the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA). This advice will be helpful in shaping the Draft Core Paths Plan.

The River Spey and the River Dee

During the consultation there was lots of support for the proposal to include the River Spey in the core paths network. Although we did not propose to make the River Dee a core path, lots of you contacted us asking to do so. There was, however, a great deal of concern about the potential impacts that designating rivers may have on angling interests and the environment. The CNPA has been advised by the LOAF that the Spey and the Dee should be considered as core paths to ensure that the network provides for a range of activities. They also advised that the rivers should only be included in the network after careful assessment of the potential impacts that this may have. They noted that, if well managed, core path status may help to improve the current situation on the rivers through improved information and guidance for all river users about how to act with care, respect and responsibility.



Linking across borders



Making sure that core paths network in the Cairngorms links up with those in other areas is very important. The CNPA are working with the LOAF and neighbouring local authorities to make sure that this happens.

Quiet Roads and Pavements

The Interim Draft Core Paths Plan did not propose any roads or pavements as core paths. The LOAF advised the CNPA, however, that there is a need to include some roads and pavements in the network to ensure that the network links together. Any roads that are proposed as core paths should be assessed as to how suitable they are for use by pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders etc. and where a suitable off-road alternative exists roads should not be proposed for inclusion in the network.

Promoted Routes & Rights of Way

The Interim Draft Core Paths Plan proposed the inclusion of all existing low-ground promoted routes in the core paths network and during the consultation some people asked that all existing rights of way be designated as core paths. The LOAF has advised the CNPA that such routes should only be proposed as core paths if they meet the aims and objectives of the Core Paths Plan.

Speyside Way

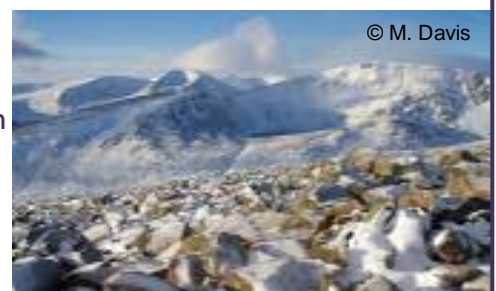
The Interim Draft Core Paths Plan did not propose the Speyside Way as a core path. This was because the route is already protected and funded by its status as a formal Long Distance Route. The Cairngorms LOAF has advised the CNPA, however, that the core paths network is not sufficient without it and that the Speyside Way should be proposed as part of the core paths network in the draft Core Paths Plan.



Paths in upland areas

Back in 2006 when we first asked people to get involved in the core paths planning process many of you were concerned that there should not be increased promotion, signage and way-marking of routes in remote and mountainous areas. As such, we did not propose any core paths in these areas.

During the consultation on the Interim Draft Core Paths Plan, however, many people felt that some upland routes should be included in the network. The LOAF advised the CNPA that paths up mountains should generally not be included in the network but that some paths in upland areas (such as the Lairig Ghru, the Tilt, Jock's Road etc.) should be considered. It was also noted that paths up some popular smaller hills close to communities such as Morrone and Meall a' Bhuachaille should also be considered.



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If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised here please contact us, see the front page of this newsletter for details.