

# MOUNTAIN BIKING AND ENDURO ACTIVITY

## Purpose

1. To consider and decide -
  - a) if it is required to establish a NAF sub-group to address issues relating to MTB facilities and activity in Scotland, and
  - b) if so, the outline terms of reference which may be appropriate for the sub-group.

## Background

3. A discussion paper on this topic was considered at the Forum's January meeting, and the conclusion was that there was clearly a package of issues that are in need of some discussion and clarification, which may be suitable for a sub-group to look at in greater detail. The recommended first step was to arrange a site visit to see some evidence on the ground, and to use that as a basis for seeing if a sub-group would be appropriate.
4. FCS subsequently arranged a site visit for a range of interested members to view and discuss the mountain bike issues in more detail. This was held on 8 March 2017 at Glentress Forest mountain-biking centre, to see examples of practical usage and management for mountain biking.
5. The note of this site visit is attached.

## Discussion

6. The site visit viewed a range of installations within the context of two specifically-developed centres for mountain biking, some provided officially by the centre management, and others which have developed through usage or more unofficial construction. Discussion showed that there are various existing organisations, initiatives and approaches already active in this topic area, but also some developing factors such as online networking and the creation of infrastructure without discussion with land managers that are creating challenges. Suggestions focussed particularly on the importance of communication in raising awareness and co-ordination among the various interested groups.

**A) For decision: whether a Sub-group of the National Access Forum would be required and welcome in adding to the co-ordination, advice and guidance on MTB activity?**

**If (A) approved -**

## Terms of reference

7. Potential outline terms of reference are suggested as follows –
  - a) Membership of the sub-group would be open to Full and Corresponding Member organisations of the National Access Forum, who may send one member each to the sub-group.
  - b) The sub-group will at its first meeting select a chair-person
  - c) The sub-group will at its first meeting decide whether any further organisations or interests be invited to be represented on the sub-group.

- d) The sub-group will initially clarify the nature of the issues that needs to be addressed, the key audiences, and the topic areas which are to be addressed, and report back to the Forum on these initial findings.
- e) These may or may not include such topics as:
- Assisting existing interests such as DMBinS in approaches such as its website, the 'Do the Ride Thing' leaflet, and similar existing guidance,
  - Examine whether there may be guidance from other forms of recreation (eg. skiing, orienteering etc), and from other types of competitive events, which could be positively applicable,
  - Examine the evidence and need for guidance on issues such as fly constructional activity, and legal liabilities
  - Examine experience and approaches from other areas of Scotland and beyond in fostering communications with formal, informal and online networks of users, trail developers, and facility managers,
  - Examine the particular effects for MTB, positive and negative, of digital apps such as Strava and other equivalents,
  - Develop advice and guidance which may best assist relevant audiences, eg. facility managers, land managers, user groups.

**B) For decision: Are these (or any other) terms of reference and briefing points to be provided by the Forum for the Sub-group on Mountain Biking and Enduro Activity?**

Paper for National Access Forum meeting, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2017

## Annex - Note of Site Visit - Wednesday 8th March 2017

### Site Study Visit to Glentress on Mountain Biking Trails centre / Enduro topics -

#### Attendees -

David Henderson Howat -	NAF Convenor
Rob Garner	NAF Sec
Karen Ramoo	Scottish Land and Estates
Angus Duncan	Falkirk Council
Alan Macpherson SNH	SNH
Simon Pilpel	South Lanarkshire Council
Graeme Mclean	Scottish Cycling
David Gould	
Gareth Heavisides	Scottish Government
Craig Burn	Scottish Cycling
Peter Crane	Cairngorms National Park
Alan Stevenson	Forest Enterprise Scotland
Kevin Lafferty	Forestry Commission Scotland
Sallie Bailey	FCS District
Hugh McKay	FCS District ;
Paul Timms	CTC
Roger Scrutton	Orienteering Scotland
David Clyne	Cairngorms NPA
Lee Cousins	Downhill Mountain-Biking in Scotland
Mike Brady	South Lanarkshire Ranger
Bryan McGrath	Scottish Borders Council

Itinerary – Meet at Glentress Peel Tower, near Peebles

Introduction from MTB centre and Forest District staff, and from NAF Secretary

**Morning** visits to see –

a) **FCS constructed MTB route** : engineered with bends, banked berms etc: discuss FCS construction, inspection regime and maintenance, signage and trail maps; use of ski-based colour system for grading the various runs provided (black / red / green / blue / orange etc) .

b) **Enduro event trail**: part of event route with timed competition - relatively less engineered, more natural (with tree roots etc); not mapped on the official centre route trails map; use occurs through digital tracking like Strava/ word of mouth. Discussion on the development of Enduro events, the nature of organised races, subsequent post-event participation.

**Afternoon** visits to see -

c) **Innerleithan Downhill centre** : downhill competitive centre, minibus uplift; use includes night riding; trail centre management plan in preparation, for consultation summer 2017

d) **Fly construction of unofficial route lines**; proliferation of rudimentary single-track route lines, many involving rough construction works, to relatively low engineering standards.

Return to Peel Tower; brief discussion.

**Discussion** - The discussion was mainly about the levels of contact and forms of communication that may be available. Scottish Cycling explained that the Downhill Mountain-Biking in Scotland (DMBinS) was largely formed to foster those kinds of contacts between the land managers and the informal groups of mountain bikers behind the fly constructions, and some development groups make contact for instance to see if any funding is available. In the Cairngorms, where there are some similar issues, the various bike shops have proved a very useful means of making contact and providing information, and of putting groups in contact with relevant land managers, because it was often a case of groups being simply unaware of some of the issues. It was suggested it is useful to target key local individuals, and to use local consultation activity to form links and increase understanding. The local consultations planned for 2017 in the Tweed Valley have exactly this aim of making such contacts for mutual awareness. It was suggested that an update of the SNH guide on Occupiers' Liabilities would be useful.

FCS Hand-outs -

- Practice Guide – 'Wild trail & desire line management' - FC (Eng)
- 'A Brief Guide to Occupiers' Legal Liabilities in Scotland' - SNH
- Diagram 'Risk Control Matrix
- Rough Guide to the current Legal System - FCS