

National Access Forum Update – May 2018

Summary of main topics - National Access Forum meeting 16 May 2018

Mountain Biking and Enduro Activity -

There was an update from the NAF sub group which met on the 18 April. Work on the guidance relating to the unauthorised construction of mountain bike trails in Scotland is progressing well and entering the consultation phase. A number of events for key stakeholders (land managers and the MTB community) are planned, the first on 25 June in Aviemore, followed by three regional workshops at Glentress, Birnam and Aberdeenshire in early August. Draft key messages were presented to the Forum for comment. The guidance will be brought to the NAF meeting on 26 September for approval with the final guidance launched at the 'Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland' conference in November. Key messages will also be promoted using digital media and through local campaigns.

Joint NAF/LAF meeting on 16 March-

The Convenor reported from the successful joint NAF/LAF meeting which focused on 'Engaging with Young People to Promote Responsible Access'. A summary note of the meeting captures the positive initiatives highlighted on the day along with a list of potential actionable ideas which were discussed by Forum members. Support was given for greater involvement of young people in the work of NAF and promoting the Code in particular developing key messages that facilitate responsible access. Joint work with Reroute and developing the resources for young people aimed at understanding the Code would be taken forward with further discussion on NAF actions at the September meeting. In addition, it was agreed that, to help engage young people in the work of NAF, Forum members would be welcome to bring younger colleagues (i.e. age under 26) to future NAF meetings.

Communications and Campaigns -

The Forum heard from Anna Marriot about the changes in the SNH communication team following the recent unit restructuring. She invited comments from Forum members on the priorities for National Access Forum communications, including revision of the SOAC Website, SOAC promotion, Heading for the Hills, and Year of Young People. Support was expressed for the on-going seasonal campaigns and Code messages that help people make good choices. Forum members accepted that, for reasons of efficiency, the SOAC website may need to be nested within the SNH website but requested that the SOAC website should also retain its separate user-facing identity, and be easy to access on mobile devices.

Mediation and resolving longer standing access issues –

The Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance (SORA), a newly formed informal group of outdoor recreational bodies outlined their proposals to use mediation as a method for resolving some of the stalled access cases in Scotland. Members were invited to suggest worked examples where mediation has been used successfully or potential case studies for SORA to take forward.

Scottish Countryside Ranger – opportunities and challenges –

A presentation by Bob Reid of Scottish Countryside Rangers Association (SCRA) provided background information from a recent SCRA survey of ranger services. The survey identified that 141 posts had been lost in the sector since 2008, over half of which are local authority posts in urban areas. The loss of seasonal posts is a particular concern affecting job opportunities for young people. This information forms the basis of an on-going petition to the Scottish Parliament where the Petitions Committee is seeking evidence from a number of agencies and NGO's. The challenge going forward is to seek longer term funding to secure

the valuable front line services in connecting people with nature and visitor management that the ranger services provide. Forum members were encouraged to raise awareness of the petition.

Working for Waders –

The Forum heard about a collaborative partnership to halt the decline in breeding waders, one of a number of breeding birds showing population declines in the uplands. SLE are one of the partners raising awareness amongst land managers and helping share good practice. This includes managing the land to reduce habitat fragmentation, and providing reminders for the public to avoid disturbance of ground nesting birds.

Guidance -

SNH's revised 'A brief guide to occupiers' legal liabilities in Scotland in relation to public outdoor access', can be found on the SOAC website at: <https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/Access-management-guidance/visitor-planning>.

Drumlean Estate update -

Drumlean Estate are not appealing against the recent Court of Session decision to dismiss the appeal against the decision of the Sheriff Appeal Court to uphold a complaint by Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNP) over public access provision under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. LLTNP are working with the Estate to prepare a whole Estate management plan where access rights apply. A summary of the decision is available at;

<http://www.scotland-judiciary.org.uk/9/1948/Renyana-Stahl-Anstalt-v-Loch-Lomond-and-The-Trossachs-National-Park-Authority>

Review of National Access Forum Membership –

The Secretary reported on the second phase of the National Access Forum membership review, during which other bodies and other relevant interest groups were invited to confirm whether they wished to have “full” or “corresponding” membership of the Forum. RSPB have requested to become a corresponding member creating a vacancy within this group. Other members will be invited to fill the vacancy. Forum members approved the request from Police Scotland to become a full member. A revised list of Forum members will be presented at the September meeting.

Future NAF meetings –

The next Forum meetings will be on Wednesday **26th September 2018** and the Wednesday **30 January 2019** at Battleby. A provisional date for the joint NAF/LAF meeting is Friday **26 April 2019** (tbc). Suggested topics for the NAF/LAF joint meeting are invited from Local Access Fora.

<p>For more information or comment on any of the above topics, please contact the NAF Secretary – Janice Winning (NAFsec@snh.gov.uk ; 0131 316 2639). Further information can be found on the National Access Forum pages at http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/access-forum/.</p>
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