

**For further information about the
Countryside Recreation Network
or any of the articles contained
within this publication
or
to enquire about advertising in this space**

call 0114 225 4494

or

email: crn@shu.ac.uk

Alternatively visit our website:

www.countrysiderecreation.org.uk

Front page photograph credited to Visit Wales

Countryside Recreation Network
Sheffield Hallam University
Unit 7 Sheffield Science Park
Howard Street
Sheffield
S1 2LX
T: 0114 225 4494
F: 0114 225 4038
E: crn@shu.ac.uk



This issue... 'Activity Tourism'

- Understanding the Outdoor Activity Market • Activity Based Tourism: What does it mean for us? • Watchdog on the Outdoors (AALA)
- The Inter-relationship between Recreation and Tourism in the Yorkshire Dales and Drivers for Change • Active Tourism - The Ingredients for Success
- Activity Tourism - Developing Cycle Tourism in the North York Moors and Coast • Counting People in the Countryside • The PROGRESS Report
- Naturally Active - A New Website for Commercial Recreation in Woodland • News • CRN Events • Publications



Countryside Recreation Network

Countryside Recreation Network (CRN)

CRN is a network which:

- covers the UK and the Republic of Ireland
- gives easy access to information on countryside and related recreation matters
- reaches organisations and individuals in the public, private and voluntary sectors networks thousands of interested people

The Network helps the work of agencies and individuals in three areas:

Research:

to encourage co-operation between members in identifying and promoting the need for research related to countryside recreation, to encourage joint ventures in undertaking research, and to disseminate information about members' recreation programmes.

Liaison:

to promote information exchange relating to countryside recreation, and to foster general debate about relevant trends and issues.

Good Practice:

to share information to develop best practice through training and professional development in provision for and management of countryside recreation.

Chair: Geoff Hughes

Vice-chair: John Watkins, Countryside Council for Wales

For more information, please contact:

Melanie Bull
 Network Manager
 Countryside Recreation Network
 Sheffield Hallam University
 Unit 7
 Sheffield Science Park
 Howard Street
 Sheffield
 S1 2LX

Tel: 0114 225 4494
 Fax: 0114 225 4038
 Email: m.bull@shu.ac.uk

Visit CRN on the Internet! See our home page at:
www.countrysiderecreation.org.uk

Countryside Recreation Editorial Policy

Countryside Recreation is the journal of the Countryside Recreation Network. The purpose of the journal is to act as an exchange for sharing information, ideas and practical solutions that promotes best policy and practice in countryside recreation across the UK and Ireland. Countryside Recreation is free and is published three times a year. We welcome articles and letters from all readers. The editorial policy for the journal is to provide a platform for a fair and honest discussion on issues relating countryside recreation.

Articles will be accepted from anyone from the Network organisations and other organisations and individuals who wish to share their knowledge, research findings, practical experiences or promote policies and strategies in the provision and management of access, recreation, sport and active tourism.

The Journal is not a lobbying or campaigning platform. We will not accept articles that are defamatory and potentially libellous. Rights of reply will be offered when organisations' actions are brought into question.

The Response section is used to enable comments to be made on specific articles. Articles offered for this section may be edited for length.

The journal is managed by the CRN Network Manager and guided by an editorial panel made up of representatives from organisations in the Network. The editorial panel and CRN Network Manager reserve the right to reject articles; and curtail discussion on specific subjects if the panel feel that the issues have been appropriately and satisfactorily dealt with. We will always discuss with authors the reason for rejecting articles.

The CRN Network Manager will commission articles related to the specific themes that are part of each journal. We will also accept articles on a range of subjects for each issue but they must be related to the business of the Network members' remits.

The Autumn/Winter journal will be based on the theme of 'Equality and Diversity' If you would like to submit an article or a news item for consideration by the Editorial Board, please email the document in word format to the Network Manager m.bull@shu.ac.uk.

Please note the following submission deadline dates:

Articles for editorial board consideration to be submitted by 1st September 2006.

Commissioned articles to be submitted by 29th September 2006.

News items to be submitted by 13th October 2006

Chair of Editorial Panel: Jo Burgon, The National Trust



'Countryside Recreation' is provided free by the following organisations to promote good practice:



Contents

CRN Contact Details and Editorial Policy	
Editorial	2
Understanding the Outdoor Activity Market	3
Andrew Keeling, ACK Tourism	
Activity Based Tourism: What does it mean for us?	7
Keith Muir, Forestry Commission Scotland	
The Inter-relationship between Recreation and Tourism in the Yorkshire Dales and Drivers for Change	10
Kathryn Beardmore, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority	
Activity Tourism - Developing Cycle Tourism in the North York Moors and Coast	14
Bill Breakell, North York Moors National Park Authority	
Watchdog on the Outdoors - The Work of the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority	17
Marcus Bailie, The Adventure Activities Licensing Authority	
Active Tourism - The Ingredients for Success	20
John Vaughan, Community Forestry	
Naturally Active - A New Website for Commercial Recreation in Woodland	23
Steve Scott, Forestry Commission	
Counting People in the Countryside	26
Peter Curbishley, Hampshire County Council and Eben Wilson, Main Communications Ltd	
The Progress Report	31
Martin Fitton, The PROGRESS Project and Emma Stevens, Forestry Commission	
Response Section	36
News	37
CRN Events Diary	44
Publications	45

Countryside Recreation goes out to over 2700 individuals working in the field of countryside recreation, tourism and leisure. If you would like to have a flier or advert distributed with the journal, please contact the Network Manager for further details and pricing policy.

Editorial

Steve Webb, Welsh Assembly Government

The main theme for this issue is Activity Tourism, an important and growing element of the UK tourism market - important not only because of the health benefits that it bestows upon participants but because of the significant contribution it makes to local economies.

Six articles examine Activity Tourism covering issues that include market segmentation, regulation and inspection, visitor management, promotion, partnerships and planning. The common thread, hidden to all but the most observant, is that the future prospects for Activity Tourism and active recreation are highly promising but careful planning and prioritisation, involving robust market analysis, innovative facility provision and active community involvement will be essential to deliver sustainable long term growth.

The first article by Andrew Keeling explains why segmentation of the Activities Tourism market (Samplers, Learners, Dabblers and Enthusiasts) can help to inform more targeted and effective marketing campaigns, more relevant information provision and more focussed facility provision. The approach adopted in Wales has wider relevance across the UK.

Keith Muir from Forestry Commission Scotland describes how forest areas have been transformed into dynamic natural environments supporting a diverse range of activity events. Higher numbers of visitors has brought a new set of challenges for forest managers who need to ensure compatibility between different types of activities and commercial providers, provide higher quality facilities for an increasingly demanding visitor and educate the visitor about their environmental responsibilities.

Kathryn Beardmore suggests that one of the more positive outcomes of the foot and mouth crisis was to raise awareness of the economic and social inter-relationships that exist between tourism, agriculture and the environment. In turn, this has stimulated a more integrated and research-led approach to strategy development for tourism and recreation in the Yorkshire Dales National Park, with its delivery being co-ordinated through the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The range of initiatives that have taken place in the North Yorkshire coast and moor area to promote and develop it as a centre of excellence for cycling tourism is outlined by Bill Breakell. A framework strategy supported by local cycling plans and more

specific project based activities has led to improved integrated transport solutions and the stimulation of wider access to participation in cycling tourism.

Whilst the benefits associated with participation in activities are considerable and the risks are small, they do exist – hence the need for the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority. Marcus Bailie explains that its role is to regulate and inspect the operations of activity providers to help ensure the safety of young people taking part in adventurous activities.

I hope that John Vaughan will not mind me calling him an activity 'junkie' as he continues in his search for adventure, inspiration, new experiences and unique memories. His article is written from the point of view of the customer – what he is looking for from his activity holidays, how he researches, plans and books his holidays. What are the challenges facing the intrepid adventurer? What could be better?

Finally, the article by Steve Scott provides more evidence to show that woodlands and forests are now established as a key natural resource for active recreation, supporting rural diversification, economic growth, and the wider public health agenda. The 'naturally active' branded website provides advice to all (woodland owners and users) who are seeking to make more of their woodlands.

A basic conclusion that can be drawn from these articles is that Activity Tourism is of growing importance to the countryside and local communities. Activity Tourism may not be the dominant economic force in any area but it can help to safeguard local environments, provide a stimulus for community involvement and strengthen regional distinctiveness.

STEVE WEBB
Welsh Assembly Government

As a valued reader of *Countryside Recreation*, please find enclosed a readership questionnaire to establish whether our journal and website are meeting your specific needs.

Please complete the questionnaire and either fax back to 0114 225 4038 or alternatively send to Melanie Bull, Network Manager, Countryside Recreation Network, Unit 7, Sheffield Science Park, Howard Street, Sheffield, S1 2LX. The questionnaire is also available to download on our website www.countrysiderecreation.org.uk

Understanding the Outdoor Activity Tourism Market

Andrew Keeling, ACK Tourism



The following paper provides an overview of the approach to understanding the outdoor activity tourism market that has been developed in Wales over the past 5 years to guide the work of the Wales Tourist Board (now Visit Wales) and its regional, local and National Park authority partners in terms of activity tourism marketing, information provision and product development. This approach has evolved through a range of research and consultation exercises that have been undertaken to support the development and implementation of the Wales Tourist Board's series of six activity tourism strategies (covering walking; cycling and mountain biking; horse riding; fishing; sailing and watersports; and adventure sports and activities).

Segmenting the Activity Tourism Market

Market segmentation is a useful tool for understanding how markets break down into different groups of people that can be targeted for marketing, information and product development purposes. On the basis of the research and analyses undertaken for the Wales activity tourism strategies

over the past 5 years, ACK Tourism has identified 4 main market segments that are common to all types of activity tourism, based on people's interest in an outdoor activity (or activities) and the amount of time that they devote to it (or them) during their leisure time and while on holiday:

Samplers

- those that are trying out an outdoor activity for the first time, or that only undertake the activity on a very occasional basis.

Learners

- those that are learning an outdoor activity, or seeking to improve their skills.

Dabblers

- people who occasionally take part in an outdoor activity as part of their leisure time or while on holiday;
- they will have learned how to undertake their chosen activity (where a degree of skill is needed) and will have some knowledge and skill, but will not be regularly undertaking the activity;
- holidays can provide the opportunity to undertake outdoor activities for these people.

Enthusiasts

- people who regularly take part in an outdoor activity (or activities) and are very keen on it;
- they will be experts in activities that require knowledge and skill.

Within each market segment the amount of time that people will spend on an outdoor activity and the level of interest and enthusiasm that they have for it will vary.

This market segmentation applies equally to individuals and groups. Groups can be described as:

- **Sampler groups** - special occasion groups (e.g. stag and hen parties), corporate groups, school groups, friendship groups trying out an activity together.
- **Learner groups** – youth groups, training groups.
- **Dabbler groups** – friendship groups where some or all of the party have experience of an outdoor activity.
- **Enthusiast groups** – activity clubs organising trips and holidays for their members.

The segmentation applies equally to day and holiday visitors. Families are most likely to be Samplers, and possibly Dabblers. All market segments may include disabled people. People with disabilities are thought most likely to be Samplers.

People may well fall into different market segments at different times depending on who they are undertaking an activity with and the activity they are undertaking: an Enthusiast undertaking an activity with his/her children may become more of a Sampler or Dabbler, and an Enthusiast for one activity (e.g. climbing) may become a Sampler for another (e.g. canoeing). People may also move from one segment to another over time e.g. a Sampler may return as a Learner, and a Learner may well progress to become an Enthusiast.

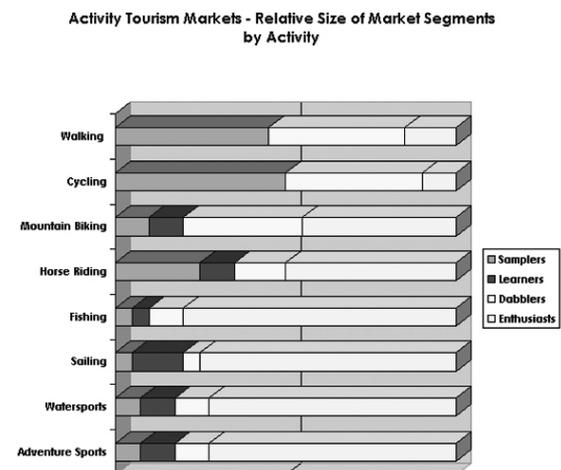
While the four market segments are common to most outdoor activities the available research suggests that the mix of market segments varies by type of activity:

- The walking market has a high percentage of Dabblers and Samplers: walking Enthusiasts are a smaller market segment;
- Dabblers are a key market for cycling;
- Mountain biking has a high percentage of Enthusiasts and Dabblers;
- Anglers are more likely to be Enthusiasts. Game and coarse fishing Enthusiasts may become Samplers for sea fishing;
- The horse riding market appears to be split between Enthusiasts looking for horse riding holidays and day rides with or without their own horse, and Samplers looking to go riding or pony trekking for the day through a riding or pony trekking centre as a holiday or day visit activity. Horse riding Enthusiasts bringing their horses on holiday with them appear to be a very small market segment. There are also small Enthusiast markets for other specialist equestrian activities such as carriage driving and Le Trec.
- Sailing and watersports are dominated by Enthusiasts and Learners: sailing and most watersports

need a degree of skill and knowledge. There appears to be less of a Dabblers market for sailing and watersports, other than possibly for canoeing and maybe dinghy sailing and surfing (which have a lower entry level skill requirement);

- More dangerous adventure sports that require a high level of skill (e.g. climbing, caving, paragliding) attract mainly Enthusiasts. Adventure sports that have a lower entry-level skill requirement (e.g. white water rafting, hill walking, mountain biking) attract a broader mix of Enthusiasts, Dabblers and Samplers.

The diagram below attempts to provide a visual representation of the relative size of market segments by activity. It is not based on accurate data to determine the size of each segment for each activity, however. It is intended purely for illustrative purposes.



Target Market Segments for Public Sector Agencies

The market segments that are most likely to respond to public sector marketing initiatives for outdoor activities and look to public sector agencies for information on outdoor activities are Dabblers and Samplers.

Dabblers may use outdoor activities literature and websites provided by public sector agencies at the pre-visit stage for initial ideas on where to go, and to research, plan and book the outdoor activities that they want to take part in. They may also contact information centres at this stage. They will also use word of mouth, specialist magazines and websites and commercial guidebooks and websites. Dabblers will tend to have planned their outdoor activities in advance, although may also be influenced by information leaflets and guides on outdoor activities (e.g. local walks books) that they pick up or buy once at their destination.

Samplers will not usually plan participation in outdoor activities in advance of a holiday. They can, however, be influenced by information leaflets and guides on outdoor activities once at their destination. Accommodation establishments will be their key source of such information.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITY MARKET SEGMENTS - KEY PRODUCT REQUIREMENTS

Activity	Samplers	Dabblers	Enthusiasts	Learners
Walking	Promoted short walks - 2-3 miles, easy going, on way-marked paths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks leaflets Walks suitable for children Walks accessible by public transport Accessible walks for people with impaired mobility Walks in country and forest parks Short guided walks (for some)	Promoted day and half day walks - 4 -7 miles, relatively easy going <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks books • Walks leaflets Walks suitable for children Walks accessible by public transport Guided walks (for some) Walker-friendly accommodation	Well maintained footpaths Long distance footpaths Guided walks (for some) Walker-friendly accommodation - particularly B & Bs and hostels	
Cycling	Traffic-free cycle paths Cycle hire	Promoted day cycle rides on quiet country lanes - 25-35 miles Packs of day cycle rides around an accommodation base - for centre based cycle breaks Cyclist-friendly accommodation	Promoted cycle touring routes (for some) - most cycle tourists will plan their own routes Cycle carriage on trains and buses Cyclist-friendly accommodation	
Mountain Biking	Purpose-built mountain bike trails suitable for novice riders and families Mountain bike hire	Purpose-built mountain bike trails Guided mountain bike rides Mountain bike hire Cyclist-friendly accommodation	Purpose-built mountain bike trails Purpose-built downhill courses Promoted cross-country mountain biking trails Cyclist-friendly accommodation	Mountain bike guides and instructors
Horse Riding	Accredited riding and pony trekking centres	Promoted horse riding trails Accredited riding centres that offer group rides and hacks	Accredited riding and pony trekking centres	Accredited riding schools and centres
Fishing		Access to rivers, lakes and the sea Sea fishing trips Fishing guides Tackle shops/bait suppliers	Access to rivers, lakes and the sea Charter boats for sea fishing Fishing guides Tackle shops/bait suppliers	Fishing guides
Adventure Sports	Accredited activity centres, operators and instructors	Accredited activity centres, operators and instructors Equipment hire	Access to crags Access to caves and gorges Take off and landing points for paragliding and other airsports Promoted trails for 4 x 4 driving and other motorised sports	Accredited activity centres, operators and instructors
Canoeing	Accredited canoe and watersports centres and operators	Access to rivers, lakes and the sea Accredited canoe centres	Access to rivers, lakes and the sea	Accredited canoe teaching centres and instructors
Sailing	Accredited sailing operators and charter boats	Accredited sailing operators and charter boats	Marinas, harbours, moorings and slipways Chandleries Boat repair	Accredited sailing schools
Other Watersports	Accredited watersports centres	Access to beaches and the sea Beach showers and changing facilities Equipment hire e.g. surf boards, wet suits Accredited watersports centres	Access to beaches and the sea Beach showers and changing facilities Dive charter boats	Accredited watersports centres and instructors

The table provides a summary of some of the key product requirements of each market segment for each type of outdoor activity.

They may also access or respond to information on outdoor activities provided by tourist and countryside information centres and other outlets such as attractions, shops, pubs and cafes. Sampler day visitors may use public sector literature and websites for information on outdoor activities if they provide information on the sort of outdoor activity opportunities they are interested in.

Enthusiasts are unlikely to look to public sector agencies for information on outdoor activities. They will primarily rely on their own knowledge or word of mouth recommendations and information. They may also use specialist sources of information, such as activity specific magazines and websites, governing body websites and commercial guide-books purchased through high street or online retailers. They are unlikely to use literature and websites provided by public sector agencies unless they are suitably targeted at Enthusiasts. They are also unlikely to use tourist or countryside information centres for information on outdoor activities.

There may, however, be a case for public sector agencies to provide information for Enthusiasts:

- Where comprehensive information on an activity is not otherwise available;
- In order to raise the profile and reputation of an area as a destination for particular outdoor activities for which it has clear product strengths;
- In terms of access information that the public sector has specific responsibility to provide e.g. information on Open Access land, access restrictions and codes of conduct.

Information for Enthusiasts must be geared strongly towards their needs and interests for them to see it as a credible source of information.

Learners are likely to access information on accredited activity centres and schools through accreditation bodies or by word of mouth through local leisure centres and facilities (e.g. climbing walls). They may also undertake Internet searches and may make use of outdoor activities information print and websites produced by public sector agencies if they include information on accredited schools and training centres and feature well on Internet search engines.

The Product Requirements of Each Market Segment

It is important to recognise that each market segment has very different requirements in terms of outdoor activity products and experiences and for public sector agencies to be very clear about which market segments they are developing outdoor activity products and facilities for.

Enthusiasts are largely self-sufficient and will plan and organise participation in outdoor activities themselves. Their primary requirement is good access to the countryside and

coast for their chosen activity: access to the countryside via well maintained footpaths and bridleways; access to water for fishing, canoeing, sailing and other watersports; access to crags and caves for climbing and caving. Enthusiasts are also interested in products such as long distance footpaths, cycle touring routes, horse riding trails, purpose-built mountain biking trails and cross country mountain biking routes.

Dabblers will also plan and organise participation in outdoor activities themselves, but will also make use of products produced by public sector agencies such as promoted walks and cycle routes.

Samplers require safe and easy opportunities for outdoor activities such as short walks on well-defined and way marked paths, country and forest parks and traffic-free cycle paths. They will also look to undertake outdoor activities through accredited activity centres such as riding and pony trekking centres and activity centres offering taster sessions for beginners.

Learners will undertake activities through accredited teaching schools and centres.

Conclusion

It is important that public sector investment in outdoor activity tourism marketing, information provision and product development is market-led and based on the recognition that there are different market segments in the outdoor activity tourism market, with differing requirements, interests and motivations. The market segmentation approach developed in Wales provides a useful way of understanding the market and has been used to good effect by the Wales Tourist Board and its partners to implement highly effective outdoor activities marketing campaigns and begin to develop new activity tourism products for specific target market segments. Other destinations may find this approach useful as they develop their own plans and strategies for outdoor activity tourism.

Andrew Keeling is the director of ACK Tourism, an independent tourism consultancy with specialist knowledge and expertise in activity tourism market research and strategy development. He has worked closely with the Wales Tourist Board since 1999 assisting them with the development and implementation of its suite of activity tourism strategies.

All Photographs credited to Visit Wales

Contact Details

Andrew Keeling
 ACK Tourism
 Tel: 01522 789702
 Email: ack.tourism@btinternet.com

Activity Based Tourism: What does it mean for us?

Keith Muir, Forestry Commission Scotland



Tourism is the only industry in Scotland that shows continual growth year on year, with activity tourism, where tourists take part in some form of active pastime, the single largest area of growth in forest-based tourism. Mountainbiking, aerial ropeways, grassboarding, horse-riding, speed-walking, running, dogsledding, fishing and orienteering are only a few of the activities now taking place within the forest environment.

Few of these activities are new. They have been tried and tested, are well-known and have large numbers of participants across the country. So, why have we seen this area expand so much in our forests?

Forests have been part of the modern Scottish landscape since the early 1900s, but for the first 50 years forests were not known as idyllic places to enjoy oneself. However, over the past 20 - 30 years, in tandem with the population generally seeing an increase in employment levels, income and leisure time, forests have been changing into good places for activities. Forest managers have, over the past number of years, also changed their ways, taking into consideration landscaping, species choice and a more open

mind to alternative uses of the timber resource. There are now foresters out there who also enjoy using the forests in their free time and are arguably more in touch with what the public want to do there than anyone else.

The Forestry Commission, in particular, has embraced the fact that forests can be multifunctional and has for many years now tried to increase awareness of the forest environment and what it has to offer. We have been very successful in achieving this particularly with the middle classes who have become richer, with more free time, with private transport and favoured leisure habits to explore the countryside more widely. If you add in the push from the health sector over the past 10 years to get healthier and lead more active lives then perhaps the resulting increase in activity tourism is not really surprising. Crowded gyms, busy roads, hectic work lives have all helped in pushing people towards an area of land that was once not only forbidden but even scary for many people (thank you, Hollywood!).

Galloway Forest Park has been in existence since 1947, a massive expanse of land covering 75,000 hectares in one block. It is still relatively untouched by commercialism and unknown to many people (although we're working on that), with currently only around 800,000 visitors per annum with 150,000 visiting the three visitor centres at Kirroughtree, Glentool and Clatteringshaws.

Even today, Galloway is a powerhouse of production, producing 500,000 tons of timber every year. Mills across

the region were established as a result of the plantings that took place decades ago, but the foresters of yesteryear did not realise then, that they were creating a magnificent backdrop for tourists of the 21st Century.

The Forest Park hosts car rallies, folk concerts, mountain-biking, walkers, teambuilding events, dog-racing and plays host to large numbers of military personnel in training. As the park has evolved it has coped well with the changing face of tourism, but unlike some other areas of Scotland, Galloway is only now considering tourism as a priority due to the quietness of the area and emphasis on production.

There is huge opportunity to take advantage of this growing active market, not, you understand, to make the public forest earn vast sums of money but to empower the businesses around the Forest Park and region to take advantage of the pulling power of the Park. To do that all activities have to be catered for correctly without detrimental effects to one another.

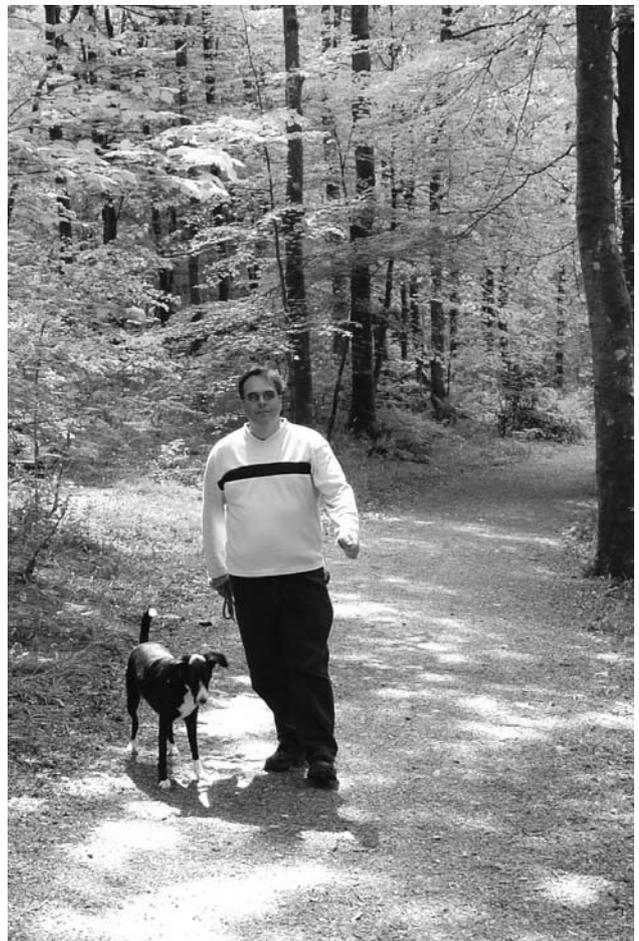
The active visitor has to share the countryside, therefore, with many other users active or not. Experience has shown me that this happens 99% of the time without problems. Tourists realise that if they want to go to a particular location, then so will others, for the very same reason. This is how we end up with over 200,000 mountain-bikers every year at Glentress and why Ben Nevis on a good bank holiday in the summer looks more like an ants' nest with a continuous trail of people stretching all the way to the top. But they all get on, pass pleasantries as they meet and move on, only on a rare occasion does something happen and that is primarily due to one party being unreasonable or irresponsible.

All access managers, including the Forestry Commission, are tourist managers. We manage how, where and when people visit our forests, how they find their way around and we try to point the different users in different directions to avoid that rare, unpleasant situation. This is essential, or activities would overlap and there could be a massive breakdown in responsible behaviour. When this occurs the location has reached its capacity point.

Kirroughtree is an area where we've had to work carefully to balance user needs. Initially an old nursery for the Forestry Commission, the large open areas lend themselves to events. Hence most of the activities that our park staff host occur around this venue. This was not an issue in the early years as the most active use of the forest was walking. The introduction of car rallies, horse-riding and then a forest drive meant that there was increased pressure until the car rallies moved to other locations. The site remained that way until 2004 when the 7stanes (South Scotland mountainbiking project) opened 3 very specialised trails all starting from the visitor centre. Numbers jumped from a relatively quiet 25–30,000 to 45,000 in the first year, with a further 5,000 increase in 2005 and so far 2006 is seeing another increase.

Tourism has evolved and so has the tourist. Gone are the days when you were happy to share a bathroom in a B&B or guest house, now we all ask if the room has en-suite facilities. Likewise for the country-loving tourist, whether it be adrenaline-seeking mountain bikers, high-wire-swingers or the casual woodland walker and craft-seeking visitor they all seek the same things: where are the toilets and when does the café open? There is greater expectation and therefore greater pressure to deliver.

Who are our active visitors? Activity tourism has brought in a vast number of younger tourists who, under normal circumstances, might not venture in to the depths of the forest environment, but it has also given the young retired another chance of getting out there. What do I mean by this? Mountainbikers range in age from 5 to 70+ years old. Retired people are living healthier and longer than ever before and are looking to stay that way. Being active is great but gyms and health spas are maybe out of reach or not the ideal spot for them, whereas the countryside and forests are perfect. The 'empty nesters' can visit the countryside and do what they want, when they want and at the pace they want. Take a walk in the country at any time and I can guarantee that the biggest group of users you'll meet are the agile 'silver surfers'.



The most active and largest band in mountain-biking is however, from 25 -35. High-earners, fairly fit and wanting some kind of explosive rush to take their minds off their jobs, so the mountainbiker often also takes part in rock-climbing, canoeing, sailing and other fast- paced sports. Amongst these visitors, there are the very specialised and 'hard core' bikers that seek out new challenges, but they are in the minority, most are seeking easily-followed routes that are graded to suit their needs.

As is now the case for bikers, walking trails have been marked and mapped for years allowing walkers of all ages and fitness levels to take part at whatever level they require. For many active visitors, there is often activity crossover, with the majority enjoying the fact that they have such a huge choice of places to go and things to do. Over and above the increase in recreation infrastructure, this choice stems from the reduction in car prices, improved road networks and the formation of clubs or like-minded groups. Just getting up and going to the forests has never been easier.

So what have we noticed in terms of tourism? In general terms, tourists are now more single minded. They know what they want and where to get it. Never before have they been better informed thanks to the power of the internet. They arrive onsite with preconceived opinions and if these 'expectations' are not met there is no second chance. We have found there is a great number of people who want to enjoy the rural setting away from hustle and bustle, but there is now an expectation that it may be rural but a basic standard is still required. The "adrenaline junkies" require power bars, power drinks and good quality snacks and drinks. The young retired want good-quality tea and coffee with a good choice of cakes, home-made if possible. Families are looking for a good range and increasingly less of junk food.

All groups want accurate information, easily found . They don't like queues and won't stand for wrong information or poor standards on trails and equipment. When once we would have had a quiet word from a customer, it is now a written letter with expectation of a full reply and explanation as to why expectations have not been met. Our tourists are educated and becoming ever more so.

However, there is also an increase in selfishness and a sense of "I came here for one thing and I will do that thing regardless." I see it occurring at events when people push young children aside, older people complain that the site has been taken over for the young, cyclist complain that their routes are being used by others, walkers complain there is nothing for anyone but cyclists. Rubbish is deposited everywhere with no care or thought for the consequences. With dog-fouling illegal in many areas, we now have tidy little giftwrapped plastic bags hanging from trees and posts around the forest, and wild camping with human waste all around the more popular sites. These are the very real down-

sides of the activity-based tourist.

However, I believe that we, the land managers, have only ourselves to blame. We have encouraged people into the countryside, expecting them to know how to act responsibly and to know the consequences of an animal digesting discarded waste, when, in reality, 90% of our visitors come from an urban environment and the closest they get to the countryside is watching Emmerdale on TV. So who is to blame?

We have to grasp this opportunity to educate our tourists about what we do and why. They need to understand what happens when a carelessly-discarded cigarette lands in dry dead grass or heather, when a gate is left open to a farmer's field full of stock, the result of dogs being allowed to chase after wildlife, or the damage that quad-bikes do to precious conservation sites. We tend to use a subtle approach, by taking groups out on guided walks and rides, inviting them to ask questions so that they begin to understand the potential results of their actions. This, we find, is a practical and friendly way of communicating and educating. But maybe the time has come for a more direct and 'shocking' method to be deployed?

Open access in Scotland has been heralded by many as the downfall of Scotland's countryside – I believe, instead, it could eventually be the saving grace of our rural life .

In 1957 Freeman Tilden said, "Through interpretation, understanding, through understanding, appreciation, through appreciation, protection". He understood what had to be done then, it is up to us to deliver his quote through interpretation and our actions now. He also said; "The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation." In other words give the tourist enough information that they want to ask more.

Photographic References

All photographs credited to the Forestry Commission

Contact Details

*Keith Muir
Head of Tourism, Recreation & Environment
Galloway Forest Park
Forestry Commission Scotland
Creebridge
Newton Stewart
DG8 6AJ*

Tel: 01671 402420

Email: keith.muir@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

The Inter-relationship between Recreation and Tourism in the Yorkshire Dales and Drivers for Change

Kathryn Beardmore, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority



Drivers for Change in National Parks over the past 50 years

The Yorkshire Dales - what images does the name conjure? Limestone scenery of caves and cliffs, heather clad moorlands and hay meadows, walled lanes, the natural sounds of wind and water. These are just some of the features that give the Yorkshire Dales its sense of place, its special qualities, to put it into marketing speak its 'unique selling point'. They are the particular elements that define the character, importance and value of the area and make it worthy of National Park designation.

As Circular 12/96¹ explains 'the attraction of the special qualities of the National Parks has long been recognised and is demonstrated by the numbers of visitors who seek the enjoyment of these beautiful areas and the opportunities they afford for open air recreation...National Parks Authorities should continue to promote the widest range of opportunities for recreation to reflect the variety of ways in which the Parks can be enjoyed'.

Making the most of these environmental assets can both

enhance economic benefits and improve people's enjoyment and understanding of the environment. This article considers what has changed since the Yorkshire Dales National Park's designation over 50 years ago and the step change that has taken place over the last 5 years in relation to recreation and tourism.

In 1945, at the request of the Government, John Dower produced a report on how National Parks (first created in the USA) might be introduced in England and Wales². Dower stressed the importance of recreational access to relatively wild country, and the desire of the public, whether 'active or passive' in their pursuits to experience these places, in a way that did not impair that beauty. Dower identifies the need for facilities such as tourist accommodation and work on the footpaths, signs and gates etc. Dower did not expect the National Park authorities to do all these things themselves but through working with and encouraging others whether within the public or private sector and for the past 50 years that is what National Park authorities have done. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, for example in the early 1980s, first promoted the Yorkshire Dales Cycleway as a means of enjoying the area. Since the early 1990s, the Authority has been a key partner in the Joint Promotions Initiative (JPI) which is the key delivery organisation for local authority tourism projects within the Yorkshire Dales. This initiative works with, and through, both private and public sector organisations. One aspect to the success of the JPI is that it has looked at a wider Yorkshire Dales area, including

Nidderdale AONB and the market towns on the periphery of the Park.

The Review of English National Parks (Pullen Review) considered how far our twentieth century model of National Parks can go in the 21st century and decided, overall, that our National Park system works well most of the time, and changes sought should be evolutionary – not revolutionary ones. The Report confirms that the two National Park purposes (conservation and understanding and enjoyment of the area), first suggested by Dower, should remain unchanged, as they have stood the test of time when combined with the duty to promote the social and economic well-being of the local communities. However the expenditure constraint on the Parks' socio-economic duty is one part of the 20th century model that has now been removed, through the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act - not on the basis that socio-economic issues over-ride the two original purposes but because they are seen as inseparable. This was graphically illustrated during the foot and mouth crisis. It is this event which is seen as the watershed that has brought about a step change within the Yorkshire Dales National Park in relation to recreation and tourism.

Views of Local Businesses

In 2003, in the wake of the foot and mouth crisis, a study was commissioned by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, as part of the Craven Integrated Rural Development Project (CIRD). The project, which was financially supported by Yorkshire Forward, aimed to deliver sustainable economic development based on the environmental assets of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and to diversify its economic base. The study addressed the access enhancement elements of the CIRD project, or how to make more out of the rights of way in the area and opportunities for recreational walking, cycling and other outdoor activities. The study's aims were:

- To assess the economic value of the rights of way network and countryside access to the economy of Craven District part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park.
- To identify potential opportunities to further develop rights of way, access and environmental resources to maximise economic and community benefits in a sustainable manner.

The objectives were to encourage visitors to take part in more walking and outdoor activities, to encourage them to stay longer, spend more and come back sooner, and widen participation to new target markets and to groups with low participation rates, including opportunities for visitors with disabilities. The study involved:

- an analysis of previous studies in the UK of walking and cycling

- a questionnaire survey of over 500 local tourism related businesses (with a 21% response rate)
- telephone interviews with 17 businesses
- interviews with key organisations e.g. Yorkshire Tourist Board, and business associations
- a local economic audit
- development of project ideas

The study³ noted, for example, that long distance routes (and to a lesser extent regional walking routes) can generate millions of pounds worth of expenditure along their routes. Average spending is around £30 per person per day on long distance routes. It was noted that overnight visitors spend was likely to generate at least ten times as much tourism revenue as day visitors and arguably have less environmental impact (in transport terms for instance).

The questionnaire survey of businesses in the area found that businesses are either highly or fairly dependent on outdoor activities. The implication was that only a small proportion of revenue comes from visitors who do not take part in outdoor activities. The most common outdoor activities of people visiting the businesses surveyed were walking (46% short walks and 29% on longer distance walks) and cycling (5%) and some activities e.g. horse riders in Malhamdale and caving in Ribblesdale having more localised significance. (These results were reassuringly consistent with the Authority's survey of visitors!). Local businesses valued walkers and cyclists/mountain bikers who are seen as higher spenders than some other activity groups. Businesses perceived that cavers and climbers were low spenders and that there was little demand for some activities e.g. angling/canoeing. In addition while businesses felt that there was a good range of opportunities, eroded access routes and opportunities for people with disabilities should be addressed. Poor quality signposting, the condition of stiles and parking (number, cost and location issues) were perceived as key constraints to usage of the rights of way.

The ECOTEC⁴ report identified a number of practical actions that could help local businesses make the most of walkers, cyclists and horse riders and over the past three years these have been taken forward through a number of different projects some of which are outlined below:

The promotion of cycling

Funding for this area of work has been secured from Yorkshire Forward, the EU Interregg iib through the Target Project, and the Countryside Agency.

Re-launch of the flagship on road cycle route Yorkshire Dales Cycleway

1:100 000 scale map produced by Harvey Maps, showing the whole route on one map, together with useful information for cyclists and a route profile showing the hills. The route has been resigned. A website aimed at providing information on cycling has also been developed www.cyclethedaes.org.uk.

Promotion of Mountain Biking

The website www.mtbthedaes.org.uk has been set up to provide lots of information aimed specifically at mountain bikers, together with a marketing campaign under the banner 'leave the forest behind'. A series of Harvey maps covering the Dales and Nidderdale designed for walkers and mountain bikers in particular, with all rights of way shown and off road routes for cyclists graded. The grading was carried out on the bridleway and green lane network using the CTC grading scale. Some routes were deliberately excluded where there are very significant management or erosion issues, although they were still indicated as PRoWs.

Research and Strategies

The Authority, on behalf of Yorkshire Forward, is working in partnership with relevant organisations in North Yorkshire and York to develop and deliver a comprehensive sub-regional cycle tourism strategy which is supported by all and that offers a clear vision for cycling product and promotional development across the sub-region. The vision is for North Yorkshire and York to become an outstanding, clearly recognised UK cycle tourism destination by making the best sustainable use of the area's unique and diverse environmental and cultural assets.



The YHA have also been working hard in the area to encourage cycling and have equipped all their hostels in the area with superb facilities for cyclists. YDNPA have provided display boards for cycle maps of the area to each hostel.

Promotion of Horse Riding

Pennine Bridleway

This new National Trail will eventually run from Middleton Top in Derbyshire to Byrness in Northumberland a distance of 560km (350 miles). The route is planned and designed specifically for horse riders, cyclists and walkers, and in the Yorkshire Dales it will run from Long Preston to Mallerstang. It will use existing bridleways, upgrade existing footpaths and create new sections of route. The 'Settle Loop', a 10mile loop from Settle to Malham on the Pennine Bridleway is now open and well used.

Promotion of Walking

Promotion of walking opportunities have been developed through the Target and Craven Integrated Rural Development Projects, funded by Interegg, Yorkshire Forward and the Countryside Agency. There are a number of long distance walking routes passing through the Park:

Pennine Way

A booklet of the Hidden Gems found along the route of the Pennine Way in the Yorkshire Dales has now been produced and distributed through the Countryside Agency.

The Dales Way

The Authority has worked with the Dales Way Association to enhance the promotion of this route and raise its profile including:

- Display boards sited on, or close to, the route
- A revised general promotional leaflet
- A new Hidden Gems booklet
- And the Association has launched its website at www.dalesway.org.uk

Settle-Carlisle Route

The Settle-Carlisle Railway Development Company has worked with the Authority, through the Target Project, to further promote the railway service:

- A Line Guide and Map. This is designed to enhance the journey for train passengers allowing them to follow the progress of the train and learn information about the history of the line and the area it is passing through.
- A walking map at 1:40 000 scale walking map, produced by Harvey Maps, covering the entire route of the Settle-Carlisle with a highlighted walking route connecting all the stations along the line. This gives

what is believed to be the most public transport accessible long distance trail in the country, with people able to walk the whole route in one go, or dip in doing sections using the railway to return them to their start point.

Village Walks Maps

A series of Harvey maps showing eight walks centred on a village centre. They all include a linear walk to encourage the use of public transport, with the additional idea that the series of walks will encourage short break holidays and return visits.

Access for All

A workshop to help local businesses to implement good practice and a guide on how to adapt your business to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 have been undertaken. A booklet of walks and places of interest for those with limited mobility has also been produced.



Conclusion

All of the projects have three common themes:

- To improve the co-ordination and integration of the recreational product in the area and facilitate access to walking, cycling and other recreational activities

- To make planning a visit to particular area of the Yorkshire Dales easier by co-ordinating and integrating information and visitor services
- To encourage greater business networking and joint working within a particular area

During the foot and mouth crisis, the economic benefits and inter-relationships of tourism, agriculture, the landscape, and opportunities for access and recreation were starkly realised. This has contributed to changes in the way tourism and recreation is managed in our National Parks. However the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority has always taken the development of its sustainable tourism product seriously. Through partnership, it has encouraged sustainable tourism that recognises the special qualities of, and builds on, the environmental assets of the National Park. It continues to be pro-active in pursuing improvements in access and recreational opportunities, and managing access in innovative ways that develop good practice that encourage people to enjoy the areas at the same time as supporting the local economy.

Footnotes

¹Dept of the Environment (1996) Circular 12/96 Environment Act Part III National Parks HMSO

²Dower, J. (1945) National Parks in England and Wales HMSO

³Alun Michael (2002) Speech to the Council for National Parks' Conference Southampton, 13 July 2002 Defra

⁴Ecotec Research and Consulting Limited (2003) Craven Access Enhancement and Promotion - A Report to the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Unpublished

Photographic References

All photographs credited to the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Contact Details:

Kathryn Beardmore
Access and Recreation Manager
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
Yoredale
Bainbridge
Near Leyburn
DL8 3EL

Tel 01969 652365
Fax 01969 650025

Email kathryn.beardmore@yorkshiredales.org.uk

Activity Tourism - Developing Cycle Tourism in the North York Moors and Coast

Bill Breakell, North York Moors National Park Authority



Exactly 100 years ago, Michael Heaviside got his bike out of the guard's van at one of the stations on the railway between Middlesbrough and Whitby. He'd taken advantage of a special North Eastern Railway ticket which encouraged cyclists to take one route out and return home, a few days later, by another line. He'd also written to several of the village inns to book accommodation for his excursion. This was very much a way of life for Mr Heaviside and he wasn't unique, even in 1906. What this Edwardian enthusiast did can be replicated today - not just his routes, but also the processes by which he planned and executed his holiday (although finding space for a bike on a train is a bit more problematic these days and phone or e-mail makes booking accommodation a bit more immediate).

Mr Heaviside was what we would today call a 'cycling tourist,' defined as 'a person of any nationality, who at some stage or other during his or her holiday uses the bicycle as a mode of transportation, and to whom cycling is an important part of this holiday'¹.

However, that definition excludes an important market -

recreational day visitors. So we could classify the activity into one of four categories:

- cycle touring - either short breaks or longer holidays based primarily on cycling as an activity
- holiday cycling - short breaks or longer holidays but when only part of the holiday features cycling
- cycling day visits - day trip from home, for non-routine, recreational purposes
- mountain biking - either day visit or holiday, but when the routes are primarily off-road, often with an element of technical skill required.

All of these could be undertaken entirely by bike (i.e. door to door) or more probably by making part of the journey by rail, bus or car, and either hiring a bike or using the tourist's own bike (especially the case with the more dedicated cyclist.)

Cycle Tourism, Sustainability and the Rural Economy

Cycle tourism in its widest sense is an important element of activity tourism in rural areas. It has a lower impact than many other activities (even mountain biking, often the bete noir of environmentalists, can be managed in a creative and environmentally-friendly way as evidenced in the Dalby Forest project).

Other reasons why cycle tourism is particularly suitable for rural areas include the opportunities to penetrate more remote locations, services and facilities in which car-borne traffic may be intrusive. This benefits the rural community through spend in village shops, pubs, small-scale accommodation, attractions - spend which is less likely to leak out of the local economy. Cycling, tourist and academic bodies have identified spending patterns and levels for different types of cycling tourists: in our area we would suggest that average spend per visit varies from £25 for a day visit, to £75 per day for someone staying in serviced accommodation. Cyclists tend to favour budget accommodation, and whilst this results in a lower spend, the local economic benefits are often greater due to retention within the local economy.

Direct health benefits accrue to the individual cycling tourist, and local communities gain from indirect health benefits through decreased traffic travels and improved facilities for utility cycling in the local area. Cycling also tends to utilise under-used environmental assets, most of which are sustainable or can be made more sustainable either through minor engineering solutions, or promotion of alternative routes.

Finally, cycle tourism can be more socially inclusive than many other forms of tourism, although this is not to deny the high spending patterns of enthusiasts, especially on equipment, or overseas visitors coming for a cycling holiday.

As with all sustainable tourism, cycle tourism interrelates with four elements known by the acronym 'VICE' - Visitor, Industry, Community, Environment. In the North York Moors, careful consideration has been given to ensure a positive balance through a hierarchy of strategic planning, investment, project development, marketing support and monitoring.

A Strategy for Cycle Tourism

Many agencies in the Moors and Coast area acknowledge the real benefits from cycle tourism, and wish to see the area established as the cycling centre of excellence for England. Drawing all these threads together is a new **Cycle Tourism Strategy**² for North Yorkshire and York which sees the sub-region as a high quality cycle tourism destination, with a five year action plan of product development and promotion. The plan sees cycle tourism delivering significant economic benefits to the sub-region, while providing active and healthy recreation, access to cultural attractions, and environmental benefits associated with reducing car use. Partners include the local transportation authorities, local authorities, the two National Parks (Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors), Sport England, Yorkshire Tourist Board and cycling organisations (including Sustrans). The Cycle Tourism Strategy has been managed largely through the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, with funding from the Regional Development Agency (Yorkshire Forward). The cycle tourism strategy also takes account of a 'Transforming Outdoor Adventure' programme supported by a consortium of local authority cultural officers, and the strategy

will also be embedded in the Area Tourism Plans which are being developed simultaneously in Yorkshire.



One level down, and as part of the Local Transport Plan for North Yorkshire, a series of **local cycling plans** has been developed, including ones for each major town, as well as whole areas such as the Yorkshire Dales and the North York Moors. These now acknowledge the cross benefits of linking utility routes with recreational routes. The North York Moors plan includes nine key routes which are being improved and signposted by North Yorkshire County Council and additional links along the Heritage Coast and at other key destinations.

The National Cycle Network provides major access to and through the area and also gives a national profile for recreational cycling here. The North Sea Cycle Route (www.northsea-cycle.com) also runs through the area - an international cycle route of 6000 km following much of the North Sea Coastline through Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and the UK. In the North York Moors it coincides with parts of the National Cycle Network and the Moor to Sea Cycle Route.

Delivering Cycle Tourism projects

The Moor to Sea Cycle Route (www.moortoseacycle.net) is a 130 km route across the North York Moors linking the towns of Whitby, Scarborough and Pickering. It takes in some of the most varied and dramatic landscapes in the country - heritage coastline, forest, open moorland, remote countryside and spectacular heritage locations such as Whitby. Although it takes three or four days to cover the entire route, it can be started at any point and undertaken as a series of day rides. The route was planned as part of the North York Moors Sustainable Tourism Project, and takes account of accessibility, accommodation, hire facilities and attractions. Rail access is provided at Whitby and Scarborough. Cycle hire facilities are available at a number of locations en route and the range of accommodation includes four youth hostels.

YHA and Budgie Bikes



Youth Hostels in North Yorkshire have benefited from an initiative to make them more cycle friendly so they now all have extensive cycle toolkits as well as flexible cycle hire through a partnership with Budgie Bikes. Budgie Bikes are also developing a wider network in the North York Moors, having been supported by the National Park Authority's Sustainable Development Fund.

Youth Hostels are a key part of the sustainable tourism offer, with Lockton hostel having just been awarded the first European Ecolabel in the UK and another hostel (Whitby) is undergoing major redevelopment to create a flagship hostel in the region. Their branding helps build user confidence and their bookability means that international visitors (especially from key cycle markets such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Germany and France) can create their own cycle holiday package to suit their personal needs.

Dalby Forest cycle projects

Cycling in the Moors and Coast has been given a huge boost as part of an ambitious £4.3 million project by the Forestry Commission to create world class visitor facilities in Dalby Forest. For many years the 3600 hectare forest has been a Mecca for off road cyclists but the latest project is set to make Dalby the centre of excellence for mountain biking in England

Work is well under way on a £400k project to build 50 kms of new cycle trails to replace worn out and unsustainable routes. The first part of the new network, developed with partnership funding of £140k from Europe and the remainder from the Forestry Commission, is a 7km single track trail which has been developed with support and technical input from local mountain bike group, SingletrAction, local mountain bike manufacturer, PACE, and from the North York Moors National Park Authority.

Along with the new trails, a Skills Area features technical aspects which attract specialists - 'corkscrews'; 'tabletops'; 'skinnies'; 'drop offs'; 'see-saws'; and a loop of 'north shore'.

For those less ambitious (or simply scared), there are family routes and bike hire is available from a new development at Low Dalby.

Guiding and promoting Cycle Tourism

Confidence is critical for developing activity tourism and the final link in the chain is to provide guiding facilities for those either unsure of their abilities, or simply wanting someone else to do the planning. NYM Leisure Guides - a co-operative of guiding services in the area - now provides qualified guides for cycle rides, walks and other outdoor activities in the Moors and Coast.

Those visitors lacking in confidence require adequate and accurate information to ensure they can make a sound decision on the destination and level of activity, the accommodation available and the appropriate backup if required.

Promoting this array of opportunities in the North York Moors and Coast is undertaken through a number of media, especially www.outdoormoors.com, and will be a key component of the Area Tourism Partnership's marketing programme.

Conclusion

Mr Heaviside was something of a pioneer: with local knowledge he was able to plan and enjoy his cycling holiday in 1906. He did it all without a tourist information centre in sight!

A hundred years on and cycle tourism is now on the desks of many organisations - national, regional and local, commercial, voluntary and statutory. Their co-operation and shared problem-solving is essential if we are to realise the immense social, economic and environmental benefits which can accrue from this activity.

References

- ¹Simonsen, Peter Saabye; Jorgensen, Birgitte; Robbins, Derek (1998) 'Cycling Tourism', Unit of Tourism Research at Research Centre of Bornholm, Denmark 231 pp
- ²Mann, Iain (2006) 'A Cycle Tourism Strategy for North Yorkshire and York', Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Photographic References

Cycle hire and cycling photographs credited to Tony Bartholomew
YHA Budgie bikes photograph credited to Youth Hostel Association (YHA)

Contact Details

Bill Breakell
Tourism Officer
North York Moors National Park Authority
Bondgate, Helmsley
York, YO62 5BP
Tel: 01439 770657
Email: bill@nymnp.sol.co.uk
Website: www.moors.uk.net

Watchdog on the Outdoors - The Work of the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority

Marcus Bailie, The Adventure Activities Licensing Authority



Why do we need a watchdog?

All sectors of society are currently supportive of the interest, being expressed by government departments and non-governmental organisations alike, for young people to develop a fit and healthy life style. Countryside recreation forms a significant part of this growing market. Some benefits, physical, social, and medical enhancement for example may be obvious, with other benefits such as re-engagement at school, crime reduction, self-confidence increases, and emotional contentment may be less obvious, but none the less important to today's and tomorrow's society. However, whilst the benefits are enormous and the risks comparatively small, they do exist. The Adventure Activities Licensing Authority employs experts from the outdoor adventure activity world to inspect activity providers for young people and if satisfied with their safety management systems we issue them with an operator's license.

The Adventure Activities Licensing Authority was established

through the Young People Safety Act of 1995 to help to ensure the safety of young people taking part in adventurous activities such as watersports, mountaineering, rock climbing, caving, etc. With the subsequent Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations of 1996 it became a legal requirement for providers of certain adventure activities to undergo an inspection of their safety arrangements and become registered as a licensed provider.

The Licensing Authority is funded partly by license fees, but shortfalls are covered by the Department of Education and Skills in Westminster, who operate the system throughout the UK. The Authority operates under the written guidance of the Health and Safety Commission, and liaises regularly with the Health and Safety Executive.

Generally, licensing only applies to those activities which are carried out in remote or isolated environments. Moreover the licensing scheme only applies to those who offer activities to young people under the age of 18 and, with a few exceptions, offer it commercially. The licensable activities include those shown on the table on the next page.

The Regulations define when activities are considered to be taking place in 'remote or isolated environments' and when they are not. For example:

- Rock climbing on a natural outdoor 'crag' requires a licence but climbing on a purpose built indoor climbing wall does not.

CLIMBING <i>on natural outdoor features</i>	WATERSPORTS <i>on most lakes, fast flowing rivers & the sea</i>	TREKKING <i>in remote moorland or mountain areas</i>	CAVING
Rock climbing	Canoeing	Hillwalking	Caving
Abseiling	Kayaking	Mountaineering	Pot-holing
Ice climbing	Dragon boating	Fell running	Mine exploration
Gorge walking	Wave skiing	Orienteering	
Ghyll scrambling	White water rafting	Pony trekking	
Sea level traversing	Improvised rafting	Mountain biking	
Canyoning	Sailing	Off piste skiing	
	Sailboarding		
	Windsurfing		

- If canoeing takes place on a white water river or an inland lake where it is possible to be more than 50 metres from the main shore then it is considered isolated and is licensable. Canoeing on a canal, or an indoor swimming pool is not.
- Similarly being on moorland or mountain and more than 30 minutes walk from the nearest road is considered remote and is therefore licensable.

There are exemptions for some providers and for some circumstances. For instance:

- If a school is providing activities to its own pupils then no licence is required.
- If the young person is accompanied on the activity by a parent or legal guardian then again no licence would be required.
- There is also an exemption for voluntary associations offering activities to their own members. Thus, a voluntary disabled persons support group offering activities to its members does not need a licence.

What does Licensing achieve.

The licensing scheme provides assurances that good safety management is in place so that young people can continue to experience exciting and stimulating activities outdoors whilst not being exposed to the avoidable risks of death or disabling injury. Where safety standards need to be improved the Authority sets requirements which must be addressed. In other cases the Authority, based on the observations of inspectors, offer advice and guidance on good practice. The system has been independently acknowledged as improving safety

standards across the sector and not just amongst those who require a licence. Those involved in countryside recreation can be assured therefore that licensed providers will be operating to good safety standards.

Who needs to be registered with the Licensing Authority?

Most 'adventure centres', outdoor education centres, adventure holiday centres, free-lance or self-employed providers of adventure activity, local authorities, and activity clubs offering commercial courses to non-members would all require a licence.

By this point you will have realised that the situation is more complex than may have first appeared. The idea of the licence is to simplify all this as much as possible, or to be more precise make it the responsibility of the Licensing Authority to unravel it all! If a centre has a licence then you may safely assume that they satisfy the requirements and meet the standards of the Licensing Authority.

What does the inspection cover?

Applicants submit to us details of their staff, their safety management systems and their operational procedures etc. We consider these carefully in advance of visiting the provider.

During the inspection we interview management and sample records in order to fully understand how the organisation manages safety. For example we look carefully at how the provider addresses the varying needs which arise from each groups particular requirements or special needs. Since every group has special needs to a greater or lesser extent we would

expect the provider to take extra measures, deploy additional staff, or staff with specialist expertise whenever the need arises. Later we interview instructors and observe activities taking place in order to ensure that what appears on paper actually takes place in practice.

If we are satisfied that their safety management systems conform to nationally accepted standards then we issue them with a licence.

Who exactly is the Licensing Authority?

The Adventure Activities Licensing Authority is an independent organisation funded by the Department for Education and Skills and operating under the written guidance of the Health and Safety Commission.

Its eight inspectors all come from within the world of adventure activities where they were, for example, development officers for National Governing Bodies, worked at National Centres, or been managers or instructors at outdoor centres. In short, it is the most experienced group of people ever brought together to do this type of work. They are supported by a team of management at offices in Cardiff.

What should the public look for?



Check that the provider is "registered with the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority". They should have a licence document clearly displayed in their premises if they have premises. Otherwise it should be available on request. It will indicate their name, reference number, the licensable activities which they are registered to offer, and the expiry date of the licence together with any conditions under which activities are to be offered.

In any advertising material providers may state that they are registered with the Licensing Authority but must also give our phone number or display the Licensing Authority's logo (which contains our phone number). You should feel free to contact us on this number if you wish to have their details verified.

Any provider offering licensable activities is obliged to hold a licence. It is a criminal offense, punishable with up to £200,000 fine or 6 months imprisonment in extreme cases to offer licensable activities without one.

What does licensing NOT cover?

The focus of the licensing regulations is very narrow and only looks at the safety of young people whilst on activities. We do NOT therefore explicitly look at, for example, fire safety, transport safety, over-night and free-time supervision, food hygiene, insurance, child protection policies, nor indeed at the QUALITY of the provision nor the appropriateness of the activities to any particular client group. These remain the responsibility of the client, and we recommend that a pre-visit

visit is generally of the utmost usefulness.

What about non-licensable activities?

The existing Regulations only cover certain situations as described above, consequently, certain activities such as jet skis, ropes courses or even archery do not require a licence but are still potentially hazardous. Centres catering only for adults do not need a licence, nor do providers who only offer non-licensable activities. It is anticipated that in the future a unified register may be extended to include those outside of licensing, although any national scheme would almost certainly be on a non-statutory basis. Such a scheme has existed in Wales for a number of years and is operated by the Wales Tourist Board. A similar scheme is under development in Scotland and in the Lake District.

Self-assessment and Guidance

The Adventure Activities Licensing Authority has published a self-assessment and guidance manual for providers of adventure activities. This pack is based on the questions asked at licensing inspections and on the standards and good practice which the licensing regulations require.

The manual leads the user through 39 separate aspects of outdoor activity provision ranging from the competence expected of the people in charge to the standards of equipment and its maintenance. It will be of use to anyone who offers adventure activities to other people, and therefore will be applicable to voluntary organisations and youth groups as well as commercial providers.

Summary



1. Look for the AALA Logo
2. Before you send your children to an adventure centre or similar activity ask if the provider of the activities is "Registered with the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority ". If the answer is "no" ask "why not". If you don't like their explanation phone us on 029 2075 5715

All photographs credited to Visit Wales

Contact Details:

For further information on any aspect of Adventure Activity Licensing contact:

*The Adventure Activities Licensing Authority,
44 Lambourne Crescent,
Llanishen, Cardiff.
CF14 5GG.*

Tel 029 2075 5715.

Fax 029 2075 5757.

E-mail info@aala.org.uk

Web site www.aala.org

Active Tourism - The Ingredients for Success...

John Vaughan, Community Forestry



Cairngorms, Scotland

What drives me?

I have always been active. Early on I abandoned competitive indoor and team sports for activities involving closer contact and engagement with the outdoors and with natural environments - walking, running (on and off road), cycling (on and off road), caving, climbing and mountaineering. While I would always argue that personal reward is more important than league points, that doesn't mean I'm 'uncompetitive' among other participants in my chosen activities.

I am informed, articulate and have the financial and technological resources to indulge my passions at home and abroad, whether Munro-bashing in the Scottish Highlands, mountain biking in the French Jura or sport-climbing in northern Mexico.

I want to be engaged and challenged rather than entertained. I'm prepared to put some effort into getting what I want and I'm prepared to pay for it. I'm old enough to want a degree of comfort and convenience, without eliminating risk or seeking indulgence. Activity is part of my wider social life - I share my chosen activities with close and trusted friends but expect to

meet and make new contacts along the way.

Getting started

First off, I need inspiration ~ new ideas about places to go and activities to try. In the first instance memories of earlier trips, word of mouth, magazines (mostly specialist rather than weekend colour supplements), conversations with like-minded family or friends and accumulated dreams plant the seeds of ideas for the future.

A 'dream file' of articles culled from past mountaineering, climbing and cycling magazines, together with a selection of impulse-bought guides, provide rich reading through the long winter nights. Images to fuel the imagination and enough information to illuminate the possibilities - steep, sun-drenched limestone in northern Italy or soaring granite walls in Norway, dog sledding in Scandinavia or icy alpine summits.

Or poring over maps of the Cairngorms to trace potential bike trails through what I already know is glorious and testing scenery for a gnarly coast to coast ride across Scotland. It has to be about more than just doing the activity - it needs to have an exploratory edge, a feeling of adventure.

Getting Going

Information. Possibilities and problems? How do I get there? Where can I stay? What should I take with me? What maps and guides can I lay my hands on to plan the trip?

The planning process is as much part of the experience as the trip itself - shaping evening conversations in the pub and underpinning spurious planning meetings in distant locations. It provides a ready excuse for sorting equipment and buying new gear and motivates new training programmes. Plans are still flexible - last year we shifted our destination from Canada to Mexico following a 15 minute conversation at our local climbing wall!!!

Most activities have spawned a wealth of guides and informative books but increasingly the internet is a key source of beta. The ability to trawl worldwide through specialist websites to gather information and to use chat rooms and discussion groups to explore possibilities, gather ideas and seek opinions has dramatically increased the availability of knowledge and expanded our choice of options. It helps us to hit the ground running, making best use of our valuable time away.

More general information about the area and supporting transport and accommodation infrastructure can be found on local tourism websites. The standard of these has improved dramatically over the last 10 years but they can still range from the brilliant to the downright incomprehensible. Downloadable leaflets, brochures and accommodation lists are particularly useful for trip planning.

Getting There

By most measures, activity tourism is pretty unsustainable. In contrast to work, for which I use almost exclusively public transport, I will drive long distances, taking my car to access more remote areas and carry lots of equipment. Even with baggage restrictions, cheap (and easily booked) air flights and hire cars offer ready access to a wider range of experiences and destinations and greater flexibility once I am there.

Some of this is laziness and indulgence on my part but transport agencies could do a great deal more to improve access to active destinations - efforts to date have been pretty half-hearted. The absence of any coherent approach across rail companies and airlines to the carriage of bikes and other sports equipment inevitably nudges people towards easier motorised options. In contrast, I am always impressed when a hostel or bunkhouse tells me they will collect me from the nearest station and ferry me to and from the start and finish of my route.

On-line booking is now so easy that I rarely use travel agencies. I recently got really good service from a company specialising in winter activity packages in northern Finland but, having been once, I will probably do most of my own organising direct with the destination next time.

Staying There

I look for places to stay that are comfortable without being luxurious. Recommendations in guidebooks and articles help

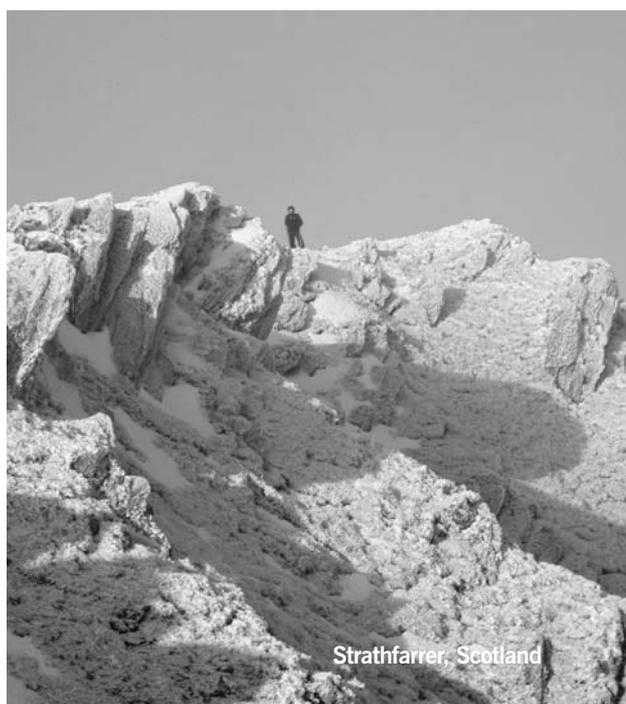
me get started while local tourism websites and e-mail facilities make inquiries, booking and payment simple and quick. I collect information as I go, like the 'Blue List' of independent Scottish hostels, accumulating it for future use.

Basic hostels, bunkhouses and apartments appeal more than hotels. Understanding and flexibility are important - wet clothes, filthy bikes and heaps of climbing gear don't co-exist easily with deep-pile carpets and antique furniture. If I find a good place I recommend it to others - likewise a bad reputation soon spreads among the active community.

The 'real deal' is to discover accommodation run by people with local knowledge of what I want to do - people who know the best routes, secret trails or spectacular viewpoints, who can point me to the climbers bar, the bikers pub or the best food and beer. That sort of added value can make the difference between a good trip and a special one.

Increasingly over the past few years I've gone back to camping, particularly in the more remote parts of Scotland. But the changing nature of formal sites, either moving upmarket towards family holidays or occupied by groups of late night urban music players escaping from parental control, pushes me towards going light and camping wild. Some lessons here for tourism providers possibly - or am I just becoming a 'grumpy old man'?

What else is important? Oh yes, food and drink... It doesn't need to be cordon bleu but it does need to be available (both eating out and self-catering), it does need to be edible and it does need to be interesting. Why? Because these trips are social occasions as well as personal ones and much of our downtime is spent relaxing over a meal or in the local bar.



Doing What I Came For

Some years ago, inspired by a photograph in a magazine, I went mountain biking in the French Jura. Arriving late one weekend, with only a short stay in prospect, we called into the local tourist office in a small country town. Within twenty minutes we had a full collection of guides, maps, route cards and leaflets about the extensive local trail network, including things to see and places to eat and drink. Over the next week we enjoyed some great riding on well signed trails ranging from easy to suicidal. All of this was supported by the local Commune and Department, who clearly saw activity tourism as an important part of their local economy.

A few weeks ago I was climbing around Arco, on Lake Garda in Italy. Even the smallest newsagent or corner shop carried a good selection of climbing guides and maps in five different languages and the local authority supported the preparation and bolting of new routes, again recognising the economic value of 'the activity tourist pound'.

Public agencies can play a key part in providing the land-based and facilities infrastructure for active tourism. Major landowners like the Forestry Commission and the custodians of our finest landscapes, the National Parks and AONBs, have an important role but the commitment of local authorities and local businesses is equally important. We are also beginning to see some encouraging signs that local communities, particularly in Scotland and Wales, see opportunities for themselves as active tourism providers.

More Than Just a Trip

No matter how good the area and its facilities, there is one crucial element to any successful trip - people. A warm welcome, personal attention and helpful attitude make all the difference. While fortunately it isn't the norm, I've had my fair

share of surly staff, unhelpful shopkeepers and aggressive landowners. They don't generally detract from the activity but they do make a big difference to the overall experience, including whether I go back and what I tell other people.

In contrast, and more often, I have come home with tales of great places and great people. Characters and individuals who enrich the trip and add colour and value. A restaurant owner in a Mexican town keen to explain the complexities of land ownership and how they used to rule America. A gite owner in France trying to trap a stonemarten that had taken up residence in the loft of our accommodation. Elderly ex-pat Brits on the Costa Blanca who preferred the delights of Benidorm to the rich tapestry of arid inland landscapes. In each case they have turned what might have been a good trip into a memorable one, rich in experience and anecdote, rich in inspiration for 'the next trip'...

Would I Go Back?

Would I go back again? Well, that depends... So much rock... So little time!!!

John Vaughan is the Programme Manager for Community Forestry, any opinions contained in this article, however, are his own.

All photographs are credited to John Vaughan

Contact Details

*John Vaughan
Programme Manager
Community Forestry
Tel: 0191 217 0075
Email: john.vaughan@forestry.gsi.gov.uk*



Naturally Active - A New Website for Commercial Recreation in Woodland

Steve Scott, Forestry Commission



The original high ropes course - "Go-Ape! at Thetford Forest"

I swear that if I see another article headed "If you go down to the woods today..." then I may not be able to answer for my actions. The ironic thing is that you may well be surprised by the changes that are taking place in our woods and forests.

The price of timber has been falling for years and is now about a quarter of what it was in the 1980s¹. Woodland owners have responded in different ways: some have continued to find niche markets; others have simply "closed the gate". There are a growing number of owners, however, who are seeking new ways to make money from their wooded assets, and many of them are looking closely at what commercial recreation opportunities might have to offer.

One of this latter group is Richard "Toby" Coke. Toby and his wife have set up a gut-tightening high-ropes course in what are reputed to be some of the tallest trees in Eastern England. This "Extreme Adventure"² facility, near King's Lynn in Norfolk, consists of a series of rope crossings, obstacles and zip lines in the tree canopy - essentially an assault course at height. It was set up with Rural Enterprise Scheme³ funding from Defra.

Luckily this interest in active recreation has synchronicity with a number of Government aspirations particularly on rural diversification, and as part of the public health agenda in getting more people active and undertaking regular exercise. The

Forestry Commission, as the Government Department responsible for trees and woodland, has been promoting an "Active Woods"⁴ campaign for a couple of years, which encourages people to get out and enjoy woodlands, to keep fit, to reduce stress and stimulate the senses.

But until now, woodland owners looking to diversify into commercial recreation have largely had to go it alone or pay for third party professional help. Now a new web site - www.naturallyactive.org - has been created to give information and advice for all those seeking to make more of their woodlands.

Developing the concept.

The idea for this "toolkit" originated with Helen Townsend, the England lead on recreation, access and tourism in the Forestry Commission, and was developed in the East of England, but it has been deliberately set up and neutrally branded to apply anywhere, certainly in lowland England.

Funding for Naturally Active (about £60k in total including all the research and IT) has come from our Regional Development Agency EEDA (who are interested in the rural development angle), Sport England East (interested in the rural sport and recreation angle) and the Forestry Commission (interested in supporting woodland owners seeking or needing to diversify to increase revenue). The remaining partners, who have given much by way of time and expertise are the East of England Tourist Board, Forest Research, and the Forestry and Timber

Association.

The original background research of material and case studies was produced by The Landscape Partnership⁵, who then carried out trials of the raw material with a cross-section of woodland managers, including the aforementioned Toby Coke. This material was then churned (with added bells and whistles) by Objective IT⁶ into a wonderful web site (yes, I am biased).

Here comes the science.

The web site is an interactive resource with two main entry points. On entering the site users are given the option to navigate to the Commercial Woodland Recreation section or to visit the Rural Sport and Recreation section. This latter section guides community groups engaged in designing, developing and implementing community activities and includes real life case studies of projects that are helping to increase access to sport and physical activity in many isolated areas.

At the heart of the Commercial Woodland Recreation part of the web site is a powerful "Wizard" which helps pinpoint innovative woodland recreation activities. Over 90 activities are illustrated, from abseiling to workshops for woodland businesses (perhaps readers can suggest activities beginning with x, y or z?)

The process of compiling this catalogue has uncovered a number of idiosyncratic and innovation ideas for aspiring entrepreneurs. My personal favourites that have emerged are:

- Disc golf - frisbees thrown into metal baskets. The idea comes from across the Pond (of course) and this is no idle game with the dog; these guys take it VERY seriously!
- Llama trekking. No, honestly. The llamas are led on a lead (not ridden as I first imagined) in varied or themed treks.
- GolfCross - another variation with goals instead of holes and it's played with an oval ball instead of a round one
- Geocaching (pronounced geo-khash-ing). Treasure hunting with a GPS receiver!
- Historical re-enactments. A surprisingly wide variety of groups offer historical re-enactments. It may be possible to book such a society for a specific event for which an entry charge is made. Suitable woodland may offer an excellent base for a group who could then set up semi-permanent facilities for re-enactments (although frankly, most of them seem to be particular hairy!).

A series of case studies and a number of information notes accompany each illustrated activity. The case studies are particularly interesting as they give marketing advice and financial profiles. (Again I would actively urge readers to suggest more case studies to add further value to this section).

The information notes contain a wealth of, well, information. There are currently thirteen, covering planning permission, business planning, insurance, staffing, marketing, obtaining funding, constraints and opportunities, and promoting diversity.

This is where the web site comes into its own. Not so many years ago we would have produced a handbook, or if feeling particularly adventurous, a CD. Both formats have their merits of course (I for one still find it easier to read hard copy rather than on-screen). I know that producing an online "toolkit" is very trendy (and I subscribe fully to the principles of General Ned Ludd and his Army of Redressers on many of these issues), but in truth the advantages of the web far outweigh the more traditional media for this resource. It can, of course, reach many more people, more cheaply, and we can update it daily if necessary, and add new examples and ideas as they develop.

The main advantage for me, however, is access to the wealth of information that's out there in super-highway-interweb-land. So, open the note on promoting diversity and - click - you can instantly access the Disability Discrimination Act; or want more info on obtaining planning permission and - click - you're in the Government's "Planning Portal".

Taking it forward.

Like many a good concept, Naturally Active will mean nothing if we can't get it "out there". As it started in the East of England, we have managed to get good buy-in from the media and the business/rural advice sector. There was a super launch event for all the partners to celebrate, launched by double-gold winning paralympic champion Danny Crates. At the time of writing we are in the midst of a County Show tour in the region. The regional Sport England sponsored "Rural Sport and Recreation Network" has taken the whole "Naturally Active" brand to its heart, and has renamed itself accordingly and is actively advocating and promoting the site.

Getting the message to the wider nation will be a more interesting challenge. We plan to promote Naturally Active at the national APF International Forest Machinery Exhibition⁷ in Warwickshire in September 2006, and will be undertaking some media promotion over the coming months I would also welcome suggestions from CRN readers on how to get the web site better known among the sector and would - time allowing - be happy to come and demonstrate the thing or give a presentation.

Ultimately my measure of success will be how many woodland owners we can help set up commercial woodland activities with a bit of help from the web site. I have in mind a whole generation of Toby Cokes setting up challenging and exciting activities in their woodlands, bringing in the day-trippers and the tourists to help make their woody assets more sustainable (had to mention the "s" word somewhere didn't I!)

Incidentally, I ordered a batch of Naturally Active logo-bearing frisbees as a photo-prop for the launch, and very successful

they were too. Only the minimum order was 500, so if you can find one a good home and you're passing through Thetford Forest anytime....

Steve Scott is Conservator for the Forestry Commission in the East of England. Any opinions contained in this article, however, are his own.

References

¹Anon (1996) "England's trees, woods and forests: a consultation document" Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pp10

²Last accessed on 19 May 2006 at URL: www.extreemadventure.co.uk

³This particular "England Rural Development Programme" fund will close to new applicants on 30 June 2006. The next rural development funding programme, which will run from 2007 to 2013, will be administered by the Regional Development Agencies. Last accessed on 12 May 2006 at URL: www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/pbs-closure.htm

⁴Last accessed on 12 May 2006 at URL: www.forestry.gov.uk/active

⁵Last accessed on 19 May 2006 at URL: www.thelandscapepartnership.com

⁶Last accessed on 19 May 2006 at URL: www.objectiveit.com

⁷Last accessed on 19 May 2006 at URL: www.apfexhibition.co.uk

All photographs credited to the Forestry Commission

Contact Details:

Steve Scott
Conservator of Forests
Forestry Commission
East England
Santon Downham
Brandon
Suffolk
IP22 5 SE
Email: steve.scott@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

SCREEN SHOT OF THE COMMERCIAL WOODLAND RECREATION HOME PAGE

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying <http://www.naturallyactive.org.uk/woodlandhome.aspx?SectionID=61&subsite=woodland>. The website header features the 'naturallyactive' logo and a navigation menu with links: 'about naturallyactive', 'introduction to...', 'helping you...', 'contact us', and 'rural sports & recreation site'. A main text block states: 'This site is aimed at existing or prospective woodland owners and managers who are seeking new ways to make money from their land and woods. It has originated in the East of England but will be applicable throughout lowland England. The website is an analysis and a business advisory package. It details when and how to seek professional advice and demonstrates how recreation, leisure and tourism activities can provide a financial return in a sustainable manner alongside other woodland priorities such as timber production and biodiversity.' To the right of this text is a photograph of a person standing next to a large, circular, wire-mesh structure. Below the main text are two boxes: 'ACTIVITY IDEAS' with sub-sections for 'CRAFT FAIRS' and 'PICNIC AREAS', and 'WHAT'S NEW' which mentions a 'Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism' issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Counting People in the Countryside

Peter Curbishley, Hampshire County Council and Eben Wilson, Main Communications Ltd



Counter Post on Lymington Sea Wall

Hampshire County Council, with the help of Main Communications Ltd Winchester, has succeeded in collecting visitor information and transmitting that to our desktops. It provides us with a means to account for and manage our sites and rights of way without the need for staff to visit a large collection of locations around the county. We receive data every week on daily and hourly movements which is analysed and presented in a digestible form.

Much work has already been done on counting technology and several systems now exist to do this. However, collecting the stored data often has to be done by hand by visiting and reading loggers. This method is expensive and prone to error. Staff using PDAs or laptops to download the data draw attention to the devices and this increases the risk of vandalism and to themselves. It is still only data which then has to be analysed and turned into useable information. Our method obviates this and gives us information direct to screen. English Nature has developed a similar system¹.

The need

To manage any organisation requires data. The public sector is subject to increasing demands to justify its actions and satisfy various performance measures, so it needs information to manage its facilities and to ensure value for money is being

achieved.

Parks, nature reserves and some aspects of rights of way are discretionary items, and are therefore more likely to experience reduced expenditure when local authorities are under financial pressure. Part of the reason for this has been an inability to provide information on the large number of people who use the facilities.

Numbers are crucial to telling a story. Simply to say 'we are busy' or 'lots of people use our service' cuts little ice and is unconvincing. Politicians need information to justify council taxpayers' money. Outside funders want to know hard information on the beneficial effects of their intervention and they seek evidence of increased usage.

An inability to provide numerical information also effects credibility. Which of us, for example, would buy a car if the dealer cannot say how big the engine is or how many miles to the gallon it does?

Problems

Obtaining the information is difficult. Counting people in and out of a building is, by comparison, relatively easy. There are doors, mains electricity and an IT link of some kind. Outside, these conditions do not exist and there are the added problems of weather, insects and vandalism. The site may be open 24 hours.

Another problem is that many parks and the rights of way network have more than one entrance and exit so any counting is only ever going to be a sample of the usage. They are not closed systems and there is considerable 'leakage'. In addition there is a risk of double or multiple counting if people walk past several devices and are counted each time so numbers have to be interpreted with caution.

Vandalism and theft were a key problem in the trials and the contractor worked hard to find ways to conceal the devices for the main installation. One device was uprooted and thrown into the canal and solar panels were stolen, despite etching.

Lack of power is a problem particularly because information requires electricity in order to be transmitted. The problem was solved with a combination of batteries supplemented with solar panels. Further details are provided below.

The methods

Existing methods seem to rely on visits by staff to counters and downloading the information onto a device or even by reading a dial. This is slow, expensive and prone to error if counters are not reset. We wanted a system which gave us results on screen at reasonably frequent intervals.

The practicalities of counting in the country pose a number of challenges. In addition to those we have mentioned we have to cope with a diversity of locations with different patterns of passage of people, through different gates, stiles, entranceways, pinch points and terrain. It's also important to retain the aesthetic of the counting point by making the technology as unobtrusive as possible. Coherent counts may also demand a group of counts at multiple access points to a single park or right of way.

We resolved early on that gathering the data remotely and sending it back to base automatically had a number of benefits:

- Travel to visit collection points is unnecessary
- Data can be frequently updated direct to the desktop
- Information gathering is scaleable at low marginal cost
- It has the ability to recognise centrally when a device goes off air



We also wanted something which turns data into information. Many organisations in our experience have lots of data but they still don't know what is happening because there is no one to analyse and make sense of it.

A system which transmits data directly to a server immediately provides access to powerful analysis and presentation tools. No wage costs (or time delays) are sunk into preparing and uploading data. By applying software tools to the numbers they are immediately turned into useable information.

Our installation collects, transmits, stores, collates and presents the data from all our counting points automatically. We obtain information directly with no extra cost.

Devices

With a diversity of locations, we opted for a range of counting devices. We used equipment from Linetop www.linetop.co.uk who provided the pressure pads and magnetometers, and Chambers Electronics www.chambers-electronics.com the radio counters. Main Communications www.mainhighway.com provided the gate counters. Experiments with infra-red during the trials proved not to be successful so we switched to microwave. We used pressure pads; magnetometers; beam and gate counters. While these are offered with bespoke data loggers, the Main Communications' system integrator has its own G-Node; a combined data logger, controller and GPRS communicator. This was tailored to accept and process inputs from the counting devices, aggregating time-stamped hourly counts through the day. Programmed to send data back to an internet server once a week it can run on battery power for six months or, with a solar panel, indefinitely.

Technical details

For those of a technical persuasion, data is sent in the form of a time-stamped structured datagram by a direct command across the GPRS network to a Unix IIP server. That raw data is stored permanently while a local program parses each data line to populate a database table. Aggregated hourly counts are in turn interrogated by a bespoke analysis program which can

post table-based counting results, histogram, pie or trend chart presentations direct to a web page. A common presentation for each counting node is thereby presented to allow comparisons. Through time, other summaries and presentations can be added at low cost, with the advantage that the pages generated are fully comparable with each other. They can also of course be disseminated at zero cost across those who need to know the results. The pages are all behind a secure log-in wall for which we have control over registrations and an audit of visitors.

Installation

Pressure mats and magnetometers are buried, radio beam counters need to be set at waist height, gate counters need to be attached to gates and GPRS aerials need to be above ground.

In Hampshire, our most recent tranche of devices are installed in chalk downland, wetlands below sea level, car park entrances and even in an historic streambed. As such, they have to be concealed, vandal proof, and secure to the elements.

Finding a generalised solution is not easy but, by pooling experience with its suppliers, fencing contractors and others, Main chose two methods.

First, installation underground within a hidden equipment box. Transmission aerials are concealed in treated timber sleeves that are screwed to a nearby fence post. Pressure mats, gate counters and magnetometers installation thereby become fully hidden.

Second, installation within a workshop built "post". Made of treated timber this was used for the beam devices. One other radio beam device was attached to a height restriction frame at the entrance to a car park using standard road sign back plates. While successful, these installations still demand a buried box and wiring between the counter and the data logger has to be made secure.

These were 9" x 9" strainer posts with the fronts removed, hollowed out and the fronts reapplied with the electronics inside using vandal proof bolts. At first sight they look like ordinary fence posts thus blending them into the landscape and lessening the chance of unwanted attention.

In fact, the second arrangement is potentially useful for all types of counter. The buried box method involves some risk as you never know what you are going to find underground. One box hole had to be painstakingly chipped out of hard chalk, while another hole hit an ancient stream bed.

The issue here is one of aesthetics and the need for vandal-proofing. All our equipment was put in blind initially to see if it received attention and installation of the electronics done a month later. In fact, no vandalism was experienced, however

in the wetland environment we did suffer flooding of one box that by sheer bad luck had found its resting place in a run off area for rain water from a nearby track. A "french drain", seep-away pipe and double thickness polythene sheeting resolved this problem.

The final install of the electronic equipment is rapid. The devices are essentially plug-and-play with a test "bleeper" confirming that the counting device and the logger are communicating. There is also an additional delight of a confirmatory SMS text message sent direct to the field installer's mobile phone from the server as soon as the new node powers up, performs a test hook up and sends a trial datagram.

The devices were linked to GPRS transmitters to enable data to be received once a week.

Systems view

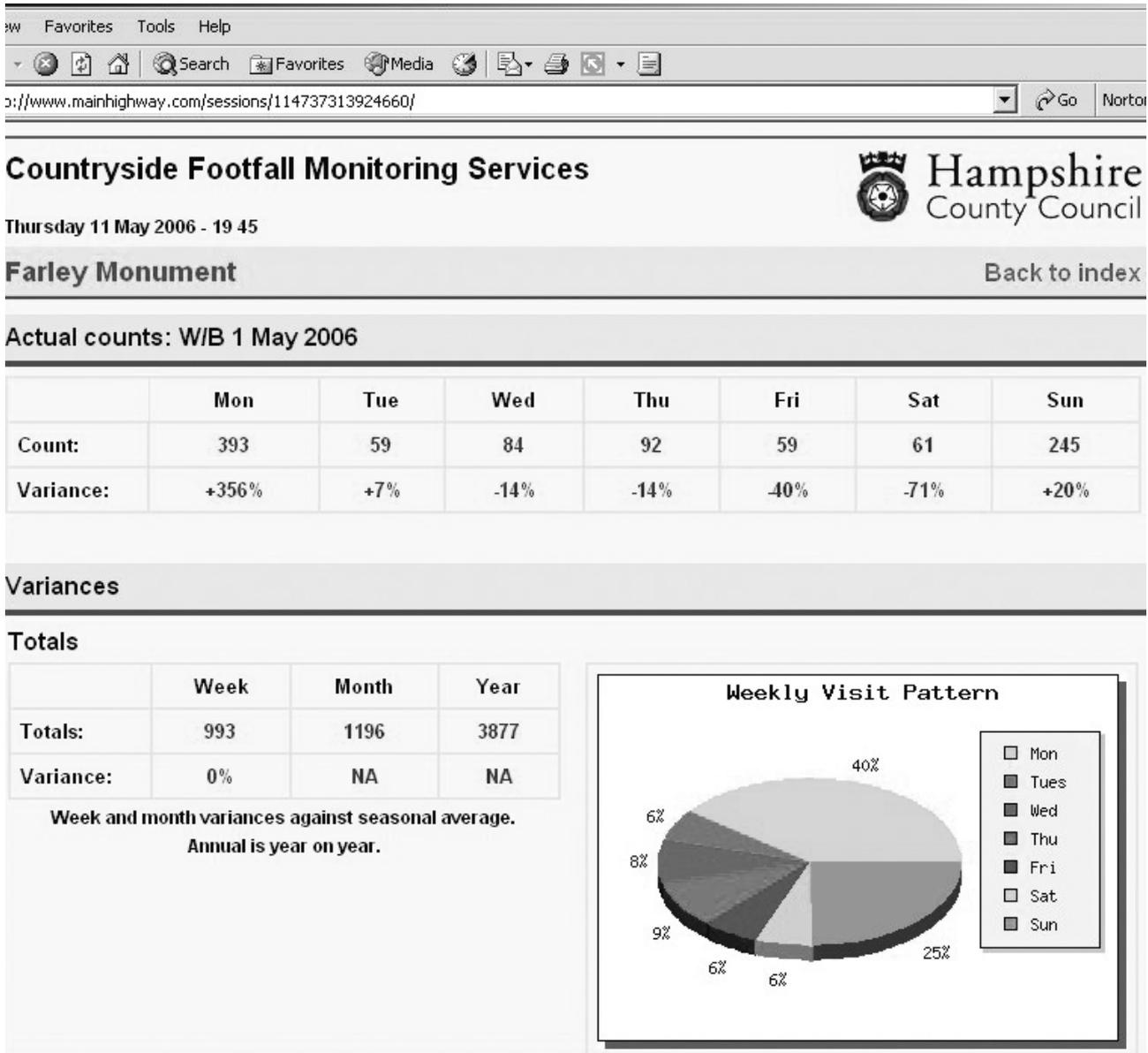
Collecting data must be seen in the wider management context of how such information is made use of or how it is turned into something useable and meaningful. Many organisations have data - often in considerable quantities - but making sense of it is another matter.

Time was spent on working out how to present the data to screen and the screen shot gives an example of a typical location. We are able to see the number of counts; the pattern of visits per week; and trend information (lacking at present because insufficient time has elapsed). Thus managers can see the overall figures of site visits and more detailed information on a site by site basis. Information on an hourly basis is available to enable managers to see trends throughout the day.



The involvement of local teams is important in the process. There is always a danger that management impose solutions on a reluctant staff. Right from the start, the local teams were involved and their local knowledge was important in selecting the locations of counters. There was considerable interest in the results. For the first time, managers of busy sites now have some hard data to support them and information about the pattern of visits.

ILLUSTRATION OF DATA



We were keen also to enlist support to ensure the devices were looked after in the field. Although we have gone to some trouble to hide, bury or conceal the devices, damage or disturbance may still occur - by an animal perhaps - and it is important we hear about it as soon as possible. 'Ownership' by the local teams was an important consideration for us therefore. In fact, some problems can be detected automatically.

The data

The illustration of the page of data provides an example of the type of information we are receiving from the devices. It can be seen that a daily count is given with the ability if needed, of linking through to hourly figures. The pie chart provides a visual presentation of weekly figures and a chart provides

comparisons of this week with the week before.

Once the system has been in use for some months we will review the nature of the data presented and consider any changes to the presentation. One thing we shall be doing is grouping all the data nodes from the same site together and presenting a summary chart.

One problem of interpretation concerns multiple entry sites where we do not have counters on every entrance. We chose the most active entrances but our data will undercount the actual numbers. Until the cost of installation drops considerably, counting every entrance is not feasible. We will derive useful information about visitors and about trends but we need some care in describing and presenting the results.

Rights of Way

The next stage of our installation will include some rights of way. We have over 2,500 miles in the county and this includes long distance walks, circular walks and routes used by commuters and school children.

We have chosen around 16 locations to monitor use on a selection of these routes and we hope to begin installation in the summer. The results from this work should be especially interesting and may reveal unexpected volumes and patterns of use.

Conclusions

Hampshire County Council and Main Communications have installed devices which transmit data about usage to our screens and translates that data into meaningful information. We think this is a significant step forward in the management of parks and rights of way.

We argue that the provision of meaningful data is essential for management purposes and in bidding for funds both internal and external.

We think we have mostly overcome the problems of vandalism by concealment and transmission of the data obviates the need for staff visits drawing attention to what is there. The system is cost effective.

The involvement of local teams is important in the process. They can advise on the best locations and their continued commitment is important to ensure the integrity of the locations.

We have a system providing us with visitor information on sites we knew to be busy and well used but for which we now have hard data.

Reference

¹Melville, Simon & Ruohonen, Juha (2004) 'The development of a remote-download system for visitor counting,' Working Papers of the Finnish Forest Research Institute 2 [online]. Last accessed 5 January 2005.
<http://www.metla.fi/julkaisut/workingpapers/2004/mwp002.htm>

All photographs credited to Eben Wilson

Contact Details

Peter Curbishley
Hampshire Countryside Service
Mottisfont Court
High Street
Winchester
SO23 8UJ
Tel: 01962 845147
Email: peter.curbishley@hants.gov.uk

Eben Wilson
Main Communications Ltd
39 Southgate Street
Winchester
SO23 9EH
Tel: 01962 870689
Email: eben.wilson@main.co.uk



The PROGRESS Project.

Martin Fitton, PROGRESS Project and Emma Stevens, Forestry Commission



Seeing the wood and the trees: sustainable forest recreation through empowerment

The impact of recreation on habitats, much researched in the 60's and 70's, is being re-assessed in the New Forest and Fontainebleau through an INTERREG funded project. Both forests are facing considerable increases in recreational pressure but accept that high public use is both inevitable and of benefit. Through innovative modelling the Project aims to identify site management changes that will ameliorate the pressure and have sufficient clarity to generate stakeholder and public support for the changes that will be required to sustain the habitats.

Introduction

In the 60s and 70s there was rising concern about the threat that increasing recreation posed for the countryside. In three seminal Countryside Conferences the danger that what was enjoyed might be destroyed by weight of numbers was much explored (The Countryside in 1970 Conferences). Dower suggested that leisure would break like a fourth wave across the countryside following those of urbanisation and the impact

of rail and car transport (Dower, 1965). In response a policy of new country park provision near to towns to better manage use was strongly promoted (Lambert, 2006). An extensive research programme was also developed to assess the environmental carrying capacity of natural resources and the impact of recreation on this.

In the event, this image of the countryside under leisure siege proved somewhat exaggerated. It turned out that although increased leisure time, affluence and widening car ownership had made greater participation possible, the leisure society remained a concept rather than actuality as working hours stabilised (Fitton, 1979) And many other leisure options became available. Alongside this the new provision of country parks, the widening of access through better rights of way management, access to open land and new commercial leisure opportunities provided by farmers seeking to diversify has further reduced the overall pressure on the countryside.

This has had a number of consequences. Research on carrying capacity diminished even though many sites were still at risk (Curry, 2001) The need to relate environmental impact to visitors perception of carry capacity and the impact of this on behaviour has not been fully researched (Dalrymple, 2005) In addition the need to involve the public in a debate about the impact of recreation was missed and also the opportunity to test management changes through public involvement and consent.

These research gaps also emphasise another issue. It is

becoming increasingly clear that countryside recreation and access to green space provides huge benefits to physical and mental health (*Pretty et al 2005*). We need to capitalise on this and ensure that the public has the confidence and opportunity to enjoy the countryside. This means in many cases that we need to facilitate and encourage increased use of countryside near to residential areas if access is to be provided for all.

The PROGRESS Project and Partnership

This paper is an interim report on action research being carried out in the New Forest and Fontainebleau to more effectively assess recreation use, its impact on the natural resource and the management changes (pilot actions) that will be needed to ensure sustainable enjoyment in a situation of increased use.

This project is being run by a PROGRESS partnership (PROmotion and Guidance for Recreation on Ecologically Sensitive Sites) which is an international project with five partners including the Forestry Commission and the Countryside Agency in the UK; the Office National des Forêts and the Comité Départemental du Tourisme in France; and the Alterra Research Institute in The Netherlands. The Forestry Commission is the lead partner and manages the project via a small team based in the New Forest.

It is a four year project (2003 - 2007) costing €3.7 million. It is jointly funded by the E.U. Interreg IIIB Programme, the UK's Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and the project's five partner organisations.

To assess the impact of recreation and identify appropriate management strategies:

- Sophisticated data collection techniques are being used including GPS data to provide spatial and temporal distributions of visitor behaviour.
- This data is used in modelling exercises which give clarity to present recreational use and clear guidance on its impact on the natural resource.
- These models will allow the "virtual" testing of proposed site management changes aimed at reducing impact whilst accepting continued and probable increased use. The GPS data provides verification of model outputs and gives legitimacy to them when presented to stakeholders.
- These are being presented to stakeholders and the public through the use of participation techniques which allow them a role in decision making based on clear and understandable information generated by the data collection exercise.

Overall therefore the aim is to test techniques which will provide better ways of establishing visitor flow management strategies that are effective, gain public support and reduce impact on the natural resource whilst facilitating sustainable enjoyment.

The New Forest and Fontainebleau

There is much in common between the two research sites:

- Both are high quality iconic landscapes of considerable size with a range of individual recreation sites within them
- Both are close to large urban populations so much of the use is by locals visiting with high frequency and throughout the year.
- Activities of these locals - especially dog walking, horse riding and mountain biking - present special management problems.
- Both have seen considerable increases in use in the last 15 years against the general trend of countryside recreation which has been largely stable.

Levels and Patterns of Use

New Forest

Forestry Commission managed land (perambulation)	38,000 ha
Land within the National Park boundary	57086 ha
Car Parks/Sites	132

Total Visits per annum	13.5 million
Total local resident day visitors per annum	6 million
Total non resident day visitors per annum	6 million
Holiday makers	1.5 million

(source:2006 PROGRESS Visitor Survey)

Fontainebleau

Fontainebleau National Park	17,117 ha
Car Parks/Sites	56

Total Visits per annum	13 million
Total local resident day visitors per annum	6.5 million
Total non resident day visitors per annum	6.5 million

Introduction to partnership in PROGRESS

The research is also testing methods of engaging with the public and stakeholders to fully involve them in decisions about necessary management changes and thus to implement them with the consent and commitment of users.

The main aim of PROGRESS is to reduce the impacts arising from the increasing demands of recreation on protected conservation areas in both the New Forest and the Forêt de Fontainebleau in France.

Modelling with Clarity to achieve Public Credibility

Encouraging the public to enjoy the countryside and the therapeutic benefits of tranquillity, open space and fresh air whilst protecting the natural resource is the challenge faced in both forests. To fully understand present behaviour, its impact on the natural resource and the likely impact of ameliorative changes requires effective modelling.

The models also need high clarity to be credible when presented to the public and stakeholders so that they will understand the reason for management changes and willingly modify their behaviour.

This is a big prize, done right it will provide public acceptance of, and commitment to, sustainable management change. It could also lead across to other behaviour to encourage a more sustainable lifestyle.

Two interlinked models are in development and being tested as part of this research: (Jochem *et al*, 2005)

The first is MASOOR (Multi-Agent Simulation of Outdoor Recreation) which assesses the movement of individual visitors who are properly represented as acting independently to achieve a defined leisure objective or activity. The model reflects the real world in having visitors spatially located and aware of their location. It also reflects the nature of the recreational experience which is a complex mixture of time allocation and route choice.

The model assesses movement across sites treated as closed systems with a number of entry points (such as car parks, village centres and railway stations). And with either formal or visitor established routes of different surface type and attractiveness. Likely distributions on these paths are based on social preferences of different visitor categories for route options drawn from the survey data and verified by the use of GPS data.

Social differentiation also reflects in cultural differences in the response of different individuals to the natural environment. The environment has different meanings and values for individuals and groups. Components of these have been defined in this model in relation to instrumental value and whether a visitor can answer specific needs in a specific environment (USE), whether the site meets qualitative values, good, bad, beautiful or ugly, all of which will be culturally underpinned (PERCEPTION). The historic or cultural content (NARRATIVE) and linkage to the environment through use over time, near residence, feeling of safety in one's own place (APPROPRIATION). All of these will effect use of a site and

likelihood of accepting change in management. As with assessment of movement patterns the models are calibrated to reflect these cultural responses from attitude survey data.

It is hoped that the development of this model will also provide greater understanding of the perceptual carrying capacity of recreation sites. This aspect of site use has been little researched. However analysis of the responses of visitors to the presence or absence of others on sites (i.e. their response to crowding could add further sophistication to Management tools). (Dalrymple, *ibid*)

The LARCH model (Landscape Assessment using Rules for Configuration of Habitat) evaluates the biodiversity potential of different habitats for a range of indicator species including the effect of their size and condition. (Pouwels *et al*, 2005) Habitat data for the model is drawn from vegetation maps which are available for both forests. Optimum potential is then assessed for a range of species. This is based on field studies and expert advice. LARCH can be used to predict habitat sustainability for individual species. It can also provide a more general assessment of habitat sustainability using eco-profiles of a range of species with similar habitat needs.

Research on environmental carrying capacity indicates that small habitat areas can sustain higher species populations than would be expected if they are linked to other similar habitats by ecological corridors or networks and that there are no barriers to dispersal. The LARCH model can also test this spatial cohesion and take any barriers into account.

Linkage Between the Two Models

The impact of recreation on biodiversity has been much studied at a species level. From this it is clear that different flora and fauna respond variously to recreation pressure. However no standard framework has been developed to undertake an overall assessment of recreational impact on the environment. Running the two models in tandem does allow recreational pressure to be assessed and thus provide guidance for management changes such as limiting access or re-routing footpaths to protect habitats and the ecological corridors between them.

In summary therefore these models can take data from the real world and:

- analyse and integrate monitoring data;
- allow full evaluation of proposed site management changes and predict their effect; and,
- work flexibly across a range of habitats and patterns of recreational use.

Working with Stakeholders and the Public

The models are also of great value because they provide clear, understandable information which is meaningful to the public

and stakeholders. This is essential as the PROGRESS Project is predicated on achieving stakeholder and public understanding and acceptance of site management changes and commitment and support for the behaviour changes this will require.

A key aspect of the project is therefore the involvement of local stakeholders at both locations. Statutory agencies, forest user groups, businesses and interest groups have been brought together in a project forum. As the stakeholders represent a variety of interests, both recreational and environmental, and can provide a good local knowledge the team can ensure that decision-making has broad support and that any actions taken can be sustained into the future.

An early achievement of the New Forest stakeholder group was the production of new codes of conduct for popular activities such as horse riding, dog walking and cycling. These codes carry important messages to provide guidance on how forest users can help protect the area they enjoy so much, and are distributed at visitor information centres, local shops and libraries and can be downloaded from the New Forest website. Since they were launched in Spring 2005 a number of land managers have contacted the project to request further information and examples of each code so that they can produce their own versions.

The response to these codes will be examined later in the project through onsite survey work to assess if forest visitors are aware of the messages being conveyed.

By examining the outcome of the models the New Forest stakeholders are now in the process of deciding which sensitive parts of the forest are coming under increasing pressure, as well as discussing potential pilot actions to trial across the forest. When these actions are implemented each representative will be a key player in communicating the messages of the project and the reasons behind each action. By showing their support and understanding of the project in this way, it is hoped that they will have a greater influence in the education of other forest users.

Good communication and education is vital to the project's success. To date messages have been communicated to raise awareness of conservation issues in a variety of ways. Since the project started in October 2003 the response from the media has been excellent, and has resulted in nearly 50 million people seeing or hearing about the project through coverage in the press, on the television and radio.

PROGRESS also uses the internet as a communication channel. A website has been created to give the background and latest news of the project (www.progress-eu.info). It is aimed mainly at other land managers who may want to carry out similar activities to that of PROGRESS. The New Forest also has a site specifically for the area www.forestry.gov.uk/newforest. This is aimed more at visitors to the forest, but also to students and teachers and others who are interested in learning about the area. As well as talking about

the history, wildlife and forest projects, it also gives important information linking into the project aims about recreation and conservation, and gives details of the Forestry Commission's extensive events programme.

A project newsletter is produced three times a year and gets distributed to all involved in the project, plus other land managers. Local wildlife celebrity, Chris Packham, asked to write an article in the March 2006 issue and is incredibly supportive of the aims of the project. This has offered further credibility to the project.

PROGRESS messages are also regularly communicated through the Forestry Commission's team of rangers and volunteer rangers who take guided walks and speak at schools, and through a variety of publications including the codes of conduct previously mentioned, and an annual New Forest newspaper aimed at locals and tourists. Later this year a visitor information pack containing important information about how visitors can play their part in the protection of the forest will be distributed to all hotels, guesthouses, and so on within the National Park boundary.

Further methods of communication will be implemented throughout the project, especially whilst the pilot actions are being tested on the ground. At this point the project team aims to hold 'surgeries' on site for members of the public to drop in and find out more about the project and the actions. Talks at local villages will also be arranged along with specific meetings to explain and discuss the actions that could effect forest users.

Community Participation in Forest Management

This high public exposure for the project will hopefully lay the basis for community based management strategies which will maximise the benefits of public use of green space whilst providing better protection for the environment. There is a real opportunity to increase public confidence in appropriate use of sites to make this important use of leisure time a central component in more sustainable lifestyles. This would both meet the growing desire to involve the public more directly in the decision making processes for site management and benefit the public's wider perception of sustainability, linking a number of present national and global agendas. These include a present concern about the lack of public participation in the political process most recently presented in the Power Report (Power to the People Report 2006).

Engaging the public directly will aid this democratic deficit by encouraging citizen participation in resolving an issue which is a real concern (all recent surveys show that better provision and maintenance of public open space is seen as a major unfulfilled political desire). It will provide a clear and relevant issue to draw the public into the debate about how to achieve more sustainable lifestyles directly linked to immediate concerns. Failure to involve the public in these sort of sustainable issues despite general concern about the environment, is seen to result from presenting the sustainable

message in an irrelevant way (Hounsham, 2005). This issue could break through this problem. In tandem with this a number of researchers are considering whether community involvement that leisure activities generate are increasing social capital and therefore political effectiveness.

Use of Participatory Techniques

To achieve this on a small number of complex sites more innovative participation techniques are being piloted to assess whether the public responds positively to the opportunity to be directly involved in the decision making process for site management.

Using techniques somewhat similar to "Planning for Real" (a technique developed by the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation) a meeting will be convened using large scale plans of sites with data on use and impact drawn from the modelling exercises. By use of this technique and facilitating discussion through Open Space Technology the public will become directly involved in the decision making processes. It is hoped that by involving the public in such a way, and asking them to contribute with ideas and suggestions, the communications programme will enable people to enjoy the forests, find out where appropriate activities can be pursued and, simultaneously, learn to appreciate the special character and values of these two unique sites. At the same time it is hoped that it will read across into other sustainable behaviour

Finally it is hoped that the two country base of the research will also allow assessment of culture differences in response to the management actions and hopefully provide European relevant guidance on public and stakeholder involvement and commitment to necessary management controls.

References

Curry. N. *Access for Outdoor Recreation in England and Wales: Production, Consumption and Markets Journal of Sustainable Tourism* Vol 9, No 5, 2001 400-416

Dalrymple. G. *Recreation in the Loch Lomond Area: Ecological and Perceptual Dimensions. The Glasgow Naturalist* Vol 24 No.3 17-22)

Dower. M. (1965) *The Fourth Wave: The challenge of leisure. A Civic Trust Survey. The Architects Journal* (special issue)

Fitton. M. *Countryside Recreation. The Problems of Opportunity. Local Government Studies* 14 37-51

Glover. T. & Hemingway. J. *Locating Leisure in Social Capital Literature: Journal of Leisure Research* 2005, Vol. 37, No. 4, pp 387 - 401. See also Harshaw. H. W. & Tindall. D. B. *Social Structure, Identities, and Values: A Network Approach to Understanding People's Relationships to Forests: Journal of Leisure Research* 2005, Vol. 37, No. 4, pp 426 - 449.

Hounsham. S. *Painting the Town Green: How to persuade people to be environmentally friendly Green-Engage* 2005. See also Al Gore *The Moment of Truth. Vanity Fair. May 2006* 105

Jochem. R. et al. *MASOOR The Power to Know. Alterra* 2006. This paper will be presented at the *Third International Conference on Monitoring and Management of Visitor Flows in Recreational and Protected Areas, Rapperswil, Switzerland, 13-17 September 2006 (MMV Conference)*

Lambert. D. *The History of the Country Park, 1966-2005: Towards a Renaissance. Landscape Research* Vol 31, No 1, 43-62 Jan 2006

Pouwels. R. et al. *Integrating Recreation and Biodiversity Alterra* 2006. To be presented at the *MMV Conference*

Power to the People. The Report of the Power Commission 2005. The Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust. See also Smith. G. Beyond the Ballot: 57 Democratic Innovation from Around the World. Research conducted for the Power Commission 2005

Pretty. J. A. et al. *A Countryside for Health and Well Being: The Physical and Mental Health Benefits Of Green Exercise. Countryside Recreation Network 2005. See also Countryside Recreation* Vol 13 No 1 2005. on health and recreation.

All photographs credited to Forestry Commission

For more information about PROGRESS or the New Forest visit: www.progress-eu.info or www.forestry.gov.uk/newforest
For Alterra's modelling and concept development visit www.alterra.wur.nl/UK/

Included with this Journal is the latest edition of the Progress Newsletter.

Towards the end of 2006 the project will run a workshop for site managers who are also making management changes involving public and stakeholder participation in the management changes. We would be keen to make contact with any organisations who are working on similar programmes.

Martin Fitton: is a Member of the Progress Project Steering Group and was formally the Chief Executive of the Association of National Park Authorities and Emma Stevens is the Forestry Commission Communications Manager for the New Forest.

Contacts

Martin Fitton - tel: 02920 481791
Email: martin@mfitton.wanadoo.co.uk

For the Administration of the Progress Project please contact Peter Thaxter - tel: 023 8028 6846
Email: peter.thaxter@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Response



I thought there was perhaps a touch of “I’m alright Jack” in Hugh Westacott’s article “Lies damn lies and statistics” in your last publication (*Countryside Recreation Journal*, Spring 2006 edition)

BV178 measures the legal minimum standard for all categories of rights of way (i.e. are they passable and free of obstruction or other deterrent) consistent with the type of use that may be expected of them. I am pleased that a lot more of the nations rights of way do meet this minimum standard - possibly in part because of the BV178 performance measure and the two Audit Commission indicators which preceded it - and that seasoned and confident users will find many paths accessible with little difficulty.

Highway authorities, however, want to encourage a more diverse range of users, including the young, elderly, those with mobility problems and those with low confidence, to enjoy the benefits of the rights of way network. These benefits include mental and physical well-being and are not confined to just enjoying the countryside, but also better and more sustainable access to services in urban areas. These objectives require much better maintained routes than are required

by the seasoned walker.

Mr Westacott acknowledges his comments are limited to walkers; highway authorities’ duties and priorities are not so limited and embrace the needs and aspirations of equestrians, cyclists and even motorised vehicles.

The methodology for surveying paths for BV178 is robust and for the most part undertaken by highway authorities in a professional and dedicated manner. Over time it gives a very good indication of the authority’s performance and will be one of the few occasions officers are able to assess general network condition rather than looking at problems. Most authorities will gain a wealth of valuable sample data from the twice-yearly surveys, on which policy and budget decisions can be based to determine the most effective means of improving condition (often related to arable farming in my part of the world).

Andrew Woodin
Countryside Access Leader
Suffolk County Council
Tel: 01473 264753
Email: Andrew.woodin@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk

The views expressed within this section are not necessarily those of the Countryside Recreation Network member agencies. To submit any comments on articles in this journal, please email m.bull@shu.ac.uk

News



ACTIVE EXMOOR

Exmoor National Park's hidden gems

Visiting a National Park can give you a taste of an idyllic lifestyle but Exmoor is more than just pretty villages and beautiful countryside.

Three years ago, after some successful grant raising, Active Exmoor was set up to examine just what was going on and encourage more of the parks residents to get out and enjoy what was of offer.

Mike Bishop, the project's coordinator, soon discovered that the issues were not a lack of activities being provided on Exmoor, but a more a lack of knowledge about just what was on offer and where to go to find out about it.

Three years later the projects website now boasts a local activity directory detailing over 400 opportunities to get active, from guided walks to canoeing trips, climbing, navigation courses, riding, rowing, mountain biking, archery,.... well the list goes on significantly!

Active Exmoor also produces a regular 12 page newsletter delivered to over 2,500 Exmoor households and has nearly 1,000 recipients of its e-mail bulletins.

Mike Bishop said, "Exmoor's natural assets have huge potential. Wimbleball Lake boasts 374 acres of water with a new £1.1m water sports centre, not to mention the newly opened Coleridge Way, 400 miles of bridleways, Valley of the Rocks, stunning coastline and mile upon mile of beautiful moorland to discover!"

"Already we have the Exmoor Explorer mountain bike marathon with over 400 bikers every August, a 32 mile perambulation of Exmoor every June attracting over 200, and this year we are proudly hosting the UK IRONMAN 70.3 triathlon event with over 1,000 athletes taking part!"

Having had such success with the local community the project is now turning it's focus towards Active Tourism.

Mike Bishop continued, "It's just a natural progression. If so many people who live here had no idea about all the activities Exmoor has to offer, then the potential regionally and nationally must be massive."

"Walking guides, sailing instructors and activity leaders are always needed on Exmoor and at present the younger population are having to move away due to house price rises and the limited employment opportunities. We hope to be able to go some way to helping with this by supporting and developing local business who have so much to offer here."

The project, due to change it's focus from community to sports tourism in September this year, aims to attract thousands of new visitors to the park, help train up the local community to support the industry and deliver some exciting new sporting events in the Park.

For more information visit www.activeexmoor.com or contact mike@activeexmoor.com.

COUNTRYCHANNEL.TV

New Web Based TV for Country People

The Country Channel uses the explosion in broadband uptake and technical improvements in web based TV, to deliver a unique new service for everyone who has a passion for the countryside. The Country Channel launches in preview format on 1st May and is located at www.countrychannel.tv; the channel goes live on 1st June 2006.

Dealing with subjects that are important to country people, the Country Channel will provide targeted

information that is relevant to people who live, work or play in, the countryside.

The Country Channel will appeal to groups with shared interest such as horse riders, field and country pursuits, clubs and societies, wildlife and twitchers, conservationists, ramblers, walkers, anglers, farmers and small holders

The Country Channel is being championed by some famous faces associated with country matters such as Tony Francis (Director of the Country Channel) and Wendy Nelson, both of ITV's Heart of the Country; Lucinda Prior-Palmer, former Olympic Medallist Show Jumper and Adam Henson of BBC TV's Countryfile and the Cotswold farm Park. BBC TV's Breakfast Presenter Rob Bonnet is also Director and a Country Channel champion. He says: *"This is the first on-line TV service for a general audience and it will be a hit with both those who live in the country, and those with a keen interest in the countryside."*

To preview the Country Channel, go to www.countrychannel.tv ideally through your broadband connection. For dial up users, please visit www.countrychannel.co.uk

COUNTRYSIDE JOBS SERVICE

Online recruitment service and so much more...

Established in July 1994 CJS is an ethical company publishing free & low cost information to promote countryside careers in the UK & environmental conservation worldwide. We are a small team of ex-rangers, education officers and ecologists working on a co-operative basis to ensure we publish the widest range of relevant information for our readers. Our backgrounds in the industry ensure we know what will be relevant to those currently in the field. We are endorsed by both the Countryside Management Association and the Scottish Countryside Rangers Association.

In addition to recruitment we also advertise professional training courses, voluntary opportunities and quarterly Special Edition information supplements the next edition is to be published in August and will focus on Coastal and Marine environments, not only the type of work available but on some of the problems, conservation issues and their solutions posed by this dynamic environment.

If you would like further information then please have a look at our website: www.countryside-jobs.com

We look forward to working together to the benefit of the countryside and the conservation movement.

EQUINE TOURISM

Online Horse Tourism for the UK

Equinetourism.co.uk was launched in 2004 to promote horse tourism for the South West of England. The concept of 'horse tourism' is far more wide ranging than simply horse holidays and includes the movement of all equestrian people, at home and overseas, across all disciplines and all levels - from professional competition riders to happy hackers. Equine tourism, as a subject, includes accommodation providers and venues, horse shows and events, all the equestrian support businesses and services and the authorities and organisations that manage this wide-ranging infrastructure.

The Equinetourism.co.uk website initiative is currently developing to represent these various elements - and is now progressing nationally and internationally to represent global 'horse tourism'. With over 55,000 unique visits a month (about 750,000 hits), the site is generating excellent response for its subscribers and advertisers and it is well placed to respond to the Government's Strategy for the Horse Industry report which calls for a national online horse tourism initiative. The site was awarded Somerset Tourism Business of the Year 2005.

Equinetourism.co.uk's aim is to 'put people in touch with the experts and professionals they need, for the good of the horse, horse welfare and good horsemanship' and it is this commitment to high standards and ethics that is enabling it to build strong partnerships with organisations such as The British Horse Society, Equine Ethology, Monty Roberts and the many equine businesses and services represented on the website. The team at Equinetourism.co.uk edit and host the British Horse Society South West regional website, which is included in the main website. These partnerships are important and proactive - Equinetourism.co.uk is a partner in the new BHS Exmoor and Quantocks Riding Routes, with Exmoor National Park Authority and the Quantock Hills AONB, for which it fulfilled essential criteria to secure Sustainable Development Funding for the project.

Dawn Williams, Equinetourism.co.uk's managing director, said, *"We have established very good relationships with equestrian bodies and organisations, National Parks and Tourism authorities and the horse industry itself and the site benefits from national advertising and important two-way hyperlinks to other appropriate websites. Our objective is to develop a powerful global 'portal' site which enables everyone to benefit from better communication and business enquiries - at home and abroad. We are currently investing in the complex IT systems necessary to facilitate this progress."*

"We have found that working closely with authorities in the South West has been of considerable 'two-way' benefit in

getting projects off the ground – such as the Exmoor Riding Routes and the various Area Equine Directories that we carry online for some of the District Councils. The authorities are finding that we can take an initial project and build it into something self-sustaining which gives life to the projects after the initial funding period has ceased. It is an excellent example of how private companies can work effectively and ethically with local authorities, for the greater good of everyone and for rural sustainable economic development.” said Dawn Williams. “Individual area tourism authorities are realising the benefits of supporting a ‘portal’ initiative which attracts greater numbers of visitors and is therefore more effective than myriad individual equine tourism projects.”

Visitors to the site will find a well established South West of England section with its own Equine Directory. The UK Regions and Worldwide Equine Directories are currently being established. There is a continually updated Equestrian Events & Shows listings section which keeps people in touch with horse shows, events, activities, talks, demos and training. There are also editorial sections covering area and riding information, riding routes, and special interest sections such as TREC, The Exmoor Pony Breed, Monty Roberts, Point to Point and Equine Ethology.

Equinetourism.co.uk is a self-funded initiative and needs to build its subscriber and advertiser base to sustain its growth and development. “Fortunately, the most marketing-aware equine businesses and professionals are realising that they need to join Equinetourism.co.uk to establish a horse tourism marketplace and they are being rewarded with enquiries and response as our profile and awareness grows. By supporting the initiative now, it will be there as a long term support and promotional tool for them, which is effective, and also - very importantly - cost effective for the horse industry.” says Dawn Williams.

Equinetourism.co.uk would like to talk with organisations and area authorities across the UK who are keen to improve and establish equestrian tourism in their areas. Please contact Dawn Williams on 01984 640668 or email marketing@equinetourism.co.uk or visit <http://www.equinetourism.co.uk>

Worldwide copyright and all rights reserved 2006 Happy Horses Ltd

THE OUTWARD BOUND TRUST

The Outward Bound Trust is the UK’s leader in providing supportive and challenging outdoor adventures focused on personal development.

A charity with over 65 years’ achievement, *Outward Bound^R* inspires young people to fulfil their potential through experiences in the outdoors, helping them to overcome their fears, raising their self-esteem and preparing them to face the future with confidence, respect and compassion.

The mountains and the sea have provided the outdoor classroom for a million young people to benefit from *Outward Bound^R* since its foundation in 1941. In the next year alone, a further 25,000 will complete a high ropes course, build a raft or abseil for the first time in their lives. These young people will complete their *Outward Bound^R* Adventure as part of a residential course at one of the Trust’s centres in inspiring UK locations – Ullswater in The English Lake District, Loch Eil near Scotland’s Fort William, and Aberdovey on the Welsh coast near Aberystwyth.

Outward Bound^R is about taking people through a transitional time in their lives –whatever stage they’re at. It shows them the meaning of the phrase “I can”. And it generates memories and experiences that last a lifetime, changing the way they approach and view their life choices and helping them take responsibility for them.

Tony Blair is the first to recognise that an outdoor experience such as *Outward Bound^R* develops skills and attributes critical for the challenges facing young people at school and as they enter the world of work.

And it works. One Birmingham school has seen a grade and a half improvement in test results for their students following *Outward Bound^R*. And in a study with Loughborough University, 87% of children on an HSBC-sponsored *Outward Bound^R* course demonstrated academic improvement once back in school.

The Outward Bound Trust is non-profit making, educational charity. Any surplus is ploughed back into the organisation, providing more courses for young people who would otherwise not have the opportunity. Nick Barrett, *Outward Bound^R*’s CEO, believes every child should have the opportunity to do an *Outward Bound^R* course: “Adventure in the outdoors can be an extraordinarily powerful teacher. Obviously it is healthy; but it also gives young people a belief in themselves, a chance to work as part of a team and the ability to trust and respect others.”

For further details of all personal development opportunities with *Outward Bound^R*, visit www.outwardbound-uk.org. *Outward Bound^R* is the registered trademark of the Outward Bound Trust

TOOTH AND CLAW

A New Website

Despite our deep-rooted fascination with eagles, foxes and even wolves, their need to kill other animals to survive, can distort our perspective and influence our attitude towards them.

Predators mean different things to different people but few with an interest in the British countryside remain indifferent.

How we live alongside these creatures is really about managing people's perceptions – what we believe, what we value and how we interact with nature.

So how do we really feel about Britain's predators and how are those feelings persuaded by culture, myth and economics? Can the shooting of seals ever be justified? Should the impact of pet cats on small birds be controlled? Should public money be spent on returning wolves and lynx to our wild areas?

Tooth & Claw is a new initiative which will explore these issues and provide a meeting place for anecdotal evidence and scientific fact. Its objective is to improve communication and awareness on a range of predator-related issues.

The recently launched web site at www.toothandclaw.org.uk is the foundation for the project which, over the coming years, is set to be the most far-reaching survey of its kind in Britain.

For further information please contact Peter Cairns, Ballintean, Glenfeshie, Kingussie, PH21 1NX. Tel: 01540 651352 or Email: peter@toothandclaw.org.uk

THE COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY

An Assessment of the Delivery of Countryside Management in England

The Countryside Agency (CA) has commissioned Sheffield Hallam University and Hallam Environmental Consultants Ltd to carry out an assessment of the delivery of countryside management in England. The project has been commissioned by that part of the Agency which deals with the urban fringe and countryside on the urban doorstep -the operational focus of so many (but obviously not all) countryside management professionals and teams.

This will be the most thorough national investigation into how countryside management is delivered since a Value for Money Study of Countryside Management Services by the Countryside Commission (the CA's predecessor) at the beginning of the 1990s. As you will be aware the CA will become part of Natural England (NE) in October this year. We all want the countryside management sector to be recognised as an important partner and delivery agent by the new organisation. To help this happen we should bequeath NE a clear understanding of what countryside management is, how it operates (either through distinct teams or integrated with wider park and green space or environmental services), and what it needs to realise its potential etc.

Hallam Environmental Consultants Ltd will be sending out a questionnaire, on behalf of the project, to all local authorities and members of organisations involved in delivering Countryside Management Services during July. Telephone

interviews may also be carried out with a selection of key individuals. A small number of case studies will be undertaken based on responses from the survey and identification of good practice.

The Countryside Agency urge questionnaire recipients to complete and return their form asap. If you are due to be on holiday could you ask an appropriate colleague to deal with it. Obviously, the greater the level of returns the more robust the project's outputs. If you would like to contribute to the research but do not receive a questionnaire or letter or you have any queries about the questionnaire please contact Christine Handley at info@hallamec.plus.com. Please contact Andrew Gale if you would like to know more about the project in general.

Andy Gale, Senior Policy Officer, The Countryside Agency
andrew.gale@countryside.gov.uk

DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS (DEFRA)

Jim Knight announces Natural England Board

Rural Affairs Minister, Jim Knight today announced thirteen appointments to the Board of Natural England, the new public body responsible for enhancing and managing the natural environment.

Mr Knight said Peter Allen, Melinda Appleby, Sarah Burton, Roger Clarke, Lynn Crowe, Merrick Denton-Thompson, Michael Depledge, Tony Hams, David Hill, Doug Hulyer, David Macdonald, Christopher Pennell and Pam Warhurst would take up their positions on the Natural England Board when the body is legally established in May.

The Chief Executive Officer of Natural England, Dr Helen Phillips, has been appointed an *ex officio* member of the Board.

Mr Knight said the Natural England Board would be responsible for overseeing the establishment and operations of the new body, which will take up its full functions on 1 October.

"The Board of Natural England has a big job ahead of it, and I am confident that the Board we have chosen has the breadth of interests, expertise and dynamism to discharge this duty ably, and to provide the new organisation with the leadership and direction it needs in the critical period ahead," he said.

Sir Martin Doughty, the Chair Designate of Natural England said: *"I am delighted that we have a Board with such a wealth of expertise, experience and knowledge. Among its members are leading ecologists, lawyers, upland and*

lowland farmers, recreation and access experts and academics. I believe that we have an excellent team to drive forward Natural England's purpose, ensuring that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of people now and in the future."

Biographical details of appointees

Appointed until 30 September 2007

Doug Hulyer. Now an independent advisor on People and Nature programmes and projects, Doug was formerly (to end of December 2005) Director of Conservation Programmes for the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust. A committed environmentalist, environmental educator and conservationist with almost 30 years professional experience.

Pam Warhurst. Currently Deputy Chair of The Countryside Agency, Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and Manufacturing, and Chair of a social enterprise in the North East of England. Previous posts include Chair of a Health Trust; Leader of a Local Authority; and a member of an RDA.

Appointed until 30 September 2008

David Macdonald. Professor of Wildlife Conservation, University of Oxford. Director (and founder) Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, Oxford University. Chairman Darwin Advisory Committee. Awarded 2004 Dawkins Prize for contributions to wildlife conservation.

Tony Hams, OBE. Countryside Agency board member since 2000 - leading on protected areas, planning and energy issues. Chair of the UK Association of National Park Authorities and East Midlands Heritage Lottery Fund Committee. Former chair of the Green Alliance - remains a trustee. Professional background in planning, conservation and sustainable development. Awarded an OBE in 2000 for 'services to sustainable development'.

Roger Clarke. Chief Executive and a member of the Board of the Youth Hostels Association since 2000. From 1984 to 1999 he was Policy Director in the Countryside Agency (formerly the Countryside Commission).

Merrick Denton-Thompson OBE. Assistant Director of Environment, Hampshire County Council. A Trustee of the Learning Through Landscapes Trust and the Place2Be Trust. Rural Adviser to the Local Government Association and Awarded an OBE in 2002 for services to education.

Melinda Appleby specialises in sustainable land management and is an independent consultant in agriculture and environment. Member of the Consumer Council for Water- Eastern region; Council member of the Royal Agricultural Society of England; Trustee of the Wildlife Trust - Cambs, Beds and Northants.

Appointed until 30 September 2009

Christopher Pennell. After an Oxford law degree and 27 years in the coal industry, Christopher became for a decade the National Trust's East Midlands Director. For 13 years he was a Parish Councillor and for 3 years a trustee of CPRE in the Peak District and South Yorkshire. He is now a Member

of English Nature's Council, the Peak District National Park Authority and the East Midlands Committee of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Mrs Lynn Crowe. Principal Lecturer in countryside management at Sheffield Hallam University and responsible for the management of the Countryside Recreation Network. In 2005, Lynn was appointed to the Council of English Nature, and she is also a member of the Peak District National Park Authority.

David Hill has significant experience in consultancy, nature conservation and company business strategy. He is Chief Scientific Adviser to RPS Group plc, and a Fellow and past President of the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. He has published extensively on ecological issues.

Sarah Burton. A Lawyer by training. In January 2006 was appointed Campaign Programme Director for Amnesty International. Between 1990 and 2001 Sarah held various positions with Greenpeace UK.

Michael Depledge. Chief scientific advisor to the Environment Agency. Senior science advisor to the Plymouth Marine Laboratory. Member of the Natural Environment Research Council.

Peter Allen. Is a 17th generation Lakeland tenant hill farmer. Chairman of the North West Regional Management Board of the NFU. Member of the Moorland Access Advisory Group.

Appointment details

All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for appointees' political activities (if any) to be made public.

This appointments were made in accordance with the code laid down by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Commissioner is independent of the Government and was appointed to follow up certain recommendations of the Nolan Committee. The intention of the Code is to provide an efficient and transparent appointments system in which both candidates and the public can have confidence. More details concerning the Commission and the Code are available at www.ocpa.gov.uk

THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Anglers Survey

Anglers are being asked to help in a survey of angling activity and expenditure in England and Wales. The Environment Agency and Defra have commissioned the project to improve our knowledge of the economic contribution of fresh water angling in each region. Economists from Glasgow Caledonian University and Jacobs Babbie are leading the work. A sample of licence holders in every region was surveyed by telephone during February and March. The study team has also produced a web-based

survey and is appealing for anglers to complete a questionnaire on-line. Every angler who fished in England and Wales for freshwater species (salmon, sea trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, grayling, eels or coarse fish) at any time during 2005 is asked to take part. *The questionnaire can be found at: <http://www.gcal.ac.uk/econsurv/anglersurvey.htm> and takes about 10-15 minutes to complete.*

A Better Environment, Healthier Fisheries

Ben Bradshaw, the Fisheries Minister, launched the Environment Agency's Strategy – 'A Better Environment, Healthier Fisheries' – at the House of Commons on in February 2006. The first implementation plan under it – Angling in 2015 – was published in April. Angling is good for our health, the economy and the environment. Last year more than 4 million people went fishing. We want to increase this number and the benefits it can bring. You can read our implementation plan, and details of the specific actions we'll take over the next ten years to make Angling 2015 a reality. *More information can be found from the Fisheries on our website: http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/fish/?lang=_e*

Preparing for Climate Change Impacts on Freshwater Ecosystems (PRINCE)

Researchers from Cascade consulting have reviewed the potential impacts of Climate Change on freshwater ecosystems and proposed an approach to investigate these for a selection of UK river environments. Potential changes in climate are likely to influence the aquatic ecosystem in two ways, by episodic pulsed effects (i.e. changes in the frequency, duration and magnitude of extreme events) and by progressive change in average conditions. In freshwater ecosystems, changes in the temperature regime could have significant effects on the life cycle of a wide range of aquatic organisms. *Full report: <http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/SCHO0805BJJF-e-e.pdf> Science summary: <http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/SCHO0805BJJG-e-e.pdf>*

Strategic Planning for Water Related Sport and Recreation

We are pleased to announce that we have agreed pilot projects for Strategic Planning to be hosted in South West and Eastern Regions of England. Strategic planning is likely to provide a very positive opportunity for us to influence the sustainable development, better management and promotion of water-related sport and recreation in each region. A regional approach to provision will facilitate the development of better planning guidance for local authorities, the development of policy, guidance and best practice to assist others to resolve issues, conflicts and other needs. Crucial to the forming baseline information will be the involvement of governing bodies in the process, providing data on facilities, participation and membership levels, working with us to collect best practice and evidence of social and economic benefits. It will also be important that each governing body of sport plays an active part in the stakeholder consultation process.

This is an opportunity for the Environment Agency to apply its knowledge of water resources and the wider environment, water quality and the impacts of climate change to ensure that we influence and help others plan sustainably for changing conditions or emerging opportunities. A GIS based decision making planning tool will be used to help identify the most appropriate opportunities for investment which are sustainable and maximise social & economic benefits.

Salmon parasite & water recreation

In agreement with Defra, Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science, Welsh Assembly Government and British Canoe Union, we have been able to assemble an information sheet aimed at all water recreation users regarding the salmon parasite *Gyrodactylus salaris* (*G.salaris*). Thankfully the parasite has not yet been found in the U.K but experiments have shown that our salmon would be killed by it, so it is important that it is not introduced from Europe. It is possible that even one parasite imported to a previously unaffected river could cause an epidemic in a very short time. The main threat is from the importation of diseased fish from the continent and controls are now in place to minimise these risks. Anglers have been previously informed of the dangers of importing the parasite.

However, there is also a smaller risk that other watersports enthusiasts returning from some European countries could inadvertently carry the parasite back to this country on craft and kit. The information sheet will help to raise the need for responsible use of the environment by all users and points the way to simple preventative measures.

The information sheet is also available from the Recreation pages of our website: www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/recreation

MOORS FOR THE FUTURE PROJECT

Moorlands Visitor's Dog Card Launched

From today (May 16) dog owners who visit the Peak District moorlands can pick up a free card which enables owners to record details about their pet that can be kept on them at all times. As part of the 'Paws on the Moors' initiative, the Moors for the Future Partnership have published the card to help owners become re-united with their dogs in the unlikely, but worrying event they become separated.

The handy wallet-sized card is based on the 'You and Your Dog in the Countryside' leaflet published by the Countryside Agency, Kennel Club and English Nature last year and focuses on what to do if you lose your dog. A photograph of your dog can be attached to the card and important information such as the dog's petlog number, insurance details and important phone numbers can also be recorded for easy reference if you become separated. In addition, a complimentary webpage is available at www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk <<http://www.moorsforthefu->

www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk> which holds a wealth of information on dog friendly B&B's, vets and first aid.

The card has been produced in liaison with the Kennel Club. Stephen Jenkinson, Access Adviser for the Club, said: "Dogs give many people the motivation and confidence to explore these very special places. This card helps dogs and their owners have a safe and enjoyable visit, whilst protecting the moors through the Countryside Code. Accidents do occasionally happen and the 'Paws on the Moors' card gives vital information at a critical time."

Said Dan Boys, Moor Care Ranger: "We not only hope that when dog owners visit the moors they will ensure their pet stays under close control, so that they do not become separated and get lost, but also to ensure disturbance to wildlife is kept to a minimum. Internationally important birds such as red grouse, curlew and golden plover live and nest on the ground and excited dogs can inadvertently scare parent birds off their nests which can result in the death of young or unhatched chicks. Sheep and lambs are also particularly vulnerable at this time of year too."

In order to minimise impacts and keep your dog safe, the card asks visitors to:

- Keep your dog close by, under control and in sight at all times;
- Please follow official signs that illustrate the sensitive times and areas of moorland in the nesting and lambing season - from 1 March to 31 July. Dogs should be on a short lead during this time and you may not be able to take your dog onto some open access areas of heather moorland at any time of year, to protect wildlife;
- If cattle chase you and your dog, it is safer to let your dog off the lead - don't risk getting hurt trying to protect it.

When planning a moorland walk, it is advisable to check www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk to see if dogs are allowed and obey local signs. Public rights of way across moorland remain open for dog walkers as before. The new card will be available from Tourist Information Centres and National Park Rangers. For further information please contact Moors for the Future on 01629 816581.

SPORTSCOTLAND

Sportscotland Heads West

Scottish Ministers have concluded following an option appraisal that sportscotland's headquarters should relocate to the east end of Glasgow.

The national sports agency will be sited within the new National Indoor Sports Arena which is being built as part of the Executive's National and Regional Sports Facilities Strategy.

The move will affect 133 staff and will take place as soon as the building is ready with the arena scheduled for completion by Autumn 2009.

Sports Minister Patricia Ferguson said: "I am convinced that relocating sportscotland to Glasgow is the right move for our national sports agency. I also understand the concerns of sportscotland staff who face the upheaval of relocating to Glasgow, but I believe it presents an exciting opportunity that will allow sportscotland to develop and influence the future of sport in Scotland. It is good news for the east end of Glasgow - an area with pressing social and economic needs. It is important that our national sports agency plays a central role in preparations for the London Olympics in 2012 and helps Glasgow secure the 2014 Commonwealth Games."

Julia Bracewell OBE, Chair of sportscotland, said: "Now that a decision has been made by Ministers, we will work closely with the Scottish Executive and our staff to discuss how a move to Glasgow can be implemented in the best interests of Scottish sport. As the national agency for sport, our role is to lead and develop sport in Scotland. We are at an exciting yet critical time for Scottish sport with a London Olympics in 2012 and a potential Commonwealth Games in 2014. We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to change the face of Scottish sport and we will do everything possible to ensure we are in a position to fully capitalise on this."

Derek Casey, Director of the Glasgow 2014 Bid Team, said: "The decision demonstrates a vital commitment to Scotland's bid to host the Commonwealth Games in 2014. Sportscotland's new location will act as a hub for the future development of sport at all levels across the whole of Scotland."

The relocation appraisal looked at both the economic case and the specific relocation criteria. The economic case examined and compared the capital and revenue costs of the different options over a 25 year period. It showed that relocation to Glasgow would provide better value for money than remaining at Caledonia House.

The assessment of the relocation criteria looked at socio-economic and business efficiency factors. The Glasgow option scored particularly highly for socio-economic factors and scored the highest overall for the combined score.

The Executive's policy on relocation, which was introduced in September 1999, aims to ensure that government in Scotland is more efficient and decentralised, providing cost-effective delivery solutions and assisting areas with social and economic needs.

To-date, over 2,000 posts have been located or relocated outwith Edinburgh and around a further 900 posts have had their future location decided. There are around 1,500 posts currently under review.

Countryside Recreation Network Events

Young People in the Countryside Seminar

The Centre in the Park, Sheffield
27th September 2006
£125 (£100 sponsoring agencies)

The seminar is intended for countryside site managers, rangers, local authority planners, leisure officers and educationalists, government agencies and any public, voluntary or private sector organisation that wishes to understand issues in developing and promoting the countryside to young people. It will explore strategic and practical questions, illustrated with a range of examples of good practice.

Aims of the Event

Timed to coincide with the DEFRA consultation "Outdoors for All: Draft Diversity Action Plan" the seminar will explore:

- What has happened to influence young people's demand for recreation in the outdoors?
- Is it worthwhile trying to overcome young people's negative perceptions of the outdoors when in the near future the majority of people will be over 50 and who perhaps like things the way they are?
- If we are serious about providing for young people what do we need to do to enable the countryside to overcome its traditional image and to provide opportunities which teenagers enjoy.

Knowing Your Customer. The Joys of Statistics and Visitor Monitoring Seminar

The Priory Centre, York
25th October 2006
£125 (£100 sponsoring agencies)

The seminar is aimed at site managers, practitioners and policy makers in local authorities and national government agencies; and any public, voluntary or private sector organisation that wishes to further understand the methods of visitor monitoring. It will explore strategic and practical questions, illustrated with a range of examples of good practice.

Aims of the Event

- To provide an overview of the range of visitor surveys that take place and discuss how these can support work at national, regional, local and site based level.
- To consider how visitor surveys support policy, site management, communications and marketing.
- To consider the range of information which can be gained from visitor surveys and the possibilities and the limitations. To look at the value of trend data - flexibility versus consistency.

Why? How? Who? Community Engagement in Countryside and Urban Greenspace Management.

The Priory Rooms, Birmingham
15th November 2006
£125 (£100 sponsoring agencies)

The seminar is intended for countryside and urban greenspace practitioners from the public, private and voluntary sectors who wish to find out more about the benefits of community engagement and how to go about it. It will explore strategic and operational aspects of community engagement and be illustrated with a variety of case studies.

Aims of the Event

- To provide an insight into the benefits of involving the community in countryside and urban greenspace management
- To suggest a number of mechanisms for facilitating community engagement
- To help identify which methods of engagement will help to meet which objectives
- To promote a greater understanding of what we mean by "the community"
- To provide an opportunity to meet other professionals involved in community engagement

For further information and a booking form for any of these events please visit our website www.countrysidecreation.org.uk or alternatively email crn@shu.ac.uk

Countryside Recreation Network Publications List

	Price (incl.postage)	Tick
REPORTS		
A Countryside for Health and Wellbeing: The Physical and Mental Health Benefits of Green Exercise (2005)	£20	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Exclusion in Countryside Leisure in the United Kingdom - the role of the countryside in addressing social exclusion (2001)	£10	<input type="checkbox"/>
CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS		
Removing Barriers; Creating Opportunities: Social Inclusion in the Countryside (2001)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing the Challenge of Access (2000)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the Honeypot Overflowing? (1998)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making Access for All a Reality (1997)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Today s Thinking for Tomorrow s Countryside (1995)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communities in their Countryside (1994)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS		
Volunteering. Strategies and Practice for Engaging Volunteers in Countryside Recreation and Management (2006)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activity Tourism: From Strategy to Delivery (2006)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrating the Economic Value of Countryside Recreation II (2006)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reasonable Access? (2005)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Question of Respect; Conservation and Countryside Recreation (2005)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivering a Countryside for Health and Wellbeing (2005)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visitor Safety in the Countryside (2005)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
'And Your Evidence Is?' Evaluation Frameworks (2004)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visitor Information and Wayfinding Needs (2004)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrating the Economic Value of Countryside Recreation (2004)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessible Greenspace (2003)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Country Parks II (2003)(Country Parks I & II can be purchased together for £20)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Country Parks I(2003)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Rights of Way Improvement Plans (2002)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Funding for Social Projects (2002)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opening Up Access In and Around Towns (2002)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visitor Payback Schemes (2002)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Access Forums (2001)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fundraising and the Lottery (2001)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are We Getting There? Delivering Sustainable Transport in the Countryside (2000)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Breaking New Ground in Sustainable Tourism (2000)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using Local Distinctiveness as an Economic Development Tool (1999)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Just Walking the Dog (1999)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sponsorship (1998)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making Ends Meet (1997)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
GIS & Countryside Management - Theory and Application (1997)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to Water - Sharing Access on Reservoirs and Rivers (1997)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do Visitor Surveys Count? - Making use of Surveys of Countryside Recreation (1996)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consensus in the Countryside I - Reaching Shared agreement in policy, planning and management (1996)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Brush with the Land - Art in the Countryside II (1996)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Brush with the Land - Art in the Countryside I (1995)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playing Safe? Managing Visitor Safety in the Countryside (1995)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
GIS & Access to the Countryside (1995)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sport in the Countryside (1995)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>

Title _____ First Name _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

E-mail _____ Tel _____

For more information, please contact: Katherine Powell, CRN, Sheffield Hallam University, Unit 7, Sheffield Science Park, Howard Street, Sheffield, S1 2LX.

Email: crn@shu.ac.uk or order publications online from our website www.countrysiderecreation.org.uk

Cheques should be made payable to: Sheffield Hallam University