About the speakers

**Lynn Crowe** is Professor of Environmental Management at Sheffield Hallam University. Her main interests are in countryside recreation, and the contribution the natural environment can make to the quality of people's lives. Trained as a planner and ecologist, she has previously worked at the Countryside Commission, local authority countryside services, and the Campaign to Protect Rural England, and has been a board member of both English Nature and Natural England

**Dave Stone** is the Deputy Chief Scientist at Natural England. He has been an advocate for the environment as a wider determinant of health since the late 1990’s. He is the UK National Reference Centre for environment and health, and an executive board member of the Health and Environment Alliance.

**Simon Butler** is Policy Officer at the Sport and Recreation Alliance, which serves as the UK’s umbrella body for the sport and recreation sector. His role focuses on extending physical activity opportunities to individuals of all ages and backgrounds.

**Verity Comley** is a researcher for the Sport and Recreation Alliance, and has a Master’s Degree from the University of Durham.

Presentation abstracts

**Keynote 1: Outdoor recreation: changing pressures, new opportunities**

Professor Lynn Crowe, Sheffield Hallam University

A personal overview summarising existing trends in outdoor recreation, particularly relating to who participates in what and where and why. An exploration of the factors which influence the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities in the natural environment, particularly public intervention in recreation provision, and how these might be changing. What are the opportunities and what are the challenges? Finally reflecting on how (if?) we evaluate our policies and initiatives effectively, and whether we can judge if we are successful in our objectives or not.

**Keynote 2: Evidence informed policy and practice: future research challenges in countryside recreation**

Dave Stone, Natural England

The last decade or so has seen significant advances in the understanding of the benefits that outdoor recreation helps to deliver to society, economy and the environment, and not forgetting the folk who actually participate. But in these straitened times the benefits of the outdoors are in danger of being overlooked or considered as nice to have but not necessary. External pressures and our increased professionalism have raised the bar for evidence to inform policy and practice.

Understanding and overcoming the barriers to outdoor recreation, properly evaluating the effects of recreation management on people’s behaviour, and identifying and quantifying the causal mechanisms of health and well-being benefits are just a few of the research challenges facing the countryside recreation community. In this talk, I shall offer some brief reflections on future research challenges that must be met if countryside recreation is not to be overlooked in policy and practice, and what the community could practically do to meet them.

**Keynote 3: Communicating the economic impact of outdoor recreation**

Simon Butler and Verity Comley, Sport and Recreation Alliance

The Sport and Recreation Alliance represents a wide range of organisations which deliver outdoor recreation opportunities. By stimulating tourism, creating jobs, generating sales and boosting health and wellbeing these activities have a direct and indirect economic impact. The Alliance is currently drafting a report which will showcase the extent of that impact as part of its long-term aim to make the case for outdoor recreation. The report is currently a work in progress, but this keynote offers a chance to share the progress so far and invite thoughts, feedback and input from others in the sector.