



This issue... 'Young People and the Outdoors: the Next Steps'.

- Children and Nature-Deficit Disorder • Real and Perceived Risk to Children in the Outdoors • Growing Up Outdoors with the John Muir Award
- Scottish Wildlife Trust's Glen Mile Mountain Bike Trail • Wild Child - The National Trust Campaign to Get Children Outdoors
- Influencing Walkers with Dogs: Three Years of Progress • From the Archive - Young People, Adventure and the Countryside
- Agency Profile - Defra • News/ Case Study • Summary of Past CRN Events and Forthcoming CRN Events • Publications



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.

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Forthcoming CRN Event:

Education in the Outdoors
23 February 2010
Sheffield

Please contact the Secretariat to find out more about this event and to book a place

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Editorial

Geoff Hughes, Chairman of the Countryside Recreation Network

At the end of the final session of the Countryside Recreation Network conference in December last year, all delegates were asked to leave notes on their table outlining specific actions which they felt the agencies of the Countryside Recreation Network (CRN) should consider further to encourage “Growing Up Outdoors”. One of the challenges to CRN was to collect evidence about the benefits of the outdoors to children and to disseminate this information throughout the sector and to other sectors particularly education and health.

So twelve months on, the theme of this journal is “Young People and the Outdoors: The Next Steps” and I hope that the words of the contributors can at least take a few small steps to spreading the word about the dangers we face as a society if our young people disengage from the natural world. The evidence contained in the articles of “what works” will also hopefully encourage other providers to think about the need to continue to innovate to make the countryside relevant to the lifestyles of young people in the 21st century.

Of course, nobody said it was easy and young people’s (and parents’) attitudes and patterns of behaviour have changed significantly in the last twenty years and are a reflection of changes in society over a much longer period. And it’s not just in the UK and Ireland where things have changed. As Richard Louv indicates in his article, people of my age grew up playing outside only going home when it got dark. Now Richard indicates only 10% of children play in natural spaces. David Ball makes similar arguments and using children’s outdoor play provision as a history describes some of the pressures which shape children’s environments and the unintended consequences.

In the last year it would be easy to say nothing has changed! But I am more positive than that. All of our writers explore good practice and it is a key role of CRN to try and share “what works”. Perhaps one of the easiest ways to get kids outdoors is to get them to “take the dog for a walk” and I am delighted that in the last 3 years since we explored this issue Stephen Jenkinson, Jo Hale and Paddy Harrop feel that good progress has been made in meeting the needs of dog walkers. In a different way The National Trust, the largest conservation organisation in the UK, is making great efforts to re-connect children with nature, described in the article about its “Wild Child” campaign. This seems to me to be a really positive approach of the Trust and a demonstration that it is serious about tackling the problems that arise from an increasingly sedentary indoor lifestyle.

I have mentioned above the importance of innovation and a good example is the article about the Scottish Wildlife Trust’s initiative to explore the opportunity to get mountain biking on the PE curriculum. There is no doubt that for many young people they get switched on to the outdoors by their experience at school and learning outside the classroom is a growing part of government education policy. There is first hand experience of the benefits described in the case study as part of the article about the John Muir Award which shows that an increased connection to the natural environment afforded benefits to young children who had been excluded from school. The study showed that the experience had a calming effect on the children and afforded emotional and mental health benefits.

At CRN we are also trying ourselves to innovate and in this issue we have begun to include an archive section and to share the knowledge gained from our Member organisations by incorporating Case Studies. We have 40 years worth of good practice having run events and published reports since our inception in 1968. We don’t need to keep “reinventing the wheel”, there is lots of good practice out there and I am sure most of it has been done before!

I think it’s fair to say that we are continuing to do our bit to further the opportunities for outdoor recreation for young people and in February 2010 we are holding an event entitled “Education in the Outdoors”. I do hope that some of you will be able to join us at that seminar.

Geoff Hughes is the Chairman of the Countryside Recreation Network.

Children and Nature-Deficit Disorder

Richard Louv, *Children and Nature*



Many people about my age, baby boomers or older, were familiar with free, natural play as children. I surely knew my Missouri woods and fields; I knew every bend in the creek and dip in the beaten dirt paths. I wandered those woods even in my dreams.

Such experiences were as likely in the UK as in the U.S., although the settings would differ — a prairie windbreak of trees in the American Midwest, a hedgerow on an English heath. Even in the most urban areas, children had more freedom, in those days, to experience nearby nature in a park or on patches of undeveloped land. In this era of child pagers, GPS tracking and instant messaging, most of us know that natural play seems to many like a quaint artifact of a distant age.

In *Last Child in the Woods*, first published in the U.S. in 2005, and updated for publication this summer in Britain, I suggested the phrase “nature-deficit disorder” as a way to define a widespread problem. The phrase is not a medical diagnosis (though perhaps it should be) but a handy way to describe today’s increasing alienation from nature. An expanding body of research in the UK, the United States, Scandinavia, Australia and elsewhere suggests the extent of this trend and the impact if it continues. (A bibliography of more than one hundred recent research studies relating to benefits to children of contact with nature and children’s

experience of nature is available on the Children & Nature Network Web site. All studies meet criteria for scholarly excellence and are available at no charge.

<http://www.childrenandnature.org/research/>

Recently, a survey of 3,000 parents by the National Trust revealed that playing in a garden or a park was their favourite childhood memory, followed by building a den and seeing wildlife in its natural habitat. Yet, says the Trust, 38 per cent of children now spend less than one hour a day outdoors.

In March of this year, the Report to Natural England on *Childhood and Nature: a Survey on Changing Relationships with Nature Across Generations* measured differences in nature contact between children today and their parents’ generation. The researchers found that fewer than 10 per cent of children played in natural places, such as woodlands and heaths, compared with 40 per cent of adults who did so when they were young. The researchers also reported that 75 per cent of adults claimed to have had a “patch of nature” near their homes when they were children, and that more than half went there at least once a week.

A survey by BBC Wildlife Magazine, reported in 2008, found that many children in the UK sample group could not identify common species, including bluebells and frogs; these children ranked playing in the countryside as their least popular way of spending spare time. The report led Sir David Attenborough to warn: “*Nobody is going to protect the natural world unless they understand it.*”



Lest anyone should consider nature-deficit disorder to be only a Western phenomenon, an article this year in the *American Journal of Play* reported the results of a survey of mothers of 2,400 children in 16 countries. The percentages of mothers who said that their children often explored nature were lowest in Brazil (18 per cent), Indonesia (7 per cent) and China (5 per cent).

Why is this world outside – the natural world — becoming unfamiliar to young people? In my interviews with American parents, they gave various everyday reasons, including disappearing access to natural areas, competition from television and computers, dangerous traffic, more homework and other time pressures. Most frequently, though, they cited fear of strangers, as round-the-clock news conditions them to believe in an epidemic of child-snatchings. One father told me: *“I have a rule. I want to know where my kid is 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I want to know where that kid is. Which house. Which square foot. Which telephone number.”* Such comments are widespread, despite evidence that the real number of kidnappings by strangers is small relative to the impression that the news and entertainment media create.

These are very real barriers. I felt that fear, too, as a parent, so my two boys did not have the kind of free-range childhood that I did. But when my younger son, Matthew, made me aware of the nature gap in his life many years ago, I tripled my efforts to get both my sons outside more. My wife and I encouraged them to build forts in the canyon behind our house (within eyesight) and we took them hiking and fishing, standing back to allow them to play as independently as possible, as long as they were relatively safe.

Although we live in a very different society today, we all have to do what we can to give our children the gifts of nature. While some children do just fine without direct nature experiences, reliable studies indicate that nature can offer profound enrichment to young lives. For example: Environmental psychologists report that simply being in a room with a view of nature can help to protect children against stress, and that the protective impact of nearby nature is strongest for the most vulnerable children — those experiencing the highest levels of stressful life events. Mind, the mental health charity, commissioned a recent study that compared the benefits of a 30-minute walk in a country park with a walk in an indoor shopping centre on people with depression. It found that after the country walk, 71 per cent of participants reported lower levels of depression, while only 45 per cent experienced a decrease after walking in the shopping centre.

BTCV, the charitable organisation in the UK that created Green Gyms to improve people's health and the environment, has individuals participate in a range of conservation and gardening projects outdoors, such as planting trees and constructing footpaths. From 2007 to

2009, BTCV implemented Green Gyms in nine primary schools and included outdoor environmental activities. BTCV commissioned a university to evaluate the School Green Gyms, and as part of this evaluation, children completed a questionnaire before and after participation in the programme. In analysing the data, researchers found those children's psychosocial health and overall health significantly improved after the Green Gyms programme. They also found that children's weekend physical activity levels significantly increased after the programme and that children felt very positive about the programme.

http://www2.btcv.org.uk/display/greengym_research

Researchers at the University of Illinois have correlated direct exposure to nature with the relief of symptoms of attention-deficit disorders. Studies also suggest that creativity, learning and test scores are stimulated in schools with green play areas, or that emphasise experiential learning. Swedish researchers reported that children at “all-weather schools” who played outside every day regardless of weather conditions had better motor co-ordination and more ability to concentrate.

A nationwide survey in Sweden indicated that children who spent at least six hours a week outside had fewer absences due to illness. The Swedish National Institute of Public Health notes research suggesting that *“children who are out in the natural environment are healthier than children who are mostly indoors and do not have access to the nature environment in the pre-school yard.”*

Greener neighbourhoods may also help to reduce child obesity. In December 2008 the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* published the results of a two-year study that followed 3,800 inner-city children; researchers found that trees and other vegetation were associated with slower increases in children's body mass.

Why does nature appear to have such a powerful impact on health and well being? One possibility is that when a child is in a natural setting, he or she is likely to be using all the senses simultaneously. E.O. Wilson, a Harvard University scientist and Pulitzer Prize winner, takes this concept further, proposing his “biophilia hypothesis.” He defines biophilia as *“the urge to affiliate with other forms of life,”* and argues that human beings have an innate affinity for the natural world, probably with a biological basis. The theory, though not universally embraced by biologists, is supported by more than a decade of research. Simply put, children need to go outside and get their hands wet and their feet muddy.

Of course, no one believes that nature experiences are a panacea. Life is not that simple. Also, much of the research currently available is relatively new and describes correlations rather than causes and effects. But, as Howard Frumkin, head of the National Center for Environmental Health in the U.S., says, although we need more research, we know enough to act.

A movement to heal the broken bond between children and nature is growing internationally. More than 60 regional campaigns have sprung up in the U.S. and Canada over the past three years. The No Child Left Inside Act of 2009, designed to help educators to get children out of doors, is moving through the U.S. Congress (the House approved a version of the bill last year). In November 2009, Sesame Street, the children's television show, launched a year of special "nature" programming. For the first time in four decades the programme's set will be redesigned, adding features of the natural world.

In the UK, several initiatives are setting good examples. To coincide with its report, the National Trust organised more than a thousand "wild child" events to encourage interest in local wildlife. (<http://www.wild-child.org.uk/>) It has also compiled a list of "Ten things to do before you're 10," including going on an insect hunt and hosting a teddy bears' picnic.

Nature's Capital, a report issued by the National Trust last year, calls for local funding for "wellbeing prescriptions." The charity Mind recommends "green exercise" to be considered as a clinically valid treatment, and the UK's growing Green Gym movement brings families together to exercise through nature restoration projects. This served as partial inspiration for an initiative launched in the U.S. by the Children & Nature Network, called Family Nature Clubs.

Last year, Chip and Ashley Donahue, parents of three in Roanoke, Virginia, decided to start getting their kids — and themselves — back to nature on weekends. One day their five-year-old son asked: "Why are we the only family having so much fun?" So the Donahues created a free outdoor adventure club for families in the Roanoke Valley. What began with one family spread quickly. Thanks to word of mouth and two local newspaper stories, the membership soon grew to more than 170 families. These families, two or more at a time, agree to meet each other at the weekend to hike, do some gardening or even work on projects such as stream reclamation.

What if tens of thousands of families were to create nature clubs or "green gyms"? With the help of government agencies, regional campaigns, nature centres, educators, college students, conservationists and concerned individuals, they might accomplish what seems impossible today: the end of nature-deficit disorder. One thing is certain: It's never too late to have fun outdoors.

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Introductory photograph: "Matthew" credited to Richard Louv

"Younger son, Matthew, in the Sierra" photograph credited to Richard Louv

Tips for parents from "Last Child in the Woods"

Here are a few suggestions adapted from the recently published UK edition of "Last Child in the Woods." First, bear in mind that nature is an antidote to stress, regardless of age; all the benefits that come to a child are available to the adult who introduces that child to nature.

- Establish a "green hour" as part of the family routine, whether it's going outside to climb a tree with your children or joining them to look at flowers and insects in the garden.
- Go for a walk. The Ramblers' Association offers suggestions, including details of regional walks planned specifically for children (www.ramblers.org.uk).
- Plant a garden. Choose seeds that sprout quickly, such as radishes, or grow herbs in pots on a balcony or windowsill. If you live in an urban area, allotments may be available; this kind of shared gardening is a fine way to get children outside all day. You can search for allotments around the UK on www.allotments-uk.com and to read about the joys of self-sufficiency at www.allotment.org.uk.
- Your family can benefit from a Nature Staycation close to home www.naturerocks.org
- Band together with other families to create a Green Gym (www2.btcv.org.uk/display/greengym) or a Family Nature Club www.childrenandnature.org/movement/natureclubs/



Real and Perceived Risk to Children in the Outdoors

David J. Ball, Middlesex University



The “fairy dell” in Lletty Wood, Radnorshire. Much liked by girls

The freedom of children and young people to move about, by themselves, and experience nature has shrunk enormously over the last generation. Surveys suggest the problem is particularly severe in Britain, and that this has far-reaching effects on the quality of everyone’s lives.

Some people attribute this loss of freedom to parental anxieties, and some to the workings of society. This paper examines both of these dimensions and places them in the context of the wider literature on the psychology of risk. Then, using children’s outdoor play provision as a history, it will describe some of the pressures which shape children’s environments and how these may lead to unintended consequences. Finally, some suggestions are made, for the brave, about how to break out of the trap.

The bad news first

In Spring 2009 the Child Poverty Action Group put out a press release describing a Europe-wide survey which placed the United Kingdom 24th out of 27 in terms of child wellbeing (CPAG, 2009). On its own, one swallow does not make a summer, but this has been just one of many warnings about the state of childhood and youth in this country. In June 2009 the BBC reported that school teachers were being pressured to make school too ‘safe’

and examples included requirements to wear goggles to put up posters, five page briefings on the dangers of glue sticks, bans on playing on wet grass and many other safety-obsessive actions (BBC, 2009). None of this is by now unfamiliar. In 2002 the Children’s Society and the Children’s Play Council conducted a survey of children and young people and found that these were being stopped from engaging in numerous activities ranging from cooking and carpentry in school, to making daisy chains.

This is seriously bad news for children and young people including teenagers. Not only are they deprived of enjoyable experiences which make life worthwhile, but their mental and physical health is undermined and their opportunity to learn gradually that the world is a risky place and, more importantly, the chance to develop the skills to deal with it is lost. Society also by this means alienates certain groups and one has only to think of the plight of teenagers for a ready example.

Are parents to blame?

The Philip Larkin hypothesis, ‘*They fuck you up, your mum and dad,...*’, is widely believed to offer at least a partial explanation for this sorry state of affairs, and indeed parents are rightly worried about things like paedophiles, abduction and the risk of injury. But it’s more complicated because as far as injury risks are concerned, parents are generally happy for their children to play football, hockey

and the like which are known to have a high injury rate (Play England, 2008a: 11), and on the other hand the risk of abduction and the threat from paedophiles is very small. In 2002/3 there were 848 child abduction offences in England and Wales of which 56% involved a person unknown to the child, 9% were 'successful,' and 6% were sexually motivated (Newiss and Fairbrother, 2004). Furthermore, there is evidence that the risk taking behaviour of children is heavily influenced by parental behaviours and disciplinary styles (Ball, 2002: 6.1) and can make children into risk takers.

The psychologist Paul Slovic has exhaustively studied adults risk perception (Slovic, 2000). From this it has emerged that there is a tendency to overestimate very small risks and to underestimate common risks. Lay people, which includes us all most of the time, are also influenced by qualitative factors associated with hazards when we rate their importance. Hazards which are found to be dreaded or unfamiliar are singularly worrying. One might conclude that the kind of hazards which affect members of the Countryside Recreation Network, like abduction, are feared because of dread rather than the size of the risk, and those which involve the risk of injury are mentally exaggerated because they involve children. The risk communication expert Peter Sandman has put forward the following equation by way of explanation:

RISK = HAZARD + OUTRAGE

Here, RISK refers to a person's reaction to some possible harmful event, HAZARD is what we normally call risk (i.e. probability of harm) and OUTRAGE is a factor derived from the qualitative characteristics of hazards such as dread and familiarity (Sandman, 2009). The game we are in, it would seem, is more to do with OUTRAGE management than risk management.

An alternative explanation

Helene Guldberg's view is that parent's should not be blamed for what is in fact a broader cultural obsession with safety (Guldberg, 2009). This view is shared by the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (2009), and myself, who see the problem as resulting from complex interactions of different agencies in society, all of whom have a finger in the pie of what children and young people get, but also have their own disparate interests which do not necessarily coincide with promoting the welfare of the young.

The case of play provision

Play provision has been dominated for several decades by multiple interests including insurers, standards-setters (BSEN), injury prevention campaign groups (RoSPA, CAPT), lawyers, inspectors, manufacturers and assorted experts, all with their own axe to grind, but a popular one having been safety. The unintentional outcome has been wretched and

disastrous. By 2000 play settings had become festooned with metal barriers, coated with rubber surfaces, surrounded by fences, littered with warning signs and in many cases were totally uninteresting. More of the budget goes into safety measures, such as surfacing and fencing, both of disputed benefit, than into play value which sometimes is not even considered. Not only that, but the cost of the safety juggernaut has been enormous (£1 billion or more) and the accident rate has barely changed (Ball, 2002: 2.1.2). As Peter Heseltine, former Director of RoSPA's play safety company has so courageously put it, "We (the Standards committee) have recommended removal of anything dangerous... We have emasculated equipment.... We have covered everything in protective surfacing.... Children are still getting hurt.... We have forgotten why we have playgrounds – they are for children to play on" (Heseltine, 1995).

The evolution of this situation can be traced in part to a spill over of risk assessment techniques and procedures from the occupational sector into public life. Curiously, occupational safety and play safety both come under the Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974. These days the HSWA tends to be associated with risk minimisation and with the political proposition that 'nothing is more important than safety' (HSE, 2000: 11), although neither is true nor a fact. The trouble is that when such ideas take hold in public affairs, they have the power to wipe out all manner of things which people formerly enjoyed because the enjoyment dimension is not necessarily part of the risk assessor's thought process (Ball, 2003).



Nightmare in the park. A mindlessly awful idea of children's play

Send for the Mounties

In 2008 Play England produced two pioneering documents on play design and risk which while being important enough in play alone, could have a far wider impact, since the messages they bear appear relevant to all kinds of public activities (Play England, 2008a, b). Importantly, both documents have been endorsed by the regulator (the HSE).

The emphasis is upon more natural play, still with equipment, but making full use of natural settings, and upon a switch from traditional risk assessment to risk-benefit assessment.

Both documents have significant messages but here I will dwell upon the latter. Conventional risk assessment generally requires the following questions to be answered: what are the hazards? who is exposed? what might the consequences be? are controls adequate? has everything that is reasonably practicable been done? Risk-benefit assessment, however, kicks off with: what are the benefits? These could be anything from fun and enjoyment, to health and welfare, the beauty of a location, or the authenticity of a site of cultural interest. These benefits should then be compared against the risks, and these things then need to be weighed in the balance. It can be seen that failure to consider the trade-off with benefits for public sector situations is to undervalue and potentially wipe them out.

A follow-up question is: 'Who are the risk-benefit experts?' It would seem that a balanced decision can only be made by persons who are conversant with both the benefits of public space and its risks. This suggests that the past and commonly-followed procedure of parachuting in external inspectors is flawed, because these persons are likely to be unfamiliar with benefits. Of course, one benefit is health, psychological and physical, but although many inspectors are described as experts in 'health and safety' their knowledge is not so much of health in the broader sense, but of COSHH Regulations and their ilk, and this is not the point.



Natural Play

It is also pertinent that risk-benefit decisions be made against a policy background and this is the responsibility of the duty holder, not an external expert who may not even know what your policy and objectives are. Furthermore, as noted in 'Design for play' (Play England, 2008b), managing public risk is about managing uncertainty. It can only seriously be managed by monitoring, and the only persons

able to do this are those who have an on-going involvement and a watching brief. Indeed, public space needs to be monitored and fine-tuned on a regular basis if the optimal risk-benefit position is to be achieved.

As Helene Guldberg (2009) has put it, in the context of children and young people:

"Rather than projecting fears and uncertainties onto children, adults need to allow children to grow and flourish, balancing sensible guidance with youthful independence. This means we need to chill out a little: allowing children to play, experiment and mess around, without adults hovering over them, and giving them the opportunity to get themselves out of difficulties they may get themselves into and to resolve their own conflicts."

For this to happen providers will need to assert themselves, fight for their own priorities, and break away from the pressures and desires imposed by the encircling interest groups.

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Photographic References

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Growing Up Outdoors with the John Muir Award

Caroline Standing, John Muir Award



Leaning into the wind, Cartmel Priory School students

An overarching theme of the Countryside Recreation Network conference at the Oval in London in December 2008, 'Growing Up Outdoors', focused on the fact that for many growing up outdoors is an idea that is fast disappearing. Growing up is something that seems to be increasingly being done indoors.

The John Muir Award is an environmental award scheme that aims to encourage a return to growing up outdoors by engaging people with the natural world and encouraging them to connect, enjoy and care for wild places through a structured yet adaptable scheme.

The conclusion of the conference stated that "most adults will remember their favourite play areas from childhood and for many it will be simply the fields near the house in which they grew up, the local forest, beach or meadow, but for many of these adults, now parents, allowing their children to play in the outdoors as they used to, is an entirely different matter". Real or perceived barriers including safety; difficulty accessing the outdoors; cost; weather; transport and lack of confidence have contributed to the decline in time spent outside. The John Muir Award offers some solutions to these problems and supports the conclusion that we need a culture that "believes that young people should be outdoors

and takes joy in seeing them do so".

The Award was set up in 1997 as the educational initiative of the John Muir Trust – the leading wild land conservation charity in the UK. John Muir was a founding father of the conservation movement and the Trust promotes his ethos in relation to 21st century issues - with a vision that wild land is protected and wild places are valued by everyone. The award aims to:

- Promote educational, social and personal development through exploration of wild places and involvement in conservation
- Encourage an environmental agenda within youth organisations
- Ensure that social circumstances don't exclude people from opportunities to experience wild places

It's not competitive, and should challenge everyone who gets involved at an individual level. Taking part develops awareness and understanding of a wild place, encourages personal responsibility for it and for some will offer an opportunity to explore values and spirituality.

Every award is a celebration of how an individual has met four challenges – with experiences that include understanding, caring and doing. Participants discover a wild place, expand their knowledge of it through actively exploring

it, helping to conserve it and sharing their experiences. In addition they gain an awareness about John Muir, who he was and his achievements.

There are 3 levels to encourage a progressive involvement. The same 4 challenges above are repeated for each, with increased involvement in terms of time, activity and ownership.

Breaking down Barriers

The move indoors has brought with it disconnections with nature and a loss of knowledge about the natural world. Many adults working with young people claim to lack confidence working outdoors. The Award is open to all and, although working with qualified staff can enhance an Award, you do not have to be a specialist to run or achieve one. Involvement is about a personal connection with a wild space, exploring it in ways appropriate to the participant and taking responsibility for it. To take part a participant contacts their closest regional manager to discuss their ideas for each of the above challenges and they can signpost groups and individuals to sources of more detailed support if needed.

The conference mentioned the changing and often negative attitudes towards young people that can act as a barrier to engaging them in the outdoors. The John Muir Award has been successful in engaging a wide variety of participants - including those in mainstream education, extra curriculum activities and alternative curriculum groups. Its focus on first hand experiences and flexible, inclusive framework allows participants to care for a wild place and take practical steps to conserve it - actively contributing to an area and feeling a sense of achievement. In the words of John Muir himself participants can become “active conservationists’ as campaigners, as practical project workers, as scientists, as artists, as writers”. As a recorded outcome it celebrates what participants achieve at their level and understanding. Their involvement can also help to make sense of relevant wider

global issues – such as climate change and biodiversity loss. To paraphrase the naturalist Robert Pyle *“What’s the extinction of the condor to a child who has never known a wren?”*

Finally the conference touched on the need for adventure – no matter how small - and the need to instill a curiosity in young people about the world around them. Jim Davis at the Children’s Society talked of the thrill of going on an adventure, of discovering something new and unexpected. He spoke of the fact that this doesn’t have to be done in far-away and exotic places but can happen on your doorstep if you stop and take the time. The Award’s four challenges embody this principle – as long as your chosen place has a sense of wildness and natural character it doesn’t need to be in a far flung corner of the country. It can be anywhere from a mountain top to an urban park. The wonder of discovering a new place and uncovering what makes it special is fundamental to the Award.

The Award embraces the idea of ‘growing up outdoors’ for people of all ages – even those who may think themselves grown up already. It encourages a sense of continual connection with the world’s wild places and a belief that through better understanding of the natural world we will achieve the John Muir Trust’s aim that wild places are valued by all sectors of society – as places both to grow up in and protect.

To find out more and for details about your regional manager go to our website for further details www.johnmuiraward.org.

“Do something for wildness and make the mountains glad” – John Muir



Case Study

Woodland Calms Excluded Pupils



Participating in the John Muir Award and an increased connection to the natural environment benefits the young people taking part in many ways – including emotional and mental health benefits. This has been documented by a number of studies and was experienced first hand by a group of children who had been excluded from primary 6 classes in Worcestershire this year. They worked together during their alternative curriculum programme to achieve their John Muir Award. In a little-used area of the Wyre Forest, and with help from the Forestry Commission, they identified wildlife, tasted wild food, built bird and dormice boxes and created natural art.

Experiencing nature had a calming influence on many of the children. One child, although he had forgotten to take his Ritalin, was able to remain calm all day through being in the wood and has since had his dosage cut by 75%.

Their leader Sarah Robertshaw says: “They are not the same children. It’s easier to get them engaged: they are not just in a world of their own.” She says using the John Muir Award puts a different slant on everything. “It brings out the wonder and beauty of being in nature. It is a beautiful way of working with kids and encourages them to look at the bigger picture.”

The children now have their John Muir Discovery Award, something they are proud of and can add to their Records of Achievement as they move onto new schools.

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Photographic References

Introductory photograph: “Leaning into the wind” credited to Cartmel Priory School
Photograph: “Tomiwas” credited to the John Muir Award
Case study photograph credited to the Wyre Forest Discovery Centre

Scottish Wildlife Trust's Glen Mile Mountain Bike Trail

Duncan Clark, Scottish Wildlife Trust; Hugh McNish, Forestry Commission Scotland



Mountain bike trail

In August 2008 the Scottish Wildlife Trust opened its first mountain bike trail. The trail comprises four trail grades and was appropriately named Glen Mile by a local person and competition winner – she won a mountain bike, naturally.

Mountain biking and subsequent wild trail construction is increasingly common throughout woodlands in Scotland. SWT's Cumbernauld Glen Wildlife Reserve is an area of woodland frequently used by mountain bikers, but in recent years the number of complaints against bikers had become a concern. Instead of trying to restrict or prevent mountain biking, the Trust decided to designate an area within the reserve and build graded trails. This formal and open approach enabled the Trust to engage with local bikers, cycle cops and schools. The creation of Glen Mile has kick started a local educational process that benefits the sport of mountain biking. The next generation of Cumbernauld's mountain bikers will not only develop their skills from a young age but will also respect and appreciate their local wildlife reserve.

The development of the mountain bike trail and skills loop at Cumbernauld Glen presented an ideal opportunity to engage with local secondary schools and explore the possibility of mountain biking as part of core physical education.

At an early stage of the trail development Forestry Commission Scotland approached Abronhill High School to explore this possibility. The physical education department was enthusiastic about the possibility of including mountain biking within the curriculum. Following this initial approach money was secured from Forestry Commission Scotland to help facilitate the purchase of necessary equipment. Cycling Scotland was also approached about becoming a partner and delivering the relevant training for the physical education teachers.

The physical education staff attended a bespoke training programme delivered by Cycling Scotland incorporating elements of the trail cycle leader course. Twenty four mountain bikes along with safety helmets, trail tool kits, a work bench and a one year maintenance contract were purchased with the money from Forestry Commission Scotland. Cycling Scotland provided funds to supply a storage container that could be placed in the school grounds.

Following the delivery of the training and equipment the school proceeded to start introducing mountain biking as an option within physical education lessons. Initially this was within the upper years but it has now been expanded to include all year groups. The first step for the pupils is to gain confidence and master some of the basic biking techniques within the school grounds. The Physical Education department has created a range of equipment including a slalom course, see-saw, ramps and balance beams.

Glen Mile is only a five minute bike ride from the school grounds and gives the pupils their first experience of mountain biking on a designated trail. The trail is ideally suited for school groups due to the inclusion of a small skills loop and the clear view that the teaching staff have over the full site.

Abrornhill had an HMIE inspection in January 2009 which highlighted the mountain biking option as enriching the physical activity curriculum. The report also noted the successful partnership of Scottish Wildlife Trust, Forestry Commission and Cycling Scotland in helping to deliver this project.

Forestry Commission Scotland helped SWT develop its understanding and implementation of cycle trail management. The Trust's Cumbernauld Greenspaces Manager worked closely with FCS staff and attended training courses provided by FC Learning and Development. FC Cycle Trail Management Operational Guidance Booklet Number 37 is a comprehensive practice guide that covers legislation, project management, training and event management. FC has also developed extensive interpretation, signs and information which helps to direct consensus, for example, signs and information present throughout SWT's Glen Mile trail complements FC's interpretive works. This means that young cyclists experiencing mountain biking for the first time at Glen Mile and later choose to visit FCS trails will already be familiar with FC trail grades and code of conduct. A standardised approach and continuity of information and interpretation is an important element of reducing risk. Inspections, maintenance and talking to people using the trails will help to further reduce risk, but it is inevitable that accidents will occur on all mountain bike trails.

Background to the Project and the Trust

Cumbernauld Glen (120 ha) - This is the largest area of ancient semi-natural woodland and greenspace within Cumbernauld. It also has grassland areas and a small area of heath. Carpets of bluebells reflect the age of the glen woodland and dog's mercury is the most common herb. Great spotted woodpecker, tree creeper, woodcock and jay breed on site.

The reserve is very popular with local people but it was evident for a number of years that mountain biking was occurring throughout the woodland and 'wild trail' construction was causing destruction and disturbance to sensitive habitats, for example, damage to bluebells and other native flora. There was a growing number of incidents involving near misses between cyclists and walkers. Wild trail routes crossed sections of formal footpath leading to risk of collisions between footpath users and mountain bikers. The Trust appreciated the general public rights to enjoy responsibly access to the countryside; however they felt that there were situations where land owners must manage a

balance between native woodland conservation, public safety and recreation. In this instance the Trust recognised that there was a necessity to be proactive in its response to mountain biking activities in sensitive areas of woodland habitat and to reduce the risk to walkers.

In 2005 SWT started a local public consultation (funded by Forestry Commission Scotland – Woodlands In and Around Towns Challenge Fund). The process was an important mechanism to inform local people and visitors to the reserve of management proposals, and for local people to have their say concerning the management of the site. On the whole local people supported a proposal to designate an area within Cumbernauld Glen specifically for mountain bike activities. Selecting the area was difficult, but a number of limiting factors helped to guide the choice of location, for example, landscape, tree species composition and the existing path network.

An area (3.5ha) of predominately poor quality conifer plantation was felled. Once the trees were cleared from the site, it was possible to begin the process of creating the Trust's first mountain bike trail. Work started in Nov. 2007, and by Aug. 2008 the Glen Mile Mountain Bike Trail was finished and included four trails: skills loop, blue, red and black grade. Glen Mile provides local people with an opportunity to experience a variety of trail grades, for example, blue grade is designed for intermediate mountain bikers with basic off-road riding skills. Glen Mile does not occupy a large area and is designed to be used and appreciated by people living in Cumbernauld.

Scottish Wildlife Trust is the largest environmental non-Governmental organisation in Scotland working on all aspects of wildlife conservation. The Trust acquired its first wildlife reserve in 1966 and currently manages 123 reserves covering over 20,000 ha. SWT has over 35,000 members and employs around 95 staff in Scotland. The Trust remains committed to the acquisition and management of wildlife reserves and this has resulted not only in the conservation of a wide range of habitats and species throughout Scotland, but also in the creation of a series of example sites which can be used to demonstrate the approach that other land managers could adopt towards wildlife conservation and its management. www.swt.org.uk

In Cumbernauld, the Trust employs a small team of staff and manages around one third of the greenspaces and woodlands in the town. The effective management of wildlife reserves requires a framework within which the correct management decisions can be taken. This framework is provided by the reserve management plan and it is the policy of the Scottish Wildlife Trust that all reserves should have such a plan.

The preparation of a management plan provides an opportunity for everyone with an interest in the reserve (e.g. reserve volunteers, reserve management groups, branches,

local authorities, SNH, staff, etc.) to “come together” in order to resolve possible conflicts and to agree on the management objectives for the site.

In defining management objectives the Trust gives full and equal consideration to all reserve functions subject to causing no unacceptable damage to its nature conservation interest. These functions include geology, habitat and species conservation, interpretation, education, recreation and access, research demonstration and landscape.

The Scottish Wildlife Trust owns and manages five wildlife reserves in North Lanarkshire, four of which are woodlands: Cumbernauld Glen, Forest Wood, Luggiebank Wood and Northside Wood. These reserves are collectively referred to as Cumbernauld Greenspaces and were gifted to SWT in 1995 by Cumbernauld Development Corporation (North Lanarkshire Council).

SWT’s Cumbernauld Greenspaces total 286 hectares and came with an endowment of £850,000 which was a one off payment and intended to fund the management of the areas in future years.

Project Facts

- Funded by – Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, WREN, Biffaward and North Lanarkshire Council
- Cost of trail construction £97,000.
- Cost of primary (H&S) trail signage £7,000
- Cost of cycle eco-counter £1,000
- Planning Permission approved August 2006
- Contract awarded to UPM Tilhill – June 2007
- Trail opened 1st Aug 2008
- Cycle counter data 2008-2009: average number of counts per month 1,400
- Total length of Trails – 1 Mile

What next?

It may strike people as odd that the Scottish Wildlife Trust has built a mountain bike trail. Glen Mile has generated a lot of positive publicity and enabled SWT to make a significant contribution to greater choice of recreation in Cumbernauld. The Trust hasn’t forgotten about wildlife. The area of land allocated to the trails is located adjacent Ancient Semi-natural Woodland. The trees felled to create space for the trails were predominately non-native conifer. Those trees will be replaced with oak, ash and other native tree species. Woodland will establish again, but the quality of new woodland and associated benefits to biodiversity will be significant. Mountain biking has ironically helped the Trust to protect, enhance and expand an area of native woodland.

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Photographic References

Introductory photograph: “Mountain Bike Trail” credited to Mr P Hunter

“Boy on bike photograph” credited to Mr B Griffin (Abronhill High School consent has been granted for pictures including children)



Boy on the Mountain Bike Trail

Wild Child- The National Trust Campaign to Get Children Outdoors

Lucy Bendon, National Trust



Boy with Flower

Spurred by the proliferation of evidence on climate change and rising child obesity levels, the National Trust, like many charities has invested greater efforts and resources in tackling these issues. But how does a single organisation turn the tide on such all-consuming trends and bring about any real, tangible change?

As the nation's largest conservation charity both in size and support, the National Trust is in a unique position to tackle these issues, and to join a movement among fellow charities and authorities to re-connect children with nature, facilitating a re-discovery of its wonders and rewards, and the benefits to our physical, mental and emotional well-being.

Why children?

The mantra of the National Trust is 'to preserve special places *For Ever and For Everyone*' but our experiences of engaging 14million visitors a year, teach us that one size of communication does not fit all. Whilst every one of our supporters is important to us, our long-term perspective of 'forever' has turned our attention to our young audiences who will one day, hold the power to safeguard our special places themselves.

As the future custodians of these special places, many

children have an alarming lack of awareness of even the most basic elements of nature. In 2008, the Trust commissioned research revealing that children spent so little time outdoors that common British wildlife was often alien to them, with one in three unable to identify a magpie and half confused between bees and wasps. In the same year the BBC ¹ found that 38% of 9-11 year olds could not identify a frog and through a culmination of research that was amassed, the Trust and its contemporaries were charged to take action.

Of course the National Trust has been offering widespread opportunities to engage with nature and British wildlife for over a century. However, as diverse and well-received as these engagement activities are, participation is largely with individuals who are all already concerned and proactively engaged in protecting natural species and habitats. The real challenge lies in reaching groups that are disenfranchised or possibly even unaware that both we and our natural surroundings are suffering, and the consequences of neglect and ignorance will inevitably be felt to a greater extent by future generations.

The winds of change

In 2009 the National Trust initiated Social Marketing as a new approach to engaging supporters in specific causes, central to its work and survival. This approach aimed to inspire, influence and empower individuals to make lifestyle choices and adopt behaviour changes in line with the Trust's

own long-term organisational objectives. Practiced by many other organisations in the public and private sector, this emerging form of marketing places the individual's current activity or lifestyle at the centre of its thinking and creates communications to enable and empower positive, voluntary change.

To establish the current lifestyle activities and potential barriers to behaviour change, the project started with focus group research. This identified that the National Trust's main family audience, constituting 21% of its visitors, was often concerned by the impact of climate change on wildlife, however their needs from the National Trust primarily revolve around having positive, leisure experiences and quality family time. Both members and non-members with children under 12 years were significantly more likely to be attracted to playful family events and experiences as opposed to conservation work, sustainability activities or involvement in more political campaigns. Whilst many parents would themselves engage in green behaviours such as recycling and using public transport, they perceived a friction between doing 'green activities' and experiencing a really good day out. Some respondents expressed concern that in advocating greener lifestyles to its visitors, the Trust could even be perceived as worthy, over-bearing or guilt mongering, so positive messaging was of utmost importance.

Inspired by these insights the Trust created *Wild Child*, a package of family engagement activities based on having the freedom to enjoy positive leisure experiences outdoors. These activities would be differentiated from our previous family activities by using family-friendly language imagery and branding, clearly signposting an offer specifically designed for visitors children to enjoy. The aim of this positioning was to celebrate the joys of outdoor exploration and to increase contact with the outdoors, starting children on a journey of pleasure and discovery and allowing them to build a relationship with nature on their own terms.



A programme was devised offering more than 1000 nature events across the England, Wales and Northern Ireland, timed to run throughout the school summer and autumn holidays. Each event offered a unique nature experience encouraging outdoor play in our gardens, parklands, forests and coastlines owned by the Trust celebrating the local wildlife on offer. Properties such as Fell Foot Park in the Lake District encouraged visitors to do more than take the usual scenic walk by offering hands-on activities such as den building.

Experiences were created especially for families and each participating child was rewarded with a Wild Child activity pack – a key mechanism for inspiring families to continue their nature adventures at home and throughout the summer holiday. The pack welcomed and acknowledged the visitor as a 'Wild Child' appealing to their sense of adventure and inviting them to keep the pack as a scrapbook record of their outdoor experiences.

A dedicated website www.wildchild.org.uk was designed to support ongoing contact with the nature and to inspire children to do more outdoors. The site invites users to navigate their way through a typical habitat they might encounter on a family day out, and to find out what common species to look for, learn fun facts about them and gather ideas for things to do in those habitats. Created in a naïve hand-drawn illustrative style, reminiscent of a story book, the habitat changes depending on the time of day, revealing different creatures, sounds and sights as the sun sets and rises, keeping the content fresh and dynamic.



Of course the very nature of using online communications is sedentary and indoor which was at odds with the aims of the campaign. Nick Baker, TV naturalist and supporter of the Wild Child campaign explains the problem,

"These days we try to simulate the movement and balance children learn from outdoor play in virtual environments but children are still missing out on so much. The truth is that, in terms of development, nothing can replace what children gain from the freedom and independence of thought they have when trying new things out in the open. There was nothing I loved more when I was a child than getting outside and looking for bugs... Today, however, just playing outside has to battle with the virtual world of Nintendos and Playstations – and whether it's down to parents or children themselves, it appears that that virtual world is winning."

In the knowledge that family visitors to Trust sites are daily users of the internet and that the virtual world is 'winning', the challenge was creating an exciting piece of online engagement that paradoxically needed to encourage rather than compete with the outdoors. To directly incentivise this behaviour an area of the website called 'The Challenge' was developed. This interactive nature quiz incentivises users to undertake real outdoor experiences in order to achieve greater "Wild Child" status. The more challenges the users complete in gardens and open spaces, the higher their score and their progression from 'Home boy' or 'Home girl' to a 'Really Wild Child'. The Challenge invites children to keep returning to the site, improving their knowledge and range of experiences of British wildlife. At the end of the year, the highest scoring child will be rewarded with a family activity holiday involving outdoor conservation experiences and wildlife encounters at a favourite National Trust site.

As National Trust properties are typically in quiet, rural settings, there is a need to ensure that the campaign would reach those people without access to diverse wildlife or outdoor spaces, in particular inner-city families. The Trust chose to launch the campaign with a touring double-decker activity bus roadshow, visiting five city centre locations across England, coming face to face with 50,000 urban families.

To launch the campaign the Trust also published a list of '10 Things To Do Before You're 10'* challenging parents to recreate some of their favourite childhood memories with their children. The concept of creating happy memories was identified to be a key motivator to parents and a survey of 3000 parents was commissioned by the National Trust to aid the media campaign and to emotionally engage families in the campaign. The survey found that 'playing in the park' was the favourite memory for 25 per cent of parents surveyed, with 'building a den' in second place (21 per cent) and 'seeing wildlife in its natural habitat' in third (20 per cent). Each of these activities is being actively promoted across elements of the Wild Child campaign in an aim to reconnect parents with their own childhood experiences and to increase the proportion of happy outdoor memories instilled within the next generation.

Whilst it's too early to conclude on the success of the campaign, the demand for Wild Child activities, events and take-home packs far outstripped expectation. There are hundreds of committed repeat users logging onto the website and taking up the challenges everyday and around half a million families take part in events, with the vast majority rating their experiences as 'excellent' and recommending them to friends. It will of course take far longer to establish the long-term impact of the campaigns on the adult behaviours of the children we've engaged but the Trust is confident that Wild Child represents a step in the right direction - towards greater appreciation of the extraordinary aspects of natural world through inspiring experiences - that

many families and children might otherwise have missed out on.

Footnote

¹ BBC Wildlife Magazine Survey, 2008
<http://tinyurl.com/a78mbe>.

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Photographic References

All photographs credited to the National Trust's Picture Library

More than 3,000 adults across the UK took part in the survey which was conducted by OnePoll on behalf of the National Trust in April 2009.

Britain's favourite childhood memories are:

- Playing games in the garden/park
- Building a den
- Seeing wildlife in its natural habitat
- Learning to ride a bike
- Swimming in a British sea, lake or river
- Climbing a tree
- Going to the cinema for the first time
- Going on rides at a theme park
- Flying a kite

As well as asking for people's favourite memory, the survey also found:

- 38 per cent of children now spend less than an hour a day outdoors.
- Almost a quarter (23%) of youngsters spend more than 14hrs a week sat in front of a TV or computer screen.
- 87 per cent of parents wish their children spent more time outside - Yet one in four won't allow them to do the things they did as children because they are worried about safety.
- While only one in four children has played tennis in the past year, twice as many have played the sport on computers such as Nintendo Wiis or Xboxes.
- Fewer than one in 20 (4 per cent) said that playing computer games was their favourite childhood memory.

Influencing Walkers with Dogs: Three Years of Progress

Stephen Jenkinson, Access and Countryside Management; Jo Hale, Hampshire County Council; Paddy Harrop, Forestry Commission



Introducing a zoning system using coloured paws symbols greatly improved access management at Danebury Hillfort, Hampshire

In Autumn 2006, our paper in *Countryside Recreation* explored how new partnerships and philosophies could more effectively and equitably manage access for walkers with dogs. Three years on, we can now report on how these new approaches have been delivered in practice, complementing CRN's *Dogs in Parks* and the Countryside seminar in May 2009.

Three key principles underpin these new approaches, which in truth equally apply to influencing the behaviour of any visitor, irrespective of whether they have dogs, canoes, bicycles or disposable barbeques.

Understanding visitor needs

The first principle is understanding, respecting and somehow accommodating the experiences dog-owning visitors seek. Over the past two decades, our knowledge has greatly increased about the needs of, for example, people with disabilities or from different cultural backgrounds. But until recently the needs and aspirations of walkers with dogs were little studied, and so in 2007 a research contract was commissioned by a partnership of Hampshire County Council, The Kennel Club and Natural England. The work was undertaken by the Sports Industry Research

Centre (Barlow and Hart, 2008) who used on-site interviews and an anonymous online questionnaire, to provide a groundbreaking insight into what dog-owning visitors seek. One finding of fundamental importance to successful management is shown in Table 1.

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Table 1: Top 10 single most important access requirements for walkers with dogs

41%	Dogs can be off-lead
10.7%	Away from traffic
10.5%	Close to home
8.7%	Personal safety
4.7%	Peace and quiet
4.1%	Unlikely to meet other dog walkers
3.6%	Mixing with other dogs
2.9%	Away from livestock
2.5%	Poo disposal facilities
2.2%	Circular route

(From Barlow and Hart, 2008)

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This very clear desire, above all else, for off-lead access, away from traffic and close to home is as pivotal to successful access management as it is challenging. Take, for example, the principle of nationwide "on-lead" restrictions when using rights of access to upland areas in England and Wales between March and July (in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), and similar principles in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. (It should be

noted that dogs need not be on a lead if the landowner, or some other entitlement to access, permits a less restrictive regime on some or all of such land). Whilst such seasonal restrictions may be seen by some as an eminently reasonable precautionary principle to protect ground-nesting birds, we can see that it is in head-on conflict with the most important characteristic of access that dog owners seek.

This conflict is also exacerbated when dog owners are pushed into the wider countryside through greater restrictions in urban parks, and building development on informal greenspace. In short, unless the 6 million dogs in the United Kingdom are eradicated, we need to face up to the fact that every single day, dog walkers will be seeking – and using somewhere – off-lead access, away from traffic and close to home. But we are not naive.

Even when high quality, relevant access is provided for dog owners, there will always be a hard core of persistently irresponsible people, where a firm enforcement line may be the only option. Done fairly and proportionately, such action will have the support of responsible dog owners, as they also abhor the selfish elements within their ranks. The irresponsibility of such a minority though, should not distract access managers from the fact that, as with any group, the majority of dog owners want to enjoy their visits and avoid conflict. These people are open to modifying their behaviour if approached in the right way.

Like dogs or loathe them, the findings of the case study opposite undeniably bring us - uncomfortably for some - to the reality that a planned and strategic management approach is needed towards accommodating the needs of walkers with dogs. Failing to do so will just increasingly create different problems through displacement, bad publicity and unhelpful, heightened conflict.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour

Our second principle helps us to devise more effective ways to influence behaviour, through Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). As with this theory's widespread use in, eg, promoting healthier lifestyles and recycling, it provides a relevant, practical framework for recognising the many different reasons why a person will – or will not – perform a particular behaviour, be it picking up their dog's poo, or using a lead at certain times.

Figure 1 shows the TPB's principle, adapted for this context, that there are three factors that influence a person's likelihood to behave in a certain way. This model can be applied to any visitor, not just dog owners.

Case Study:

Local Impact of Increasing restrictions

To understand the local implications of incremental restrictions on access around Winchester, Hampshire Countryside Access Forum commissioned research to investigate dog owner perceptions about local access provision (Jenkinson and McCloy, 2008)

The study found that 56% of dog owners felt less access was available to them than 10 years ago, and that when faced with additional restrictions, they had one of four choices:

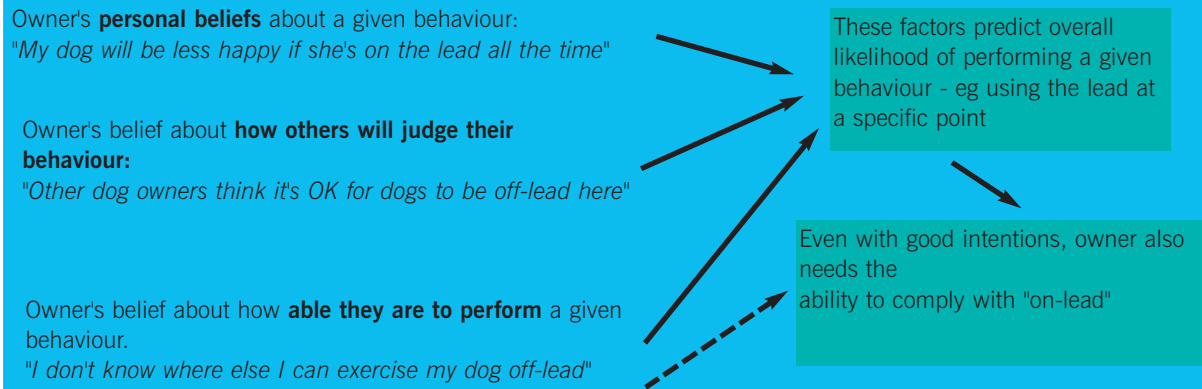
1. Keep visiting a site if their needs are still met with a restriction in place – whole site “on-lead” rules are unlikely to give this outcome.
2. Drive every day to other places that better accommodate their needs –increasing greenhouse gas emissions and displacing the activity to sites that may well be more sensitive and less well supervised.
3. Practically and/or politically challenge the restriction – dog owners can be very vociferous when provoked, and have lots of votes.
4. Ignore the restriction given a low likelihood of being caught/fined – this erodes management credibility and compliance with signage generally.



A dog and human activity trail encouraging owners away from more sensitive areas and positively increases communication, social contact and exercise

Figure 1

Using TPB to understand why dog owners do what they do: example complying with an "on-lead" sign



This theory shows us that simply erecting a few restrictive "don't" signs is not an effective or enduring way to influence the way people behave. It equally illustrates why increasing compliance with desired behaviours, eg, lead usage, is predominantly about understanding what's important to dog owners and then utilising this knowledge when we communicate with them. It is far less about understanding or communicating, for example, the breeding sensitivities of ground nesting birds, even though the latter may well be the motivation for the access manager's involvement.

Put another way, the strongest motivations for dog owners revolve around their dogs having safe and enjoyable exercise; their primary motivation is not to go out every day to scare wildlife or irritate site managers – even though it may superficially seem like that!

In short, access staff need to manage for their outcomes on their visitors' terms to achieve the best possible behavioural change.

Promote the good things too

The third principle is trying to influence visitors using a solely negative, restrictive agenda, that offers them no personal benefit in complying, is only likely to have a limited success and be an inefficient use of public funding. A far more effective approach comes from also seeking opportunities to promote the beneficial aspects of a given visitor type at the same time.

In the case of dog owners, traditional negative approaches can needlessly work against the many benefits dog ownership brings on a daily, year-round basis. Conversely, recognising such benefits provides a very helpful and positive agenda for engaging with dog owners, and securing funding to do so.

In strategic terms, dog owners are very loyal and supportive stakeholders for given sites and routes.

They come from a very wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and greatly contribute to the wider political agenda for safer, healthier and more inclusive communities by:

- Encouraging more active lifestyles and reducing stress through taking regular walks, even on the dullest of days.
- Making people feel more confident when out for a walk.
- Acting as an icebreaker for contact with others.
- Helping children develop better social skills.
- Preventing loneliness and isolation for older people.
- Reducing owners' blood pressure and visits to the doctor.
- Giving independence to over 5,000 people with disabilities such as mobility and visual impairments, deafness and epilepsy.

At a more local level, over half of the land managers interviewed in the Winchester study (Jenkinson and McCloy, 2008) also said that walkers with dogs brought benefits such as early reporting of problems like injured livestock and deterring criminal activity. This and other studies have also identified that dog owners will volunteer to help manage sites if engaged in a relevant, positive way.

Practical management principles

In summary, these principles collectively show us that to improve how we influence walkers with dogs we need to:

- Provide accessible alternative opportunities for activities
- Give signage more credibility and relevance
- Avoid imprecise terms like "close control", "be responsible", "this spring and summer", "sheep worrying"
- Be clear about where restrictions both start and finish
- Deliver messages and information at more appropriate times
- Check signage for understanding with the intended audience

- Accept that changing long-established behaviours will take time
- Genuinely engage with the local dog-owning community to both help and influence them
- Challenge what may be thinly-veiled prejudice against all walkers with dogs
- Overall, make it easy for dog owners to do the right thing.

Forestry Commission's initiatives:

Dog walking is the largest single activity on Forestry Commission (FC) land with around 40% of all visits being made with a dog. In 2005 the FC formed a partnership with the Kennel Club to promote responsible access by dog owners and provide better-managed facilities. Access for dog owners needs to be managed pro-actively to minimise conflicts between user groups, particularly around managing dog waste.

The Forestry Commission, working with the Kennel Club, published *Managing Dogs in the Wood*, guidance for staff (Jenkinson and Harrop, 2007), illustrating a variety of initiatives such as dog washes, clearer signage, and offering creative alternatives to traditional approaches to dog fouling and disturbance to wildlife and livestock. This can be accessed at www.forestry.gov.uk/england-dogs.

The *"Paws in the Woods"* credit card-sized guide used the core messages of dogs having a safe and enjoyable visit to the engage with owners about responsible behaviour. A similar principle underpinned a fun postcard for dogs to write to their canine friends (with a little help from their owners!) and a branded bag for dog poo. These 'dog-uments' form a core part of the Commission's "Walkies in the Woods" brand, which focuses on the physical and mental health benefits of dog walking as part of the Active Woods campaign.

Dog and Human activity trail

This groundbreaking 1.5km trail was constructed by the Forestry Commission in March 2008 at Coatham Community Woodland on Teesside. Its aim was to enhance opportunities for people to experience and enjoy responsible, healthy exercise and interaction with their dog, and to act as a focal point for delivering messages about responsible behaviour and other site management issues. Evaluation interviews in October 2008 showed that 60% of trail users were now more active when walking their dog. In addition, 22% came to the site more frequently and 89% had recommended the site to a non-visitor.

Apart from clearly promoting greater human health, such trails can be a very positive way to encourage dog owners away from more sensitive areas.

Hampshire County Council's initiatives:

Walkers with dogs are without question major users of the countryside and greenspace services the council provides; they are also very loyal to the sites they use. The unhelpful consequences of well-intentioned but traditional, confrontational approaches used elsewhere in the region, served to further emphasise how new approaches could also benefit other site users and land managers, as well as dog owners. Hampshire's website www.hants.gov.uk/dogs gives specific generic advice for site managers and details of many successful initiatives.

Danebury Hillfort

This 40-hectares of chalk downland includes an Iron Age Hillfort, designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, flanked by woodland, scrubland and Site of Special Scientific Interest chalk grassland.

The Hampshire County Council ranger team wanted to reduce uncontrolled dogs disturbing wildlife and livestock, dog poo not being picked up and binned, and heated confrontations with dog walkers over access and signage. An additional poo bin was provided where it was easiest to fill (rather than having it where it was easiest for the contractor to empty) and a colour coded dog paw zoning system, that dynamically indicated where dogs could be off-lead (whilst still under control), or where "on-lead" or "no dogs" applied. Crucially, the zoning signage is immediately updated when grazing patterns change, so visitors have confidence in the system. A "Dog Day" was held to engage with dog owners and explain about the new signage.

The site conditions and owner behaviours were then monitored. Over three quarters of dog owners were found to be better informed about where restrictions applied and the location of grazing livestock. It was also evident that since just after the launch of this new system, no attacks on livestock have been recorded and the amount of dog poo left behind has declined by 82%.

Hampshire's website also describes initiatives at Manor Farm Country Park and Yateley Common. Both projects focused on increasing rapport with dog owners and giving very clear messages about desired behaviours, as well as recognising and accommodating the need for off-lead access.

The future

This pioneering work is already having far-reaching and long-term positive effects. For example, a much more strategic and effective approach towards walkers with dogs has been enshrined in the development of the Marine and Coastal Access Bill for England. For the first time in such a major piece of legislation, government bodies, in this case Natural England, have engaged with the canine community at an early stage. As a result, much clearer behaviours are being defined as conditional on using the proposed new right of access. For example, if dogs are let off-lead, the handlers must keep them in sight, remain aware of their actions, and be confident that they will return reliably and promptly on command (Defra, 2009).

This legislation also takes into account the reality that walkers with dogs are, and will continue to be, a major user of all access types. Thus, successful management needs to as much address where they can go, and what they can do, as much as where restrictions will be needed. We hope this paper will inspire all site and access managers to feel more confident about trying these approaches, to reduce needless conflict with this most frequent and loyal visitor to the countryside and urban greenspace.

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Photographic references:

Introductory picture: "Colour coded paws" credited to Stephen Jenkinson

"Activity Trail 4" photograph credited to Nigel Whitfield
 "Dogs all year sign" photograph credited to Stephen Jenkinson



To minimise conflict, dog owners need positive messages about where they can get the experiences they desire.

From the Archive: Young People, Adventure and the Countryside

Geoff Hughes, Countryside Recreation Network



In 1990 the theme of the Countryside Recreation Research Advisory Group (CRRAG) Conference was young people. CRRAG, the predecessor organisation to CRN, decided that the theme should be to discuss the issues raised by the Hunt Report “In Search of Adventure”.

Lord Hunt, (perhaps best known for leading the British Everest Expedition which made the first successful ascent of the summit in 1953) was concerned that “by 1995 every young person should have the opportunity to take part in adventurous activities”.

The conference held at the University of East Anglia and attended by 150 delegates explored how more opportunities could be provided in an environmentally sustainable way and also what constitutes adventure, who should be responsible and whether young people should be impelled to experience outdoor adventure!

Young people themselves gave their perspectives and as well as examining opportunities in remoter areas such as National Parks. There were case studies of urban outdoor adventure looking at schemes in the inner cities such as the Ackers Trust.

Summing up was undertaken by the conference

chairman Derek Casey, who went on to become Chief Executive of Sport England and led Glasgow’s successful bid for the commonwealth Games. Other contributors included Roger Clarke Policy Director at the Countryside Commission (CRRAG Chairman at the time), Richard Broadhurst (also a former CRN Chair), and speakers from the Youth Hostels Association, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Royal Geographical Society and the Cheshire Landscape Trust.

References

The report “Young People and the Countryside” University of East Anglia, Norwich 18-20th September 1990 can be made available as a photocopy. Please contact the CRN Secretariat for more information.

Photographic References

All photographs credited to the Countryside Recreation Network



Agency Profile

Each issue of *Countryside Recreation* will profile a relevant agency/organisation.

Defra - Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs

Martin Gorringe, Recreation and Access Team



Our purpose

“To secure a healthy environment in which we and future generations can prosper.”

This builds on our previous mission of enabling everyone to live within our environmental means – but makes clear the positive benefits for the economy and society of protecting and enhancing the environment. We lead for government on public sector agreement (PSA) 28 on the natural environment and are key delivery partners for the Department of Energy and Climate Change’s (DECC) PSA 27 on climate change.

Our priorities

PSA 28: secure a healthy natural environment for everyone’s well being, health and prosperity, now and in the future.

Underneath our PSA sit our three priorities:

- Secure a healthy natural environment for us all and deal with environmental risks
- Promote a sustainable, low-carbon and resource-efficient economy
- Ensure a thriving farming sector and a sustainable, healthy and secure food supply

These are our main tasks. We need to focus on achieving these through everything we do.

Departmental strategic objectives

We have agreed some changes to our existing departmental strategic objectives (DSOs) with the Treasury – to focus DSO1 on adaptation; to make clear our role in promoting a low carbon resource efficient economy in DSO3 on sustainable consumption and production. We have created a

new DSO to highlight our new additional role in ensuring a sustainable, secure and healthy food supply. All others remain unchanged, reflecting the fact that the bulk of departmental business continues.

Our new departmental strategic objectives

- **A society that is adapting to the effects of climate change, through a national programme of action and a contribution to international action.**
Cutting greenhouse gas emissions is a priority. But some climate change is now inevitable and all of us – as individuals, businesses, government and public authorities – will need to adapt to respond to the challenges of climate change.
- **A healthy, resilient, productive and diverse natural environment.**
To protect and enhance the natural environment, and to encourage its sustainable use within environmental limits.
- **Sustainable, low carbon and resource efficient patterns of consumption and production.**
Working towards an economy where products and services are designed, produced, used and disposed of in ways that minimise carbon emissions, waste and the use of non-renewable resource. Supporting innovation and encouraging economic prosperity.
- **An economy and a society that are resilient to environmental risk.**
This is delivered through ensuring that flooding and coastal erosion risks are managed sustainably, through the economy, human health and ecosystems being protected from environmental risks and emergencies, and through public health and the economy being protected from animal diseases.
- **Championing sustainable development.**
Defra is the government's champion for sustainable development – domestically and internationally. Ensuring that policy and delivery at all levels of government observe the five principles of sustainable development set out in the 2005 SD strategy
- **A thriving farming and food sector with an improving net environmental impact.**
Making the farming industry more innovative, self-reliant, profitable and competitive and with better environmental management throughout the whole food chain.

- **A sustainable, secure and healthy food supply.**
Working across government and with stakeholders for sustainable production, distribution and consumption of food, ensuring that it is available and affordable for all sectors of society, and considering the sustainability impacts of meeting global food needs.
- **Socially and economically sustainable rural communities.**
Taking an overview of the effects of government policies in rural areas and helping departments understand better the rural dimension, including by improving the evidence base.
- **A respected department delivering efficient and high quality services and outcomes.**
Respect is gained and maintained in the long-term by doing the day-job well, developing and delivering good policy through DSOs 1 to 8. But it's also lost easily by messing up in any of our areas: policy, delivery or corporate.



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Photographic References:

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News



BRITISH WATERWAYS Foxton Locks hosts Olympic star

Artistic gymnast, Becky Downie, 2009 British senior champion and 12th at the Olympic Games in Beijing (the highest overall Olympic placing for a British gymnast in her first year as a senior at only 16 years old), was recently pictured at the Foxton Locks' famous staircase of 10 locks.

The images were taken by East Midlands Tourism to appear on display in the baggage reclaims area of East Midlands Airport in order to showcase some of the region's magnificent attractions alongside up and coming Olympic athletes. For more information, visit

<http://eastmidlandstourism.co.uk/article.asp?PageId=110&ArticleId=176>

Image available from the BW press office: Olympic gymnast, Becky Downie and BW south east regeneration manager, James Clifton, next to the new East Midlands Tourism poster campaign at East Midlands Airport

DEFRA

On 8 September 2009 Defra published a public consultation on proposals to amend the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as it will apply to coastal access land.

The new right of access to the coast provided for in the Marine and Coastal Access Bill includes provision for an Order to be made to amend the CROW Act for coastal land. The amendments we are proposing in the consultation will ensure that coastal land is included within the CROW Act's description of land to which the public has a right of access for the purposes of open-air recreation. A number of other amendments are also proposed, including:

- Changes to the provisions for restrictions and exclusions
- Changes to the categories of excepted land in Schedule 1
- Changes to the general restrictions in Schedule 2

You can read a copy of the consultation at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/coastal-access/index.htm>.

We have also prepared a response template that you may find helpful in submitting your comments.

Responses should be sent by email to:

coast.consultation@defra.gsi.gov.uk

or by post to: Coastal Access team, 1/01 Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6EB.

The final date for receipt of responses is Tuesday 1 December 2009.

PLAYLINK

Inspection and Maintenance of Play Areas -Clarification Note by the authors of Design for Play and Managing Risk in Play Provision

Professor David Ball - Nicola Butler - Tim Gill - Phil Doyle - Bernard Spiegel - Aileen Shackell

On 1 May the Association of Play Industries (API), a trade body that represents the interests of the equipment and surfacing industry, issued a statement on the inspection and maintenance of natural play areas. As the authors of Design for play: a guide to creating successful play spaces and Managing risk in play provision – an implementation guide, we believe the API statement is incorrect and inconsistent with the guidance published by Play England, the DCSF and DCMS and endorsed by the Health and Safety Executive. The API's 'advice' on natural play spaces, inspection and maintenance is inaccurate and misleading.

Please go to the following link to find out more and to read the clarification based on the government advice to local authorities set out in Design for Play and Managing Risk in Play Provision.

<http://www.playlink.org/articles/> Email:info@playlink.org

Case Study

Castle Ward Demesne - Multi Purpose Trail Project



Located on the shores of Strangford Lough, Castle Ward is an 820-acre demesne owned by the National Trust. It is a popular attraction with over 63,000 visitors in 2007/8.

The Demesne currently provides walking and horse riding trails with many visitors also using the trail system for cycling. However, with increasing use over recent years, the current trail system suffers from severe levels of erosion, especially after bad weather. This means that many users expectations are not being met and increases the management and maintenance implications for the National Trust.

Who is involved?

In 2005, CAAN began working with the National Trust and the British Horse Society (BHS) with the aim of creating a network of sustainable and integrated multi-purpose off-road trails suitable for walkers, horse riders and cyclists.

In the intervening years substantial consultation and on site work has taken place and a project Steering group established. Dafydd Davis - <http://www.trailswales.com/> has been employed to design a trail system that meets the needs of land managers, user groups and other project partners. Dafydd is an internationally renowned trail designer who in 2005 was awarded an OBE for his work on trail development in Wales.

The result is the design of a unique trail system providing up to 34km of waymarked trails utilising existing trails (with some upgrade) and creating new sections of purpose built trail. In addition certain sections of existing trails will be put beyond use.

The proposed trails will cater for a range of users including walkers, joggers, cyclists and horse riders, and for a range of abilities as follows -

Loop 1 - All Ability and family cycling trail – 2kms

Loop 2 – Pedestrian only Trail – 2.5kms

Loop 3 – Pedestrian & Cycling Trail 1 – 5.5kms

Loop 4 – Pedestrian & Cycling Trail 2 – 17kms

Loop 5 – Equestrian Trail network – 16kms

What can be achieved?

Total project cost is estimated at just over £1 million. CAAN is working towards securing this money with a view to having the project complete by March 2011.

To date the National Trust has agreed to finance up to £300,000 of project costs with a further £23,000 secured from Down District Council. Delivery of the project is now dependent of securing the remaining funds hopefully through the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

Once complete, it is anticipated that the above trail system will:

- Manage existing use, predicted increased use and visitor flow
- Attract up to 1000 additional visitors to the property per month - day visitors and tourists
- Create a trail system that will not have a negative physical or visual impact on the natural or built environment of Castle Ward.

What can we learn?

The development of this extensive and sustainable trail system will compliment the existing product on offer and create further opportunities for people to take part in outdoor recreation in Northern Ireland.

This exciting and innovative project highlights the benefits of a partnership approach and the value of a strategic approach to trail design and development within an entire site.

For more information on the project contact:

clare@countrysiderecreation.com

For project updates visit:

<http://www.countrysiderecreation.com/project/castle-ward-demesne/>

Summaries of Events

Taking a chance outdoors - Is fear of risk damaging our children? 01 July 2009 - Birmingham

This seminar was chaired by Chris Marsh from the Environment Agency. The aims of the event were to provide evidence of real and perceived risks faced by children and others when using greenspace. To look at other factors that may be leading to a decline in the use of the outdoors and to explore interventions and good practice that may change patterns of outdoor use.

The morning session included presentations from: Professor David Ball, Middlesex University, on the actual and perceived risk to children in the outdoors; Jonathon Pearce, Natural England who presented recent survey results about places where children played in the past compared with today; Luke Bennett, Sheffield Hallam University who talked about whether fears of litigation reduced play opportunity or inhibited use of the countryside, Paddy Harrop, Forestry Commission talked about organising play schemes that offer reassurance to parents of reduced risk of outdoor play for children.

The afternoon was organised around two workshops: What other research is necessary? This was facilitated by William Crookshank, Environment Agency; How can we make a difference? This was facilitated by Fiona Groves, The Natural Route.

Making a Splash: Providing Opportunities for Water Based Recreation in Inland Waters - 28 October 2009 - Sheffield

This seminar was chaired by Geoff Hughes the CRN's Chair. The seminar explored the issues relating to water based recreation and considered how to meet the needs of users. The event examined the case for a strategic planned approach in England and Wales, how Scotland has approached the issues. There was an opportunity to explore whether inland water was fulfilling its potential, to dispel some myths about liability and what was required to manage risk. A key element was to hear about good practice and what worked!

The morning session included presentations from: Dr Neil Ravenscroft, University of Brighton who talked about

Identifying the need- Strategic Planning for Water Related Sport and Recreation; Rob Garner, Scottish Natural Heritage who spoke about the Scottish experience of Water Recreation; Matt Strickland, Environment Agency Wales who talked about managing rivers for multiple use - Wye and Usk Case study.

The afternoon was organised around four workshops on the topics of Safety- Danger no swimming facilitated by David Walker at RoSPA; The development of Canoe Trails in Northern Ireland, led by Sarah Noble at CAAN; Access to reservoirs, led by Andrew Parsons at South West Lakes Trust; and Waterway volunteering led by Lucy Bowles at British Waterways

A new era for country parks? 23 November 2009 - Worcester

This seminar was chaired by Andy Maginnis from Worcestershire County Council. The aims of the event were to raise delegates awareness of the place of country parks in the family of greenspaces, to appreciate the potential that country parks have in terms of health & wellbeing, social inclusion, economic regeneration and environmental awareness and to raise awareness of country park accreditation.

The morning session included presentations from: David Lambert, The Parks Agency, who gave an historical perspective of country parks; Lucy Heath, Natural England who talked about the relevance of country parks today; David Solly, Natural England talked about country parks accreditation: setting the standard and Paul Todd, Keep Britain Tidy talked about the benefits of the Green Flag Award.

The afternoon was organised around three case studies: one presented by Liz Nether, Worcestershire County Council, the second presented by Bob Bleakley, Northern Ireland Environment Agency and one presented by Eirwen Hopwood, West Lothian Council

If you would like to purchase the proceedings of these events, please see the publications list page 29

Countryside Recreation Network Publications List

	Price (incl.postage)	Tick
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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"/>
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