

Countryside Recreation

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*Exchanging and Spreading Information to develop best Policy
and Practice in Countryside Recreation*



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Countryside Recreation Network

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

Chair: John Thomson, Scottish Natural Heritage

Vice-chair: Geoff Hughes, SportEngland

Countryside Recreation is free and is published four times a year. We welcome articles and letters from all readers.

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www.CountrysideRecreation.org.uk

Editorial

This editorial marks the end of an era. After twelve years at Cardiff CRN is moving to Sheffield Hallam University.

As the person who had the pleasure of overseeing the CRN contract at Cardiff University I would like to thank the seven Network Managers and their respective assistants who did all of the hardwork in terms of organising events, getting copy for the journal, establishing the web-site etc.. Without their tireless efforts it would not have been possible to develop the Network from the foundations laid by its predecessor CRRAG - The Countryside Recreation Research Advisory Group.

I believe that the basic aims of CRN remain as valid now as at anyother time and I hope that the constituent agencies will remain committed to the principles of co-operation and exchange of good practice.

Finally, I would like to wish Lynn Crowe and other staff at Sheffield Hallam good luck for the future development of CRN. I am sure that it is in safe hands.

Kevin Bishop

Head of Environment and Regeneration
Welsh Local Government Association

Linking National Trust Properties to the National Cycle Network

Kevin Saunders, Sustrans

The National Cycle Network (NCN), co-ordinated by the charity Sustrans, currently provides 6500 miles of cycling and walking routes throughout the UK. This will increase to 10,000 miles by 2005. Usage of the National Cycle Network has increased strongly over the past few years, and Sustrans aims to quadruple use over the next decade.

About one-third of the NCN is on paths which are free from motor traffic, with the rest using quiet lanes or traffic-calmed roads in towns or cities. Routes are

designed to appeal to novices, and are thus direct, convenient and well signed. The NCN provides a great number of links from urban areas to the countryside.

The National Trust has 12 million visitors to its pay-for-entry properties and an estimated 50 million visits to its coast and countryside properties annually. It is working to reduce the proportion of car borne visitors to its properties from more than 90% to 60% by 2020.



The potential through working in partnership to achieve these goals is clear to both organisations.

Sustrans and the National Trust first worked together in 1982 at Saltram House near Plymouth. The licence granted to Sustrans made possible the development of what is now one of the most popular sections of the NCN, the Devon Coast to Coast cycle route. Since then, NCN routes have improved access for cyclists to many National Trust properties across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

In 1999, the National Trust embarked upon their three year 'Cycling Development Project', part funded by the Countryside Agency. This enabled the appointment of a full time Cycling Development Officer, Gina Upex, to tackle the issue of cycling to and within National Trust properties. Sustrans is represented on the Cycling Development Steering Group, and it is this key link and regular contact that has made working in partnership possible.

The project addresses the National Trust's own target, arising from the 1995 AGM resolution, 'to reduce the proportion of car borne visits from 90% in 1995 to 60% by 2020'. Although this goal was set for environmental reasons, it makes sound financial sense. Congestion in rural areas, set to increase by 35% between 2000 and 2010 (DETR Ten Year Plan 2000), has been identified as a prime reason for declining visits to properties (National Trust visitor research, Wessex Region, 1999). Alternatives need to be found.

Increasing the number and proportion of visitors arriving by bike involves both convincing existing visitors to alter their travel habits, and welcoming new visitors. The easiest way to increase the number of cyclists arriving at National Trust properties would be for property managers to encourage local cycle clubs to visit en masse during their regular Sunday rides. However, this is essentially diverting people who would spend their day cycling anyway. The challenge for both Sustrans and the National Trust is to provide good quality facilities that will encourage people who may not consider themselves cyclists to get into the

saddle and leave the car at home.

In doing this, the nature of the visit may change slightly. The property will be the destination, but the journey to the property becomes an important and enjoyable element of the day out.

A good example is Lydford Gorge. Spectacular enough in its own right, when approached by bicycle along the former railway line from Okehampton, the contrast is stunning. An almost entirely flat route involving several viaducts skirting the rugged western edge of Dartmoor, with magnificent views, leaves the cyclist completely unprepared for the lush, seemingly tropical gorge. A discount for cyclists, well located cycle parking, and refreshments all add up to a wonderful experience. The property is well placed to benefit from the growing popularity of the NCN on its doorstep.

It is this approach, the 'whole journey experience' that Sustrans and the National Trust are working hard to achieve at other properties. Not least because the National Trust is keen that neighbouring communities, often rural, should feel the full economic benefit of this type of visit to their properties.

As they pedal their way through the countryside, exercising heart and lungs, cyclists scatter money. Tourism chiefs may believe that they should attract 'BMW's, not bikes', but cyclists have a particularly beneficial impact.

When people holiday by car, they will often fill up the boot with food from a supermarket and take it with them. Cyclists cannot do this. They will buy 'little and often', and this means using village shops and post offices. On the popular C2C cycle route from Whitehaven to Sunderland, cyclists spend an average of £32 per day, and the route puts £1.5 million into the local economy every year.

Good information is essential. It is important to inform potential visitors of the travel choices available to them, and the two organisations make the most of

the internet to do this. On each of the individual property pages on the National Trust's site, there is a link entitled 'Local cycle routes'. This links through to the mapping section on the Sustrans site, with an Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 map centred on the property showing relevant NCN and other cycle routes in the vicinity.

From the Sustrans mapping site, there is a reciprocal link to the relevant property page.

By 2005, the NCN will run past or through 100 National Trust pay-for-entry properties. A total of 230 sites, including coast and countryside properties will be within 1 mile of the 10,000 mile Network. The development of the Network is essential for the National Trust to attain their sustainable transport goals. Likewise, effective promotion of the opportunities to cycle to these special places is necessary for Sustrans to achieve the ambitious goals it has set for increasing usage of the NCN.

In many cases, the properties themselves provide the key link enabling the all important continuous route to be developed. An excellent example of this is Stourhead in Wiltshire. By allowing an old carriage drive to be resurfaced, the National Trust will enable cyclists to avoid a busy B-road that skirts the property. This will join up quiet lanes either side of the property to make a pleasant, continuous 20 mile route from Warminster to Gillingham.

Not only will upgrading this carriage drive ensure continuity of a safe and attractive route, but it will significantly increase the proportion of visitors arriving by bicycle. Sustrans assembled the funding for this project, the main contributor being Wiltshire County Council's Travelwise programme. Included in this funding will be the development of a visitor travel plan, to address the potential for increased use of public transport, and more cycle parking.



Cycle parking is the most basic requirement at any property, in fact at any location where people may arrive by bicycle. The National Trust have shown leadership in this area, by producing 'Cycle Parking Technical Guidance'. This document shows how racks can be incorporated into historic and rural surroundings, and highlights suitable alternatives such as metal rings attached to walls. This has been widely distributed, both within the National Trust, and externally, and is now referred to by local authorities and other national organisations.

The success of this document highlights the esteem in which the National Trust is held. There is a popular sentiment of 'if it's good enough for the National Trust, it's good enough for us'. By demonstrating that paths such as that at Stourhead, and cycle parking, can successfully be developed within properties, to a standard that is acceptable to the National Trust, it is likely that they may be more readily accepted elsewhere.

But perhaps the biggest gain through the National Trust's involvement will be in altering the public's perception of cycling.

Cycling still suffers from an image problem. Some see it as an activity that is very expensive, requiring a lot of equipment and an expensive bike. For others, they can only assume that the person gallantly pedalling is doing so because they cannot afford a car. One of the intended outcomes of the NCN is to 'normalise' cycling, through creating high quality facilities that make people feel rewarded for choosing to cycle.

However, Sustrans cannot achieve a widespread change in attitudes on its own. If cycling is to be seen as a perfectly legitimate, normal, sensible way of getting about, then it needs high profile support from large organisations, and this is exactly what it is receiving from the National Trust. Much has been gained through co-operation, and the successes of this partnership will be celebrated in 2005, when National Trust properties will form the focus of many of the rides on the Grand Opening of the 10,000 mile National Cycle Network.

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*For information about Cycle Parking Technical Guidance, visit the website at:
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/environment/html/cproject/_fspapers/fs-cycl*

Catching Up

How Northern Ireland is striving to catch up with the rest of the UK in meeting the demand for increased countryside recreation opportunities

Caro-lynn Ferris, Countryside Access and Activities Network

Introduction

For some people the term Northern Ireland automatically conjures up negative images of 'the troubles', whilst for others, especially those fortunate enough to have visited the Province, the term evokes a very different image. The reality is that of a small country with a wonderful diversity of landscapes and seascapes suitable for hosting a wide range of countryside recreation activities.

Whilst undoubtedly the potential exists within Northern Ireland for the provision of countryside recreation opportunities for both the local population and for an increasing number of tourists wishing to partake in 'activity tourism', unfortunately to date these opportunities have not been maximised and Northern Ireland has fallen behind developments taking place across the rest of the UK. It has also lagged behind its immediate neighbour and 'competitor' the Republic of Ireland.

Attempts to address this imbalance and help Northern Ireland 'catch up' with its neighbouring countries are underway through the development of five major strategic countryside recreation projects, led by the Northern Ireland Countryside Access and Activities Network.

The five projects are:

- ♦ the completion of a network of long distance walking routes known as the 'Waymarked Ways'
- ♦ the development of a network of off-road cycling trails
- ♦ the development of a network of off-road horse riding trails
- ♦ the development of a network of environmental trails
- ♦ the development of increased opportunities for canoeing

Although the five projects are being led by the Countryside Access and Activities Network, all the projects are based on partnerships between a wide range of organisations including recreational users, local and central government organisations, farmers and landowners, environmental and community organisations, youth organisations and providers of outdoor education.

I: The Waymarked Ways walking initiative

The Waymarked Ways project involves the development of a network of walking routes all of which are over 35kms long across Northern Ireland. To date eight Waymarked Ways have been developed covering 360kms with another five proposed to complete the project. The Ways each of which can be divided into sections providing shorter walks, cross a variety of landscapes and terrain from canal towpaths to upland treks. The Ways are all branded using a new Waymarked Way logo and have common signposting, interpretation packages and marketing literature.

II: Off-road cycling initiative

Earlier this year the Network agreed to take forward a proposal from the governing body of mountain biking in Northern Ireland to address the serious under-provision of facilities for their activity. At the same time, the Network was aware of the economic value that off-road cycling could have on the local economy and communities as documented in case studies such as Coed Y Brenin in North Wales. In early 2002, a feasibility study was completed which assessed the potential of developing off-road cycling in Northern Ireland. Results of the study and a subsequent visit to Northern Ireland by the International Mountain Biking Association, Boulder, Colorado, confirmed the suitability of Northern Ireland for the development of off-road cycling. Consequently plans are now underway to develop:

- ♦ Eight family off-road cycling routes
- ♦ Six cross country single track mountain biking routes .

The development of these routes on the ground will be accompanied by marketing literature and a code of conduct.

III: Off-road horse riding initiative

The need for safer, traffic-free equestrian routes and the potential for off-road horse riding to become a key activity tourism product in Northern Ireland prompted the British Horse Society (Northern Ireland Branch), to ask the Network to undertake a strategic review of the opportunities for off-road horse riding across Northern Ireland. The study which was completed in November 2002 recommended the development of a series of off-road trails across Northern Ireland including:

- ♦ Seven, one hour plus trails
- ♦ Four, two hour plus trails
- ♦ Two endurance trails (30-50 miles) and
- ♦ A toll ride where there is a high demand for riding and poor availability of forest or estate lands

IV: Canoeing initiative

Despite Northern Ireland having an abundance of suitable lakes and rivers which could be used for canoeing, the Canoeing Association of Northern Ireland asked the Network to carry out a feasibility study to consider the present access provision for canoeing both on rivers and lakes and the potential to develop additional opportunities including long distance canoe touring trails. Following a series of work-shops and consultation an action programme was drawn up for canoeing which includes:

- ♦ Providing improved water access at key well used sites
- ♦ Providing new canoe steps and replacing worn or damaged canoe steps at 20 sites
- ♦ Developing new access to flat water sites in areas where demand is high
- ♦ Providing two outdoor polo sites
- ♦ Developing and promoting a series of three canoe trails



V: Environmental Trails - 'ecotrails'

The environmental trails project (ecotrails) provides an opportunity for young people in Northern Ireland to develop an awareness, appreciation and understanding of, and responsibility to, their local natural and built environment. The project which combines the sport of orienteering with environmental education is now commencing its second phase. Five ecotrails have already been developed in five of Belfast's city parks and phase two of the project will see a further 15 developed across Northern Ireland.

The on-going challenge

Securing the necessary funding to implement the five strategic development projects is the Network's next formidable challenge. Although it has identified the sites / areas suitable for development, it must now convince a range of funders that investing financially in the five planned development areas will have significant value for the Northern Ireland economy, its environment and the wider community.

This is not easy as many bodies who have the potential to fund such projects do not share the Network's vision or have no real experience of a 'partnership' approach preferring instead to run with their own agenda.

However, hopefully if these projects are financed and implemented, a start will be made to addressing the problem of Northern Ireland catching up with the rest of the UK in terms of countryside recreation provision.

Footnote:

¹ *The Countryside Access and Activities Network was established in 1999 following a recommendation in Northern Ireland's first Countryside Recreation strategy (1998). It is an umbrella organisation which brings together all bodies directly or indirectly involved in countryside recreation. The Network is tasked with the strategic development and management of countryside recreation across Northern Ireland.*

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Wild land in Britain: Promoting awareness through the Internet and GIS

Steve Carver, University of Leeds

Ask most people whether they think there is any true wilderness left in Britain's countryside and they'll probably say "no" or maybe just shrug off the question. Rephrase the question slightly and ask them whether they think any parts of our countryside retain a wild and natural feel and they're likely (if in anyway familiar with the British landscape) to start reeling off the names of remote corners such as Knoydart, the Upper Elan Valley or Kielder Head. Better still ask them to define what it is that makes these places wild; characteristics such as remoteness, lack of obvious human features such buildings, roads, dams and power lines, natural vegetation, rugged terrain, and so on. Identifying where such attributes combine on a map to create the "right conditions" for wildness, however, is where the problems begin. This is a complex and socially vague concept that at first glance may defy normal mapping methods. This article describes ongoing research at the University of Leeds into identifying wild areas, surveying public opinion and evaluating landscape character using online Geographical Information Systems (GIS). In particular, the article describes how putting relevant datasets on the web within an easy-to-use GIS interface can help shed some light on how different people perceive the components of landscape and, using this knowledge, identify where the wildest parts of the countryside may well be found.

Recent developments in wild land policy

In a previous issue of *Countryside Recreation* John Mackay of Scottish Natural Heritage makes a convincing case for the existence of considerable tracts of wild land in Britain (Mackay, 2002). Indeed, SNH have recently published a policy statement on "Wildness in Scotland's Countryside" (SNH, 2002) as have The National Trust for Scotland (NTS, 2002). Both documents stress the importance of Scotland's

wild land resource and the pressures that lead to the loss of wildness, as well as supporting the principle of wild land within land use planning (NPPG14, 1998). Both documents dwell in detail on what wild land means to the Scottish countryside and draw up lists of indicators of wild land quality.

"Wild land in Scotland is relatively remote and inaccessible, not noticeably affected by contemporary human activity, and offers high-quality opportunities to escape from the pressures of everyday living and find physical and spiritual refreshment." (NTS, January 2002)

Their respective policy objectives are to safeguard wild land, enhance nature, promote responsible recreational use, restore past damage and promote awareness. Key wild land indicators identified by both SNH and NTS include remoteness and inaccessibility, opportunity for solitude, the high degree of perceived naturalness and the absence of modern human artefacts and land use. Further criteria include rugged terrain, scenic grandeur, elements of physical challenge and risk. Whereas both documents stress the need to identify core areas of wild land as a precondition of management, the actual mechanism required to identify and map these areas is left open to interpretation (though the SNH document uses distance from public and private roads as an indication of the probable extent of wild land areas).

Developing a GIS approach

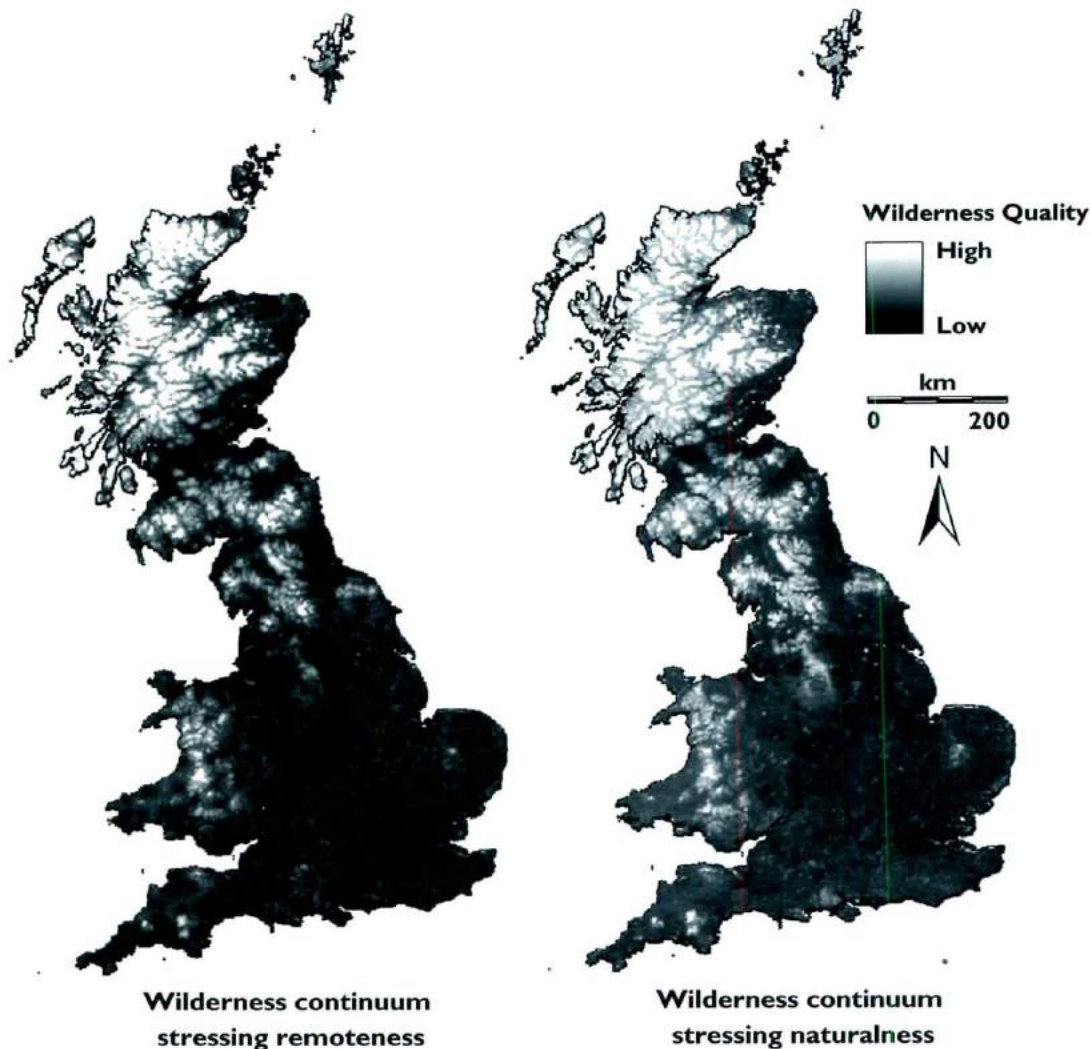
To meet a particular policy objective - in this case the mapping of wild land quality - it is often necessary to evaluate several criteria by considering their different levels of importance. Using digital maps of four principal wild land indicators (remoteness from settlement, remoteness from mechanised access, lack

of human artefacts or apparent naturalness, and biophysical or ecological naturalness) GIS can be used to identify the wilderness continuum in Britain based on a combination of map overlay and personal value judgements. In other words, how one person sees the impact of, say, roads on wilderness quality relative to, say, the presence or absence of native woodland.

National digital datasets are used here to create six factor maps describing remoteness from local population, remoteness from national population centres, remoteness from mechanised access, apparent naturalness, biophysical naturalness and

altitude. These can then be combined using weighted GIS overlays to create a series of different wilderness continuum maps depending on personal preferences for the aforementioned factors. Figure 1 shows a comparison between two example personal continuum maps: one based on user weights that stress remoteness from population and access, and one based on user weights that stress apparent and biophysical naturalness. The differences between individual maps created in this manner serve to illustrate how different people's perceptions affect how the wilderness continuum may be mapped.

Figure 1: Comparison between two example personal continuum maps



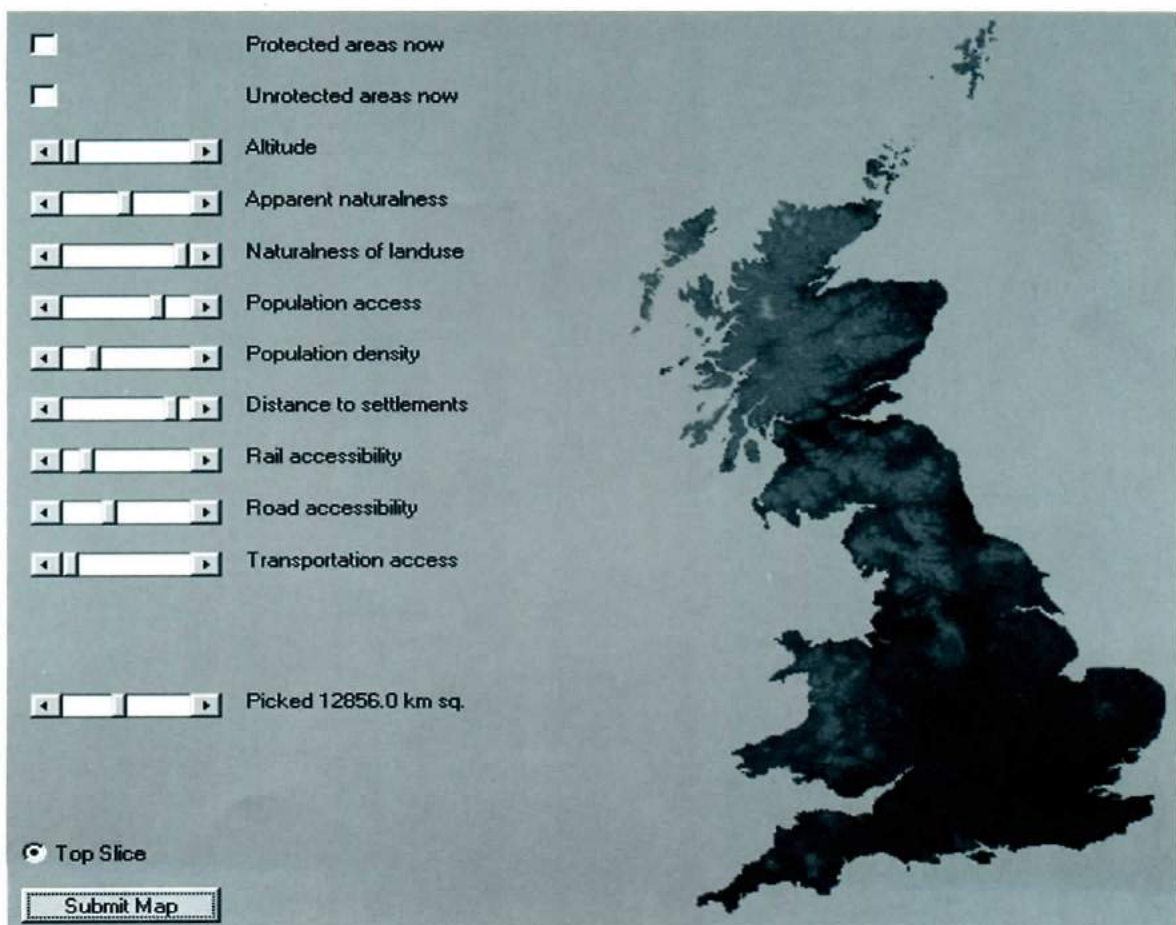
Internet-based surveys of public perception

Policy can be much better informed through careful scrutiny of public opinion, and, can in turn, meet with greater public approval. To explore public opinion regarding wild land in more detail an easy-to-use web-based educational and survey tool has been developed. The aims of the web site are to identify which geographical factors are perceived to be important wilderness quality indicators and use these to derive consensus maps from multiple user responses.

The web mapping system allows users to explore the idea of wilderness in the British landscape through viewing a series of related attribute maps and descriptions. The user can then experiment with weights they might apply to these and draw their own wilderness continuum map on the screen. Weighting of attribute maps is done using simple slider bars and

a Java mapping applet that re-calculates and then re-draws the continuum map "on the fly". All processing of the maps is done using client-side applets and pre-loaded attribute maps thereby greatly reducing re-draw times and making the system highly interactive. Wildness values are relative and drawn as a continuous grey shading, with the least wild areas in black and most wild areas in white. Once users are satisfied with their continuum map, a further slider bar can be used to 'top-slice' the continuum map and formulate a decision as to where they think wild countryside begins on their wilderness continuum. By moving this slider bar those areas thought of as wilderness or wild land are highlighted on the continuum map in green. The main map interface to the system is shown in figure 2. All final user responses submitted are retained in server-side log files such that it is possible to re-draw individual continuum maps for subsequent analysis.

Figure 2: Main map interface to the system

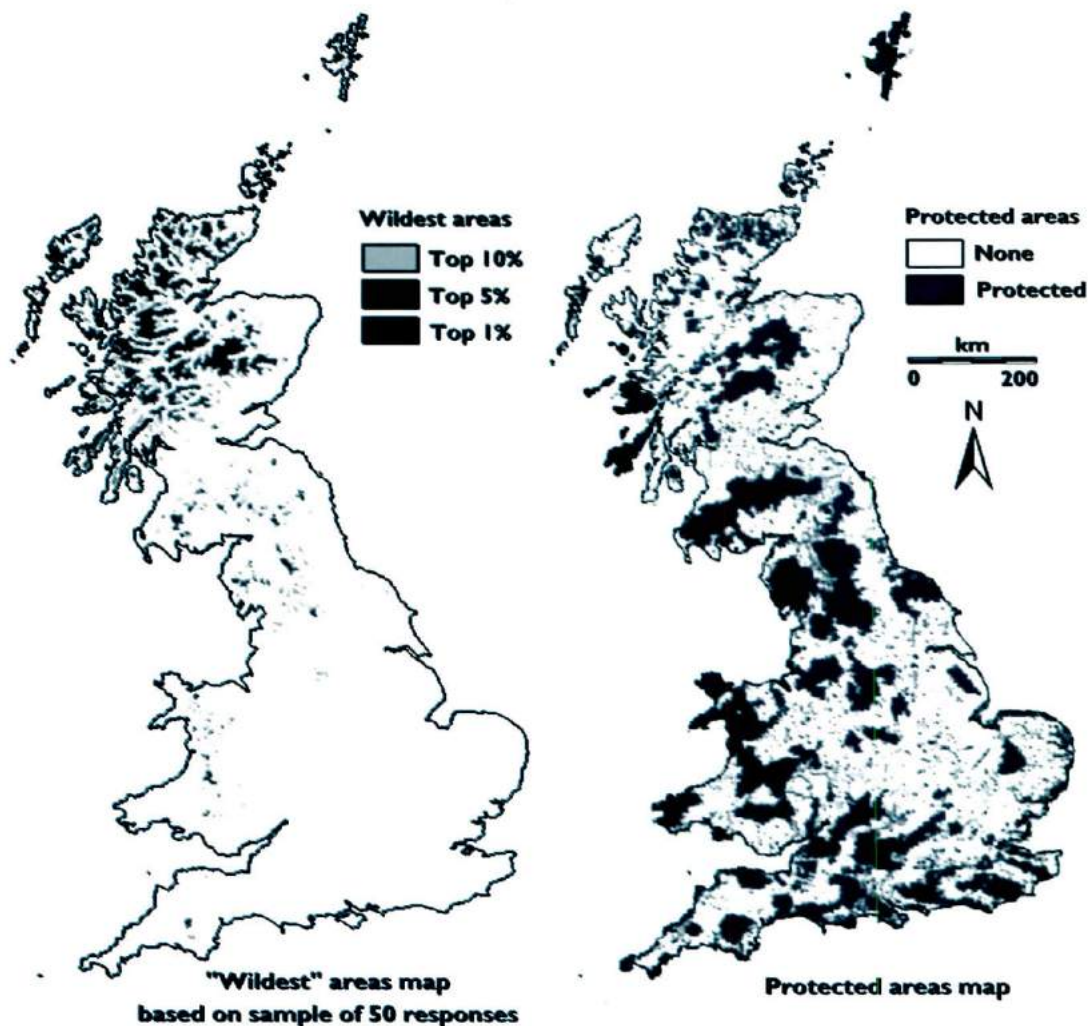


Implications for protected areas and education

Using results from Internet-based mapping methods, such as those described here, it should be possible to identify what a large and, given time and exposure, representative sample of people believe to be the wildest parts of country. While there may be some misgivings as to how representative these maps may actually turn out to be, they do form a useful benchmark against which Britain's existing network of protected areas can be evaluated. The 'wildest' areas shown in figure 3 are derived from the mean continuum map from a sample of 50 student responses by re-selecting the wildest 1, 5 and 10% of

the country. For the purpose of discussion these are shown next to a map showing existing protected areas within Britain. Looking at this map it can be seen that while existing protected areas may contain landscapes of high wilderness value, a significant proportion of the wildest areas of the country are not formally protected by conservation area status. If these areas are not formally identified and protected then we run the very real risk of losing them to the pressures of development, such as from energy (hydroelectric and/or wind) developments and non-wilderness dependent forms of tourism.

Figure 3: The 'Wildest' areas, derived from the mean continuum map



Internet-based wild land mapping could prove very useful in drawing public attention to the state of wild land and therefore can stimulate a discussion about the status of wild land protection. It can raise public awareness of wild land conditions and help to educate people about the value of land that is 'not developed'. Wilderness preservation is heavily dependent on good education. If people do not know about wild nature and its values, or have never experienced it, then they are unlikely to support policy on its preservation. And without public support, the political will can be fatally weakened. Traditional wilderness information campaigns, whether based on paper, TV or the Internet, can only go so far in educating the public. It is essentially a one-way process, with the public receiving second-hand experiences through the medium of text, sound and pictures, but being unable to give in return. Experiencing real wilderness first hand may be the ultimate education, but is one that not all of us are fortunate enough to have. The Internet GIS approach outlined here may go some way toward providing the public with the opportunity not only to learn about wilderness and its position within the landscape, but also to interact with the geographical concept and actively contribute to the process of policy-making, planning and conservation.

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Why not take part in this survey? The wild land mapping web site and an associated survey on wilderness definition may be accessed via www.ccg.leeds.ac.uk/wild/

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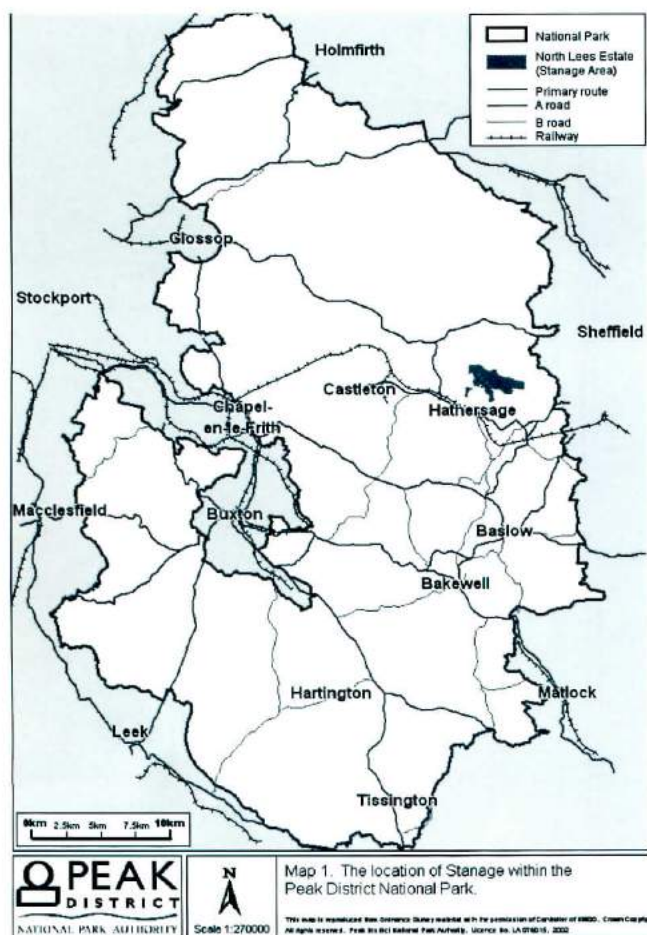
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People, Environment and Consensus

The Stanage Forum – Involving Communities in Protected Area Management

Matthew Crony, Estate Manager, PDNPA and Steve Smith, Icarus Collective



Stanage Edge, situated within the estate, is one of the most valued and visited areas of countryside in the UK. Situated just six miles from Sheffield it is used intensively for all manner of recreational activities, generating many conflicting interests, ideas and positions among the 'users' of the estate. Most of the Estate has open access promoting activities such as climbing, walking, mountain biking, hang-gliding and bird watching. Indeed Stanage Edge is regarded as one of the birthplaces of climbing, boasting over 1200 routes. The estate is also very important to the local people of Hathersage and Outseats; supports a working farm and is a valuable educational resource.

The estate is also of exceptional wildlife and habitat value. It has been designated at an international level as a Special Protection Area for its many rare breeding birds and a Special Area of Conservation for its heather moorland and bog habitats.

Issues

Major conflicts existed between recreation, ecology and farming. Examples included parking, access and traffic management (95% of visitors arrive by car), conflict between recreational groups such as walkers and four wheel drivers, climbers and bird watchers. Footpath erosion, the disturbance of rare ground nesting birds and a desire to provide access, interpretation and facilities without losing the wild character of the landscape were all high on the agenda.

A participative approach?

The National Park Authority had found through experience that the traditional 'decide and sell' approach to management planning in this area had not worked. It appeared that the majority of estate users did not understand why certain management decisions were being taken and had little or no

In 2000, the Peak District National Park Authority embarked on an innovative and ground breaking approach to protected area management. It commissioned a process that would enable communities and wider stakeholders to get fully involved in developing a new 10 year consensus-based management plan for the North Lees Estate.

The process started with many conflicts, a blank sheet of paper and an open mind. Two years and many meetings later, a site management plan has been launched which describes agreed ways forward for every identified issue.

opportunity to put forward ideas or get involved themselves in discussing the future management of the estate. This misunderstanding, lack of information and opportunity to get involved promoted further conflict.

The Stanage Forum aimed to tackle these root causes of conflict. A process would be launched aiming to identify, engage and work with stakeholders to the estate to develop a new management plan. The plan would be developed through dialogue and discussion with the interested individuals and groups and it was hoped that understanding would be enhanced, new alliances created and a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for the area's future engendered. It was also hoped that the innovative nature of the approach would attract more resources for managing the area through the combining of different partner's resources and in attracting more external funding to the area.

A different way of working

The Stanage Forum process was established to bring together key stakeholders. Through a series of large facilitated forum meeting and other activities individuals, interest groups and organisations with different views were invited to enter into solutions orientated dialogue. The process aimed to build agreement among and between different stakeholder groups as to the way forward for the management of the estate. For the process to be successful people would need to be brought together and helped to relate to each in a different way. The usual ways of planning and decision making using the 'decide and sell' model would be redundant as too would the normal methods of 'consulting' the public through public meetings or exhibitions. A set of principles were agreed which would inform the way of working over the following two years. These set out what could be described as a consensus approach to management planning.

- Participants speak directly to each other and aim to reach agreement openly.
- Everyone will have the opportunity to have a say and their opinion will be valued.
- Every effort is made to reach agreements

acceptable to everyone.

- People work from an open position - interests are stated and understood.
- People accept, and are willing to work with, each other's differences in order to reach a consensus that benefits all.
- Everyone who has an interest in the issue can contribute
- Everybody is encouraged to take an active role in seeking progress.

An independent facilitator will be used to advise on, design and facilitate the process

An ambitious set of principles and easier to write than implement. To achieve a way of working which lived up to these principles demanded much of both participants and organisers.

Making it work

The process developed through a number of key stages and much was learnt on route. The following points describe some of the most important elements that were put in place to enable the process to succeed.

Appointment of facilitators. Quality process design and facilitation is crucial to the success of any engagement process. It was also important to have independent facilitation due to the many past conflicts and positions of different stakeholder groups. The Icarus Collective were appointed as facilitators, an organisation specialising in the design and facilitation of multi-stakeholder developmental processes.

The Forum. Four open public events were held with



up to 70 people attending each. These were not typical public meetings. Interactive techniques were used to get people from different interest groups and positions working together, discussing issues and generating mutually beneficial solutions.

Newsletter and website. These were used to keep people in touch with progress and maintain momentum. People who could not attend forums could feedback by phone, letter or through the on-line discussion board.

Establishing a steering group. Seventeen people were nominated to a steering group representing the key stakeholders to the area. These people were nearly all volunteers and met 22 times over the two year period. The steering group developed ownership of the process within the key stakeholder groups, developed co-operation and understanding between individuals and groups and was vital, and central to the process of sorting and clarifying the Forum's suggestions and investigating the viability of solutions in detail.

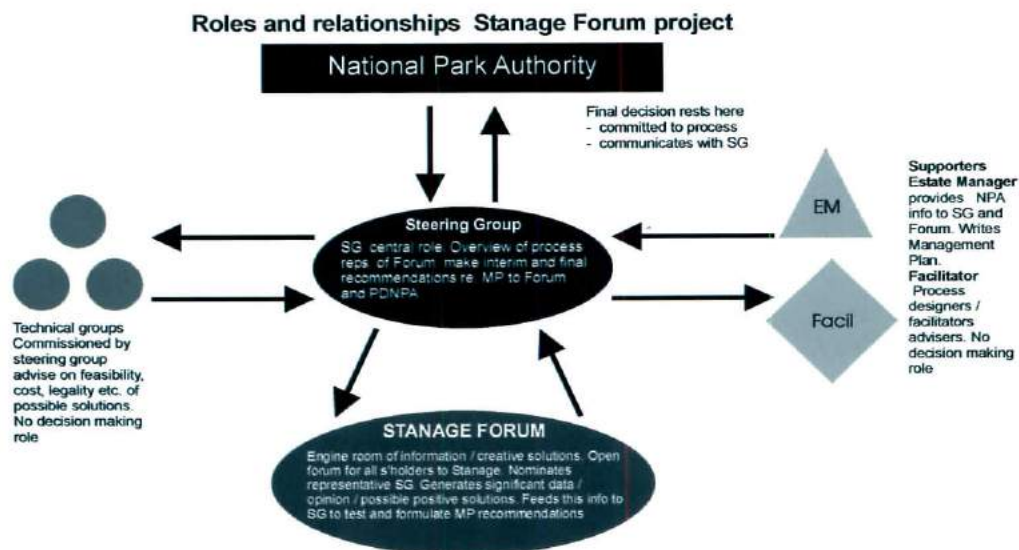
Stakeholder analysis. This was undertaken with the members of the steering group at the start of the process to identify any individual, group or organisation that had an interest in the proposed management plan or who would be affected by it. For the Forum process it was very important to make

sure that all interested parties were involved from the start and there are now over 250 people on the mailing list

Agreeing and establishing a decision-making structure. It was important that the roles, remits, responsibilities and communication routes of each of the key groups involved were clarified and agreed early on. The following was agreed.

The process

The large facilitated Forum events brought different stakeholder groups together to discuss, generate, prioritise and agree possible solutions and actions. A wide range of participative and consensus building tools and methods were used to enable people to engage in positive solutions orientated discussions. The Steering Group then sorted the suggested solutions and actions and worked them up in more detail to become objectives (calling technical groups to advise on feasibility where necessary). At each stage, the Steering Group checked back with all stakeholders, inviting comment via newsletter, website and Forum meetings. Once agreed the final objectives were developed into an action plan format showing timescale, priority and delivery mechanism before being written into the Estate Management Plan. The final plan was formally approved by the National Park Authority in July 2002, and launched at the 4th Forum event.



Achievements and lessons learnt

Overall the process has been a great success and much has been learnt. It has achieved more than first anticipated, finding and agreeing ways forward for every identified issue, represented by 150 objectives in all. As a result of pooling partnership resources and agreeing realistic objectives, funding has been identified for most of the Plan and it is hoped external funds will be secured for the few that need additional investment.

Apart from the final product of the Plan, the process has also engendered a wide range of new and positive relationships between different groups and organisations. The participative approach at Stanage will now be continued into the future with structures in place to maintain the Forum and steering group to enable ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the management plan's impact as it is implemented.

The process is challenging and has not always been easy. The question to ask however is what is the next best alternative? Most participants would agree that an involving process where all the users of the estate have had the opportunity to participate has produced a plan and vision for the area which is of a higher quality and much more likely to succeed than a more traditional approach. Such a process requires patience, diplomacy, and determination and relies on a substantial amount of voluntary effort. The voluntary contribution the Stanage Forum process has enjoyed is a clear indication of how passionately people care about the area.

A large scale consensus building process requires sufficient time, resources and expertise. The Stanage process has cost £14,000 to date plus around 160 days worth of staff time. Planning and skilled process design and facilitation are also crucial ingredients. The experience at Stanage has however demonstrated that it can work in what is one of the most visited areas of countryside in the country. At its simplest, it is about getting people to talk to each other for mutual benefit and none of the potential concerns, such as loss of control or the raising of expectations beyond the possible materialised.

Want to know more?

Many people have said, "If it can work at Stanage, it can work anywhere!" The good practice established through the Stanage Forum process is applicable to most areas of protected area management.

There are a number of way to find out more.

Visit the website (www.peakdistrict.org) and click on the Stanage Forum link under 'Working Together'. Here the whole process can be tracked and a summary copy of the Management Plan has been posted.

The facilitators and National Park Estate manager are running a three day course in April 2003 looking at every aspect of stakeholder engagement in protected are management. **People, Environment and Consensus – National Park Study Centre, Losehill Hall, Derbyshire – 14-16th April 2003.** Contact Losehill Hall. for more details. 01433 620373, training.losehill@peakdistrict-npa.gov.uk, www.losehill-training.org.uk

Contact Matthew Croney at PDNPA. mc@peakdistrict-npa.gov.uk, tel: 01629 816351 or Steve Smith from the Icarus Collective. e-mail: steve@icarus.uk.net, 01484 846486, who can offer training and facilitation support based on the Stanage approach.



News

THE PEOPLE'S PLACES AWARD SCHEME

The People's Places Award Scheme supports community groups in England that aim to bring environmental and / or social benefits to their areas. Grants are available from between £3000 and £10,000. In April, £5,425 was awarded from the scheme to the Salisbury Estate Residents Association on the Isle of Wight. People's Places has supported a wide range of projects, from community gardens to reclamation of wasteland and habitat restoration. The Association will use its grant to improve the condition and environment of its estate and current play facilities. For example, it will plant bird and butterfly friendly plants and protect and develop an existing wetland by erecting bird and bat boxes to encourage more wildlife to the area.

If you are a group interested in applying for a grant or for more information about the scheme, please contact: People's Places, BTCV, 36 St Mary Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 0EU, Tel: 01491 821 600, or visit the website at: www.btcv.org/ppawards

Issue 29, Autumn 2002 – Interactive, Shell Better Britain Campaign

FOOT AND MOUTH BURIAL SITE TO BECOME WILDLIFE SANCTUARY?

More than 40,000 animal carcasses are buried in the Inkerman site at Tow Law in County Durham. This giant foot and mouth burial site may now be transformed into a sanctuary for wildlife. Landowners, and officials from Defra are close to agreeing a plan to turn the site into a wildlife sanctuary.

Local people agree that the reserve could attract thousands of people and help regenerate the area. The burial site was bought from a local firm (HJ Banks) during the crisis, by Defra. HJ Banks still owns the surrounding land and want to give back a large slice for a 500 acre wildlife sanctuary.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/2371179.stm>

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE AMONGST THE WORST AFFECTED IN THE RURAL REALITY

A fifth of people who live in the English countryside, live in poverty, according to the Countryside Agency at their Rural Social Exclusion Conference held on 3/12/02.

New Countryside Agency research 'Indicators of Poverty & Social Exclusion in Rural England 2002', compiled by the New Policy Institute, shows that: 'the unemployment rate for 18 – 24 year old in rural areas is more than double that for older workers; the suicide rate between 1998 – 2000 was higher among 16 – 24 year old in remote rural areas than in either accessible rural or urban areas; 18% of people in rural areas live in low income households compared to 24% in urban areas; the same number of pensioners, one in four, in rural areas live below the low income threshold as in urban areas.'

Ewen Cameron, Countryside Chairman, said: "...The Countryside Agency has been working to identify the depth of rural social exclusion and better ways of addressing it. I am particularly concerned at the impact on rural young people. Too many of them have to leave to find jobs, homes or training and many of those that remain have low aspirations, limited opportunities and are excluded from choices about their lives. Finding ways of addressing the problems they face is a high priority for the Countryside Agency and its future work on social exclusion. In doing so, we shall learn from and build on some of the exciting and innovative projects already happening around the country, such as the Cornish YP2 Clay project."

Countryside Agency New Release, Social Exclusion Remains a Rural Reality, and young people are among the worst affected, 03/12/02

SUSTAINABILITY BOOST TO SNOWDONIA

Idwal Cottage is a YHA hostel in the Snowdonia National Park and has welcomed visitors since 1931. Two new eco-friendly features are now installed at the hostel. Locally produced and sustainable materials, such as slate and timber from managed forests has also been sourced for the £240,000 environmental makeover funded by the YHA, its members and the Snowdonia National Park's CAE environment development fund, as well as by foot and mouth recovery grants from the Wales Tourist Board and Gwynedd Council.

Dormitories have been made into smaller bedrooms and family rooms and has improved access and facilities for people with disabilities. All this has been achieved without altering the character of the former quarry manager's house.

YHA North Wales Area Manager, Eric Soutter said: "The redevelopment of YHA Idwal Cottage demonstrates not only YHA's commitment to sustainable tourism in Wales but the importance of the links we have forged with our partners in the national Park."

http://www.yha.org.uk/cgi-bin/display_pages/display_news.cgi?submit=displayarticle&&id=79&&type=N

RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLANS

'Government announcements provide a welcome framework in which England's rights of way network should become more usable and be extended to meet the needs of everyone using it, according to the Countryside Agency. However, it warns that the success of this new framework depends on adequate funding and the commitment of local highway authorities.

The commencement of a new duty for local highway authorities to prepare Rights of Way Improvement Plans, announced by Rural Affairs Minister Alun Michael, gives local authorities the opportunity to plan and create a network of routes to suit everyone's needs, as well as to improve the existing network. In 2005 these Rights of Way Improvement Plans will become part of the Local Transport Plans, following an announcement from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, demonstrating the Government's commitment to quality of rights of way'.

The Countryside Agency, news release, 29/11/02, Rights of Way Improvement s come a step closer

THE COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP SCHEME 2003

The Countryside Stewardship Scheme 2003 - Information and how to apply handbook is now available. The Countryside Stewardship is a scheme run by Defra, which makes payments to farmers and land managers to improve the natural beauty and diversity of the countryside. It operates throughout England and is part of the England Rural Development Programme.

Countryside Stewardship is open to those who have management control over suitable land for ten years. This includes: farmers; non-farming land owners and managers; voluntary bodies; local authorities and community groups. Joint application can be made.

*For a copy of the handbook and application form, please visit the website at:
www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/regulat/forms/erdp/css/index.htm*

ARC - ADDINGTON FUND LAUNCHES AFFORDABLE RURAL HOUSING INITIATIVE

ARC - Addington Fund's Strategic Housing Scheme was launched at the Royal Smithfield Show.

"Our aim is to help people who have been financially dependent on a rural-based industry to exit their present accommodation and business with dignity" said Ian Bell, Fund Director. "Tenant farmers, publicans and village shop-keepers, whose place of work is also their home, are among the groups we expect to help."

ARC-Addington Fund distributed £10.3 million in hardship grants during the Foot and Mouth crisis. It is now changing its emphasis to address the urgent need for affordable houses in rural areas.

The fund will purchase the property, which can then be rented or offered on a split equity basis dependent on the circumstances of the individual. They have already bought two houses in the North East, and they have made offers on four houses in Wales, the South East, the South West and Scotland. The first tenants have now moved into their new home. The fund moves with complete discretion. Neighbours need never know that help has been taken from charity.

*For further details please contact:
Ian Bell or Sue Eeley, Fund Director, ARC-Addington Fund, National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV8 2LZ
Tel: 02476 690587, E-mail: addington@rase.org.uk*

LOCAL HERITAGE INITIATIVE

The Local Heritage Initiative is the nationwide community heritage conservation scheme, which gives communities across England practical help and funding to explore, cherish, celebrate and share their local heritage, landscape, landmarks and traditions. It is run by the Countryside Agency with £8 million grant aid from the Heritage Lottery Fund and £1 million sponsorship from the Nationwide Building Society.

The 'Heritage Stars' Awards, an award to recognise the contribution young people make to the initiative, were awarded to:

Laura McGee of Cleator Moor in West Cumbria, for her involvement in a project to make videos and inform people about the unique Cumbrian sport of hound trailing, and;

Special needs pupils from Greenacres School in East Barnsley, who studied, restored and recorded a monastic site – including a 13th century well, in the grounds of their school.

Judges assessed schemes on their ability to make a difference to the local community, the way they encouraged community involvement, the hard work and endeavour involved, success in overcoming difficulties and contribution to spreading the heritage message. Laura McGee received £500 and the Greenacres School pupils received £1000.

Young Heritage Stars Twinkle in Cumbria & Yorkshire, Press Release, 22/1 1/02

ANNUAL CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND RECREATION REPORT 2001/2002

The seventh annual conservation, access and recreation report is now available on the Environment Agency website at:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/carreport.

The report is only available on the internet. The report is seen as a key promotional tool and an important means of informing; members of the public, local authorities, environment groups, partnership organisations, local clubs and Government Ministers, of the Agency's activities, achievements and partnerships in relation to conservation, access and recreation.

MOUNTAIN RAILWAY IS THE BEST IN THE COUNTRY

The Snowdonia Mountain Railway at Llanberis, which runs from the village to the summit of Snowdon, is Britain's only public rack and pinion railway. It has been awarded by the Good Britain Guide 2003, as the

best scenic railway in Britain and the top family attraction in Wales.

The company says that the awards are down to the hard work and dedication of its staff – 90 of whom are fully employed in the summer and 50 in the winter. The railway is 106 years old and is open from 15 March until 1 November. It attracted 130,000 visitors last year.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/2523971.stm>

GETTING RURAL COMMUNITIES ON THE MOVE

According to the Countryside Agency, around one in six households in rural England don't have a car and one in three settlements don't have a bus service. Therefore, for some people who live in the countryside getting from A to B is not easy.

A new guide published on October 16th 2002, by the Countryside Agency will help make it easier for rural people to get to where they need to go, when they need to go. 'Get your community moving – A step by step guide to the Parish Transport Grant explains how to work out what transport scheme will work best for a particular town or village, apply for a parish transport grant from the Countryside Agency and get a scheme up and running and known about locally.

The Countryside Agency can help communities solve some of the problems by providing up to £1000 for a parish or town council to work out their transport needs and up to £10000 to help meet these needs.

'Get your community moving' explains that funding doesn't have to be used to provide extra bus services – there are variety of types of transport that are often more suited to the needs of people living in the countryside, such as car-sharing or taxi-voucher schemes..

To get a free copy of 'Get your community moving (CA 116) from Countryside Agency Publications, PO Box 125, Wetherby, West Yorks, LS23 7EP. Tel: 0870 120 6466 or down load it from the website at: www.countryside.gov.uk/publications.

For further information about applying for a parish transport grant or any of the Countryside Agency's other Vital Villages grants call the Countryside Agency's Vital Villages help line on 0870 333 0170 or visit the website at: www.countryside.gov.uk/vitalvillages

Countryside Recreation Network Publications List

	Price (incl.postage)	Tick
REPORTS		
Social Exclusion in Countryside Leisure in the United Kingdom - the role of the countryside in addressing social exclusion (2001)	£10	<input type="checkbox"/>
CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS		
Removing Barriers; Creating Opportunities: Social Inclusion in the Countryside (2001)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing the Challenge of Access (2000)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the Honeypot Overflowing? (1998)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making Access for All a Reality (1997)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Today s Thinking for Tomorrow s Countryside (1995)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communities in their Countryside (1994)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS		
Public Rights of Way Improvement Plans (2002)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Funding for Social Projects (2002)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opening Up Access In and Around Towns (2002)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visitor Payback Schemes (2002)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Access Forums (2001)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fundraising and the Lottery (2001)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are We Getting There? Delivering Sustainable Transport in the Countryside (2000)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Breaking New Ground in Sustainable Tourism (2000)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using Local Distinctiveness as an Economic Development Tool (1999)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Just Walking the Dog (1999)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sponsorship (1998)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making Ends Meet (1997)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
GIS & Countryside Management - Theory and Application (1997)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to Water - Sharing Access on Reservoirs and Rivers (1997)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do Visitor Surveys Count? - Making use of Surveys of Countryside Recreation (1996)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consensus in the Countryside II (1996)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consensus in the Countryside I - Reaching Shared agreement in policy, planning and management (1996)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Brush with the Land - Art in the Countryside II (1996)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Brush with the Land - Art in the Countryside I (1995)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playing Safe? Managing Visitor Safety in the Countryside (1995)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
GIS & Access to the Countryside (1995)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sport in the Countryside (1995)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Drive in the Country? - Examining the Problems of Recreational Travel (1994)	£7	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental Economics, Sustainable Management and the Countryside (1994)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
CRN RESEARCH DIRECTORY An annual directory of the research work carried out by the CRN agencies during the year		
Research Directory 1998	£5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research Directory 1997	£5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research Directory 1996	£2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research Directory 1995	£2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Since 1998 we have been developing a searchable database on the CRN website. This has replaced the 'traditional' hard copy of the 'Research Directory'.		
UK Day Visits Survey 1994 (1996)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
UK Day Visits Survey 1993 (1995)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>

Title: _____ First name: _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

E-Mail: _____ Tel: _____

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