



Countryside Recreation Network

**Making a splash:
providing opportunities for
water based recreation on
inland waters**

2009 Seminar Proceedings of the
Countryside Recreation Network

Edited & Formatted by
Kim Haigh, Network Assistant

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Countryside Recreation Network
Sheffield Hallam University
Unit 1, Sheffield Science Park
Howard Street
Sheffield
S1 2LX

Tel: 0114 225 4494

Fax: 0114 225 6319

E-mail: crn@shu.ac.uk

Website: www.countrysiderecreation.org.uk

"Making a splash: providing opportunities for water based recreation on inland waters"

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Welcome and introduction

Geoff Hughes
Chairman
Countryside Recreation Network

Concerns about recreational access to inland water have been evident for many years. Different approaches have been adopted in the countries of the UK, but is the resource truly fulfilling its potential? This was the question posed by the event.

The seminar clearly showed that there is no right way of doing things and a wide range of factors influence opportunities for people to get on, in, or under water for outdoor recreation. The event also explored provision of opportunities to get alongside water and for most people I guess this is as close to water as they want to get?

During the course of the day speakers from all parts of the UK outlined their experience in making provision for water recreation and the issues explored ranged from those of broad based strategy at a whole country or regional level, to what it takes on a practical site specific basis to unlock the potential. It was clear from Dr Neil Ravenscroft's presentation that there is considerable merit in adopting a planned approach to managing the resource by matching supply with demand. In Scotland where the Land Reform Act offers an open access approach it seemed to be about managing and educating users in order to reconcile conflicts between the different interests involved. In Wales it was apparent that much had been achieved by the very positive approach adopted by the Welsh Assembly Government.

In the afternoon delegates had the opportunity to explore some of the more detailed issues which influence opportunities to take part. These included health and safety considerations, dealing with the interests of a private company, the role volunteers might play and how to make specific provision for canoeing.

There is no doubt that there is more to do if all of those who want to take part can have the opportunity to do so, but in my view the seminar clearly demonstrated the benefits of sharing the experience.

Identifying the need - strategic planning for water related recreation

Dr Neil Ravenscroft
Professor of Land Economy
University of Brighton

Background

Nearly a quarter of the UK adult population now spend some of their leisure time in ways closely linked to coasts and inland waterways and watercourses (Arkenford Market Modelling and Research, 2008). Of these, the majority go to beaches, swim in the sea and walk beside water. Just over 6% of adults take part in boating activities, the most popular being canoeing and motor boating/cruising (mainly on inland waters), and around 5% participate in angling (sea and freshwater). Many more people express a wish to participate in water related activities – often inspired by international sporting success in activities including swimming, sailing, canoeing, rowing and angling - but feel constrained by factors such as cost, lack of skill and lack of access to suitable waters. The General Household Survey reveals that swimming is the form of exercise people aspire to undertake more regularly. This situation is highly significant given that the majority of us live within close proximity of at least one type of water environment, and water related recreation is increasingly widely recognised for its potential to deliver a range of national policy priorities, not least health (Natural England, 2009a).

It is certainly the case that better use could be made of many existing opportunities to experience water related recreation. However, research has shown consistently that information about these opportunities is often not readily available, that there are insufficient coaches and support services to help people access new activities, and that is no strategic overview of what is required and where it should be located (University of Brighton, 2001). This is compounded by the extremely complex legal situation regarding access to non-tidal waters, which leaves few people confident that they know when and where they can safely and legally gain access to water for recreation (see University of Brighton, 2001; Caffyn, 2004; Church, et al, 2007).

The net result is that there has been until recently a policy vacuum in which the value of water related recreation (and, more generally, the water environment) is recognised rhetorically but not addressed comprehensively. This has resulted in many people being unable to access outdoor recreation opportunities that would have been highly beneficial to them, while some water sports clubs struggle to find suitable waters and maintain a membership sufficient to sustain them. While this situation has been evident to participants and club members for years, it came to wider attention in 2001, following the publication of the University of Brighton (2001) 'Facts' report for Defra. In highlighting a range of issues facing the development of better and more widespread provision for water related recreation, the Facts report concluded that a new strategic approach to planning for water related recreation was required. This recommendation was taken up by Defra,

which asked the Environment Agency to develop such an approach, for England and Wales. Following a competitive tender, the University of Brighton were awarded, in 2007, a contract to undertake three strategic planning pilots for water related recreation¹, in Wales, South West England and the East of England (the English studies being based on RDA boundaries). Following successful completion of these, the University of Brighton is currently working on strategic plans for the North West, Midlands and London & the South East regions of England.

Following a review of the policy frame within which the regional strategic agenda for water related recreation is being developed, this paper will set out the process used to generate the strategies, which will be illustrated by reference to a case study of South West England. The paper will conclude with some observations about the success of the approach and the extent to which non-statutory plans can influence regional policy.

The local and regional planning frame

Strategic and statutory planning policy for water related recreation can be found in a number of documents, including Natural England's (2009b) guidance on Green Infrastructure (GI), the Countryside Council for Wales' (2006) guidance on accessible greenspace in towns and cities, Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17) (ODPM, 2001), Technical Advice Note 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space (TAN 16) (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009), Minerals Policy Statement 1: Planning and Minerals (MPS1) (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2006a) and Minerals Planning Policy Wales (Welsh Assembly Government, 2001).

In its work on GI, Natural England describes the processes by which new and existing greenspaces and green networks are properly planned, designed and integrated into town and country planning in a strategic fashion. In this context, Natural England asserts that GI covers all forms of open space, including 'waterways, water bodies and flooded mineral extraction sites'. Planning Policy Guidance 17 has a more specific definition, including rivers, lakes, canals and reservoirs as examples of 'open space', while Technical Advice Note 16 defines open space as including '... open air tidal and freshwater pools, ponds, rivers, canals, lakes, reservoirs, docks, and harbours'. In terms of advice on incorporating water related recreation into Local Development Frameworks, Local Planning Authorities are advised, via Planning Policy Statement 1, that they should:

... bring forward sufficient land of a suitable quality in appropriate locations to meet the expected needs for housing, industrial development, the exploitation of raw materials such as minerals, retail and commercial development, and leisure and recreation – taking into account issues such as accessibility and sustainable transport needs, the provision of essential infrastructure, including for sustainable waste management, and the need to avoid flood risk and other natural hazards (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2006c).

¹ See www.brighton.ac.uk/waterrecreation for details. The strategies are for water related recreation that includes water based activities occurring on or in the water and related activities on water edges such as walking, bird watching, cycling and horse riding.

In addressing this requirement, the National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy sets out a strong framework for supporting the effective delivery of local services. Culture and sport services are integral to this (Local Government Association, et al, 2008), and are widely seen as areas in which local authorities need to make improvements, but which have the potential to address a number of the outcomes and indicators contained in the new National Performance Framework:

**Elements of the National Performance Framework
Relevant to Culture and Sport**

Outcome	National Performance Indicator (NI)
Stronger communities	Adult participation in sport and active recreation (NI 8); Use of public libraries (NI 9); Visit to museums and galleries (NI 10); Engagement in the arts (NI 11); Participation in regular volunteering (NI 6)
Children and young people (be healthy)	Children and young people's participation in high quality PE and sport (NI 57)
Children and young people (make a positive contribution)	Young people's participation in positive activities (NI 110) Children and young people's satisfaction with parks and play areas (NI199) (still being finalised)

Under the new national framework, Local Area Agreements (LAA) will be negotiated to reflect a shared view of local priorities as defined by the Local Strategic Partnership in the local Sustainable Community Strategy. Local Area Agreements will include up to 35 targets from among the national indicators, complemented by 16 statutory targets on educational attainment and early years and any local targets. Local Strategic Partnerships may choose to include one or more of the four current culture and sport performance indicators (NIs 8, 9, 10, 11) as designated improvement targets within the 35 as a local target, or they can incorporate culture and sport as a contribution to other outcomes. The majority of LAAs do include at least one culture and sport NI, with the most popular being NI8, sport and active recreation (see Sport England, 2008). Planning obligations can also be used to secure new sports and recreation facilities (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2005; 2006b).

With respect to leisure and recreation, local planning authorities should prepare local needs assessments of their open space requirements to ensure that adequate resources are allocated for formal and informal sport and recreation (ODPM, 2001). These assessments should provide the framework for well located sport, recreation and leisure facilities that are sensitive to the needs of users. The Companion Guide to PPG17 (DCLG, n. d.) sets out a methodology for undertaking the local needs assessment, consisting of four stages:

- Identify local needs
- Set standards
- Identify deficiencies
- Develop strategies and related policies

Para 6 of PPG17 states that the Government believes that open space standards are best set locally, and not against national benchmarks. Nevertheless, some national benchmark guidance (such as the Urban Green Space Task Force, 2002; see also National Audit Office, 2006) is recognized, while local planning authorities are advised to consult relevant national agencies for additional information on standards. While the definition of 'open space' includes a range of water resources (Annex, PPG17), there is no comprehensive guidance relating to identifying local needs for, and standards of provision for, water resources ('blue space'). Similarly, Minerals Planning Authorities are under a duty to consider the restoration of minerals sites, taking account of the opportunities for enhancing the overall quality of the environment and the wider benefits that sites may offer, including nature and geological conservation and increased public accessibility, which may be achieved by sensitive design and appropriate and timely restoration (MPS1, para 19). Para 19 goes on to advise MPAs to provide guidance on suitable or preferred after-uses and reclamation standards. In common with the guidance in PPG17, MPS1 does not set out specific guidance on the requirements of different after-uses.

As this review suggests, on the one hand, there has never been a better time to plan and provide for water related recreation due to the development of a regional strategic agenda. Yet, on the other, there is still a lack of guidance on what to provide, and where to provide it. Inroads to addressing this are certainly being made by Sport England, with reference to the eight water related sports that receive public funding (angling, canoeing, rowing, sailing, triathlon, swimming, water skiing and sub-aqua), although there is some evidence of a growing disparity between the national governing body requirements set out in their Whole Sport Plans and the regional facilities strategies developed by Sport England. But, as the participation figures suggest, the majority of water related recreation does not involve formal sport, nor those affiliated to the national governing bodies (although angling may be something of an exception here). It is within this context that Defra has invited the Environment Agency to lead on non-statutory strategic planning for water related recreation in England and Wales.

'Enjoying Water': the strategic planning process

Non-statutory guidance has long been a feature of the Town and Country Planning system in England and Wales, particularly in the form of Supplementary Planning Guidance (see Bruton and Nicholson, 1983), now known as Supplementary Planning Documents. In addition, various national and regional authorities have produced non-statutory guidance on subjects such as tourism, sport, protected areas and the coast (see, for example, Visit Wales, 2004; Welsh Assembly Government, 2005, 2007; Environment Agency, 2006). In the main, these documents have been prepared by single agencies or authorities, to present their vision or guidance concerning a specific area for which they have responsibility. While some strategies have identified sites or preferred locations for activities to take place, most have concentrated at a more strategic level, to provide a frame for others to determine appropriate provision at the local level, or 'on the ground'.

Defra's vision for strategic planning for water related recreation, as interpreted by the Environment Agency, was somewhat different, in requesting that regional

strategic plans be prepared that identified 'dots on maps' which were locations where priorities and opportunities for water related recreation identified by the plans could be delivered. This approach effectively combined the strategic with the local, in setting out the requirements for provision for water related recreation and identifying where that provision would best be located. Furthermore, the strategic plans were to be owned by a (steering) group of agencies that would commit in partnership to supporting and promoting delivery of priorities and opportunities – recognising that not all of the agencies would be likely to support equally all of the actions and initiatives recommended in the strategic plans, and that the group itself would not be in a position to deliver all of the actions and initiatives. As such, the strategic plans are very much catalysts, highlighting the value of water related recreation and identifying places and situations in which water related recreation can make a contribution to national and regional economies, communities and environments. The strategic plans are therefore seen as highly inclusive, encouraging anyone with an interest in water related recreation to get involved in making the actions happen - and in suggesting new actions. At the core of the process have been the steering groups, which have typically comprised the regional assemblies and development agencies (the Welsh Assembly Government in Wales) and the regional offices of British Waterways, Environment Agency, Natural England and Sport England.

The evidence upon which the strategic plans are based has been generated from a number of sources reflecting the regional supply of water resources and provision for activities, and indications concerning demands and needs. These include:

- An audit of all water resources, covering the coast, estuaries, main rivers, canals and other waterways and enclosed bodies of water of more than 1 hectare in size that is stored and analysed in a spatial inventory based in a Geographical Information System (GIS);
- Content analysis of key national and regional policy documents and the desk analysis of existing research and databases;
- Interviews and data gathering workshops with key knowledge holders including Environment Agency staff and other stakeholders
- Discussion and guidance from the steering groups;
- Consultation with national and regional governing and representative bodies;
- Stakeholder workshops held in a variety of locations around each of the regions, to gather knowledge about the current situation and views about demand and future requirements for water related recreation in the region;
- A website containing blogs and details of the planning process and a web-based consultation process on the draft plan.

The different forms of data on existing provision were brought together in the GIS and combined with data on transport accessibility and population characteristics to produce a 'gap' analysis and identify areas where provision was limited or lacking for particular water related activities on coastal or inland waters. The range of stakeholder engagements involving workshops, interviews, meetings and a consultation process was used not just to gather evidence mechanistically in the form of data but to develop on-going interactions and encounters between the

plan making team and a range of stakeholders. This allowed stakeholders to communicate data and information on needs in a variety of situations often adjusting what was being communicated in response to other stakeholders. These interactions avoided a simple mechanistic approach to data and information gathering and enabled a more relational plan making process in which the plan making team and stakeholders had opportunities to reflect on the nature of evidence and understand how that evidence is shaped by the stakeholder communication process and the relations between stakeholders who often compete for water space but also co-operate in the use of facilities and funding.

What is clear by now is that, while the evidence gathering for each plan is in a rigorous and standard format, the generation of the plan and the involvement of stakeholders and their knowledge is far from conventional. Indeed, it is not a 'plan' in the formal sense, but more a collection of observations (that are termed 'priorities and opportunities' in the plans) about what provision is required and where it could be located. These observations have been generated using not only a data and information gathering procedures but also through relational process based on a range of stakeholder interactions that were also assessed and analysed by the plan making team through, for example, reports on workshops or summaries of views obtained through the consultation process. This is consistent with a phenomenological approach to identifying what needs to be done, emphasising a firsthand encounter between the researcher and the thing being studied (Seamon, 1998). This is based on understanding the value of observation, description and interactions between different interested parties as a foundation for interpretation and understanding, particularly in challenging the claimed objectivism of more formalised approaches to planning.

While there are numerous ways in which phenomenology is used as a research tool, one of the main strands has been developed around cognition and social understanding, with a focus on the ways in which lay knowledges are produced, reproduced and embodied (Springett, et al, 2007). Phenomenology is thus a qualitative approach to information gathering, often involving individual and small group interviews, biographical analyses and participant observation (see Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, 1998). What separates it from other forms of ethnomethodology is the emphasis that is placed on understanding how the research participants produce themselves and their interpretation of the meaning of specific acts and events (Jordan and Henderson, 1995). Thus, at its core, phenomenology views all actions and events as constitutive of one another, as reflexive evidence of how the social world is understood by those who are part of it.

And this is the connection to policy research: rather than work from a divide based on 'objective' frames or 'subjective' opinion, phenomenology starts from a deep description of the *natural attitude* (Husserl, 1931) of the lifeworld inhabited by those involved in the policy arena (Habermas, 1987; Bedrous, 2006). Natural attitude is here understood to mean analysis that is without interpretation; a record of people's everyday life and social knowledge (Webster, 2001) obtained through workshops, meetings and interviews. This can cover a very broad constituency of actors, each of whom constitutes, and is constituted by, the lifeworld at which the policy is aimed. Phenomenology thus resists simple interpretation in favour of reflexivity, with each actor – including the researcher – able to experience

themselves within a lifeworld constituted by themselves and relations with all others. This experiential perspective allows each actor to simultaneously belong to the lifeworld of others and to set this apart from their own understanding of the experience. This, in turn, facilitates a relational process that allows them to empathise with others in attempting to find ways of being (and then doing) that are inclusive (and constitutive) of all fellow actors.

Case study: strategic priorities for water related recreation in South West England

'Enjoying water' – a strategy for water related recreation in South West England 2009-2014 was published in January 2009, with a launch event at the National Sailing Centre, Weymouth, in early February 2009. It is based on the identification of six priorities for addressing the key gaps in provision and five additional opportunities for improving current provision. These are shown in the Table below, which is taken from the summary document produced by the Environment Agency (2009):

Priorities:

<p><i>1: Addressing lack of access to water:</i> We need to improve access to a range of water resources across the region (the provisions of the Marine and Coastal Access Bill are important here). This includes physical improvements (and appropriate new provision) to parking and slipways; and gaining new access to strategically important reservoirs and rivers. New 'doorstep' opportunities, particularly in socially deprived areas would be especially valuable. There should also be improvements to waterside access by improving footpaths, cycle tracks and bridleways that follow watercourses. Attention should also be paid to improving public transport links to water resources.</p>
<p><i>2: Addressing a lack of facilities for some water sports:</i> There are specific gaps in facilities provided and access to some water sports across the region. Of particular concern is the absence of inland training and venue facilities for scuba diving, some canoe disciplines, inland rowing and inland provision for powered craft. There is potential to improve navigated canals and rivers in the north of the region, for recreation, health and environmental benefits. The potential role of the major towns and cities in addressing these gaps should also be investigated, so people do not have to rely on private transport to get to water-based recreation activities.</p>
<p><i>3: Integrating water-based recreation into 'green infrastructure' planning in urban and peri-urban areas:</i> Green infrastructure planning needs to include specific guidance on planning and using water resources for recreation and to influence wider definition of 'green infrastructure', so that the full potential of canals, rivers and other water bodies are recognised and valued. Of particular significance here is the opportunity to provide green corridors along or around water bodies, and to ensure that waterfronts are used for recreation and in ways that do not damage the environment. This will mean that water environments remain vibrant and the widest social opportunities and benefits are exploited. Work by British Waterways, in Bath, Gloucester, Bridgewater and Taunton for example, demonstrates what can be achieved by an integrated approach to improving water environments in urban areas.</p>
<p><i>4: Providing better information to improve understanding and use:</i> Not all current opportunities for water-based recreation are well used or understood. This can lead to overcrowding at popular locations and under-use elsewhere. An information system is needed (either stand alone or linked to current local authority and tourism information systems) to raise awareness of the water-based recreation opportunities available and to encourage people to use these resources responsibly.</p>

"Making a splash: providing opportunities for water based recreation on inland waters"

5: Promoting a 'spine' of inland water resources: Work with the major water companies and their managers, including South West Water, Bristol Water, Wessex Water and South West Lakes Trust, together with some of the operators in the Cotswold Water Park, to develop a 'spine' of inland water opportunities running from Cornwall to Gloucestershire. This type of co-ordination would ensure that a full range of water-based recreation facilities is available throughout the region, to allow people more local access to high quality facilities nearer to where they live.

6: Develop demonstration sites to pilot and test a range of approaches to improve the quality and availability of water-based recreation in the region: Examples could include: demonstration sites for partnership working, successful voluntary agreements, effective approaches to conflict resolution and approaches to clarifying landowner liabilities and indemnity issues; a tourism-based voluntary payment scheme for environmental improvements; new forms of canoe access agreement based on new technology and partnerships between land owners, river users and key agencies; development of new quality assurance processes for recreational providers; establishing climate change monitoring sites and areas to help inform adaptation and provide a range of measures to protect and improve water-related recreation. Opportunities also need to be found to demonstrate the health, life skills, and wider social or economic benefits of reducing barriers and widening access to water activities.

Opportunities:

1: Develop a regional network of multi-activity centres that incorporate water-based recreation: Multi-activity hubs (centres) (catering for water and non-water-based recreation) and associated networks can become a focus for water-based activity, and can create the amount needed to ensure training can be provided in a wide range of water-based sports.

2: To encourage water-based recreation training centres to be developed as part of multi-activity hubs: We need both generic and specific (sport-related) skills training if people are to take advantage of the opportunities being created. Generic skills include swimming, life saving, health and safety, club management, child protection and leadership training.

3: Integrating recreational and ecological values in applying the UK Framework for Sustainable Development: There are opportunities throughout the region to combine providing water-based recreation with protecting the environment, for example, by making certain areas accessible only by non-motorised water craft. There is also an opportunity here to recognise the strategic significance of estuaries, inland wetland and coast, to encourage greater innovation and promote a range of activities that are sustainable and that protect and complement a high quality environment.

4: Regeneration of the Cotswold and Wilts and Berks Canals: The regeneration of the main canals in the Cotswolds would link England's two great rivers, the Thames and Severn, as well as offering water corridors into some of the region's urban areas. These new resources could provide easier access to Gloucester, Bristol and Bath from the wider waterway national network, acting as a catalyst for both urban and rural regeneration, particularly in Swindon. The Cotswold Canal link alone is estimated to bring 1.7 million new visitor days to the region each year, generating £6.8 million a year for the local economy and creating more than 200 permanent new jobs in tourism.

5: Providing new large-scale facilities: Some current gaps might best be addressed by large-scale solutions. Examples include: improving facilities at strategically- located reservoirs (especially in the Bristol area); continuing the development of the Cotswold Water Park; developing regional water sports centres in North Cornwall and near Bristol; and developing a 'hydrocentre' in Plymouth, to demonstrate how more people can leave their boats and equipment close to the water responsibly, but using different means of transport to get to

them. There could be new commercial opportunities for facilities such as 'wave pools' or 'surf rider' machines close to main urban and growth areas within the region.

As the list of priorities suggests, strategic gaps were identified in access to, and on to, a number of water resources, especially reservoirs and rivers. This was felt to be a particular issue in urban areas, where 'doorstep' opportunities had not really been developed. These gaps were allied to a lack of provision for certain activities – both sport and leisure – and to a lack of visibility within the planning process. In part, the priorities suggest that new provision is required. However, it is also recognised that more use can be made of existing opportunities, if there is better information about what is available. With the exception of Priority 5 (the spine of inland water resources), therefore, the priorities address relatively small scale changes that have the potential to make large differences in the access to and quality of water related recreation in the region. In contrast, the opportunities are much larger in scale, and offer the potential to create entirely new ways of undertaking and experiencing water related recreation. Clearly, while being identified as 11 separate initiatives, there are links and overlaps, such that the value of creating the spine of inland recreation sites (Priority 5) can be enhanced by also using these sites as part of a network of multi-activity training centres (Opportunities 1 and 2), and by using them as pilots for a number of other initiatives (Priority 6). Equally, regeneration of the Cotswold and Berks & Wilts Canals (Opportunity 4) will enhance access to inland waters (Priority 1).

Since it was not an implementation plan, the strategy was presented - in both the draft and final versions - by the Environment Agency and its collaborators as an opportunity for stakeholders and interested parties to consider how they could contribute to the improvement of water related recreation in the region. It was also stressed that it should not be seen as a final or exclusive list of initiatives, but more as a set of observations about actions and initiatives that will address the gaps that had been identified – implying that there may be other actions that will be equally appropriate, or which may offer additional benefits in delivering the priorities and opportunities. The Environment Agency further stressed that the strategy should not preclude the identification of additional gaps and new initiatives to address them. Indeed, with a commitment to monitor actions annually, the Environment Agency made it clear that this is an evolving and open process that encourages new ideas and initiatives linked to the priorities and opportunities, even if they are not stated in the strategy.

This openness to change and modification is very much at the core of the phenomenological approach taken to the work – key actors are encouraged to emerge who begin to pull initiatives together, sometimes in ways not yet imagined in the strategy itself. Examples of this that have already been identified include the recognition, by anglers and canoeists, that co-operation over access to key rivers (Priorities 1 and 2) was likely to attract funding for measures that would be to their mutual benefit (Priority 6). Similarly, a number of actors and organisations recognised the potential value of linking the strategy to the outdoor health agenda (Priority 6), leading to a pilot of the Blue Gym concept that was not originally envisaged in the research process (see Natural England, 2009a). Apart from the direct benefits that have been derived from these co-operative initiatives, what really emerges is the catalytic potential of the strategy: by being a non-statutory

document, actors recognise it for what it is – a statement of commitment from the Environment Agency and its partners that water related recreation is important, and that an environment has been created that is receptive to good, innovative ideas which can be linked to the regional priorities and opportunities.

In the eight months or so since the launch of the strategy, the following actions and initiatives have emerged:

- **Active Hubs:** The Environment Agency and partners are in last round of an application for European funding to help develop a network of 8 water hub sites from the Cotswolds to Cornwall which will dramatically widen the availability and use of inland water to urban and rural communities. Sites will also act as gateways to the wider rural tourism opportunities that surround them. Plans include two regional wakeboarding cable tow facilities, inland beaches, canoe safaris and eco-water taxi transfer to major wetland site. Amount of funding sought from RDPE - £4,373,675, total partnership funding package £10,608,450 (Priorities 1,2, 5; Opportunities 1,2,3).
- **Sport Development:** To supplement the RDPE bid the partners have also applied for Sport England funding for 2 development posts in the North and South of region - led by ARA, but to stimulate interest in range of inland water sports not just rowing (Cornwall/Devon & Cotswolds) (Priorities 2,4; Opportunity 2).
- **Blue Gym (EA pilot with Peninsula Medical School, Natural England and Department for Health):** Blue Gym is being trialled in the South West. Broadly, it will act as a focus for promoting the benefits of coastal and inland water for health and wellbeing. It will connect Primary Care Trusts with a network of local water sport providers to promote healthier lifestyles amongst those who are currently inactive. It will stimulate and support a range of organisations in engaging with new audiences and encouraging more people to be more active through the water environment (Priority 6).
- **Disturbance Study:** Joint research study by Natural England, RSPB and other partners to assess the actual effects of different water sports on feeding and breeding wetland birds in one of Europe's most important feeding grounds. It is intended that this study will provide evidence on the actual scale of disturbance for some water sports and will formulate suitable buffer, seasonal, zoning or other restrictive arrangements to prevent impact (that could be applied in similar locations) (Priority 6; Opportunity 3).
- **Fal & Helford capacity studies:** Two physical waterway recreation capacity studies have been set up by the Environment Agency, one to assess and provide a model for evaluating physical capacity to help preserve quality experience for boaters and other visitors; the other to evaluate ecological capacity and provide model for sustainable mooring development in most estuaries (includes anchor moorings) (Priority 6).
- **Various canoe access developments:** New canoe touring circuits have been provided along the River Exe and Exeter Canal. A new touring route is

being developed across the Somerset Levels. A height-based webcam pilot is being considered on the River Lyn, in association with the National Trust, to encourage more responsible use (Priorities 1, 6).

- Green Infrastructure wins: the Stour Valley green corridor has been added as a priority for the expansion of Bournemouth & Poole (Priority 3).
- Green Tourism payback scheme: A pilot is to be undertaken in North Devon. Visitors will be encouraged to make a financial contribution through a supplementary accommodation charge or a website calculator, to offset their carbon footprint arising from visiting the area. This will be targeted at the coastal and rural areas of the county, where 98% of visitors arrive by car and the use of water environment is the main purpose of the visit. The money raised will be used for initiatives that improve or provide measures to reduce environmental impacts, encourage sustainable growth in the responsible use of water environment and help 'green up' tourism services in the area (Priority 6; Opportunity 3).
- 'Enjoying Water' taster sessions: Various taster sessions are being organised around the region to help engage hard to reach groups/new audiences. One example was as part of the Maritime Festival at Portland. Links have been made with deprived local communities, young people and community policing initiatives; to date, 400 participants have taken part (Priority 4).
- A new rural rowing training venue has been identified on the Huntspill River in North Somerset. There are ongoing discussions about the development of an additional training and competition venue (Priority 2).

Conclusions

The process of identifying strategic priorities for water related recreation is still very much in its infancy, with just two of the eventual seven strategies yet published. However, the actions taking place in the South West of England suggest that the potential is there for the strategies to make a major difference to the provision for water related recreation in England and Wales. Perhaps even more significantly, the strategies that have been published are beginning to demonstrate the potential of non-statutory, spatially-specific, guidance. While the gaps and resulting initiatives are significant in galvanising interest and action at a regional level, it is the underlying phenomenological process that is making the difference. This relational process, developed in a variety of encounters including meetings, interviews, workshops and on the plan website, has brought key actors together in a new and unconventional way, where their shared interests begin to be more important to them than their long term differences. While there might have been an advantage to be gained for some stakeholders through exclusion of others from water resources, for example, it is now patently clear that there are also significant advantages to be gained from co-operating - one of which may well be a better approach to protecting and enhancing waters that are strategically significant for a particular group of stakeholders.

This is not to over-state the significance of phenomenology, but to observe that non-statutory plans and guidance need a varied and multi-encounter relational process for engaging with stakeholders and key actors, each of whom has to make a judgement about the utility of the engagement. One-off events will not provide the evidence and understanding required to develop a flexible non-statutory plan. Where this utility of engagement has been woven into the very fabric of the approach – as we have tried to ensure is the case with the ‘enjoying water’ regional strategies – there is a strong chance that stakeholders will recognise the dynamism of the strategies and will choose to engage with the process, in the expectation that others will as well. Our job now is to try and maintain this relational energy in the next round of strategies that are currently being developed.

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The Scottish experience of water recreation

Rob Garner
Policy and Advice (Access and Recreation)
Scottish Natural Heritage

No paper available.
For details of this presentation please contact Rob Garner at
Rob.Garner@snh.gov.uk

Making a splash in Wales - managing rivers for multiple use. Case study on the Wye and Usk

Matt Strickland
Recreation and Navigation Policy Advisor
Environment Agency Wales

Successful and long-term management of rivers for multiple uses does not come easy, but it can be achieved.

It is important at this point to separate the two issues of the provision of the access for users to the river and the management of that access.

On the access front in Wales we currently have what would be known by the mandarins of ancient China as *'Interesting times'*, (which in their view was equally a blessing and a curse), in the form of The National Assembly of Wales' Sustainability Committee inquiry into access to non-tidal water in Wales, (details of this can be found on their website at <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-sc-home.htm>), as this is work in progress then it would be unwise to discuss any potential outcomes at this stage. However there has been a large response to the consultation with many strongly held views being aired on both access and management issues.

On the management front, in Wales there will always be the need for some form of management because we live in a relatively small country with a high use and demand for many uses of the many rivers we have. These recreational uses range from the well known such as; angling, paddle sports, rowing and sailing to the less well known; gorge walking, wild swimming, river-boarding, coracles, sub-aqua and even gold panning.

But to only consider the recreational uses does not give the whole picture, there are a range of other factors which must also be included. To give an example the Afon Tryweryn near Bala in North Wales, which is home to the National White Water Centre, has complex management issues with the following having to be addressed ahead of any recreational use of the water released from Llyn Celyn; 1) Flood risk management, 2) Water supply, 3) Environmental protection, (this can be in the form of keeping the designated features of the river which is both a site of special scientific interest (SSSI) and a special area of conservation (SAC) in favourable condition through maintaining suitable water levels for example to enable the salmon to be able to run up the river to spawn in the winter months). 4) Hydro electricity generation and finally 5) recreational uses, like white water kayaking and rafting. For those kayakers out there who have had the experience of travelling to the site only to find that the expected water release has been cancelled, I hope this goes a little way to helping explain the some of the reasons why this occasionally happens.

Management groups, fora, committees, users groups, trusts etc. There are many differing types of groups which exist in Wales who have the best intentions to sensibly manage the river users. Many of you reading this will no doubt have been involved in similar groups. From my own experiences there are a few useful things to bear in mind to having a successful users group;

- 1) An experienced, balanced and most importantly well respected chair person. This sounds easy, but with a range of strongly held views and opinions round the table it will take a strong hand to keep everyone both to stick to the issues up for discussion and to behave in an acceptable manner.
- 2) Keep the group to a manageable size, there is no fixed number for this but if you have more than about 10 groups represented then it can be tricky to manage. A well used tactic for large numbers of interests is to have a small main group with a couple of sub-groups dealing with more specific issues.
- 3) Don't avoid the tough issues. There is no point in skirting round the really hard to crack things, if they are not dealt with as soon as you can then they often have the unpleasant habit of growing or re-surfacing under the guise of a slightly different issue. On this front the clarification of problems at the outset of any discussion is vital, for example a landowner raising concerns about inappropriate car parking by a minibus parked on their property, may be as much to do with both the need for more suitable car parking facilities as the invasion of the landowners' privacy.
- 4) Meet regularly, a group that only meets once or twice a year may spend much of the meeting time repeating what went on during the last meeting, whereas a group meeting quarterly should be able to be more up to date and on top of what has been going on.
- 5) If the group needs independent advice then get it. Expert and independent advice from a scientific authority, or government agency can greatly help the members of the group better understand, for example a new study on the potential disturbance of wildlife from boat traffic. It is much better to get the facts from the horse's mouth than from a third party's interpretation of the study.

Communication with the users on and around the river.

This often takes place in the form of riverside signage; a quick internet search will find lots of differing standards and advice on what to do. My advice is keep it as simple as possible, giving the information of what you want people to do, rather than only what they are not allowed to do. If you tell someone on a ladder '*don't look down!*' they almost always will look down, when what you want them to do is to be safe on the ladder, so try saying '*hold on tight!*' instead.

The sign below is on the Afon Glaslyn and shows the agreed water level for canoeing. The great advantage of a non-numerical gauge such as this one is that if some adjustment to the height of the gauge is required to ensure that it is set to the correctly agreed level. This adjustment can be done without confusing the

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users, who may have got used to access being agreed at say a gauge of x and then having to re-learn that a gauge height of y is the level.



Photo: Matt Strickland

A more recent development in Wales is the provision of river level information through the Fishing Wales website, (<http://www.fishing.visitwales.com/fisheries/riverlevels/default.aspx?ID=539>), this service is free to access once you have registered your email. Initially devised purely for anglers the site uses Environment Agency gauging data to give daily and weekly river flows. A very recent use of this has been seen on one canoeing web forum where a lengthy debate about suitable river levels used this information to apply some facts, rather than opinion on what height the water was on the day in question. For example here is a recent graph for the Afon Glaslyn taken from the Fishing Wales site.



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Codes of conduct, some say this is just formalising common sense. I feel that the best type of code is one that is easy to remember, I can still quote the Green Cross Code from my childhood in the 1970s..... *'I won't be there when you cross the road, so always use the Green Cross Code. STOP, LOOK, LISTEN, THINK'*. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to start with the principles of the Country Code or the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and then adapt these to fit your specific needs. Again give people both the information they need and a short explanation of the reasoning behind it.

To round things up the most important factor to successful multiple use management of rivers is communication, in all its forms; between users, within the users' group, with those who live and work around the river. If you can manage the majority of reasonable users then they will help with the management of the minority of unreasonable users.

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Workshop 1

Safety

David Walker
Information Manager
The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents

No paper available.
For details of this workshop please contact David Walker at djwalker@rospa.com

Workshop 2

The development of canoe trails in Northern Ireland

Sarah Noble
Development Officer
Countryside Access and Activities Network

Background

The Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN), formed in 1999, has a strategic remit for the development, management and promotion of outdoor recreation across Northern Ireland.

In 1998 Northern Ireland's first Countryside Recreation Strategy identified canoeing as an activity "lacking opportunities for provision". In response, CAAN commissioned a Strategic Review of Canoeing Opportunities in Northern Ireland. This report proposed the development of a network of canoe trails across the region aimed at both domestic and visiting paddlers. A full time development officer was appointed in 2003 and has since delivered 5 inland canoe trails. The first trail was launched in May 2005.

Canoe Trails

A canoe trail can be defined as "An interesting or challenging stretch of water which offers public access for canoeists to paddle. It is indicated on a map showing its associated facilities such as jetties, slipways, car parks and toilets. At designated access points information panels provide details of its features and that of the surrounding area. Canoe trails may be paddled as a whole or in sections".

The Canoe Trail product in Northern Ireland is currently comprised of five inland canoe trails geographically spread across the region. These are:

Lough Erne (50km)
River Blackwater (20km)
Lower Bann (River, 58km)
Lough Neagh (50 km)
Strangford Lough (140km²)

These locations were chosen primarily on the rationale that the water is still or slow moving (or can be easily portaged) and therefore suitable for a wide range of paddlers from beginners upward. Other factors taken into consideration included length, water quality, existing facilities available and absence of conflict with other water users.

As the definition suggests, each trail includes a number of essential elements. Where possible, use is made of existing facilities along the river or lough.

Essential Elements:

- Public access – such as jetties, slipways, canoe steps or beach access. Constructing new facilities may be appropriate where launching and landing facilities are scarce. Consideration should be given as to the distance between access points.
- Car parking and toilets – the provision of secure parking is particularly helpful for paddlers planning overnight trips. Larger parking bays and turning circles accommodate vans towing trailers.
- Campsites and stop-off points – provision of campsites is essential for longer, multi-day trails.
- Trail Guide – hard copies and electronic copies (available online for downloading).

Other elements have also been included on some trails to enhance the canoe trail product:

- Onshore interpretation panels – displaying information relating to safety, code of conduct, points of interest and the environment.
- Signage – directional road signage is very useful where access sites are remote or difficult to locate.
- Bothy accommodation
- Disabled access – wheelchair accessible launching facilities.

How – Partnerships and Funding

Partnership work is vital for successful delivery of a canoe trail. Steering groups are established for each trail with all key stakeholders represented. Typically these include representatives from user groups, statutory bodies, local government and other interested parties. Buy-in is encouraged by highlighting the various benefits of the project for each party involved; delivery of a canoe trail will often assist in meeting objectives in various stakeholder's strategic plans. These may include increased participation, benefits to health and wellbeing, activity tourism, sustainable tourism, environmental awareness and rural development and regeneration. These outcomes also form the basis of the case to secure funding. Funding is coordinated through CAAN with key funders typically including local government, sports council, tourist board and Europe (through rural development programmes).

Costs

The cost of developing a canoe trail does not necessarily correspond to the length of trail being developed. Capital costs vary significantly, for example the river Blackwater Canoe Trail is both the shortest and most expensive trail developed to date. This is because the river originally lacked sufficient launching and landing facilities to establish a canoe trail. As part of this project, five new wheelchair accessible canoe steps were constructed significantly increasing project costs. The decision on whether or not to include information panels also has a considerable bearing on the final costs.

Capital costs for each canoe trail are as follows:

Lough Erne	£49,375	Including 10 information panels
Lower Bann	£70,506	Including 15 information panels
Lough Neagh	£30,315	Including 6 information panels
Strangford Lough	£94,604	Including refurbishment of Salt Island Bothy at £52,500 and 8 information panels
River Blackwater	£182,653	Including construction of 5 new canoe steps and upgrade of existing launching facilities to wheelchair accessible status, also 8 information panels

Management, maintenance and insurance costs for all facilities must also be considered. In the case of the Northern Irish canoe trails this responsibility is usually assumed by the landowner; in most cases this is the local authority or another public body.

Promotion and marketing

Promotion of the canoe trails is achieved in a variety of ways. Canoe Trail guides and brochures are distributed free of charge directly by CAAN and through various outlets including Tourist Information Centres. In November 2007 CAAN launched CanoeNI as the definitive website offering information on canoeing in Northern Ireland. The canoe trails are a central feature of the website and trail guides can be viewed, downloaded or ordered free of charge from here - see www.canoeni.com. The website facility is particularly useful in allowing canoe trail information to be kept updated as changes take place on the ground – this ensures that users can access accurate information.

From October 2008 to October 2009 - 5,500 trail guides were requested and there were 20,273 visitors to Canoe NI. The trails have also been the subject of features in national newspapers including the Sunday Times, in various canoeing magazines and on the BBC television programmes 'Countryfile' and 'Coast'. These have generated significant publicity for the product.

Successes

Four years have passed since the launch of the first canoe trail in Northern Ireland and already some positive outcomes are evident. The canoe trails have raised the profile of canoeing within Northern Ireland and beyond. Monitoring has indicated increased levels of participation with numbers of users on some trails exceeding 800 per month; these are both local and visiting paddlers. Anecdotal evidence suggests increased numbers of visiting paddlers travelling to Northern Ireland specifically to paddle the trails.

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The canoe trail product is particularly suited to the growing number of recreational paddlers using sit-on-top craft. These users favour non-technical water with clearly defined access. Newly established launch sites have increased access for paddlers whilst the provision of clear guidance on where and how to access has led to a reduction in unauthorized access elsewhere.

The trails have received acclaim at national level and beyond. In 2008 the Lough Erne Canoe Trail won the Innovation Category at the UK Waterways Renaissance Awards. In 2009 the newly refurbished Salt Island Bothy on the Strangford Lough Canoe Trail was Highly Commended in the Innovation Category of the Northern Ireland Tourism Awards. The canoe trails have been well received by user groups and other stakeholders and there is growing enthusiasm and impetus for further trail development.

Challenges

Monitoring trail use is important to accurately determine levels of participation. Monitoring statistics provide evidence of demand and are often required by funders for a number of years following project completion. Gathering this data with any level of accuracy is extremely challenging; the practicalities of recording levels of use of large bodies of water with multiple access points combined with a general lack of enthusiasm of users to supply this information means that statistics are crude at best.

It is increasingly difficult to persuade public bodies to take on management, maintenance and insurance responsibilities for proposed facilities.

Current and future developments

CAAN has embarked on Phase II of canoe trail development. This will see new facilities added to established trails to enhance the canoe trail product. These will include campsites, bothy accommodation, secure parking, and road signage. A volunteer ranger programme has also been established to audit the trails each year.

Three new coastal canoe trails are currently under development for launch in autumn 2010. Together the trails will stretch the entire length of the Northern Irish coastline.

For further information please visit www.canoeni.com

Workshop 3

Conservation and leisure working together?

Andy Parsons
Head of Operations
South West Lakes Trust

Background

South West Lakes Trust is an independent charity formed in 2000 to promote public access and recreation on inland waters in the south-west. It also protects the natural environment within these designated areas and continually strives to find a balance between conservation and recreational needs.

It is now in the top 3,000 of the country's 150,000 charities and the largest combined environmental and recreational charity in the region. It has a management contract with South West Water, who took the unique step of outsourcing this responsibility to a voluntary organisation. The formula has proven to be a successful one with the reservoirs in this area of the UK being fore runners in the provision of water based recreation.

The Trust has a proven track record of delivering capital projects on time and on budget. It has also been able to make these projects sustainable beyond the funded period. This has been achieved through the success of its trading arm, South West Lakes Limited, which is wholly owned by the Charity and includes:

- Five RYA training centres providing sailing, windsurfing, kayaking and canoeing opportunities across Cornwall, Devon and Somerset. Subsidised activities are provided for school groups, disability groups, socially disadvantaged individuals, etc. This out-reach programme is a key part of the Trust's charitable objects.
- Thirty fisheries providing game and coarse angling. Through partnering the Environment Agency and other local organisations regular 'taster days' are run to target potential newcomers to the sport. Wimbleball Lake on Exmoor hosts 'Fishing for Life' a wonderful initiative for women who have, or are recovering from, breast cancer. It provides a much needed social network in rural areas and, in addition, the action of casting is proven to aid muscle recovery following surgery.
- Five hospitality outlets ranging from a catering trailer to the Lakeside Conference and Banqueting Centre at Roadford Lake which provides for over 250 business conferences and 35 weddings each year.

The commercial success of the Limited Company has enabled the Trust to be less reliant on external grant funding as the profits are gift-aided to the Charity to initiate self-funded revenue and capital environmental projects.

The Seminar

The workshop at the Countryside Recreation Network on 28 October raised the following comments and thoughts from the delegates:

Positive:

1. The relationship between the water company and the charity was viewed as ground-breaking and it is leading the way within the UK in terms of provision of recreation opportunity.
2. In general, the quality of the facilities at the Trust's sites exceeds those of other UK water companies.
3. As a result of the major capital projects participation rates have increased in key areas: youth, ladies, over 55's, disabled.
4. By outsourcing conservation, access and recreation management to a charity, South West Water are safeguarding these important assets for public benefit.
5. It provides a template which other water companies can follow in the future.

Negative:

1. Unsupervised water activity of any kind, e.g. kayaking, is not allowed. This includes the highly debated topic of open water swimming. There are fundamental health and safety and operational reasons for this management. The reservoirs are privately owned by South West Water with the management being undertaken by the Trust. The reservoirs are very different in their physical attributes to natural lakes, e.g. colder temperatures, poor visibility, up to 50m in depth and the obvious hazards of the dam/water flow. Contrary to some comments made during the workshops, The Trust and South West Water have a duty of care towards the public and as responsible landowners of private land/water will only allow on-water activity under supervised conditions using qualified and skilled staff. Can you imagine the cost of insurance if the Trust were to allow unrestricted, unsupervised water access at all of its managed sites?
2. Ten years after the formation of South West Lakes Trust other UK water companies have not followed the same format, why not?

Summary

Since 2000, South West Lakes Trust has vastly improved accessibility to inland water based recreation in the region. Through a combination of major capital projects and smaller revenue based initiatives (e.g. Community Sports Coaches employed in Cornwall and Devon) participation rates have increased significantly at the five watersports centres. There are many challenges to be looked at over the coming months and years, not least the open water swimming debate which appears to be gaining momentum and one which, as both a landlord and land

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manager, South West Water and the Trust have serious concerns in relation to public safety and well-being.

Finally, time will tell whether other UK water companies adopt this approach to conservation and recreation provision. The results are undoubted; however, the time and effort that is required into getting the model off the ground in the first instance may prove to be a stumbling block in what are very difficult economic conditions.

Workshop 4

Waterway volunteering

Lucy Bowles
Volunteer Coordinator
British Waterways

No paper available.
For details of this workshop please contact Lucy Bowles at
lucy.bowles@britishwaterways.co.uk

Appendix A

Programme

- 09:30 *Registration and refreshments*
- 10:00 **Introduction and welcome by Chair**
Geoff Hughes, CRN Chair
- 10:15 **Identifying the need - strategic planning for water related recreation**
Dr Neil Ravenscroft, University of Brighton
- 10:45 **The Scottish experience of water recreation**
Rob Garner, Scottish Natural Heritage
- 11:15 *Refreshments*
- 11:30 **Making a splash in Wales - managing rivers for multiple use. Case study on the Wye and Usk**
Matt Strickland, Environment Agency Wales
- 12:00 **Q&A with morning speakers**
- 12:30 *Lunch*
- 13:15 **Welcome back from the Chair**
Introduction to afternoon workshops: Managing and Developing Water Recreation
- 13:25 **Workshop session 1 (Delegates divided into 4 groups)**
- 14:25 *Refreshments*
- 14:35 **Workshop session 2 (Delegates divided into 4 groups)**
- 15:35 **Summary**
- 16:00 Close

Appendix B

Speaker Biographies

Chair

Geoff Hughes

Countryside Recreation Network

Geoff is the independent Chairman of the Countryside Recreation Network. He is a Director and the only full time employee of G & L Hughes Limited which is a leisure, planning and open space consultancy. Until 2003, when he established his consultancy he was policy lead officer for countryside and water sport and recreation at Sport England and led a team dealing with strategic planning for sport and lottery funding in the North East Region. In a consultancy capacity he is a specialist adviser to CABI Space and from 2004 - 2008 he project managed a programme of facility provision for Middlesbrough Council. He has led the preparation of strategies and been part of a team preparing a range of land and water related sport and recreation studies. He has undertaken work for a variety of public and private sector organisations including the North Yorkshire Cultural Consortium, Stockton on Tees Borough Council, Environment Agency, University of Brighton, British Waterways, North Yorkshire Moors National Park, Genesis Consulting and the Countryside Council for Wales. Geoff has recently been part of a team preparing a master plan and business case for the velopark facilities as part of the 2012 Olympic Games. He is an associate of Genesis Consulting who are delivering a Facility Improvement Service on behalf Sport England, working with a number of local authorities in the North East of England and the West Midlands to improve strategic planning for sport. In addition to his consultancy work Geoff is Chairman of the Durham County Local Access Forum.

Speakers

Dr Neil Ravenscroft

University of Brighton

Dr Neil Ravenscroft is Professor of Land Economy at the School of Environment and Technology at the University of Brighton, where he has specialised in contract research on the cultural industries, leisure and property, stakeholder engagement and the rural environment. He has undertaken research for a large range of clients, including the Learning & Skills Council, Culture South East, Sport England, Countryside Agency, Environment Agency, Defra and Forest Research, and has contributed to policy development in the areas of urban open space and people's quality of life, public access to private property, sustainable transport systems and the management of public rights of way, community engagement in the management of public parks and gardens and workforce development in the creative and cultural sectors. Dr Ravenscroft has been an advisor to the United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization, on land tenure in developing countries, the European Commission, on urban open space and people's quality of life, the

Countryside Agency, on sustainable transport planning and on planning for social and cultural diversity in the countryside, and the Soil Association, on Community Supported Agriculture. In addition to his research, Professor Ravenscroft sits on the Editorial Boards of the Journal of Retail and Leisure Property and the Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events, is a Director of Tablehurst Farm Ltd, a governor of Plumpton College and a member of the Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy's Regional Committee for Europe.

Rob Garner
Scottish Natural Heritage
No biography available

Matt Strickland
Environment Agency

Matt has been working for Environment Agency Wales since 2004, firstly covering recreation in North Wales and then the whole of Wales. His interest in the outdoors goes back 30 odd years and includes various obsessions in; rowing (even representing his country as a youth), flat water canoe racing, quite a lot of time rock climbing whilst studying Biology at Bangor University, a 10 year stint instructing; sailing, powerboating, river kayaking, sea kayaking, gorge walking, coasteering and mountaineering at Plas Menai National Watersports Centre for Wales. Current pastimes include mountain biking, fell running and skiing as and when family and job commitments allow. Matt's last couple of years at work have revolved around the development of the Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation for Wales, the Splash grant funding scheme as well as the development of a weir risk rating tool for managing safety and rescue in partnership with Rescue 3 international.

Workshop Facilitators

David Walker
The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
No biography available

Sarah Noble
Countryside Access and Activities Network

Sarah Noble is a Development Officer with the Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN) in Northern Ireland. Sarah is a qualified teacher and taught Modern History and Politics before working as an instructor in a large residential outdoor centre in Scotland. Sarah holds a variety of outdoor qualifications including the British Canoe Union Level 4 Coach Award. In her spare time she loves to explore rivers, sea and surf by boat!

Sarah started work with CAAN in a freelance consulting role; she took up her current role as Development Officer in May 2009.

Andrew Parsons
South West Lakes Trust

Appointed as the Trust's Head of Operations in December 2007, Andrew is responsible for developing the Trust's current undertakings. He leads a team of six area managers located across three counties at key sites offering diverse activities, on and around inland waters, including public access to forests, moorland and other open space visited by around two million visitors annually. He oversees the profitable and growing trading subsidiary whose profits are subsequently gift-aided back to the charity. He also ensures the estate; land and buildings are managed to a high standard - fulfilling the Management Agreement with their landlord, South West Water.

Andrew holds a 2:1 BA Honours degree in Leisure Management and is a professional member of the Institute for Sports, Parks and Leisure. Before joining the Trust, Andrew spent 12 years working in the private sector, involved with national and regional businesses in the automotive industry. More recently he was a director of his family's successful South West-based company. He lives in North Cornwall with his wife and three children.

Lucy Bowles
British Waterways

Lucy has been working for BW for three years as Volunteer and Community Co-ordinator on the Droitwich Canals Restoration. Prior to this Lucy worked for a local authority and BTCV. All Lucy's roles have involved delivering projects working with volunteers and community groups.

Appendix C

**Water Recreation
28 October 2009**

Attendance List



Chris Hawkesworth

Planning and Facilities Manager
Canoe England
Red Brae Farm
Bewerley
Harrogate
England
HG3 5JE

Telephone 01423 711563

Fax

E.mail chris.hawkesworth@bcu.org.uk

Christie Webster

Biodiversity and Recreation Officer
Environment Agency
Lutra House
Dodd Way Off Seedlee Road
Preston
England
PR5 8BX

Telephone 01772 714029

Fax

E.mail christie.webster@environment-agency.gov.uk

Matt Strickland

Recreation & Navigation Policy Advisor
Environment Agency Wales
Llywn Brain
Parc Menai
Bangor,
Wales
LL57 4DE

Telephone 01248 484135

Fax

E.mail matt.strickland@environment-agency.gov.uk

Carl Baron

Head of Countryside
Tameside MBC
Park Bridge Heritage Centre
The Stables, Park Bridge
Ashton under Lyne
England
OL6 8AQ

Telephone 0161 342 2320

Fax

E.mail carl.baron@tameside.gov.uk

**Water Recreation
28 October 2009**



Attendance List

Geoff Hughes

CRN Chairman
Countryside Recreation Network
36 Spring Lane

Sedgefield
England
TS21 2DG

Telephone 01740 620928

Fax

E.mail geoffhughes36@tiscali.co.uk

Neil Ravenscroft

Professor of Land Economy
University of Brighton
Chelsea School
Trevin Towers, Gaudick Road
Eastbourne
England
BN20 7SP

Telephone 01342 826778

Fax

E.mail neil@reevesravenscroft.co.uk

Carol Parsons

Recreation Strategy Officer
Peak District National Park Authority
Aldern House
Baslow Road
Bakewell
England
DE45 1AE

Telephone 01629 816297

Fax

E.mail Carol.Parsons@peakdistrict.gov.uk

Simon Cunningham

Countryside Ranger
TeignBridge District Council
Forde Road Offices
Brunel Road
Newton Abbot
England
TQ12 4AD

Telephone 01626 215773

Fax

E.mail scunningham@teignbridge.gov.uk

**Water Recreation
28 October 2009**

Attendance List



<p>Arran Cartwright Project Manager Cartwright Associates 52 Maesbrith</p> <p>Dolgellau Wales LL40 1LF</p> <p>Telephone 07788 778262 Fax E.mail arran@cartwrightassociates.co.uk</p>	<p>Chris Wright Chief Executive Snowdonia Active Yr Hen Ysgol Brynrefail Caernarfon Wales LL55 3NR</p> <p>Telephone 01286 685 502 Fax E.mail chris@snowdonia-active.com</p>
<p>Ken Taylor Director Asken Ltd 17 Hayfell Rise</p> <p>Kendal England LA9 7JP</p> <p>Telephone 01539 738039 Fax 01539 741943 E.mail k.taylor@asken.co.uk</p>	<p>Lynn Crowe Professor of Environmental Management Sheffield Hallam University City Campus Howard Street Sheffield INTERNAL S1 1WB</p> <p>Telephone 0114 225 2927 Fax E.mail l.crowe@shu.ac.uk</p>

**Water Recreation
28 October 2009**

Attendance List



<p>Graeme Stringer Recreation Ranger Forestry Commission Government Buildings Arran Rd Dolgellau Wales LL40 1LW</p> <p>Telephone 0845 604 0845 Fax 01341 423893 E.mail graeme.stringer@forestry.gsi.gov.uk</p>	<p>Jim Embrey Activity Tourism Manager Visit Wales Welsh Assembly Government 77 Conway Road Colwyn Bay Wales LL29 7LN</p> <p>Telephone 01492 536906 Fax E.mail jim.embrey@wales.GSI.gov.uk</p>
<p>Sarah Ford Principal Rights of Way Officer Barnsley MBC Highways and Engineering PO Box 601 Barnsley England S70 9FA</p> <p>Telephone 01226 772696 Fax E.mail sarahford@barnsley.gov.uk</p>	<p>Mike McClure Countryside Recreation Development Officer Sport Northern Ireland House of Sport Upper Malone Road Belfast Northern Ireland BT9 5LA</p> <p>Telephone 028 90 383855 Fax 028 90 682757 E.mail mikemcclure@sportni.net</p>

**Water Recreation
28 October 2009**



Attendance List

<p>Helen Lawless Countryside Recreation Officer Wicklow Uplands Council Saville House Rathdrum Republic of Ireland</p> <p>Telephone 00353 404 43958 Fax 0035340446995 E.mail hlawless@wicklowuplands.ie</p>	<p>David Walker Information Manager-Leisure RoSPA 353 Bristol Rd Edgebaston Birmingham England B5 7ST</p> <p>Telephone 0121 248 2020 Fax E.mail djwalker@rospa.com</p>
<p>Katie Fisher Student Sheffield Hallam University Ty'n Y Maes, LLanafan, Aberystwyth, SY23 4AZ</p> <p>Telephone 01545 574173 Fax E.mail katief@ceredigion.gov.uk</p>	<p>Hazel Earnshaw Forestry & Recreation Manager Severn Trent Water Ltd Ashopton Sawmill Ladybower Reservoir Bamford England S33 0AX</p> <p>Telephone 01433 659897 Fax E.mail hazel.earnshaw@seventrent.co.uk</p>

**Water Recreation
28 October 2009**

Attendance List



Anna Baness

Access & Recreation Officer
Dartmoor National Park Authority
Parke
Bovey Tracey
Newton Abbot
England
TQ13 9JQ

Telephone 01626 832093

Fax

E.mail abaness@dartmoor-npa.gov.uk

Rob Garner

Policy and Advice (Access and Recreation)
Scottish Natural Heritage
Silvan House
231 Corstorphine Road
Edinburgh
Scotland
EH12 7AT

Telephone 0131 316 2682

Fax

E.mail Rob.Garner@snh.gov.uk

Denise Snelson

Countryside Access Development Officer
Cheshire County Council
Phoenix House
Clough Road
Winsford
England
CW7 4BD

Telephone 01606 271931

Fax

E.mail denise.snelson@cheshire.gov.uk

Nigel Thomlinson

Principal Officer - Recreation
Environment Agency
Kingfisher House
Goldhay Way
Peterborough
England
PE2 52R

Telephone 01733 464452

Fax 01733 464472

E.mail nigel.tomlinson@environment-agency.gov.

**Water Recreation
28 October 2009**

Attendance List



<p>Cath Hart Countryside Access Development Officer Hampshire County Council Access Team, Countryside Service Mottisponct, High Street</p> <p>England SO23 8ZF</p> <p>Telephone 01962 847221 Fax 01962 845335 E.mail cath.hart@hants.gov.uk</p>	<p>Alistair Bayford Special Projects Manager Lee Valley Park Authority Myddelton House Bulls Cross Enfield England EN2 9HG</p> <p>Telephone 01992 709872 Fax 01992 719937 E.mail abayford@eevalleypark.org.uk</p>
<p>Paul Coates Senior Sports Development Officer Lee Valley Park Authority Myddelton House Bulls Cross Enfield England EN2 9HG</p> <p>Telephone 01992 709934 Fax 01992 719922 E.mail pcoates@eevalleypark.org.uk</p>	<p>Sarah Noble Development Officer Countryside Access & Activities Network The Stableyard Barnett's Demesne, Malone Road Belfast Northern Ireland BT9 5PB</p> <p>Telephone 028 90303937 Fax 028 90 62 62 48 E.mail sarah@countryside-recreation.com</p>

**Water Recreation
28 October 2009**

Attendance List



Richard Atkinson

Recreation Officer
Environment Agency
Phoenix House
Global Avenue
Leeds
England
LS11 8PG

Telephone 01904 822540

Fax

E.mail Richard.atkinson@environment-agency

Phil Stone

Recreation & Access Officer
Countryside Council for Wales
Plas Gogerddan
Penrhyncoch
Aberystwyth
Wales
SY23 3EE

Telephone 01970 821151

Fax

E.mail p.stone@ccw.gov.uk

Susan Taylor

Visitor Services Manager
Nene Park Trust
Ham Farm House
Ham Lane
Peterborough
England
PE2 5UU

Telephone 01733 367579

Fax 01733 361342

E.mail susan.taylor@neneparktrust.org.uk

Lucy Bowles

Volunteer Coordinator
British Waterways
Droitwich Canals Project, South West
The Dock Office, Commercial Road,
Gloucester,
England
GL1 2EB

Telephone 01452 318000

Fax

E.mail lucy.bowles@britishwaterways.co.uk

**Water Recreation
28 October 2009**

Attendance List



Rodger Hamilton

Participation & Club Development Officer
Canoe Association of Northern Ireland
CANI Unit 2 Rivers Edge
13-15 Raven Hill Road

Northern Ireland
BT6 8DN

Telephone 08702405065

Fax

E.mail rodgerhamilton@cani.org.uk

Amanda Spivack

Waterways Development Team Leader
Environment Agency
Kingfisher House
Goldhay Way, Orton Goldhay
Peterborough
England
PE2 5ZR

Telephone 01733 464051

Fax 01733 464372

E.mail amanda.spivack@environment-agency.gov.uk

Rachel Evans

Director for Wales
Countryside Alliance
Gosen

Llangadog
Wales
SA19 9LS

Telephone 01550777997

Fax

E.mail rachel-evans@countryside-alliance.org

Humphrey Murphy

Director
ICL
Carrowthsd Ranblon
County Budgegoul

Southern Ireland

Telephone 00353862659276

Fax

E.mail humphrey@ic.ie

**Water Recreation
28 October 2009**



Attendance List

<p>Tom Gallagher Assistant Business Manager North Lanarkshire Council Strathclyde Country Park 366 Hamilton Road Motherwell Scotland ML1 3FD</p> <p>Telephone 01698 402080 Fax 01698 252925 E.mail gallagher@northlan.gov.uk</p>	<p>Brian Devlin Water sports Instructor North Lanarkshire Council Strathclyde Country Park 366 Hamilton Road Motherwell Scotland ML1 3FD</p> <p>Telephone 01698 402095 Fax 01698 252925 E.mail devlinb@northlan.gov.uk</p>
<p>Dave Liddy Visitor Management Advisor Forestry Commission Y Fron Llandrillo Corwen Denbigshire Wales LL21 0TD</p> <p>Telephone 07881 502224 Fax E.mail david.liddy@forestry.gsi.gov.uk</p>	<p>Andrew Parsons Head of Operations South West Lakes Trust Lidn Park, Quarry Crescent Pennygillam Industrial Estate Launceston England PL15 7PF</p> <p>Telephone 01566 771930 Fax 01566 778503 E.mail aparsons@swlakestrust.org.uk</p>

**Water Recreation
28 October 2009**

Attendance List



<p>Michael Quinlan Project Manager Electricity Supply Board 27 Lower Fitzwilliam Street</p> <p>Dublin 2 Ireland</p> <p>Telephone 353 1 7027404 Fax 353 1 8815329 E.mail michael.quinlan@esb.ie</p>	<p>Hillary Scott Access & recreation Advisor Natural England Bull Ring House Northgate Wakefield England WF1 3BJ</p> <p>Telephone 03000601871 Fax E.mail hillary.scott@naturalengland.org.uk</p>
<p>Peggy Haughton PHD Student University of Sheffield 104 Loxley New Road Malin Bridge Sheffield England S6 4NG</p> <p>Telephone 07967 014 730 Fax E.mail g.haughton@shef.ac.uk</p>	<p>Damian Hall Consultant The Royal Life Saving Society UK Ltd River House High Street Broom England B50 4HN</p> <p>Telephone 01789 774211 Fax E.mail tiffanycheyne@rlss.org.uk</p>

**Water Recreation
28 October 2009**

Attendance List



<p>Adrian Lole Director of Development The Royal Life Saving Society UK Ltd River House High Street Broom England B50 4HN</p> <p>Telephone 01789 774211 Fax E.mail tiffanycheyne@rlss.org.uk</p>	<p>Sue Smith Access Officer Peak District NPA Aldern House Baslow Road Bakewell England DE45 1AE</p> <p>Telephone Fax E.mail sue.smith@peakdistrict.gov.uk</p>
<p>Charlie Lambert Sports Co-ordinator Mayo County Council Mayo Sports Partnership Castlebar Co. Mayo Republic of Ireland</p> <p>Telephone 00353878109596 Fax E.mail clambert@mayococo.ie</p>	<p>Kirsty Mallindine Access Assistant Brecon Beacons National Park Plas Y Ffynnon Cambrian Way Brecon Wales LD3 7HP</p> <p>Telephone 01874 624437 Fax 01874 622574 E.mail kirsty.mallindine@breconbeacons.org</p>

**Water Recreation
28 October 2009**

Attendance List



Keri Jenner

PHD Student
University of Exeter
Room 360 Amory Building
Rennes Drive
Exeter
England
EX4 4RJ

Telephone

Fax

E.mail kaj204@exeter.ac.uk

Appendix D

Neil Ravenscroft's presentation slides

Identifying the need: strategic planning for water related recreation

Professor Andrew Church
Professor Neil Ravenscroft
School of Environment & Technology



University of Brighton

Overview

- Background
- Strategic Planning Framework
- 'Enjoying Water'
- Case study: the South West
- Conclusions

Background

- Participation
- Latent Demand
- Constraints
- Policy vacuum
- The 'Facts' Report
- 'Enjoying Water'



Strategic Planning Framework

- Planning Policy Guidance & Statements
- Minerals Planning Guidance
- Green Infrastructure
- Local Development Frameworks – bringing forward sufficient land for ... leisure and recreation

National Performance Indicators

- Adult participation in sport and active recreation (NI 8);
- Use of public libraries (NI 9);
- Visit to museums and galleries (NI 10);
- Engagement in the arts (NI 11);
- Participation in regular volunteering (NI 6)
- Children and young people's participation in high quality PE and sport (NI 57)
- Young people's participation in positive activities (NI 110)
- Children and young people's satisfaction with parks and play areas (NI199) (still being finalised)

PPG17 & TAN16

- **Identify local needs**
- **Set standards**
- **Identify deficiencies**
- **Develop strategies and related policies**

Enjoying Water

- Steering group
- Key knowledge holders
- Existing plans
- Data capture/audit
- National Governing Bodies
- Stakeholder consultation & engagement



Plan Process

- Phenomenological approach
- Deep observation
- How 'those in the know' produce knowledge
- Reflexive understanding of the 'social world' of water related recreation
- Thus, not 'objective', or 'subjective', but driven out of local 'knowledges'



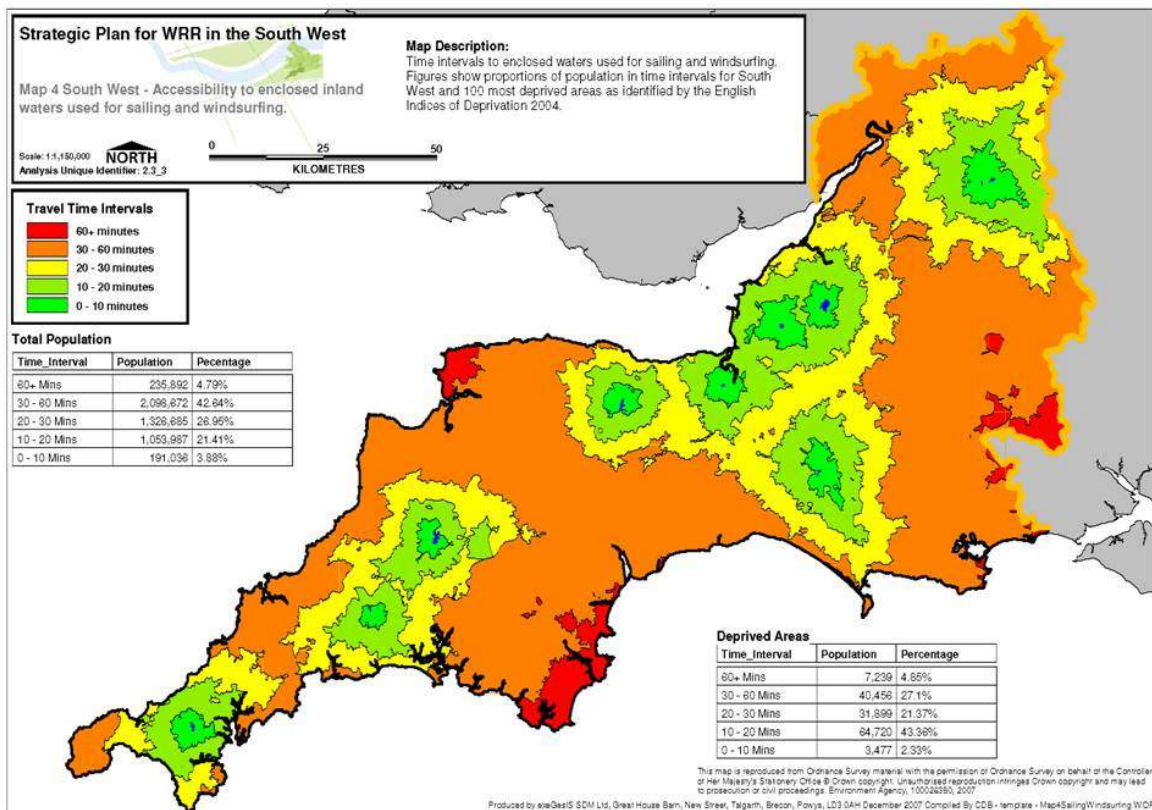
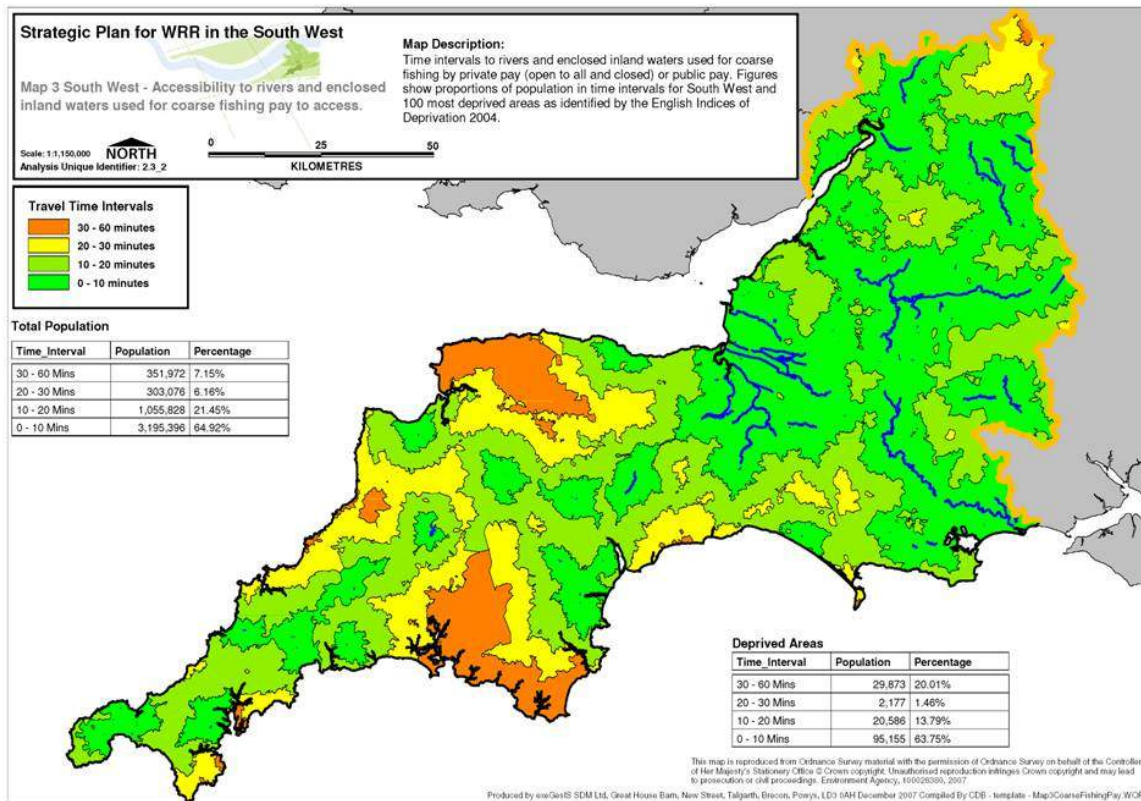
Enjoying Water in South West England



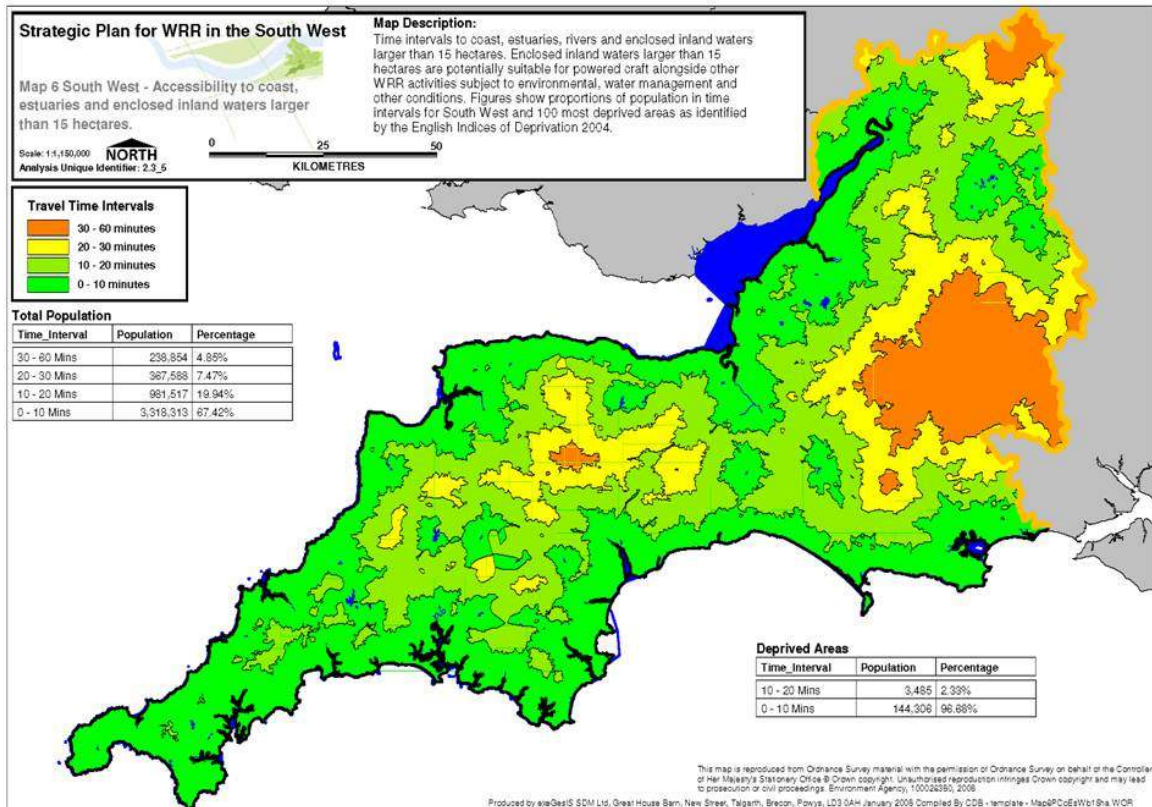
Priorities

1. A lack of access to water
2. A lack of facilities for some water sports
3. Integrating water into Green Infrastructure planning
4. Better information
5. Developing a 'spine' of inland water resources
6. Pilot studies on access, environment, health

"Making a splash: providing opportunities for water based recreation on inland waters"



"Making a splash: providing opportunities for water based recreation on inland waters"



Opportunities

- Network of multi-activity hubs
- Developing coaching capacity
- Integrating recreation and ecology
- Regenerating disused waterways
- New large scale facilities

Outcomes Year 1

- Active hubs
- Rural Communities sports development
- Blue Gym
- Disturbance & capacity studies
- Canoe access developments
- GI planning in the Stour Valley
- Green tourism payback
- Taster sessions



Conclusions



Rob Garner's presentation slides

Scottish Natural Heritage

Making a Splash!

The Scottish Experience of Inland Water Access Rights

Rob Garner

Scottish Natural Heritage



Scottish Natural Heritage

The Scottish Experience of Inland Water Access Rights

- The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003
- Prior problems
- The Package
- Various views - nationally / in a problem location
- Rights - dialogue : investment : enjoyment
- Applicable elsewhere??



Scottish Natural Heritage

The Scottish Experience – Previous problems

Mid-1990s – Access Forum (inland water)

“..an uneasy balance – few clear legal rights for the public ... few workable remedies against irresponsible behaviour”

Solution – integrated package as on land



Scottish Natural Heritage

LRSA 2003 and Access Code

Since Feb 2005, statutory right for responsible access to Land and Inland Water.

- all non-motorised forms – swim, canoe, raft, row, sail, etc
 - excludes motor craft and fishing
 - river, loch, canal, reservoir



Scottish Natural Heritage

The Scottish Access Rights – the ‘Package’

- Statutory Rights
- ‘Responsible’ – the SOAC Access Code
- Powers - temporary suspension;
- to remove obstructions, etc.
- Education
- Local Access Forums (and National forum)
- Access Officers
- Investment



Scottish Natural Heritage



Scottish Natural Heritage



Scottish Natural Heritage

Education -

- Paddlers' Access Code
- national awareness campaigns, TV ads
- national Guidance for all water users
- local initiatives



Scottish Natural Heritage

Experience so far ... 5 years, still early days

**Evidence to Welsh Assembly
Petitions Committee April 2009**



Scottish Natural Heritage

Experience so far ...

Evidence from a problem stretch -

River Tay

**Mandy Cook
MSc
Dissertation**



Scottish Natural Heritage

Access rights have led to -

- Dialogue, Local Agreements
- Collaborative approaches
- One court case
- Infrastructure
- Activity



Scottish Natural Heritage

Is it applicable elsewhere ??

Thank you

Questions ?



Matt Strickland's presentation slides



Making a Splash in Wales

Matt Strickland
Recreation & Navigation, EAW
28th October 2009

The joys of canoe access

- ⇒ Where are we now
 - ⇒ WAG 'Exemplar Access Projects' 2007-8
 - ⇒ Strategic Planning 2008
 - ⇒ SPLASH 2008-11 (?)

Wye / Glaslyn

⇒ 'Exemplar' projects

- ⇒ Cash from WAG
- ⇒ Short timescale



Wye

⇒ Positives

- ⇒ W&UF led
- ⇒ Permissive access
- ⇒ Signage & water levels



Wye

⇒ Not so positives

- ⇒ Life of project
- ⇒ Not all felt involved
- ⇒ Some drop in angling revenue



Glaslyn

⇒ Positives

- ⇒ Landowner led, NT
- ⇒ Year round access
- ⇒ Water level guages



Glaslyn

⇒ Not so positives

- ⇒ Gorge more restricted
- ⇒ 'science' behind water levels
- ⇒ Negative view from angling club*

* In response to Sustainability Committee inquiry



SPLASH

⇒ WAG funding for water recreation

- ⇒ EAW managed grant scheme
- ⇒ £410k a year
- ⇒ Up to 100% funding



'Interesting Times'

⇒ WCA petition to WAG

- ⇒ Petitions Committee's 'Short report' 2009
- ⇒ NAF Sustainability Committee's Inquiry 2009-10

Where do we go from here?

- ⇒ Manage water quality, water resources, fisheries and flood and coastal erosion risks in ways that improve opportunities for water-related recreation and public enjoyment.
- ⇒ Work with local communities, angling and navigation interests to address barriers to participation and increase the benefits that recreation activities provide them.

From draft Corporate Plan 2010-15

"Making a splash: providing opportunities for
water based recreation on inland waters"

David Walker's presentation slides

No presentation slides available

Sarah Noble's presentation slides



Canoe Trails In Northern Ireland

Sarah Noble
Development Officer

28 October 2009



- Lough Neagh 150km
- Lough Erne 50km
- Lower Bann River 58km
- River Blackwater 20km
- Strangford Lough 140km Sq

"An Interesting or challenging stretch of water which offers public access for canoeists to paddle.

It is indicated on a map showing it's associated facilities such as jetties, slipways, car parks and toilets.

At designated access points information panels provide details of its features and that of the surrounding area.

Canoe trails may be paddled as a whole or in sections."

Elements of a Canoe Trail:

- Public access and egress
- Toilets and parking

Elements of a Canoe Trail:

- Camping and refreshment sites
- Trail Guide - Waterproof!
- Online canoe trail guide

Optional elements:

- Onshore interpretation panels

Points of Interest

Safety Information

Environmental Information

Code of Conduct

Optional elements:

- Signage
- Bothy accommodation
- Canoe and equipment hire
- Disabled access

Background

1998 – NI Countryside Recreation Strategy: Canoeing “lacking opportunities for provision”.

2002 – Strategic Review of Canoeing in Northern Ireland.

Nine Objectives:

- Improving facilities
- Developing a series of canoe trails
- Encourage development of canoe facilities
- Water quality improvement
- Weir Safety
- Comprehensive information for canoeists regarding access
- Develop events
- Develop environmental awareness
- Improve relationships with other users

How

Partnerships

- User groups – canoe clubs, NGB, commercial activity providers
- Statutory Bodies – Sports Council, Rivers Agency, Navigation Authority, Environment Agency, etc.
- Local government
- Other interested parties – anglers, commercial operators, yacht clubs

Funding

- Local government
- Sports Council
- Tourist Board
- Europe – rural development programmes

Cost

Canoe Trail	Length	Cost
Lough Neagh	150km	£30,315
Strangford Lough	140km sq	£94,604
Lower Bann	58km	£70,506
Lough Erne	50km	£49,375
Blackwater	20km	£182,653

Promoting the trails

- Free trail guides – available from TICs, CANI and CAAN
- Establish a brand – CanoeNI.com
Your definitive guide to canoeing in Northern Ireland
- Brochure – in conjunction with NI Tourist Board
- Website www.canoeni.com
Online interactive trail guide free to download with free OS mapping
Can order hard copy of trail guide online

Promoting the Trails

www.canoeni.com

October 2008 – 2009:

- 20,273 visitors to canoeni website, increasing annually
- 9,599 visitors to canoe trail page
- 4 minutes average user time on the site
- Referrals from CAAN sister websites, CANI, outdoor forums, etc.
- 5,500 trail guides requested, including 800 by individuals

Success

- Increased participation – Strangford Lough Canoe Trail 800+ users per month.
- Activity tourism
- Improved relations between water users
- Paddlers more confident regarding access
- Discouraged illegal access
- Award winning – Lough Erne Canoe Trail & Salt Island Bothy
- Positive environmental impact
- Partnership work

Challenges

- Liability insurance, management & maintenance
- Monitoring
- Disabled access
- Government agencies
- Funding
- Planning permission

Future Developments

Developing facilities on exiting trails:

- Camping
- Bothies
- Secure parking
- Volunteer rangers
- Road signage
- Private yacht club use

Future Developments

3 Coastal Canoe Trails - entire length of NI coastline

"Making a splash: providing opportunities for
water based recreation on inland waters"



Sarah Noble

Development Officer

sarah@countrysiderecreation.com

Tel: 028 90 303937

"Making a splash: providing opportunities for
water based recreation on inland waters"

Andy Parson's presentation slides

Please contact the Countryside Recreation Network for a copy of this presentation
crn@shu.ac.uk

Lucy Bowles' presentation slides

No presentation slides available