

Scottish Countryside Access Network (SCAN)

Conference
April 2003

“Responsible Access”



Jeremy Rowan-Robinson

Gave the opening speech.

Peter Hutchinson (SNH)

Educational programme of SOAC.

Plenary 1

questions / answers

Jim Strachan.

Where does liability for advice given in the code lie? Dogs on short leads etc. Who do I sue if I get attacked?

Peter Hutchinson.

Land managers' have a duty of care and this will need to continue, supported through good practice advice. It is still the responsibility for the user and the land manager. Passing over to Rob Garner.

Rob Garner (SNH)

The Code makes a lot about being responsible for yourself. User to user responsibility.

Jim Strachan

But the code is giving specific advice and people will be following it.

J Rowan-Robinson

Walkers can have liability.

Andrew Maithers (NE Fife Farmer). The principles of working together are in the code, but this is not getting taken up with SEERAD. Access is being penalized and there is no communication with the Rural Stewardship Scheme; tying in with beetle banks etc. There is a conflict.

Peter Hutchinson. Have to have a joined up government so that you won't be penalised.

Andrew Maithers

Code is ok in general principles but extra care of wildlife is required. It is a criminal offence to disturb wildlife.

Peter Hutchinson

The code is about responsibilities and linked with other legislation.

Dr. James Irvine

Still not clear about liability. It has been raised over the last 2/3 years and it is still the same issue.

J Rowan-Robinson

It cannot be resolved today.

Dr. James Irvine

Lowland farmer next to the urban edge. It is putting far too much of a burden on farming in this area which can't be tolerated.

Peter Hutchinson

Ranger expansion; should be focused on urban edge areas.

J Rowan-Robinson

Local authorities also receiving additional funds.

Alistair Lawson (Scotways) There will always be a residual core of people who will resist change; primarily ending up in social problems such as litter and drinking. The educational proposals mean that hopefully the majority of the public will change. But still have a core resistance who will not

pick up in this initiative. Perhaps these are our tenth target audience and a specific programme should be compiled?

Peter Hutchinson Many of these activities are already against the law; therefore up to the police to deal with. Perhaps the tenth target audience should therefore be the police and those in the legal profession.

Susan Grant (visitscotland) Foot and mouth demonstrated that people did not go to SNH for advice.

Where did they go and are you working with those sources?

Peter Hutchinson We are working with locals, ranger services, teletext, and newspapers.
Why is the educational programme still pushing for a viral approach?

J Rowan-Robinson Corner Peter over coffee if you have further questions.

Hugh Muschamp. (Paths For all Partnership)

Education & interpretation

- Shared responsibility.
- Communication; formal versus informal.
- Captive versus non captive audience.
- Provoke and capture attention.

Plenary 2

Alison Irvine

questions / answers

Emphasising education about the code but also need to remind people about the countryside; including understanding and awareness. The SOAC doesn't educate us about the environment. There is more to it than just how to act when out there.

Peter Hutchinson

Very good point; forestry operations etc. Urban society that we live in today; many differences between our thoughts.

Hugh Muschamp

Work on nature codes; common visual language; keep dog on a lead; why. We all have a thirst for knowledge to understand.....why?

Human behaviour; camping issues; not here but give an alternative elsewhere.

Dr Irvine

Bring it back to the practicalities; concern about how much does SNH understand about how the countryside works?

Peter Hutchinson

SNH tries to understand the countryside; ongoing learning; programme to include training for staff too.

Mike Dales

Mention in presentation; when you get the responses in, would it help to get these in triplicate?

Peter Hutchinson

It doesn't matter. Electronic form is fine; just tell us what you think.

Chamers Smith (Outdoor Education). In formal education there are styles of learning; 80% of what we do.

Educational programme; is most about reading and seeing. If people don't have a concrete experience in learning – don't have a base to build subject knowledge on. We need formal learning programmes that are repetitive. SNH and other organisations have touched base with formal education. Many people have not heard or seen the draft SOAC.

When it's out in 2004; needs to look at prolonged learning. Is someone from education on the Access Forum?

Peter Hutchinson

There is a parallel consultation out on the National Access Forum; who should be on it?

We are communicating with schools; out to the directors of education, not to the schools; how can we get it out to them? Concrete experience; outdoor education has been cut back; very concerning.

Hugh Muschamp local work, festivals, walks etc other examples of getting a concrete experience out to the public.

Andrew Maithers *Member of the Fife branch of Royal Highland Educational Team organised by NFUS to get an agricultural information box into primary schools in Fife. The uptake has been good but the problem arises when it comes to a farm visit. So much red tape. Education departments won't allow children to visit a farm unless strict criteria are met, so no one takes part incase they are sued.*

School representative Most schools do sponsored walks; educational programme in build up to these about countryside matters.

Colin Sneddon (British Association of Shooting and Conservation, BASC)

How BASC currently gets the message across about its practices

Land managers are willing to accept change.

BASC was set up in 1982. It now has 12,000 members across Scotland. Each one is covered by £5m public liability through membership. £150m pa is generated by shooting and deer stalking, and around 7,000 fte jobs.

Land managers,

Only a small proportion own land, more people occupy or manage land; the key audience of the SOAC consultation.

Issues.

Keepers are concerned about traps and release pens and access close to them. Disturbance of wild game and the conflict with the conservation value of field margins.

Concern about shoot days. Deer shoots are more accommodating to other users. Woodland deer have the highest shoot rate. Night-time access; poaching. Are these fears justified?

Urban areas – don't believe there will be a massive influx / change. There may be some conflict in some places at some times. So BASC needs to inform members what it entails.

BASC have many codes of practice – up to 15. They have a good knowledge on the use of codes and how they work.

There is a lot of legislation to adhere to but so much information is available, hence the codes.

Shotgun safety, air weapon codes, picking up, gun dogs, game handling, deer stalking, pigeon shooting, trapping etc. All free of charge.

Four important functions of the codes.

- Confirm / inform knowledge of Acts
- Easily read source document for those working / visiting the countryside
- Gives relevant authorities a simple guide to current legislation
- Codes set standards

Recently brought all the codes together.

Example of behaviour issue:

Inland Goose shooting; lots of shooting of geese; not illegal but contrary to the sporting ethic. The code has no legal status, but it was endorsed. The code was brought in to control a small, but damaging minority.

BASC also run courses from 1 day to 4 days and youngster's courses too; looking at access, firearms and specialist courses.

Access code; what does it mean to land managers and BASC members?

A lot, will interact a lot, impact will be low, wording is important, conflict could and should be avoided.

Do they see changes requiring a new leaflet or amend other codes; the latter. Land Reform Act isn't top of the pile.

Land managers are willing to accept change. It will be adopted, concern more over the legislative change, responses to consultation are effectively ignored. Land reform Act and firearms act are still not mentioned together.

As the legislation currently stands; now will have armed trespass. Offence to shoot under the access rights. But they don't say you cannot partake in access rights with a gun tho.

The shooting community and land managers in general have concerns. The draft wording is very useful (although shooting and other land management practices should continue without disturbance)

Want to see the young growing up with a clear idea about their rights and responsibilities.

Jonathan Kitching. Outdoor Education

Plenary 3

- questions / answers*
- J Rowan-Robinson *Given that you have been using codes of practice with your members, have you any way of showing their effectiveness?*
- Colin Sneddon No, but people know a little and it reinforces what they know.
- Colin Sneddon *Are SNH to monitor the SOAC?*
- Peter Hutchinson Monitoring is going on just now, but we will also be evaluating the techniques used.
- Dr Irvine *Groups of people are the main worry amongst farmers. Grass is an essential commodity. Weather conditions can change; for 5 months the ground can be wet and vulnerable. For group activities. Access should be arranged in advance. The Farmer could then move the livestock away if there was a real concern. Use of groups coming into farmland.*
- In the Code or legislation? The future may be a problem.*
- Jonathan Kitching With respect to the industry, if it is not a problem now, it won't be one in the future with led walks etc.
- J Rowan-Robinson Duties on the local authority to develop core path networks; most people want to follow a path. Hope land managers can take assurance from this – if implemented effectively it would be ok.
- Dr Irvine *What about spontaneous visits? Football, cycling on a grass field, causes damage.*
- Peter Hutchinson Groups, potential impacts; larger the group, the larger the potential impact.
- Dr Irvine *The access taker has no financial input but land managers have huge financial implications; left open with anxiety.*
- Mike Dales Outdoor education should be seen as a solution; although not in the field, but adjacent to it can educate the users about rights and responsibilities.
- Andrea Partridge *Are you intending to target messages to the public or leaving SNH to get on with it?*
- Colin Sneddon BASC is a small organisation; can provide information but not on a large scale; only when people approach them. Will do what we can.
- Gordon (NE Aberdeenshire Ranger)??? *Issue of grass. Walkers compared to a tractor? Public perception is that how can they be worse than a tractor doing legitimate farm business?*

Rob Bushby / John Summers.

Keep Scotland Beautiful

Plenary 4

NE Ranger

questions / answers

Dog fouling campaign. In your experience; a lot of time, effort and money has gone into the campaign. How long does it last after the campaign?

John Summers

Other campaigns have been very successful, but they do have to be reinforced. The Dog Fouling Campaign will be launched in November 2003 and again six months later. The use of graphic images will have an effect, but reinforcement is required. The launch will tie in with when the Act comes into force; November 27th 2003.

Alistair Lawson

You have illustrated work in different communities. How do we still target our residual audience in the countryside? Access cannot be compartmentalized. How do we take the principles from that to our audience?

John Summers

Experience; need to think in a different way from the past. If you are not getting the message across, think in a different way.

J Rowan-Robinson

So many different target audiences.

Eleanor McGregor (SNH) In Peters absence; the educational programme will be targeted at different groups, integrating at lots of different levels. It will be based on the success of other campaigns and SNH has to move with the times. CARE to RESPECT?

Mike Dales

Outdoor World is often seen in only 2D complexity. Educate people to protect farmer's interests and educate farmers to the view of accepting access.

Graham Banks (Dumfries & Galloway). Build into the code; advice to deal with dog fouling in rural areas?

Disposal of dog faeces in rural area. Dog bins on bus shelters in the urban environment is ok but where in the woods?

Ground neighbouring farmland with livestock taking on diseases from dog faeces.

John Summer

Code of practice on litter and waste. Pull together in 2004. Today, just gave an example. Issues; can be done in a different way to give good advice. Clear guidance and messages are required and to sell it in the best possible way. Need to define the message first.

Peter Hutchinson

Complex issue and working with canine interests. Code related to circumstance.

- Chamers Smith???* *Absence of the outdoor environment not being part of the curriculum. National connections. Learning by doing and deliverable by various agencies. Can celebrate success. Also a platform to get into the John Muir Trust.*
- Andrew Ralton (Scotways).* *Respect for the environment; how does the John Muir award engender respect and appreciation?*
- Richard Barron Use of key words; discover, etc. How proposing to take personal responsibility. People get a sense of feeling about places; visiting and working to put something back.
- Gavin Skipper (LLTIC).* *Highlighting fires; SOAC. Hinting at no open fires, nothing about enclosed fires. Style should be similar to the dog campaign? Damages by fire. Or Enforcement and fines?*
- John Summer Enforcement is very difficult. Litter; police have no enforcement powers. People are given the responsibility but it needs to be enforceable.
- The offence isn't dropping the litter; it is not picking it up. What are the procedures? They need powers. Litter wardens cannot ask for names and addresses. Statutory powers by the fiscal. Education, Good Services and Enforcement.
- J Rowan-Robinson Code to stop the problem before it arises? But then where to if do cause a problem?
- Jim Pickin* *Wording of the code. Can't see a problem of continuing to travel and practice of fires where appropriate. It may be applicable in the National Park setting. The real danger is that if you don't get the wording correct, it will erode the traditional values.*

Summary
J Rowan-Robinson

Have had a wide range of issues covered. It will be a while before we get the answers to many questions. Got different messages to be getting across. Got different target audiences and will need different approaches. Lots to think about for SNH. There are a wide range of people in the educational programme. It's not a one off; it will need reinforcement.

Thanks.

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