

Hello from SCAN – with our second newsletter and the first of the New Year! This time reporting on the winter conference, our spring conference plans and access related news from around the country. Happy reading and all the best wishes for 2005!

NEWS FROM SCAN

**** Email address ****

A new email address is now in use for general queries to SCAN. It is SCAN@scottishcountrynet.org

**** Managing Access Rights to Water ****

The SCAN Winter conference of the 26th of November attracted some 60 access professionals to the scenic surroundings of Dunkeld to discuss the in's and out's of managing access rights to water. No doubt some expected the topic to give rise to lots of controversial and thorny issues, but many speakers contributed to the feeling that there generally is less conflict than imagined. Particularly in the field of water sports, such as rafting and canoeing, the establishment of access agreements has been a positive experience and is still the way forward, even when the new legislation comes into force. Water managers, such as Scottish Water, are also increasingly becoming more positive towards recreational use of reservoirs. Nevertheless, open access will cause changes that are not always easy to foretell and there are likely to be some problem hotspots. For example, maintaining the balance between wildlife conservation and open access will be challenging, whilst in other places there still is potential for conflicts between different user groups. However, all in all the day demonstrated a high degree of mutual understanding between stakeholders and a lot of optimism about the future of managing access rights to water.

Copies of the conference papers and proceedings will be sent out soon. They are also available to those who did not attend for an administration fee - please contact the SCAN Co-ordinator for further information on SCAN@scottishcountrynet.org

**** SCAN Conference - Managing Multi-use ****

This year SCAN has a special treat for both the superstitious and the non-superstitious. Our next conference on multi-use issues will be held on **Friday 13 May in the Birnam Institute, near Dunkeld.**

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 sets out the rights of responsible access for everyone including the less-abled, horse-riders, cyclists and walkers. This increases the multi-use of paths, which will need to be carefully designed and planned to take account of the variety of users and their range of abilities. Matters such as technical specification and barrier design require careful consideration. These routes may also serve both commuter and recreational purposes, so how will a network be planned for shared use on potential single-use routes? And what is the role of signage – can it be used as a promotional tool, rather than as a means of stopping use by others.

This conference will look at these considerations and ideas and will present case studies to allow practitioners, land managers and users to share good practice. Further details and booking forms will be sent out mid-march, but you can register your interest now by emailing SCAN@scottishcountrynet.org

**** SCAN AGM ****

The SCAN Annual General Meeting will take place immediately after the SCAN Conference on Friday 13 May (approximate start time 16.00). Details of the meeting will be sent out in advance, including information about taking a seat on the committee. If you would like further information about the activities of the SCAN Committee send an email to SCAN.

ACCESS IN THE NEWS & PRESS RELEASES

This section include Access related items that have appeared in the media recently. If you would like your press release to be featured or have come across an interesting news item, send an email to news@scottishcountrynet.org

**** Outdoor Access Code Website ****

The Outdoor Access Code Website is now live. This site is hosted by Scottish Natural Heritage to promote understanding of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. Here you can find out all you need to know about statutory access rights, responsibilities, and how to manage access. Please log on and have a browse! www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

**** Access Forum appoints new head ****

The National Access Forum, which brings together a broad range of people such as land managers, recreational interest groups, public bodies and conservationists, to advise on access issues, has appointed Bob Reid to head up their operations. (SNH Press Release – 22 November) <http://www.snh.org.uk/scripts-snh/nw-displ.asp?ID=1077>

**** Clarkson in deep peat over 4x4 ride ****

The BBC is criticized as the Top Gear programme scales a Sutherland hill in a land rover (Guardian – 15 November) http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,3604,1352111,00.html

**** £40,000 fines for 4x4 drivers who churn up countryside ****

**** Off-road bikers face fines for 'eco-vandalism' ****

The Herald reports on the fallout as the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act comes into force and the Sunday Times carries a similar story, but from a mountain biking angle (29 November and 28 November) <http://www.theherald.co.uk/news/28846.html>

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2090-1378691,00.html>

**** Warning to walkers over rise in deer coursing ****

More illicit use of the countryside as police are warning walkers to avoid any gangs with dogs that they come across in the countryside following an increase of illegal deer coursing throughout Scotland. (The Scotsman, 30 December – Free registration required)

<http://news.scotsman.com/topics.cfm?tid=485&id=1474802004>

**** Public Polled on Deer Control ****

The Scotsman reports that countryside enthusiasts can now give their views on how to manage the problem of Britain's growing deer population. Via an online survey, ramblers, cyclists and other countryside users will be asked to submit ideas on how to control the explosion in deer numbers, currently standing at 1.5 million. (22 December - free registration required)

<http://news.scotsman.com/latest.cfm?id=3917698>

The survey can be found on www.bath.ac.uk/ice/deer

**** Loch Lomond in the Herald ****

Early December the Herald carried a number of feature stories on Loch Lomond and the role of the National Park, which gave rise to intensive letter writing by the public. "Loch Lomond dream turns sour" is on

<http://www.theherald.co.uk/news/29230.shtml> and

letters can be found on the following links

<http://www.theherald.co.uk/features/29282.html>

<http://www.theherald.co.uk/29622.shtml> and

<http://www.theherald.co.uk/29514.shtml>

**** Gaelic for hikers ****

And finally, the Scotsman gives a little preview of 'Tir is Teanga', which means Language and Landscape, a six-part series filmed in the Highlands and islands. The series starts on Thursday 13 January at 7pm on BBC 2 (11 December, free registration required)

<http://news.scotsman.com/topics.cfm?tid=485&id=1402762004>