

Outdoor Recreation Plan



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SCENE SETTING

What is the ORP?



This Outdoor Recreation Plan (ORP) outlines commitments and intentions held by all stakeholders which will enhance outdoor recreation opportunities across Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park over the next five years. The overall goal is that the combined actions and aspirations will result in increased and widened participation in outdoor recreation by the public.

Although the online format and content will be of interest to a wide audience the main purpose of this plan is to ensure cross-partner co-ordination, stakeholder agreements and commitments to complete actions which are agreed will maximise value for money and public benefit.

The resource network shown is not a navigational tool and only shows what activity opportunities partners throughout the Park are looking to provide within the next five years. Many paths and actions shown on the system do not currently exist. The mapping has been designed for viewing at 1:25,000 scale with a maximum viewing threshold of 1:7,500. All efforts have been made to ensure that the mapping is as accurate as possible, however inevitably some errors may have occurred when uploading such a large dataset. The principal of responsible access is key to the ORP however as the structure of the plan is activity led, the ORP project team have generally categorised each path under activity headings. It should be noted that if a path is not scored under cycling, for example, this simply acknowledges that the path specification does not meet criteria for promotion under that cycling banner and access rights would still apply to the path.

The breadth of activities covered within this plan is extremely large, however this simply reflects the range of opportunities available and enjoyed. A level of prioritisation has been conducted utilising an Activity Matrix (Appendix A) to ensure that we concentrate energies and funding towards actions which bring the most benefits in line with the National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017.

Key Activities

The ORP clearly identifies a number of actions that cover a broad spectrum of recreational activities. The individual actions will ultimately lead to an improved recreation resource, however in order to focus the delivery of the ORP the following themes have been prioritised:

- Family friendly activities
- Accessible and diverse range of activities at entry level
- Recreational off road cycling
- Linking up the Park and creating journeys
- Water based recreation
- Letting people know what they can do and where

What is an ORP Action?

An action has received commitment from the lead partner that it is of high value and will be included within five-year work plans.

Headline actions within this plan are:

- Signed core paths network
- Long Distance Route development
- Promoted network of public berthing opportunities on Loch Lomond
- Expansion of Wheelie boat provision
- Upland paths project
- Development and promotion of Trossachs and Cowal mountain biking network
- Park wide semi-formal camping network

What is an ORP Aspiration?

An aspiration has value which is appreciated by potential project partners but at this time has received no firm commitment within work plans.

Notable aspirations within this plan are:

- Falls of Leny destination development
- The Great Trossachs Path
- Improved links into the National Park (Balloch, Sandbank, Callander)
- Glen Dochart shared use cycle path
- Expand partnership people counter network
- Pilot online fishing permit system
- Community Sports Hub in Stronachlachar

National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017 Vision for Outdoor Recreation

The key strategic outcome for Visitor Experience in the [Partnership Plan](#) is:

“A high quality, authentic experience for visitors, with many opportunities to appreciate and enjoy the natural and cultural heritage, within an internationally renowned landscape that compares to the best on offer around the world.”

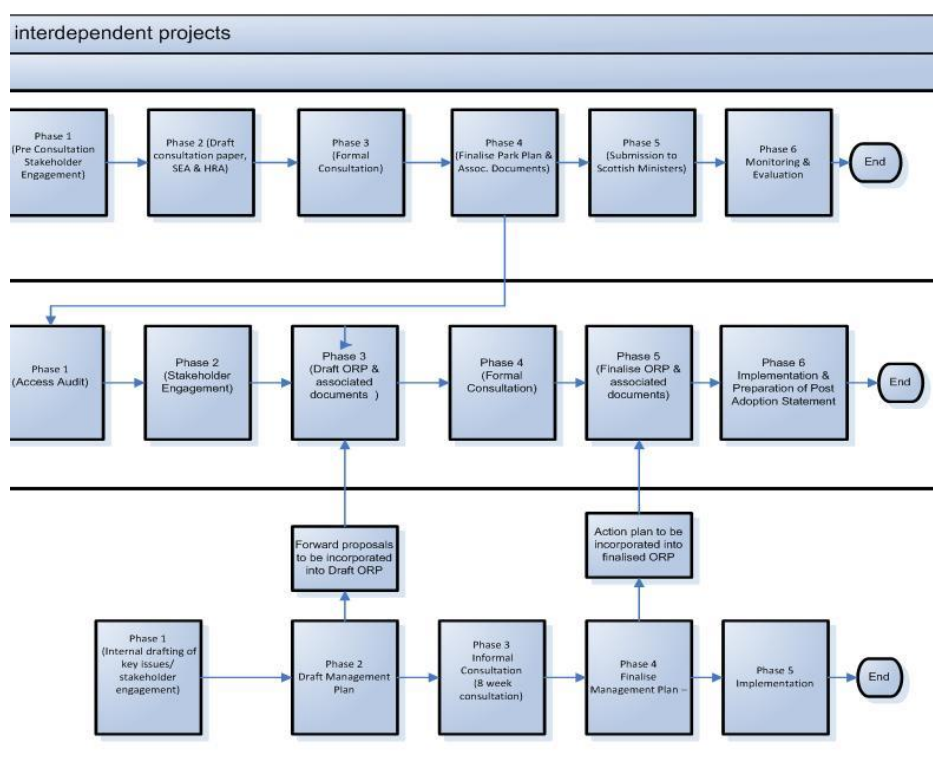
In the drafting of the Partnership Plan and subsequently the Outdoor Recreation Plan the following documents were included in initial audits as they are key in providing context:

- Scottish Outdoor Access Code
- SNH – Enjoying the Outdoors
- Community Planning Partnerships’ Single Outcome Agreements
- Tourism Framework for Change
- Scottish Transport Strategy
- Local Authorities’ Transport Strategies
- Cycling Action Plan for Scotland
- Better Health, Better Care: Action Plan
- Reaching Higher, Scotland’s National Strategy for Sport
- Out There – Sportscotland policy statement on sport in the outdoors
- Let’s Make Scotland More Active
- Regional Transport Strategies
- Forests for People
- Local strategic and access, recreation and tourism documents

The ORP receives most of its strategic direction from three Visitor Experience policies:

- VE Policy 3: Recreation and Access
- VE Policy 4: Water Recreation
- VE Policy 6: National Park Scenic Routes

The diagram below demonstrates the relationship the ORP has below the Partnership Plan and alongside the Five Lochs Management Plan.



Local Plan Vision for Outdoor Recreation

The Adopted Local Plan provides a spatial framework for the development and use of land in the national park, focusing on development that is to be achieved over the years 2010–2015.

The vision for the local plan is, “A robust development and land-use planning framework to 2015 that will deliver high quality, sustainable development in an area of outstanding landscape and environmental quality. New development will contribute to the Park’s special qualities, directly supporting the social and economic development of the Park’s communities and a growing rural economy, contributing to Scotland’s prosperity, improving the range and quality of opportunities to experience the National Park, and enhancing its standing as an international visitor destination.”

Opportunities for recreation will be enhanced through encouraging improvements to visitor infrastructure on land and water and associated commercial activity. New recreational activities will typically be linked with visitor or tourist facilities and infrastructure.

The plan sets out where new developments will be directed giving a hierarchy for settlements, their role, and the developments each will support. The plan identifies many specific sites outlining their preferred use and any constraints.

The plan highlights the challenge of finding a balance between encouraging recreation and associated development with conserving the special qualities of the park. New recreational activities will be linked with visitor or tourism facilities and infrastructure. The plan maps land and open water recreation in terms of areas of visitor pressure and for open water level of management required. The opportunities and constraints for each of these classifications are specified.

The plan safeguards land for transport infrastructure and has policies designed to support innovative and sustainable travel options.

Policy REC3 seeks to safeguard and where possible enhance opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation.

The plan seeks to uphold the general right of responsible access through Policy TRAN.7.

Open space policies ENV29/30/31 seek to protect and enhance open space provision for communities. In recognition of the contribution they make to quality of life and the special qualities.

The plan finally sets out proposal maps for the settlements of the park. These detail the settlement boundary the development strategy and opportunities with constraints for each settlement.

European Charter for Sustainable Tourism

The National Park has been awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism. The Charter has two underlying principles:

- To increase awareness of, and support for, Europe’s protected areas as a fundamental part of our heritage that should be preserved for, and enjoyed by, current and future generations.

- To improve the sustainable development and management of tourism in protected areas, which takes account of the needs of the environment, local residents, local businesses and visitors. This Strategy is integral to the Parks achievement of this commitment.
- The Charter has ten principles as follows:
- To involve all those implicated by tourism in and around the protected area in its development and management.
- To prepare and implement a sustainable tourism strategy and action plan for the protected area.
- To protect and enhance the area's natural and cultural heritage, for and through tourism, and to protect it from excessive tourism development.
- To provide visitors with a high quality experience in all aspects of their visit. To communicate effectively to visitors about the special qualities of the area.
- To encourage specific tourism products which enable discovery and understanding of the area.
- To increase knowledge of the protected area and sustainability issues amongst all those involved in tourism.
- To ensure tourism supports and does not reduce the quality of life for local residents.
- To increase the benefits of tourism to the local economy. To monitor and influence visitor flows to reduce negative impacts.

This Outdoor Recreation Plan with the Separate Tourism Strategy (both sit below the Partnership Plan) contribute to fulfilling the principles of the Charter. In particular this plan advances principles 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10.

Core Paths Plan

The National Park Authority adopted its Core Paths Plan on 23 June 2010. That undertaking met the statutory duty placed upon the Authority to, "...draw up a plan for a system of paths sufficient for the purposes of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area." The core paths network was agreed following a robust evaluation and consultation process involving landowners, communities and the Local Access Forum. The next stage is for the Authority and partners to agree actions which ensure that the network of core paths is well-maintained, signed and fit for use. It should be remember that there are no specific standards associated with core path status and "fit for purpose" will differ from path to path.

Visitor Management Plans

The NPA through the 5 Lochs Visitor Management Group (four local Community Councils, SC, SNH, FCS, Sportscotland, CSP) is currently developing a Management Plan for an area in the north east of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. The 5 Lochs Management Plan is a new initiative being developed through stakeholder involvement to reduce the impact of visitor pressure and anti-social behaviour on local communities and the environment, while realising the visitor experience potential of the 5 Lochs area. This 5 year management plan will focus on and around the areas of: Loch Venachar, Loch Earn, Loch Lubnaig, Loch Voil & Doine, Loch Achray and Loch Drunkie. The 5 Lochs Management Plan will provide a coordinated approach by way of a framework of actions; identified through collaboration between stakeholders to focus on the visitor management challenges around the identified area. The 5 Lochs VMG expect to have the Management Plan completed by Autumn 2012.

National Park Tourism Strategy 2012-2017

The National Park Tourism Strategy is intrinsically linked to the ORP and both share the same vision. Many actions and aspirations raised within the Draft ORP have been absorbed within the Tourism Strategy and where applicable each specific relevant Tourism Strategy action has been included within the text and action lists under specific activity sections.

The Tourism Strategy provides a future-focused framework for maximising the potential of tourism in the Park and enabling stakeholders to understand the NPA purpose and direction. It provides a clear view by way of:

- Identifying the areas where development is needed
- Directing resources to areas of most impact
- Enabling NPA and partners to work to agreed goals
- Safeguarding the Park's natural heritage, cultural heritage, land and water resources through sustainable development
- Reducing risk of being diverted from our task

Preparatory Work

As part of the core paths planning exercise every community within the Park, landowners and other stakeholders were consulted during 2006 and 2008. Prior to this the Community Futures project had gathered community aspirations in 2005 and these Action Plans were revisited in 2009. All of these consultations have fed into the ORP.

Throughout 2011 the ORP Project team facilitated workshops with key stakeholders covering the entire remit of the project. Workshop attendees were:

- SportScotland and Scottish Natural Heritage
- Forth & Tay Disabled Ramblers and Fieldfare Trust
- Forestry Commission Scotland
- Sustrans, Cycling Scotland, Scotways and Ramblers
- Scottish Canoe Association, Royal Yachting Association and Loch Lomond Association
- The Great Trossachs Forest
- National Farming Union Scotland and Scottish Land & Estates
- John Muir Trust and Mountaineering Council of Scotland
- Trossachs Riders Access Group
- Local Authorities
- Community Councils and Community Development Trusts

Landowners were contacted throughout the process on an individual basis and all efforts were made by the ORP Project Team to ensure that all actions and aspirations are not incompatible with land management activities or plans in specific areas.

A draft was produced in August 2012 and was consulted on widely over a 3 month period. A Consultation Report is available which outlines the responses received through that process.

Feedback to the draft was positive and the general theme was that the infrastructure on the whole is satisfactory and that energies should be concentrated on key gaps in provision and promotion of opportunities. Following the consultation the ORP Project team have amended

the text where appropriate, prioritised (scoring against set criteria including Core Paths Plan, Tourism Strategy, PPP, Risks and Activity Priority) and reduced the Actions list by 40% down to 69. 24 Actions have become Aspirations and 26 have been covered within Actions held within the Tourism Strategy.

RECREATION AND ACCESS

The Partnership Plan outlines the aspiration that the National Park should provide high quality recreation and access opportunities that offer something for everyone. The actions outlined in this chapter will focus on gaps in provision which are barriers to visitors and residents enjoying the Park's special qualities whilst developing a healthy lifestyle. Visitors and residents require short options around communities and hubs as well as more challenging opportunities such as upland and long-distance experiences. It is key that the park provides for all audiences and the Outdoor Recreation Plan includes actions and aspirations on all activities, from the most common to the more niche such as caving and open water swimming.

This Plan includes all-abilities access within two sections; around hubs and in more remote areas. However the National Park Authority's attitude is that wherever possible all provision for all activities should be carefully designed to enable participation by all. It should be taken for granted that actions and aspirations will be designed to minimise or alleviate man-made barriers to access. For this reason some actions which relate specifically to provision for disabilities will be found under the activity and not under All-abilities, for example, the provision of wheelie boats allowing wheelchair access onto water will be found under Fishing.

One of the key terms you will come across in this chapter is "hub". This word can mean many things to many people but in the interests of clarity, in this Plan we use the term in its broadest sense and includes any site which sits in isolation from settlements, but from which users can enjoy an activity. It is not necessarily a gateway into a wider network, although often it is, but can sit in isolation entirely and has the facility to exist sustainably on its own right.

Active Travel



The Scottish Government promotes cycling and walking as sustainable forms of transport, especially for short journeys, recognising the important role they can have in reducing emissions, improving air quality and contributing to improved health by increasing physical activity levels. Cycle Action Plan for Scotland 2010 details the route to realising the ambitions vision that, "By 2020, 10% of all journeys taken in Scotland will be by bike."

Active Travel is high on the national agenda due to the key role a quality well-used network can play in relation to health benefits and climate change. Movement within the National Park is currently predominantly car based but some key actions in the southern area of the Park could provide viable and attractive walking and cycling alternatives between communities.

With this in mind, the Park Authority included three key footways (a path along the side of a public road) between communities in the Core Paths Plan and will work with partners to upgrade these footways into best-practice shared-use paths.

The Callander charrette specifically raised a community aspiration for safe active travel options within the settlement boundary, which includes key journeys such as to McLaren High School.

AIM - A fully connected strategic path network across the Park which provides credible active alternatives to road travel.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 41: Arrochar western shore path
- ORP Action 45: Balloch to Gartocharn shared use footway
- ORP Action 46: Croftamie to Drymen shared use footway
- ORP Action 47: Drymen to Balmaha link
- ORP Action 48: Improvements to Arrochar-Tarbet link
- ORP Action 49: Callander safe cycling project
- ORP Action 64: Port of Menteith roadside link
- Aspiration: Traffic free route Ardentinnny to Blairmore
- Aspiration: Safe cycle route at Cot House, Sandbank

All-ability Access



Wherever possible all provision for all activities should be carefully designed to enable participation by all. It should be taken for granted that actions and aspirations under each individual activity will be designed to minimise or alleviate man-made barriers to access. For this reason some actions which relate specifically to provision for disabilities will be found

under the activity and not under this section, for example, the provision of wheelie boats which will allow wheelchair access onto water will be found under Fishing.

Most communities within the Park are well served with a network which provides a minimum of one short loop option which adheres to all-abilities standards. Aberfoyle, Balloch, Callander and Luss all offer excellent opportunities. These opportunities can be improved but workshops clearly indicated that there is an expectation that such opportunities are expected within towns and villages and that money and promotional activities should be targeted at more remote visitor hubs and greater promotion of opportunities provided by facilities such as NCN7.

It was noted that there was no appetite for distinct on the ground signage for those with mobility constraints and that energies should be directed towards leaflets and web communications.

NCN7 offers many flat well-surfaced opportunities away from hubs and communities on which users can enjoy a semi-wilderness lochside experience. Specific attention will be paid to Loch Lubnaig and Loch Venachar to ensure that these opportunities are maximised.

Loch Katrine is a hub that provides world class all-ability access and some simple actions will improve this opportunity. Other opportunities exist in the TGTF area to provide new opportunities to complement the wheelchair provision at Glen Finglas, which has previously been highlighted in the Top 10 Wheelchair routes by The Scotsman. It is important that the Woodland Trust maintains the high quality provision provided at Glen Finglas. David Marshall Lodge (DML) is currently a key hub which offers few all-abilities opportunities and actions required here include new path links with more accessible gradients. Plans at this stage include improved access to the Nature Play feature, waterfall and sculptures, view points, picnic areas and wildlife hide. New ramp entrances are also required at the lodge, toilet, café and shop. Partners, including Stirling Council, are looking towards improving infrastructure throughout Aberfoyle which removes all barriers to access. This potential pilot project could then be repeated in other settlements.

In time Forestry Commission will be developing the 3 Lochs Forest Drive and as part of that destination project they will be installing new parking and path works which meet all-abilities criteria and best practice. These include access to the toilet block, Loch Drunkie view points, trail sound features, car park, picnic site area and Nature play features. Improvements are also being considered for Rowardennan and Salloch on East Loch Lomond.

Glenbranter and Benmore Botanic Garden in Cowal are hubs whose all-ability opportunities are under promoted. Glenbranter offers a recently improved all-abilities toilet.

The National Park Tourism Strategy includes the following actions under the heading of accessible tourism:

TS Action 55: Provide high quality all-ability access opportunities around towns and villages and in semi-wilderness surroundings

TS Action 56: All abilities access opportunities well promoted and shared with visitors

AIM: The Park is appreciated as an area which provides high quality all-ability access opportunities in settlements and semi-wilderness surroundings and that these opportunities are well promoted and shared.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 24: Parkmobility Project
- ORP Action 27: David Marshall Lodge path improvements

- ORP Action 28: Aberfoyle all-abilities village pilot
- ORP Action 41: Arrochar western shore path
- ORP Action 50: Trossachs Pier infrastructure
- Aspiration: Increased presence of routes on Fieldfare Trust Photo Trail website
- Aspiration: Improved infrastructure at Benmore Botanic Garden
- Aspiration: 3 Lochs Drive
- TS Action 55: Provide high quality all-ability access opportunities around towns and villages and in semi-wilderness surroundings
- TS Action 56: All abilities access opportunities well promoted and shared with visitors

Archery



In the Park archery is confined to an offering by activity providers, often in association with other activities. Archery can be booked as an activity through some accommodation providers. There are no archery clubs in the Park however there is an opportunity for the activity to be included within any future Callander Community Sports Hub. While there are undoubtedly locations suitable for field archery in the Park no one has yet come forward with proposals.

AIM: Continued participation.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 59: Community Outdoor Sports Hubs (Balloch & Callander)
- ORP Action 67: Monitor trends in participation levels

Camping



The National Park is a very popular area for camping with a variety of formal campsites in beautiful surroundings. Most are located on loch shores such as Loch Long, Loch Lomond or alongside rivers such as the River Forth, Teith or Balvaig.

Forest Holidays provide three formal sites in the National Park area at Ardgarten, Cashel and Cobleland near Aberfoyle. The Park also includes six other independent formal campsites at Luss, Ardlui, Cashel, Callander, Strathyre and Lochgoilhead.

Over recent years complaints have been received by the Park Authority that some formal caravan and campsites were reluctant to accommodate campers and kayakers. The reasoning for such a position needs to be explored but this is not an issue isolated to this area as Argyll & Bute Council have recently inserted a statement within their Local Plan which stipulates that such sites must accommodate the camping market.

The Park Authority runs a campsite on Inchcailloch and Forestry Commission Scotland runs one at Sallochy, East Loch Lomond. These sites are semi-formal with basic facilities. New camping byelaws have been introduced covering East Loch Lomond.

Responsible camping is permitted in the National Park under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 as part of the public's right of responsible access but unfortunately camping is often associated with entirely separate behaviour such as littering and anti-social behaviour carried out by a minority.

It is widely appreciated that whilst formal campsites provide a certain experience they lack a sense of "wildness" many visitors are searching for. At present the only alternative for responsible access takers is the pitching of tents where no facilities exist and this often results in sporadic roadside camping which is difficult to manage. Stakeholders believe there is an appetite for a network of promoted semi-formal campsites across the Park, which (like Inchcailloch and Sallochy) provide a sense of escape but alongside infra-structure such as fire-pits, barbecue areas and composting toilets which protect the area from any degradation. Such sites can provide income generation or resolve long standing anti-social behaviour issues by changing the audience which visit the area or indeed by creating a greater level of respect from visitors. It is hoped that this action, alongside other mechanisms such as road and lay-by design, will result in significantly less litter associated with road-side camping.

Successful examples of such facilities are found across the country and the Park Authority, National Farmers' Union and Scottish Land & Estates will look for organise events for land managers which showcase success stories and lessons learned.

Responsible camping is currently a key element within the successful West Highland Way and promotion of responsible camping will be integrated as part of other multi-day activity itineraries (see Packaging and Promotion).

AIM: The Park boasts a variety of camping facilities mostly of a formal design, and a few semi-formal. Opportunities exist to broaden the variety of camping experiences available for a variety of users.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 4: Network of quality semi-formal campsites in East Loch Lomond and the 5 Lochs area
- Aspiration: Formation of semi-formal campsites at key locations across the Park which resolve long standing anti-social behaviour issues

Caving

There is no caving in the Park of significance to speleologists. There are two notable subterranean caverns that are of interest to visitors. These are the famous Arrochar caves in Glen Loin near Arrochar and Rob Roy's Cave near Inversnaid on east Loch Lomondside.

The Arrochar caves are substantial caves formed beneath a jumble of large boulders deposited after glaciation. They have a long history including a visit from Robert the Bruce. They were used extensively for overnight stays during the development of climbing on the Arrochar hills and this use continues today, although less frequent.

Rob Roy's Cave is located just north of Inversnaid close to the West Highland Way, reputedly used by both Rob Roy MacGregor and Robert the Bruce. The cave is indicated by the word "CAVE" written in large white painted letters above the entrance.

Where appropriate stakeholders should consider relevant intervention to prevent degradation through litter, vandalism and erosion.

AIM: Ensure sustainable future for the caves through use of appropriate management measures.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 14: Web portal promotion of activity
- ORP Action 5: Upland paths project
- ORP Action 67: Monitor trends in participation level

Climbing



Climbing in the National Park has a long and rich history.

Development began principally on the mountains around Arrochar, transport to which improved during the early 1900's rendering them readily accessible from Glasgow. This range of mountains include the spectacular Cobbler and collectively they are often referred to as the Arrochar Alps, so named because they became the established setting for the exploits of those early climbers and mountaineers beginning with Victorian gentry, to be followed by working class men and women in search of escape from Glasgow tenements and the drudgery of city life during the 1920's and 30's. A further wave of interest followed a lull during the Second World War, with the outdoor movement gaining popularity and people seeking out the challenge and camaraderie offered by climbing and membership of the clubs it triggered. In more contemporary times the hills around Arrochar have continued to offer opportunity for modern climbers employing cutting edge techniques and equipment on the steep schists of the Cobbler and the Brack.

There are many climbing venues in the Park offering the full range of climbing disciplines from classic multi-pitch mountain routes on the Cobbler, such as Punsters Crack (Severe 4a***), Whither Whether (VS 4b***), Osiris (E4 6a***) and Wild Country (E6 6b***) to fully equipped sport climbing at Glen Ogle, The Anvil or Ardvorlich.

Over the past few years, an explosion in the popularity of bouldering has also led to a number of local venues and circuits being developed including the Trossachs boulders overlooking scenic Loch Katrine, the Ben Ledi boulders, the Loch Sloy circuit, Stronachlachar, Glen Croe and Glen Massan.

Winter classics include gullies like Central Gully (I) on Ben Lui, waterfall ice such as Eas Anie (IV) on Beinn Chuirn near Cononish and mixed routes such as Monolith Grooves (IV) on Beinn an Lochain.

The main venues are:

- The Arrochar Alps: Located around the coastal village of Arrochar, includes the Cobbler and the Brack, offering a wide range of summer and winter climbing of all grades. The Cobbler in particular remains popular throughout the year due to there being a number of high quality routes.

- Glen Croe: Accessible single pitch rock climbing on a variety of outcrops on the southern flank of the Cobbler, mostly VS and harder. Extensive bouldering circuit.
- Argyll: There are a number of accessible crags and outcrops scattered throughout this area of the Park. Options include single pitch cragging, bolted outcrops and bouldering. The area is surprisingly mountainous with many rocky summits and buttresses including some which have produced a few winter lines.
- Loch Lomond: Home to a number of scenic cragging venues. Including, a bouldering circuit along the eastern shoreline of the loch, bolted single pitch routes at Ardvorlich and good quality slab routes on the south facing Sub Station crag (Loch Sloy).
- Ben A'an: Scenic rock climbing area overlooking the historic Loch Katrine. Mostly single pitch climbs on good quality mica schist including some established classics such as 'Last Eighty' (Severe^{***}) and Coriander (VS 4c^{**})
- Ben Lui: Heralded by many as the 'finest mountain in the Southern Highlands'. The epochal 'Central Gully' (I^{***}) takes the headwall of Coire Goatach to reach the grand 1130m summit.
- Beinn Chuirn: Situated close to Ben Lui, the Eas Anie waterfall often freezes to create a splendid two-pitch icefall climb (IV^{**}). It is accessed via Glen Cononish from Dalrigh on the A82.
- Cruach Ardrain: This lofty munro above the railway village of Crianlarich holds the fine 'Y Gully' (I) which offers a lengthy direct line of ascent up the winter north face.
- Glen Ogle: Scotland's premier sport climbing venue with over 200 routes and grades from F6a to 8b. Climbing on the SW facing Sunny side can be a delight on a warm summer evening when the breeze often keeps the midges away, the Dark Side is altogether different with generally harder climbing and a some high grade test pieces.

A number of guidebooks cover the area include the Scottish Mountaineering Club's (SMC) Arran, Arrochar & the Southern Highlands guide and Scottish Rock, Volume 1: South by Gary Latter. The SMC guide is comprehensive while Scottish Rock is selective, offering information on the best routes across a range of locations and grades.

The Park is home to protected cliff nesting birds and climbers should follow the Mountaineering Council of Scotland's (MC of S) guidance when visiting certain crags, especially White Wall and Buzzard Wall, Glen Ogle. The guidance can be viewed on the Landscape and Access page of the MC of S website - www.mcofs.org.uk

There are opportunities to improve available online resources and it is important that stakeholders carefully develop the quality of available web based information to improve visitor awareness of the variety of climbing opportunities in the Park. Linked into the Upland Walking section, it is also essential that stakeholders ensure key paths and facilities serving climbing areas are maintained to support quality of experience and resilience against future expenditure.

AIM: There is an outstanding range of places to climb with many accessible via established paths. Climbing is also available throughout the year, from roadside crags in the summer to the high mountains in winter. Visitor opportunities can be better informed through tailored information and visits sustained by means of targeted management intervention.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 14: Web portal promotion of activity
- ORP Action 5: Upland Paths Project
- ORP Action 67: Monitor level of participation

Cycling – Day



Within this plan we have not separated out the different forms of cycling and all will be covered in this section.

Road cycling typically involves a run in from outside the Park from Glasgow, Stirling and other larger settlement areas. Road routes are often not exclusively within the park boundary and are of high scenic value and have been enjoyed by cyclists for generations. Popularity is aided by inclusion of Park roads in cycling events. The Tour of the Trossachs (which is a time trial) has a long history. More recent introductions to the scene are sportives like the Trossachs Ton and Evans Ride It events. The sportives associated with the Scottish Bike Show are a new addition to the calendar for which the route is entirely in the National Park. Road conditions are an issue, for example the route of the Trossachs Ton had to be altered because of poor road condition. It's not only surface issues with potholes and unevenness but also on small (often single-track) roads gravel is hazardous particularly in descent (for example the single track road from Drymen to Gartmore). There is evidence that cyclists are avoiding some roads because of these conditions. Traffic density and speed is less of a deterrent in the Park as a whole, however it requires investigation within communities and along A-roads.

The Outdoor Recreation Plan shares the vision of the Cycling Action Plan Scotland (CAPS) and key actions include publicising and promoting methods of traffic calming and cycling and rail integration. This second point is key at Balloch Station where trains from Glasgow have little capacity to bring large numbers of cyclists into the National Park path network. Linked into this the development of the water bus network on Loch Lomond with its bike carrying facility has increased opportunities for day rides around the Park.

Mountain biking (MTB) as a term includes all aspects of off-road cycling within this Plan. There is an acknowledgment that the area has great potential and that this has not been maximised. The Park, principally in the Trossachs and Cowal areas (Queen Elizabeth and Argyll Forest Parks) has much to offer already in terms of cross country (XC) MTB routes. FCS already publicises some routes, as does the Park Authority, but this is not coordinated with cycling businesses. The stakeholder meetings arranged as part of developing this plan confirmed there is an interest in developing the MTB offering in the park area and key to this

is a close working relationship with Developing Mountain Biking Scotland. The Park's mountain biking opportunities attract a broad range of participants ranging from beginners, families, and seniors enjoying leisurely rides on forest tracks, up to keen cyclists tackling long distance routes or challenging ascents of the Park's mountainous summits.

The development of the Park's MTB potential will be undertaken following the principles:

Firstly, making best use of the routes that currently exist. Mapping of these has been undertaken as part of the ORP, with the Trossachs recognised as a priority. This audit work will also include the identification of short sections of track where improvement would make a big difference to the offering, for example by enabling a looped route or increasing the quality of the experience. Such upgrades will be prioritised according to cost, deliverability and impact.

The key MTB market to cater for is the leisure market. It is recognised that these users are looking for good facilities. Even if they are day trippers from the central belt, they could still be looking for other activities during their day out. This group has the most potential for MTB business development as there is a good match between the type of routes on offer and their requirements.

Short sections of path that would make a big difference to the network will be identified for upgrading; these will be prioritised according to deliverability including cost and impact on the network.

It is desirable to have some offering for more committed mountain bikers. This will be achieved by linking together routes to offer long days out for faster riders, rather than progressing more technical routes. This could fit in with promoting some enduro (long-distance endurance) events and is very much working with the strengths of the existing path network and following the successful 1SW Project model from Devon.

Offering some harder red routes (MTB routes are graded through green, blue, red, black and orange with rising difficulty) would increase the appeal of the area, which could assist with having a year round market. This aspiration would also reduce the levels of use and damage on areas such as Ben Lomond.

The leadership of a suitable body that brings together land owners, agencies, the cycling businesses and other stakeholders is required if the MTB offering is to be fully developed. Such a grouping could, in the first case, see the publication of route cards (see examples from rural Perthshire), a website (see Scottish Borders for example) and move into route development if appropriate capacity and funding is available.

Organised events have a big part to play in promoting the area and this subject is covered in more depth in the Events section.

Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) is the largest land owner in the park and, as a land manager, has been involved in the development of impressive trail centres elsewhere. They have taken the position nationally following various studies in 2005, and with ministerial approval, that they would not invest public money in new mountain biking trail centres on the national forest estate. At this time FCS investments are focused on consolidation, maintenance and improvement of existing facilities so that they have a sustainable future. They also manage open access to the national forest estate for mountain bikers under the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. FCS does respond to approaches received seeking to lease or acquire land for trail centre type developments. The merits of each individual development proposals and their compatibility with other management needs require each to be considered on a case by case basis. At present no plans by private landowners in the park

to develop a mountain bike trail centre are known. The case at Lennox Forest falls (not in the park) is an example of a relatively small site with contained facilities.

Recently a community interest group, Bike Trossachs, has started proactively looking at how the Trossachs offering can be enhanced and better promoted. Some popular routes are unsuitable for wide promotion and use but there are opportunities to develop Guiding Businesses following the successful Highlands example. The promotion of guides ensures economic growth and also sustainable and responsible path use on areas which would not benefit from wider promotion.

AIM: Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is renowned for its well promoted path network with route options for all levels of cyclist throughout the Park.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 29: Promoted Trossachs & Cowal circular routes
- Aspiration: Central Scotland cluster within or directly linked into Park
- Aspiration: Promotion of responsible guided exploration
- TS Action 43: Involve transport, land and water operators, where appropriate to facilitate cycle journeys and products
- TS Action 40: Produce and implement a plan with partners for development and promotion of mountain biking

Cycling – Hubs



There are no fully developed hubs for cycling in the park. There are locations cyclists take their bike to and cycle from (or in some cases hire bikes from) and which have some of the facilities associated with a hub. This does mean there are business opportunities in developing hubs and concentrating support for cycling in specific areas. The packaging and promotion section and National Park Tourism Strategy provide additional direction on this work. The hub concept perhaps doesn't apply so much in road cycling, to the extent that the hubs are located outside the park and cyclists come into the park on club runs, training runs or for events. From Stirling cyclists tend to come into the Trossachs, from Glasgow cyclists use the A82. Routes are also used in Cowal, probably for a longer day than in the Trossachs.

The Sustainable Development of Mountain Biking in Scotland – A National Strategic Framework also has an ambitious vision, of increasing the number of participants by 25% over five years, the framework encourages the use of off-road tracks near to where people live, and is also looking to the development of more mountain bike trails in urban settings. Specifically the framework seeks to increase mountain biking visitor numbers by a further 50% over five years and to increase domestic participation in mountain biking by 25%.

In addition to the purpose-built trail centres, the framework highlights there are extensive opportunities for mountain biking throughout Scotland on the network of natural and informal paths and tracks that already exist. To achieve their objectives the framework proposes a new approach in the form of Development Clusters for Mountain Biking. The National Park would be located within the West Central cluster (not yet established).

It is appreciated that the term mountain biking can mean various things to various people so in the interests of clarity we use the term mountain biking to cover any off-road cycling in line with the national direction.

Balloch is significant because of the West Loch Lomond cycle route, NCN7, hire facilities and the rail link. The offering here is different to that of Cowal and the Trossachs, in that it is not forest based and there are numerically significantly less routes available but it is at the cross roads of long-distance routes. The NPA and partners plan to develop hub concept and research business models and management models that will allow a hub to develop that has a full range of facilities and range of offering, to include cycle hire, local availability of routes, connections to long distance routes, guiding, baggage handling facilities, plus accommodation and food and drink.

Dunoon could develop as a hub, particularly once the local routes are better marketed. A potential hub is Arrochar as the Ardgartan Peninsula offers great potential and also boasts a new cycle hire business.

Glenbranter could be considered a mountain biking hub but there is little accommodation and few businesses support cycling in the area, so it might be better to consider Cowal as one promoted MTB recreational network rather than having a specific centre.

The Trossachs is the location most fully developed as a hub. The Trossachs hub is centred on Aberfoyle, including David Marshall Lodge, which could become increasingly important as it is redeveloped. Loch Ard is currently promoted for family cycling (gradients are much better here than Achray Forest) and the link to Stronachlachar and Callander will become increasingly important. It is noted that an individual has produced a proposal for Aberfoyle and through the charette process Callander wishes to be considered the outdoor capital of the National Park. Technical mountain biking provision is likely to form part of this, however it is widely agreed that the key shorter term goal is to promote the Trossachs area in a similar package as 1SW in Devon where an extensive network of low-level routes linked into businesses and infrastructure has brought increased participation and tourism. Recently a community interest group, Bike Trossachs, has started proactively looking at how the Trossachs offering can be enhanced and better promoted. Some popular routes are unsuitable for wide promotion and use but there are opportunities to develop Guiding Businesses following the successful Highlands example. The promotion of guides ensures economic growth and also sustainable and responsible path use on areas which would not benefit from wider promotion. In terms of more technical downhill provision the recent approval for ride centre on the Glen Livet estate in the Cairngorms could provide a model: www.glenlivetestate.co.uk/Mountainbiketrails.htm. Other estate developments include www.drumlanrig.com.

AIM: Cycling hubs grow, flourish and concentrate increased participation into the most suitable areas which offer sustainable economic benefits to the area.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 2: Old Military Road (Strathard)
- ORP Action 10: Rob Roy Way development
- ORP Action 26: Balloch Cycle Hub development
- ORP Action 27: David Marshall Lodge path improvements
- ORP Action 29: Promoted Trossachs and Cowal circular routes
- Aspiration : Great Trossachs Path
- Aspiration: Aberfoyle bike area
- Aspiration: Promotion of responsible guided exploration
- Aspiration: Technical downhill offering within a suitable strategic area which integrates into the wider network
- TS Action 26: Support development of Balloch as a hub for walking and cycling routes

Cycling – Long Distance



Multiple day cycling is an activity which makes use of existing established long distance routes and attracts visitors to the park using recognised paths which enter and exit the boundary travelling from a start point to a destination. This is generally a journey involving three days or more, visits communities and uses goods and services along the way. These recognised cycling routes are strategic links to the national network provided by Sustrans but increasingly include other paths not specifically designed for cycling. These combined types of routes link to an expanding green network for sustainable people powered travel, recreational pursuits, events, health and wellbeing opportunities, economic and tourism development.

National Cycle Route 7 (NCN7) is the only recognised multi day cycling route passing through the Park with multiple stop off/on locations starting and finishing in neighbouring local authority partner areas. This long-distance cycle route officially runs from Sunderland to Inverness via Penrith, Carlisle, Dumfries, Ayr, Glasgow, Pitlochry and Aviemore and uses sections of the West Highland Way and Rob Roy Way. Regional route 40 (West Loch Lomond Cycle Path) from Balloch to Tarbet and Regional route 41 to Helensburgh from Balloch both have the potential to form a multi day experience in and around the Park.

Planned long-distance routes provide a more easily accessible package of services and information which allows the user to access the outdoors more efficiently and allow for more effective visitor management. There is untapped potential within the park to create multi day cycling routes using minor roads, long distance walking routes, national and regional Sustrans cycle paths.

These routes will not be exclusive to multi-day cyclists as they run through or are close to local communities, services, public transport links and roads. So, although multi-day cycling is a recreational activity predominately engaged in by visitors to the Park, the network provides opportunities for individual, visitors, communities and businesses. Communities along the cycle paths regularly use sections of the multi-day route in their local areas which,

in some cases, link into local path networks. All users benefit from the health and wellbeing delivered by involvement in this activity. It is possible to cycle across the park in any direction in a day or two so it is best to think about multi day cycling in the context of people travelling through the park as part of a much longer journey. There is undoubtedly a lot to offer people in terms of serial day cycling where they stay in the Park for a few days and tackle different routes each day, this has been covered above.

NCN7 is a long established national route going through the park from Balloch to Killin. It has to be acknowledged that the West Highland Way is increasingly used by cyclists undertaking the route in two or three days. It can be expected that as other long-distance routes (LDRs) become better known they will attract attention from cyclists. The A82 corridor is used by cyclists because, if heavily laden with panniers, the West Loch Lomond cycle route is a less attractive proposition compared to a riding it unencumbered on a day trip, and in any case it ends at Tarbet leaving a formidable ride to Crianlarich.

AIM: The completion of a sustainable Park-wide path network and creation of new multi-day cycling routes and itinerary packages (linear and circular) which will enhance recreational and economic development activity in the Park.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 2: Old Military Road (Strathard)
- ORP Action 6: John Muir Way links
- ORP Action 12: Braeleny Glen
- ORP Action 40: Crianlarich shared use cycle link
- ORP Action 51: Sustainable upgrade of Menteith Hills path
- Aspiration: Propose linear and circular routes within the Park from existing path networks
- Aspiration: Develop partnerships to ensure maintenance of off road sections of all routes
- Aspiration: Develop partnerships to ensure all road types become more cycle friendly and maintained with a view to improving line of sight and road conditions
- Aspiration: Develop safe cycling along A82 north of Tarbet
- Aspiration: Create a marketing and promotional package for new routes that will also support new and local opportunities
- Aspiration: Market an itinerary for an LDR to the Cairngorm National Park
- Aspiration: St Fillans cycle link to Perth
- TS Action 30: Explore opportunities for further joined up transport and activity experiences
- TS Action 38: Raise the profile of long distance routes and increase the number of visitors and the opportunities for businesses on the routes
- TS Action 44: Involve transport, land and water operators, where appropriate to facilitate cycle journeys and products
- TS Action 46: Encourage businesses and other interests to collaborate to develop packages of itineraries and products that provide a coherent and quality offering alongside marketing and consistent messages

Cycling – Settlements



For the purposes of this plan we have not separated out cycling into its various genres but will cover actions relating to road, off-road and technical downhill in the same chapters.

The National Park priority is that all settlements should have safe cycle routes to school, to facilities within the village and to the wider route network. Regarding road cycling there are issues of road condition in some locations, and the need in others for designing routes away from main traffic flows. In some locations it is appropriate to provide for this by upgrading pathways which have been designated as core paths. These will also provide improved access to the countryside route networks which largely use forestry roads.

The Sustainable Development of Mountain Biking in Scotland – A National Strategic Framework also has an ambitious vision of increasing the number of participants by 25% over five years. The framework encourages the use of off-road tracks near to where people live and is also looking to the development of more mountain bike trails in urban settings. Specifically the framework seeks to increase mountain biking visitor numbers by a further 50% over five years and to increase domestic participation in mountain biking by 25%.

In addition to the purpose-built trail centres, the framework highlights there are extensive opportunities for mountain biking throughout Scotland on the network of natural and informal paths and tracks that already exist. To achieve their objectives the framework proposes a new approach in the form of Development Clusters for Mountain Biking. The National Park would be located in the West Central cluster (yet to be established).

It is appreciated that the term mountain biking can mean various things to various people so in the interests of clarity we use the term mountain biking to cover any off-road cycling as this in line with the national direction.

AIM: Safe cycle routes to school, to facilities within the community and links to the wider route network to be available in villages throughout the Park.

Aberfoyle

Aberfoyle has good links to extensive off road cycling opportunities and NCN7 runs through the village and links to DML to the north. There are traffic calming measures in place to link the centre to the school. The condition of the B829 westward to Milton, Kinlochard and

beyond is a concern. However, greater promotion of off-road links south of Loch Ard and Loch Chon which form part of the Old Military Road will reduce demand on the B829.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 2: Old Military Road (Strathard)
- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network
- Aspiration: Road repairs from Aberfoyle to Kinlochard and north
- Aspiration : Community development of small-scale bike tracks which encourage young people to get involved in mountain biking and develop their skills

Ardentinny

There are no formal cycle links connecting Ardentinnny with the adjacent communities. The public roads are however relatively quiet and direct so offer viable alternatives.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network
- Aspiration: Traffic free route Ardentinnny to Blairmore

Arrochar & Succoth

There are good links to the extensive recreational network of off- road routes. The local network including links to the railway station at Tarbet are dominated by the trunk road.

The former MOD torpedo range on the western shore of Loch Long is allocated within the National Park Local Plan for appropriate tourism development. The site is complex and the incorporation of pedestrian access opportunities, principally to ensure the potentially isolated nature of the site is offset through effective links with the wider access network, is an important consideration. Depending on the chosen development there may be new recreation opportunities including enhancement to recreation facilities available to visitors and local people.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 41: Arrochar western shore path
- ORP Action 48: Improvements to Arrochar & Tarbet link
- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network

Balloch

NCN7 goes through the village, so there are good links within the village and through the work which improved the NCN7 gateway from Glasgow to Balloch opportunities should be improved. The primary schools are in the middle of residential areas with adequate cycle access (both schools are outside the park boundary). The footway to Gartocharn should be improved to offer safer cycling alongside the A811.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 45: Balloch to Gartocharn shared use footway

- Aspiration: Community development of small-scale bike tracks which encourage young people to get involved in mountain biking and develop their skills would be supported should such schemes come forward
- TS Action 26: Support development of Balloch as a hub for walking and cycling routes

Balmaha

Cycling in Balmaha is dominated by the B832 which is busy at any time of the year in good weather but especially in the summer. Either cycle friendly measures along the road or a traffic free alternative would be valuable but remain a long-term aspiration that would provide a good link to NCN7 in Drymen. The footway linking east to Drymen is a core path and as such can be used for cycles but requires a well designed upgrade.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 47: Drymen to Balmaha link

Balquhidder

NCN7 passes through Balquhidder following the single track public road. This current provision caters well for recreational cycling. A feasibility study has been conducted recently which identified an alternative route passing through Beananach Farm linking Strathyre and Kingshouse. Some work was also undertaken to render this route passable including installation of a new pedestrian bridge. There is a further opportunity to improve traffic free cycling by formalising this route.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 55: Strathyre to Kingshouse link
- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network

Brig O'Turk

There are good links to recreational off road routes, with NCN7 accessible to the south and the Glen Finglas network to the north. Callander is accessible along the southern edge of Loch Venachar however the A821 to Trossachs Pier on Loch Katrine does not offer an ideal link westwards. The Great Trossachs Forest is actively investigating improvement of shared use paths east and west which would enhance the provision greatly.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 52: Creation of shared use off-road link between Brig O'Turk and Kilmahog
- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network
- Aspiration: Creation of shared use off-road link between Brig O'Turk and Loch Katrine

Callander

Safe routes through and around Callander are a priority. Through the Callander charette and subsequent Community Action Planning, proposals will be brought forward and these will be supported by agencies. Bike Trossachs has begun to work with Callander Youth Project and McLaren High and those groups are looking to develop a Callander Youth Project Cycling Apprenticeship Scheme.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 49: Callander Safe Cycling Project
- ORP Action 52: Creation of shared use off-road link between Brig O'Turk and Kilmahog
- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network
- Aspiration: Cycling Apprenticeship Scheme
- Aspiration: City-bike style rental scheme pilot

Crianlarich

There are opportunities to improve cycling provision available from Crianlarich. A feasibility study investigating a potential link with NCN7 from Lix Toll via Glen Dochart was undertaken a number of years ago, which incorporated the route extending through to Tyndrum. Recent initiatives are re-examining this.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 40: Crianlarich shared use cycle link
- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted network
- Aspiration: Support initiatives towards development of cycle route to Crianlarich and Glen Dochart

Croftamie

NCN7 runs through the centre of this community offering good opportunities east and west. However, the core path footways through the village itself and linking to Drymen require well designed upgrades to complete a safe and practical cycling network.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 46: Croftamie to Drymen shared use footway

Drymen

NCN7 goes through the village but does not provide the direct links to neighbouring communities like Milton of Buchanan and Croftamie. A lot of traffic bypasses the village on the bypass but the road to Balmaha is often very busy, especially during the summer. Cycle friendly road infrastructure or a traffic free option is a long term aspiration.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 46: Croftamie to Drymen shared use footway
- ORP Action 47: Drymen to Balmaha link

- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network

Gartmore

The village has good links to forest tracks of which there are many. Being off the main A81, traffic levels are low and traffic calming goes some way to making the journey to school safe within the village. Its hilltop location gives splendid views but does limit the opportunities for cycling for some. NCN7 goes through the village, giving a link with Drymen over a single track road that is often in a poor state of repair and lots of gravel on the road.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 53: Wee Wood east link (Gartmore)
- ORP Action 15: Wee Wood north link (Gartmore)
- ORP Action 16: Gartmore to Lemahamish link
- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network

Gartocharn

The NCN7 runs to the north of the settlement giving circuitous links to Balloch and Drymen. For functional journeys, more direct links are required and the improvement of the footway would deliver this for the route to Balloch.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 45: Balloch to Gartocharn footway
- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network

Killin

There is a good range of cycle-friendly options available from Killin. This includes NCN7 which passes close to the village centre. There are a number of short forest roads within Acharn Forest, close to the village and popular for recreation. The old branch railway line which passes through the southern edge of the village is also accessible and very well used. There are satisfactory safe routes to school.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 30: Support project to upgrade former railway surface in Killin and improve link with NCN7
- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network

Kilmun, Strone & Blairmore

East Cowal Paths group (a sub-committee of the B&K Trust) particularly seeks a safe route to the Cot House from the surgery. The road from the surgery to the Cot House is narrow and busy with HGV traffic.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network
- Aspiration: Traffic free route Ardentinn to Blairmore

- Aspiration : Safe cycle route from surgery to Cot House

Kinlochard

There are good links into the forest network but the condition of B829 could be improved. However greater promotion of off road links south of Loch Ard and Loch Chon which form part of the Old Military Road will reduce demand on the B829.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 2: Old Military Road (Strathard)
- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted network
- Aspiration: Road repairs from Aberfoyle to Kinlochard and north

Lochearnhead

NCN7 passes close to Lochearnhead and is signed from the A85 through the village. Community aspirations to re-connect the former Comrie railway between Lochearnhead and St Fillans are currently being progressed. Reinstatement of a dismantled bridge over the Tarken Burn would see this route accessible to mountain bikes and further plans are for upgrade to a standard similar to NCN7.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 31: Lochearnhead to St Fillans old railway project, phase 1: Tarken Bridge
- ORP Action 42: Lochearnhead to St Fillans old railway project, phase 2: surface upgrade
- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network

Lochgailhead & Carrick Castle

Accessible via FCS strategic off road cycle route from Arrochar. Single track road connecting the two is used by relatively low levels of traffic and gives a direct link. Ardentinny is accessible from Carrick Castle via the recently improved coastal path. Current level of provision is satisfactory.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network

Luss

The West Loch Lomond Cycle Route (WLLCR) passes through Luss and caters well for cycling to destinations north and south.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 54: Traffic calming on the Old Luss Road south to A82

Port of Menteith

Access to off road routes necessitates cycling along the A81. There are many corners and humps and the speed of traffic has been a concern of the community for a long time. With the present road conditions and a 40mph speed limit there is no safe cycling route to the school. A new core path will provide a safe link from the T-junction to the hotel. The road to Arnprior is poorly surfaced in places and susceptible to gravel on the road.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 64: Port of Menteith roadside link

St Fillans

The village is accessible by bicycle from Lochearnhead via the South Loch Earn Road. This single track road sees low volumes of traffic and is direct. Community aspirations to re-connect the former Comrie railway between Lochearnhead and St Fillans are being progressed. Reinstatement of a dismantled bridge over the Tarken Burn would see this route accessible to mountain bikes and further plans are for upgrade to a standard similar to NCN7. Completion of this could act as a major catalyst towards improvements in linkages eastwards towards Comrie and Crieff.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 31: Lochearnhead to St Fillans old railway project, phase 1: Tarken Bridge
- ORP Action 42: Lochearnhead to St Fillans old railway project, phase 2: surface upgrade
- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network

Strathyre

The village is well integrated with NCN7 with a formal signed and surfaced link having being created recently. An option to re-route NCN7 along the continuation of the former Callander to Oban railway through Beananach Farm has been investigated and a feasibility study has been completed for this. This project remains viable with the necessary planning permission still in place.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 13: Strathyre Bridge
- ORP Action 55: Strathyre to Kingshouse link
- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted network
- Aspiration: Cycle link to Perth

Tarbet

The West Loch Lomond Cycle Route from Balloch terminates at Tarbet and there are options to extend this route, for example to link with the railway station and west towards Arrochar. Current major development proposals including a 'masterplanning' exercise may provide opportunities to progress this and the Park Authority will support improvements to cycle links through new development.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 48: Improvements to Arrochar to Tarbet link

Tyndrum

There are long-term aspirations to instigate construction of an off-road cycle link between Tyndrum and Crianlarich. A feasibility study investigating this potential link and extending to NCN7 at Lix Toll via Glen Dochart was undertaken a number of years ago. Recent initiatives including a village planning exercise at Crianlarich are re-examining this.

ACTIONS:

- Aspiration: Support initiatives towards development of cycle route to Crianlarich and Glen Dochart

Diving

Diving in the Park is very much concentrated in the Loch Long area which is renowned throughout the UK as an important site. Currently this site can have capacity issues relating to car parking on road verges.

The former MOD torpedo range on the western shore of Loch Long is allocated within the National Park Local Plan for appropriate tourism development. Depending on the chosen development there may be new recreation opportunities and facilities associated with diving.

AIM: Arrochar improves in reputation as a diving destination which provides quality diving and excellent launching, gas, parking and refreshment facilities within site.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 44: Promoted sea lochs opportunity supported by shoreline infrastructure
- Aspiration: Parking facilities integrated with facilities within the Arrochar area

Dog sledging

Aberfoyle has been used as a location for dog sled racing, a minority sport, and a few of the forest tracks around Aberfoyle and Gartmore are signed as racing routes. In recent years the numbers has declined but it could easily become popular again. The Sled Dog Association of Scotland has approx 250 members.

AIM: Activity continues to be enjoyed

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 67: Monitor trends in participation levels

Fishing



There are excellent fishing opportunities of all types in the National Park, from high quality fly fishing on famous salmon rivers through loch fishing for brown trout and other species by boat or from the shore to fisheries re-stocked regularly with brown or rainbow trout and coarse fishing for pike and perch etc. Fishing is available to anyone by purchasing a fishing permit on sale at a variety of outlets, such as fishing tackle shops, newsagents or individual proprietors in the case of salmon and sea trout.

Game fishing for salmon, sea trout or brown trout and in some places rainbow trout or grayling, can be enjoyed at a number of locations throughout the Park, many of which are in scenic highland situations. Boat fishing, as well as bank fishing, is available in many of the locations.

Most of the outlets which sell permits for brown trout fishing will also sell permits for coarse fish species that are also present. Coarse fish you can catch include pike, perch, roach, dace, bream, chub, carp and gudgeon.

Greater promotion of where to fish responsibly is required with potentially minor path improvements to manage the access. Generally the infrastructure is of a good standard as it is linked to business and needs to be commercially viable. The wheelie boat provision at Lake of Menteith Fishery provides fishing and boating opportunities for wheelchair users. Further information on wheelie boats and locations which support these facilities would bring benefits and hopefully increase positive responsible participation, the Wheelie Boat Trust would be a key partner in delivering such opportunities. The Park Authority will look to work with stakeholders to investigate suitable wheelie boat business opportunities on Loch Earn, Loch Lomond and Loch Venachar. It should be noted that the benefits of wheelie boat provision can be shared out with the usual fishing audience.

There are also great facilities for disabled anglers at the Geisher Pool on the outskirts of Callander where a platform has been erected on the River Teith.

AIM: The National Park provides high quality experiences in a range of angling opportunities for a variety of participants.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 25: Angling in the Park leaflet
- ORP Action 68: Responsible fishing education
- ORP Action 56: Wheelie Boat project
- Aspiration: Establish a consistent approach to permitting
- Aspiration: Online permit system pilot
- Aspiration: Permit machine pilot at Loch Earn

Flight / Airports - Powered & unpowered (excl. aircraft & helicopter)

Paragliding and hang gliding websites e.g. www.paraglidingmap.com list suitable launch / landing sites within the National Park including Ben Bowie, Beinn Dubh, Balquhiddy and Ben Ledi. Little flight activity is reported in the Park and there are no British Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association (BHPA) registered schools or recreational clubs listed for the area.

Microlight aircraft occasionally use agricultural land near Drymen bridge for take-off and landing. The Scottish Airports Club based at Easter Poldar, Thornhill (just outside the park) caters for hang gliding (aerotow), powered hang gliding, microlights, outlanding and visits from light aircraft.

AIM: Low level activity continues to be enjoyed.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 67: Monitor trends in participation levels

Golf



The National Park boasts eight parkland golf courses which vary from affordable Council run examples to the very highest end of the market. Golf is a major income generator to the area and is an important form of outdoor recreation for residents and visitors alike. The National Park Tourism Strategy will cover this activity in more depth due to its specific position within the market.

Access rights exist on golf courses and many courses include promoted and well used public paths.

AIM: Club membership levels are good, increased levels of participation by tourists and reduction of issues with other users.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 67: Monitor trends of participation level

Horse riding – Hubs



Most horse-riding provision in the Park is concentrated within the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park (QEFP). FCS has invested in horse box parking at key hubs in QEFP and a quality network also exists around Callander. Popular hubs are also around the communities of Drymen and Gartmore where several livery yards exist.

Lesser levels of riding currently exist in Cowal and the Lomond basin around Balloch and these areas currently have no promoted routes. Historically, forestry operations have had a negative impact on riding opportunities and surfaces and it is essential that consistent high standards of path re-instatement are implemented with key promoted core paths avoided entirely where possible.

AIM: Quality hubs throughout the Park which offer consistent riding surfaces, parking, signage, gate designs and are also well promoted.

Ardentenny

This isolated hub offers a wide network of well maintained routes. Routes exist from the village into the many other forestry tracks going as far Whistlefield and Loch Eck in one direction or Stronchullan and Blairmore in another. Links, mostly off road on forestry tracks, continue onto Strone, Kilmun and Rashfield. The upgrade of a small bridge on the Carrick Castle route would remove a barrier to access and enhance the offering in this area.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 17: Carrick Bridge
- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network
- Aspiration: Creation of equine tourism accommodation

Balloch

Balloch offers limited opportunities with low levels of responsible access currently enjoyed within Balloch Country Park and using NCN7 and West Loch Lomond Cycle Route.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network
- ORP Action 69: Haldane Loop Path

Braeval

Braeval offers excellent parking and loops of varying lengths and gradients.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 7: Western Braeval loop
- ORP Action 63: Stonefields route at Braeval
- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network
- Aspiration: Horse activity signage

Coilhallan/ Cock Hill

Coilhallan offers a well signed network with some excellent cantering opportunities on certain straights. Parking provision is excellent and horse friendly gates have been installed throughout. An aspiration would be the alteration of gate arrangements towards the summit of Ben Gullipen which would allow continued access.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network

Easter Park

This area offers a good variance in path surfaces and offers quiet recreation close to Aberfoyle. The area has parking opportunities at Aberfoyle and Lemahamish. Promotion of this site should include the presence of horse box parking facilities.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network
- Aspiration: Horse activity signage

Garadhban

Garadhban offers a well signed network with great variety of path surfaces and widths close to the communities of Drymen and Gartmore. The network links well with other areas such as Buchanan Castle Estate resulting in excellent longer rides. Horse box parking exists at the FCS car park which sits centrally within the Garadhban network. The eastern loop at High Wood offers excellent grass surfaced tracks providing canter opportunities in the right conditions.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network
- Aspiration: Upgrade of High Wood loop

Gartmore

This is a centrally located village with horse routes towards Drymen, Buchlyvie and Aberfoyle.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 8: Cobleland to Buchlyvie railway route
- ORP Action 15: Wee Wood north link (Gartmore)
- ORP Action 16: Gartmore to Lemahamish
- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network
- Aspiration: Improvement of gate arrangements throughout Gartmore network

Glenbranter

The main riding hub in Cowal offers an extensive network. Links exist to Puck's Glen via Loch Eck and Benmore Botanic Garden. The promotion of this part of the network should include the presence of horse box parking facilities.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network
- TS Action 12: Develop marketable itineraries covering a range of activities

High Corrie

This hub sits between Drymen and Gartmore and users can use this as a gateway into the wider Loch Ard Forest network. This is arguably an underused network as it offers horse box parking and good path variety.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network

Milton

This is one of the most popular hubs within the Trossachs area as it offers quality horse box parking and an extensive network of promoted routes to the south, east and west. The network can also be accessed easily for parking facilities within Aberfoyle.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network

West Achray

This is a more limited site offering mainly forest road experiences and a limited network with horse box parking.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 65: Protection of surface quality throughout promoted forestry network

Horse riding – Multi Day



The Trossachs offers an excellent expansive network of horse riding routes complemented by several car parking areas which are suitable for horse boxes. Minimal infrastructure works are required to complete a long-distance route between Drymen and Killin, which could bring economic and recreational benefits that a similar project has brought to the Borders. Several business opportunities could be linked to such a resource including, accommodation, baggage transfer and horse box taxis.

AIM: Nationally renowned network of good quality horse-riding opportunities.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 8: Cobleland to Buchlyvie railway route
- ORP Action 12: Braeleny Glen
- Aspiration: Audit of infrastructure gaps and equestrian tourism business opportunities
- Aspiration: Ensure road and path design accommodates equestrian interests
- Aspiration: Safe driving around horses guidance and signage
- Aspiration: Promotion of Callander to Comrie route
- TS Action 12: Support collaboration between business groups, activity groups and agencies to take advantage of marketing opportunities
- TS Action 38: Raise the profile of long distance routes and increase the number of visitors and the opportunities for businesses on the routes
- TS Action 46: Encourage businesses and other interests to collaborate to develop packages of itineraries and products that provide a coherent and quality offering alongside marketing and consistent messages

Kayaking & canoeing



The National Park has a wide variety of paddling opportunities from open water on the many lochs to meandering rivers.

Kayaking and canoeing are enjoyed throughout the Park on rivers such as the Endrick, Balvaig and Forth, but predominantly upon the many lochs. For the experienced paddler there are more challenging rapids and falls on Rivers Falloch, Leny and Dochart.

There are five core primary routes on loch and river and three subsidiary routes on rivers, where summer flows are going to decide whether they are useful or not. These are highlighted in the main section of this chapter.

With such a large and interesting coverage of water bodies, the Park is in an ideal position to become a world renowned destination for medium to easy level paddling. The resource exists and there is a desire shared by the Park and partners to tie the sporadic hub offerings together to ensure that all access and egress opportunities showcase best practice and are well promoted.

When looking at linking existing resources to create longer distance itineraries partners will be acknowledging the key guiding principles which have been taken up by the LDR Group in Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), a multi-agency group from all government departments and major recreational bodies. The crucial deciding points are listed below:

- 'Easy' water routes, suitable for beginners, i.e. Lochs and Grade 1-2 rivers – may be very sheltered coastal routes
- Requiring signage for easy route-finding, or an obvious geographical feature, e.g. the Great Glen
- Requiring some infrastructure, e.g. low-level pontoons, and with consideration of access for those with disability
- Provision of maps and guides, user-friendly for tourists

- Engaging a wider audience, e.g. accommodation-providers, shops etc.

The promotion of the opportunities online is key to increased participation levels and business interest and much of the proposed work will follow the successful methodology of the Go Canoeing Project in England

AIM: Well promoted network of good quality opportunities for a wide range of abilities.

Loch Lomond – central and north

The spectacular waters of Loch Lomond are a fantastic resource for canoeing and kayaking. Loch Lomond is the largest body of freshwater in mainland Britain and can be most easily accessed from the east side from Milarrochy Bay, Sallochy car park or Rowardennan; from the west side at Luss public car park, Tarbet car park and Inveruglas; or from the south at Balloch either from Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway or Duck Bay.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 32: Network of fit for purpose access and egress points throughout Loch Lomond
- ORP Action 57: Balmaha capacity issues resolved
- Aspiration: Network of fit for purpose access and egress points at Aldochlay, Inchmurrin, and Inversnaid
- TS Action 46: Encourage businesses and other interests to collaborate to develop packages of itineraries and products that provide a coherent and quality offering alongside marketing and consistent messages

Balquhiddel

This area is understood to be under used and under provided from Loch Voil down the Balvaig to Loch Lubnaig. The main issue here is access and parking, particularly at Loch Voil. Loch Lubnaig offers an excellent all year option due to its sheltered position and this also makes it an ideal site for beginners.

ACTIONS:

- Aspiration: Fit for purpose launch site with associated parking at Loch Voil
- TS Action 46: Encourage businesses and other interests to collaborate to develop packages of itineraries and products that provide a coherent and quality offering alongside marketing and consistent messages

Northern Trossachs Lochs

This route from Inversnaid to Callander via Loch Arklet, Loch Katrine and Loch Venachar includes several portage and river links. An area of conflict on this route is the eastern end of Loch Katrine where steam boats and kayaks currently share the same confined space. A priority action will be the provision for access and egress facilities which satisfy all interested parties.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 33: Fit for purpose access and egress point at eastern end of Loch Katrine
- Aspiration: Fit for purpose access and egress points at Inversnaid and Loch Achray

- Aspiration: Community Outdoor Sports Hub in Stronachlachar
- Aspiration: Provision improved at Loch Drunkie with promotion linked into 3 Lochs Forest Drive improvements
- Aspiration: Formalised parking and access at Leny Falls
- TS Action 46: Encourage businesses and other interests to collaborate to develop packages of itineraries and products that provide a coherent and quality offering alongside marketing and consistent messages

Southern Trossachs Lochs

The main area for improvement on this route between Inversnaid and Aberfoyle via Loch Arklet, Loch Chon, Loch Ard and Milton is the provision of safe portage where dangerous road links currently exist.

ACTIONS:

- Aspiration: Provision of safe portage opportunities using the Old Military Road and fit for purpose forestry links
- Aspiration: Improved surface for portage and launching at Milton end of Loch Ard
- Aspiration: Fit for purpose access and egress point at Inversnaid
- TS Action 46: Encourage businesses and other interests to collaborate to develop packages of itineraries and products that provide a coherent and quality offering alongside marketing and consistent messages

Loch Eck

This is a small interesting loch with options from both northern and southern ends. At high water it can link to the Southern end of the Holy Loch through the River Eachaig.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 34: Promoted access and egress point at Loch Eck
- TS Action 46: Encourage businesses and other interests to collaborate to develop packages of itineraries and products that provide a coherent and quality offering alongside marketing and consistent messages

Sea Lochs

The Park includes sea lochs to the west and this resource for recreation has received little promotion in the past. Loch Long, Loch Goil and Holy Loch offer interesting kayaking from bases in Cowal and from Arrochar. Opportunities exist to promote and aid passage between those sea lochs and Loch Lomond through the Firth of Clyde and the River Leven. Any investment, businesses and promotion will have to consider the potentially dangerous areas of the Firth.

The former MOD torpedo range on the western shore of Loch Long is allocated within the National Park Local Plan for appropriate tourism development. Depending on the chosen development there may be new recreation opportunities and facilities associated with diving.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 44: Promoted sea lochs opportunity supported by shoreline infrastructure
- Aspiration: Network of fit for purpose access and egress points at Kilmun, Ardentinny, Lochgoilhead and Arrochar

- Aspiration: Fit for purpose access and egress point on Ardgartan Peninsula
- TS Action 38: Raise the profile of long distance routes and increase the number of visitors and the opportunities for businesses on the routes
- TS Action 46: Encourage businesses and other interests to collaborate to develop packages of itineraries and products that provide a coherent and quality offering alongside marketing and consistent messages

Land-based motorised activities



The National Park has long been a location for car rallies, the run up the Rest & Be Thankful particularly having a colourful history, and it remains popular with heritage car enthusiasts. At the very highest level the forest parks attract special stages of international rallies. The Park Authority intends to continue to be accommodating to rallies where there is no detriment to the special qualities and ensures safety through Section 11 agreements and collaboration with land managers and event organisers.

There is a commercial supplier of quad bike experience in the park and 4x4 driving excursions have also been provided.

AIM: To continue the current level of provision, new provision would only be supported where it did not affect the special qualities of the park or conflict with other recreationalists.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 67: Monitor trends of participation levels
- TS Action 52: Create a one stop contact at the National Park for outdoor event organisers
- TS Action 53: Introduce a sustainable events checklist for use by outdoor event organisers

Motor boating



This popular activity, also referred to under the umbrella term 'Cruising', is predominantly carried out on Loch Lomond where there is a significant level of use. This activity is also popular on Loch Earn but is understood to be well catered for in that area with little evidence of conflict.

The banner of 'motor boating' includes a wide diversity of craft but workshops revealed a common frustration for such users of Loch Lomond, the lack of opportunities to launch and more particularly to go ashore.

Infrastructure exists at a few locations due to the steam boat legacy and large piers have recently been improved. However these sites have proved popular and are used inappropriately by a few visitors, effectively blocking others to get alongside. Greater signage and management is required to resolve this issue and remove any doubts within the mind of a responsible loch user that they are entitled to such facilities due to previous negative experiences. Opportunities will probably have to be linked into existing or new business and the feasibility of traditional roles such as a Pier Master could be investigated for some locations. Potential sites for public berthing opportunities could include: Ardlui, Balloch, Luss, Balmaha, Tarbet, Inveruglas, Cruin Restaurant, Duck Bay, Inchmurrin and Rowardennan north.

Increased opportunities to go ashore will improve economic development for many small rural communities that are sited along the loch shore. Further moorings and pontoons are required whilst the need for strategically positioned refuelling stations should be investigated. A chargeable overnight moorings and berthing system across Loch Lomond would be a challenging project but a worthwhile one and it is important to determine how this potential facility would be resourced, managed and maintained and investigate suitable locations for a pilot trial.

There are opportunities to develop the popularity of this activity in the sea lochs area of the Park and developments such as the Holy Loch Marina and any potential projects on Loch Long could provide the necessary infrastructure to create new gateways to the Park. The former MOD torpedo range on the western shore of Loch Long is allocated within the

National Park Local Plan for appropriate tourism development. Depending on the chosen development there may be new recreation opportunities and facilities associated with cruising, sailing, kayaking and diving.

AIM: To develop and encourage improvements to mooring and berthing opportunities for powered craft using Loch Lomond. This will enable more opportunities to enjoy the loch, reduce pressure on the currently limited locations to go to shore, and improve opportunities for local business to benefit economically from water borne visitors.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 43: Overnight moorings on Loch Lomond
- ORP Action 44: Promoted Sea Lochs opportunities supported by shoreline infrastructure
- ORP Action 58: Promoted network of public berthing opportunities on Loch Lomond
- ORP Action 60: Loch users education programme
- Aspiration: Strategically placed re-fueling station on Loch Lomond
- Aspiration: Programme of training events on basic boat skills
- TS Action 22: invest in visitor facilities, toilets, campsites, parking and develop innovative solutions for long time sustainability
- TS Action 33: Identify gaps in accommodation provision and working with partners such as SDI, promote opportunities to investors

Personal Water Craft

Personal Water Craft (PWC) includes jet-skies and jet-bikes and this activity is generally concentrated to the southern area Loch Lomond.

AIM: This activity continues to be enjoyed at sustainable levels and within appropriate areas which help reduce any potential impacts on other recreational activities.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 60: Loch users education programme
- Aspiration: Investigations carried out into potential areas where this activity can be concentrated with associated facilities and economic benefits for local businesses

Recreational Towing

The umbrella term 'Recreational Towing' covers both waterskiing and wake-boarding and both are enjoyed by people of all ages on Loch Lomond and Loch Earn in particular. Users can access both lochs by launching independently or by using the facilities of a local club. The two public launch facilities on Loch Lomond are the Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway at Balloch and at Milarrochy Bay, north of Balmaha. Loch Earn has a Code of Conduct and access to for water-based activities is at the western end of the loch at Lochearnhead. The Park Authority will continue its work in ensuring that participants in this activity understand and abide by the Loch Lomond Byelaws. All motorised craft have to be registered with the Park Authority and parts of the loch are subject to an 11 k.p.h. speed limit. Special attention should be given to Section 3.7 of the Loch Lomond Byelaws covering recreational towing.

The master of the craft is asked to ensure that whilst engaged in recreational towing they comply with all relevant parts of this byelaw.

AIM: This activity continues to be enjoyed at sustainable levels and within appropriate areas which help reduce any potential impacts on other recreational activities.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 59: Community Outdoor Sports Hubs (Balloch and Callander)

Rowing



Rowing has a strong historical legacy in the southern basin of Loch Lomond where the Loch Lomond Rowing Club was established in 1827. The club is proactive in increasing membership and is accommodating of beginners which should hopefully allow participation levels to be maintained and increase. The installation of mooring pontoons on the River Leven has been welcomed by the rowing community as it has removed the hazard of dragged moorings and ensured that the central navigational channel remains clear.

Key to raising the profile of this activity is the creation of a new multi-activity community water sports hub on the southern banks of Loch Lomond.

AIM: Continued growth in participation through rowing club activities.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 59: Community Outdoor Sports Hubs (Balloch and Callander)
- Aspiration: Increased activity profile and participation levels from beginner level

Sailing

Sailing is also popular on Loch Ard and Loch Earn however that use is dwarfed when compared to Loch Lomond which has a long heritage. Sailing provides opportunities to discover and explore the many inlets and islands, making the Loch an attractive destination. There is still the potential for conflict from higher speed craft in the vicinity of the race courses.

There are extended speed restriction areas for powered craft at Milarrochy Bay and around the islands between Balmaha and Luss. These parts of the loch are particularly suitable for peaceful, relaxed sailing. For anyone looking for more competitive thrills, Loch Lomond Sailing Club (over 110 years old), located at the north end of Milarrochy Bay, has a regular calendar of organised races for members throughout the year. This annual programme includes three open events which bring significant economic benefits to the area. The main event is the open dinghy weekend in September which attracts more than 100 dinghies. The Club proactively encourages uptake in this activity through its junior racing fleet which includes regular well attended training sessions in Optimist dinghies. The Club has concerns relating to the current boundary of byelaw speeds at Milarrochy Bay as this is through the main dinghy racing area. It is argued that this focuses some fast power craft activity into the area causing conflict with sailing fleets.

There is an opportunity for Royal Yachting Association and Loch Lomond sailing club work with partners to improve education and awareness for other loch users, reducing the potential conflicts for sailors and powered craft.

Sea lochs offer a huge potential to discover and explore areas of the park. Increased communication of the opportunities that exist would benefit the Clyde sea lochs and the communities in that area around the Holy Loch and Loch Goil. The former MOD torpedo range on the western shore of Loch Long is allocated within the National Park Local Plan for appropriate tourism development. Depending on the chosen development there may be new recreation opportunities and facilities associated with diving.

AIM: Loch Lomond is valued as a popular destination for sailing, racing and for beginners to learn to sail, whilst the potential of the sea lochs is maximised where practical.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 44: Promotion sea lochs opportunities supported by shoreline infrastructure
- ORP Action 60: Loch users education programme
- TS Action 50: Promote a calendar of events that reflect the destination brand

Ski Mountaineering

The origins of Scottish ski mountaineering date back to 1892 when founder member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, W.W Naismith first experimented with 'long wooden planks' on the nearby Campsie Fells, and in 1904 W.R Rickmers made the first ski descent of Ben Chonzie. Since these initial forays, ski mountaineering has become a well-established activity in Scotland, and although the Park does not attract large numbers, with a good snow covering the area offers a range of ascents, mountainous link-ups and challenging descents.

Ski mountaineering is distinct from cross-country skiing (which can be practiced anywhere with sufficient snow cover and suitable terrain e.g. forestry tracks and paths) and involves ascending and descending mountain summits and may include carrying the skis while negotiating steep and/or technical terrain. Ski mountaineering equipment is broadly similar to that of Alpine (downhill) skiing but uses special bindings which allow the heel to be released during ascent. Synthetic 'skins' are also employed during ascent in order to create traction

between the ski and snow surface. During descent, heels are fixed in the bindings with the technique being the same as Alpine off-piste.

Recent milder winters have tended to reduce opportunities for participation in the NP to minimal levels with the northern mountain ranges being more likely to sustain snow cover throughout the season.

The routes described below are comprehensively covered in 'Ski Mountaineering in Scotland, 1987'. Edited by, Bennet, D & Wallace, B.

The main areas in the Park are:

- The Luss Hills: This large area offers a number of rolling summits, good quality tours and straightforward access from Glen Fruin, Glen Luss or Glen Douglas roads. The hills are characterised by smooth and grassy slopes, broad ridges and a general absence of crags, scree and boulders. In good snow conditions the ESE ridge of Beinn Eich provides a fine ascent, with a link along Beinn Lochain ridge to Doune Hill summit, followed by a descent to Glen Molloch.
- Ben Lomond: This popular hill walking peak is also surprisingly good for the ski mountaineer, offering a 13km route and 970m of ascent. Starting at Rowardennan or Blairvockie, the south ridge offers a fine ascent to the summit, followed by a long downhill schuss back to the starting point.
- Ben Vorlich / Stuc a'Chroin: An anticlockwise circuit of these two fine summits provides a long and challenging tour for experienced skiers. The highlight of the route is the traverse from Ben Vorlich to Stuc a'Chroin, followed by an excellent and exposed passage across the east face of Stuc a'Chroin - depending on conditions this 250m crux section may require mountaineering techniques and crampons / ice axes.
- Ben Ledi: Overlooking Callander and the surrounding area, 2 routes are possible on this popular hill, the first starting at Coilantogle to ascend / descend the SE ridge, or alternatively from Brig O' Turk via Gleann Casaig.
- Beinn Tulaichean / Cruach Ardrain: These two mountains are steep and quite craggy but still provide an interesting short tour with good skiing on the upper slopes. Starting from Balquidder an easy slope leads to steeper ground and the south ridge of Beinn Tulaichean, followed by a broad ridge to the summit of Cruach Ardrain and a fine gully descent in good conditions.
- Stob Binnein / Ben More: This route offers one of the finest ski-traverses in Scotland linking together a series of well-defined ridges which (depending on conditions) can be steep sided and corniced in places. This is a route for competent skiers and winter mountaineers covering 12km, with 1350m of ascent.

AIM: Continued sustainable development of this activity.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 67: Monitor trends in participation levels

Stalking & Field Sports



This activity is undertaken predominantly in the more mountainous northern area of the Park and has a long tradition important in underpinning commercial viability of a number of estates. The economic benefits passed on to the smaller rural economies are valuable inputs and an important proportion spins off into the wider Park economy to support tourism businesses. The activity of stalking is currently independently driven by long established estates, however, the value of this activity is appreciated by partners within the National Park and it is important that participation levels are monitored to ensure enjoyment and economic gain associated with this activity is maintained.

Traditional sporting activities form an important part of the commercial viability of several estates within the National Park. The most important and widespread activity is red deer stalking, with roe deer stalking, driven pheasant shooting and game fishing also important to some estates. The economic benefits passed on to rural communities are valuable and an important proportion spins off into the wider Park economy to support tourism businesses. Red deer stalking in particular also plays an important role in managing wild deer populations to conserve key habitats such as woodland and heathland.

The sporting industry is independently driven by long-established estates. However, the value of this activity is appreciated by partners and it is important that participation levels are monitored to ensure the enjoyment and economic gains associated with these activities are maintained.

The majority of estates successfully manage sporting activities alongside other outdoor recreational opportunities, with stalking and shooting taking place in conjunction with access rights. However, conflict can arise when stalking, or more rarely a shoot, is disturbed.

These conflicts can be minimised by providing route information for areas where sporting activities take place: signage at the access points is an important tool by which landowners can effectively manage public access during the stalking and shooting seasons.

In addition, the Hill Phones system has operated for a number of years now and continues to offer an important resource for estates and hill walkers to minimise disturbance of stalking activities. This national system is now being piloted as an online service under the title 'Heading for the Scottish Hills'. Twenty estates have now signed up to the system which receives 6000 website visits per year.

Further collaboration on initiatives geared towards improving information and interpretation at key locations (e.g. hill access points) would bring benefits to both sporting activities and upland walking – this work could include, for example, the car parks and laybys at Falls of Falloch, Keilator, Auchessan and Inverlochlarig.

AIM: Support continued participation with associated economic benefits alongside management of any impacts on other recreational interests.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 35: Heading for the Scottish Hills online project
- ORP Action 67: Monitor trends in participation levels

Swimming – Open water



This activity is on an upward trend and is particularly concentrated in the southern Loch Lomond basin but also more infrequently in small numbers in the Trossachs water bodies. Mostly participation is through Triathlon Clubs including: Lomond Masters, Glasgow Triathlon Club, Glasgow Nomads Swim Team, Stirling Triathlon Club (using Loch Lubnaig), Wild West Swimmers and the Westerns Masters who use Milarrochy Bay.

AIM: Open water swimming participation levels continue to increase throughout the park sustainably and ensuring public safety.

- ORP Action 59: Community Outdoor Sports Hubs (Balloch and Callander)
- Aspiration: Promotion of safe open water areas with facilities and safety guidance
- TS Action 51 : Promote a calendar of events that reflect the destination brand

Walking – Visitor Hubs and Feature Paths



Throughout the Park there are visitor hubs which are isolated from settlements and serve the large visitor numbers travelling through the Park or visiting these hubs specifically. Walking is the most popular activity enjoyed by the visitors to these sites.

AIM: Each hub offers a variety of quality walking options which cater for all abilities of walking. Each hub should also complement the provision existing in neighbouring hubs and settlements.

Bracklinn Falls

This site received £130k of investment from stakeholders in the last two years to develop the destination. Works include a new 22m bridge and 400m of path upgrade and creation. These works and targeted destination promotion have increased visitor numbers by 450% since 2006 to 45,000 visits per year. At a minimum these visits are enjoying a 40 minute walk from the car park with the potential of a 90 minute walk on the Scout Pool loop or two-hour loop from the village centre.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 9: Bracklinn destination improvements

David Marshall Lodge network

David Marshall Lodge sits within the hills north of Aberfoyle and the site includes 8 signposted paths designed for a walking audience. The route options offer a good variety of length and gradient and planned improvements to the site will enhance the offering. Guided Ranger walks can be booked which is intended to appeal to the family audience and introduce new audiences to the path network. Toilets are on site and parking is charged at an hourly or daily rate.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 27: David Marshall Lodge path improvements

Glenbranter network

Glenbranter is managed by Forestry Commission Scotland and sits to the north of Loch Eck on the Cowal Peninsula. The site offers well developed parking and toilet facilities. No new paths are planned for this site and energies will be concentrated on maintaining path standards and promoting the offering of quiet recreation to the audience which possibly doesn't explore the western are of the Park.

Puck's Glen

Puck's Glen is managed by Forestry Commission Scotland and sits beside the more illustrious Benmore Gardens to the south of Loch Eck on the Cowal Peninsula. The site has parking capacity for 10 cars and offers a good loop walk on a well surfaced path with some steep sections. In recent years the path has suffered significant erosion but all repair works are now complete. It is important that FCS work with partners to develop a destination plan for this site which ensures that its potential is maximised. Such a plan is unlikely to include new path works but may investigate parking and promotion to name just two aspects.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 18: Puck's Glen improvements

Leny Falls

Leny Falls are impressive waterfalls which sit to the west of Callander and the foot of Ben Ledi. In the past Forestry Commission Scotland have offered a public car-park and Stirling Council worked with landowners to install a fenced path which linked the car park to the Falls. In recent times FCS have extracted timber from the car park site and as a result the site has essentially been closed for an extended period. The riverside path is in a state of decay and the site is currently hardly visited. Partners all agree that the site is now in need of considerable investment and offers an excellent potential joint project. In the short terms FCS have agreed to resurface the car park so it can be reopened however partners need to agree a project plan which integrates the car park, road crossing, riverside path and potential bridge to NCN7 and Ben Ledi. Such a potential project has the full support of Callander Development Trust and encouragement can be taken from the successful Bracklinn Falls Project which CDT completed with the National Park Authority and landowners. Ben Ledi receives approximately 45000 visits a year and parking is extremely limited, therefore a well-considered destination plan must look to provide for the Ben Ledi audience as well as those visiting the falls specifically and those stopping off whilst travelling on the A84.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 19: Leny Falls car park upgrade
- ORP Action 20: Ben Ledi and Leny Falls destination plan
- Aspiration: Riverside path
- Aspiration: Road crossing
- Aspiration: Bridge
- **Trossachs Pier**

Trossachs Pier sits at the eastern point of Loch Katrine and is one of the most visited hubs within the National Park. The offering is comprehensive with café, boat cruises, toilets, bike hire and an excellent surfaced path along the northern edge of the loch which allows visitors to explore as far as then choose or indeed combine boat and cycle options. The Walter Scott Trust manage the site to a high standard and a project which would benefit the site would be the installation of well-considered signage which ensures all visitors are aware of the excellent walking opportunities on offer.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 61: Trossachs Pier signage

Walking – Long Distance



Multiple day walking is an activity which attracts visitors to the park either using existing routes within the park or those which enter and exit the boundary. They are excellent hooks for the positive promotion of opportunities to both the local and international audience. These routes are strategic links to the increasing national long distance network in Scotland and the wider UK. It would be beneficial for the marketing and promotion of the area to develop these national and international strategic links and maximise the potential tourism opportunities. The multi day walking paths, known as long distance routes, are an expanding green network for sustainable people powered travel, recreational pursuits, events, health and wellbeing opportunities, economic and tourism development.

The National Park has four recognised multi day walking routes all of which run through the Park to start and finish in neighbouring local authority partner areas but the majority of communities along these routes are within the park. These routes are the West Highland Way (WHW), Rob Roy Way (RRW), Cowal Way (CW) and the Three Lochs Way (3LW). The WHW, RRW and 3LW are all included in Scotland's Great Trails which is a marketing, promotional and national planning initiative.

The West Highland Way, Scotland's first official long distance route, is the only well-established route and can claim success in generating additional interest in multiple day walking and the national development of that recreational sector. Recognised long distance routes provide a more easily accessible package of services and information which allows the user to access the outdoors more efficiently and allow for more effective visitor management. This also reduces barriers and provides an opportunity for the general population who may have previously felt excluded from this type of outdoor recreational activity.

These routes are not exclusive to multi-day walkers as they run through or are close to local communities, services, public transport links and roads. So, although multi-day walking is a recreational activity predominately engaged in by visitors to the Park, the network provides opportunities for individual, visitors, communities and businesses. Communities along the Ways' regularly use sections of the multi day walking routes in their local areas which in some cases link into local path networks. All users benefit from the health and wellbeing delivered by involvement in this activity.

AIM: Maximise the benefits available from multiple day walking by raising the profile of existing routes, creating new multi day route options(linear and circular) within the Park and wherever possible link to local, national and international path networks.

West Highland Way

The WHW is Scotland's premier multi-day walking route and one of Scotland's Great Trails covering 96 miles between Milngavie and Fort William. The NPA has day to day management of over half the route which is enjoyed by over 32,500 whole length walkers annually and provides whole route management coordination of marketing, promotion, retail, information provision, planning, development and sharing of resources. National Park communities along the Way are Drymen, Balmaha, Rowardennan, Inversnaid, Inverarnan, Crianlarich and Tyndrum.

The popularity of the WHW has resulted in a corresponding visitor impact on the path infrastructure with several sections requiring development investment and considerable maintenance to maintain its status as Scotland's premier route. The NPA and other stakeholders will resolve path drainage and erosion issues in line with best practice and with consideration to the impacts of climate change. Some path upgrades, including Conich Hill, will fall under a wider upland paths project which will be led by the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Countryside Trust.

It is important that partners ensure that marketing and promotional activity of the West Highland Way help support new and local business opportunities. Partners may also look at increasing the product with greater promotion of high level sections, horse riding opportunities and all-abilities access options.

ACTIONS:

- Aspiration: Re-establish the management mechanisms for the West Highland Way
- TS Action 38: Raise the profile of long distance routes and increase the number of visitors and the opportunities for businesses on the routes
- ORP Action 1: WHW development Phase 1
- ORP Action 5: Upland path project
- Aspiration: Re-establish the management mechanisms for the West Highland Way
- TS Action 38: Raise the profile of long distance routes and increase the number of visitors and the opportunities for businesses on the routes

Rob Roy Way

The Rob Roy Way is one of Scotland's Great Trails offering a multi day people powered journey through Rob Roy MacGregor country between Drymen in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park and Pitlochry in rural Perthshire. The route is 79 mile long with opportunity to experience scenery, wild life and cultural heritage. This route has multi use opportunities for cycling and horse riding. The route development will concentrate on supporting economic development and community opportunities.

National Park Communities along the way are Drymen, Aberfoyle, Callander, Strathyre, Lochearnhead and Killin, This route offers an opportunity to continue from Pitlochry to Killiecrankie or Blair Atholl creating a long distance route link between Loch Lomond and the Trossachs and Cairngorm National Parks.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 10: Route infrastructure development of the Rob Roy Way
- ORP Action 13: Strathyre Bridge
- ORP Action 36: support the establishment of a management group
- Aspiration: Extend the Rob Roy Way to create a long distance route link between national parks
- TS Action 12: Support collaboration between business groups, activity groups and agencies to take advantage of marketing opportunities.
- TS Action 38: Raise the profile of long distance routes and increase the number of visitors and the opportunities for businesses on the routes

The Cowal Way

The Cowal Way is a 57-mile long route from Portavadie on Loch Fyne in Argyll to Inveruglas on Loch Lomond with opportunity along the route to experience typical west coast glens, sea lochs, wildlife and cultural heritage. The historical heritage of the area includes standing stones, burial cairns and rock carvings.

Key sections along the route are impractical for bike or hoof and therefore the path is enjoyed predominantly by only walkers. The entire route is a 5 day walk. The route provides a different challenge from the other long routes but is complementary to the unique linking opportunities to the other routes. Currently it is not listed as one of Scotland's Great Trails as it does not currently meet criteria regarding waymarking and has not management group. Transport options to, from and along the route restrict accessibility but other support services have great development potential. Communities in the Park are Lochgoilhead, Arrochar and Inveruglas but blurring the edges includes Strachur and Glendaruel. As the route develops it is key that stakeholders promote the economic development opportunities to communities and business operators.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 36: support the establishment of management groups for Cowal Way and Rob Roy Way
- Aspiration: Achieve Scotland's Great Trail status
- Aspiration : upgrade of sections of the Cowal Way and improve way marking
- TS Action 12: Support collaboration between business groups, activity groups and agencies to take advantage of marketing opportunities

- TS Action 38: Raise the profile of long distance routes and increase the number of visitors and the opportunities for businesses on the routes

The Three Lochs Way

The Three Lochs Way is one of Scotland's Great Trails and is 32 miles long from Balloch to Inveruglas. Pastoral landscapes around Balloch gradually progress to the scenic drama of mountains, crags and sea lochs as the route crosses the Highland Boundary Fault and heads towards the glaciated glens and sea lochs of Argyll and the national park. There have been considerations that it could overlap with the proposed John Muir Way.

The long-term aspiration is that the entire route is shared use however currently there are significant infrastructure barriers at Gouk Hill and Arrochar which need to be addressed before the path can be confidently promoted to a wider audience than walkers.

Communities in the park are Balloch, Arrochar and Inveruglas but the park periphery includes Garelochhead and the major community of Helensburgh. It is predominately low level route easily walked in 3 to 4 days and supported by major transport links and services in Balloch and Helensburgh making it easily accessible for day trips.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 11: Upgrade sections of 3 Lochs Way
- TS Action 12: Support collaboration between business groups, activity groups and agencies to take advantage of marketing opportunities
- TS Action 38: Raise the profile of long distance routes and increase the number of visitors and the opportunities for businesses on the routes

John Muir Way

The John Muir Way is an east to west 100 miles long distance route from Dunbar in the east to Helensburgh in the west. The route links together the finest scenery, wildlife and historic sites and travels through Scotland's First National Park.

- ORP Action 6: John Muir Way links
- TS Action 38: Raise the profile of long distance routes and increase the number of visitors and the opportunities for businesses on the routes

National Park Coastal Trail- Sea Lochs Way- Potential new route

The proposed Sea Loch Way provides access to sea lochs in and around the Park showcasing another unique perspective of the Park. The trail uses existing local paths at Sandbank, Carrick Castle, Blairmore and parts of the Cowal Way and Three Lochs Way to create a multi- day walk between Dunoon and Helensburgh/Balloch. The 55 mile route links the Holy Loch, Loch Long, Loch Goil and Gareloch with an option of finishing at the iconic feature of Loch Lomond.

This route has established transport links, accommodation and other services. Park communities along the route are Blairmore, Ardentinn, Lochgoilhead, Arrochar, and on the periphery are Dunoon, Sandbank and Helensburgh.

ACTIONS:

- Aspiration: Create a National Park coastal route in partnership

National Park Circular Trail- West Highland Way Circular –Potential new route

The proposed National Park Circular Trail is approximately 66 miles long utilising the 3 Lochs, Cowal and West Highland way paths

ACTIONS:

- Aspiration: Create a National Park route by utilising existing established Long Distance Routes

The Great Trossachs Path (Callander to Inversnaid) –Potential new route

The Great Trossachs Forest Project is seeking funding to complete and promote a shared use path across its area between Callander and Inversnaid. The missing path sections required to complete a strategic east-west link are ongoing projects however the exact promoted itinerary and marketing strategy has yet to be agreed. Options include a circular route including Aberfoyle or simply a linear route across the area.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 2: Old Military Road (Strathard)
- ORP Action 52: Creation of shared use off-road link between Brig O'Turk and Kilmahog
- TS Action 12: Support collaboration between business groups, activity groups and agencies to take advantage of marketing opportunities
- TS Action 38: Raise the profile of long distance routes and increase the number of visitors and the opportunities for businesses on the routes

Mary Queen of Scots Way–Potential new route

The proposed Mary Queen of Scots Way is a 107 miles coast to coast long distance path across central Scotland from Arrochar to St Andrews linking many places associated with Mary Queen of Scots. The park communities that would be affected by such a route are Inversnaid, Aberfoyle and Callander. The proposal is in its infancy and it is important for credibility that the route alignment is carefully considered with input from land owners, communities and public sector agencies.

Walking -Settlements



Fit for purpose, good quality community path networks are essential to the function and development of all communities in the National Park, benefitting both residents and visitors. Most communities are well served but all require key actions which add either a missing opportunity or link into a wider network.

AIM: All visitors and residents enjoy a quality, well promoted walking network which provides functional links within settlements but also links into the wider recreational network.

Aberfoyle

Short flat tarmaced options exist within the village itself and NCN7 eastwards offers an excellent flat option. The Queen Elizabeth Forest Park path network to the south and west offers a large variety of options whilst the network around the hills on the north end of the village offer greater variety and gradients with the old slate mine being of cultural interest.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 21: National Park Health Walks Project
- ORP Action 66: Piggery path (Aberfoyle)
- Aspiration: Craigmore path upgrade
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Ardentinnny

Ardentinnny has virtually no roadside footways serving local amenity, however there are no shops with the nearest being in Blairmore. There are many links into the wider area with much of the surrounding land being owned and managed by Forestry Commission Scotland. There is a large FCS car park and picnic site at Shepherd's Point and a variety of paths available from there.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Arrochar

Arrochar is well served by a network of footways and links into the wider area. In common with others in the National Park the village is surrounded by a significant proportion of Forestry Commission Scotland owned land and there is consequently a good network of recreational paths including the Cobbler summit path, a path to Tarbet and others from Succoth.

The former Ministry of Defence torpedo range on the western shore of Loch Long is allocated within the National Park Local Plan for appropriate tourism development. The site is complex and the incorporation of pedestrian access opportunities, principally to ensure the potentially isolated nature of the site is offset through effective links with the wider access network, is an important consideration. Depending on the chosen development there may be new recreation opportunities including enhancement to recreation facilities available to visitors and local people.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 41: Arrochar western shore path
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Balloch

The path network is extensive and offers many good quality well-surfaced routes in Balloch Castle Country Park and links to Loch Lomond Shores. The National Park Health Walks Project (Walk in the Park) has worked well in Callander and Killin and partners are confident that such a model will succeed in Balloch and increase participation levels. The Tourism Strategy highlights the need for quality interpretation of walking opportunities at the railway station.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 21: National Park Health Walks Project
- ORP Action 69: Haldane Loop path
- Aspiration: Balloch & Haldane paths leaflet
- TS Action 26: Support development of Balloch as hub for walking and cycling routes

- TS Action 31: Seek full coverage of rail access and heritage in all paths leaflets produced for villages with stations. Seek active promotion of outdoor activities from Stations
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Balmaha

Balmaha offers flat well surfaced walking around the bay with more difficult gradients and surfaces further from the village centre, east up Conich Hill and north up the West Highland Way. A longer loop including Conich Hill, Milton of Buchanan and footway on the main road is also well used. Upgrades are required throughout, including sensitive upland work and well-designed shared-use roadside paths.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 5: Upland Paths Project
- ORP Action 47: Drymen to Balmaha link
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Balquhiddy

Balquhiddy has limited footways serving local amenity. The settlement centre is small however and is more widely dispersed. There may be some benefit from improvements to amenity footway provision around Balquhiddy Kirk. There are good links into the wider surrounding network including the Kirkton Glen Right of Way.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- Aspiration: Improvements to local footways
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Blairmore

Blairmore is well served by amenity footways and links into the wider area, including Forestry Commission Scotland woodland. There is one core path linking a continuation of High Road and the A880 which has been identified for improvement.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- Aspiration: High Road core path upgrade
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Brig o'turk

Brig O'Turk is well served by the Glen Finglas Estate to the north and east managed by the Woodland Trust. To the south there are also good walking opportunities which link into the wider network. The Great Trossachs Forest is actively investigating improvement of shared use paths east and west which would enhance the provision greatly.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Callander

Callander is well served with excellent flat well-surfaced paths through the town, around the Meadows and NCN7 stretching westwards. The hills immediately north provide greater gradients and views. There are opportunities to develop the promoted network and enhance existing destinations such as Bracklinn. Safe routes through and around Callander are also a priority. Through the Callander Charette and subsequent community action planning, proposals will be brought forward. These will be supported by agencies. The National Park Health Walks Project (Walk in the Park) has worked well in Callander and partners are confident that this project will continue to develop and increase from the current level of 16 walkers weekly.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 9: Bracklinn destination improvements
- ORP Action 21: National Park Health Walks Project
- ORP Action 49: Callander Safe Cycling Project
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Crianlarich

Crianlarich is largely well catered for by the existing network of footways and there are a range of informal links into the wider area including Forestry Commission Scotland woodland. Strathfillan Community Development Trust has created a small community woodland with a number of paths and associated car parking to the south of the village at Dalrigh. There are further community aspirations for improvement to recreational paths together with proposals for a cycle path to Tyndrum. Some of this work may be supported through contributions made by Scotgold following approval of gold mining operations at Cononish.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- Aspiration: Support local initiatives towards path improvements
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Croftamie

NCN7 runs through the centre of this community offering good opportunities east and west. Core path footways through the village itself and linking to Drymen required well designed upgrades to complete a safe and practical walking network.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 46: Croftamie to Drymen shared use footway
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Drymen

Drymen is well served with access around the village and links into Garadhban Forest to the north and Buchanan Estate to the west. Opportunities exist to raise the standard of the core path network and ensure that signage and path surfacing is fit for purpose. Key improvements are required to facilitate increased walking between neighbouring villages.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 46: Croftamie to Drymen footway
- ORP Action 47: Balmaha to Drymen footpath upgrade
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Gartmore

Gartmore is well served by the Wee Wood path and paths around Gartmore House, however, the key action for this community is the creation of small links which allow residents and visitors to easily access the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 15: Wee Wood north link (Gartmore)
- ORP Action 16: Gartmore to Lemahamish link
- ORP Action 53: Wee Wood east link (Gartmore)
- Aspiration: Sow Park path
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Gartocharn

Gartocharn has two well-used local walks in Duncryne Hill and the Aber path which links the village with the National Nature Reserve on the shores of Loch Lomond. Both of these paths require upgrade and signage from the main road. Opportunities exist to develop a path network within the Forestry Commission Scotland woodland and also to create a path providing an off-road option linking into Balloch.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 22: Duncryne Hill
- ORP Action 37: Aber Path (Gartocharn)
- ORP Action 45: Balloch to Gartocharn shared use footway
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Killin

Good range of walking opportunities including footways serving local amenity and a variety of links into the wider area. The former Killin branch railway track is accessible and very popular however the surface is prone to puddling in wet weather and warrants upgrade to a better standard. A number of paths in the core path network are signed and a newly implemented Heritage Trail is also in place. The National Park Health Walks Project (Walk in the Park) has worked well in Killin within a very short time, following the successful project model used in Callander. Partners are confident that this project will continue to develop and increase from the current level of 16 walkers weekly.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 21: National Park Health Walks Project
- ORP Action 30: Upgrade former railway surface and improve link with NCN7 (Killin)
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Kilmun

Like adjacent Blairmore, Kilmun is well served by footways and good links into the wider area including Forestry Commission Scotland woodland. Nearby Benmore offers a range of accessible core paths.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Kinlochard

There are good links into the forest network but the condition of B829 could be improved and core paths consultations unearthed an appetite for a safe off-road path between the village shop and Forest Hills Hotel. Small improvements by the Ledard Ben Venue path could create a loop path to the village through the forest road network and provide a circular option which is currently missing.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- Aspiration: Northern circular route

- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Lochearnhead

The village is well served by existing amenity footways and links into the wider area including links to NCN7. There is potential for improvements to the core path network particularly accessibility of those paths near to head of the Loch Earn. There is also an additional core path linking with NCN7 which could be considered.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 38: Investigate potential core path improvements (Lochearnhead)
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Lochgoilhead

Lochgoilhead has a good range of paths serving local amenity and access into the wider network. Much of the surrounding area is Forestry Commission Scotland land and there are a number of popular routes including the Cowal Way.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Luss

Luss is a honey pot destination, particularly in the summer, and offers a highly concentrated walking network within a small area. Core paths including the lochside, river and quarry paths offer excellent, well signed options. Other paths exist in the Glebe area which add to the resource and Ben Dhu to the west offers an excellent moderate hill climb with fantastic views over Loch Lomond.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Port of Menteith

Port of Menteith has no path network and opportunities are minimal. The key objectives here are to ensure that the existing footways are fit for purpose and that a new core path provides a safe off-road link between the T-junction with the A81 and hotel.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 64: Port of Menteith roadside link
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

St Fillans

The village has a good network of footways and there are a variety of local core paths and also access into the wider area. A long-standing problem remains with access along the former Lochearnhead railway at the Tarken Burn where a major bridge is missing, having been dismantled at the time of the line closure. A current project aims to reinstate this missing link to make the railway track accessible for its full length to Lochearnhead.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 31: Lochearnhead to St Fillans old railway project, phase 1 – Tarken Bridge project
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Strathyre

Strathyre has a good network of path serving amenity and access in to the wider area. There are direct links to NCN7 which passes close to the village.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 13: Strathyre Bridge
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Tarbet

There is potential for improvements to the amenity path network including links to the railway station. Current major development proposals, including a 'masterplanning' exercise, may provide opportunities to progress this.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- ORP Action 48: Improvements to Arrochar and Tarbet link
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Tyndrum

Access opportunities are partly limited by the proximity of the A82 trunk road, however there are footways alongside. There are a reasonable number of accessible recreational paths including sections of the West Highland Way and a community owned woodland. There are also aspirations for a cycle path linking Crianlarich which would serve walking.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 3: Signed core path network
- TS Action 39: Explore opportunities to work with partners to make path networks at a range of levels easily available to visitors
- TS Action 40: Make information about walks readily available to visitors

Walking - Upland



There are a number of important upland paths in the National Park from valley routes such as Glen Ample to paths traversing the major summit ridges of Munros such as Ben More, Ben Lui and Ben Lomond. This section will focus on the most popular upland paths and in particular those under increasing pressure through sustained use resulting in erosion of soils and damage to montane ecosystems.

Upland walking covers several different types of terrain, such as landmarks summits, valley paths and mountain paths.

Landmark summits are destination hills with established paths leading to the summit. The routes tend to entail half-day walks and are consequently popular with a wider range and greater number of visitors (and residents).

They are less demanding than many of the Munros and widely promoted. They make up an important grouping of paths which are readily accessible to visitors and play an important role in contributing to local economic activity. Examples are Ben Ledi, Conich Hill, Ben A'n,

Ben Venue, Bein an Sidhean, Sron a' Chlachlain, the Cobbler, Bein Narnain and Cruach Tairbeirt.

Valley paths often following historic through routes used for droving cattle or attending church. Examples include Kirkton Glen and Glen Ample.

The highest mountains in the National Park are those of Strathfillan and Glen Dochart where, amongst a total of 13 Munros, six are over 1,000m high. The Arrochar Alps give rise to further concentrations of high mountains extending from Beinn Narnain to Ben Vorlich on Loch Lomondside. The other Munros in the National Park are more isolated and include Ben Lomond, Ben Vorlich and its near neighbour Stuc a' Chroin. The major groupings form a focus for walkers and mountaineers visiting the Park and have become important centres for mountain recreation. These mountains are accessible to large numbers of people, being the most southerly of the Munros, and in many cases they are close to trunk roads. Spin-off from mountain recreation has therefore developed as a core constituent in a number of local economies helping sustain rural populations and livelihoods. Aligned to this is a requirement to ensure the resource which sustains mountain recreation is maintained and protected and central to this are the many mountain paths. An exemplar in managing heavy visitor pressures on the Ben Lomond path sustainably, The National Trust for Scotland have developed considerable expertise in techniques and best practice and are well placed to offer valuable input to upland path restoration and management projects in the National Park.

The main summit paths over the Munros highlighted below require full survey to accurately determine overall path condition and to identify priorities for action. Because of the potential scale and cost of upland path maintenance and intervention in the National Park it is proposed that a phased path survey programme be carried out to identify and prioritise issues which would create the basis for future projects.

Aside from the obvious need to ensure the popularity and promotion of paths does not diminish the very qualities people come to enjoy, there is a fundamentally practical need to ensure that access to popular paths from the public road network is safe, functional and capable of representing the best Scotland has to offer. This analysis is therefore limited to a brief overview of each path and otherwise focuses on issues arising at their interface with roadside locations where ascents are normally begun.

AIM: Key upland paths are subject to an improvement programme to improve sustainability of use through: a) enhanced resilience to climatic factors; b) reduction in active soil erosion; c) decreased path extension and widening.

Ben Ledi (including Stank)

One of the most popular upland paths in the Park, currently attracting upwards of 40,000 walkers a year. The path is largely within the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park, which is owned and managed by Forestry Commission Scotland.

The summit of Ben Ledi gives very fine views south across the Carse of Stirling towards the Menteith hills and beyond. Limited car parking is available where the path starts at Corrieachrombie just off the A85. The lower path is generally in fair condition, a substantial proportion of which was re-constructed following felling operations by Forestry Commission Scotland some years ago. The path is not currently subject to an ongoing programmed maintenance regime and as a result is generally deteriorating. Above the tree line the upper path is eroded in places and above 600m large areas of peat are exposed and consequently erosion here is particularly severe. The car park at Corrieachrombie is constrained by

topography, being located on a section of the former Callander to Oban railway track. Surface drainage is poor and it is often full to capacity.

In attracting a high number of visitors, Ben Ledi plays an important role in supporting local economic activity. Current use is not sustainable over the long term without further deterioration of the path causing greater environmental damage, particularly affecting the upper sections.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 5: National Park Upland Paths Project
- Aspiration: Consider improvements to the car park with appraisal of options for reconfiguration to create an additional number of spaces

Conich Hill

Accessible from a large public car park at Balmaha and often included as part of the West Highland Way. The most popular route when making an independent ascent reaches the westernmost top via the West Highland Way from Balmaha. The path begins through planted woodland leading to the Bealach Ard and continues via the West Highland Way to reach a junction where the summit path cuts steeply uphill cresting the ridge some distance west of the true summit. The path to this is in reasonable condition overall with the exception of two steeper areas where it has eroded through the surface vegetation. The path used most regularly leads westwards from the western top to descend back to the West Highland Way via the ridge crest. Erosion is severe in many places, having reached the underlying conglomerate bedrock, particularly where the path leaves the West Highland Way and similarly where it traverses the ridge westwards in descent. The severity of the erosion on the summit can be attributed directly to sheer popularity. The path is heavily used during the summer season particularly and is not known to have received maintenance input. The West Highland Way is also heavily used at this location and is due for repair work during 2013.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 5: National Park Upland Paths Project

Ben A'an

Path leading to the iConich summit of Ben A'an, one of a number of tops associated with Meall Reamhar which overlooks the scenic Loch Katrine reservoir. The path is within the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park, owned and managed by Forestry Commission Scotland. It is likely to see similarly high numbers of users as Ben Ledi being situated in the heart of the Trossachs and within easy reach of a number of nearby tourist destinations.

The path leads through standing conifer woodland in its lower section. Above this it becomes narrow and stony, weaving a steep line towards the rocky top of Ben A'an. It is badly eroded in places including the lower section where the base material is relatively soft, being largely mineral soil. The presence of tree roots here, many of which are now severely exposed is helping delay greater erosion, however the path is poor and can become very slippery. The central section is generally stonier and erosion less severe until the uppermost part is reached where the peat surface is deteriorating badly.

The path is not currently subject to an ongoing programmed maintenance regime and as a result is generally deteriorating. The existing car park is broadly sufficient and although it reaches capacity at certain times there is a nearby alternative at Creag Noran.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 5: National Park Upland Paths Project
- Aspiration: Re-alignment and upgrade of the lower path which protects integrity of the route from issues associated with felling of the lower conifer crop.

Ben Venue (Ledard)

Path from the northern shore of Loch Ard via the Ledard Burn leading to the west ridge and eastwards to the rocky summit of Ben Venue. The path is partially in private ownership although most is within the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park being owned and managed by Forestry Commission Scotland. The lower section is known to receive periodic maintenance input from the private landowner. An alternative route leads to the west ridge from a Forestry Commission car park at Creag Noran close to Loch Achray. This path is substantially on forest roads and is less popular than the route from Ledard. The path from Ledard is most noticeably affected by erosion in the lower section where it follows the Ledard Burn, it is not currently subject to an ongoing programmed maintenance regime and is generally deteriorating overall.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 5: National Park Upland Paths Project

Beinn an Sidhean

Promoted path leading to the summit of Beinn an Sidhean west of Strathgryre. It is usual to ascend to the southernmost and lowest (546m) top only. This point, called An Sidhean, offers an excellent vantage point for views south down Loch Lubnaig. The path is way-marked and promoted by Forestry Commission Scotland with the route to An Sidhean being wholly within the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park owned and managed by Forestry Commission Scotland. Recent felling of commercial timber crops through which the path passes has resulted in long-term closure and construction of an associated extraction track has caused a proportion of the upper path to become inaccessible. The lower section of the path (to 200m height) is unaffected and in a reasonable state of repair. Above 200m however the path is either substantially inaccessible, removed or obliterated.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 5: National Park Upland Paths Project

Sron a' Chlachain (Killin)

Path leading from Breadalbane Park to the summit of Sron a' Chlachain is promoted in a number formats including a local paths leaflet and is signed from the village centre. It is popular with local residents and visitors to the area.

The summit offers a fine viewpoint over the village and surrounding area including Loch Tay, Ben Lawers and the Tarmachan hills. The path receives no maintenance and as a result erosion is occurring in places, most notably in the lower section which passes through established oak woodland where the path crosses relatively soft mineral soils which have become eroded, particularly during wet weather when the path becomes slippery. The most notable erosion on the upper section is at approx 330m where the path takes a direct line up a steep knoll.

ACTIONS:

- Aspiration: Consider project to fund targeted intervention aimed at stabilising the lower path and those upper sections where erosion is most severe

The Cobbler (Arrochar Alps)

Path to the summit of The Cobbler from a large council maintained car park near Arrochar at the head of Loch Long. The path receives many ascents each year and is promoted extensively, being the main the route of ascent up this iconic mountain. It lies entirely within the Argyll Forest Park being owned and managed by Forestry Commission Scotland. The path starts adjacent to the large car park just off the A83 and follows a relatively recently constructed section which climbs via a series of zig zags to the treeline. From the treeline the path leads past the Narnain Boulders towards the upper hill at which point it has been further upgraded to reach the summit via the central corrie. There is a further path leading to the north peak. The upper sections were substantially upgraded by Forestry Commission in 2004 through European Regional Development Funds. Since upgrade, periodic maintenance has taken place but the path is not subject to an ongoing programmed regime and as a result is generally deteriorating. This is quite severe in the lower section where erosion is aggressive, being exacerbated by steep gradients and high rainfall causing surface water run-off.

The Cobbler, alongside Ben Lomond, is one of the most widely recognised mountains in the National Park and is the focus of many visitors' experience of upland walking in the Park. In common with many of those upland routes which are widely promoted, the path plays an important role in supporting local economic activity and therefore requires appropriate maintenance so that high visitor numbers can continue to be catered for. Present use cannot be sustained over the long term without very much greater deterioration of the path surface leading to higher future capital cost and diminished visitor experience.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 5: National Park Upland Paths Project

Beinn Narnain

Part of the Arrochar Alps and consequently popular alongside the neighbouring Cobbler. The most frequently ascended routes to the summit are the north-west ridge (approached from the Cobbler north peak or Beinn Ime) and the south-east ridge from Arrochar via the Spearhead. The Spearhead path in particular is becoming eroded and there is now some justification towards considering intervention where it is most severe.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 5: National Park Upland Paths Project

Cruach Tairbeirt

The lower slopes of this hill are planted over all aspects with commercial timber crop which substantially impedes access to the summit. As a result of this, paths have developed which necessarily weave through the forest following burns and rides. The most commonly used routes has become saturated in places and consequently very muddy. The summit of

Cruach Tairbeirt gives exceptional panoramic views south down Loch Lomond and to Ben Lomond and although convoluted, ascents to the summit are made regularly by visitors.

There is presently no formal route to the summit of Cruach Tairbeirt, and none is way-marked or promoted by Forestry Commission. Given its low height, availability of public transport (bus and rail) and close-by parking and facilities there is good justification for improving the accessibility of Cruach Tairbeirt so that visitors are better catered for and an ascent more easily made. In this way, it is possible that the popularity of Ben Ledi and Ben A'an could be emulated at Cruach Tairbeirt if it were similarly accessible. The summit is comparably low and offers similarly wide vistas over well-known landscapes, a walk to the summit is likely to take around 4 hours, there are close-by facilities and the area is close to the trunk road network. The creation of additional visitor opportunity through improved access to Cruach Tairbeirt has the potential to create valuable economic spin off focussed at Tarbet village.

ACTIONS:

- Aspiration: Consider path improvement scheme to create a new, sensitively built, promoted route to Cruach Tairbeirt from Tarbet village; this should coincide with the existing path network and take visitors to the treeline
- ORP Action 23: Cruach Tairbeirt
- Aspiration: Incorporate improved access to Cruach Tairbeirt within master planning exercise for new built development at Tarbet village

Kirkton Glen

Historic Right of Way leading from Balquhiddy to Ledharrie in Glen Dochart. The initial section of path rising to reach Lochan an Eireannaich is within Forestry Commission owned land where the path follows a combination of forest roads and footpath all of which are in good repair. The section of path descending from the lochan to reach Ledcharrie Fram is boggy in places, particularly north of the railway bridge. Improvements could be made to the existing gating arrangements at the railway bridge.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 5: National Park Upland Paths Project

Glen Ample (Ardchullarie)

The historic Glen Ample Right of Way is reached on foot via this path which leaves the A85 at Ardchullarie heading north-east. It is readily accessible from the A85 where cars can be left in a nearby layby and is consequently popular. The path is narrow, following the southern bank of the Ardchullarie Burn, which it crosses into commercial woodland following a rising traverse to reach an adjacent forest road leading to the southern end of Glen Ample proper. From this point the path has been improved and is in good condition through to Edinample.

The initial section of path from Ardchullarie receives little or no maintenance but is in reasonable condition, although it could be improved by some minor stabilisation and surface work. From the Ardchullarie Burn crossing the path becomes heavily eroded and badly affected by runoff which tends to flow directly down the path. This section has deteriorated over time and has no real formation and very limited functional drainage. There are many exposed tree roots which are preventing total disintegration however the path is very poor and slippery and there is much loose material present.

The crossing of the Ardchullarie Burn has been severely washed out in recent years and where there was previously a form of elementary bridging nothing now remains. The resulting ravine is difficult to negotiate and degrading further with each winter spate. In all, the section of path described above is exceptionally poor and for the given level of use warrants improvement. It will be necessary to consider the implications arising from any future felling however subject to landowner agreement it should be practicable to incorporate path improvement work within any felling and restock scheme.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 5: National Park Upland Paths Project

Ben Vorlich (Loch Earn)

The main route of ascent up one of Scotland's most southerly and most accessible Munros takes its northern ridge beginning on the southern shore of Loch Earn. The lower section of path follows a vehicle track past Ardvorlich House for about 2km. Beyond this a substantial proportion was reconstructed during an improvement project implemented by Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust some 12 years. The improved section terminates at around 550m above which the final section is now quite badly eroded in places. This upper section follows the exposed crest of the north ridge to reach the summit at 985m.

There is fairly limited parking available along the verge of the south Loch Earn road close to the start of the driveway to Ardvorlich House. This parking area coincides with a section of shore which is popular for fishing so the area can become congested with parked vehicles.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 5: National Park Upland Paths Project
- Aspiration: Problems associated with car parking, particularly of capacity and obstruction to the road should be investigated

Cruach Ardrain

This Munro, located close to Crianlarich, is accessible from the A82 and A85 and sees many ascents throughout the year. The route over Cruach Ardrain follows the major north west ridge over the Grey Height to reach the summit at 1,046m, from this high point it is possible to continue south to reach Beinn Tulaichean or alternatively to undertake a high level circuit of Coire Ardrain with descent via Stob Coire Bhuidhe. Beinn Tulaichean can be reached from Inverlochlarig to the south. The path via Inverlochlarig Farm is served by a sizeable public car park located at the end of the public road from where it follows a substantial vehicle track to reach the south east shoulder. Foot traffic is reasonably well dispersed until above 700m at which point the path becomes more defined.

The normal approach to the north ridge has historically been complicated by commercial plantings on the lower slopes below the Grey Height. Recently, in conjunction with felling operations, significant improvement to hill access has resulted from the construction of new roads meaning that a previously tortuous route following a narrow ride is no longer necessary.

Further opportunity exists to improve and consolidate access via the north west ridge and to improve off road parking for the public at the Forestry Commission's main entry to the Inverardran woodland. An outcome of this would be to help supplant use of the two other access points at Glen Falloch to that via the A85, thereby focussing use toward the now

extended forest road network and to where the hill path might be more readily maintained. The existing parking off the A85 serves the Crianlarich Community Woodland and offers limited capacity.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 5: National Park Upland Paths Project
- Aspiration: Investigate options for improvements to parking available from A85

Ben More

Neighbouring Cruach Ardrain to the west, Ben More is the highest mountain in the National Park at 1,174m. The route most often taken in ascent follows the north west shoulder from Benmore Farm. The path is steep and unrelenting but direct. From the summit the path crosses the Bealach eadar dha Bheinn to reach the summit of Stob Binnein via its north ridge. There are areas where erosion is becoming evident and overall the path has become very defined.

Stob Binnein can be reached from a public car park near Inverlochlarig serving access for hillwalkers. Ascents beginning near Benmore Farm on the A85 require visitors to park on the roadside which consists of the stone filter drain for this widened section of road. Traffic speeds here are generally high and, the road being both wide and straight, means that overtaking regularly takes place. On busy days there can be upwards of 20 vehicles parked nose-to-tail along the roadside. Overall the situation is unsatisfactory and on the basis of safety alone there is reasonable justification to consider alternative options.

Of the alternatives available arguably the most effective would be to consider parking improvements at the nearby Forestry Commission woodland (west). There is already maintained access to the western side of Ben More and options to access the summit via Sron nam Forsairean or the Bealach eadar dha Bheinn exist from here. Importantly there is an opportunity to create off-road parking close to the forest entrance which would provide a safer alternative to that of the roadside near Benmore Farm. A potential site exists just inside the existing gate off the A85.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 5: National Park Upland Paths Project
- Aspiration: Investigate options for improvements to parking available from A85
- Aspiration: Implement a programme of monitoring and periodic maintenance to stem further deterioration of the path

Braeleny Glen

Braeleny Glen links Callander to Comrie and provides an excellent semi wilderness experience. Traditionally the route has been used by scout groups, Duke of Edinburgh Award groups and the general public who enjoy full day walks in a remote setting. The route is predominantly used for walking, however, the path surface provides a potential option for more advanced cyclists and horse riders. In 2004 severe flash floods destroyed Braeleny Bridge and to make this key core path fit for purpose in all weather conditions a replacement bridge is required.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 12: Braeleny Glen
- ORP Action 5: Upland Path project

Wilderness Exploration



For the purposes of this Plan we use the term “Wilderness Exploration” to cover visits for purpose of experiencing and enjoying the special qualities; nature, wildlife and the landscape, often in conjunction with journeys made specifically via non-motorised means. This activity includes overland backpacking, wild camping and wildlife tourism. The common factor is the ability to access and travel freely across wild or secluded areas of land within the National Park. Whilst most energies and finances are quite rightly targeting towards raising participation levels from the base levels where the greater health benefits will result, there is an appreciation that self-exploration is an important type of experience that the National Park can provide for the more confident responsible access takers.

Areas relevant for this activity are likely to be concentrated among those identified as wild land in a recent study by the Park Authority, where an opportunity exists for visitors to be out of range of human intervention and development. The wild land resource in the Park is under increasing pressure from various types of development including, for example, forestry, hydro-electric power generation schemes and minerals extraction.

Although there is a robust imperative on behalf of the Park Authority to protect the wild land resource there are equally pressing obligations towards appropriate economic development. In many cases the two principles are opposed and the result tends towards loss of existing natural landscapes. The erosion of this resource however also erodes the opportunity for visitor enjoyment and economic activity associated with it.

There is potential to expand information r available to the public and for the National Park website to act as a conduit for other key information resources concerning landscape and nature, such as Scottish Natural Heritage designations, National Trust for Scotland etc.

Aim: Improve promotion of the National Park as a destination for wilderness experiences through better packaging of opportunities and itineraries in conjunction with improved levels of information about key areas.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 14: Web portal promotion of activity
- Aspiration: Promotion of bothy network
- Aspiration: Promotion of responsible guided exploration

SUSTAINABLE ACTIVITY PROMOTION

All stakeholders are in agreement that although infrastructure provision and upgrades are required and will improve the resource. The key to raising participation levels and encouraging responsible access is through quality targeted promotion, the active involvement of individual businesses and business groupings is essential to achieving this. Packages of itineraries and products that provide a coherent and quality offering are needed alongside marketing with consistent messages. It is also important that we target activity growth in partnership with the sustainable and active travel networks to ensure that participation levels and healthy lifestyles continue to develop as fuel costs and concerns about climate change increase.

Workshops revealed that there is a frustration that business hours in key settlements and hubs are not in line with the needs of many recreation visitors and that this small change could greatly enhance experiences and increase repeat visits and income.

Whilst this Plan is being drafted the Park Authority is also working with stakeholders to draft a Tourism Strategy and authors have liaised to ensure both documents share the same vision and are complementary pieces of work.

Increasingly event organisers are using the National Park and it is key that events that add value to the Park and help raise profile and participation levels are encouraged.

Packaging & Promotion



The key message that has emerged through the preparatory work of this project is a shared appetite for quality targeted promotion. This will help overcome one of the most significant barriers to participation, namely lack of knowledge about products available.

The provision of facilities and opportunities for outdoor recreation is not sufficient in itself if the participation levels are to increase and the potential economic benefit is realised. To achieve this goal, agencies need to work with businesses and business groupings to market packaged outdoor products to visitors. The way this is achieved is covered in the Tourism Strategy, a sister document to this Plan. However this project has raised a key required action is the development and packaging of long distance route options following the successful West Highland Way model. These promoted itineraries will include a National Park Canoe Trail, a National Park Sea Lochs Trail for kayaks and a National Park Equestrian Trail between Drymen and Killin. These promoted itineraries will require and allow the development of local business linked to activity such as accommodation, baggage handling and portage for kayaks and canoes.

The National Park Authority and partners will continue to develop the Cycle in the Park leaflet and network of promoted cycle routes that encourages the development of cycling hubs.

The National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017 highlights the need for a National Park web portal which increases participation through increasing visitor knowledge of opportunities. External websites such as Walk Highlands and Fieldfare Trust produce quality visitor information and often the web portal will simply link to such sites. The development of the Outdoor Recreation Plan as an online document allows the Park Authority to look towards future online route mapping in a digestible form for the public.

AIM: An exemplar suite of information materials and promotional products, both on-line and off-line, allow residents and visitors to confidently explore and enjoy the Park, increasing their activity levels and bringing participants into new areas or undertaking new activities.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 14: Web portal promotion of activity
- Aspiration: Online “design your own” multi-use long-distance journeys or routes
- TS Action 12: Support collaboration between business groups, activity groups and agencies to take advantage of marketing opportunities
- TS Action 22: Invest in visitor facilities, toilets, camping areas, parking and develop innovative solutions for long term sustainability
- TS Action 38: Raise the profile of long-distance routes and increase the number of visitors and the opportunities for businesses on the routes
- TS Action 12: Support collaboration between business groups, activity groups and agencies to take advantage of marketing opportunities
- TS Action 47: Encourage businesses and other interests to collaborate to develop packages of itineraries and products that provide a coherent and quality offering alongside marketing with consistent messages

Events and Competitions



Events are a good way of showcasing the outdoor offering and encouraging participation in an active lifestyle. They can also be a way of attracting funds to a project or infrastructure development for example a charity walk that channels some of the funds to path maintenance. Events also play a vital role in tourism and it is key that the majority target a new audience and not the elite of any activity. Their ability to attract visitors, extend the visitor season, increase total spend and increase the average length of stay make events an important tool in developing the tourism industry. The Park's event strategy will be detailed in the National Park Tourism Strategy 2012-2017 a sister document to this plan that will also cover large competitions related to activity.

The Park Authority wishes to foster an exciting events programme throughout the year. There is a history of events in the park, ranging from large international events to small community or charity events. As pressure on the park's valuable resources increases it is necessary to work with landowners to minimise adverse impacts so that the events programme can grow and play a full part in the economy. In particular the Park Authority will seek the expansion of headline events which showcase the Park's offering, particularly where these combine outdoor and cultural aspects. Events play an important role in the life of Scottish society and it is important that the National Park contributes to this. Therefore events that contribute to national initiatives, such as 2012 Year of Creative Scotland, 2013 Year of Natural Scotland, will be encouraged.

A sustainability checklist has been developed for events in the park and all organisers will be encouraged to make use of this which is linked to guidance produced by SNH and the National Access Forum. Specific guidelines for event organisers using the West Highland Way have also been developed and these can easily be transferred to other long distance routes and potentially upland paths.

Many excellent events related to specific activities are currently organised by local clubs. Stakeholders will hopefully be able to support these events to bring added value where

requested. Such events include the open sailing events on Loch Lomond and fishing events on the Lake of Menteith.

As shown in the activity matrix (Appendix A), particularly large-scale events will require more regulation than individuals undertaking the same activity. This is because of the increased potential to spoil the special qualities of the area from large numbers undertaking an activity in a confined area and time frame. This is not a new issue and the National Trust has, for example, had to manage sponsored walks and charity events up Ben Lomond for a number of years.

AIM: A vibrant sustainable calendar of events which showcases the outdoor offering, encouraging participation in active lifestyles, contributing positively to the local economy, whilst minimising environmental impacts and conflicts between users of the Park.

ACTIONS:

- Aspiration: Research support for Loch Lomond water festival, possibly linked to the Great Scottish Swim, to showcase all the loch has to offer
- TS Action 48: Capitalise on 2013/14 – year of Natural Scotland / Commonwealth games / Ryder Cup / 700th Anniversary of Bannockburn / Centenary of John Muir / Homecoming
- TS Action 49: Create an event plan for the National Park
- TS Action 50: Promote a calendar of events that reflect the destination brand
- TS Action 51: Encourage development of new community or private sector led events which help create a vibrant Park
- TS Action 52: Create a one stop contact at the National Park for event organisers
- TS Action 53: Introduce a sustainable events checklist for use by event organisers

Sustainable Transport



While the car remains the mode of choice for the majority and the park wishes to see people have viable sustainable transport options, for shorter journeys cycling and walking should become the norm and public transport should cater for recreational visitors. Alternatives to the car should be actively promoted within the park so that visitors using the car to get here are encouraged to leave it unused for the duration of their visit. Through the planning process infrastructure and amenities will be directed to locations accessible by public transport. Through the improvement in sustainable transport and the separate implementation of visitor management plans the disruption to outdoor activities through road closures on extremely busy days should be avoided.

Many of the actions needs to improve and provide sustainable transport for those taking part in outdoor recreation are the same for all visitors to the park and are covered by the National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017. Below are specific actions relating exclusively or nearly so to outdoor recreation. Similarly the requirement for safe walking and cycling routes with communities is crucial, these are better covered in individual Community Action Plans and are covered in this document under Hubs.

A common theme which came out through preparatory workshops was the value of the key gateways into the Park and that targeted investment into these key sites would encourage modal change over time. The key gateways are:

- Glasgow to Balloch
- Greenock/Dunoon to Kilmun/Benmore
- Stirling to Callander
- The primary goal at the gateways would be to encourage travel into the Park by active means if possible. However it is appreciated that a quality sustainable transport link into these gateways which seamlessly links into the recreational path network will bring benefits to a greater audience.

The water bus services on Loch Lomond are a welcome addition to the travel options around the loch. Cyclists are making use of these services for journeys of varying length and seriousness around the park. The SS Sir Walter Scott on Loch Katrine has long been used by cyclists using the largely traffic free road around the north side of the loch. The water bus services are used to access the West Highland Way from the west shore and walking part of the route is possible as a round trip from Tarbet.

AIM: To reduce carbon emissions from transport, encourage active lifestyle and protect the special qualities of the park. Encourage people to use the most sustainable travel mode possible.

ACTIONS:

- Aspiration: Bus service linking key rural car parks so people don't drive around the park, linked to car parking charges and piers/pontoons
- Aspiration: Provide cycle storage and bike racks at suitable locations
- TS Action 27: Ensure tourism role of roads is considered in upgrades to main routes through the Park
- TS Action 28: Investigate innovative means of addressing transport challenges to encourage sustainable experiences
- TS Action 29: Grow water based transport to connect tourist attractions. Develop further the Loch Lomond waterbus and water based transport on other lochs

Outdoor and Community Sports Hubs

Local authorities use outdoor activity providers across the park. Traditionally this important work has continued independently but greater liaison with providers, sportscotland and local authorities has uncovered potential opportunities which will increase participation and responsible behaviour.

The community sport hub initiative, sportscotland's contribution to the Scottish Government's 2014 legacy plan, is an exciting and innovative approach to the development of sport in local clubs. It is designed to increase the number of people of all ages participating in sport in communities across Scotland. Community sport hubs are based in local places such as club

pavilions, sports centres, community centres, the natural environment and/or schools. They are bringing local people together and providing a home for local clubs and sports organisations. They should also provide information, support and advice on a wide range of sports and physical activities to make it easier for local people to get involved and engage in a more active and healthier lifestyle.

Several sports clubs in Balloch are developing a community sports hub on the south of Loch Lomond and opportunities also exist in Ardlui and Stronachlachar. McLaren High School in Callander, Bike Trossachs and Callander Youth Project are moving an education focus towards outdoor sports education and, following the charrette process, there would appear to be a strong appetite to drive forward a community sports hub.

AIM: Key outdoor sports hubs develop sustainable business models which maximise the potential of their sites and surrounding recreation opportunities.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 59: Community Outdoor Sports Hubs (Balloch and Callander)
- Aspiration: Stronachlachar Community Sports Hub
- Aspiration: Loch Earn Community Sports Hub
- Aspiration: Increased bike capacity on trains, bus and waterbus
- Aspiration: Flexible public transport fare structure to accommodate cyclist need
- TS Action 25: Support development of Callander as hub for outdoor adventure in the Park
- TS Action 26: Support development of Balloch as a hub for walking and cycle routes

NATIONAL PARK SCENIC ROUTES

The National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017 outlines the need for improved visitor experience, increased safety and designs that complement the landscape on the key scenic routes which travel through the Park. These include the A82, the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful and the A84 from Callander to Glen Ogle. It is vitally important that improvements on these routes include the vision of this Outdoor Recreation Plan and encourage users to stop, participate in an activity and appreciate the landscape.

The A82 forms one of two primary transport corridors linking the north and south of the Park, the other being the A85 between Callander and Crianlarich. For much of its length within the boundary of the Park the A82 is of a good standard relative to modern 'A' class trunk roads and in places there are adjacent off-carriageway facilities for cycling and walking. There is however a notable deviation from this overall picture at the section between Tarbet and Inverarnan. Workshop feedback highlighted a strong desire for a roadside link between Ardlui and Inverarnan. For many decades this section has suffered from acute under-investment resulting in today's chronically sub-standard road, which in most respects is not fit for purpose and for a substantial proportion of its length no better standard than most 'B' class roads. Being a crucial transport corridor this situation presents both a major economic bottleneck and also a major opportunity. The problem is how to go about funding and designing the now long overdue upgrade. The opportunity is to create, alongside the imperative fit-for-purpose transport corridor, a high quality scenic route incorporating appropriate roadside facilities and formal viewpoints that showcase (to the world) one of Scotland's finest lochs and landscapes.

There is, arguably, the potential for the A82 to rank alongside some of the world's greatest lakeside roads if a suitably ambitious and creative approach is adopted. The Scottish Government has recently committed £500k towards producing an upgrade strategy, a process which has so far involved close working with the NPA to try and secure the very best outcome while accounting for the aforementioned issues. There are numerous constraints, with the most pressing of these concerning landscape and ecology together with the principal requirement of funding what is likely to be a complex and therefore costly scheme and one which presents real challenges.

The road south of Tarbet has already been upgraded with improvements in roadside facilities. Previously improved sites are Duck Bay, Luss village and Firkin Point. The National Park Authority operates a visitor facility at Tarbet, which houses public toilets, visitor information and was recently expanded to incorporate a small leasehold coffee-bar enterprise. The Tarbet site covers 0.25ha and includes open space, picnic facilities, parking and a substantial pier which services boat cruises and water bus services on Loch Lomond during the summer months.

There are clear opportunities to emulate the relative success of the self-contained facilities at Firkin Point and Tarbet further north with the creation of at least one better-design facility to establish another self-contained but higher standard stop on Loch Lomondside. There are however few places where sufficient land is available at the lochside so the potential locations are limited.

The existing Falls of Falloch car park is of a low standard and is located where sight-lines off and on to the A82 are poor. The falls themselves are spectacular when in spate and there is reasonable justification for at least some improvements to the parking provision and visitor information at this site.

Alongside consolidation of existing stopping points to fewer, better managed facilities, there is a pressing need for improvements to infrastructure catering for walking and cycling, both in respect of opportunities for 'local' recreation such as short walks and access to hills neighbouring the road but also to ensure cyclists can safely use the road carriageway.

The Duke's Pass historic road gives a scenic alternative route linking Aberfoyle and Callander. The road climbs sinuously over the eastern shoulder of Craigmore before descending to reach Loch Achray. From here it meanders through the Trossachs, past Brig o' Turk to reach the A84 at Kilmahog. The road offers a popular scenic drive and can be busy during the summer when congestion can occasionally occur. It gives access to a number of key destinations including Loch Katrine, Tigh Mor Trossachs, Forestry Commission David Marshall Lodge Visitor Centre and the Three Lochs Forest Drive.

Superb views can be had shortly before the road descends to Loch Achray, one viewpoint in particular, located on the west side of the road, and approached on foot gives panoramic views over the Trossachs. Consequently the short path leading to a plinth and viewfinder is well used. In recent years it has become eroded and warrants remedial work to restore it to a good standard.

Current indications suggest the road operates at near capacity in serving the existing number of destinations along its length and it is therefore suggested that the existing level of use at peak times is viewed as a reasonable upper limit.

Although additional numbers of vehicles may be capable of being carried, there is some risk that the visitor experience would diminish should greater numbers of vehicles be present in the area during the summer months.

Additional visitor destinations accessed via the Duke's Pass should avoid generating significant additional traffic. Consolidation and carefully considered improvement of existing opportunities should form the focus of future development.

The West Highland Line is internationally recognised as a great scenic journey. Stations at Arrochar and Tarbet, Ardlui, Crianlarich and Tyndrum (Upper & Lower) give access to the park. All stations are near Munros and long-distance walks (Ardlui via ferry link to West Highland Way). The train timetable does not always provide time for adventurous day excursions in the Park (connections with ferries further north determine times) but inclusion of rail should be a part of outdoor recreation packages.

AIM: National Park Scenic Routes provide infrastructure and opportunities which encourage active travel and recreational activities at key points along the route(s).

ACTIONS:

- TS Action 21: Develop a pilot in the National Park for a Scottish Programme of architectural inspired view point stops which enhance the experience of the stunning landscape
- TS Action 22: Invest in visitor facilities, toilets, campgrounds, parking and develop innovative solutions for long terms sustainability
- TS Action 23: Management of visitor pressure locations through a range of appropriate measures
- TS Action 31: West Highland Line, seek full coverage of rail access and heritage in all paths leaflets produced for villages with stations. Seek active promotion of outdoor activities from stations
- TS Action 32: Work with partners to ensure scenic views from West Highland Line maintained

MONITORING

It is essential that the Park Authority and partners acknowledge the value of quality data on outdoor recreational behaviour. Such information will enable all interested parties to target finances into priority areas and continued monitoring will hopefully evidence value for money.

Action 17 of the Cycling Action Plan Scotland (CAPS) promised to “develop guidance for gathering data on cycling at a local level”, and the Park Authority will look to follow such guidance once it is published.

Also linking into CAPS it is key that stakeholders collect data that will provide a Park-specific picture of cycling and travel habits.

Visitor Counter Network

A network of visitor counters has been maintained in a number of key locations across the National Park, including the West Highland Way. The Park Authority envisages replacing these older counters, many of which use outmoded technology or had become unreliable, with electronic, fully automatic counters. Four have been deployed so far and it is intended that more be installed as funding becomes available. The objective is to generate reliable, up to date visitor counts for important sites, including those locations where counts have previously not been made (or where data has not been reliable).

The counter type being used employs infra-red detection to generate individual counts and uploads logged data automatically to a website via mobile phone communications. Technology allows for separate logging of user types, including bicycles. The website is hosted externally and data can be accessed via a secure log-in. Data is uploaded daily and is viewable on a next-day basis. Data for each counter is held on the web server and is viewable at any time and can also be interrogated using online charts and tables. The system allows any number of password holders to be created, these being controlled by the Park Authority so data can be widely and easily shared. Accessible data will be used to inform wider and better understanding of the spread of visitors to destinations in the National Park amongst relevant organisations.

Currently individual organisations in the Park collect path use information separately with minimal cross-partner liaison or sharing. There is an opportunity for partners to collaborate finances and staff resource to improve path usage and visitor data collection on a Park-wide basis.

AIM: Multi Partner visitor counter network across the park providing accessible and accurate real-time data.

ACTIONS:

- ORP Action 39: NP online people counter system
- Aspiration: Pilot Social Return On Investment or new Philanthropy Capital Evaluation Systems on spend related to an aspect of outdoor recreation infrastructure and promotion
- TS Action 4: Biennial Visitor Survey to monitor visitor profile and experience
- TS Action 5: Bench Mark with best practice destinations
- TS Action 6: Research perceptions of places and activities in the Park with potential visitors

Monitoring Success of the Outdoor Recreation Plan

It is vitally important that the Outdoor Recreation Plan bring tangible benefits to the area by concentrating all stakeholder resources towards agreed targets. To this end the success rate of completion of actions will be monitored annually through stakeholder meetings and the on-line plan will be updated at the end of each financial year to ensure that what interested parties read on-line is a live evolving entity.

AIM: Confirmation that actions are being completed within intended timescales.

