

DRAFT OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN



CONSULTATION REPORT
JUNE 2013

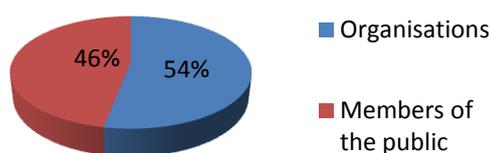
1.0 Introduction

The following report summarises the responses received from the 12 week public consultation held by Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority from 1st August 2012 to 24th October 2012 on the Draft Outdoor Recreation Plan (ORP).

The Park Authority invited responses from the general public, partners, local businesses and interested agencies via an online consultation tool. In addition, paper copies of the plan were available on request.

2.0 Response Profile

A total of 60 responses were received to the consultation. The table below summarises the response profiles. *Appendix 1* shows a list of organisations which responded.



Note: Organisations include community groups and local businesses.

3.0 Analysis of responses

Overall respondents were generally in agreement with the proposals outlined in the draft ORP. Some general comments included the need to ensure greater engagement with landowners, local businesses and other partners and agencies to develop, deliver and promote the proposed actions and aspirations.

Six key themes received support and concerted interest through the consultation process, those being:

- **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**

Several additional activities were proposed for consideration. These included:

- Game Shooting
- Running - In particular, trail, mountain and long distance running.
- Other “cani-sports” (working dogs in harness) - including canicross (running with dogs), bike or (cycling with dogs), skijor (skiing with dogs).
- Ski Touring

3.1 Active Travel

Overall there was positive support for an interconnected network of paths across the Park capable of providing active alternatives to vehicular travel.

There were a range of comments and suggestions made including the need for greater engagement with bus and train operators to investigate the provision of cycle carriages and increased bike capacity and a proposal to investigate flexible fare structures for those who wish to cycle different out-and-back routes.

A new proposal was suggested for an off road 1 mile link between Knockour hill track and Gartocharn. This received high volumes of both positive and negative comments.

Other comments suggested a need to ensure funding and resources are secured to upgrade existing cycleways and path networks before implementing new routes.

There were a range of changes suggested to the wording including the clarification of the term “footway”.

Some respondents expressed concern on the potential conflicts amongst users as a direct impact of improving access provisions. Concerns related mostly to an increase in visitor numbers and an increase in vehicular traffic.

Arrochar to Tarbet link - Support for the proposed upgrade of a 2 mile off road path and for a safe cycle path between the two villages.

3.2 Archery

Suggestion to promote archery through the Callander Target Sports Club and for the Park Authority to investigate including other targets sports in the final ORP.

3.3 Camping

Overall there was positive support for a network of semi formal campsites. Greater education and promotion of responsible behaviour was supported by respondents as was the need for greater engagement with landowners, local businesses and partners. Some respondents would also like to see both formal and semi formal camping sites permitting tents and kayakers around the Loch Lomond shore.

There were a range of suggested changes to wording within this section including a clear definition between ‘roadside camping’ and ‘wild camping’ and a suggestion to re-word the section on responsible camping in relation to anti-social behaviour and littering.

A limited number of respondents expressed concern on the lack of any actions or aspirations for wild camping.

The concept of an informal campsite network was highlighted as requiring further consultation with landowners and interested parties before further development.

3.4 Caving

Overall there was positive support to monitor trends in participation levels of caving to ensure the sustainable future for this activity and the caves enjoyed.

3.5 Climbing

Overall there was positive support for the increased promotion of climbing activities within the Park. Several respondents expressed support and willingness for collaborative working to link the National Park web portal to existing online resources.

There was also a suggestion to include a section on the availability and promotion of existing indoor climbing facilities.

A comment was also received on the need to raise awareness of the potential impacts of climbing near protected birds during the nesting / breeding period.

3.6 Cycling – Hubs

Overall there was positive support for cycling hubs to grow and concentrate increased participation into the most suitable areas highlighted. No additional areas were suggested.

Suggestions for cycling hubs included Tarbet, Balloch, Ardgartan and Crianlarich with opportunities to link into the water bus service giving visitors added diversity to their journey. Respondents also suggested Arrochar/Ardgartan as a secondary hub, noting its existing quality surfaces (south of Ardgartan) which could make this suitable for families.

Aberfoyle was also suggested as a natural cycling hub, with proposals for this to be explored as being the next National Trail Centre.

Some changes to wording were suggested including the need to differentiate more clearly the definition of a “hub” and a “community sports hub”.

Some respondents expressed concern on the quality of certain existing cycle route surfaces and the need to ensure the necessary upgrades are addressed before further promotion.

3.7 Cycling – Day

Overall there was positive support for the majority of actions detailed in the plan, particularly actions which improved opportunities for family off road cycling.

There was a suggestion to develop a new cycle route from Killin to Crianlarich and for the development of volunteer-led cycle rides to promote routes for the less experienced. Routes crossing the boundary of the Park were also proposed which linked into Perthshire, Stirling, Glasgow and Cowal.

Other comments included a proposal to investigate options for cross country rides as opposed to built trails and for shorter skill loops, pump tracks etc. to be considered near settlements. There was overall support and recognition for the publicity and increased participation that events could bring to the area.

There was commitment for further development of the Loch Lomond and proposed Loch Long water bus and the development of marketable day cycling itineraries.

Some respondents expressed concerns with the promotion of new cycling routes in areas where there are no tracks or paths. It was also proposed that any repair works on paths should take into account the needs of mountain bike users.

Two additional actions were proposed by respondents:

- traffic calming in the Park and
- developing red graded (intermediate/challenging) mountain bike routes.

3.8 Cycling – Long Distance

There was overall support for the completion of a sustainable Park-wide path network and the creation of new multi day cycling routes and itinerary packages. In particular, the benefit which may be derived from improving the road network for cyclists was recognised and supported. The need for greater engagement with train and bus operators was highlighted to investigate opportunities for the provision of cycling facilities on public transport.

There was also support for enhanced collaboration between cycle hire companies with a proposal for operators to provide a pick up/drop off service. There was also a suggestion to promote the activity offerings to an overseas market.

Suggestions for new routes included; Braeval to Callander; Inverarnan to Inveraray via Glen Shira and a suggestion to investigate the opportunity to use The Great Trossachs Path as a cycle route.

Other suggestions and comments included clarification on the proposed upgrade of the Menteith Hills path, the need to ensure the balance between accessibility and enjoyment of a wilder experience is not compromised, and the need to liaise closely with Transport Scotland to ensure cycling provision / infrastructure is considered during the A82 upgrade work. There was also a suggestion for local restaurants and cafes to provide cycle racks for visitors.

3.9 Cycling - Settlements

There was general support to develop and encourage cycling throughout the Park with particular support for the aim to introduce safe, off road cycle routes to schools.

Other comments from respondents included development of a community led cycling project in Callander and traffic calming measures within Luss village including a pedestrian zone to exclude traffic from the village

Some respondents raised concerns at the lack of firm timescales for the Tarbet Master Plan and suggested that the Park Authority should explore an interim solution.

3.10 Fishing

Overall support for the promotion of angling opportunities within the Park. Some respondents proposed that the Park Authority should investigate opportunities for co-operation between the various angling groups to share information and to ensure that the angling resource is managed as a whole and sustainably. Other suggestions included the need to ensure a consistent approach to permitting is encouraged with the income generated used to fund research.

Some respondents raised concerns there is an unfortunate link between informal camping, fishing and antisocial behaviour and more work should be done by the Park Authority to promote responsible behaviour.

3.11 Flight - powered & unpowered (excl. aircraft & helicopter)

Suggestions and comments included;

- Investigate proposals to develop access near the summit at Craig Mhor for paragliding and hang-gliding;
- Promote a paragliding event on Craig Mhor to gauge interest levels;
- A proposal to include monitoring of the Seaplane activities (currently based at Cameron House).

3.12 Horse Riding

Overall there was positive support to ensure that quality hubs throughout the park offer consistent riding surfaces, parking and signage and that designs are well promoted. Some respondents commented on the need to ensure sufficient resources and funding are in place to deliver the actions and to police these routes to avoid conflict with other users.

Other comments and suggestions included;

- Support for the creation of a loop option at Braeval and for the proposal to access the Beinn through a horse friendly gate;
- Suggestion to develop and promote circular routes from hubs where possible. A proposal was suggested for the Park Authority to engage with local stables to offer hire and/or led, multi-day rides and for parking to be improved at Lemahamish.

Concerns raised that Forest Drive is used periodically for timber extraction and would therefore not be ideal to promote as a route. Respondents also commented that Garadhban should not be a promoted route.

3.13 Kayaking & Canoeing

Overall there was positive support for a well promoted network of opportunities and most respondents were fully supportive of the proposed access and egress points, however, some comments highlighted the need to ensure the resources, funding and infrastructure are in place to deliver this and a collaborative approach is taken across the loch to ensure there is a network of entry sites with suitable infrastructure, including car parking to avoid conflict with other users.

Several comments were received relating to proposed access points including;

- Clarification on the importance of Aldlochlay as an access point
- Clarification on the proposed location of the access point at Rowardennan
- Ensure consideration of the protected black throated divers on the islands near the edge of Loch Arklet

There was a suggestion that the Teith should be included as a location and also that partners should develop route cards to promote kayaking and canoeing.

3.14 Land Based Motorised Activities

Some respondents proposed the Park Authority should support the increased provision of land based motorised activities.

3.15 Motorboating

Overall there was positive support to improve infrastructure for motor vessels on Loch Lomond and to promote the opportunities available to users. In particular there was strong support for a pilot to investigate chargeable overnight mooring and berthing facilities. Luss was suggested as a potential for the pilot. Strong support for improving facilities for landing with tenders. It was highlighted that any mooring development needs must ensure that it does not infringe on the right to anchor as part of the right of free navigation.

Some comments proposed increased berthing space at Luss and Balmaha Pier.

Courtesy moorings were also suggested to attract more boating activity as well as increasing spend ashore at riparian businesses.

3.16 Personal Water Craft

The economic benefit of personal water craft within the Park was supported as was the recent extension of the speed restrictions at Inverbeg, however, the potential conflicts with other users and impact on tourism was also highlighted. There were suggestions to amend the wording of certain actions proposed within this section.

3.17 Rowing

Overall there was positive support for the actions and there were no comments proposing actions to be removed or changed substantially. Most of the comments were around clarifying and strengthening the text and context.

Callander Meadows was suggested as a possible opportunity for recreational/pleasure boats.

3.18 Sailing

Overall there was positive support for the Park Authority to engage further with partners to improve education and awareness and for greater promotion of sailing opportunities and events on the sea lochs. Some comments related to changes in wording and the possible addition of actions. There was strong support for local businesses to work together. Other comments proposed that Loch Venachar could be a possible addition as a location for sailing and that there is an opportunity for the Park Authority to liaise with RYA (Scotland) on the development of their facility strategy.

3.19 Swimming

Overall there was positive support to increase open water swimming participation levels in a sustainable and safe manner. Some local businesses commented that there was an opportunity to promote existing businesses who could provide training in safety coverage. Swimmer safety concerns were raised by several respondents.

Events were recognised as having the potential for greater economic benefit within the Park area. There was a suggestion for the Park Authority to liaise directly with West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) and local businesses on WDC's proposals for the Balloch Community Outdoor Sports Hub which included a swimming interest.

3.20 Stalking

Overall there was positive support for the National Park to advocate uptake of the Heading for the Scottish Hills web- based information system and to monitor levels of participation. The need to engage directly with SNH on proposals to increase coverage of the Heading for the Scottish Hills service was highlighted. Comments were received on language and suggestions made that grouped stalking along with other field sports.

3.21 Walking – Upland

Overall respondents agreed with the proposals to ensure upland paths are maintained and improved at the sites detailed in the plan. Some respondents commented the timescales for some of the proposed works were disappointing, however, the balance between funding and priorities was also recognised.

The repair works proposed for Conic Hill, Braeleny Bridge and Cruach Tairbeirt were highlighted as priority actions by respondents.

Other comments included:

- proposal to link existing paths to create longer, integrated routes through the Park and beyond;
- proposal to consider Luss Alps as a hill walking route;
- Proposal to create access above and below the rapid at Auchessan, creating a grade 1 tour from Crianlarich to outskirts of Killin, with existing public transport to 'shuttle' back.

3.22 Walking – Visitor Hubs and Feature Paths

Overall there was positive support to offer high quality walking options which cater for all abilities of walkers. In particular the proposals for Leny falls were supported, and the potential issues in relation to the road crossing and linked access were acknowledged.

Several respondents highlighted the limited availability of loop trails and/or lower level options available.

There was encouraging support from businesses and partner organisations expressing their interest to work together with the Park Authority to encourage mutual respect between the different user groups to reduce any potential conflicts.

3.23 Walking – Long Distance

Overall there was positive support to promote and raise the profile of existing routes to create new multi day route options. A proposed circular walk around Loch Lomond was supported as were the proposals for the 3 Lochs Way and the new proposed routes. Clarity was sought by some respondents as to what path developments were envisaged between Balloch and Gartocharn in relation to Aspiration 57 and rewording of the term “Southern Loch Lomond Link” was suggested.

The opportunity for these routes to be used by runners was also highlighted with a suggestion to promote running events on these routes. The proposals for safe cycle parking was fully supported and commended.

Finally, there was particular support for the action to support management groups of all long distance routes.

3.24 Walking – Settlements

Overall there was positive support for well promoted walking networks which provide functional links within settlements. The proposed priority repairs to hill paths in the ORP were also commended. Some proposals suggested that path improvements could also have additional benefits such as flood prevention and enhanced planting and drainage.

There were both positive and negative comments to the proposals for signage with some respondents expressing concerns that there were already too many signs in the Park.

Some respondents proposed the Park Authority could explore greater all abilities access and facilities on these routes by providing wheelchairs or mobility scooters for hire.

Health & Safety and environmental concerns were raised by respondents on the aspiration to create a national park route by linking sections of the WHW, Cowal Way, Three Lochs Way and Southern Loch Lomond link.

3.25 Wilderness Exploration

Overall there was positive support to promote the Park Authority as a destination for wilderness experiences through better packaging of opportunities and itineraries in conjunction with improved levels of information on key areas.

Guided exploration, web based information and events were recognised as key to the promotion of this activity. A regular adventure race in the Park to showcase the wilderness potential was proposed.

4.0 Sustainable Activity Promotion

Some partners expressed an interest to engage with the Park Authority in the development of the tourism strategy, with a particular focus promoting existing online information hubs to raise awareness of existing and new opportunities and derive local benefits.

Events were supported with opportunities for greater engagement with local businesses and organisations to initiate a Park wide approach to coordinating events so to maximise participation. Increased promotion of the existing cycling provision on Loch Lomond waterbus was welcomed.

Some respondents expressed a need for further clarification on the marketing role and boundaries of the Park Authority.

Other comments included the need to ensure clear lines of communication between public agencies, destination organisations and private businesses on complimentary marketing strategies and campaigns.

5.0 Packaging and Promotion

There was concerted support and a shared appetite for high quality, targeted promotion. Several suggestions for itineraries were proposed and will be considered during preparation of the final ORP.

6.0 Events and Competitions

The development and promotion of both new and existing events was commended and supported throughout all the comments received from respondents.

Suggestions included showcasing the recreational strengths of the area through themed seasonal festivals and working with event hubs such as Loch Lomond Shores and gateway towns such as Callander and Helensburgh.

The promotion and support of cycling events was fully endorsed with opportunities for greater collaborative working highlighted. There was also a suggestion for the Park Authority to develop a working group to encourage and host a large scale cycling sportive similar to the Etape Caledonia event.

Some respondents expressed concerns that some of the actions were not clear in terms of timescales.

7.0 Sustainable Transport

Overall there was positive support for the actions to improve and provide sustainable transport within the Park. In particular, key partners intimated they would like to engage with the Park Authority to further develop transport information and opportunities for community transport and demand responsive transport.

The provision of capacity on public transport for equipment such as bicycles, walking poles etc was seen as a critical requirement for visitors if using public transport to enjoy the outdoor recreational activities within the Park.

Some respondents commented that the cost and current availability of public transport was a barrier for visitors to the park. The ability to travel around the Park independently and at visitors' "own leisure" was important to them for their experience of the Park.

The need to ensure coordinated timings between public travel (bus and train) and waterbus services to enable seamless visitor experience was highlighted. The waterbus and cycle hire opportunities at Tarbet were supported and highlighted as having great potential to encourage visitors to stop in the village. The increased provision of cycle hire opportunities was recognised as a complimentary addition to the existing waterbus services. Tarbet was highlighted as having the potential to become a recognised starting point for activities with integral links to the eastern shore of Loch Lomond: Ben Lomond; Rowardennan; Inversnaid and the Trossachs.

There was interest in exploring a project to replicate the Loch Lomond waterbus model on Loch Long between Arrochar and Lochgoilhead to further develop activity offerings to our visitors as well as increasing the profile of Arrochar/Arrochar Alps as a destination for visitors.

Itineraries which combine Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond using cycle / waterbus were proposed and supported.

8.0 National Park Scenic Routes

The A82 was recognised as being one of the primary transport corridors linking the north and south of the Park.

The section of road between Stonymollan roundabout and Luss was highlighted as a concern from respondents due to frequent bottlenecks at weekends and peak times.

The need for future upgrading of the section between Tarbet and Inverarnan was also highlighted.

Some respondents proposed a new path for walkers to provide a link between existing paths at the north end of Loch Lomond and the West Highland Way at Inverarnan.

Overgrown vegetation was highlighted as a concern with comments suggesting regular maintenance to provide our visitors with the opportunity to view the landscape and the lochs.

Other comments included the need for separate access for walkers and cyclists on the entire route between Tarbet and access to West Highland Way at Beinglas Farm and a suggestion for other train stations to be included on the western edge of the park, i.e. Helensburgh .

Cruise Loch Lomond advised of their intention to operate an integrated cruise / waterbus ticket office; cycle hire and visitor information facility at Tarbet.

9.0 Monitoring

Opportunities for collaborative working with partners were regularly highlighted throughout the comments received which would support the collation of data on recreational behaviour within the park.

10.0 Conclusion and Next Steps

The level of comments and suggestions included in the responses clearly illustrates the interest and passion to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities across Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park over the next 5 years.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all respondents for their detailed and comprehensive feedback to our Draft ORP. All responses were considered as the National Park Authority finalised the plan.

The final ORP was submitted to the National Park Board on 17th June 2013 for approval and was adopted. The Executive Summary of the plan is available on the National Park Authority's website and the final online version will be available for viewing later in the year.

Copies of this report can be obtained from;

Office National Park Headquarters
 Carrochan
 Balloch
 G83 8EG
 Tel No. 01389 722 600

Website www.lochlomond-trossachs.org

Appendix 1 – List of organisations who responded

Organisation Respondents
Trossachs.co.uk
Helensburgh Canoe Club
The Great Trossachs Forest
Callander Countryside
Abernethy Ardeonaig
Walk Wild Scotland
Wild Biking Business
Outward Bound Metro
RSPB Scotland
National Trust for Scotland
Trossachs Riding Action Group
Scottish Natural Heritage
Strathclyde Passenger Transport
CnDo Scotland
Loch Ard Sailing Club
Loch Lomond Sailing Club
Loch Lomond Association
RYA Scotland
Sportscotland
Stirling Council
Ramblers Scotland
Cruise Loch Lomond
Mountaineering Council of Scotland
FCS
Skidaddle
Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs
Boturich Castle
Luss Estates
Bike Trossachs/McLaren Leisure Centre
Glenfalloch Estate
Love Loch Lomond
Balloch & Haldane Community Council
Kilmarnock Community Council