

Tourism, recreation and local residents

CAMPING PRESSURES

The National Park is very close to a large number of urban areas and can receive high levels of visitor pressure, which often includes informal camping activity around popular loch shores. As one of the busiest rural areas in Scotland this specific area needs active management to deal with the visitor pressure.

The Park Authority sought to ease camping pressures and enhance the visitor experience in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park through the delivery of different initiatives. Unfortunately, our most popular and accessible loch shores are suffering from damaging overuse and the irresponsible behaviour of some. You can access some of these images on our Flickr account



Conflicting National Park aims:

As a National Park Authority we regularly have to make difficult decisions over what is the best way to proceed. At the heart of these decisions are two, sometimes conflicting, National Park Aims.

- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the Park
- To promote enjoyment and understanding of the special qualities of the Park, including enjoyment in the form of recreation



Role of the National Park Authority in managing pressures



The experience on East Loch Lomond led to the consideration of further byelaws and the 'Your Park' project, to address similar problems in other areas of the National Park.

Following a public consultation and approval by Scottish Ministers, Camping Management Byelaws were introduced in 2017 covering some of the most heavily visited loch shore areas of the National Park.

A series of measures and infrastructure improvements were brought in to support the introduction of the byelaws including engagement, education and information tools, a seasonal camping permit scheme within Camping Management Zones (see map below) and the development of new, low-cost campsites within these zones.

The National Park aims to increase enjoyment of our National Park, through providing opportunities for people to camp on our loch shores in well maintained sites, which have the right facilities and where visitor numbers are managed sustainably. We believe that this will allow visitors to enjoy these popular beauty spots and help protect the environment for future generations to enjoy.

camping facilities and toilets and a programme of signage improvements. At the same time, Stirling Council introduced a ban on drinking Alcohol in the restricted zone.

East Loch Lomond is regularly patrolled by both National Park Rangers and the Police during peak holiday periods and the summer months.

Visitors to the area are welcomed, advised of the byelaws and the justifications behind them and encouraged to enjoy the area but at the same time to act responsibly and respect it. National Park Rangers and the Police are authorised to enforce the byelaws and encourage compliance.



Abandoned campsite



The East Loch Lomond Camping Byelaws were introduced in 2011 to help tackle problems of mis-use and overuse. The loch shore had been suffering for many years and the National Park Authority introduced byelaws to help get the area back to being a place that both locals and visitors can enjoy, and reduce the impacts of years of visitor pressure and anti-social behaviour.

A number of other measures were also implemented as part of the East Loch Lomond Visitor Management Plan, including car park upgrades, provision of



Environmental Impacts



In most areas where camping was historically popular but is now prohibited from March to September, findings to date indicate there have been improvements in terms of vegetation and bare ground recovery. In many areas where managed camping is permitted there are slower signs of recovery, or in a few places declines in vegetation and bare ground condition.

The overall numbers of irresponsible fire sites has been in general decline for a number of years including prior to the byelaws. Numbers of fire sites have remained relatively low in the Camping Management Zones, with slightly higher numbers in permit areas.

Findings on litter presents a complex picture. Generally litter is being found less frequently, however when it is found, it tends to be in higher volumes than pre-byelaw era. Specifically camping-related litter was only the fourth most common type of litter found in popular camping areas over the three years.



Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is a special place. You are in a Camping Management Zone. From March to September camping is only permitted in campsites and permit areas.

To find out where to camp, buy a permit or book a pitch visit: www.lochlomond-trossachs.org

Failure to comply with the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management System 2017, between March and September, can result in a fine of up to £200.



Irresponsible Behaviour

- Prior to the introduction of the byelaws there was some concern that there could be widespread disregard or deliberate contravention of them once in place, however the vast majority of campers complied with the byelaws.
- Of the total number of people that camped in a permit area or one of the new low-cost campsites over the three seasons, 2,492 (3.5%) of those who camped had their details taken in relation to an alleged contravention of the byelaws.
- During the time of the implementation of the byelaws the incidences of specific camping-related antisocial behaviour have remained low. From all available data, there is no significant change in the level of antisocial behaviour across the Camping Management Zones to date and visitors have indicated they feel safe when camping.

Other Findings

- **Number and profile of campers:** Over the three seasons that the byelaws have been in operation so far, more than 70,000 people (57,000+ adults and 13,000+ children) have camped in a permit area or one of two new low-cost campsites. The number of adults camping increased by 62% from 2017 to 2019 and the number of children camping rose by 90% from 2017 to 2019.
- **Camping supply and demand:** The provision for informal camping created through the permit scheme and low-cost campsites appears to have been sufficient to meet demand. Over the 642 nights that the byelaws have been in place (March – September each year in 2017- 2019), so far capacity was reached on three nights.
- **Camping satisfaction levels:** feedback surveys sent after every stay have been completed by almost 5000 people camping. Satisfaction scores have risen each year, with 93% of respondents saying they would be 'quite likely' or 'very likely' to recommend staying in a permit area in 2019.



Other Findings (continued)



- **Camping volume and density:** the byelaws are managing both the number and density of people camping at peak times. The overall number of tents recorded in Camping Management Zones has declined since the introduction of the byelaws. Despite the increases in people being seen in areas where camping is permitted from 2017 to 2019, the overall density of people camping is still lower than prior to the introduction of the byelaws.
- **Human waste:** Campers feedback and Ranger patrol data indicate that inappropriate toileting behaviour continues to pose an ongoing problem in some areas within the Camping Management Zones, particularly around busy parts of Loch Earn. Learning from an innovative behaviour change pilot in 2019 offers potential for further development and testing in other areas, to work towards tackling this issue.
- **Displacement:** There is currently very little direct or anecdotal evidence of displacement of informal camping being caused by the byelaws, although camping associated problems do continue to take place in some historic sites outside the Camping Management Zones within and around the boundary of the National Park.
- **Recreational impacts:** Although there is no evidence of direct correlation with the byelaws, increases in levels of recreational activities such as walking, fishing, canoeing and cycling have been recorded at popular lochshore locations since 2017, including in Camping Management Zones.
- **Visitor economy:** Findings to date indicate that the visitor economy remains strong across the National Park. While not directly attributable to the camping byelaws, it appears that there has been no negative impact on the tourism economy of the National Park.
- **Public perceptions:** In terms of wider public perceptions, the majority of National Park residents including businesses remain in favour of the byelaws.
- **Adaptive management:** All three seasons have provided real opportunities for the National Park Authority, its partners and stakeholders to 'learn through doing', particularly in the first season when the concept of camping byelaws and permit areas was new to many. This has been a major new programme of work, with some steep learning curves; yet staff, visitors, communities and partners adapted, making the 2018 and 2019 seasons more straightforward than the first season in 2017.

Following the initial years of implementation there should be continued investment in engagement and education with all visitors. This would include responsible camping and fire-lighting; waste disposal and toileting behaviours. This could be targeted at areas where managed camping is permitted; alongside an appropriate monitoring programme to ensure the Park Authority can respond to visitor pressures



Questions and pupil enquiry

- Why does the National Park have a Respect Your Park campaign?
- Why do the Camping Management Byelaws cover zones along loch shores?
- What other solutions can you suggest to address the anti-social behaviour associated with irresponsible camping?
- What other ways can we promote responsible camping in the National Park?



FURTHER GUIDANCE

Online

- [Case study of East Loch Lomond](#)
- [Camping in the National Park](#)
- [Camping Management Byelaws](#)
- [Annual reports on Camping Management Byelaws 2017](#)
- [Three year report on Camping Management Byelaws 2017](#)

Video clips

- [Your Park – Transforming Our Loch Shores](#)
- [Camping in the National Park](#)
- [National Park Land Use video](#)
- [Exploring Loch Lomond & The Trossachs](#)
- [Responsible Camping](#)

Site visits

- Balmaha on east Loch Lomond is a great location to base a field visit, with the National Park Visitor Centre and Outdoor Classroom available for school groups.
- Other sites suitable for field visits include Luss, Loch Lomond Shores and Loch Lubnaig in the Trossachs.