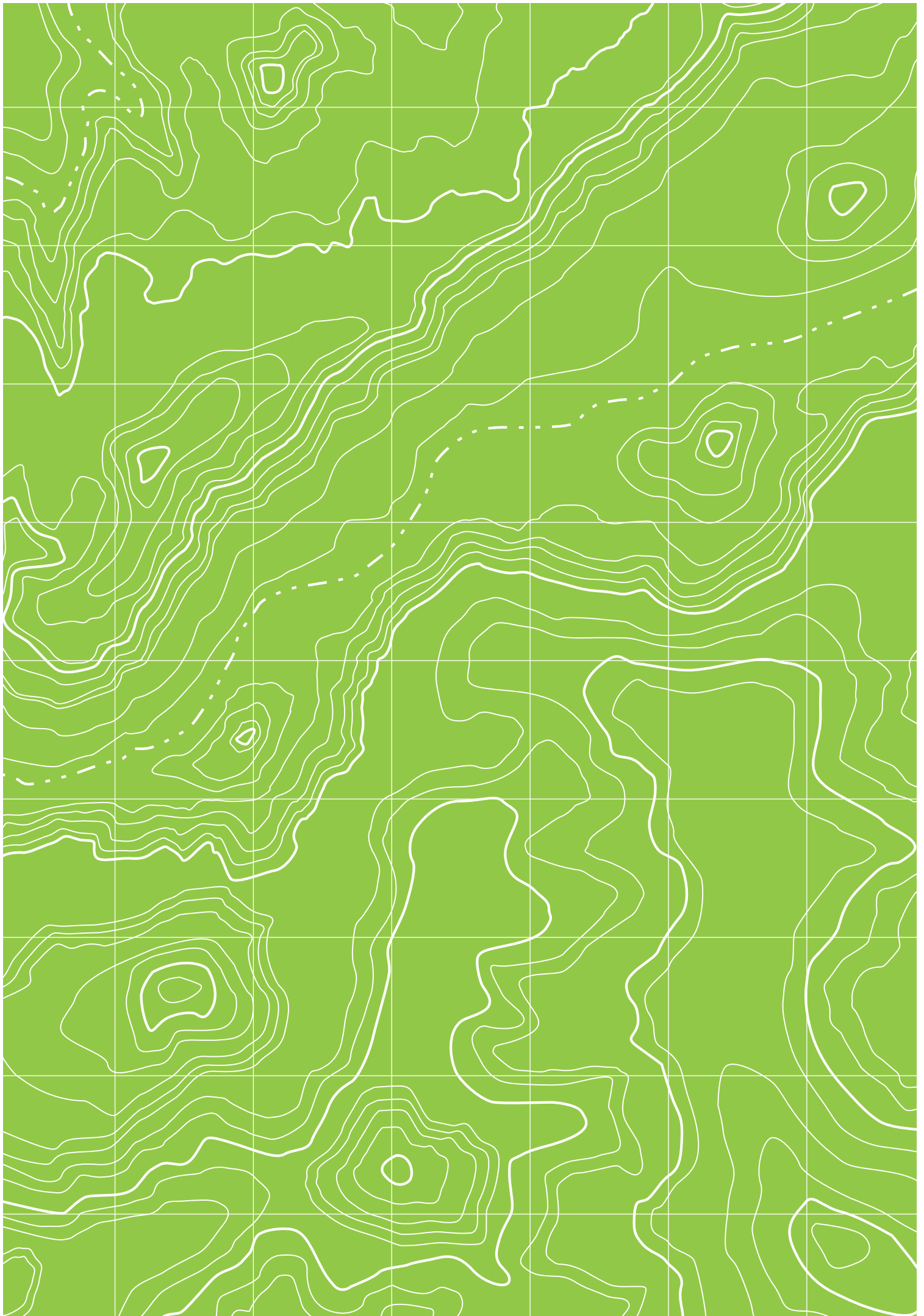




OUT THERE

A **sportscotland** policy statement on sport and physical recreation in the outdoors

sportscotland
The National Agency for Sport



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In 1996, sportscotland published *Earth Wind and Water*, our policy statement on the planning of natural resources for sport and physical recreation. Much has changed since that time.

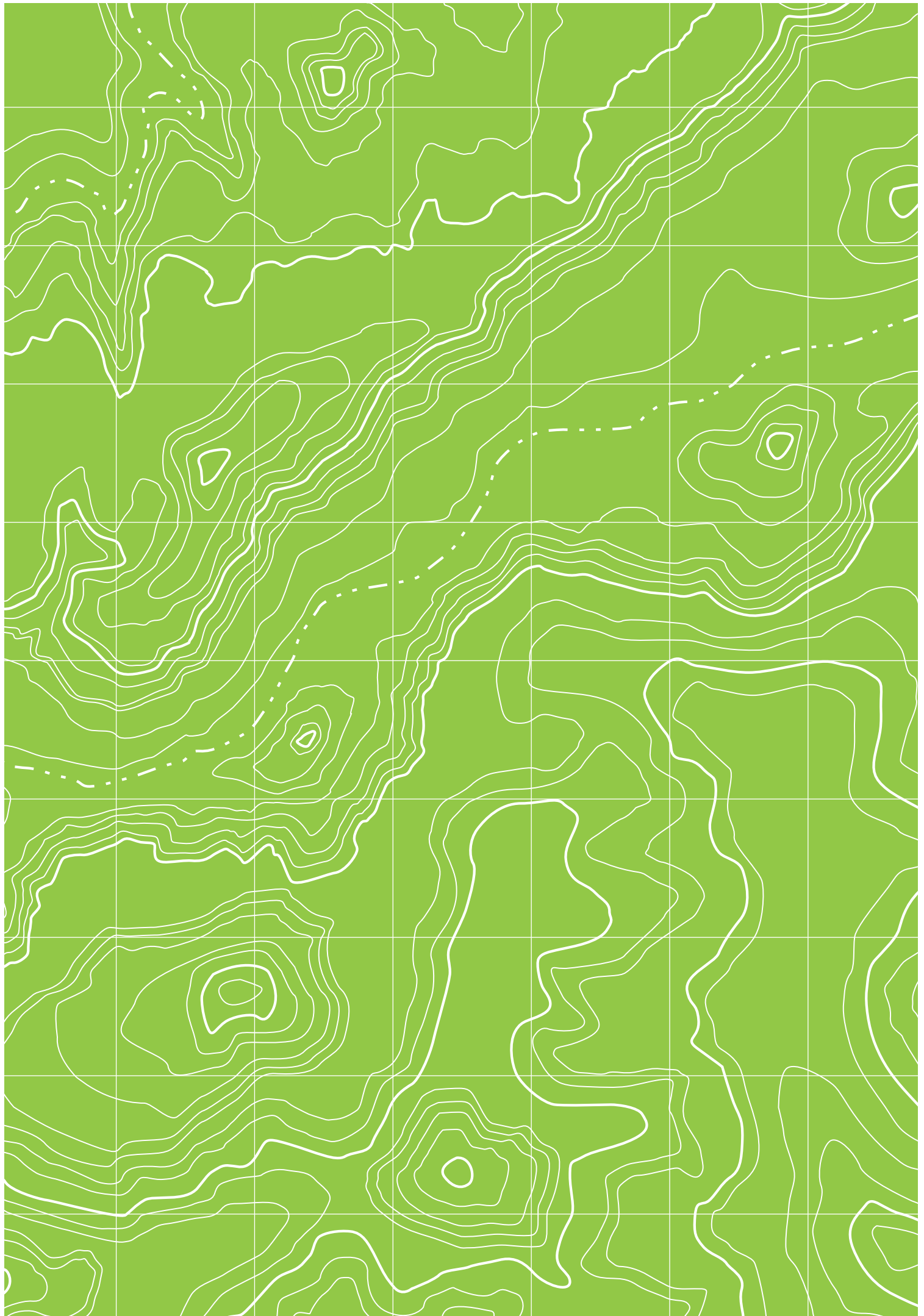
National parks have been established in Scotland, with a remit which includes the promotion of recreation. The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 has introduced a statutory right of responsible access to Scotland's outdoors. The Act has also given local authorities a range of new powers, duties and resources to provide for sport and recreation in the outdoors. Access restrictions imposed because of the 2001 outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease highlighted how important and popular recreational access to the outdoors is.

In recent years, new and different users, techniques, facilities, opportunities, equipment and attitudes have emerged in an increasingly diverse range of outdoor sport and recreation activities. In addition, public policy objectives relating to sustainability, health, biodiversity, equity and physical activity are having a direct influence on the development of sport and recreation in Scotland.

Given such changes, we consider it is appropriate to review and restate our position on sport and physical recreation in the outdoors.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Louise Martin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Louise Martin CBE
Chair, sportscotland





The purpose of *Out There* is to present **sportscotland's** thinking, aspirations and position on issues we consider important and relevant to sport and physical recreation practised in the outdoors.

Out There provides an approved and consulted-on position upon which to base our policy responses, and with which to promote and advocate **sportscotland's** stance on relevant issues.

Out There highlights the range of positive work which **sportscotland** has done – and continues to do – to support sport and recreation in the outdoors.

Out There is about recognising the popularity and value of sport and physical recreation in the outdoors. It promotes the need to appreciate and consider these interests, and to take a positive approach to their planning, management and provision.

It is hoped that *Out There* will generate thought and debate, and will inform and encourage our partners' approach to managing and providing for sport and recreation in Scotland's outdoors.

Bold text statements

Out There includes a series of statements presented in **bold text**. These statements are used to highlight, emphasise and provide clarity on **sportscotland's** thinking, aspirations and position on particular issues or policy areas.

Work to support sport and recreation in the outdoors

Throughout the text of *Out There* we detail examples of the range of work we have done, are currently doing, or hope to do in the future to support sport and recreation in the outdoors. These examples are presented in green boxes like this.

A balanced approach

Out There has been developed with the interests of sport and physical recreation as the starting point, but in a way which recognises the range of other interests in the outdoors and the need to balance sport and recreation interests with these.

It is important to note that *Out There* is not a sports development strategy. Although it outlines our aspirations, approach to and position on sport in the outdoors, it is not a statement on **sportscotland's** investment priorities in this area.

Out There was prepared following two periods of consultation, including with the appropriate divisions of the Scottish Government, and has been approved by the **sportscotland** Board.

VISION



sportscotland looks to a future where sport and recreation in the outdoors is increasingly welcomed and positively managed, with an informed approach. Where outdoor sport is well resourced and well promoted, and is supported by the provision of quality services, facilities and infrastructure, set in a quality environment. Where the value and contribution of outdoor sport and recreation is recognised and where existing opportunities to participate are protected and enhanced, and new opportunities developed, for all sectors of Scottish society.

Our vision sees sport and recreation practised sustainably and responsibly, fully respecting Scotland's natural and cultural heritage. We see harmony between the range of different sports that take place in the outdoors and between those who participate in sport and recreation and those who live and work in the outdoors and who manage the land and water.

We envisage a future where people from all sectors of society want to take part in sport and recreation in the outdoors. Where they can, easily, and are encouraged and motivated to do so.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



The following principles underpin **sportscotland's** approach to sport and recreation in the outdoors.

Partnership and dialogue

We believe in the importance and value of partnership working, and of learning from each other's knowledge and experience. We endorse the value of consensus building and consider dialogue and understanding of others' positions and points of view to be essential for effective planning, management, issue resolution and policy development.

A fair and balanced approach

We seek a fair and balanced approach to the management of sport and recreation in the outdoors. It is important that decision-making is based on knowledge and understanding, and takes all interests and viewpoints into account.

Equity and social justice

We recognise and promote the right of all sectors of society to have an equal chance to take part in sport and recreation. We believe that no-one should be discriminated against for reasons of gender, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation or social background.

Sustainability

We support the sustainable use of Scotland's outdoors for sport and recreation, which recognises the need to use the environment, and the range of social and economic benefits that can deliver, but at a level and in a manner which ensures the long term conservation and enhancement of the environment.

Responsible use

We support the responsible exercise of sport and recreation in the outdoors. Irresponsible use and behaviour is not only detrimental to the interests of others, but can also impact negatively on recreational experience and the interests of the participant.

It is crucial for sport and recreation to respect, integrate and work responsibly with each other, with the environment and with the range of interests apparent in Scotland's outdoors. It is also important that those who interact with sport in the outdoors respond to it in a responsible and positive manner.

Inclusive decision-making

We consider it important to involve sport interests in any decision-making processes that will impact on sport and recreation in the outdoors.



Section 1

Outdoor sport and recreation in context



1.1 *Out There* and sport in the outdoors

sportscotland's remit, as defined by our Royal Charter, is for sport and physical recreation. In referring to sport in *Out There*, it is important to appreciate that this also extends to physical recreation. While *Out There* is relevant to sport practised in a formal manner, it is just as relevant to sport practised recreationally and on a less formal basis. The terms 'sport' and 'recreation' are used interchangeably in *Out There*.

Out There is concerned with those sports that use, are attracted to, and are dependent on, Scotland's outdoor environment for their practice. By the outdoors we mean Scotland's countryside and coast and the green spaces and networks of our towns and cities. *Out There* is aimed at those sports which use our lochs and rivers, our hills and mountains, our forests, our cliffs and caves and white water, the sea and our path networks. As such, *Out There* is relevant to a broad range of activities, such as canoeing, horse riding, walking, cycling, mountaineering, orienteering, hang gliding, caving, motor sports, surfing and skiing.

For clarity, *Out There* is not aimed at less active outdoor recreation such as wildlife watching or picnicking. In addition, while **sportscotland** has a remit for angling,

Out There, in referring to sport, does not intend for this to include activities such as grouse shooting or wildfowling for which we have no remit.

Out There is primarily (although not exclusively) aimed at and of most relevance to those activities that take place in the outdoor environment itself. It is less relevant to activity which takes place in purpose-built facilities such as climbing walls, swimming pools, shooting ranges, dry ski slopes, or other wholly artificial facilities (excluding paths and trails).

It is important to make clear that *Out There* is not just about Scotland's new right of responsible access. It addresses a range of sport and recreation activities and settings in addition to those included within access rights, and touches on a range of policy areas and issues that are independent of the right of access.

Finally, while it is important to define what is meant by sport in the context of *Out There* and to recognise the differences that exist between different outdoor sports, *Out There* focuses primarily on the context, environment and circumstances that outdoor sports take place in, rather than on individual sports themselves.



1.2 Scotland: an ideal environment for sport in the outdoors

Scotland's outdoors is richly endowed with resources that are attractive to participation in sport and recreation. Scotland's marine environment, its inland water, its hills, mountains and glens, its caves and cliffs, its weather conditions, its tides and currents, its scenery, its flora and fauna, its wild land, and its facilities and infrastructure, combine to provide a range of outstanding opportunities to enjoy sport and recreation.

In Scotland, you can hill walk, mountain bike, sea kayak, raft, scuba dive, cave, ice climb, surf, ski, board, sail and glide. All of these activities can be done within close proximity of each other and in close proximity to Scotland's main population centres.

Scotland's environment provides conditions of international quality for outdoor sport and recreation, including sailing in the Minch; winter climbing on the north face of Ben Nevis; windsurfing at Tiree; scuba diving at Scapa Flow; surfing off Thurso and the Western Isles; mountain biking in the Borders and at Aonach Mor; and sea kayaking off the coast of Skye. People come from all over the world to fish Scotland's salmon rivers.

Scotland hosts some of the world's premier events for outdoor sports, such as the Tiree Wave Classic and the Mountain Bike World Championships at Nevis Range. Scotland has a range of world-class purpose-built facilities for outdoor sports, including the Edinburgh International Climbing Arena, the downhill mountain bike course at Aonach Mor, and the Ice Factor in Kinlochleven. And Scotland has produced world-class athletes in outdoor sports, with world champions and gold, silver and bronze medallists in cycling, equestrianism, rallying, trial biking, orienteering, skiing and snowboarding, angling, canoeing, sailing, open water swimming, mountaineering and water skiing. Scottish climbers have an international reputation for the discovery of new climbing areas and first ascents of new routes around the world.

Outdoor sport is also valued for the simple joy of participation. Large numbers take part, not necessarily for outstanding achievement or competitive success but purely to get out in the fresh air and enjoy the scenery and the company of their friends; to gather their thoughts, to take a bit of exercise and develop their skills; and for the thrill and challenge their particular activity may give them.

Safety in the Scottish hills

sportscotland has funded a range of work aimed at promoting safe and responsible practice in Scotland's hills and at increasing people's confidence and ability in going to the hills for sport and recreation purposes.

sportscotland Avalanche Information Service

The **sportscotland** Avalanche Information Service (www.sais.gov.uk) provides daily forecasts during the winter season of the avalanche and climbing conditions at five key climbing areas in Scotland. The website has grown to become the main dissemination of the Snow and Avalanche Reports, with over 3,000 visits on a busy winter's day.

Mountain Weather Information Service

sportscotland funds the Mountain Weather Information Service (www.mwis.org.uk) which provides information on mountain weather conditions over five mountain areas in Scotland. The service provides the first publicly-funded comprehensive mountain weather forecast service for outdoor users in Scotland and is a major resource in promoting the safety and enjoyment of all who go into the outdoors.

Virtually Hillwalking

sportscotland funded the development of this CD-ROM, which uses an interactive walk on a Scottish mountain to introduce the principles of mountain navigation with map and compass. It features exercises and examples showing basic navigation techniques, and a 3D virtual world to help the user relate a 2D map to the real world it represents.



1.3 The value of sport in the outdoors

Sport is about people and is an intrinsic part of Scottish life... At an individual level, sport can provide a sense of achievement and enjoyment. At a collective level, it fosters community spirit and a sense of togetherness... Sport is fun, and provides individuals with the opportunity to develop skills and self esteem... Sport helps generate a spirit of national pride... Sport significantly improves our health and well-being, supports employment for tens of thousands of people in Scotland and helps the economy flourish.

Our Plan 2007/2011 ([sportscotland 2007](#))

1.3.1 The benefits of outdoor sport and recreation

In addition to sport generally, sport and recreation practised specifically in the outdoors can deliver a number of quite distinct benefits:

Participants interact with nature and the environment and with a range of land management practices. The lessons and experiences gained from this interaction can help build an appreciation, understanding and respect for the natural environment and the outdoors and its practices.

Outdoor sports, such as walking and cycling, are accessible and affordable for many to participate in. People can participate at a level suited to their opportunity, needs, wants and abilities, encouraging large numbers to do so. As such, activities such as walking and cycling can contribute positively to encouraging participation and to social inclusion.

Outdoor activities can present a challenge and sense of excitement particular to interacting with the outdoor environment. The sense of achievement or exhilaration experienced can be quite unique.

There are a range of life skills that can be learned and developed through participation in outdoor sports, such as resourcefulness, courage, risk assessment, confidence, personal accountability, communication skills, decision-making, patience, self esteem, cooperation, trust and empathy with others.

Participation can generate quite distinct social interactions, building strong and long lasting relationships and contributing strongly to social cohesion.

Many outdoor sports are participated in and present the opportunity to participate, throughout an individual's life.

The sense of escape and freedom from everyday lives, facilitated by the relatively unregulated nature of many activities and the environment in which they are practiced, can have particular benefits, particularly in relation to mental well-being.

1.3.2 Participation

Figures from the Scottish Recreation Survey¹ show that in 2004/05, Scottish residents made an estimated 156 million visits to Scotland's countryside. Activities such as walking can attract up to 30% of the Scottish population annually, with 10% cycling.

sportscotland's figures on participation for 2005² show that 30% of Scottish adults (over 16 years) walked two miles or more at least once a month. This is around 875,000 people. 11% cycled, 4% went hillwalking, 3% angling, 1% horse riding, and 1% skiing and snowboarding.

There have been steady increases in participation in walking and cycling since the 1980s.

1. Scottish Recreation Survey 2004/05, SNH Commissioned Report No. 183.

2. Participation in Sport in Scotland, **sportscotland** Research Update 2005.



The popularity of sport and recreation in the outdoors reflects a trend in the increasing popularity of activities that can be done as an individual or those that occur in informal or family settings.

Sports participation figures

sportscotland regularly produces statistics on sports participation, including at a detailed level for sports practiced in the outdoors. Information is presented in a range of categories including for example, on age and gender, disability and ethnicity and for local authority area.

1.3.3 Economic value

Outdoor sports contribute significantly to the economy of Scotland, both through direct expenditure and indirectly through sustaining employment and income generation. Sport and recreation in the outdoors is integral to Scotland's tourism product.

Figures from VisitScotland³ state that in 2003, on visits where walking formed the main purpose of the tourist trip, UK residents spent £125m in Scotland. Those who came to Scotland to go fishing spent £58m; those who came for water sports spent £32m; cyclists spent £20m and snow sports contributed £15m to the economy.

Research carried out by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)⁴ estimated a net annual expenditure by walkers/mountaineers in the HIE area of £245.7m for 2002/03, with the equivalent of 4,466 full-time jobs. A spend of £89.9m was estimated for watersports with the equivalent of 1,574 full-time jobs; £28.8m was estimated for snowsports, with 538 full-time jobs; £24.1m was estimated for cycling with 440 full-time jobs, £15.3m estimated for equestrianism, with 282 full-time jobs; and £15.6m was estimated for sea angling with 291 full-time jobs.

The 2002 Mountain Bike World Championships at Aonach Mor, Fort William, brought £600,000 to the local economy over three days⁵. A 2003 assessment⁶ of the economic impact of water-related recreation and tourism in the River Spey catchment found that anglers contributed £10.9m to the local economy, supporting 367 jobs, with water sports (primarily canoeing) contributing £1.7m locally, supporting 48 jobs.

The British Horse Society estimate that every horse, of which there are approximately 100,000 in Scotland, contributes £1,700 per annum to its local economy.

The contribution of outdoor sports to the economy is significant and made even more so because income and jobs are brought to rural and often remote rural areas. Furthermore, participation often takes place out of the main tourist season, sustaining year round employment and income generation.

77% of all hillwalking and mountaineering visitor days to the Highlands and Islands in 1995 were, for example, made between October and June⁷. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) figures⁸ highlight that over 60% of sport and recreational visits to the Cairngorms in 1997/98 were during the spring, winter and autumn.

It is clear that outdoor sport is of huge importance in Scotland, socially and economically, and at a more basic level, for the hours of fun and enjoyment it delivers. Sport is fundamentally a positive force and it is important to fully appreciate this in any approach to sport that is taken.

3. VisitScotland Factsheets 2003.

4. Economic Impact and Development Opportunities for Outdoor and Environment Related Recreation in the Highlands and Islands, HIE Commissioned Research Report, 2004.

5. Fort William World Cup, Economic Impact Study, sportscotland 2002.

1.4 The strategic context for outdoor sport

The following strategic documents set a context for the policy position outlined in *Out There*.



Reaching Higher – Scotland's national strategy for sport

(Scottish Government 2007)

In 2007 the Scottish Government published *Reaching Higher*, the national strategy for sport in Scotland. The strategy presents a vision for Scotland as:

- a country where sport is more widely available to all;
- a country where sporting talent is recognised and nurtured;
- a country achieving and sustaining world-class performances in sport.

To achieve this vision the strategy identifies two national challenges of increasing participation and improving performance in Scottish sport. Four national policy objectives are set out as the building blocks to help address these challenges:

- well trained people – such as coaches, officials and volunteers;
- strong organisations – primarily local authorities and governing bodies of sport;
- quality facilities;
- player pathways – to ensure the mechanisms are in place to encourage and allow an individual to develop to their full potential, including to an elite level, in sport.



Our plan 2007/2011

(sportsScotland 2007)

sportsScotland's mission, as detailed in our corporate plan, is to encourage everyone in Scotland to discover and develop their own sporting experience, helping increase participation and improve performance in Scottish sport.

sportsScotland is identified as playing a key role in the delivery of *Reaching Higher*.

Three key principles underpin our corporate plan:

- developing a sporting infrastructure – people, organisations and facilities;
- creating effective sporting pathways – creating opportunities for people to participate in sport at any level and at any stage in their life;
- embedding ethics and equity throughout sport.

Seven priority areas of work have been identified:

- Active Schools Network;
- Coaching;
- Community sport – sports clubs and community organisations;
- Performance Development;
- Quality Facilities;
- Strong Partners;
- Strong **sportsScotland**.

Under these priorities, **sportsScotland** has and will continue to carry out a range of work to benefit outdoor sports.

Specific reference is made in both *Reaching Higher* and in **sportsScotland**'s corporate plan to the importance of Scotland's outdoor environment for sport and recreation. Reference is made to the opportunities for sport presented by our national parks and by Scotland's right of responsible access. Emphasis is put on the need to recognise and address the changing nature of participation in sport, where the popularity of team sports is declining while participation in individual sports such as cycling and climbing is rising, and where our young people are increasingly attracted to sports such as mountain biking, snow boarding and surfing. The importance of identifying and promoting opportunities for sport in the outdoors is stressed, as is the need for key agencies to work in partnership to develop and promote the sustainable and responsible use of the outdoors for sport and recreation.

6. An Assessment of the Economic Impact of Water-Related Recreation and Tourism in the Spey Catchment in 2003. Glasgow Caledonian University, and University of Edinburgh, 2004.

7. The Economic Impact of Hillwalking, Mountaineering and Associated Activities in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, HIE 1996.

8. Cairngorms Mountain Recreation Survey 1997–98, SNH 2000.



Enjoying the Outdoors

(Scottish Natural Heritage 2007)

This policy statement sets out Scottish Natural Heritage's vision and key priorities for taking forward their agenda for enjoyment of the outdoors.

The statement is relevant to outdoor recreation, education and volunteering. *Enjoying the Outdoors* outlines a range of priorities on promoting participation, promoting responsible behaviour, better provision for and management of outdoor recreation, and recognising and championing the importance of outdoor recreation in policy and practice.

The importance of partnership working is stressed in the delivery of *Enjoying the Outdoors* with **sportscotland** identified as a key partner.

Let's Make Scotland More Active: A strategy for physical activity

(Scottish Executive 2003)

Let's Make Scotland More Active outlines the significant role that inactivity plays in poor health. The strategy emphasises the importance of sport and recreation to an active and healthy lifestyle and stresses the role that exercise has in preventing conditions such as cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis as well as the contribution exercise can make to positive mental health. The strategy makes reference to the importance of facilities and opportunities for encouraging a more active lifestyle and to the role of clubs and support groups and networks in encouraging, sustaining and developing participation in activity.

Delivering a Healthy Scotland – Meeting the Challenge

(Scottish Executive 2006)

Delivering a Healthy Scotland identifies the uptake of physical activity as one of the major challenges to improve the health of the people of Scotland. The strategy highlights the role of inactivity in increasing the risk of coronary heart disease, strokes and other major health problems such as obesity and diabetes.

The strategy makes specific reference to the role that attractive, accessible green spaces within and near to towns and cities can play in helping to encourage physical recreation, and the role of the natural physical environment for better mental health.

Scottish Tourism: The Next Decade – A Tourism Framework for Change

(Scottish Executive 2006)

Tourism is now one of Scotland's most vibrant sectors. *A Tourism Framework for Change* identifies the key role that sport and recreation in the outdoors plays in Scotland's tourism product. Across the leisure tourism market, the framework identifies a range of outdoor sport and recreation activities as being key to meeting visitor demands, while playing to Scotland's strengths. The framework emphasises the need for a particular focus on driving innovation and product development in outdoor activities and the natural environment, identifying these as key assets that provide a basis for Scotland's competitive advantage.

The framework reveals that the most important factors in choice of Scotland as a leisure destination relate to our scenery, the natural environment and the number of things to see and do.

The framework stresses the need for the sustainable promotion of our tourism product.

Scottish Government Strategic Objectives

(Scottish Government 2007)

Sport and recreation in Scotland's outdoors can make a significant contribution to the Scottish Government objectives of making Scotland a wealthier, healthier and greener country.

1.5 sportscotland's role in sport and recreation in the outdoors

sportscotland is involved in a number of areas which support sport and physical recreation in the outdoors, including:

- governing body support, advice and funding;
- sport facility development and funding;
- strategy and project development work, often working with a range of different partners;
- planning work, commenting on planning applications, development plans and planning guidance in the interest of sport;
- representing sport and recreation interests on a range of national and regional steering groups and consultative forums, such as the National Access Forum;
- consultation response work on a range of plans and strategies relevant to the interests of sport and recreation in the outdoors;
- work to support sport and recreation interests in ensuring their interests are taken into account. This includes work on defending sport interests, conflict resolution and work to promote positive and sustainable solutions for sport;
- support for coaching, clubs, volunteering and athletes;
- demonstration/best practice projects and guidance on provision for and development of sport;
- provision of opportunities for children and young people to adopt active, healthy lifestyles (through the work of the Active Schools Network);
- significant training, teaching and coaching opportunities in a range of outdoor sport activities, provided through sportscotland's national centres for sport;
- work with local authorities on the production of sport development and sport facility strategies;
- research on sport, including the production of sports participation data;
- funding to support a range of initiatives to support sport and recreation in the outdoors, such as the Mountain Weather Information Service.

Throughout the text of *Out There* we detail examples of the range of work we have done, are currently doing, or hope to do in the future to support sport and recreation in the outdoors. These examples, shown in green boxes like the one over the page, are intended to highlight and clarify sportscotland's role in sport and recreation in the outdoors and to give an impression of the breadth of work we are involved in. They are also used to reinforce or demonstrate a point we have made in relation to the policy content of *Out There* and to demonstrate what our contribution might be to the policy areas identified. The green boxes are also used to draw attention to information that may be of interest and use to partners.

A range of reports and guidance are referred to in *Out There*; copies of or links to these reports are all available on www.sportscotland.org.uk/outdoorsport



Athlete support

Working with the Institute Network, local authorities and Scottish governing bodies of sport, **sportscotland** has supported a range of athletes in activities such as rowing, canoeing, snowboarding and skiing, sailing, water-skiing and mountain biking.

sportscotland provides leadership, support and investment to develop coaching, club development, facility provision, performance development programmes, athlete development, and volunteering programmes throughout Scotland.

Scottish governing body support

sportscotland works closely with Scottish governing bodies such as the Scottish Canoe Association, the Mountaineering Council for Scotland, the Scottish Equestrian Association, the Scottish Anglers National Association and Scottish Cycling, on the development of national facility strategies, club development strategies, sport development strategies, long-term player development frameworks, staff support and volunteering strategies, and is working towards the development of single plans for each sport.

Active Schools

sportscotland invests in staffing, training and support for the Active Schools programme. The fundamental aim of Active Schools is to give school aged children the tools, motivation and opportunities to be more active throughout their school years and into adulthood. Active Schools recognises the importance of involving children in sport and the contribution this can make to encouraging more active lifestyles later in life. The programme has involved a number of projects where children are encouraged to practise sport and recreation in and engage more closely with the outdoors.

A photograph of a forest path. The path is made of dark soil and is covered with fallen brown leaves and twigs. Several trees with thin trunks are visible, some with moss on their bark. The background is a dense forest of similar trees.

Section 2

Outdoor access

sportscotland considers access to be fundamental to the practice of sport and recreation in the outdoors.

2.1 Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003

While Scotland has always had a tradition of access, extensive access rights and responsibilities were enshrined in legislation as part of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.

Access rights in Scotland are now recognised as some of the most progressive in Europe and present a significant and important opportunity for people to participate in sport and recreation activities in the outdoors. Importantly, the Act has provided assured access to Scotland's outdoors, increasing people's confidence to take access, secure in the knowledge that, provided they act responsibly, they have a statutory right to be there.

sportscotland welcomes the access rights and responsibilities established by the 2003 Act, and the significant opportunities for sport and recreation which these rights present.

The Scottish Outdoor Recreation Network

In 2000 **sportscotland** helped to establish the Scottish Outdoor Recreation Network (SORN). SORN was established primarily to contribute to the development of the access and national parks legislation in Scotland. Its purpose was to provide a strong and representative voice for outdoor recreation and a recognised body for consultation purposes. SORN aimed to highlight the common factors on which the diverse range of recreational users of the outdoors agreed. SORN gave evidence to committee and proposed a number of successful amendments to both the National Parks and Land Reform Bills, which are now apparent in the Acts. **sportscotland** provided the secretariat for SORN.

2.2 Responsible access



2.2.1 Exercising access rights

The Land Reform Act 2003 states that a person has access rights only in so far as they are exercised responsibly. The Act states that those who take access must have regard to the advice of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (www.outdooraccess-scotland.com), which sets out detailed guidance on the responsible conduct of access rights. Responsible access, as outlined in the Code, is underpinned by three key principles:

- *respect* for the interests of others;
- *care* for the environment;
- *responsibility* for one's own actions.

If problems are to be minimised and access for sport and recreation is to be welcomed and encouraged in the outdoors, it is essential that access is taken responsibly and on the basis of the above three principles and the advice of the Code.

2.2.2 Land managers and access rights

Land owners and managers play a crucial role in relation to sport and recreation in the outdoors. Land managers are key to shaping and maintaining an environment attractive to sport and recreation, to accommodating access to the outdoors and to developing and maintaining path networks and other facilities and infrastructure important for the practice of sport and recreation in the outdoors.

sportscotland fully appreciates the valuable role land managers play in relation to sport and recreation in the outdoors.

It is crucial to the enjoyment of sport, for sport and recreation interests to relate to land managers and land management in a positive and responsible manner.

It is equally important for land managers to relate to sport and recreation in a positive manner.

The Act places new duties on land managers to relate to access rights in a responsible manner, and the Code gives advice on how land managers can best do this.

It is important to the practice of sport and recreation in the outdoors for land managers to relate to access rights in a positive and responsible manner and in line with the advice of the Code.

2.3 Local Access Forums

Local Access Forums have been established to agree how to develop, manage and promote access locally. As such, they have a pivotal role to play in the implementation of access rights. The Land Reform Act 2003 states that every access authority (i.e. national park and local authority) must establish at least one Local Access Forum for its area.

2.3.1 Representing sport on Local Access Forums

Given the importance and relevance of access rights to a range of sport and recreation purposes (including those outwith access rights) and the key role that Local Access Forums play in the implementation of access rights, it is important to involve sport and recreation interests in their work.

While it is clear that sport and recreation interests are well represented on Local Access Forums, there may be occasions where issues of particular relevance to a particular sport, or discipline within a sport, or type of participant (e.g. participants with a disability), are not

well represented on a Forum. In such circumstances, it is important that that particular interest is able to inform and input to the work of the Forum.

This may require a degree of flexibility in how Local Access Forums operate and engage with sport and recreation interests. It may be appropriate, for example, for particular sport and recreation interests to be able to attend meetings on a one-off or short-term basis.

It is important for Local Access Forums to engage with those sport and recreation interests most relevant to the issues being addressed and for the flexibility and mechanisms to exist to allow this to happen effectively.

Working groups and the establishment of comprehensive contacts databases will be useful in engaging with specific interests. And mechanisms such as Local Access Forum web pages or newsletters will be useful in involving and keeping informed a range of relevant interests.

Access Forum membership

sportscotland is a full member of the National Access Forum, is a partner of Paths for All, has advisory status on the Local Access Forum of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, and has observational status on the Local Access Forum of the Cairngorms National Park. We work with others, to represent and promote the interests of sport and physical recreation on these forums.

2.4 Core paths planning

sportscotland considers that most people prefer to use paths. Paths represent more assured access to the outdoors: they go somewhere, usually follow a logical, safe and unfettered route and are generally the easiest means of access to walk, horse ride and cycle on.

The Land Reform Act 2003 establishes a duty on access authorities to draw up a plan for a system of paths, to be known as core paths. Core paths are to provide for a basic framework of routes (including waterways) sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area and which will link into and support wider networks of other paths and access opportunities.

The development of core paths and core paths plans will play a key role in providing for and encouraging participation in sport and recreation activity in the outdoors.

2.4.1 Provision for sport and recreation

It is clear from national guidance⁹ that core paths will help to provide for a number of public policy objectives, including supporting healthy lifestyles, promoting sustainable transport, contributing towards social inclusion and community safety, and promoting economic development. In addition to providing for recreation, core paths will provide for functional and utility access purposes, such as routes from the home to shops, bus stops, work and schools.

sportscotland supports the role of core paths in providing for utility and functional purposes. However, in developing core paths, it is important not to lose sight of recreational core path provision. While people can enjoy the outdoors through functional journeys, it is important that provision of routes whose main purpose is to provide for recreational access, forms a significant component of core path provision. Such provision can be quite different from that provided for utility needs.

It is important to fully consider recreational core path needs in each access authority area.

9. Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 Part 1 Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, Guidance for Local Authorities and National Park Authorities, Scottish Executive, 2005.

2.4.2 Paths close to where people live

The emphasis in core path provision is on routes within and between communities, close to where people live.

The closer and more convenient opportunities to access the outdoors are, the more likely people are to take advantage of them. In addition, providing access and recreation opportunities that do not require people to drive, positively addresses equity and sustainability issues.

Access opportunities within and on the edge of our towns and cities can be crucial in providing for outdoor experiences that many people might otherwise never have.

sportscotland fully supports and stresses the need for outdoor sport and recreation opportunities close to where people live and the role of core paths in this.

2.4.3 Linking to the wider countryside

While the priority for core paths is on access in, between and around settlements, core paths also have a clear intended role in linking into and supporting wider networks of other paths and access opportunities.

In terms of sport and recreation, it is often the wider countryside to which access is sought and core paths can provide an essential basis for such access.

It is important to fully consider the role that core paths can play in providing a basis for access into the wider countryside.

2.4.4 Providing for visitors

Guidance¹⁰ states that core paths should also aim to meet the access needs of visitors to an area and play a role in tourism promotion. Sport and recreation is often integral to why people visit the outdoors and to why particular parts of the outdoors are popular. Core paths can play an important role in providing access to important sport and recreation destinations that are also important destinations for visitors and tourists.

It is important to consider the role core paths can play in tourism promotion and the contribution that access to sites that are important and popular for sport and recreation in the outdoors can make to this.

2.4.5 Promotion

sportscotland considers it crucial that core paths are well promoted.

People are most likely to use and benefit from core paths if they know that they exist, what they are for, that they can use them, where they go and what activities they can use them for.

10. Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 Part 1 Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, Guidance for Local Authorities and National Park Authorities, Scottish Executive, 2005.

2.5 Wider network provision

Although core paths will play a significant role in the implementation of access rights, it is important to appreciate that it is not core paths alone, or indeed paths alone, that will deliver access rights.

In many ways, non-core path access provision will be as important as core paths to sport and recreation interests. Non-core paths and access off-path provide for important recreational experiences and for access to areas and sites important for sport and recreation purposes.

It is important to recognise the role of the wider access network in delivering access opportunities and experiences and to continue to support, manage and develop this network accordingly.

2.6



2.6 Appreciating the range of recreational purposes

Paragraph 2.7 of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code details the range of recreational purposes that are included in access rights. In relation to sport and physical recreation, a range of active pursuits are identified, including walking, cycling, horse riding, rock climbing, hillwalking, running, orienteering, ski touring, ski mountaineering, caving, canoeing, swimming, rowing, windsurfing, sailing, diving, and air sports.

In providing for access, it is important to appreciate and consider provision for the full range of activities included within access rights.

It is important to appreciate that access rights extend to inland water, to the air and to access underground.

It is important too to appreciate that access rights extend to a range of abilities, including to those who use a wheelchair, and to make provision accordingly.



Calmer Waters – Guidelines for Planning and Managing Water Sports on Inland Waters in Scotland

sportscotland published *Calmer Waters* in 1997 to promote the pro-active planning and sustainable management of inland waters for water sports and informal recreation. The Guidelines provide:

- a model planning approach;
- a 'menu' of management mechanisms;
- recommendations for monitoring recreational activities and potential impacts;
- illustrative examples of good practice.

Readers can use these to adapt planning and management approaches to suit local circumstances.

Although published before the access legislation came into effect, the messages and information contained within *Calmer Waters* are still relevant and may be of interest and use.



2.7 Multi/shared use of paths

The Land Reform Act 2003 establishes access rights for a range of recreational purposes. Activities within the right of access have a right to access all land, including all paths, that are included within access rights, as long as it is done responsibly. This allows for a range of recreational activities to use the same paths and path networks (including core paths).

The responsible shared use of paths presents significant opportunities for sport and recreation activities, allowing access on paths that some activities, such as cycling and horse riding, may have previously been restricted from or unsure of using.

sportscotland appreciates that there are concerns with the shared use of paths. These concerns can, however, be based on the perception that there will be problems with shared use, rather than on whether there are any problems in reality. This can result in unnecessary and unjustified restriction of sport and recreation.

sportscotland supports the responsible shared use of paths and the opportunity this presents for improved and increased access for sport and recreation activities.

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code gives guidance on the responsible shared use of paths.

For the shared use of paths to work, it is important that access is taken in a responsible manner and in line with the advice of the Code.

It is important too that path development, where appropriate, is of a design and build quality able to accommodate shared use.

Notwithstanding the above, **sportscotland** appreciates that the shared use of paths may not be appropriate in every circumstance. We recognise that there will be circumstances where it will be irresponsible for a particular type of activity to use a particular path.

While a range of recreational purposes are included in access rights, there is no obligation for every route to be able to accommodate all recreational purposes, and in practice, we appreciate that some paths will be unsuitable for certain forms of access.

Where shared use will be difficult, and demand exists for those activities most likely to be excluded from shared use, it is important that alternative provision for those activities is considered.

In this regard, there may be a role for routes that have been developed with specific users needs in mind. Routes intended primarily for cycling or horse riding, for example, can provide enhanced recreational experiences for these activities and can divert the demand for shared use away from paths that might struggle to cope with such use.

Formartine and Buchan Way

sportscotland funded a 12 month survey of a 20 kilometre section of the Formartine and Buchan Way in Aberdeenshire, monitoring shared use of the route. The survey looked at conflict between users (walkers, cyclists and horse riders) and impact on path surface. The results revealed that less than 5% of users were concerned by conflict with other users, being more concerned about issues relating to overgrown vegetation, litter and dog fouling. Problems that were cited in relation to shared use related to the need for different users to better understand how to interact and respond to each other. This included, for example, the desire for cyclists to alert other users to their presence on the path. Impacts on path surface were noted but were attributed primarily to issues relating to poor drainage or to the trail not being given long enough to bed down. It was considered that the issues identified in relation to shared use and surface impact were all able to be effectively addressed through positive management of the route.

2.8 Totality of provision for sport and recreation in the outdoors

While access rights are of crucial importance for sport and recreation, it is important that they are not viewed as representing the totality of recreation provision in the outdoors. Access rights do not extend to all land and water and do not include all sport and recreation activities that take place in the outdoors. In addition, sportscotland perceives that less focus may be given to activities included within the right of access, when done on a more formal or active basis.

It is important not to equate access provision with the totality of sport and recreation provision in the outdoors. It is critical to ensure that activities and areas outwith the right of access and the more formal and active practice of sport and recreation continue to be considered, provided for and developed.

It is important that the full range of settings, features, services, facilities and infrastructure that support and are important to a wide range of sport and recreation activities in the outdoors, continue to be provided for.

Other access rights and traditions, such as rights of way and of navigation, will continue to be of importance for sport and recreation in the outdoors.



Section 3

Management of sport and recreation in the outdoors

Sport and recreation often requires some form of management to guide the way it is practised. Management may be required for the protection of the environment; the protection of amenity and cultural interests; for health and safety reasons; for land management purposes; or to accommodate the interests of different users of the outdoors, including different sport and recreation interests.

sportscotland fully recognises that management of sport and recreation activity is necessary and that management is generally a positive force, with benefits to sport and recreation, and to the quality of the environment that sport takes place in.

Management can, however, sometimes result in the unnecessary or unreasonable modification of sport and recreation activity.

It is important that a considered and informed approach is taken to the management of sport and recreation in the outdoors. Management should be properly justified and based on a full understanding of all the issues and interests involved.

3.1 Positive management

Where management is required of sport and recreation in the outdoors, sportscotland supports a proactive and positive approach.

There are a range of positive management measures that can be taken to influence the way sport is practised. These include:

- education and awareness-raising;
- promotion of codes of conduct;
- voluntary management and self policing – engendering positive peer group influence;
- path and car park management and location;
- providing facilities;

- providing alternative attractions/sites/facilities;
- reservation, licensing and permit systems;
- dialogue and communication;
- training and coaching – e.g. in how to practise an activity safely or less intrusively;
- technical improvements – e.g. exhaust silencers, less polluting engines.

Management of sport and recreation in the outdoors should aim to address the negative impacts of an activity in such a way that enables the activity to continue in an enjoyable and challenging way.

The original challenge and enjoyment sought in an activity should, if possible, still be able to be experienced.

It is important to appreciate that management regimes which aim to significantly restrict or prevent sport and recreation activity are not the only solution to negative impacts from sport and, in some circumstances, can be the least effective means of addressing any problems that may exist.

In addressing impacts from sport and recreation, the onus is also on the participant to practise their activity responsibly and to limit any negative impacts they may have.

sportscotland has been involved in a number of negotiations over the management and practice of sport and recreation in the outdoors.

Loch Leven

sportscotland worked closely with SNH, Perth and Kinross Council and sports governing body interests on the implementation of access rights at Loch Leven, by Kinross, a site of international importance for bird interests. Through significant debate and negotiation over proposed access arrangements to the loch, including detailed examination of natural heritage and access legislation, all parties were able to agree to access guidance for the loch. A commitment was made to monitoring recreational use of the loch and to a review of access guidance over time. Positive agreement was also reached over recreational involvement in the future management of the loch.

Nevis Partnership

In recognition of the outstanding resource presented by Glen and Ben Nevis for outdoor sport and recreation, **sportscotland** helped to support and develop the Nevis Partnership. **sportscotland** nominates and provides a director of the Partnership and has input to and helped support the development of the Nevis Strategy on environmental and visitor management in the Nevis area. Recently, **sportscotland** has supported and been involved in the review of the Partnership and of the Nevis strategy itself, which is due to be finalised in 2008.

A sustainable strategy for mountain biking in Scotland

sportscotland is working with a number of other public agencies on the development of a framework for the sustainable future delivery of mountain biking in Scotland. Work will be done throughout 2008/09 to engage with stakeholders and develop a strategy that will clarify roles and prioritise action which builds on Scotland's international reputation in mountain biking.

3.2 Management considerations

There are a number of considerations to be aware of when exploring management options.

3.2.1 Taking a proportionate response

Impacts from sport and recreation can be significant, and it is important not to underplay this. Generally, however, impacts from sport are limited and it is important that they are kept in perspective.

Problems associated with sport and recreation in the outdoors tend to be concentrated and site-specific. Management responses can be focused, avoiding the need for broad-brush approaches which can impose management regimes where they are not required.

It is important that management measures used to address sport and recreation in the outdoors are appropriate and proportionate to the impact or situation they seek to address.

Simple and small-scale management measures can be effective in managing sport and recreation activities.

It is important to appreciate that in most cases, impacts from sport and recreation are not caused maliciously.

3.2.2 Knowledge and understanding

Many of the problems that arise between sport and other interests and users of the outdoors stem from a lack of understanding of each other's activities and perspectives.

In relation to sport, it is important to appreciate what a sport comprises, what a participant needs and seeks in order to do their sport, and what it is they enjoy and value about their activity. It is important to appreciate that there are differences in attitude, culture, requirements, approach, values, practice, and impact between different sports and between different disciplines within the same sport. And to understand that different sports can seek quite different experiences from the outdoors and use, require and value different features, components and qualities.

It is equally important for those who participate in sport and recreation to understand the environment within which they practise their sport. It is important for participants to understand the impact they can have, including on other sport and recreations, and to understand how best to integrate with the range of interests and qualities within the outdoors.

Hopefully, increased knowledge and understanding will lead to a greater appreciation of sensitivities and engender greater respect for the outdoors and for all those who manage, work, live, recreate in and visit it.



Communication not Conflict (2004)

sportscotland worked with SNH to develop *Communication not Conflict*, an advisory document providing guidance on how communication techniques can be used to prevent or solve conflicts between groups of people using the outdoors for different recreational pursuits. Section 5 of the guidance draws on lessons learned from an education programme developed by **sportscotland** and SNH on reducing conflict between canoeists and anglers. The main output of this programme was a video, *Meeting at River Creek* (1999), which aimed to show how canoeists and anglers could better share the same recreational resource, promoting messages on responsible and considerate use.

3.2.3 Involving sport participants in decision-making

It is important to involve sport participants in management decision-making, and to involve those participants that issues are most relevant to. If, for example, issues relate to mountain biking, it is important to involve a mountain biker, as opposed to a touring cyclist, in addressing solutions. If issues are about downhill mountain biking, a downhill mountain biker, as opposed to a cross country mountain biker, should be involved.

It is important to appreciate the variety of different participants in sport and recreation and the range of different needs, wants, abilities and consequent expectations and values that exist. Within the same sport there will be those who do that sport competitively and those who do it on a much more recreational basis. There will be old people and young people, disabled people and people of different ethnicities and different genders, all with differing interests and perspectives.

There may also be a role for other stakeholders with an interest in sport to be involved in decision-making, such as transport providers, shops and hire services, facility managers, accommodation providers, training centres and path builders.

In addressing management issues relevant to sport, it is important to engage with sport and recreation interests, and to engage with those interests of most relevance to the issues being addressed.

It is important to appreciate the range and diversity of sport and recreation interests that an issue may be relevant to.

3.2.4 Recognising the benefits

As well as providing health and well-being benefits, sport and recreation can contribute significantly to local economies and support a range of local services and infrastructure. Participation presents opportunities for social interaction and cohesion, for learning and awareness raising, for appreciation and understanding of the environment and for contributing to the culture of an area.

When deciding on management measures, it is important to fully appreciate the range of benefits sport and recreation can bring. And to be aware of the impact any management measures proposed might have on the delivery of these benefits.

3.2.5 Monitoring

Monitoring is an essential management tool and a vital component of effective management. Monitoring can be used to assess whether there is an impact from sport, what that impact is and how these might change over time. It is key therefore to assessing whether management of sport is needed and if so, what type of management would be most appropriate.

Monitoring is also important in assessing whether management measures introduced, are working and what may need to be done to ensure that management remains fit for purpose over time.

It is important that management measures once introduced are monitored to assess their effectiveness, and that they are revised if shown to be ineffective or inappropriate.

Loch Lomond – recommendations for a monitoring programme

During consultation on the revision of the Loch Lomond byelaws in 1996, **sportscotland** commissioned some work on behalf of the Loch Lomond Byelaws Management Group providing recommendations on effective monitoring of recreational activity and of the effectiveness of the byelaws proposed. This work, although historical, still retains a number of important generic messages on effective monitoring that may be of interest and use to partners.

sportscotland is currently working with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park on recreational data requirements necessary to inform the 2010 revision of the Loch Lomond Byelaws.

Advice on Monitoring Access and Recreation at Sensitive Natural Heritage Sites (Scottish Natural Heritage 2006)

As part of work **sportscotland** did with SNH on recreational access to Loch Leven, in Perth and Kinross, SNH commissioned and led on the development of the above advice. The report provides advice for site managers on how best to plan and implement survey and monitoring of recreational use to identify actual impacts of recreation on the natural heritage. This in turn allows more informed and effective management decisions on recreational use of sensitive natural heritage sites. **sportscotland** was a member of the steering group involved in the development of the advice and fully supports the advice produced.



3.3 Sport and Scotland's natural heritage

Scotland's natural heritage is outstanding. It is important intrinsically and, in relation to sport, is important for the range of opportunities and the setting it provides for sport and recreation.

Sport and recreation benefit from, are dependent on and are strongly attracted to the scenic qualities, biodiversity and natural landforms and processes (e.g. waves, crags, white water, snow) of the natural heritage.

Scotland's natural heritage is integral to the enjoyment of sport and recreation in the outdoors.

The successful promotion of sport and recreation in the outdoors must take full account of the importance of the conservation and sympathetic management of Scotland's natural heritage.

Within this context, it is important to appreciate that for sport and recreation to happen the outdoors must be able to be used. It is important not to assume impacts from sport on the natural heritage. Not all of our natural heritage is necessarily of the highest quality, is particularly rare or valued, or is unable to accommodate impacts from sport. Even our most important natural heritage can be used for sport and recreation.

3.3.1 Designated sites

sportscotland fully recognises the importance of sites and areas designated for their landscape and nature conservation importance. We fully appreciate the value of protecting some of our most important, rare, and vulnerable natural heritage resources.

It is important to appreciate, however, that sport and recreation can and does take place in areas and sites designated for their natural heritage value. And to recognise that they do so with no impacts, or acceptable impacts, on the interests of the site. Designated areas can provide very important and attractive locations for sport.

sportscotland recognises the priority of conserving and enhancing the natural heritage within designated sites and the need for sport to operate within the range of statutory requirements applicable.

sportscotland supports the responsible practice of sport and recreation in sites designated for their natural heritage importance.

3.3.2 Promoting use to encourage protection

Promoting use of the environment can be an effective way to encourage its protection.

The more that people actually engage with the outdoors, the more inclined they may become to value, understand and respect our natural heritage and to be supportive of and active in the need to conserve it.

Participation in sport and recreation in the outdoors provides an important and effective opportunity for such engagement.



sportscotland National Centre Glenmore Lodge – mountain bike training facility

The mountain bike training facility at Glenmore Lodge lies within a National Scenic Area, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Protection Area and a Special Area of Conservation. Through good management, siting and design, and construction of the facility, an intensively used recreational resource was successfully accommodated on a site with a number of natural heritage designations.

sportscotland has produced a best practice report on the development of the facility which highlights what has been done to ensure natural heritage interests have been respected and successfully integrated with the development and use of the facility.

Natural heritage advice

sportscotland is working on the development of advice on the implications of natural heritage legislation for sport and recreation in the outdoors. **sportscotland** perceives there to be limited understanding of the implications of natural heritage legislation for sport and recreation, and that greater understanding would benefit both those who participate in and provide for sport and to the protection of our natural heritage.

The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004

sportscotland, as a public body, has a duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act to further the conservation of biodiversity. **sportscotland** is fully committed to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in the policies we promote and direction we foresee for sport in Scotland. **sportscotland** has produced an Environmental Policy Statement which commits us to the development of an Environmental Management System. The Management System will consider and develop actions on how **sportscotland** can improve its environmental performance and how we can influence our partners in sport to improve the environmental performance of sport generally.

Joint remit statement with SNH

sportscotland is working with SNH on the production of a joint statement on our shared remit for enjoyment of the outdoors. The purpose of the statement is to clarify to partners our respective roles in this area and detail our respective areas of focus, and to outline how we work together on this common remit.

3.3.3 Training

The teaching, training and coaching of sport, through, for example, outdoor centres, clubs and colleges, provides an important opportunity to educate sport and recreation interests about the natural heritage and their impact on it.

sportscotland encourages training and coaching courses relevant to sport in the outdoors to include content which highlights the integral role of the natural heritage to the enjoyment of sport, and which outlines ways to reduce any impact sport may have on that heritage.

Opportunities should also be taken to teach sport and recreation interests about their interaction with the range of interests in the outdoors, including other participants, cultural interests, land management activities and those who live in the countryside.

In addition it is also important for courses provided on land management and conservation to include content that explains sport and recreational use of the outdoors – what it comprises, its needs and values and how best to integrate with such interests.



Training courses at Glenmore Lodge

sportscotland, through our national centre at Glenmore Lodge, includes natural heritage and land management components in the wide range of training courses provided. Every year, Glenmore Lodge trains around 800 coaches, instructors and leaders in outdoor sports. Through training those who will themselves go on to be teachers and instructors, the messages taught on integration with the outdoor environment trickle down to sports interests across the country.

Glenmore Lodge is acutely aware of the importance of putting something back into the resource that they are so dependent on. For every place booked at Glenmore Lodge, a proportion of the booking fee goes towards environmental projects run by the Centre.

3.4 Precautionary principle

The UK Government is committed¹¹ to using the definition of the precautionary principle set out in the Rio Declaration:

Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992)

The precautionary principle has been used to manage sport and recreation activities where there is concern that they might impact on natural heritage interests.

sportscotland recognises the relevance and value of the precautionary principle to the management of sport and recreation activities. We consider it important, however, in applying the principle, that an agreed, unambiguous, consistent and transparent approach is taken.

In Scotland, the precautionary principle and its application has been developed by Scottish Natural Heritage¹², and by the Scotland and Northern Ireland Forum for Environmental Research¹¹.

Based on their advice, it is clear that the starting point for the use of the precautionary principle is to decide first of all, whether its application is appropriate. A number of considerations should be taken into account in coming to a decision on this, including whether:

- there are good reasons to believe that harmful effects will occur;
- there are significant uncertainties about the impacts of an activity on the natural heritage, which cannot be resolved in the short term;
- there is a potential risk of serious and or widespread and or irreversible damage;

- the natural heritage in question is important – i.e. where national and international designations or conservation status apply, or where the risk affects a significant proportion of a more common resource;
- there are plausible causal links between the activity and the perceived environmental damage.

The guidance states explicitly that where impacts are unlikely to be significant, the precautionary principle does not apply.

The guidance stresses that a precautionary approach will rarely require the total cessation of activity. In most cases where the precautionary principle is appropriate, an adaptive approach should be taken, where the activity posing a threat can continue but in some modified (adapted) way, that reduces that threat.

sportscotland supports the application of the precautionary principle in accordance with the advice of SNH and SNIFFER and supports an adaptive approach to its implementation.

The guidance states that it is important to employ sustained efforts to remove the uncertainty upon which the precautionary restriction of activity is based and stresses the importance of monitoring and reviewing any management decision made on the basis of the precautionary principle.

Restriction on the basis of uncertainty does not provide a sound basis for long term management decisions. The need to monitor decisions based on the precautionary principle is critical, ensuring their continuing legitimacy.

sportscotland appreciates that in some circumstances it may be difficult to completely remove the uncertainty upon which a precautionary approach is based. If serious damage, attributable to recreation is clear, sportscotland fully supports the need for appropriate management measures to be put in place.

11. Practical Guidance on Applying the Precautionary Principle, Scotland and Northern Ireland Forum for Environmental Research, 2006.

12. Applying the Precautionary Principle to Decisions on the Natural Heritage, SNH, 2000.



3.5 Wild land

Wild land is a component of the natural heritage, and specifically the landscape, which is of particular importance in Scotland. Scotland has some of the wildest areas left in Britain.

Scottish Government planning policy¹³ defines wild land as uninhabited and often relatively inaccessible countryside where the influence of human activity on the character and quality of the environment has been minimal. The policy advises that wild land is most clearly defined in our remoter mountains and coastal areas.

Wild land is attractive and important for sport and recreation purposes. Wild land has a distinct character; it can engender particular emotions and psychological and spiritual responses and can present a specific recreational challenge. As such wild land can present a distinct and in some circumstances rare, recreational experience, which is particularly sought by some recreationists.

Wild land has come under pressure from developments such as wind turbines, telecommunication masts, commercial plantation forestry, hydro developments, and vehicle hill tracks.

Sport and recreation can also impact on wild land. Recreational infrastructure such as signs, car parks, and bridges introduces man-made elements into wild areas. And particular types of recreation, such as motorsports, may be less acceptable in wild land.

It is important to conserve and enhance wild land.

sportscotland supports the sustainable and responsible use of wild land for sport and recreation purposes, which does not impact negatively on wild land qualities.

sportscotland recognises that impressions of wildness are subjective and that people can experience feelings of wildness throughout Scotland including in areas close to and within our towns and cities. While such areas may not be considered as wild land in its purest sense, they can still provide important experiences for people.

sportscotland recognises the important role of wildness to recreational experience, throughout Scotland.

13. NPPG 14 – Natural Heritage, Scottish Executive Development Department, 1999.

3.6



3.6 Noise

The peace and quiet of the outdoors, and in particular the countryside, is one of its main attractions, including for many who visit for sport and recreation purposes.

Peace and quiet is important to those who live and work in the countryside, and noise can have a detrimental impact on animal and bird life.

The minimisation of noise related to sport and recreation in the outdoors is important.

There are, however, a range of sport and recreation activities popular in the outdoors, where noise is a by-product of their participation.

It is important that those who enjoy noisy sports have the opportunity to do so in the outdoors.

There are a number of positive measures that can be taken to reduce the impact of noise associated with sport, but which still allow sport and recreation to be practised. Relevant mechanisms include:

- managing where, when, how frequently and for how long noisy activities take place. For example, noisy activities may be more acceptable at certain times of the day or week, or in locations where noise is already apparent, such as next to roads, industrial areas, or train lines. Noisy activities may also be more acceptable on land remote from and unattractive for other uses or users;
- controlling the number of users can be effective in limiting noise intrusion;
- providing specific facilities and sites for noisy activities can be an effective way of diverting noise from more sensitive areas. Providing dedicated trail bike facilities for example, has shown to be effective in reducing antisocial behaviour associated with illegal trail bike use;
- technology can be used to reduce impacts. The use of exhaust silencers, electric motors, two stroke engines and liquid propane gas can, for example, lessen the impact of noise (and pollution) from motorised activities;

- codes of practice and training can be used to encourage activities to be practised in a manner that reduces their noise impact;
- use of planting and bunding can help absorb noise impacts.

It is important to appreciate that through positive management the intrusive nature of noisy sports can often be managed to an acceptable level.

It is important that noisy activities are not always considered in a negative light. They can contribute significantly to people's health and wellbeing and to social inclusion, and to local economies. Provision for activities such as scrambler motorbiking can also be valuable in providing diversionary opportunities for young people who might otherwise take part in less socially acceptable behaviour.

sportscotland recognises that while it is important for noisy activities to be able to take place in the outdoors, there are certain parts of the countryside where tranquillity is a distinctive feature and is particularly valued, and where noisy activities can be particularly intrusive and may be less acceptable.

3.7 Charging for participation

While charging is an established feature of some sports, such as angling, **sportscotland** does not support charging for use of the natural environment where this is not and has not been a feature of an activity.

It is clear that the right of responsible access established by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 cannot be charged for.

There is a difference, however, between charging for use of the natural environment and charging for services and facilities supporting sports use of the environment.

This could include, for example, charges for car parks, storage facilities, ski or mountain bike uplift, or showering and changing facilities.

sportscotland does not support charging for sport and recreational use of the natural environment. We do, however, recognise the use of charging for the provision of services and facilities which support and provide for sport and recreational use of the outdoors.

In some instances the use of charging has significantly improved the sports facilities and experience on offer, which may not have happened otherwise.

Those who take part in outdoor sports support local shops, bed and breakfasts, pubs and restaurants, garages and public transport, ensuring their long-term viability, for the benefit of all members of the community.

In considering whether to introduce charges for sport, it is important to appreciate the contribution which sport may already be making to the economy and infrastructure of local areas.

It is important to be aware that the introduction of charging may discourage people from using an area or facility which may have a negative impact on the local economy.

In levying charges, it is important to be aware that doing so could result in the exclusion of certain sectors of the population from the outdoors because they cannot afford to pay.

It is important that charges are set at a level that avoids excluding certain sectors of the population from participating in sport and recreation because of cost implications.

It is important that charges are fair, consistent and proportionate to the cost of the service or facility being supplied.

Charges are often more acceptable when people know why they have been introduced and what the income generated will be used for.

Where charging is introduced, the provision of information explaining why there is a charge and how the income will be used, can be useful.

sportscotland supports the use of income generated from charging to improve the recreational experience that charges are related to.

While **sportscotland** does not support charging for the use of the natural environment, we do recognise the value of encouraging sport and recreation participants to put something back into the outdoors. This could be done through, for example, volunteer work in path building or conservation, in teaching and training, or marshalling and event and competition support.

3.8 Sites important for outdoor sports

There are sites and areas throughout Scotland's outdoors that are particularly popular and of value for sport and recreation purposes. These include Scotland's award-winning mountain bike centres, our popular Munros, our snowsport centres, our surfing breaks, our long distance paths, our best climbing crags, or our top white water kayaking rivers. There are also more local sites which, as well as being important for sport, can be important community, health, education and economic assets.

It is important to be aware of sites important for sport and recreation in the outdoors, to recognise their value and to protect and invest in them accordingly.

It may be most appropriate to do this through local development plans and the statutory planning system.

Scottish Planning Policy 11 (SPP11) Open Space and Physical Activity

sportscotland worked closely with the Scottish Government on the development of SPP11 Open Space and Physical Activity (2007). As part of this work it was recognised that guidance would be beneficial on the protection of sites of importance for sport and recreation in the outdoors. Paragraph 66 of SPP11 now affords protection to such areas, stating:

Scotland's outdoors presents outstanding opportunities to participate in a range of sport and recreation activities. Resources such as rivers, lochs, hills, crags and paths support activities as diverse as fishing, mountain biking, horse riding, surfing, canoeing, rock climbing and snowboarding. In assessing development proposals which may affect such facilities and resources, sport and recreation interests should be fully considered and planning authorities should consult with sport and recreation interests. Where a resource or facility is considered to be of strategic importance for sport, it may be appropriate to consult with sportscotland.

Hydro-renewables and canoeing

sportscotland is working with the Scottish Canoe Association and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency on the strategic integration of hydro-renewable schemes with Scotland's important canoeing rivers. The aim is to ensure that Scotland's best canoeing resources are preserved as hydro scheme proposals come forward.

Planning advice and sport in the outdoors

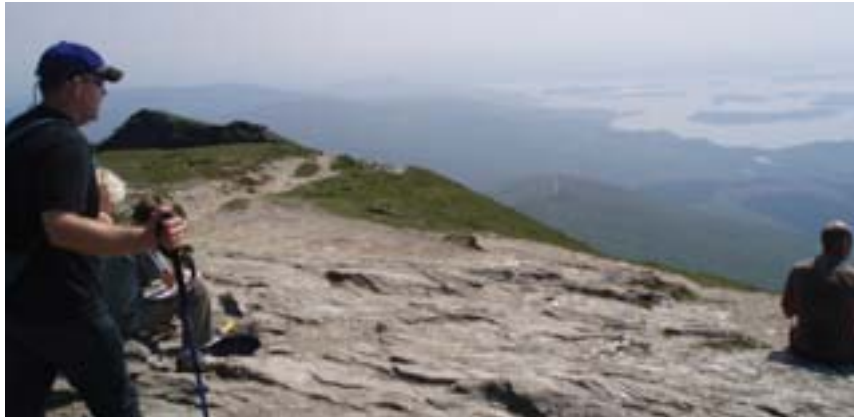
sportscotland is exploring the value and potential of developing a guidance note on how planning advice (Scottish Planning Policies and Planning Advice Notes) relates to and provides for sport and recreation interests in the outdoors. Any guidance note produced would be used to inform and strengthen our consultation response work, particularly in relation to development plans and planning applications. The guidance would be made available to any interested partners.



Section 4

Parks

4.1



4.1 National parks

sportscotland welcomes the development of national parks in Scotland and the opportunity they present to promote sport and recreation.

sportscotland considers national parks to be of strategic importance for outdoor sport and recreation.

4.2 The National Parks (Scotland) Act

The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 establishes the legal basis for national parks in Scotland.

The Act sets out the aims of national parks in Scotland as:

- to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
- to promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;
- to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public;
- to promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

The Act states that the general purpose of a national park authority is to ensure that national park aims are collectively achieved in relation to the national park in a coordinated way.

sportscotland strongly supports an integrated and collective approach to the achievement and implementation of national park aims.



4.3 National parks and the promotion of enjoyment

The promotion of recreation and enjoyment is a clear aim of national parks in Scotland and throughout the world. Internationally, national parks have been designated in areas where the wildlife and landscape are of national significance and where people enjoy and are encouraged to enjoy that wildlife and landscape.

In Scotland, the importance of an area for outdoor recreation has been a key criterion in designating national parks.

Scottish national parks are recognised as Category V parks under the IUCN (the World Conservation Union) classification. This classification identifies Category V parks as protected areas managed mainly for landscape/ seascape conservation and for recreation. One of the main management objectives of Category V parks is to provide opportunities for public enjoyment through recreation and tourism, appropriate in type and scale to the essential qualities of the areas.

The promotion of enjoyment is a fundamental component of Scottish national parks and one which the promotion of sport and recreation is integral to.

4.3.1 A positive approach

The promotion of enjoyment, including in the form of sport and recreation, presents real opportunities to deliver a range of health and well being, economic, environmental, educational and social benefits in our national parks.

It is important, then, that enjoyment really is promoted and a focus on the control or restriction of activities is avoided.

In promoting enjoyment in our national parks, sportscotland encourages the proactive and positive provision, facilitation, development and management of activities.

4.3.2 Best practice exemplar

Given the purpose of national parks and the resources and expertise they have and can stimulate and co-ordinate, it is important that national parks seek to demonstrate best practice.

National parks should evolve as centres of excellence and best practice. They should be positive, proactive, and innovative and make high quality provision.

It will be important for national parks to promote any messages of best practice that emerge.

4.4



4.4 Conservation in national parks

sportscotland fully recognises the importance of conservation in and to national parks. We recognise and support the goal of protecting some of Scotland's finest environments from a range of pressures, including recreational ones.

As is detailed in the Act, conservation will take priority in situations of conflict between park aims. It is important that this does not translate to a general presumption that conservation is the primary aim of national parks. It is important to recognise that conservation is one of four national park aims which all require consideration and application in a collective and co-ordinated way.

It is important that national park aims are achieved in a balanced way and are given equal consideration, promotion and resources in the operation and development of a national park.

4.5 Special qualities

It is clear from the national park aims that the promotion of enjoyment, including of sport and recreation, is closely linked to a park's special qualities.

A range of special qualities have been identified in Scotland's national parks, including qualities such as tranquillity and wildness. sportscotland agrees that such qualities are special and important in national parks. Indeed, such qualities are particularly attractive and important for a range of recreational activities and it will be important to promote enjoyment of these qualities. It is also important that such qualities are not used to unreasonably restrict sport and recreation activity in a national park, because of concerns over impacts on them.

Through the careful management, siting and responsible practice of sport and recreation, any negative impacts which sport might have on a park's special qualities can be kept to a minimum, allowing a range of activities to be practised.

Special qualities will be apparent to varying degrees in a national park and not every special quality will be present throughout the whole of a park. Tranquillity or wildness, for example, may only be strongly present in certain parts of a park.

It is important that management in a national park recognises and is reflective of the varying presence of special qualities throughout a national park.

4.5.1 Recreation as a special quality

Scotland's national parks contain a host of natural features, qualities and conditions attractive to and important and necessary for a range of sport and recreation activities. These features, qualities and conditions provide outstanding, and in some cases, internationally important, opportunities for sport and recreation. Our national parks provide for a wide range of sport and recreation activities with huge numbers of people participating. Scotland's national parks build on a tradition of practice and innovation in outdoor sport and recreation stretching back over a hundred years. Our parks are recognised nationally as focal points for certain activities and throughout the world as special places for outdoor sport and recreation.

sportscotland supports and encourages the recognition of the outstanding opportunities our national parks present for sport and recreation as a special quality.

4.6 National park plans

sportscotland recognises the crucial role that national park plans play in the management, development and promotion of national parks. In particular we support the specific consideration that is given in national park plans to the promotion of enjoyment, including in the form of sport and recreation.

It is important that sport and recreation interests continue to be closely involved in the development and revision of national park plans.

4.7 National Park Authority Boards

4.7.1 Representation of outdoor sport and recreation interests

The Boards of Scotland's National Park Authorities (NPAs) are responsible for key decision-making on the functions and powers of national parks and for ensuring the collective and coordinated delivery of the four national park aims. They have a primary role in facilitating and enabling the development, delivery and revision of the National Park Plan.

Given the key role of NPA Boards in the development and functioning of national parks, and given that the promotion of enjoyment is a key national park aim, it is important that NPA Boards include members who have experience and expertise relevant to sport and recreation interests and issues in the outdoors.

sportscotland supports and encourages the establishment of NPA sub-committees on sport, recreation and the promotion of enjoyment.

4.7.2 Advisory Groups

The National Parks Act states that national parks should have one or more advisory groups, with the purpose of advising the NPA on any matter relating to the functions of the Authority.

sportscotland supports and encourages the establishment of advisory groups or similar bodies on the promotion of recreation and enjoyment, and for them to involve a range of sport and recreation interests.



4.8 Country and regional parks

The 1967 Countryside (Scotland) Act provides the legislative basis for country parks, defining them as relatively small areas of countryside which, by reason of their proximity to major areas of population, afford convenient opportunities to the public for enjoyment of the countryside, including for open air recreation.

Regional parks are defined by the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1981 as extensive areas of land part of which is devoted to the recreational needs of the public. Their purpose, as stated in the Act, is to provide for outdoor recreation and to effectively integrate recreational use with other rural land uses within the area, such as agriculture and forestry.

Country and regional parks play a key role in encouraging people to participate in sport and recreation in the outdoors. They provide a range of sporting opportunities and facility and service provision attractive to and important for sport in the outdoors, and in locations accessible to large numbers of people. They play an important role in introducing people to the outdoors and can act as a stepping stone – preparing, enthusing and motivating people to access the wider countryside and more remote outdoor recreational experiences. Country and regional parks can play an important role in educating people about the outdoors and about responsible behaviour. They can also demonstrate good practice in the management of recreation and its integration with other rural land uses and interests. And they can provide important venues for sporting events and competitions.

sportscotland welcomes the purpose of country and regional parks and recognises them as a proactive way to manage and provide for sport and recreation in the outdoors, close to where people live.

sportscotland values the role of country and regional parks in providing secure and welcoming access to the outdoors and in encouraging people to participate in sport and recreation.

4.8.1 Recreation in country and regional parks

Country and regional parks have evolved from their legislative focus on recreation to provide for a range of purposes, including landscape and natural heritage protection and enhancement, environmental education and economic development.

While sportscotland is fully supportive of the broad range of interests country and regional parks provide for, it is important that their role in providing for recreation and enjoyment remains key.

4.8.2 Accessibility and social inclusion

There may be particular opportunities to promote sustainable forms of access to country and regional parks given their proximity to urban population centres. This should include consideration of public transport opportunities, but should also examine potential links to walking and cycling networks emanating from towns and cities. Core path planning exercises may offer particular opportunities to promote sustainable access.

In addition, country and regional parks, because of their proximity to urban population centres, may present particular opportunities to involve a range of potentially excluded sectors of the community in the outdoors and in outdoor sports.

Opportunities to promote social inclusion and sustainable access should be explored in country and regional parks.

4.8.3 Promotion

In order to encourage and maintain participation, it is important that country and regional parks are well promoted.

People need to know that they exist, what they are, where they are, how to get to them, what can be done there and how, and that they are relevant to them.

4.8.4 Consultative forums

Advisory groups and consultative forums can and have played an important role in the management and development of country and regional parks. They provide a valuable mechanism for involving relevant stakeholders, engendering support for and ownership of a park, and for making best use of a range of relevant experience and expertise in policy and decision-making.

sportscotland supports and promotes the use of advisory groups and consultative forums.

Consultative forum membership

sportscotland is a member of the consultative forums for both the Pentlands and the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Parks. As such we are able to input directly to discussion on policy and management issues relevant to sport and recreation in the parks.

sportscotland is also on the steering group for the development of the Dams to Darnley country park to the south of Glasgow. As part of that steering group we are working with a range of partners to ensure that the interests of sport and recreation are taken fully into account in the development of the park.

4.9 Sport and recreation throughout Scotland's outdoors

While parks are an important element in providing for sport and recreation in the outdoors, it is important that they are not viewed as the only or primary locations where outdoor sport and recreation activities should or do take place. There are a range of different locations, circumstances and environments throughout the countryside, the coast and in the green spaces and networks of our towns and cities that are important for sport and recreation.

sportscotland supports the responsible exercise and sustainable development and promotion of sport and recreation throughout Scotland's outdoors.



Section 5

**Encouraging and developing opportunities
for sport and recreation in the outdoors**

5.1 Facilities and infrastructure

There is a range of facility and infrastructure provision that supports and encourages sport and recreation use of the outdoors. Facilities such as mountain bike trails, ski centres, climbing walls, canoe slalom courses and air fields are clearly integral to participation in outdoor sports. However it is important to also appreciate the role of the less obvious infrastructure and service provision that supports the practice of sport and recreation in the outdoors. This includes car parks, toilets, changing and showering facilities, secure storage, cleaning facilities, accommodation and food facilities, bike hire, and information provision, on, for example, bus and train times, shooting seasons, weather/tide forecasts and route destinations.

It is important to be aware of and provide for the range of facility, infrastructure and service provision which supports, and in many cases is integral to, sport and recreational use of the outdoors.



Sports facility investment

sportscotland distributes lottery and exchequer money for sports facilities across Scotland. The main principle behind investment is to deliver a network of quality facilities at local, regional and national levels which are accessible and affordable to the communities they serve.

sportscotland has funded a broad range of facilities supporting sport and recreation use in the outdoors. Significant awards have, for example, contributed to the development of the down hill mountain bike track at Aonoch Mor, indoor ice climbing facilities in Kinlochleven, the Edinburgh International Climbing Arena, and changing facilities at Glentress. In addition, a range of more local facilities have been supported including, boat storage facilities, mountain rescue accommodation, path development works, ski tow uplift, safety boat provision, and the construction of a fishing lodge.

Facilities Demonstration Programme

The Facilities Demonstration Programme invests in projects and ideas that demonstrate cost-effective sport and recreation provision through examples of good design, management and planning. Best practice and lessons learned from projects are shared with interested parties.

Knockando changing facility

In 2002, under the Facilities Demonstration Programme, **sportscotland** invested in the development of a small changing and toilet facility at Knockando in Moray. The facility was developed to provide an amenity for recreational users of the River Spey and the Speyside Way. It was designed to discourage canoeists from changing in public and to reduce indiscriminate toileting on the riverbank. The project also aimed to implement and monitor the effectiveness of a low impact, low energy and minimum maintenance changing and toilet facility. In particular, the project sought to develop and 'test' the provision and operation of a composting toilet, which did not require a water supply or sewerage connection and which uses renewable energy. The report on the findings from the project will be available during 2008.

Through the programme, **sportscotland** has invested in a number of projects relevant to sport in the outdoors. This has included projects on the design and construction of a mountain bike training facility, a boat for disabled anglers, and sustainable toilet and changing facilities for recreational users of the River Spey.

Mountain Bike Training Facility Report – Development, design and construction (sportscotland 2006)

Funding from the Facilities Demonstration Programme was also used to develop a mountain bike training facility at the **sportscotland** National Centre Glenmore Lodge. The subsequent report on the facility gives details on the development of the facility and the lessons and best practice learned from the project. The project aimed to demonstrate innovative and up to date sustainable trail-building techniques and their application in the conditions present in northern Scotland. The project also aimed to demonstrate what a good mountain bike training facility could comprise; what features to include, and how skills could best be taught on them.

Sport facility strategies

sportscotland is working on guidance for local authorities on the development of sports facility strategies. While the focus of this guidance will be on built and urban facilities, it is intended to include a section that highlights the potential of the outdoors to deliver local authority goals on sport and recreation.

5.2 Transport

The role of motorised transport, particularly the car, is apparent in facilitating participation in sport and recreation in the outdoors. sportscotland appreciates, however, the problems created by motorised transport, such as congestion and pollution, and its contribution to climate change. We recognise the desirability and benefits of reducing motorised traffic and particularly use of the car.

Providing alternatives to the car is also important in supporting social inclusion.

sportscotland supports measures to reduce and promote alternatives to the use of motorised transport, and in particular the car, as a means of transport for sport and recreation purposes.

The provision of sports facilities, services, infrastructure and opportunities close to where people live and in proximity to public transport interchanges, can go some way towards reducing the need to use motorised

transport. The development of core paths networks and the protection of open spaces and green networks in our towns and cities can also play a role.

By encouraging activities such as walking and cycling, less people may, over time, be inclined to take the car.

In relation to public transport, sportscotland supports :

- increased capacity for transporting sports equipment, such as bikes, small canoes, skis and snowboards, rucksacks, walking poles, boots, helmets etc, and at no extra cost;
- the provision of flexible services more attuned to recreational demand, and able to pick up and drop off at a range of destinations;
- provision for disabled users and parents with young children – e.g. low-loading buses and space for wheelchairs and pushchairs.



5.3 Derelict and disused land

Derelict and disused land can provide particular and valuable opportunities for sport and recreation. Mineral extraction sites and old reservoirs, for example, can provide important opportunities for water sports; quarries have been converted for climbing activities; redundant bings are used for scrambler motor bikes; and disused railway lines have been developed for walking, cycling and horse riding routes.

Sport and recreation can provide a positive use for land that might otherwise remain derelict.

Derelict and disused land can be particularly suitable for sport and recreation purposes:

- derelict land is often close and accessible to where people live;

- there may be little competition from alternative uses;
- there are often features (or the potential to develop them), such as cliffs, gradients, water bodies and track networks, which are attractive for sporting activities;
- derelict land can be of lower nature conservation value, allowing for easier integration of sport and recreation activities and particular types of activities;
- derelict land can be in locations, or of a nature, where noise from sport is more acceptable.

In developing derelict and disused land for sport, it is important to appreciate that there may be health and safety and risk assessment issues that will require to be addressed. In addition, disused and derelict land can provide very specific environmental conditions that allow particular plants and insects to flourish, which may be of importance.

Water sports and mineral extraction sites

sportscotland commissioned a report on behalf of the Access Forum Inland Water, assessing opportunities for water sports use of mineral extraction sites. The report identifies constraints and opportunities and makes recommendations on best practice. While the report is now quite old (1998), it still retains relevance and may be of interest.

Piperhill jet ski facility

sportscotland worked with Scottish Coal, Enterprise Ayrshire and a commercial jet ski operator, on a feasibility study for the development of a jet ski facility on a former opencast coal site at Piperhill in East Ayrshire. A copy of the feasibility study, that also looked at the personal watercraft market in Scotland generally, is available.

Ratho quarry

sportscotland provided significant funding for the development of the Edinburgh International Climbing Arena at Ratho quarry near Edinburgh. The centre was developed in a disused quarry and uses the 100ft high stone quarry walls as the basis for the climbing walls that have been developed at the centre.

5.4



5.4 Sport in farms and forests

Agricultural and forestry land has significant potential for sport and recreation. Such land covers significant areas of the countryside and is often close to where people live. Farms and forests tend to have established path and track networks and forests in particular can often absorb large numbers of users, and a range of different uses, with minimal conflict.

Both the agricultural and public forestry sectors in Scotland are going through a process of change. Opportunities to diversify and maximise the potential of these sectors for a range of purposes are being explored. Recreational use of agricultural land is increasingly being considered, with new funding mechanisms facilitating provision for access and recreation. Significant work is ongoing on the national forest estate on the development of opportunities for a range of sport and recreation

activities. There have been exemplary facilities provided for mountain biking, with the development of some internationally renowned sites.

sportscotland supports and encourages the optimisation of sport and recreation opportunities on forestry and agricultural land.

In promoting the use of farm and forestry land for sport and recreation, it is crucial to be aware of land management needs and for sport to integrate with such needs in a responsible way.

It is vital for sport to be aware of land management sensitivities and to minimise disturbance to agricultural and timber operations.



5.5 Inclusion

Scotland has an outstanding outdoor environment with a huge range of different opportunities to engage in sport and recreation activities. Participation in sport and recreation in the outdoors can deliver a diversity of social and economic benefits. It is important, therefore, and of great value, to encourage, promote and facilitate participation in sport and recreation in the outdoors.

There are a number of generic reasons why people do not participate in sport, such as lack of time, cost issues, lack of opportunity, limited access to transport, or the lure of other attractions. Such generic reasons are as relevant to participation in sport and recreation in the outdoors as they are to participation in sport generally. There are also reasons why people do not participate in sport and recreation in the outdoors, which can be quite specific to sport in the outdoors.

People may view some outdoor sports as being exclusive, or may believe that you can only participate if you are very fit, have the relevant skills and knowledge, and have the correct (often expensive) equipment.

For some people it may simply never have occurred to them to go to the outdoors; or that the outdoors can be used for recreation. People may be unaware of the range of different sport and recreation activities that can be practised in the outdoors. And despite Scotland's new access rights, there may still be uncertainty about whether and where you are allowed to go in the outdoors, and about what you are allowed to do there.

In some cases people might not really know how to access the outdoors, or how to do the activities they might want to do there.

The outdoors itself can be viewed with suspicion and even fear, with some people not confident or relaxed in going there. Some outdoor activities can be viewed as unfashionable.

Research shows¹⁴ that particular groups of society, notably older people, women and girls, disabled people, black and minority ethnic (BME) people and people from more deprived social backgrounds, participate significantly less frequently in sport than the average population. This is common across all sports, including those practised in the outdoors.

For BME groups, for example, feelings of standing out and of vulnerability in the outdoors can hinder their participation. Young people may similarly experience feelings of being unwelcome or simply see the outdoors as boring. Women may have fears of isolation or are put off by lack of facilities if they are taking young children with them. For people with a disability, it may be physical barriers such as steep slopes, stairs or stiles that hinder their participation, a lack of information on the opportunities and facilities available to them, or perhaps the additional cost of having to participate with a carer.

The reasons why people do not participate in sport and recreation in the outdoors are real and it is important not to underestimate them; work can, however, be done to positively address the reasons why people do not participate and to encourage them to take part.

14. Single Equity Scheme – Promoting equality of opportunity in sport (sportsScotland 2006).

Information

Providing information is crucial to increasing participation. Giving clear information on how people can access the outdoors, and letting people know that the outdoors is relevant to them, is key to encouraging participation. Informing people on their rights and responsibilities and highlighting the variety of activities that are available in the outdoors for a range of different needs, wants and abilities, is very important.

The provision of information in the right places, formats and languages relevant to those you are trying to reach, is vital.

Often it is not more facilities or opportunities that are needed to encourage participation, but better description and promotion of what is there and how to access it.

Transport

Lack of transport is a major reason why certain groups do not visit the outdoors. This puts an emphasis on the provision of opportunities and facilities close to where people live and close to, and integrated with, public transport networks. Core paths planning and the protection and provision of green spaces and networks in and around towns and cities, can help provide better integration and links with the outdoors.

Social support networks

Social support networks and access on a group basis can be important in encouraging participation. Health walking schemes for example, with a focus on the social side of participation, can be very effective in encouraging participation, overcoming people's anxiety associated with going for a walk alone in the outdoors, or the stigma attached to it. Gender specific groups can be effective in encouraging participation amongst women. Supportive peer groups can be very effective in instilling confidence and motivating and encouraging participation and sustaining it in the long term.

Training and understanding

Often countryside/recreational staff require training to ensure that they are aware of the needs, cultures and sensitivities of those they may be trying to encourage to participate. Negative or stereotyped attitudes, or a lack of confidence in interacting with people from minority groups can be a significant barrier to encouraging and facilitating their participation.

Community engagement

In encouraging participation and addressing barriers to participation it is crucial to engage with those communities perceived to be excluded. It is important not to make assumptions about different groups and to impose top down only solutions, but to work with people and communities to properly understand their concerns and issues and what it is that may be hindering their participation.

Engagement with excluded groups is essential to identifying barriers to participation in outdoor sport and recreation and to developing positive solutions.

sportscotland appreciates that not everyone will want to participate in sport and recreation in the outdoors. It is important, however, to let people know that sport and recreation in the outdoors is relevant to them and to create the circumstances that will facilitate participation should people choose to do so.

It is important to note that some groups with traditionally low participation rates in sport may actually be quite well represented amongst some outdoor sports. This would include the high number of women who horse ride, for example, or the number of older people involved in rambling and hillwalking.

While there are barriers to participation in sport and recreation in the outdoors, it is important to note the valuable role that outdoor sports can and do play in encouraging certain sectors of society to participate in sport and recreation.

Single Equity Scheme – Promoting equality of opportunity in sport (sportscotland 2006)

Our vision for equity in Scottish sport is to ensure that discrimination is tackled, barriers are broken down, inequalities in participation, coaching and leadership are addressed, and that Scottish residents have equal opportunities to participate in sport at all levels.

Our Single Equity Scheme sets out in detail how sportscotland will embed equity into our functions, and how we will comply with our statutory Disability, Gender and Race Equality Duties and help to fulfill our vision for equitable sport.

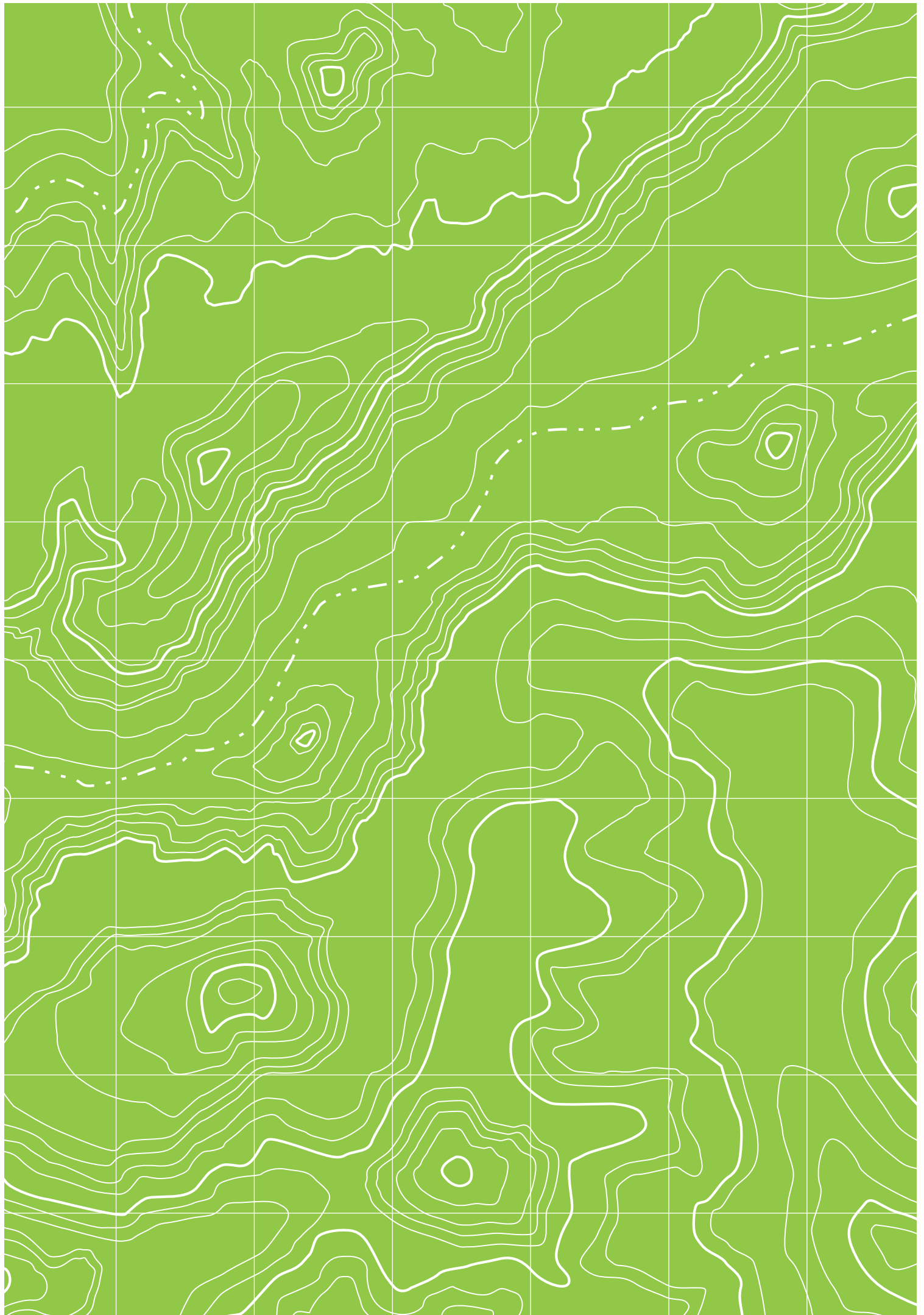


Making Women and Girls More Active – a good practice guide (sportscotland 2005)

This guide seeks to help the Scottish sporting community rise to the challenge of helping girls and women live a more active life through providing background on the barriers they face and practical recommendations and advice on breaking down these barriers.

Barriers to participation project

sportscotland is involved in a project with Perth and Kinross Council and Scottish Natural Heritage looking at barriers to participation in sport and recreation in the outdoors. The project aims to identify what generic barriers there are to participation in sport and recreation in the outdoors and to then compare these with circumstances in Perth and Kinross. The aim will then be to look at what can be done to positively address barriers identified and encourage and increase participation.






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The **sportscotland** group is made up of **sportscotland** and the **sportscotland** Trust Company (National Centres). **sportscotland** incorporates the Scottish Institute of Sport, the high performance arm of **sportscotland**.



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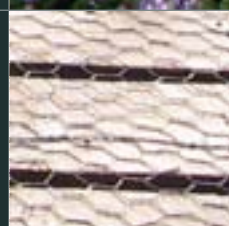
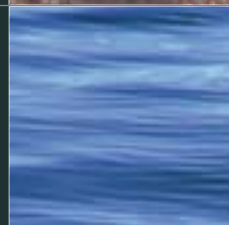
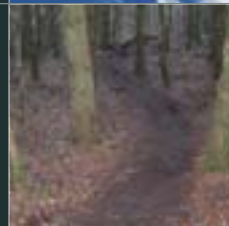
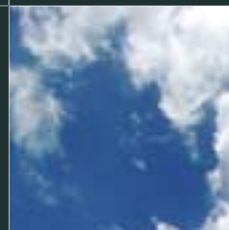
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Published by **sportscotland**

ISBN: 978 1 85060 551 5
OT08 12 08 0.5M

Awarding funds from
The National Lottery®



Designed, edited & produced by Redpath, www.redpath.co.uk