

News from around the Parks

Any items in italics are from the CNP staff. Apologies for any stylistic errors, which are caused by the variety of formats in which the reports are received. Some reports have been edited for length.

Brecon Beacons NPA – Carys Howell

No report received.

Brecon Beacons Park Society – Charles Henderson

Although our membership is holding up well in the current economic circumstances, we are looking for ways of increasing the active involvement of our members. To that end, we are developing an improved website, which should be live soon. We are also recruiting for a volunteer Publicity and Press Officer.

Our planning team continue to meet regularly with BBNPA planners, resulting in a number of useful outcomes.

Broads Authority – Rashmi Varma

Cantley staithe

The Broads Authority is one of several partners, who, through working together, have transformed a derelict village staithe into a £300,000 state of the art riverside amenity with a free public slipway and mooring pontoon.

The Authority has contributed £20,000 in cash, £20,000 from the SDF fund and £32,500 in kind match funding to the staithe at Cantley on the southern Broads which has opened up the river to boaters, anglers and residents. It was opened on September 18th by Broads Authority chairman Dr Stephen Johnson.

Stubb Mill

When the cap was craned on to a 200 year old, grade 2 listed drainage mill on October 6 it marked the end of the Heritage Lottery Fund's bursary scheme to train five millwrights and ten reed and sedge cutters in the Broads. The restoration of Stubb Mill, owned by Norfolk Wildlife Trust, was the apprentice millwrights' flagship and final project. Three of them have now formed a Millwright's Alliance which is attracting work on other mills, while another undertakes conservation building. The craning on of the cap was watched by Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Second award for Trinity Broads

The Trinity Broads have won a second award this year celebrating fifteen years of work to restore water and wetland habitats and involve the local community in improving the special environment.

The Broads, that supply drinking water to Great Yarmouth and surrounding villages, have won the UK Landscape Award for the East of England which was created by the European Landscape Convention. Earlier this year they won a prestigious Waterways Renaissance Award.

Hilary Franzen

Hilary.franzen@broads-authority.gov.uk

Broads Society – Paul Howes

Budget cuts

The Broads Community is waiting concernedly to learn within the next few days (before the date of the CNP meeting) how the Authority intends to implement the cuts imposed by central government. Given that navigation expense (about 1/3 of the Authority's budget) is funded by boat owners through the payment of tolls and thus will not be cut directly,

concerns have been expressed from some quarters about the share of overhead allocation by the Authority as the rest of it slims down, and thus potentially a reduced amount of money actually being spent on maintaining the navigability of rivers when all agree that a backlog of maintenance already exists despite recent increased activity by the BA.

Broads Plan

The Society has received both praise and opprobrium following its comments on the draft Broads Strategic Plan, particularly regarding our statement that it was neither strategic nor a plan. We were not alone in our thinking, however, and the Authority has decided to re-issue the document following consideration of what it can do within its future budget. We applaud that decision and welcome a fresh approach.

Governance and status of NPAs

During the National Park Societies' annual conference and, in particular the discussion on governance, Lord Judd expressed concerns that NPAs were drifting away from their original purpose. A representative from the Broads suggested that it might be worth considering whether NPAs be re-constituted as trusts so that their purposes could be "set in stone" (relatively). Further discussions have been had and a follow-up meeting will be held with Lord Judd and Ruth Chambers in the next few days, all being well. Nobody is yet ready to advocate such a change, however.

Paul Howes, mardler@hotmail.com

Dartmoor NPA – Diana Moyse

Military Training

As previously reported, military training, live firing and dry training takes place over about 15% of the National Park. Permission for Defence Estates to enter negotiations for a new licence to train on Dartmoor (Okehampton and Merrivale ranges) was granted by Ministers in January 2009.

The new licence will be split into two parts: part 1 a private legal document between landowner and MOD and part 2 a public document specifying responsibilities and requiring the preparation of a management plan for the Training Area to 'further National Park purposes'. The management plan associated with part 2 is currently being consulted on (http://www.dartmoor-ranges.co.uk/military_use_2_management.html). DNPA will be submitting a response in due course but key issues already highlighted are:

- How the management plan will be funded
- Weight accorded to National Park designation in setting priorities
- How the management plan will be monitored (which links to the requirement to undertake an environmental stock take at the midpoint of the new licence)

The military also train on parts of the southern moor. The planning permission for this use expires in 2012 and we have indicated to the MOD that our initial view is that the major development test should apply to any new planning application.

CNP has also submitted a response to the consultation on the integrated rural management plan (IRMP) for Dartmoor Training Area. Our comments and suggestions included the following:

- *National Park purposes to be reflected appropriately throughout the management plan and identified explicitly as an IRMP objective*
- *The Action plan to reflect landscape and access concerns as well as habitats*
- *The need for visual and landscape impacts of any new or relocated infrastructure to be adequately considered and the cumulative impact to be assessed*

Please contact us if you would like to see a copy of this response.

Management Changes

The Authority is currently restructuring its management to provide a more streamlined, efficient and effective structure. A new Leadership Team has been agreed and is now operational. The Authority has recently welcomed Steve Belli to the team as Director of Planning.

Draft Recreation and Access Strategy for Dartmoor 2010 – 2017 Consultation

The DNPA is now consulting on the draft of its first stand alone Recreation and Access Strategy for Dartmoor.

The Strategy has four key themes:

- Sustainable use of the National Park
- Widening participation and removing barriers to access
- Raising awareness and understanding of the opportunities already available for recreation, the work of the Authority and the special qualities of the National Park
- Promoting active lifestyles

The Strategy will:

- set a clear vision for sustainable informal recreation and access in the National Park;
- provide clear policies on how DNPA will manage recreation on Dartmoor;
- help shape detailed annual action plans in order to prioritise the allocation of DNPA resources;
- identify and strengthen partnerships for delivery and develop opportunities to draw down external funding.

The consultation period runs until 30 November 2010 and the draft Strategy can be viewed online at: www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk

Stonewalling Course 2010

This year's course was held in South Brent, at the beginning of September. Our usual very successful pairing of instructors from Devon Rural Skills Trust was changed this year owing to illness. Instead, we brought in a local contractor who trained on one of our courses back in 1998, when the Authority's programme of walling and hedge laying courses was just being introduced through the Moor Care Programme. Since that course he has developed his skills and is successfully self employed in fencing and walling, and now comes full circle from pupil to instructor. One of the twelve places was reserved for, and taken up, by, a young man with special needs. Reserving a place for those with more limited opportunities is something we have tried to do for the past few years, since taking a young man with brain injury onto one of the courses, where he very successfully undertook the training. Whilst it may not lead to independent employment, taking part in the course offers the chance to widen experience and extend skills, and may help to encourage opportunities for this group of people

The remaining places were filled by Dartmoor residents, several being young men working in landscaping and associated areas and wanting to expand their abilities, including our own apprentice stonemason, Sam. All were keen to utilise their skills after the course, either on their own land, or working for others. The weather was kinder than it has been in recent years, with only one day washed out.

Feedback from last year's course reveals that, of the respondents, all have undertaken further walling work, varying from a few days to 10 weeks, and all indicated that they felt that the course was invaluable in encouraging the retention of traditional skills on Dartmoor.

Dartmoor Preservation Association – James Paxman

Military Training

The points in the DNPA report regarding the Integrated Rural Management Plan are well made.

There is at present no indication as to how the plan will be funded which undermines its validity.

National Park purposes, although present in the plan, do not provide a pervasive influence.

There is not enough independence on assessment of effects and monitoring of the plan.

Sudden Oak Death

There has been an alarming outbreak of sudden oak death in the forest surrounding Burrator reservoir. The disease appears to affect larch tress and to a lesser extent rhododendron. There is no cure and the response from the Forestry Commission has required South West Lakes Trust to fell all larch in the surrounding area by Feb 28th 2011. The disease has been spreading eastwards from Cornwall for several years in spite of efforts to contain it. Further spread is understood to be likely.

Exmoor NPA – Andrea Davis

Chains Wall Permitted Bridleway

Improvements have been carried out to the Chains Wall Permitted Bridleway including two deep boggy areas which were very difficult to cross particularly in wet conditions and this was leading to the widening of the existing Bridleway. These boggy areas were dug out and over 100 tons of locally imported stone was used used to infill.

NPA responds to burning consultation

Exmoor National Park Authority has published its response to Natural England's consultation on a Best Practice Guide for burning in the uplands of South West England. A report went to the Authority meeting in June this year where Members had the opportunity to discuss and debate the issue.

In recent years there has been increasing local concern that controlled burning is declining as a land management practice and this is leading to a substantial build up of vegetation and scrub on many moorland areas.

The Authority's response is available by visiting:

http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/index/looking_after.htm

To view Defra's Regulations visit:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/burning/default.aspx>

Willow on leather

Twenty five young leaders from Devon and Somerset and the Bristol West Indian cricket team were brought together recently for a learning weekend on Exmoor thanks to Mosaic, a partnership led by the Campaign for National Parks with the Youth Hostels Association and nine National Park Authorities in England.

The young leaders, whose job it will be to promote National Parks back in their communities, took part in activities that included horse riding, night navigation, conservation work and rock climbing. The Bristol West Indian cricket team played the local Exford team

and on Sunday morning the whole group were brought together for a kennel tour with the Devon and Somerset Staghounds.

Exmoor Society – Arabella Amory

The following is the gist of points made by the Exmoor Society to the Exmoor National Park Authority concerning the Authority's priorities and spending cuts.

The Society emphasised that the cuts presented an opportunity to look at the core purposes of the national park and to distinguish and highlight its activities from those of local authorities and other bodies.

The First Purpose: there is an ability now to strengthen the conservation purpose which is the foundation stone and the reason why a separate body is needed to manage these assets.

The Second Purpose: relating this purpose to the national park's special qualities is vital. However, some of the activities can be achieved in other ways, such as outsourcing and stimulating the private sector, voluntary bodies and volunteers.

Planning Functions: the Society felt this was an area where more joint working with local authorities was possible. Setting objectives and policies in the National Park Management Plan, spatial development and land use were essential areas of strategic planning for the Authority. Development Control could be delegated to local authorities or alternatively planning staff to be shared between them.

Administration: the Society recognised that the biggest part of the NPA's core budget was on staffing and that the cuts are likely to fall on staff numbers. The Society felt strongly that the conservation staff should not be cut and that some of the staff working in other areas could be transferred to this section.

There could be disposal of some properties owned by the ENPA, particularly where they are not contributing to the first purpose.

In summary, the Society would like to see the ENPA more as an enabling body, setting standards, supporting excellence, co-ordinating activities, stimulating the private sector and voluntary bodies, and less involved in the direct delivery of services that are the responsibility of local authorities.

For a copy of the full report please contact Arabella Amory on arabellaamory@googlemail.com

Lake District NPA – John Kerr

The Partnership's Plan – the Management Plan for the National Park 2010-2015

The Lake District National Park Partnership has now formally adopted the Partnership Plan – the first National Park Management Plan ever prepared by the range of bodies that look after the National Park rather than the Authority itself. Its partner-led actions will be reviewed annually. The Partnership also played a central role in shaping the Lake District's Local Development Framework Core Strategy, which has been found 'sound' by the Planning Inspectorate. By the time of the meeting the Authority will have formally adopted the Strategy.

Carbon Trust Standard

We have achieved the Carbon Trust Standard, an independent accreditation of our work to reduce carbon emissions, our monitoring systems and our approach to achieving further carbon reductions. We are the first National Park Authority in the UK to achieve this

prestigious standard, which builds on our earlier success in the Energy Saving Trust's Fleet Heroes Awards for cutting vehicle emissions.

Joint Equalities Scheme

We are consulting on a new Joint Equality Scheme, which aims to promote equality and diversity and sets out key actions to improve service quality. We have developed the scheme with support from colleagues at Disability Cumbria, Outreach Cumbria, and AWAZ, our local race equality group. As part of the consultation we are asking communities how we can improve service accessibility, reflecting the specific needs of diverse groups of people.

Life in National Parks

Along with the Peak District and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs we are taking part in a year-long television documentary about life in National Parks. Here, the programme makers are focusing on the competing and sometimes conflicting demands on national park managers in encouraging tourism businesses that provide much-needed jobs, while protecting the landscape that attracts those visitors in the first place. The programme, commissioned by BBC 4, will be broadcast in 3 one-hour long episodes towards the end of 2011.

For more information contact Bob Cartwright, Director of Park Services:

Email: BobCartwright@lakedistrict.gov.uk

Tel: 01539 792679

Friends of the Lake District – Andrew Forsyth

Honister Zip Wire

Friends of the Lake District greeted the decision by Honister Slate mine, to withdraw its controversial application for a 1200m zip wire from close to the summit of Fleetwith Pike, (due to go to the Lake District National Park Authority's Development Control Committee on 3 November), with cautious optimism. We can only speculate as to why the application has been withdrawn at this point, but suffice to say that many share our view that the development would cause significant damage to an internationally important landscape. Natural England has also voiced significant concerns over the damage to the rare wildlife habitats present at the site. More than 300 statements of objection and fewer than 30 in support had been received by the LDNPA when the application was withdrawn.

Hopefully this will be an end to the matter, but we will continue to monitor the situation, should the applicant decide to resubmit at some point in the future.

Green Field Nuclear sites dropped

Friends of the Lake District was delighted when the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) dropped two of the three preferred sites for new nuclear power stations in Cumbria. The Department's new policy statement says that Kirkstanton and Braystones were now '*unsuitable sites*' for new power stations. The three main reasons were; the visual and landscape effects upon the Lake District National Park; the need for all the sites at the national level; and the difficulty of developing them by 2025 due to insufficient time to get the supporting infrastructure in place, especially due to difficulties with connections to the National Grid. Friends of the Lake District's objections were echoed by the Lake District National Park Authority, CNP, Cumbria Wildlife Trust and other organisations, individuals and local community groups.

The site north of the existing Sellafield site remains on DECC's list as a proposed site for a new nuclear power station and it will now be a question of working to minimise the landscape degradation caused by the necessity to take the electricity generated to where it will be used.

National Park Boundary work on track

Contrary to a press statement made by Tim Farron, MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale, there has been no delay in taking forward proposals to extend the Yorkshire Dales and Lake District National Parks. Further technical and assessment work was required before the NE Board could be in a position to take any decision on the proposals. The issue of whether a SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) is required, with the associated 12-week consultation period, is one issue which needs to be resolved. The intention is that the recommendations will go to the February 2011 Board (no date set), after which there will be a targeted consultation with the statutory authorities. Following any decision to proceed, the Variation Orders for the National Park extensions would go before the Secretary of State at Defra during 2011.

New Forest NPA – Bob Morris**Independent inspector backs National Park's first set of planning policies**

An independent government planning inspector has endorsed the first dedicated set of planning policies for the New Forest National Park, concluding that the Authority's 'Core Strategy' provides an appropriate and sound basis for planning within the National Park and should be adopted.

Inspector Neil Pope commended the Authority's work in simplifying the hundreds of existing planning policies from five plans that currently cover the National Park into a succinct set of 42 policies. The Core Strategy document will be used to guide decisions on planning applications within the whole of the National Park up to 2026.

Contact: david.illsley@newforestnpa.gov.uk

From Paraguay to the New Forest –Natural History Museum experts explore rare habitats

The exotic country of Paraguay seems far removed from the New Forest National Park. Yet two teams from the Natural History Museum are studying these remarkable landscapes in a project to map the hugely varied species that can be found there.

Supported by the New Forest National Park Authority and funded by public donations to the Museum, the first team has already started collating a New Forest inventory of the area's wildlife and environment. This will provide a snapshot in time of the New Forest against which changes over the next 10 years can be mapped.

Contact: ian.barker@newforestnpa.gov.uk

National Park reveals what lies beneath the waves

People can find out about the New Forest National Park's rich coastal heritage whether they are below the waves, on the water or on the shore thanks to a unique underwater heritage trail.

The New Forest National Park Authority has placed four bright yellow buoys in the Solent to help to reveal the area's fascinating maritime history. People sailing past can phone the number printed on the buoy to hear a recorded message revealing the history of the wrecks beneath.

Soon divers will be able to take waterproof information 'slates' with them with advice about diving safely on the wrecks.

Contact: james.brown@newforestnpa.gov.uk

New Forest Association – Peter Roberts

The NFA has published its survey of the Campsites on Crown Land. This comprehensive description of the physical environment as well as an ecological assessment should prove of great benefit in the management of the sites providing a baseline for future change.

Much time has been spent assessing the impact of the government cuts with particular concerns on the impact of commoning if there is any Forestry Commission property sale in the New Forest.

Peter Roberts, peter.robertsnf@tiscali.co.uk

Northumberland NPA – Peter Nicholson

Northumberland National Park's Beautiful Bogs Compeat and Win!

A new film shot in Northumberland National Park won first prize at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Conference in Durham. *'Our Beautiful Bogs'* was commissioned by the National Park Authority and made by the Haltwhistle Film Project with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The competition sought to find the most inspiring way of telling people about why peatlands in Britain are special, and the judges thought that this new short film, featuring local families visiting Greenlee Lough National Nature Reserve close to Hadrian's Wall, did just that. Northumberland National Park Ecologist Gill Thompson accepted first prize from John Vidal, Guardian Environment Correspondent on behalf of Haltwhistle Film Project, at the IUCN's conference in October.

National Park installs first electric vehicle charge points on Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site

The UK's first public electric vehicle charging points to be located in a protected landscape were unveiled today at the National Park Centre, Once Brewed, in Northumberland National Park. Whilst the roll-out of the charging points is well underway in some urban areas, the four charging points along the historic Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site represents the first attempt to take this new infrastructure to an upland rural setting. The aim is to demonstrate that, with appropriate infrastructure, even the North East's most remote and tranquil rural areas can be accessed by electric cars for leisure and business use and that electric vehicles should not just be regarded as city 'run-arounds'. Installing these charging points now, means that the growing number of electric vehicle users over the next decade will not be excluded from one of the country's most important monuments and beauty spots. Plans are already underway to install a network of additional charging points around Northumberland National Park and its gateway communities.

Major Heritage Partnership Agreement Announced

English Heritage, Northumberland National Park Authority and Natural England have joined together with tenant farmers, Mr and Mrs Wilson, of Ingram Farm to carry out a national pilot Heritage Partnership Agreement. Ingram Farm, Northumberland sits on land in the Breamish Valley containing a high number of nationally important scheduled ancient monuments which provide a fascinating insight into how our ancient ancestors lived and farmed. The Heritage Partnership Agreement between the Wilsons and English Heritage sees 570 hectares scheduled as an ancient monument, encompassing a rich and complex archaeological landscape – the largest piece of scheduled land in England. Importantly, the Heritage Partnership Agreement seeks to encourage a more proactive, efficient and collaborative approach towards heritage management. It creates a clear list of works that can be carried out on the scheduled monument and enables the Wilsons to do repairs to fencing, stone walls and hedges, footpaths and tracks and to control burrowing animals which could damage archaeological remains.

North York Moors NPA – Steve Scoffin

Management Plan

Over the summer, the Authority carried out a consultation with the public and various stakeholders to kick start the drafting of a new management plan.

A broad range of comments were received including more encouragement for microgeneration and green energy initiatives but in ways that are sensitive to the landscape, support for farming and encouraging young people to stay in farming through

apprenticeship schemes, more affordable housing and opportunities for employment in the National Park and tackling litter and illegal off-road activity.

The comments will be used to produce a draft plan which will go back out for consultation early in the new year.

For more information contact Sarah Housden, Policy Manager
(s.housden@northyorkmoors-npa.gov.uk)

Balsam Bashing!

This year saw round three of an initiative to control the invasive Himalayan balsam in the west of the North York Moors through a combination of strimming and hand-pulling. Approximately 13.5 miles of control work was carried out along the river Seph and its tributaries in Raisdale and Bilsdale over a ten week period this summer.

Areas blitzed in previous years showed considerably less Himalayan balsam regrowth, which allowed further progress to be made downstream.

Invasive species including Himalayan balsam and Japanese, Himalayan and giant knotweeds were also treated along an 8 mile stretch of the river Esk. New Zealand pigmy weed was recently discovered growing in a pond connected to the Esk and work is underway to stop it spreading into the river.

For more information contact Peter Barfoot, Director of Conservation
(p.barfoot@northyorkmoors-npa.gov.uk)

Apprentices

Apprentices from local families now account for more than 10% of the Authority's staff. The Authority's initial apprenticeship scheme has seen more than 30 young people complete an NVQ Level 2 (and in some cases Level 3) and go on to find work in countryside management.

Last year, the Authority introduced a business administration apprenticeship at its headquarters. All three apprentices have passed their NVQ Level 2 and two have recently left the Authority having found full time employment.

The newest scheme started this summer and is a partnership with Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council and Askham Bryan College. Six unemployed youngsters are currently learning a variety of skills on a one-year apprenticeship that will stand them in good stead for working in the Borough's parks and gardens or the North York Moors.

For more information contact Richard Gunton, Director of Recreation & Park Management
(r.gunton@northyorkmoors-npa.gov.uk)

North Yorkshire Moors Association – Gareth Fawcett

Anniversary Year Projects

The History Tree

All the planned projects for our 25th anniversary year have been a success and to some extent have exceeded expectations. The History Tree is in place, officially opened by Andy Wilson Chief Executive Officer of the National Park on July 25th which was the opening day of National Park Week. The engraved plate which is now secured to the levelled stump of the old copper beech has been a focus of interest for hundreds of visitors to the Moors Centre since the day it was completed. It is a fine piece of craftsmanship and it was a pleasure to have Tony Moss, who travelled down from Northumberland to be present on the opening day. Tony Moss who is an international expert on sun dials, and a sun-dial maker was a key figure in transforming the original design by Albert Elliot into a digital file to

enable the start of the manufacturing process for the stainless steel plate. As a further development in 2011, it is proposed to produce a booklet of information about the people and events featured on the engraved plate.

An Eye to Perceive

Derek Statham's book, "An Eye to Perceive" has been an outstanding success with the first print run virtually sold out. The book, published by the 'Association', was planned to be completed during this anniversary year and was printed in time for our AGM in June. We are extremely grateful to Derek for his generosity in donating the lion's share of the sale price of the book to NYMA funds.

Woodland Habitat

The International Year of Biodiversity coincides with our anniversary year and a start on making a contribution to local biodiversity has also been successfully launched. The plan is to create an area of native woodland and improved wildlife habitat in a plot of land above Danby Park Wood. The wood is the remains of an ancient deer park between Castleton and Danby. Work has been started on the plot of land with the first phase of bracken clearing. This follows an earlier botanical survey to make sure no important plants would be harmed by the bracken spraying. A programme of clearing and planting will now be arranged, probably starting in early spring next year. This project has been made possible through a bequest from the estate of Richard Corbett.

Cornfield Flowers Project

Phase 3 of this highly regarded conservation work has continued successfully this year with new planting and seed gathering from these rare plants of arable land. NYMA is one of the management group partners taking the role as employer of two part-time project officers.

Peak District NPA – Roger Clarke

Natural flood defence scheme piloted in Peak District

Making Space for Water, a pilot scheme to demonstrate how re-vegetated moorland can help reduce urban flooding, was launched in the Derwent Valley by Environment Agency chair Lord Smith (Sept).

The project, being run by the National Park's Moors for the Future Partnership, will work on a 220-acre (89ha) area of degraded, barren moorland on the Kinder plateau. It is hoped that the restoration of plantlife will slow the run-off from heavy downpours enough to reduce flooding in nearby Sheffield, Chesterfield, Matlock and Derby.

The Environment Agency, Moors for the Future Partnership, Defra, Natural England, the National Trust and Peak District National Park Authority are all partners in the project. More details: Making Space for Water manager Clare Brown
clare.brown@peakdistrict.gov.uk

Partnership or sale for Losehill Hall learning centre

The Authority is to close Losehill Hall, the Peak District National Park's environmental learning and conference centre, to cope with Government spending cuts.

Faced with finding savings of £1m-£1.9m over the next four years, the closure of Losehill Hall will save £250,000-£300,000 a year in running costs – 15% of required savings over four years.

The Authority is now seeking a new partner or owner who, ideally, would carry on the hall's educational role and may be willing to transfer some of the 41 full and part-time staff. Meanwhile the Grade 2 listed hall, run by the Authority for 40 years, will close for business in December. Redeployments are being sought and redundancies, if necessary, will follow in January.

A reduced learning team will be based at Authority headquarters, using other centres across the National Park for education sessions.

More details: Director of operations Richard Campen richard.campen@peakdistrict.gov.uk

Pedal Peak District goes up a gear

More than 1,000 new or inexperienced cyclists have signed up to www.pedalpeakdistrict.co.uk – an interactive website to encourage them to cycle more. Of three rural pilot projects funded by Cycling England, Pedal Peak District was the only one to reach its target of signing up 1,000 occasional cyclists in five months. Authority chief executive Jim Dixon said: “Pedal Peak District is at the cutting edge of using sustainable transport to achieve behavioural change on climate change.”

Meanwhile the other half of the Pedal Peak District project - to re-open four old railway tunnels to make the Monsal Trail fully open to cyclists - is carrying on apace. Specialist contractors are strengthening the 400-metre tunnels which have been closed since the railway line was axed in 1969. A new surface is being laid and the tunnels fully lit.

They are working towards a completion date of the end of March 2011.

More details: social marketing – Alison Riley, alison.riley@peakdistrict.gov.uk Tunnel re-opening – Rhonda Pursglove, rhonda.pursglove@peakdistrict.gov.uk

PDNPA switchboard: 01629 816200

Friends of the Peak District – Philip Hetherington

Future of Peak District National Park Authority

PDNPA have considered various options for making the required savings. We have prepared a response to their initial proposals, urging them not to abandon their second statutory purpose of promoting understanding and enjoyment of the national park by making all their savings in this area of work. We are also concerned that the authority's remit in the area's cultural heritage will be under some threat. Public concern at the moment is focused on the PDNPA's consideration of closure of their education centre at Losehill Hall – as a result of lobbying there is now a public consultation period ending on 10th November.

Off-Roading Problems

We continue to campaign against major problems with off-roading vehicles, both legal and illegal. We are helping local parish councils and other campaigning groups, including the Ramblers nationally, to deal with this problem, which causes both disturbance and damage.

Fluorspar mining in the Peak District

Glebe Mines has announced their closure and a two-year wind down of operations in the Peak Park. This means that the fluorspar mine at Tearsall, the planning application for which was approved last year, will not now reopen. Fluorspar mining in the area is likely to cease altogether after the two year wind down. We are concerned about the future of a number of the sites currently managed by Glebe, who have been a relatively good company as regards management and restoration of their sites.

Cowdale Quarry

We are delighted that High Peak Borough Council has unanimously rejected an application for a bottling plant at Cowdale, just outside Buxton. We have been campaigning hard against this development, which would have ruined a beautiful and tranquil area adjacent to the national park.

Pembrokeshire Coast NPA – David Ellis**Ramsey goes green**

The RSPB recently demonstrated the success of their newly installed wind turbine and solar panels on Ramsey Island.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Head of Development Management Vicky Hirst and Sustainable Development Fund Administrator Emma Taylor were invited to Ramsey in September to see how the system has improved everyday life for the Reserve Manager and volunteers on the island.

It is estimated that the new system will mean the use of generators at both the island's farmhouse and volunteers' bungalow will drop from being run daily to being run every third day, or even as little as once a week during peak solar and wind periods.

The photo-voltaic array and turbine have already helped lower carbon emissions and save precious money, which can be spent on conservation work on the island reserve.

For further information email: emmat@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk or tel 01646 624874

National Trail officers gather in anniversary year

National Trail Officer Dave Maclachlan from the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority welcomed over 20 National Trail colleagues from across the UK as part of the three-day event designed to share best practice and expertise and showcase the Pembrokeshire Coast National Trail in its 40th year.

The meeting highlighted access work on the Path and many sections are now accessible for everyone, with a number of stretches now stile-free, including 42 miles between Pembroke Dock and Nolton Haven and 23 miles from Newgale to Penberi. Over 400 stiles from the Path in the past 15 years.

For further information email: davemac@pembrokeshire@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk or tel 01646 624852

Land signing marks historic day for Park Authority

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority officially designated 22 hectares of Access Land in Freshwater East in August.

Members of Freshwater East community joined Welsh Assembly Government Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing, Jane Davidson AM, and the Chairman and officers of the Park Authority for the official signing at the County Show.

The designation of Access Land will dedicate a new right of access on foot for the public and will complement existing public access provided by the Coast Path and public rights of way at Freshwater East.

Landowners can dedicate Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 but few local authorities or private landowners appear to have used this power in Wales.

For further information email: anthonyr@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk or tel 01646 624849

Friends of Pembrokeshire National Park – David Holmes**Welsh Park Societies Lobby of The Welsh Assembly**

On 6th July The Friends of the Pembrokeshire National Park joined with the Brecon Beacons and Snowdonia Societies and CNP to present our proposals to political parties in Wales. We are asking the political parties to include the proposals in their manifestos for

the 2011 elections for the National Assembly for Wales. In outline the proposals are: (1) statutory responsibilities for management and improvement of rights of way should be transferred to the Park Authorities with necessary resources: (2) funding to be made available to help under-represented groups visit and benefit from National Parks: (3) consider giving Park Authorities a key role in the management and delivery of the Glastir agri-environment scheme within their areas: (4) the management of Sites of Special Scientific and National Nature Reserves in National Parks should be transferred from the Countryside Council for Wales to National Parks with necessary resources.

The Really Wild Festival 4th and 5th September 2010

This festival promotes the use of good quality local produce and crafts, and has as its patron Prof. David Bellamy. Any surplus funds generated are used to support the community of St Davids and the surrounding area by giving grants and donations to local groups and charities, whose aims and objectives broadly coincide with those of the festival. As the festival is sited in the National Park, and because of its emphasis on a natural sustainable environment, the committee of the FPNP supports this event by paying for a pitch on which to site a FPNP stand. The stand enables contacts between existing 'Friends' and the acquisition of new ones.

Improved Access to The Castlemartin Ranges

At present when the main Castlemartin Range is in use by the Army for tank firing or infantry manoeuvres walkers on the Pembrokeshire Coastal Path have to divert onto the road which passes inland around the ranges. A new path within the boundary of the ranges but inland of the areas that are used by the Army has been constructed. Thus walkers, cyclists and horse riders will not now have to go on to the road when diverted. This new path is to be opened on 29th November 2010 by Jane Davidson AM Welsh Assembly environment Minister. Also 2 mobile vedette posts are now being used to improve access by allowing access to some areas of the coastal path even when firing is taking place rather than closing the whole path through the ranges. The path through the ranges will in future be open throughout August every year.

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Scottish Campaign for National Parks – Robert Maund Cairngorms Local Plan Adoption.

The Park Authority has approved amendments to the local plan following the Reporter's findings but on key issues such as the development of the An Camas Mor NSA, has ignored the findings and the extensive objections from SCNP and many others. The whole issue of affordable housing and achieving it as an add-on to unjustifiable open market speculative housing, threatens the future of the Park. The Plan is now with Scottish Ministers and efforts have been made to take the objections to this higher level. Scottish Ministers decision is expected by 29 October.

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

The proposal to develop a gold mine near Tyndrum which would have involved depositing up to 1million tons of spoil in a sensitive location on a key route to Ben Lui has been refused by the Park Authority.

Concern had been expressed by all the major agencies in Scotland including SCNP and the Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs. It was a relief to see recognition of the 'Sandford Principle' supporting the priority of conservation in the planning report. We are even more pleased to report that the Board accepted the Officer's recommendation albeit by a narrow margin. All the signs are that the decision will not be appealed but that a revised scheme will be submitted in due course. The Park Authority now has a new,

smaller, Board and the hard work that went into previous objections will have to be repeated.

Saving Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park - 108 square miles of wild and beautiful countryside adjoining the Clyde Estuary.

The fight goes on. The Wings Law wind factory inquiry commences on 11 January 2011 in Kilbirnie which means a very busy Christmas period for voluntary bodies such as SCNP and SYRP. The application by Wind Hydrogen Limited is for 24 turbines adjoining the 35 square miles of SSSI and SPA and if successful would in all probability be the forerunner of further applications (the original scheme was for 125 turbines!). Quite apart from planning and environmental reasons, the site has been classified as unmitigateable by a government report on turbines and aircraft radar systems - but the inquiry still proceeds!

Snowdonia NPA – Denis McAteer

More@Snowdonia

Earlier this year, Snowdonia National Park Authority began strategic improvements to develop its electronic communications. The work of revamping the Authority's website began in February and by now, several improvements can be seen. As more and more people use social networking sites, the Authority has profiles on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube and SNPA we believe is the first Authority to 'tweet' the decisions of its planning committee. With work still in progress, Google maps will be used to navigate to more detailed information on individual sites and will include 'Terrain' data and aerial photography, and a renewed mountain walks section will include interactive maps and gradient graphs.

Tackling Space Invaders in Europe

Director of Land Management, Emyr Williams was invited to Italy recently take part in a conference examining the challenges facing the protected areas of Europe. At the Europarc Conference, held this year in Pescasseroli in Italy, delegates from all over Europe and beyond examined how biodiversity and human activity can co-habit and how to deal with the challenges facing the protected areas of Europe. As a result of all the work accomplished so far in Snowdonia on managing the *Rhododendron ponticum*, Emyr led a discussion on how to manage native habitats that are threatened by invasive species.

Chile hears a song from Snowdonia

As the whole world waited eagerly for news on the Miners' release in Copiapo recently, a song by the pupils of Ysgol Capel Garmon was broadcasted on Chile's national radio station and the BBC World Service. The song was composed under the guidance of Gai Toms and Myrddin ap Dafydd who worked on the school's "Bro Ni", a project developed by Bwrlwm Eryri, SNPA's cultural initiative. Following a visit to a local megalithic tomb, the children composed a simple yet poignant song sympathising with the families of the miners in Chile. The song, *Seren Esperanza* (Esperanza's Star) can now be heard on SNPA's website.

Cymdeithas Eryri/Snowdonia Society – David Lewis

Local Development Plan

The Independent Examination of the Eryri LDP opened on October 19 and the last of 11 sessions will be on November 23. This is the first LDP under the latest legislation to reach that stage in North Wales. The Society received, and is taking up, an invitation to participate in all the sessions. We are content on the whole with the proposed policies. There is general support for the target that half of all new housing in the plan period (2007-22), and all new permissions outside the two main centres of Bala and Dolgellau, should be affordable housing for local needs. But there are considerable uncertainties about whether that will be achievable in practice under the conditions that now exist.

Clearing litter from Snowdon

For the Society's Conservation Snowdonia project recent high spots (in all senses) were two litter clearances, in collaboration with SNPA, on Wales's most visited mountain. In early September a record turnout of volunteers blitzed the Llanberis Path, encouraged by free travel on the Snowdon Mountain Railway to their starting-point at the summit. In early November the target was the area around Glaslyn, Snowdon's highest lake, reached by the Miners' Track. In between other activities included two days (in partnership with SNPA, CCW and Gwynedd Council) clearing rubbish brought together by the tides on the beach at Harlech Point; and working with the local community as part of a continuing effort to enhance the village of Dolwyddelan.

Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM is being held at a new venue, Theatr y Ddraig in Abermaw/Barmouth. This is part of an effort to increase the Society's membership in the southern half of the National Park. Barmouth itself is an historic port but, often dismissed in the twentieth century as a downmarket seaside resort, it was excluded when the National Park was created. The speaker at the AGM will be Society Vice-President Sir Simon Jenkins. The traditional walk in the morning will take in Dinas Oleu, the first piece of land acquired when the National Trust was formed.

Contact: David Lewis drlewis27@yahoo.com

South Downs NPA – TBA**Transition planning**

Work to shape the new National Park Authority is on course. Detailed plans are being implemented in a range of area such as the transfer of staff and assets from the current South Downs Joint Committee. Arrangements for working with partners are being progressed including agreeing an accord with Natural England. The willing help from other National Park Authorities has been much appreciated.

Planning agreements

The SDNPA has secured agreement in principle with the 15 councils covered by the National Park to the delivery of its planning function on an agency basis. Further work is progressing to specify how this arrangement will operate including the division of responsibilities, systems and funding but the arrangements will be fully operational on 1 April 2011.

Headquarters

After an extensive search, the Authority has decided to locate its headquarters in Midhurst, West Sussex. Although the move date is not expected to be until 2012, interim arrangements will be put in place in the Midhurst area. There is further work to be undertaken to determine the location of area offices which can appropriately cover the large area of the National Park and we will be working on an enhanced transport plan.

South Downs Society – Richard Reed**NPA shadow year**

The Society continues to develop its structure and work to march with the emerging shape of the NPA in its shadow year; lobbying and making frequent contact with the Authority's officers. It has worked with other voluntary bodies through the South Downs Network. The Network has engendered some lively email exchanges among its members, not always in agreement about particular issues as should be expected with so many diverse interests.

Wish list

The Society has proffered to the NPA its own 'wish list' of a range of actions the Authority might achieve in its first year. The list includes nature conservation proposals, removals of eyesores, improvement of Rights of Way, and at least early planning for the future of the

derelict Shoreham Cement Works, undoubtedly the biggest single scar on the landscape of the Downs.

Offshore wind proposal

We learn that an offshore wind turbine development planned in the English Channel off Brighton is to be named 'Rampion'. The round-headed rampion, also known as 'The Pride of Sussex', is a prized downland flower in Hampshire as well as Sussex. It happens to be the emblem of the South Downs Society. Our concern of course is as to where the power will come ashore and how it will then be linked overland.

Planning

Both the change being made by the coalition government and the development of the NPA's delegation arrangements - to which all the local authorities have agreed in principle - are keeping the Society's Planning Officer and committee busy. The Society will certainly be vigilant in monitoring the course of the controversial delegation arrangements to ensure that at the end of the day the NPA ensures the protection and enhancement of the Park. On the ground the Society will appear at a Public Inquiry in January to support the local authority in opposing plans for 500 houses near Polegate (Eastbourne) abutting the Park.

Yorkshire Dales NPA – Malcolm Petyt

Award for excellence in service to the public

The Authority has just become one of the first in the country to be awarded the Government's new public sector Customer Service Excellence Award. An external assessor spent two days in the National Park, talking to local communities, visitors, staff and volunteers to find out what they thought about the services provided by the Authority. The assessor found that the Authority encourages and supports a customer-focused approach throughout the organisation so that excellent services are delivered to all customers. And he said this approach has been delivered through the attitude and professionalism of staff and the willingness and enthusiasm of volunteers. The attainment of this Standard is a measure of their hard work and dedication.

New powers for Rangers

Craven District Council and YDNPA have launched a pilot scheme in the Lower Wharfedale area to tackle some of the anti-social behaviour that impacts on both locals and visitors to the area. Under the scheme, believed to be the first of its kind in the country, Rangers Phil Richards and Richard Mainman will be trained to assist the Council's Environmental Protection Team in tackling some of the issues relating to those people who leave litter behind and to dog owners who do not clean up after their pets. Currently the Council has powers to issue fixed penalty notices of £75 to people who leave litter and £50 notices to dog owners who fail to clear up. And offenders face fines of up to £2,500 and £1,000 respectively if they decide to ignore the notices and are taken to court. All the money is reinvested in the fixed penalty scheme.

A tale of three bridges

While the Lake District lost many bridges in the floods last year, fortunately only one route had to be closed in the Dales because a bridge became in danger of collapse when its supports were almost washed away. Now the bridge over Slei Gill in Arkengarthdale has been rebuilt by Dales Volunteers working with a YDNPA Ranger.

Members of the Dry Stone Walling Association recently built a splendid bridge for a local show. Reluctant to see such fine work lost, CPRE Wensleydale Branch offered to pay for its re-erection in the National Park, and now it improves public access within a small nature reserve in the Dale owned by the Authority.

The largest new bridge to be built for many years will soon be opened. A 50-metre timber bridge designed by the Forestry Commission will take riders and walkers across the River Ribble as the final link in the route of the Pennine Bridleway through the National Park.

Yorkshire Dales Society – Colin Speakman

Farewell Anne – Welcome Ann

Anne Webster, the Yorkshire Dales Society's full-time Administrator and only paid officer, will be retiring from her post at the end of December. Anne has been with the Society for four years, and was responsible for setting up the Society's office in Settle and overhauling the Society's administrative procedures, as well playing a key role in the Society's events programme and in major project work. Changing financial circumstances including the severe cuts in interest rates earned from the Society's investments, has led to a decision by the Society's Council of Management to replace Anne's full time post with a part time post, essentially of just 20 hours or around 2½- 3 days per week.

This will pose a significant challenge, as the gap in provision can only be met by greater use of volunteers for at least some of the key administrative tasks. However even this part time post has attracted some exceptional candidates, and the Society is pleased to announce that the post has been offered to Ann Shadrake. Ann has at various times worked for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, the National Trust at Fountains Abbey World Heritage Site and Halifax Eureka Children's Museum, and so brings a wealth of practical experience to the Society at a perhaps critical time in our evolution.

Funding cuts threaten to undermine Dalesbus success

Despite the remarkable success of the Yorkshire Dales Society's Dales & Bowland Community Interest Company in establishing a fully integrated network of DalesBus services in the Yorkshire Dales, which in 2010-11 has achieved growth figures of over 25% on top of the 56% growth recorded the previous year, the network faces massive cutbacks as North Yorkshire County Council has proposed cutting financial support for all Sunday and Bank Holiday bus services throughout the County, including those in the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors. Together with loss of funding from the National Park Authority and Natural England, major cutbacks in this popular and highly successful green travel network seem inevitable. Support from CNP in opposing these drastic cuts has been much appreciated and welcomed.

Similar cuts will also affect the future of the nationally acclaimed Moorsbus network in the North York Moors, and other National Parks will be facing similar major cuts. It now seems that policies towards global warming, social inclusion and sustainable tourism, core aspects of all National Park agendas, are being completely abandoned in order to meet targets for financial cuts, despite the devastating impact such cuts will have on the rural economy, the environment and the tourism industry. The Dales & Bowland CIC is looking at a number of innovative ways of raising finance to retain at least some if not all of the DalesBus network, but as plans for 2011-12 need to be prepared well in advance, in order to meet deadlines for contract agreements, service registration and publicity, it is proving a race against time.

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