Promoting outdoor recreation in the English National Parks: guide to good practice
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The Countryside Agency’s Landscape, Access and Recreation division aims to help everyone respect, protect and enjoy the countryside – protecting natural landscapes; and encouraging access to, enjoyment of and sustainable management and use of the countryside.

This publication and the full research report can be downloaded from www.countryside.gov.uk

Front cover photograph:
Children climbing Pen-y-ghent in the Yorkshire Dales National Park
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Promoting outdoor recreation in the English National Parks: guide to good practice

Practical advice on the planning, management and promotion of outdoor recreation in England’s National Parks.

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1 Purpose and scope of this guide

This guide aims to provide practical advice on the planning, management and promotion of outdoor recreation in England’s National Parks. It has been developed in partnership with the English National Park Authorities who have provided examples of good practice to share with others in furtherance of their second purpose, which is to promote the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of each Park.

This good practice guide builds on the research produced by the Countryside Agency entitled Demand for Outdoor Recreation in the English National Parks. This research was conducted in response to the 2002 Defra Review of English National Park Authorities, Recommendation 13, and can be downloaded from www.countryside.gov.uk

2 Background: National Parks and recreation

The purposes of National Parks

Following the Government’s recent decision to confirm the designation of the New Forest as a National Park, there are now eight National Parks in England, plus the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads, which has equivalent status. These nine areas account for more than eight per cent of England’s land area and represent some of the country’s finest landscapes.
The eight National Park Authorities (NPAs) and the Broads Authority are local authorities in their own right. Their statutory purposes as defined by the 1995 Environment Act are:

• to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Parks;
• to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Parks by the public.

Where there is considered to be an ‘irreconcilable conflict’ between the two purposes, then greater weight is given to conservation than recreational needs - this is known as the ‘Sandford Principle’. In pursuing these purposes, NPAs also have a duty to foster the social and economic well-being of their local communities.

The ‘special qualities’ of the National Parks

The special qualities of the National Parks are diverse, complex and many. Each National Park will have its own distinctive special qualities. Common special qualities include:

• outstanding scenery and landscape character;
• significant geological features;
• sense of wildness and remoteness;
• sense of tranquillity;
• importance of wildlife and the area’s unique biodiversity;
• thousands of years of human influence which can be traced through the landscape;
• distinctive character of villages and settlements;
• wealth of historic buildings, gardens and parks,
• opportunities for quiet enjoyment;
• opportunities for outdoor recreation and adventure;
• easy accessibility for visitors from surrounding urban areas.

Clearly, the legislation requires NPAs to promote recreation opportunities and experiences which are based on these qualities and which do not conflict with them.

The environmental impact of recreational activities in National Parks

Research by the House of Commons 1995 Environment Committee1 and English Nature2 supports a general view that, compared to other activities, leisure and tourism do not cause significant widespread environmental damage to the countryside. Despite this, there is no room for complacency. Important issues to be addressed include transport, rural culture and leisure management, as well as local conflicts in specific areas.
These findings are reinforced in the Countryside Agency’s recent research into demand for outdoor recreation in National Parks. This explores the extent to which NPA officers consider particular activities to conflict with their first purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of their areas. The report concludes that NPA officers perceive very little evidence of any over-riding environmental conflicts between recreation and conservation in our National Parks. However, there are important exceptions to this conclusion:

- There are specific problems on some local sites. These include, for example, disturbance to breeding birds through specific activities and acute problems of erosion. However, NPA officers report these are generally well managed through local agreements, often voluntary, and good management practice.

- All NPAs continue to be concerned about the management of traffic and the impacts of continuing traffic growth. There are many good examples of NP initiatives aimed at promoting public transport and attempting to limit car parking, etc. but the underlying causes of traffic growth remain.

- Motorised sports: most of the NPAs consider that the promotion of motorised sports — both land- and water-based — within National Parks is in conflict with the protection of the special qualities of the Parks. Of particular concern is the growing impact on tranquillity and conflicts with other users. There is limited evidence of some damage to the resource itself, but it appears to be the two former impacts which cause the greatest difficulties.

- There is some evidence that the use of the National Parks for organised events is growing. In most cases, NPA officers are managing these events well, working closely and co-operatively with events’ organisers. However, there is increasing concern that the growing number of events may have an impact — particularly on the high moorland areas and particularly in the bird breeding season.

These findings led the CA report to conclude that NPAs could be much more pro-active than they have been in the past concerning the promotion of recreation activities which are based on the Parks’ special qualities. In reality, and particularly since the foot and mouth disease crisis of 2001, NPAs are increasingly taking the lead in promoting both leisure and tourism opportunities which both support local economies and reinforce people’s enjoyment of the Parks.
3 Demand for outdoor recreation in National Parks

Understanding recreational demand

Increasingly, local government is being asked to take a ‘customer-focused’ approach to the delivery of its services. Behind the jargon lies the reasonable intention to be guided by the needs and demands of a full range of customers — the public in its widest sense — who are the target audience for any public service. The desire to ensure that all people have an equal opportunity to enjoy the benefits of public provision of any service is the foundation of much of the Countryside Agency’s recent Diversity Review work. This addresses the specific needs of under-represented groups in the countryside in order to ensure that inherent inequalities in society generally are addressed.

This approach is often described as a ‘marketing approach’ to the provision of countryside recreation opportunities. However, the use of the term ‘marketing’ risks provoking concerns about commercialisation and the inappropriate promotion or advertising of so-called products and services. This is a misunderstanding of the term ‘marketing’. Marketing is much more than this — it is a philosophy or state of mind that considers the needs of the public in making management decisions. Key to the process, therefore, is understanding who all your customers might be, and identifying what their needs might be.

At its simplest, a marketing approach requires you to find out the needs and wants of all your stakeholders; to understand the factors influencing and affecting their decisions; and then to develop services which meet those needs. Part of this approach requires us to understand recreation demand — but it is only one element of the process. Stakeholder involvement in its widest sense is fundamental.

Why is measuring recreational demand important?

Despite the many problems inherent in measuring recreational demand (these are examined in the preliminary research1), it is clear that some degree of forecasting future leisure needs is desirable in order to inform leisure policy and the planning process. The providers of leisure services need to understand their potential customers’ needs and demands. Leisure researchers do now have access to reliable knowledge about existing forms and levels of participation, and these can be correlated with other socio-economic factors. Forecasting has to mean making
intelligent assumptions and extrapolations about how the parameters of the future world of leisure will change. Demand for leisure activities can also be created or diverted by the introduction of new provision, i.e. supply can generate demand. Thus, forecasting future leisure participation must also attempt to build in this factor, as well as changes in lifestyles or the removal of obvious constraints.

Various public policy initiatives seek to promote recreation to meet apparent social needs. These include central and local government proposals which seek:
- to address social exclusion issues within public sector services;
- to promote rural regeneration - particularly through sustainable tourism initiatives; and
- the promotion of healthy lifestyles through increased physical activity.

These policy ‘drivers’ seek (amongst other things) to encourage more people to participate in a range of outdoor or countryside recreation activities in order to meet their various objectives and targets. The current emphasis of central and local government is to seek evidence on which to base and then evaluate such initiatives - hence the drive to seek information about latent demand and constraints on demand.

Existing evidence of demand for outdoor recreation in National Parks

Despite the difficulties of obtaining accurate and consistent data, the recent report produced for the Countryside Agency reached the following conclusions:
- Overall demand for outdoor recreation remains high. National surveys suggest that walking remains the most popular of all recreation activities, while cycling also remains at high levels relative to other sports. A comparison with national data on participation in other sporting activities nationally reinforces the overall significance of all outdoor recreation activities in the Parks - a point often underplayed by agencies and National Park Authorities alike. The All Parks Visitor Survey (1994) provided the following data on outdoor recreation participation:
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• Overall trends are less clear. There is some evidence that the UK population may be participating in all recreation and sporting activities at lower levels than in previous years. Generally, outdoor recreation participation appears relatively stable, and has been since the 1990s (excluding the impact of the foot and mouth disease in 2001). There is some evidence that demand for specific activities such as cycling and canoeing may be increasing.

• It is clear that many outdoor recreation activities are extremely important to very large numbers of people. Membership of governing bodies and clubs, and anecdotal evidence of requests for information, access to improved infrastructure and supporting accommodation, etc., all indicate that these opportunities are important to the public.

• Those activities which are particularly significant in particular National Parks, for example watersports in the Lake District and the Broads, horse riding on Exmoor, caving in the Yorkshire Dales, and climbing in the Peak District, have both popular appeal and a cultural significance probably beyond numbers of participants alone.

• It would appear that — with some exceptions — current recreational demand in our National Parks is being met comfortably at present. This appears to be the case for climbing, horse-riding, orienteering, most non-motorised watersports, all airsports, field sports and others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Day trip</th>
<th>Holiday visitors staying inside the park</th>
<th>Holiday visitors staying outside the park</th>
<th>All visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General sight seeing-driving around</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking/strolling-less than an hour</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking-1-4 hours</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hill or fell walking-for more than 4hrs</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boat trips/cruise</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling/mountain biking</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riding/pony trekking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided walk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climbing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caving</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BASE NUMBER</strong></td>
<td><strong>2966</strong></td>
<td><strong>2865</strong></td>
<td><strong>1969</strong></td>
<td><strong>7795</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: this table includes all activities undertaken ‘during this visit’. Percentages can therefore add up to more than 100% (and some activities are omitted from the original table in the report). Holidaymakers’ visits are also longer than day trip visits.
The exceptions include:

1. Constraints on access to rivers for canoeists continue to cause conflicts, particularly where the basic resource is good. Access to good white water is particularly lacking for the more serious canoeists – and this leads to clear evidence of unmet demand in some National Parks (e.g. Dartmoor) - but general access to any water for more low-key ‘family paddling’ is poor throughout the National Parks.

2. Where motorised recreation – on water or land – is being actively discouraged by the National Park Authorities, there is clear evidence of unmet demand. This might be more accurately termed ‘displaced demand’ – as the resource is increasingly reduced, existing demand must find alternative facilities.

3. There is some evidence that participation in both cycling and horse-riding would increase if the infrastructure was available, and support facilities were improved. The Forestry Commission have demonstrated several very successful initiatives in the provision of graded, all ability, mountain bike trails – all of which have become extremely popular (an example of demand following supply). Where NPAs themselves have promoted specific cycling or horse riding routes, again these have been taken up in great numbers.

Consideration of the issue raised above relating to latent demand also needs to be given.

4 Some principles of good practice

This guide is based on the premise that, in most cases, it is possible to meet the demand for outdoor recreation in our National Parks. Indeed, it is possible to promote further opportunities for outdoor recreation, through sensitive planning and management based on a series of principles contained within established frameworks. The types of outdoor recreation appropriate in this context would be all those which use, and thus allow people to enjoy, the special qualities of the National Parks.

Several writers have discussed such principles of good practice in the past’, and this guide is based on their structures.

Elson, Heaney and Reynolds (1995) concluded that six major factors were pivotal in producing good management practice:
• **State of the environment** – developing a knowledge of baseline environmental conditions on site, and an agreed view of the nature of any impacts;
• **Clarity of purpose** – setting unequivocal objectives forming a realistic framework for future action;
• **Participatory management** – regarding management as a process, guided by regular engagement with and negotiations between relevant interests;
• **Importance of voluntary agreements** – the operation of restraint and self-policing by clubs and governing bodies;
• **Local involvement** – regular liaison and negotiation with local populations and sports organisations;
• **Monitoring and review** – a conscious, systematic process which informs future management decision, and any changes in direction to site management.

This guide builds on these factors and incorporates current thinking about recreation planning, and visitor and site management.

# 5 Recreation planning and policy development

The decision-making process in outdoor recreation
The overall decision-making process informing recreation planning has been summarised in the graphic opposite.

Over the years, academics and practitioners have attempted to develop planning systems which allow them to consider all the relevant issues within an objective framework and develop sensitive management solutions. These concepts and models have evolved over time as a greater understanding is achieved of the complex nature of these issues. Initial approaches were often derived from a purely natural resource management background, but increasingly social and economic factors have been added to these approaches. This is particularly appropriate in the UK, where we are faced with a resource used by a multitude of individuals and organisations, with many different interests and concerns.

The following sections summarise some of these approaches, generally in a chronological order to demonstrate the way in which planning for recreation has developed.

The ‘capacity’ issue

Some professionals in this field continue to seek a way forward based on the notion of the ‘capacity’ of an area to sustain specific uses or specific development.

‘Carrying capacity’ is one of the most complex and confusing concepts which faces the recreation resource manager. In many early applications, it was viewed as a management tool to protect sites and resources from excessive use, whilst also seeking to balance usage with recreational enjoyment for participants. In many respects, it is a precursor of the much wider concept of ‘sustainability’ which has now embraced both recreation and tourism.

One early definition of carrying capacity by the Countryside Commission (1970) was “the level of recreation use an area can sustain without an unacceptable degree of deterioration of the character and quality of the resource or the recreation experience”. This was followed by an identification of four types of recreational carrying capacity: physical, economic, ecological and social carrying capacity.

The chief problem here lies in what different individuals and groups construe as ‘acceptable change’. Not only is this an issue when related to social and perceptual factors, but it is also true of ecological change. Indeed, it has been notoriously difficult to provide any empirical evidence which can confidently demonstrate causal links between recreation use and environmental change.
There are five main reasons which explain why the carrying capacity concept has failed to generate practical visitor use limits:

- Different recreation/tourism experiences have different carrying capacities – and they could potentially all occur at the same site.
- Impacts on biological and physical resources do not help establish carrying capacities.
- A strong cause and effect relationship between amount of use and impacts does not exist. Where relationships do exist, they are generally anything but simple and linear, and a wide range of other variables will have an influence.
- Carrying capacity is a product of value-judgements and is not purely a product of the natural resource base and therefore determinable through careful observation and research.
- Carrying capacity does not help determine the balance between protecting the pristine qualities of a natural area and allowing visitor use.

Despite the concept of carrying capacity being over thirty years old, it remains in currency, although highly elusive to implement successfully. In academic circles, the concept has largely been dismissed, but in the field many practitioners continue to refer to carrying capacity as a useful technique.

This guide advocates a different approach to the planning and management of recreation within protected areas. An approach which relies on the development and application of ‘visitor planning frameworks’, which seek to balance uses, rather than attempting to define the indefinable.

Recreation planning frameworks

Over the last two decades, a variety of visitor planning frameworks have been developed to plan and manage visitor use of natural areas. All aim to protect the natural environment while providing desirable opportunities for visitors. The frameworks are all based on the zoning of areas ‘on a grand scale’ - that is, they tend to lend themselves to the regional or sub-regional level of planning, rather than small, localised sites. Thus, a whole National Park area could be assessed using these models. However, it is not really possible to be arbitrary about scale, and these frameworks have also been used at a smaller scale where appropriate.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Implementation issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Carrying capacity                         | - Determines the threshold level of activity beyond which will result in the resource base deteriorating.  
- Main dimensions are bio-physical, socio-cultural, psychological and managerial.  
- Is used for planning, site design and development, and administration.                                                                                     | Superficially simple and easy to understand, but:  
- Emphasis on visitor numbers seen as too simplistic and highly subjective;  
- Recreational impacts not always well understood - particular problems with perceptual and social impacts.  
- Emphasis on environmental change, rather than absolute visitor numbers seen as a positive, but:  
- Generally only applied in wilderness areas where land ownership/interests not complex;  
- Relies on environmental indicators, thus ignoring other issues (particularly socio-economic) and 'standards' not always easy to select.  
- Limited stakeholder involvement and thus support;  
- Limits seen as inflexible and 'lowest common denominator'  
Very focused on zoning as a management response, therefore originally very attractive to landscape planning and architecture professions. Key limitation possibly its emphasis on the setting at the expense of the type of visitor. Suggests that visitor management can be largely addressed through site and facility design, rather than ongoing management. |
| Limits of acceptable change (LAC)         | - Focuses on the management of visitor impacts by firstly identifying desirable conditions for visitor activity to occur, then how much change is acceptable.  
- A monitoring programme determines whether desirable conditions are within acceptable standards.  
- A decision-making system determines management actions required to achieve the desired conditions.                                                                 | As with LACs and ROS, the emphasis is on environmental objectives at the expense of social and community issues. Possible weaknes in terms of only addressing current visitor impacts, rather than planning for potential impacts. |
| Recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS)     | - Creates a diversity of experiences by identifying a spectrum of settings, activities and opportunities that a region may contain.  
- Helps review and reposition the type of visitor experiences most appropriate to a heritage site.                                                                                                                          | Attractive where there is a wide range of stakeholders and a range of dimensions to the heritage-visitor relationship. Management strategies can be jointly determined through shared understandings of the current situation and emerging trends. But - the full model is complex and reliant on specialised use of IT and significant data collection and management. |
| Visitor impact management model (VIMM)    | - Focuses on reducing or controlling the impacts that threaten the quality of heritage and visitor experience.  
- Uses explicit statements of management objectives and research and monitoring to determine heritage and social conditions, and then generates a range of management strategies to deal with the impacts. Recommends the use of zones. | Reliant on both expert judgement (through technical appraisal methods) and community/stakeholder views. The four evaluation questions are central:  
- What benefits/services matter and at what spatial scale?  
- How important are the benefits/services identified?  
- Are there enough of them?  
- Can they be substituted?  
Similar to the TOMM in its focus on achieving optimum results rather than hard line thresholds. |
| Tourism optimisation management model (TOMM) | - Instead of limiting activity it focuses on achieving optimum performance by addressing the sustainability of the heritage, viability of the tourism industry, and empowerment of stakeholders.  
- Covers environmental and experiential elements, as well as characteristics of the tourist market, economic conditions of the tourism industry, and socio-economic conditions of the local community.  
- Contains three main elements: context analysis, a monitoring programme, and a management response system. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
The following frameworks are not mutually exclusive – the field has been evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Thus a number of frameworks have common features or even subsume one framework within another. These frameworks can be summarised in the following table, and are described in more detail at the end of this document:\(^{10}\):

These different models are all useful in different circumstances. The latter two models must be regarded as the most helpful in the complex, multi-use systems within which most NPAs must manage visitor use of private land.

There are some fundamental elements which must be in place for these approaches to be successful:\(^{11}\):

- **Acceptance of the need for a systematic approach** - Senior staff have to be convinced that there are benefits from spending more time and resources on site planning and management, and that any system for monitoring or decision making is helpful rather than constraining.

- **Setting clear objectives is central to the process** - Whatever method is adopted, clear objective setting at both the strategic, site and individual zone level is vital. Setting objectives will involve achieving agreement between stakeholders, and will be enhanced through having trend data to inform the decisions. Where objectives are in potential conflict, zoning and prioritisation of objectives will be required.

- **Staff time and resources to follow any systematic planning and management approach** - A more systematic approach may mean spending more time and resources on meetings, site visits and monitoring. It is also important to recognise that one approach is unlikely to fit all circumstances, and that cheaper and quicker methods will be necessary for simple sites.

### Developing recreation policies

The aim of these recreation planning frameworks is to allow the methodical and systematic assessment of an area’s suitability for recreation development. These processes need to then be made transparent through the development of specific and unambiguous policies which clarify NPAs approach to different forms of recreation.

The preliminary study on the NPAs’ existing approach to outdoor recreation (Countryside Agency, 2004b) found that the majority of them had tended to skirt around this subject within their National Park Management Plans. NPAs were happy to promote the education and understanding elements of their second purpose, but were less comfortable with the recreation elements. Recreation policies tended to

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be defensive, often emphasising the need to manage or even control visitors, or focused on their minimal statutory duties in relation to public rights of way and access management. Very few NPAs have produced recreation strategies, although several are in the process of producing access strategies (see Case study 1). However, many NPAs are currently preparing new Management Plans, and the situation is changing quickly. NPAs are now tending to adopt NP Management Plans which contain succinct, strategic level policies, setting out their overall vision for each NP. This is a perfectly valid approach. But Authorities must then ensure that detailed policies, with key targets and performance indicators, are elaborated upon at a more operational level (see Case study 2).

Case study 1: Developing recreation policies

Peak District:
The Derbyshire and Peak Park Sport and Recreation Forum

The Derbyshire and Peak Park Sport and Recreation Forum is a partnership of Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council, the eight District Councils in Derbyshire, the two Local Education Authorities, the Peak District NPA, and the voluntary sports sector. It is also supported by Sport England. Its main aim is to “promote and influence provision for sport and recreation in the County and the Peak National Park and to encourage greater involvement in this process”.

This Forum and its associated Strategy (1998-2003, currently under review) is the only example amongst all the National Parks of a close working relationship with Sport England.

The Strategy is a very broad document, covering all sports in the region and is set in the national sports development context. As a direct result of the NPA’s involvement in the Forum, outdoor recreation has been designated as one of the priority sports for the Forum and an Outdoor Recreation Development Officer has been appointed alongside other sports development officers (and part funded by Sport England). This officer has a programme of work focusing on the development of cycling, walking, climbing, orienteering, sailing, and canoeing, through support to local clubs and other initiatives.

For further information contact: John Thompson, Director, Recreation and Education, Peak District National Park Authority, Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell, DE45 1AE, (tel. no. 01629 816200; email: John.Thompson@peakdistrict.gov.uk).
Case study 2: Developing recreation policies

North York Moors:
1998 National Park Management Plan

The North York Moors 1998 National Park Management Plan contains a specific section related to the promotion of specialist recreation. It is one of the few Management Plans which attempt to distinguish between different forms of recreation activity, ranging from those which are clearly compatible with the special qualities of the National Park to those which have an unacceptable impact.

The Plan contains four specialist recreation objectives which attempt to address the issue of promoting appropriate recreational activities, whilst attempting to manage those which have an unacceptable impact on the special qualities of the Park. However, the policies remain quite vague and do not specify which activities fall into which category. Nor are targets suggested to enable achievement of these objectives to be evaluated.

The objectives contained in this section are as follows:

1. To promote opportunities for specialist recreation that are compatible with National Park purposes and the special qualities of the National Park and respect the interests of local communities.

2. To recognise that legitimate recreational activities that may in some way conflict with conservation or local interests may be acceptable in certain locations, provided that they do not lead to pressure for inappropriate development.

3. To discourage those recreational objectives that are incompatible with National Park purposes, in that they cause unacceptable damage to the land surface, wildlife and archeological resources or cause unacceptable disturbance to local communities, landowners or other users.

4. In relation to all recreational activity, to undertake a range of management measures with the aim of minimising the effects of these activities both on each other and on the wider environment of the Park, and to monitor their impact.

Walking, cycling, horse-riding, climbing and orienteering, are all given as examples of those activities which might fall into objective 1. Intensive use by off-road vehicles or recreational helicopter flights are suggested as examples of activities related to objective 3.

Whilst these objectives are similar in many senses to objectives listed in other National Park Management Plans (in that they do focus on the negative impacts of recreation on the environment and the need to manage visitors), this section also contains some useful policies and proposals for future actions which are more positive and pro-active. These include the following suggestions:

- Negotiate licences and manage appropriate activities on NPA owned land.
- Work with landowners to identify suitable locations for appropriate activities following the identification of specific needs.
• Promote and facilitate activities through the NPA events programme.
• Establish a data base of recreational activities and their locations within the National Park.
• Liaise with activity organisers to minimise the impact of pursuits.
• Work with landowners, users, clubs and governing bodies to identify sustainable locations for acceptable activities.
• Promote good practice.
• Authorise motor rallies on appropriate footpaths and bridleways, ensure compliance with the Code of Practice and review the Code of Practice.

6 Management strategies and actions

Once clear objectives have been set for an area, mechanisms and processes by which these objectives are achieved can be defined. These mechanisms and processes are essentially the strategies used by managers, with specific actions occurring at a more detailed level.

A whole range of techniques are available to managers which can be used at a more site based scale within an overall framework. Good practice advocates the use of participatory management; site management strategies such as zoning, site design or self-regulation measures; information and interpretation; and monitoring and review. An exploration of each of these areas follows.

Participatory management

Increasingly, recreation managers are embracing the concept of participatory management, often driven by the need for sustainable development, emphasis on partnership working, and the need to ensure broad support for management decisions from a wider range of stakeholders. The demand for participatory management can arise both from ‘top-down’ central government initiatives, but also from ‘bottom-up’ local community interests (Richards et al, 2004).

There are an increasing number of initiatives which demonstrate the value of involving a wide range of stakeholders in a full and transparent process so that management decisions are widely owned and supported.
Identifying the needs of different target groups

The current emphasis of central government on ‘evidence based decision-making’, and exhortations to local government and related bodies to become much more ‘customer-focused’, require everyone involved in recreation management to become more focused on the initial stages of gathering information about their sites and their likely users. Monitoring and review are traditionally placed at the end of any planning cycle. However, they should not be an afterthought, but rather an integral part of the whole process.

Base-line information is essential in order to evaluate the success of management policies or strategies; to review progress in a systematic and agreed way; and to establish if changes should be made to programmes of action as they progress.

Many recreation planning frameworks require systematic and regular collection of data about the quality of the environment, recreational impacts, visitor satisfaction and attitudes. Commitment to regular measurements must be accompanied by the appropriate allocation of staff time and budgets. Methods must also endeavour to be simple and not too time-consuming, and consistent across relevant areas. (see Case Study 3).

The search for acceptable cost-effective methods for measuring ‘quality’ continues. There remain fundamental methodological issues regarding acceptable techniques for measuring the quality of the habitat and landscape, and for measuring the quality of the visitor experience. It is recognised that ‘scientific credibility’ must be balanced with cost and staff resource issues. It would also be helpful to share approaches across different areas and agencies.
Case study 3: Identifying the needs of different target groups

Lake District:
Keswick to Threlkeld railway path survey

The Keswick to Threlkeld railway path, managed by the Lake District NPA as a permissive path, forms part of the Sea to Sea (C2C) long-distance recreational cycle route from Whitehaven to Sunderland. The C2C was fully opened in 1996, as the first designated recreational section of the National Cycle Network, and now attracts approximately 12,000 users a year. In 2002, the economic value of the C2C in Cumbria was estimated at £0.9 million.

National Park Volunteers have carried out user surveys on the Keswick to Threlkeld section between July and October in 1995, 1999, and 2003. The aim has been to determine the number of people using the track before and after the C2C was opened, and the profile of users and their views on this recreational route. Both walkers and cyclists have been interviewed. The findings, over the nine year period, show:

1) A significant increase in the number of walkers and cyclists using the track:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1995 (29 survey days)</th>
<th>1999 (31 survey days)</th>
<th>2003 (29 survey days)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walkers</td>
<td>4584</td>
<td>5874</td>
<td>6495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclists</td>
<td>1314</td>
<td>2316</td>
<td>2929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Little change in the profile of users, their knowledge of the path, and opinion of it. In 2003:

- Most cyclists (79%) were on the path because it is part of a local cycle route. Only 1% were cycling the whole C2C (However, the surveys started at 10 a.m. so some C2C cyclists might have already left Keswick, or have used the alternative route via Castlerigg Stone Circle).
- Approximately 20% of users lived in the Lake District National Park and 60% were on holiday in the National Park. Nearly one third of all users were from Cumbria.
- Only 3% had arrived at the start of the track by public transport, but 14% had come by bike.
- The main user groups were families and groups of friends.
- Only 13% of users were aged under 30.
- Over half of those interviewed had used the path before, or had known about it, and the majority (93%) of users could find it easily. Only 1% had difficulty finding the path.
- Just under one half of users (47%) thought that the route should remain unchanged. One quarter would like to see toilet facilities, and 12% would like picnic areas. The main complaint was about dog dirt (795 dogs were recorded over 29 survey days).
- Only 6% of users thought that cyclists should not be allowed to use the track, compared to nearly 20% in 1995 (cyclists were using the route in 1995, before it became part of the C2C).

Information from these surveys has helped the NPA in the management of the track, for example through improved signposting, targeted litter picks, and better access for all. The findings suggested that they could promote the route more widely to young people and people with disabilities.

For more information contact: Helen Houghton, Recreation and Tourism Adviser, Lake District National Park Authority, (tel: 01539 792603), Helen.Houghton@lake-district.gov.uk
See also: Lake District Bassenthwaite Lake survey.
Stakeholder involvement and continuing engagement in decision-making

In order to develop clear objectives, owned and shared by all stakeholders, it is also essential that information and data is gathered from all those with an interest in a site. The different aspects of a site to be monitored must be agreed and performance measures decided in advance. All of these issues require resources in terms of staff time and finance.

Both internal and external stakeholders should be involved in all stages of the process. Choosing who will be involved, how this will happen, and how decisions will be taken, is crucial to the success of any system. External ‘facilitators’ may be required to ensure the process is a full and open engagement will all stakeholders. (see Case Study 4). Appropriate decision-making structures such as ‘expert panels’, site management committees and public consultation may all be aspects of any successful approach. (see Case Study 5).

It is essential that stakeholders are involved in a meaningful way. All too often, so-called consultation processes merely lead to external groups simply endorsing existing decisions without a true understanding of the issues. Establishing a sense of ownership outside the NPA can be crucial to the process; officers must sometimes learn to ‘let go’ of the decision-making process. However, it is also crucial to understand from the very beginning of a project, the nature of the proposed consultation process. Some projects may not be appropriate for full stakeholder involvement, and groups should not be misled about the nature of the consultation process if this is the case.
Case study 4: Stakeholder involvement and continuing engagement in decision-making

Peak District:
Stanage Forum

The Stanage/North Lees Estate is owned and managed by the Peak District NPA. Its landscape value is exceptional, with internationally rare heather moorland and blanket bog, and its recreational value is equally outstanding. The Estate receives over half a million visitors per year, with a wide range of activities including walking, cycling, hang-gliding and paragliding, and bird watching. Stanage Edge is perhaps best known as an internationally important gritstone climbing edge, arguably one of the birthplaces of the sport.

In 2000, the NPA wished to review the Management Plan for the Estate. It was perceived that there were real conflicts between the various activities on the Estate, and with its management for conservation and farming interests. Rather than embark on a traditional process involving the production of a draft plan followed by various consultation exercises, the NPA began with a blank sheet of paper and commissioned an independent facilitator to guide the subsequent process. A website was established with an on-line discussion board to enable as wide a debate as possible.

An open public meeting was held, attended by over 70 people, in August 2000. This wider Forum agreed a set of consensus building principles in order to develop a shared vision for the Plan. A Steering Group of 17 people was nominated through an open, democratic procedure. This Steering Group framed a number of specific problems, which were then discussed in technical groups. The emphasis continued to be on consensus building and improving understanding in order to reach agreed solutions.

Over the next two years, large amounts of time were voluntarily given by individuals and groups contributing to the shared development of the Stanage/North Lees Estate Management Plan. 285 people receive the Forum newsletter, and 135 different people have attended public events. From the first Forum event in August 2000 up to the production of the draft plan at the end of June 2002, there had been 21,300 hits on the Forum website. The final Management Plan was agreed in October 2002.

For more information about this project contact: Matthew Croney, Peak District National Park Authority, Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell, DE45 1AE (tel: 01629 816200; email: Matthew.Croney@peakdistrict.gov.uk)
Case study 5: Stakeholder involvement and continuing engagement in decision-making

Lake District: Lake District National Park Crag reports

The Lake District National Park Authority supports a Mountaineering Liaison Group, which meets formally two times a year. The group includes representatives from the British Mountaineering Council, the Ministry of Defence, the National Trust, English Nature, RSPB, and local outdoor education centres. It also has the involvement of a wider reference group - the Forestry Commission, United Utilities and the Local Access Forum. The group develops guidelines to encourage good practice for adventurous activities within the National Park, including voluntary restrictions to avoid disturbance to breeding birds, protecting gill vegetation from damage, practical restoration works and booking systems to reduce the impacts of activity. Popular climbing crags have individual reports which are regularly reviewed at group meetings, these reports look at issues like the condition of the rock and vegetation, and access.

The reports are largely completed by local landowners (often the National Trust) along with local British Mountaineering Council representatives and National Park Authority rangers. Issues raised include access, parking, erosion management, damage to vegetation, placement of fixed climbing gear, and group use. Possible solutions to any problems are agreed at the meetings.

For more information contact: Mark Eccles, Access and Recreation Manager, Lake District National Park Authority, (tel: 01539 792688) e-mail markeccles@lake-district.gov.uk

Developing new partnerships

Because of the nature of land ownership and land use in our National Parks, the range of stakeholders with an interest in any recreation development is likely to be large. Equally resources are often limited, and this can lead to managers focusing on those stakeholders with the 'loudest voice', or where traditional relationships are already well-established. Particular difficulties are faced in trying to work with ‘hard to reach’ groups, such as the elderly or young people, spatially or socially isolated groups, and other minorities which may not be formally represented or organised.

Many experienced practitioners focus on building the potential capacity of different groups to participate in any management process. There is a difference between capacity and opportunity – simply providing the opportunity is often not enough. Considerable support may be needed to enable some participants to engage meaningfully (see Case Study 6).

Recreation managers need to be creative and imaginative in reaching a wider audience and enabling them to engage as fully as possible. This could mean developing partnerships with groups not normally associated specifically with outdoor recreation activities such as community groups or youth services, or it could mean exploring new relationships with a more diverse range of user groups and activity providers (see Case Study 7).
Case study 6: Developing new partnerships

Broads:
Broads Authority Water Ski Working Group

Water skiing has long been an issue in the Broads. After consulting on its proposed policy to remove the sport from the Broads, outlined in the Draft Broads Plan 1993, the Broads Authority set up a Water Ski Working Group to examine all aspects of the sport as practised in the Broads and implications for its continuance and future management.

The Group’s membership included representation of national water skiing interests as well as local clubs, the boat hire industry, private yachtsmen, the Navigation Section of the Broads Authority, and conservation interests.

The Working Group was asked to assess the impact of the sport in the Broads, including environmental impacts, safety issues, and impacts on other people’s enjoyment of the Broads. The Group was also invited to look closely at current management of the sport and to put forward suggestions for additional or alternative control measures. Representatives made site visits, commissioned technical reports and a series of public opinion surveys.

The report of the Water Ski Working Group on the impact of this sport on the Broads was published in 1997. This included eleven possible options, ranging from no changes to the status quo (which was not favoured since it would not resolve the clear conflicts identified) through various possible amendments to existing byelaws to new byelaws. In 1998, after much debate, the Broads Authority decided to take measures to seek a cessation of water skiing on the grounds that it is an inappropriate activity within the Broads. The Authority then worked with water skiers over a period of several years to try to identify a suitable alternative location for the sport, but without success. Meanwhile, a Formal Safety Assessment of the Broads showed water skiing as presently practised to be an ‘intolerable’ risk requiring urgent attention.

The Authority reviewed the issue in 2003 and, having taken into account its earlier decision, the safety issue and the views of its newly constituted Broads Forum (representing a wide range of stakeholders), decided to defer implementing its 1998 decision in preference to allowing a new management regime to be introduced and evaluated. It was recognised that a wide range of management controls could be instituted in co-operation with water skiers and imposed through a voluntary code of practice, particularly if water skiing interests were represented by a single and clearly constituted body, rather than the existing unstructured local club arrangements.

Measures are now in place whereby water skiing may only take place subject to: a permit being issued by the Broads Authority; compliance with the conditions set out in the Speed Limit Byelaws; and adherence to a set of the conditions agreed between the Broads Authority and Eastern Rivers Ski Club. A review of ski areas is currently underway.

For further information, please contact: Jonathan Richardson, Waterways Safety Officer, Broads Authority, 18 Colegate, Norwich, Norfolk, NR3 1BQ, UK (Tel: + 44 (0)1603 610734; Jonathan.Richardson@broads-authority.gov.uk).
Case study 7: Developing new partnerships

Exmoor:
EXperience MOOR

This project is a partnership between West Somerset District Council and the Exmoor National Park Authority. The District Council perceived that although the National Park had excellent natural resources suitable for a variety of sporting activities, these were not being fully utilised by young people for a range of reasons. The EXperience MOOR project has provided volunteer training for older youths and adults to enable them to organise activities such as watersports days, mountain biking trips, and climbing and abseiling trips, in the National Park.

The project works in partnership with Minehead Social Services, Somerset Youth Services, Connexions, and local schools and colleges in the area, to ensure that all young people aged 10+ living in and around Exmoor have access to sporting and arts activities during half-term and summer holidays. The project is particularly aimed at children who have low confidence and self-esteem, have expressed some forms of negative behaviour, particularly towards authority, and who do not normally have the opportunity to take part in such activities, perhaps through lack of access to transport or other factors. Over 200 young people have taken part in the programme since its inception in 2003.

For more information about this project, contact Heather Wensley, West Somerset District Council (tel. no. 01984 635367, email: hwensley@westsomerset.gov.uk).
Site management strategies and actions

At a specific site level, there are many strategies and actions that can be pursued to manage conflicts between recreation and conservation, or between different recreation uses. Sidaway (1991) suggested the following specific site management strategies and actions to assist in the management of recreation areas:

Sidaway’s list remains a useful checklist. Some of these strategies can be further developed as follows:

Zoning at a local/site scale
One of the key strategies for managing protected areas is through zoning. This involves recognising smaller zones or units within areas, each with prescribed levels of environmental protection and certain levels and types of use. Most of the planning frameworks identified in the previous section include identifying and managing zones. But this process can also work effectively at a detailed, site level.

Zoning helps to provide choice for visitors, as well as clarifying future intentions. Zoning can also be used to separate incompatible uses in space and time (spatial and temporal zoning). This might be different recreational uses (such as motorised and non-motorised uses), or to protect the natural environment from visitor disturbance (see Case Study 8).

Bell (2001) suggests the following approach to zoning:
Following the first coarse sieve of allocating activities to appropriate areas, more refined zones can set limits on what, how much and when activities can take place…Zones might be based on areas: for example a large zone for hiking might be subdivided into zones in which camping is permitted. The camping zone might be further sub-zoned into an area for tents and one for trailer caravans and so on.

Zones can also be based on linear routes. Different trail systems might be sub-zoned, for example, by mode of use – horse, foot, cycle – or by degree of difficulty for people with various disabilities.

Zoning in time is another approach. This might be long term: for example, lease of an area for use by a particular interest group for a set period. Seasonal use…Weekly or daily use… Once again, any convenient time interval can be adopted that meets the management objective.
Checklist of strategies and actions to assist in managing recreation areas.

**Site layout and design**
- Where are access/egress points?
- What provision will be made?

**Allocation**
- Are separate zones to be established for activities or undisturbed wildlife?
- Are they of sustainable size?

**Distribution**
- Can impacts be minimised through route choice?
- Can habitat creation occur away from recreation zones?

**Standards of development**
- Can installations/services be sited to minimise impact?
- Are sustainable load-bearing surfaces being provided?
- Do they harmonise with surroundings?

**Habitat management**
- Can habitats be managed on a sustainable basis?
- Which activities are compatible with a sustainable regime?

**Cost**
- Will provision be cost-effective?
- Can recreation subsidise conservation?

**Visitor management**
- How will use be directed or even limited?

**Policies**
- Are opportunities to be taken to encourage self-regulation by users? Will this be done by rangers, bailiffs or clubs?
- Are dogs to be kept under control?
- Can events be managed to achieve standards of public safety, minimal impact, or sports competition?

**Methods**
- Are temporary or seasonal restrictions on use required?
- Can interpretation increase public enjoyment/understanding/control?
- Can price mechanisms regulate volume of use?
- Is information used to direct and attract users?
- Are routes and surfaces designed to follow desire lines and direct use?
- What combination of methods of regulation (eg. Self-regulation/ranger service) will be most effective in terms of cost and objectives?
Case study 8: Zoning at a local/site scale

Lake District:  
Bassenthwaite lake surveys

The Lake District National Park Authority has owned Bassenthwaite Lake since 1979. It is a National Nature Reserve and the only large lake in the National Park where management for nature conservation is given greater priority than recreation. Recreation policies aim to 'enable appropriate activities to take place which do not conflict with nature conservation purposes' and 'avoid additional demands which might damage the special qualities of the lake'. They include the designation of no-boating zones and issue of permits for lake users. There is no right of navigation.

Surveys to monitor the effectiveness of these policies have been carried out since the mid-1980s. Since 1995, the NPA has continuous trend data on numbers of craft on the lake, and numbers of anglers, people and vehicles around the lake shore. Counts are done during the week and at weekends throughout the year by the local Ranger, the Bassenthwaite Lake Bailiff, and National Park Volunteers.

The surveys show a decline in the number of craft since the mid-1990s. Sailing is the most popular activity at weekends and canoeing during the week. Use of sailboards, electric boats, and rowing boats is very low. In 2003, the average density of craft on summer Sundays was 3 craft per km² (compared to 11 per km² on Coniston and 18 per km² on Windermere). There have been few observed infringements of the no-boating zones on survey days. The number of anglers, people and vehicles around the lake show similar trends. Annual counts, except for angling, show marked seasonal differences and all activities are very weather-dependent. The effect of the foot and mouth outbreak is reflected in the 2001 counts. The timing of the surveys is under review to make sure that better information on current recreation trends, such as 'osprey watching', is captured and that infringements of no-boating zones can be monitored more effectively.

In addition to the recreation surveys, regular bird counts are also carried out: a monthly Wetland Bird Survey is conducted as part of a national co-ordinated census and provides long term trend data on wetland species. Bassenthwaite is one of a hundred sites nationally which contribute to an annual monitoring programme of bird populations: the Constant Effort Site programme. This helps to inform the Government’s 'state of the nation' targets. Surveys of water rail and snipe show that Bassenthwaite is one of the best locations for these species in northern England. Numbers of greylag geese have increased significantly since 1994. Trend data provides a valuable indicator of the management work carried out in and around the National Nature Reserve and wider Bassenthwaite catchment.
Bassenthwaite Lake. Average number of craft 1995-2003

For more information contact Helen Houghton, Recreation and Tourism Adviser, tel: 01539 792603, Helen.Houghton@lake-district.gov.uk, or Pete Barron, Ranger, tel: 01768 871404, Lake District National Park Authority, Pete.Barron@lake-district.gov.uk
Regulating access - through site design, route planning, signage, etc. Regulating access and the management of visitors can occur through a variety of methods and for a variety of reasons. The provision, location, style and quality of site infrastructure are a key component of the management of visitors in the countryside. It also provides an indication of the quality of management and can be an interface between organisations and visitors (see Case Study 9).

The first question must be – do we need any infrastructure at all? Particularly in protected landscapes, the wilderness quality of the environment should not be sacrificed if such infrastructure is really not needed. Often, people services – such as a ranger service or educational service – can deliver a much better result.

However, infrastructure may be needed. The table below12 illustrates some of the infrastructure tools available and the general issues relating to them.

12(Adapted from Keirle, 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
<th>POSSIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE TOOLS</th>
<th>SERVICE ISSUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control of cars</td>
<td>Car Parks, bollards, ditches, banks, fencing, yellow lines</td>
<td>Charging issues? Enforcement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Liaison with local police?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directing visitors</td>
<td>Signposts and waymarkers, orientation panels, information, desire lines, attractions, sight lines</td>
<td>Initial site design, communication of information, monitoring, ranger assistance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of visitor movement</td>
<td>Fences, hedges, barriers, landscaping, information, paths</td>
<td>Initial site design, monitoring, maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access through barriers</td>
<td>Stiles, gates, kissing gates, bridges</td>
<td>Restraints as opposed to access for all? Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of litter</td>
<td>Bins, skips, dog bins</td>
<td>Maintenance, Enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing visitor confidence</td>
<td>Lighting, signs, quality of infrastructure, site information</td>
<td>Initial site design, ranger service provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making visitors comfortable</td>
<td>Toilets, seats, picnic tables, refreshments</td>
<td>Avoiding over- suburbanisation. Maintenance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The general issues which relate to the use of such tools include:

• Design – the function of the item; who will be using the item; the nature of the site; the scale of the item; creation of local distinctiveness.
• Materials – the nature of the site; the life expectancy of the material; costs; robustness (for example, against vandalism).
• Quality and location.
• Needs of visitors with disabilities.
• Health and safety issues.
• Maintenance requirements.

Careful access infrastructure development is also an important way of delivering sustainable economic development based on the special qualities of the Parks (see Case Study 10).

Case study 9: Regulating access
Peak District:
Upper Derwent Valley

A number of Area Management partnerships with 3 water companies (Severn Trent, Yorkshire and North West), other major landowners, constituent authorities and other interests have been pursued successfully. The Upper Derwent Management Scheme has struck a balance between conserving the distinctive character of the area, the interests of the local community, and realising potential for improved recreational opportunities in an area with up to 2 million visits per year and half a million cars. The area is an attractive varied landscape of reservoirs, farmland, woodland and moorland.

An Officer Group was formed in 1980 to co-ordinate action. This Group is led by the Peak District National Park Authority and includes major landowners (Severn Trent Water, the National Trust and the Forestry Commission); English Nature, Countryside Agency, Sports Council, Derbyshire County Council, High Peak Borough Council, Sheffield City Council, Derwent and Hope Woodlands, and Bamford with Thornhill Parish Councils, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Environment Agency.

Much has been achieved in conserving and improving the valley for visitors and local people by co-ordinated action and joint funding. Capital expenditure has amounted to £1,141,900 shared between Severn Trent Water (£681,890), Peak District National Park Authority (£189,380) and other contributions (£270,630). Derbyshire County Council has funded additional traffic management works and cycle route improvements. Several awards have been received for the action taken.
Major achievements to date include:

- 6.5 miles of “traffic-free” roads with exceptions for access and disabled people has reduced pressure on more sensitive areas, and provided attractive routes free of traffic for visitors to enjoy. A Clearway Order to prevent roadside parking on Derwent Lane, a sign to advise when car parks are full, and Seasonal Traffic Warden. Connecting bus services from surrounding cities and towns, and from Bamford Station, and a regular minibus service on some 100 days a year when the Fairholmes to Kings Tree road is closed. The Park and Ride Service carries about 6,000 passengers per year.

- 7 new and improved car parks for nearly 470 cars, and 3 coaches and some lay-bys.

- Removal of about 3 miles of roadside fencing to make the area more attractive, improve access to reservoirs and allow introduction of “parkland grazing” by installing cattle grids.

- Some 18 miles of extra routes mostly for walking, but also including significant extra routes for horse riding, cycling and wheelchair users. Conversion of a disused railway line to a Trail from Thornhill to Ladybower. A cycle hire centre run by the Peak District National Park Authority at Fairholmes, with about 13,000 hirings per year and a variety of bikes for all abilities. New roadside cycle routes and a link across Ladybower Dam to the Thornhill Trail.

- A Ranger Briefing Centre at Fairholmes, and National Park Ranger coverage and action paid for jointly by the Peak District National Park Authority, Severn Trent and the Forestry Commission. The Area Ranger and Assistant have part-time staff in support in this busy area.

- An Information Centre is run by the Peak District National Park Authority at Fairholmes in partnership with Severn Trent Water from April 2000, and with about 60,000 visits per year. This includes an exhibition and displays (new in 2000) telling the story of the valley, and a small retail outlet. Production of Environmental Education packs, a ‘welcome’ leaflet and saleable Guide.

- Extensive award winning efforts to diversify species and improve the shape of existing forest and woodland, along with new tree planting to improve the landscape and nature conservation interest. The 3 main owners - Severn Trent Water, the National Trust and Forestry Commission have all played a major part in this.

- Jointly funded ecological, archeological and visitor surveys.

- Guidelines and co-ordinated responses to proposed events.
Current Plans and Future Action
The Partners continue to look for ways of building on what has been achieved. Included in recent action and current proposals for traffic management and parking is a strong requirement that there should be no net increase in parking in the area, and that new provision at Heatherdene should be a true substitute for existing roadside problem parking. Car parking charges were introduced at Fairholmes in April 2000 with income to be used to improve facilities and services in the area.

Proposals for Road Pricing as a pilot scheme in response to the Government Consultation - "Breaking the log jam" are being drawn up. This will have benefits in terms of extra public transport services, traffic management, and improved cycle and walking routes (Derbyshire County Council have recently resurfaced the footway along Derwent Lane). It is hoped to implement the proposals in 2003.

A partnership approach to improving information and interpretation throughout the valley is being developed through the Peak District Interpretation Officer.

For further information contact: John Thompson, Director, Recreation and Education, Peak District National Park Authority, Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell, DE45 1AE, (tel. no. 01629 816200; email: John.Thompson@peakdistrict.gov.uk).
Case study 10: Regulating access

Yorkshire Dales: Craven Integrated Rural Development Project

This project, which is financially supported by Yorkshire Forward, aims to deliver sustainable economic development based on the environmental assets of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and to diversify its economic base. It grew out of concerns about the reduction in visitors to the Craven District following the foot and mouth crisis in 2001.

A specific study was commissioned by the NPA to address the access enhancement elements of the project, including how to make more out of the rights of way in the area and opportunities for recreational walking, cycling and other outdoor activities. The researchers interviewed over 500 local tourism related businesses and a range of key stakeholders. It mapped business and access data on GIS and, alongside a local economic audit, proposed a range of key developments including the development of rights of way infrastructure, information on walks and trails, and integrated recreational initiatives such as heritage trails based on local produce.

For more information contact: Mark Allum, Access Officer Projects, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, (tel: 01756 752748, fax: 01756 752745).
Great Days Out with your bike

On road
Cyclists from Leeds and Wakefield can hire bicycles from the Bike Bus to cycle around the National Park Visitor Centre at Grassington. There are several stops along the way where you can stop and rest. Cycle Bus stops at National Park Visitor Centre at Grassington, Otley, and Ilkley where you can enjoy other outdoor activities.

And off-road
Mountain Bikers can use the Bike Bus to access some of the best off-road cycling the country has to offer. Take the bus to Grassington, Otley, Ilkley, and Foredale. Enjoy the best of the countryside and explore some of the hidden gems of the Yorkshire Dales.
**Self-regulation, voluntary codes, and voluntary agreements**

The acceptance of responsibility for conserving landscapes and wildlife by the sport or recreation participants themselves is one of the most effective conservation measures, but it works best as a one of a series of measures.\(^{13}\)

Self-regulation is most effective when there is an affinity of interests between the participants who want access, and conservation organisations and land owners who wish to see the resource safeguarded and wildlife protected (see Case Study 11). Usually this is more easily achieved when most participants belong to the same organisation or club, which can then negotiate access with a landowner. Clearly an element of self-interest is fundamental to this approach, and this can lead to difficulties of exclusive agreements between a limited group of users and landowners.

The limitations of self-regulation are all too evident when it is the sole mechanism in operation, particularly if there are large numbers of casual participants in an activity who are not members of any club. Self-regulation works best when the rationale is clear and well justified, with specific messages and alternatives in place to allow recreational use to continue at other locations (see Case Study 12). The responsibility must also be accepted by individual participants – so they must be informed and aware.

Codes of practice and voluntary agreements would also fall into this section. Codes exist for many individual sports, as well as for more generic activities such as events organisation (see Case Study 13). But again their use often depends on levels of awareness and individual responsibility.\(^{13}\) Sidaway, 1991.
Case study 11: Self-regulation, voluntary codes and voluntary agreements

North York Moors and English Nature: Recreation Events Division Tree

Recreational Events Decision Tree
for events taking place on the NYM’s SSSIs/SPA/SAC
criteria for assessment by EN staff

Event takes place on PFRW’s
Consider impacts on breeding birds

- Significant effect
- No likely significant effect

Change event timing/avoid route or advise against event taking place.
Advertise event organisations that event can take place within SSSI.

Event takes place off PFRW’s

The following need to be considered:
- Vegetation (SAC) - How many vulnerable species are involved? Does the route cross sensitive vegetation areas? How many times do vehicles/people traverse the route? Likely weather conditions. Safety estimation of potential impacts.
- Bird disturbance (SPA) - Does the event take place during the bird breeding season (Mar – Jul)? How many vehicle/persons/people involved? Does the route pass near any known bird breeding areas? How many times do vehicles/people traverse the route? Is the start staggered (potential greater disturbance)? Safety estimation of potential impacts table.

Estimation of potential impacts of recreational events on NYM’s SSSIs/SPA/SAC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESTIMATION OF SIGNIFICANCE OF LIKELY IMPACT</th>
<th>EVENTS TAKING PLACE ON PFRW’S</th>
<th>EVENTS TAKING PLACE OFF PFRW’S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disturbance during bird breeding season</td>
<td>Disturbance during bird breeding season</td>
<td>Impacts on vegetation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail running</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiking</td>
<td>L/M</td>
<td>L/M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain biking</td>
<td>L/M</td>
<td>L/M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle rallies</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat chance - walking</td>
<td>L/M</td>
<td>L/M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rafting</td>
<td></td>
<td>L/M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Possible actions by EN staff:
- Consent
- Request change of event timing/route
- Consent with conditions
- Refuse consent
Case study 11 (continued)

North York Moors and English Nature:
Recreation Events Division Tree

Recreational Events Decision Tree
for events taking place on the North York Moors SSSIs/SPA SAC

Guidance for North York Moors National Park

Does the event take place on PROW's?

YES

Does the event take place during the
bird breeding season (Mar – Jul)?

YES

Advisory event organizers that the
event can take place within SSSI.

NO

See Diagram B

NO

If likely impact is High or Medium,
English Nature needs to be consulted.

Table of estimation of potential impacts of recreational events on PROW's
during the bird breeding season.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENT’S TAKING PLACE ON PROW</th>
<th>ESTIMATION OF SIGNIFICANCE OF LIKELY IMPACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L - Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M - Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H - High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail Hikes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse Riding</td>
<td>L-M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Hike</td>
<td>L-M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fell running/marathons</td>
<td>H-M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

English Nature would wish to be consulted if numbers taking part in any one event would exceed:
*Horse Riding - more than 30 taking part in one event
*Mountain Bike - more than 100 taking part in one event
*Fell Running/Marathons - more than 300 people taking part in one event

**NB:** This decision tree should be used as a guide only. English Nature should be consulted if there is any doubt concerning the likely significance of any event.
Case study 11 (continued)

North York Moors and English Nature:
Recreation Events Division Tree

**Recreational Events Decision Tree**

*For events taking place on the North York Moors SSSI/SPA/SAC*

**Guidance for North York Moors National Park**

(Diagram A)

Event takes place off PROW

Does the event take place during
Bird breeding season (Mar - Jul)?

**Yes**

EN needs to be consulted
as current needs to be
listed to the
owner/occupier of the
land within the SSSI.

If event takes place on a site
under the ownership of
English Heritage, EN needs to
be consulted.

If event takes place on a site
under the ownership of
English Nature, EN needs to
be consulted.

English Nature legally has
three months to consider a
response, therefore
consultation by third parties
is recommended within
six weeks of any event.

**No**

Assessment of likely significant effects needs to be made (see significance of likely impacts table).

If assessment is judged to be medium or high
English Nature needs to be consulted.

**ESTIMATION OF SIGNIFICANCE OF LIKELY IMPACT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENT TAKES PLACE OFF PROW</th>
<th>EVENT TAKES PLACE OFF PROW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>oggles</td>
<td>Hight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandals</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassing</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grasping</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key**

L - low
M - Medium
H - High

*English Nature would wish to be consulted if numbers taking part in any one event will exceed:*

- Horse - more than 30 taking part in one event
- Mountain bikes - more than 100 taking part in one event
- Walkers - more than 200 people taking part in one event
Case study 12: Self-regulation, voluntary codes and voluntary agreements

Lake District:
Hierarchy of trail routes

The Hierarchy of Trail Routes is an approach to manage the level of recreational motor vehicle activity on green roads through voluntary restraint rather than statutory legislation. In 1995, the Lake District National Park Authority met with the motoring organisation Land Access and Recreation Association and Cumbria County Council to discuss the management of 4WD and motor cycle activity in the National Park. This led to the Hierarchy of Trails project.

The aim of the Hierarchy is not to promote use or stop motor activity, but to eliminate irresponsible use. Between 1995 and 1997, over 100 unsealed routes were identified and surveyed by rangers and local users, and then categorised by overall condition, likelihood of conflict with other users, proximity to buildings and livestock, and narrowness. There is a three-colour code system:

- Green routes - proceed with caution: Sustainable for recreational motor traffic at all times. Recorded use is minimal and no problems or valid complaints over vehicular use identified.
- Amber routes - proceed with special care and attention and follow advice given by signs: Subject to moderate levels of use by recreational motor vehicles and a greater degree of sensitivity and responsibility is necessary to drive or ride them.
- Red routes - proceed only with great care and follow advice on signs explaining special controls in place: Experience significant use, attract the greatest number of complaints regarding vehicular use, under the greatest pressure and are subject to the greatest conflict between users and users and the environment. Some of the routes cross the high fells and are badly eroded. Recreational vehicle users are asked to comply with voluntary restraint controls. For example 4x4s will be advised not to use certain routes or one way traffic will be recommended on others. All green routes are surveyed once a year while the amber and red routes are surveyed twice each year. The red routes are also monitored in detail for levels of vehicular use. Changes in condition or the number of complaints could lead to a route being moved into a different colour code. Lack of compliance with the voluntary restraints on the red routes may lead to more restrictive legal controls through Traffic Regulation Orders.

Management of routes includes maintenance and repair, such as large-scale drainage and resurfacing projects by the NPA Field Teams and private contractors, and maintenance tasks carried out by volunteers and local users acting as voluntary lengthsmen.

For further information contact: Dave Robinson, Trails Adviser, Lake District National Park Authority, tel: 01539 792649, email: Dave.Robinson@lake-district.gov.uk.
Case study 13: Self-regulation, voluntary codes and voluntary agreements

Association of National Park Authorities (ANPA) and The Institute of Fundraising: Challenge events code of practice

A code of good practice for the organisers of challenge events has been developed by the Institute of Fundraising, in partnership with the Association of National Park Authorities.

A summary of the code is available in a leaflet from the Institute, or the full version is available on their website. The guidance covers issues such as safety and conduct, impacts on the environment and local people, and emphasises the importance of consultation with the appropriate bodies and communication. It makes practical suggestions for organisers to mitigate against any conflicts with either conservation of the environment or local communities.

The following is an extract from the 'Environment and Local People’ part of the summary leaflet:

Excessive numbers of walkers arriving at the same location will cause severe congestion, disturb local residents and damage footpaths. These code of practice guidelines address these issues.

1. Park your vehicles properly and do not block exits, gateways, off road is ideal.
2. Please use local toilets and do not foul the countryside. Take any litter home with you, especially drink cans.
3. Remember that this is a working environment. Gates should be closed behind you and respect the needs of the local farmers.
4. Keep to the footpaths. Short-cuts can cause enormous damage, keep in single file in narrow sections.
5. The limit for charity events should be 200. To avoid congestion split into smaller groups. As well as being better for the hill users, it is more enjoyable for you.
6. Do not disturb or inconvenience local people.
7. Do not arrive, start or finish between 12 Midnight and 5am.
8. Report any damages to local rangers, landowners and event manager.
9. Before leaving, check that you have removed any trace of your visit, especially litter.
10. Inform Local Authorities of the event especially managing bodies such as The National Parks and The National Trust. Listen and react to their advice if there are any sensitive environmental issues.
11. Always ensure you have permission from the landowner to hold your event.

For further information contact: Institute of Fundraising, Market Towers, 1 Nine Elms Lane, London SW8 5NQ
www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk
Information and interpretation

High quality information, both on and off site, is needed to enable visitors to make informed decisions; whereas interpretation helps visitors to understand and enjoy a site. Both are important mechanisms in the manager’s tool kit and can help to influence behaviour where this is also needed.

Ian Keirle’s book *Countryside Recreation Site Management* (2003) outlines a range of information that can be provided at recreation sites, and the variety of methods of providing that information. It also suggests how information provision can be used to influence visitors, including -

**Where** people go – by providing information we can influence the sites that people go to, or the locations within sites that people go to.  
**When** people go – by letting people know about opening times, or the timing of events.  
**How** people get to a site – provision of clear information on how to get to a site by car, public transport or bike.  
**What** they do when they get to the site – what are the attractions of the site and how do they get to them?  
**Who** goes to a site – information can be targeted at particular market segments.

There is also an element of information provision which is largely concerned with promotion and publicity.

Interpretation goes beyond just information provision. An early definition of interpretation states that it is *"An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply communicate factual information"* (Tilden 1957).

Good interpretation enhances enjoyment and understanding. It may also seek to change attitudes or influence behaviour, to challenge and inspire. But as well as adding to the visitors’ experience, interpretation can also develop visitors’ understanding and support for the managers’ role, and their objectives and policies.

The following (Case Studies 14 to 18) are examples of good practice in information and interpretation provision through a number of media.
Case study 14: Information and interpretation

**Peak District:**

**Peak Pursuits – Peak District activity pack**

Another attractively produced activity guide produced by the Peak District Tourism Partnership (which includes the NPA and local district councils). This small, plastic pack of individual leaflets on eleven different outdoor activities is exciting and informative. Each sheet has a brief introduction to tell readers what the Park has to offer in that particular field, with a comprehensive list of contacts for further information, including tourist information centres and public transport information.

For further information contact: John Thompson, Director, Recreation and Education, Peak District National Park Authority, Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell, DE45 1AE, (tel. no. 01629 816200; email: John.Thompson@peakdistrict.gov.uk).

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Case study 15: Information and interpretation

**Various National Park Authorities:**

**Harveys off-road cycling maps**

Several NPAs, including the Yorkshire Dales and Dartmoor, have produced off road cycling maps in partnership with the map publishers, Harveys. These set out tried and tested cycle routes, graded and colour coded, for all ages and abilities. The maps are generally water proof and contained in plastic wallets.

Some NPAs have obtained funding from other sources to assist in the production of these maps, including their regional development agencies and European funding. These maps sell extremely well, usually from local tourist information centres and cycle shops (Dartmoor NPA have sold 2000 copies in just two years). However, the publisher would like to be free to sell them more widely and this has yet to happen.

For more information contact: Anna Baness, Access & Visitor Management Officer Dartmoor National Park Authority (tel: 01626 832093; email: abaness@dartmoor-mpa.gov.uk), or Mark Allum, Access Officer Projects, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, (tel: 01756 752748, fax. 01756 752745; email: m.allum@northyorkmoors.npa.gov.uk).
Case study 16: Information and interpretation

North York Moors:
North York Moors events programme

The North York Moors NP Events Programme includes events organised by a wide range of partners, including the NPA, the Forestry Commission, the National Trust, English Heritage, local attractions and other local authorities. The annual programme includes traditional events such as walks and talks, but also exhibitions and workshops, children's activities, and adventure days.

The adventure days are organised in partnership with local outdoor activity centres (all possess the relevant Adventure Activities Licensing Authority certificates) and take place on almost every weekday during the summer school holidays. Activities include climbing and abseiling, a wide range of water sports, orienteering, archery and assault courses.

Booking is required on all the adventure courses, and all require a fee. Officers report that these events are often fully booked in advance.

The programme also provides detailed information about public transport to events.

For more information contact: Karl Gerhardsen, Recreation and Access Officer, North York Moors National Park Authority, The Old Vicarage, Bondgate, Helmsley, York YO62 5BP, (tel: 01439 770657, fax: 01439 770691, e-mail: k.gerhardsen@northyorkmoors-npa.gov.uk).

Case study 17: Information and interpretation

Northumberland:
Hadrian’s Wall sustainable transport project

This project aims to develop and promote sustainable travel by bus, cycling and walking through the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site. The Sustainable Transport Project is managed by Northumberland Park Authority and is part of the work of the Hadrian’s Wall Tourism Partnership’s Enrichment and Enterprise Scheme, part funded by ONE North East. This comprises five projects that work together to benefit visitors and the region as a whole. Hadrian’s Wall Tourism Partnership joins up 19 organisations in the North East and North West with a key stake in the Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site to work with local people and businesses on tourism, education and related matters.

The project promotes cycling opportunities through publishing its own publications (for example, maps showing short circular cycle routes that would tempt people out for a ride while on
holiday are currently being prepared), as well as helping provide information and photos on cycling for partners publications. The project also funds cycle parking at local businesses, attractions and car parks and runs training sessions to enable local businesses to provide facilities for cyclists. A newsletter is also published to keep local businesses and partners informed. The project is working closely with Sustrans on the development of Hadrian’s Cycleway (National Cycle Network Route 72), and will play a major part in its marketing when it opens in summer 2005.

The Hadrian’s Wall Bus, service AD122, is also developed, managed and promoted through this project. Through working with the Countryside Agency the bus has been improved and tailored to meet the needs of walkers on the Hadrian’s Wall Path National Trail, which opened in 2003. A new bus was provided to run the full length of the trail and additional stops were installed at points that were predicted to be popular with walkers. Information on the Trail all included details of the bus and an encouragement to use it. This was one of the main factors in a 36% increase in bus passenger numbers from 2002 to 26,458 in 2003. The bus service also supports cyclists, with one of the vehicles adapted to carry up to 4 bicycles (2 on a rear mounted rack, 2 inside the vehicle).

Car parks in the National Park have been improved to encourage modal shift. Bus stops, and information and promotion of sustainable travel options are provided, along with CCTV to give people the confidence to leave the car behind. Cycle parking (both boxes and racks) is also provided to encourage people arriving on cycles to park their bikes and enjoy walks along Hadrian’s Wall.

The remit of this project extends beyond the National Park boundaries, and delivery of the work through a partnership organisation has brought in additional resources and has enabled greater integration.

For more information contact: Emma Moody/Debby Hall, Hadrian’s Wall Sustainable Transport Officer, Hadrian’s Wall Tourism Partnership, c/o Northumberland National Park, Eastburn, South Park, Hexham NE46 1BS (tel: 01434 611529, fax: 01434 600522, email: emma.moody@nnpa.org.uk), or Duncan Wise, Team Leader, Visitor Services, Northumberland National Park.
Case study 18: Information and interpretation

Exmoor:
www.equinetourism.co.uk

Exmoor National Park has one of the best bridleway networks in the country (60% of all routes). Horse riding is extremely popular in the area, with a range of different activities such as endurance riding, horse orienteering events (for example ‘Le Trek’), point to point riding, and eventing, as well as the more casual cross country riding.

www.equinetourism.co.uk is a privately run website designed to provide a comprehensive range of information on horse riding throughout the South West area. The Exmoor NPA has sponsored the development of the website and there are direct links between the site and the NPA’s own website.

The site provides information about products and services, venues and events, and routes and accommodation. The owners of the site, Happy Horses Ltd., are working closely with the NPA, Somerset County Council, local District Councils and other local partnerships, and the British Horse Society, to encourage equine tourism in the area and promote their message to a wider audience.

www.equinetourism.co.uk

Monitoring and review

Monitoring and review of any management programme or project is now an accepted stage in any project cycle, although all too often it is still under-resourced and ineffectively used. Managers need to truly evaluate the performance of their decisions in terms of managing visitors, and reflect on the results of such monitoring to then increase the effectiveness of their work.

It is essential that any system for monitoring and evaluation is considered very early in the recreation planning and management process. Establishing objectives and targets in partnership with stakeholders is a fundamental step. As part of this process, managers should ask themselves ‘what will success look like?’, and consider how their objectives are to be measured. Monitoring and review are not the final stage of any management system – they are ongoing throughout the whole management process.

At a local level, managers need to collect input, output and outcomes data – each of these will assist in evaluating the success of any project. However, all too often only elements of these factors are recorded.
Case study 19: Monitoring and review

Peak District:
Stanage Forum: Ring Ouzel monitoring

Many of the Stanage/North Lees Management Plan objectives focus on the Ring Ouzel (also known as the 'mountain blackbird') - a key species for the estate. Ring Ouzels are in decline nationally. The estate provides ideal habitat for the species, yet its continuing success at Stanage is considered to be marginal. The attached table of objectives are included in the Management Plan, along with agreed targets and methods of implementing specific actions and evaluating success. Some objectives have already been implemented, others have been postponed whilst the impacts of other actions on the breeding success of the birds are evaluated. However, the approach indicates a specific programme of action linked to precise outcomes.

Since the Management Plan was implemented, habitat improvements, voluntary path closures, voluntary restrictions around nest sites and a great deal of information provision (including a leaflet and regular progress updates) have resulted in two successful nests per year. This is below the target of 4-5 nests, but the locations of the nests, on the busiest parts of the Edge, have given great hope for the future.

For more information about this project contact: Matthew Croney, Peak District National Park Authority, Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell, DE45 1AE (tel: 01629 816200)
Specific objectives related to the monitoring of Ring Ouzels at Stanage Edge
(Stanage/North Lees management plan, 2002, Peak District National Park Authority)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Monitoring</th>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Undertake monitoring of Ring Ouzel breeding success on the North Lees</td>
<td>A base line survey to be undertaken in 2002 -</td>
<td>Results to be analysed and shared with all</td>
<td>Sheffield Bird Study group, BMC, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estate. Agreed target - 4/5 successful broods per year.</td>
<td>Further nest counts to be undertaken annually</td>
<td>stakeholders.</td>
<td>Nature, Peak District NPA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reduce human disturbance to Ring Ouzel:</td>
<td>a. Implement a range of positive messages, through user groups such as the BMC, the Ramblers</td>
<td>On-site monitoring of visitor activity</td>
<td>British Mountaineering Council (BMC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Encourage visitors to keep to the main paths, and the top of the Edge</td>
<td>Association, in the press, on interpretation boards at the main access points, and leaflets.</td>
<td>Log of information developed by partners</td>
<td>Peak District NPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(rather than the bottom path).</td>
<td>b. Erect small, discrete signs near nest sites if within a frequently visited area.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sheffield Bird Study Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Encourage visitors to avoid specific paths.</td>
<td>c. Communicate the importance of the hang glider launch point</td>
<td></td>
<td>Derbyshire Soaring Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Monitor the regularly used nesting area to the north of Cowper Stone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to check that there continue to be no visitors to this area.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Improve feed sources for Ring Ouzels</td>
<td>a. Reduce impact of sheep grazing on bilberry by temporarilily fencing off appropriate areas.</td>
<td>Habitat and foraging surveys to monitor use</td>
<td>Peak District NPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Improve soil conditions for worms by breaking compaction in nearby pastures and hay meadows.</td>
<td>by Ring Ouzels.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Plant more Rowan trees in local woodland.</td>
<td>Record actions on monitoring pro-forma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reduce disturbance by 'gardening' of vegetation on cliff edges by</td>
<td>Communicate impact of 'gardening' to relevant groups, and that it could be viewed as 'wilful</td>
<td>Record actions on monitoring pro-forma</td>
<td>BMC, Peak District NPA, English Nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>climbers.</td>
<td>damage' under the CROW Act.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Produce information and interpretative material on the Ring Ouzel and</td>
<td>a. Produce specific leaflet on the Ring Ouzel.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peak District NPA, BMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other issues</td>
<td>b. Include messages about Ring Ouzels on any new interpretation boards.</td>
<td></td>
<td>English Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Include information about disposal of litter - particularly that which attracts crows and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other predators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 1 – Models for visitor management (from page 13)

Limits of acceptable change

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, researchers were already exploring alternative approaches to the carrying capacity concept. Much research occurred within the North American National Park context (e.g. Clarke and Stankey, 1979, and Stankey and McCool, 1984).

The Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) system began with the initial principles of carrying capacity, however its designers then shifted focus from a relationship between levels of use and impact, to identifying desirable conditions for visitor activity to occur in the first place, as well as management actions required to protect or achieve the conditions (Clarke and Stankey, 1979, and Stankey and McCool, 1984 (G.H. & S.F., Carrying Capacity in recreational settings: Evolution, appraisal, and application, in Leisure Sciences, 6(4): 453-73).

The LAC approach implies an emphasis on establishing how much change is acceptable and then actively managing accordingly. The LAC model avoids the conundrum of use/impact by focusing on the management of the impacts of use. Instead of asking 'How much use is too much?', the LAC approach rephrases the question by asking 'How much change is acceptable?'.

'Acceptable change' is, of course, a value judgement reflecting philosophical, emotional, spiritual, experience-based and economic responses. As such, few people will have identical responses. Thus, the task for managers is often resolving fundamental differences between stakeholders to determine desired conditions and how to achieve them.

In North America, the LAC system is based on a nine stage process. However, Sidaway (1991) simplified this to meet the needs of the UK experience. Sidaway developed a four step process:
• detailed objectives to be agreed for each site by interested agencies and individuals;
• targets for improvement or thresholds for deterioration to be agreed in advance (the so-called LAC values or quality standards);
• regular, systematic measurements to be taken so that management can monitor change;
• management responses that are triggered when these values are exceeded (again, these responses are agreed in advance).
Prosser (1986, G. The Limits of Acceptable Change: An introduction to a framework for natural area planning” Australian Parks and Recreation, Autumn: 5-10) identified a number of key strengths of the LAC system as being:

- emphasis on explicit, measurable objectives;
- promotion of a diversity of visitor experiences;
- reliance on quantitative field-based standards;
- flexibility and responsiveness to local situations;
- opportunity for public involvement;
- minimisation of regulatory approaches;
- a framework for managing conditions.

Unfortunately, only a few LAC systems have been generated and successfully implemented, mostly in wilderness areas in North America and Australia (Hall and Page, 2002). UK examples include applications to the Aonach ski development near Fort William (Sidaway, 1991).

One of the most critical aspects of developing a LAC approach has been establishing stakeholder endorsement and support. Stakeholders from the local tourism sector and community can provide valuable input to desired conditions and acceptable standards, and are usually essential in providing the economic and political support necessary to maintain monitoring programmes and implement management decisions. The failure to establish sufficient stakeholder support had largely occurred because the LAC was created by natural area managers, for natural area managers. According to Hall and McArthur (1998, C.M. & S. Integrated Heritage Management, London, the Stationery Office), the culture of LAC is not attuned to attract wider stakeholder involvement. They point to issues including the ambiguity and misinterpretation of terms, and the conventional narrow focus on the condition of the physical environment, rather than economic and socio-cultural factors.

Without the wider stakeholder involvement, monitoring results become prone to conjecture, particularly if they reveal surprising or controversial implications. However, if the culture of the LAC system was diversified and its components broadened, then it may be better able to deliver the significant opportunities it was originally designed to generate.

As well as the need to broaden the LAC system to incorporate more diverse issues, there is also a need to extend the approach to allow application to real locations. The following two frameworks attempt to achieve these objectives.
Recreation opportunity spectrum

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is a conceptual framework to clarify the relationship between recreational settings, activities and experiences, and spatial planning (Clark and Stankey, 1979, R.N. & G.H. The ROS – A framework for planning, management and research. USDA Forest Service, General Technical Report PNW-98). It is based on the premise that quality is best assured through the provision of a diverse array of opportunities.

A ROS is developed by identifying a spectrum of settings, activities and opportunities that a given region may contain. For example, a National Park may contain a spectrum of settings that range from easily accessible, highly developed areas and facilities, to more remote, undeveloped areas with no facilities. Information relating to each setting is set alongside the types of activities undertaken and the opportunities available. Comparisons can then be made across sites to determine what sort of core opportunities appear to be provided and the under- or over-supply to specific activities and opportunities.

Management factors considered when determining which recreational class a setting should be categorised to include:
- access (e.g. difficulty, access system, and means of conveyance);
- the non-recreational resource;
- on-site management (e.g. extent, complexity, and facilities);
- social interaction;
- acceptability of visitor impact;
- regimentation.

The diversity recognised by ROS is usually categorised as a number of opportunity classes, ranging from primitive to developed. Today, the term ‘zone’ is often used rather than opportunity class.

Determining the ’best mix’ of recreation opportunities and allocation of land uses for a given area is not easy. Selection on opportunity classes and balancing recreation and other land use allocations draws on the preceding steps, considered within the constraints of budgets, policy requirements, and other potential uses of the resource.

Clearly, it is desirable to link the concepts of LACs and the ROS, in the sense that different opportunity classes (or zones) can be established with different limits of acceptable change.
A criticism of the LAC (and ROS) approach is its focus on natural resource management, and the suggestion that this is not easily applicable in a UK situation. The LAC approach was developed in the wilderness areas of North America, and clearly the UK experience is very different. Other researchers have suggested that the LAC approach is still too negative - with its focus on visitors as even a potential problem.

The TOMM is one of the most recent and relatively untried models to monitor and manage visitors (Hall and McArthur, 1998). The conceptual emphasis of the TOMM is on achieving optimum performance rather than limiting activity (as in the LAC system). The TOMM positions a range of influences in the heritage-visitor relationship to focus on sustainability of the heritage, viability of the tourism industry and empowerment of stakeholders.

The TOMM has borrowed the key strengths of other visitor impact and then broadened their focus into fields linked with the tourism industry and local community.

The TOMM contains three main components:

- context analysis,
- a monitoring programme, and
- a management response system


The context analysis identifies the current nature of community values, tourism product, tourism growth, market trends and opportunities, positioning and branding. This information is collected through literature reviews, face to face interviews with relevant expertise, and a community workshop. Unlike LAC and VIM models, the TOMM approach attempts to include political, socio-cultural and economic issues within this context. The context analysis also identifies alternative scenarios for the future of tourism, used later to test the validity of the model.

The second stage of the development of a TOMM is the development of a monitoring programme. The basis for monitoring is a set of optimal conditions which the visitor activity should create (rather than impacts they should avoid). The monitoring programme is designed to measure how close the current situation is to the optimal conditions. The measurement yardstick is a set of indicators (one for each optimal condition).
In the original theoretical model, the data generated from the monitoring programme are then plotted to determine whether or not the status is within the acceptable range. Annual performance is presented via report charts displaying benchmarks. These charts are designed to provide a visually accessible means for all stakeholders to identify the status of the site. Consideration would have to be given to a simple mechanism for achieving this in a practical situation.

The third stage of development is a management response system. This system involves the identification of poor performing indicators, the exploration of cause and effect relationships, the identification of results requiring a response, and the development of management response options. The exploration of cause and effect relationships will go beyond the impact of visitor activity, and could well include the actions of local residents, initiatives by other industries, and regional, national or even global influences.

Once management options are identified, the preferred options are tested by brainstorming how the option might influence the various indicators. The strict intention of the TOMM model is to ultimately transfer all these actions to a simple computer programme to streamline the reporting, predicting and testing of options. The testing helps ensure that the model has some degree of predictive capability.

The first TOMM was produced in the late 1996 and implemented during 1997 (Hall and McArthur, 1998, and McArthur, 2000). It spanned public and private land in South Australia’s Kangaroo Island, and has gained support not only from its three public sector funders, but also from the local tourism association, the tourism industry conservation groups, and members of the local community. This has been achieved because of several key characteristics:

- the TOMM covers a range of dimensions to the heritage-visitor relationship, including political, socio-cultural and economic issues;
- a wide range of stakeholders collect data and therefore ‘own’ part of the intellectual property;
- the results of the monitoring are produced in easy to follow formats so that any untrained eye can pass over them and broadly deduce the health of the heritage-visitor relationship;
- management strategies can be jointly determined through shared understandings of the current situation and emerging trends.

However, its main limitation is the amount of information needed, given the breadth of the approach. This limitation also means that data management and manipulation require a significant level of resources as well. Locating and working with stakeholders across large areas and a complexity of issues is also resource-intensive.
**Quality of Life Capital model**

The Quality of Life (QoL) Capital approach was developed jointly by the Countryside Agency, English Nature, English Heritage and the Environment Agency, to provide a consistent and integrated way of managing quality of life. It was originally developed by CAG consultants and Land Use Consultants under the name of Environmental Capital. It is advocated as a tool for identifying what matters and why, so that the consequences of plans, development proposals and management actions on quality of life can be better taken into account by practitioners and decision takers.

The core idea of QoL Capital is that the environment, the economy and society provide a range of benefits for human life, and that it is these benefits or services which we need to protect and/or enhance. The approach recognises that this principle underpins all good planning practice, but the QoL Capital approach attempts to set out in a thorough and explicit way what has previously been more piecemeal, partial and implicit, in a methodical framework to make it easier for all practitioners to do thoroughly and consistently what some are already doing.

The Countryside Agency suggests that the advantages that the approach offers are:

- putting all kinds of social, economic and environmental service – from the most technical and scientific to the most subjective and social – in the same framework;
- combining a range of specialist, technical and community inputs;
- providing a systematic framework for deriving policies or management objectives from them.

The framework is seen as particularly important in assessing specific areas and their ability to accept further development or change. This clearly can include recreation developments or increased visitor pressures.

**The QoL Capital Process**

All applications of the approach involve the same six basic steps:

1. **Purpose** - Practitioners must first be absolutely clear about the purpose of the study – from site briefs to regional planning guidance – the process can be appropriate at many different levels. The purpose will also define the geographical scale, the stakeholders who need to be involved in the process, and the information needed in scope and level of detail to inform the decision.

2. **Identifying what is there** – The purpose of the exercise will imply which sources of social, economic and environmental benefits need to be studied. A variety of techniques including traditional survey
methods and character assessment may be useful for identifying environmental features, depending on scale and circumstances. In larger, more complex areas, there may be an element of subdivision to get down to the detail required for decision making.

3. Benefits and services – The key to this method is to ask: what are the benefits and services which are potentially affected by the planning process or the decision at issue? Many places or environmental features provide a wide range of different services, and being clear about the purpose of the study enables the work to concentrate on the issues that matter and that can be influenced. In identifying these benefits, it may be helpful to think in terms of the following areas:

- Health/human survival
- Biodiversity
- Amenity
- Sense of place
- Historical character/cultural associations
- Education
- Recreation
- Value to the economy
- Value to society

This list can be expanded to suit particular circumstances.

4. Evaluation – this examines the benefits and services systematically, using a series of questions:

- Who the services matter to, why, and at what spatial scale: for example, habitat quality may matter for biodiversity at a regional or national scale, while recreational access may matter for quite specific groups of people from a small, local area;
- How important are they, which is a distinct question from the previous one: a service that matters at a national level is not necessarily more important than one that matters only locally;
- Whether we have enough of them – it is more important to maintain services which are in short supply (or in danger of becoming so) than ones that are plentiful. Where we currently do not have enough, the aim should be increase;
- What (if anything) could make up for, or substitute for, any loss or damage to the service – for example, other places local people could go equally readily for the same type of recreation, or other areas that could be used to support displaced communities of bird species.

Expert judgement and community views both need to be reflected in this stage. QoL Capital draws on both public consultation and involvement processes and technical appraisal methods including, for example, environmental impact assessment, landscape, ecological, archeological and characterisation studies.
5. Policy/management implications – from the evaluation, this step draws clear messages about the aims or policies which would be needed to ensure that social, economic and environmental benefits were maintained or enhanced rather than damaged. The form these take will depend on what decision or process the exercise is feeding into. These could highlight aspects:

- which must be conserved (benefits that are non-substitutable, important and in rapid decline);
- where strong emphasis should be placed on enhancement, with replacements being provided at greater than one to one (benefits that are substitutable, important, but again in rapid decline);
- where innovative management approaches will allow more benefits to be provided but potentially by different means.

In this way the QoL Capital approach can help in identifying clear objectives for the study area.

6. Monitoring – the benefits and services identified as important in the process are, for this very reason, the aspects of the environment which should be monitored. QoL Capital thus provides its own performance indicators.

A QoL exercise is usually summarised in a matrix – the What Matters and Why Matrix. The precise format of the matrix can vary depending on the purpose of the study but, for each of the benefits identified, will usually address the four evaluation questions:

- Scale?
- Importance?
- Enough?
- Substitutable?

Where there are no identified targets, the ’Enough’ column may be headed ‘Trends’.

QoL case studies

Two worked examples can be accessed through the following web-links:

Peak District National Park: North Lees Estate.

Camley Street Natural Park, Camden, Inner London.
http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Landscape/Quality/overview/workedexamples/camleystreetnaturalpark.asp
Appendix 2 – Bibliography and references


Elson, M., Heaney, D., & Reynolds, G., (1995), Good Practice in the planning and management of sport and active recreation in the countryside, Sports Council and Countryside Commission


Hall, C.M. and Page, S.J. (2002), The Geography of Tourism and Recreation: Environment, Place and Space, Routledge

House of Commons Environment Committee (1995), The Environmental Impact of Leisure Activities, HMSO


