



## **Appendix 1**

### **Your Park**

#### **Overview of Evidence Base**

# Your Park



## Overview of Evidence Base

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### Introduction

The National Park Authority, which was established 13 years ago, and its predecessors have over 30 years of experience and knowledge of the problems associated with the busiest and most popular areas of what is now the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park.

There are many forms of information held about the issues from commissioned research, ranger reports and patrol records, visitor survey and audit findings, police crime statistics, photographic evidence, community feedback, complaints and in more recent times images and footage on the internet.

The following report provides a summary and some extracts from some of the more recent information and data relating to the Your Park proposals:

- 5 Lochs Litter Audit 2012
- Informal Camping Research 2007/8
- Ranger Service Information
- PoliceScotland Information

Further evidence and full research documents can be found, including photographs, on the Your Park website [www.thisisyourpark.org.uk](http://www.thisisyourpark.org.uk)



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### Five Lochs Litter Audit 2012

#### 1. Context

In 2012 the National Park Authority commissioned Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) to undertake an independent audit of litter and antisocial behaviour across 27 sites within the 5 Lochs area. This audit covered sites within the Your Park Trossachs North management zone.

A total of 209 surveys were undertaken over an eight week period during August and September 2012. The issues identified by the audit are those which impact on residents and visitors alike. Using a range of methodologies, KSB gathered information which was then used to build a picture of each site:

- What problems there were (if any)
- Who used the site
- What or who was determined to be the cause of the problems encountered.

From this information common themes were identified and recommendations were presented to the National Park Authority to support the resolution of the issues. The key findings of the audit are outlined below.

#### 2. Key Findings

- Of the 209 surveys 55% of sites were found to be of an unacceptable condition in terms of the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (Scotland) 2006.
- Flytipping was noted in 44 of the 209 surveys. The majority of flytipping was found to be camping related (abandoned tents, chairs, camping equipment).
- During the audit 709 fire sites were recorded. The fires tended to appear in the same areas throughout the 8 week period.
- In some cases sites were recorded as having 13,14 and up to 17 fire sites on one occasion. On average 88 fire sites were found per week whilst carrying out the surveys.
- A number of specific litter items were noted during the audit and the quantity of these recorded. The most frequently recorded item was drink-related, with 930 items (mainly cans and plastic bottles). Of these 65% were found to be non-alcoholic brands and 35% were alcoholic brands.

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- The major issues found within the audit were not always found in sites heavily used by day trippers, but by those used by overnight social and fishing related activity categories.
  - The source of problems categorised as Long Term stay, were noted 37 times during the audit. It had a disproportionately high impact on the area with sites surveyed including flytipping and human faeces.
  - The 5 Lochs area was found to have particular problems in certain areas, rather than a general problem across the whole area. Different areas attract different visitor types and in turn bring a range of problems.
  - Long stay caravan owners, who may stay for a number of nights and in some cases weeks, tended to be a source of flytipped domestic waste. Day trippers and overnight social visitors were mainly responsible for general littering.

### 3. Conclusion

- Overall the audit highlighted that despite continued input of the National Park Authority, rangers and councils it would take a concerted effort by all to provide improved facilities, servicing and in some cases provision of bins to reduce the impact of the problems highlighted.
- Although education is an integral part of the continued efforts to improve the National Park for all visitors, service provision and enforcement also play a pivotal role in trying to provide a better environment for visitors and residents alike. These three pillars of environmental quality are essential in the improvement of any area and to create high quality environments for all, attention should be paid to all three.
- The audit highlights that within the Your Park Trossachs North management zone, there are significant issues with litter and flytipping, associated with a range of different behaviours.
- Specific issues focused on the fires and impacts of long terms stays.

### 4. Photographs from the audit

Location	Image
Loch Achray	
Loch Lubnaig North	
Derry Wood	

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Beetle Bay



Rhuveag





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## Informal Camping Research 2007/8

### 1. Context

In 2007 the National Park Authority (NPA) identified that within the National Park, vehicle based camping has been a way of enjoying the countryside. The NPA outlined that it is important that this activity happens in an environmentally sympathetic and sustainable way. At the time, this informal camping was considered to be very common at various sites around the National Park, particularly in the peak summer months.

In 2007 the National Park Authority sought to demonstrate best practice in dealing with informal camping and its related issues, through the commission of a piece of independent research to explore the composition, attitudes and behaviour of informal campers.

The research (undertaken by IBP Strategy and Research), had two broad aims:

- To develop a thorough understanding of users of informal campers
- To develop an understanding from the perspective of landowners and managers of the issues and opportunities in relation to informal camping.

These broad aims were then developed into a specific set of information requirements which included:

- Empirically observed data on each site eg. number of tents
- Profile of users eg. group size
- Awareness and attitude issues eg. awareness of SOAC
- Behaviour of users eg. Activities participated in during stay
- Response to possible new ideas eg. Openness to use of any additional provision.

In terms of land owners and managers the key themes explored were:

- Issues resulting from informal camping
- Exploration of management tools used
- Changes in nature and scope of camping activity
- Impact of other factors.
- Opportunities arising from solving these issues



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### Methodology – on site

- Data recorded at each designated site. Recording empirical details such as number and type of vehicles, number and type of pitches etc., as well as evidence of damage to sites.
- Each party seen was approached for an interview. Over 2007/8, 412 interviews were undertaken with individuals from these groups. Questionnaires covered group composition, awareness issues, attitudes behaviours, responses to new ideas and so on.
- Face to face interviews with Landowners/managers to gain information about perception of key issues and opportunities.
- Data from the completed questionnaires was analysed, and 2 data sets produced. A spreadsheet based on the recording of empirical data by observation and a database based on the completed questionnaires.

Of the seven primary locations identified for the survey to take place, 5 of these fall within the proposed Your Park management zones. All Your Park management zones had survey activity undertaken. Over 85% of the total number of surveys for the research were undertaken within the Your Park management zones.

The initial survey undertaken in late summer 2007 saw very poor weather conditions. A further survey was therefore undertaken in 2008, and the results gathered from across 2 years. The key findings from this piece of research are outlined below.

## 2. Key Findings

### Recreational Experience

- The sites concerned are almost always accessed by motor vehicle. People camp close to their vehicle, with 81% of campers pitching within 50m of their vehicle.
- Most informal campers do so repeatedly, with the May to August period being a key time of the year.
- Parking and availability of toilets and litter bins are seen as elements that would encourage people to go to particular sites.

### Impacts

- Significant environmental damage and littering is apparent, particularly in more commonly used sites.



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- The great majority of parties use a live fire, for a variety of purposes. A number admit to using wood on-site and on occasion, damaging trees and vegetation for this.
- A number of respondents admit to leaving rubbish on site
- Toilet waste is commonly disposed of by “finding a quiet spot”.
- Land owners and managers draw a distinction between truly wild camping (perceived to create very little problems) and roadside camping (of significant nuisance value).
- There is recognition that problems are caused by a minority and there is willingness from land owners and managers to work to ensure the majority do not suffer.
- Land owners and managers identify significant negative impacts of informal camping across the headings of environmental damage and antisocial behaviour. They measure this in terms of the scale of the problem and not just in terms of the number of campers.

### 3. Conclusion

- The survey highlighted that significant impacts from camping activity are apparent, especially in the more commonly used sites.
- The May-August period is the most popular time of the year for camping activity.
- The primary activities associated with camping were fishing, visiting the countryside and social drinking.
- The survey highlights that across all Your Park management zones there are issues associated with informal, car based camping. The issues observed include fire damage, litter and waste, toileting and occur frequently in heavily used sites.



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### Ranger Service Information

#### 1. Context

The National Park Authority operates a park-wide Ranger Service which focuses on engaging with and managing visitors during the busy summer months. The rangers also operate a number of facilities including boat launching, car parks and visitor centre at Balmaha.

An extremely valuable source of information used to inform Your Park and the camping management proposals has been the ranger service.

Rangers have operated in the problem areas well before the National Park was designated 13 years ago, but since the National Park Authority was established the number of rangers has increased significantly with 27 permanent rangers now employed and a seasonal intake of 29 staff.

#### Ranger patrols and information

The NPA has established a structured approach to gathering information on visitor and camping pressures as part of ranger patrolling activity. This was developed alongside the introduction of the Operation Ironworks partnership with the police services in 2007/8. These initiatives were brought forward in recognition that issues with camping associated problems were not getting any better following the introduction of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

During the summer season, from April to October, rangers undertake patrolling activity on established patrol routes, visiting sites and engaging with visitors. The primary focus is to promote responsible enjoyment of the National Park and encourage visitors to respect the park. Whilst on patrol, rangers also record information about the extent of camping, litter, fires and damage and this information is recorded on a database with associated supporting evidence in the form of experiences and photographs.

The following provides an insight into the activity and information gathered during the season for the West Loch Lomond, East Loch Lomond and Trossachs (west and north) areas. A typical season will see approximately 1400 patrol records being made.

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### Patrolling:

Ranger patrols take place in pairs, throughout the season with more taking place during busy periods. Patrols are often not completed during peak periods as dealing with significant on-site activity and issues can delay progress round a route.

- 187 sites
- 17 patrol routes
- Over 9000 hours patrolling in 2014 between April and September
- 1333 land patrols started in 2014 (1404 in 2013)

### Patrol information and data:

Rangers record information onto patrol sheets which get entered onto a bespoke database. A range of information is collected for each site visited with the following providing most useful data for camping management purposes:

- Numbers of vehicles
- Number of tents
- Individual fire sites
- Damage to site infrastructure & trees

The table below outlines the highest counts by Rangers on patrol, of tents and fires, in any one day (April-September).

Management Zone	2011		2012		2013	
	Tents	Fires	Tents	Fires	Tents	Fires
West Loch Lomond	102	56	113	115	123	35
East Loch Lomond	186	52	34	28	92	57
Trossachs	437	207	548	259	492	200

## 2. Conclusion

Rangers report that the situation on the ground has remained consistently poor over the last 5/6 years, with no new sites or issues emerging.

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The single biggest influence on capacity, impacts and behaviours is the weather, the only exception being the introduction in 2011 of the East Loch Lomond camping byelaws and associated measures.

Ranger service patrol records demonstrate that across all 3 management zones, the National Park continues to deal with high visitor numbers, in particular campers and associated impacts of fires and litter.



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### Police Scotland Information

#### 1. Context

The majority of visitors to the National Park behave responsibly and enjoy the fantastic countryside experiences that it has to offer. There are however a minority of visitors that undertake irresponsible anti-social behaviour or other criminal activity.

The National Park Authority has worked closely with the police since 2007 to tackle rural crime and anti-social behaviour in areas of the National Park that suffer from most visitor pressure. These areas include west Loch Lomond, Luss, east Loch Lomond, The Trossachs, Balquhiddier Glen and Loch Earn.

#### Operation Ironworks

The operational part of the initiative is known as Operation Ironworks and is supported with a public information campaign know as “Respect the Park”. Operation Ironworks is led by Police Scotland with core funding from the NPA to supplement policing activity. It is supported by National Park rangers and Forestry Commission Scotland, and encourages reporting of issues by local residents and visitors in an intelligence led approach.

The main focus over the last 8 years has been on:

- Increased visibility of National Park rangers and Police during peak times
- A focus on the key “visitor hotspots” by Rangers and Police
- A stronger Police presence at peak times.
- Live sharing of information and reporting
- A flexible approach to deployment based on weather and holiday times
- Intelligence led in conjunction with the public

The NPA also funds a seconded National Park Police Officer and has two Employer supported special police officers.

A report is produced every year summarising the policing activity and Operation Ironworks initiative. This information, along with other police statistics has helped inform the Your park proposals.

Information on Operation Ironworks over the last 5 years is available on the National Park website [www.thisisyourpark.org.uk](http://www.thisisyourpark.org.uk)). A summary of information from 2012-2014 is outlined below.



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### Information summary for 2014

Over the 2014 season Operation Ironworks took place over 20 weekends between Good Friday and the end of September. The following provides a summary of the type of issues dealt with (information taken from Operation Ironworks Annual Evaluation 2014).

#### West Loch Lomond

- 108 persons were issued with fixed penalty notices or reported to the Procurator Fiscal for crimes of anti-social behaviour/ disorder, including consuming alcohol in public, urinating in public or breach of the peace.
- 2 males were arrested for possession of knives during August
- In July a male was reported for wilful fire raising in Luss. Deliberate fire damage was caused to a hedge and wheelie bins.
- 95 stop searches were undertaken. 35 of these were positive, resulting in large quantities of alcohol being disposed of, and the recovery of controlled drugs and offensive weapons.
- An operation was launched on the A82 to deter and detect travelling criminals and persons intent in engaging in anti-social behaviour. This resulted in 24 positive searches for drugs offences, 3 persons arrested on warrant and one person issued with a fixed penalty notice for disorderly behaviour.

#### East Loch Lomond

- No vandalism recorded
- One incident of disorder, violence or vandalism was reported to the Police.
- Rangers approached a total of 70 people over the season for breaching the byelaws by erecting a tent in the restricted zone. All incidents were resolved by the offending person(s) either leaving the zone or using one of the locally available camp sites.

#### Trossachs

- There was an increase in the number of caravans using the laybys on the north shore of Loch Earn.
- In July, at a roadside layby on the A84, a fall out between campers led to damage to one of their vehicles. The offender was detained and charged with racially aggravated vandalism.
- 8 individuals were found in possession of controlled drugs within the area.
- 2 air rifles were seized at an informal camp but no owner could be identified.
- Driving bans totalling 10 and a half years, fines totalling £2190 and one 8 month prison term were imposed.

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### Information Summary 2013

The following is a summary of the types of issue dealt with during 2013 (information taken from the Operation Ironworks Annual Evaluation 2013)

#### West Loch Lomond

- 300 positive stop searches were undertaken for possession of alcohol, drugs or offensive weapons.
- During one weekend in June, 10 individuals were issued with Fixed Penalty Notices for public consumption of alcohol.
- Over this one weekend 145 litres of alcohol were seized and disposed of.

#### East Loch Lomond

- No recurring instances of violence or significant disorder within the zone.
- During the peak season 110 vehicles had Fixed Penalty Notice tickets for violations of the clearway ie parking on road verges.
- On one sunny day on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 50 Fixed Penalty Notice tickets were issued for violation of the Clearway.

#### Trossachs

- In the month of June, there was a serious incident at Loch Lubnaig where a disturbance took place between two sets of campers. As a result 11 people were arrested and reported to the Procurator Fiscal for a variety of offences including assault, vandalism, carrying of knives, culpable and reckless conduct and reckless discharge of a firearm. The main protagonists received bail conditions not to enter the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.
- On another weekend day in June there was a dispute between 2 groups of male campers, which resulted in a male being stabbed. The perpetrator and his associates fled the scene before the police arrived. Through recover of camping equipment the perpetrator was identified and the male pled guilty to assault and severe injury and permanent disfigurement. He was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment.
- Loch Chon has been the subject of wild camping and associated site littering.
- 3 Lochs Drive continued to attract antisocial behaviour with environmental damage and littering.

### Information Summary 2012

The following provides a summary of the type of issues dealt with (information taken from Operation Ironworks Annual Evaluation 2012).

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### West Loch Lomond

- 384 positive stop searches in relation to alcohol and drugs.
- Within the Lock Eck and Ardentinnny area, 6 antisocial behaviour Fixed Penalty Notice tickets were issued and 22 positive stop searches for drug possession.

### East Loch Lomond

- This was the first full season of byelaw enforcement in East Loch Lomond.
- 1 littering offence was detected in the area, and no reported vandalism offences.
- Data held by Central Scotland Police relating to the Drymen beat (which includes East Loch Lomond) has seen an 81.5% reduction in Antisocial Behaviour Crimes for the months of April – September, between 2009-2012.
- 46 fixed penalty notice tickets were issued for clearway violations and 11 tickets for parking on the double lines on Pier Road, Balmaha.

### Trossachs

- On the 4<sup>th</sup> August, a number of males were found setting up an industrial generator, cabling and sound systems at Loch Chon, in preparation for a 24hr party. No permissions had been obtained, 2 bus loads of revellers were intercepted and informed that the event was not taking place.
- 1 male was found to be in possession of an air-rifle on Loch Earn, who was reported for trespass with a firearm.
- A male was found on the 3 lochs Forest Drive who had been camping for a long period of time. He was advised in relation to responsible camping, but was ultimately charged with littering and defecating offenses. He was also reported for thefts of fuel and fraud in relation to food from a local restaurant.
- 2 males were traced at Loch Venachar for stealing high value electrical items from tents whilst occupants were sleeping.
- Loch Chon highland cattle paddocks have experienced fence damage, wild camping and the associated litter have raised management issues for the cattle grazing in this area.

These types of issue are typical and have been experienced to varying degrees across the 8 years that Operation Ironworks has taken place.

## 2. Conclusion

The close working with PoliceScotland and an increased police presence during the busy periods of the season continues to ensure that crime and disorder are tackled, and a reassurance provided to both visitor and residents alike.

The data gathered through Operation Ironworks has not only helped to demonstrate the dramatic changes seen in East Loch Lomond, but also highlight the issues we are still facing across the National Park.



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As evidenced by PoliceScotland, the 81.5% reduction in Antisocial Behaviour Crimes for the months of April – September (2009-2012), gives us another form of supporting information to help develop solutions for the issues highlighted by Your Park.

The information gathered and generated as part of Operation Ironworks and other police support is an invaluable contribution towards informing the proposals for tackling the long running issues experienced in certain areas of the Park.