

The LLTNPA camping plan – the disaster in numbers

Description

Camping Management Zone	Existing number of tent pitches available	Proposed Your Park campsite pitches 2017	Proposed Your Park camping permits 2017
East Loch Lomond	217 pitches*	38*	5
West Loch Lomond	208 pitches	0	41
Trossachs West	0	26	6
Trossachs North	79 pitches*	9*	177
Total pitches	504*	73*	229

The LLTNPA figures

The Loch Lomond National Park Authority Board is considering their long-awaited camping plan, which they are now gracing with the title “Camping Development Strategy” at their meeting this afternoon ([see here](#)) and ([here](#)). Its 27 pages, full of pretty graphics and based on assertions for which there is no evidence (as I have established through FOI requests). While I will come back to that in further posts, its worth looking at the numbers:

- The paper refers several times to the number of existing camping places (504) but makes no reference to the current numbers who camp. According to the Your Park consultation records shows over 800 tents camped on the lochsides on busy weekends in the summer (outside of the campsites which are generally full). Ranger patrol records do not show the number of campervans as opposed to caravans but you could safely add another 100. The “provision” of 322 “places” therefore leaves a shortfall of about 600 places. Nothing is said in the strategy about this but the clear effect of the plan, if successful, will be to cleanse the National Park of campers and campervaners.
- The number of new camping places being delivered is not 73, as claimed, but 34 (26 at Loch Chon and 8 at Rowardennan Youth Hostel). The Sallochys campsite has now been open for three years and Loch Lubnaig two. The LLTNPA has totally failed to deliver new campsite places since the Your Park consultation – which as it says almost everyone believes is what is needed – and there is NO sign in the strategy that this is going to improve. There is no mention of its failure to deliver the campsites proposed in the 5 Lochs Management Plan.
- The provision of just 20 permits for motorhomes – the term is the Park’s – is a complete disaster. Campervans have become increasingly popular and on most days this summer I reckon at least 40 campervans pull off the A82 for the night on the way north. The Park is proposing to provide just 9 places for campervans on West Lomond. There are NONE in the West Trossachs Management zone despite the Park’s claim its trying to balance provision across 4 zones. The Park have done no tourism impact assessment but its obvious this is going to be a disaster for the National Park. Local businesses should be calling for the resignation of the Park Board if they approve this.
- The LLTNPA has justified the provision of 26 places at Loch Chon costing c£250k (where there is only demand for around 10 places ([see here](#))) on the grounds that it wishes to achieve balance across the four management zones. This is complete rubbish. Originally there was just one Trossachs Management zone and the lack of camping places in Trossachs West is simply a consequence of the way the boundaries have been withdrawn. Any talk of balance is meaningless without discussion of numbers camping and the facts are that the West Trossachs zone is the least popular place for camping in the Park at present. This number of places is simply not justified. The only reason for the Loch Chon campsite is that the Park has failed to deliver campsites elsewhere.
- Even more staggering though is the creation of 72 places under permit along the Forest Drive, on Forestry Commission land, north of the Duke’s pass. The LLTNPA claims this is a popular place for camping. A look at their ranger patrol records for July and August 2015 shows the maximum number of tents recorded there as 8!!! In other words its an even less popular place to camp than Loch Chon but the Park is proposing three times as many places. They are clearly wanting to cleanse the lochsides and send campers to the backwoods. The only reason for the 72 places under permit here is because the LLTNPA needs to be able to say to Government that it has met its commitment to provide 300 places within the proposed management zones. The LLTNPA paper which approved the byelaws listed all the places suggested for camping provision – Forest Drive was NOT included; that says it all.
- There are also places where the number of campers who will be allowed to camp lawfully is precisely nil:
 - the A82 North of Inveruglas all the way to the Ben Glas farm campsite. This is popular with fishermen, cycle tourers etc. The Park has justified this complete ban by claiming that

pulling off the road here is dangerous but why this should be so for campers but not day visitors is not explained. The Park also ignores the fact that not all campers arrive by car but by bike, canoe etc, ie the type of lightweight camping the Park claims to support.

- east Loch Lomond south of Milarrochy. The Park's map of existing campsites is simply wrong. There is no campsite in Balmaha, though there is a site on Inchcailloch which is not shown. There is no campsite in the area between Drymen and Balmaha (the nearest is at Drumquhassie Farm) south-east of Drymen. There is a campsite at Cashel which is not shown. This is an important issue because backpackers on the West Highland Way arrive at Balmaha after a long first day and find they have nowhere to camp and the Park has done absolutely nothing to address this issue. So much for the West Highland Way being a world class walk!
- The only consolation I could find in all of this is that some camping is going to be allowed under permit on the Invertrossachs Rd, the location of Loch Venachar House, the home of the Park Convener, Linda McKay. None will be allowed at Loch Venachar Weirs and Dam (which is on the north side of Linda McKay's property) where 25 tents were recorded in 2014 and which would make an excellent campsite. Four permits however will be allowed on the Invertrossachs Rd. In 2014 Ranger Patrols recorded 69 tents at Loch Venachar Quay, directly adjacent to Linda McKay's House on land owned by the Park – camping is now impossible there because the Park has planted prickly scrub and trees all along the quay which had been gifted to the people of Callander. The permits are therefore likely to cover the area further down Invertrossachs Road from Linda McKay's house at Beetle Bay where a further 68 tents were recorded in 2014.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. camping
2. Camping bye laws
3. Forestry Commission Scotland
4. LLTNPA

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