

The LLTNPA needs to learn from elsewhere

Description



I counted over 20 campervans in this car park, at Montanejos, a popular climbing and walking area in Spain, which is more than will be allowed next year along all the lochsides in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park.

I have just returned from a rock climbing holiday in Spain, a first for me. Its a beautiful country although the coast between Alicante and where we were staying, inland from Valencia, has been well and truly trashed. Its not difficult though to find examples of facilities and treatment of visitors which are far far better than anything that is happening in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park.



This climbing crag, situated beneath some wonderful sandstone towers near Betxi, was reached by 5 kilometers of track. It was completely hidden in the woods and it took us an hour to find it after leaving. I was amazed therefore to find this well used litter bin at its base. It obviously worked because the base of the crag was spotless. I was struck by the effort required to provide and empty this bin with the failure of other parks to provide litter bins even in the most accessible places such as car parks.



Outside cooking area – not quite the same as a barbecue pit but a similar idea. The village where stayed provided facilities which would be unthinkable in our National Parks, and in all likelihood would be rejected by the NIMBY brigade.



Facilities are seen as public goods â?? you can find water in every village â?? rather than as something charged for.

Why what happens elsewhere matters

At the LLTNPA Board Meeting on 24th October, the papers on the camping plan implied that the Park intended to learn through experience and one board member, James Stuart, made an enthusiastic contribution to this effect, saying that this is just the start of a process to find out what works. I donâ??t think this is good enough. There is a mass of experience and evidence from elsewhere in Scotland, the UK and abroad of what works and of ways to manage visitor pressures, including campsite provision. The problem is the LLTNPA has failed to consider any of this, as the photos above illustrate, let alone basic principles about access rights or how to resolve potential conflicts between recreational interests where they exist.

The solutions to this failure to learn from elsewhere are not difficult. The Scottish Government could appoint people to the Board who had knowledge and experience of what goes on elsewhere and who were prepared to advocate alternative solutions. The National Park Authority could empower its staff to learn from elsewhere or start asking the Local Access Forum to advise it on alternatives drawing on experiences from elsewhere. I suspect though none of this will happen until things start going horribly wrong next year when the National Park starts trying to clear the lochsides of campers.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. camping
2. Camping bye laws
3. LLTNPA

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