

Why can't all anti-access signs in our National Parks be removed as quickly as this?

## **Description**

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Photo credit Cameron McNeish – the top of the sign which is not included in the photo featured the Cairngorms National Park Authority logo

Just over a week ago Cameron McNeish sent me this photo of a sign he had come across while walking on the RSPB Nature Reserve at Loch Insh near Tromie Bridge in the Cairngorms National

Park. The sign was clearly against the Scottish Outdoor Access Code – and in breach of our access legislation – because, while it had the merit of including dates, instead of explaining how people could behave responsibly it simply said NO camping. It was thus unlawful.

Certain orchid and other plant species may need protecting but these are as likely to be trampled by walkers or children playing in fields as crushed by tents so why single out campers? And, if there really is nowhere in the field where it would be possible to pitch a tent without crushing the orchids, the positive way to address this would either be to direct people to a particular part of the field to limit the damage or to suggest alternatives. The sign did none of these things.

Cameron contacted the RSPB Reserve Manager and its to her – and the RSPB's – absolute credit that within hours of being contacted she had agreed to change the sign to this:

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# TAKE CARE ORCHID FIELD

From

**1 MAY**

To

**15 AUG**

Thank You

Karen Birkby, Insh Marshes

Site Manager Tel 01540 661518

Know The Code Before You Go  
[www.outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com)

The great thing about this

sign is it applies to everyone, rather than singling out campers, and reinforces the whole ethos behind the Scottish Outdoor Access Code which is about people taking personal responsibility for their actions. Its a sign which I hope will make people think about where they tread, sit down or camp.

So, well done Cameron for challenging the sign – an example to us all – and well done Karen for listening and setting such a good example for other land managers to follow.

This case though raises a couple of broader questions about access in our National Parks:

- why, when this sign has been changed so quickly, do our National Park Authorities find it so difficult to remove other signs which breach the Scottish Outdoor Access Code ([see here](#)) and ([here](#))?
- why too, does the Cairngorms National Park Authority let landowners – as in this case – use its logo on anti-access signs thus giving the impression that signs have been officially approved?

### Category

1. Cairngorms
2. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

### Tags

1. access rights
2. camping
3. CNPA
4. LLTNPA

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