

G R E A T G L E N



G L E A N N M O R



The Great Glen Way

Development Management Plan

2008



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Canalside Monolith



Tryptich at Banavie

Section 1 Introduction

There are some minor changes to the 2005-8 DMP to be noted. This Rolling DMP is by exception as it is an extension to the 3 year plan and will take it to March 2009.

- National review of all Long Distance Routes, by Scottish Natural Heritage that commenced in 2005 is delayed until late 2009.
- Long Distance Route Monitoring Methodology pilot study completed in November 2004. Plans to undertake base line survey in 2007 are on target. This survey material and evaluation will be available August 2008
- The Local policy framework is continually being revised and new policy and guidelines will have an effect on the management of the GGW, for example new EC guidelines on redundancy, Scottish Outdoor Access Code, Core Path planning, DDA, Use of Gaelic, Countryside Act.
- New surveys have been commissioned by various agencies and organisations in the period of reporting. When the data becomes available it will be included if appropriate into this planning process. For example, the visitor numbers for the Caledonian Canal.

Summary of the Rolling Development and Management Plan 2008

This reporting period continues to be a time of consolidation and working within the guidelines set by the national framework and adjusting to local changes from both Highland Council and Scottish National Heritage.

While there are no significant changes to the operation and delivery of the Great Glen Way, there are changes that will influence the work load, programming of works, maintenance tasks, reporting mechanisms and delivery of events and educational programs.

These changes are detailed in the Annual Report each year, will be included in each rolling DMP and fed into the next full DMP now due April 2009, with this the agreed extension of the current 3 year DMP for 2005-8.

Only the changes that will impact on the route have been detailed in this document.

Section 2 The Management Plan

National Management

National management aims and objectives are reflected in the Development and Management Plan which is taken on into the Annual Work Plans of the Great Glen Way Rangers.

Route Assessment

The condition of the Great Glen Way remains robust for the majority of the route for walkers. With the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 the route is likely to come under pressure to support other recreational pursuits, for example, horseriding and cycling with hot spots likely to occur where land and water based activities merge. The DMP does not contain the Annual Route Assessment as this is in the Annual Report, however work continues on making sections of path to all abilities. Projects that improve the integrity of the route are listed in the 10 year Improvement Plan.

Appendix 1 is the rolling 10 year Capital Improvement Program 2008, which shows new projects, and re-prioritisation of the existing projects along with highlighting the projects that have been completed. The reality is that although projects are prioritised, when money is available, any project could be implemented depending of time scales and criteria of funding sought.

Green projects have funding and are either completed or been completed.
Blue projects are part of a funding package or funding collection package eg VCP
Red projects have funding and will be completed this financial year 2008-09
Black projects have not allocated funding at this time

Management Agreements

There have been some landowner changes with more expected in the future as landowners undertake subdivision of their properties. Agreements with some landowners will be negotiated in the coming year to comply with the Access Legislation, however this will be to allow for maintenance operations and not access. A model agreement has been prepared by Paths for All for this purpose, and is currently being tested.

Agreements in the future must take account of the following points:

- vehicle use for maintenance
- vehicle use for events
- no payments for land use or loss of grazing unless a loss can be clearly demonstrated
- maintenance of interpretation structures
- Land Management Contracts
- Sale of land that the route is on

Key Issues facing the Management of the Great Glen Way

The key issues remain largely the same as per previous rolling DMP however there are some additions or altering of focus of some listed previously:

- net growth or decrease in bed nights per annum
- national marketing of Scotland's Long Distance Routes
- changes in the recreational aspects and value of forestry properties
- increased involvement with communities
- Forestry Commission plans for Great Glen Forest Park
- policy and guidelines favourable to volunteer/work experience involvement
- finding ways to work with minority groups in the Great Glen Communities
- persistent threat of diminishing budget
- income generation focus
- Highland Council restructuring
- structure of the new management group for the Great Glen Way and embedding of this
- retaining staff on low wages

Maintenance of Partner organisations

Relationships with FCS and BWB are now well established and any work that needs to be carried out is notified to the Great Glen Way Rangers. In addition to this there are annual liaison meetings with Forestry Commission (October), and British Waterways Scotland (March).

The liaison meetings are an important part of the joined up thinking approach to management of the Great Glen Way and these need to be maintained and fostered. This does not diminish the informal meetings that occur regularly to keep in touch and keep track of projects being done.

Events on the Great Glen Way

Great Glen Ways Events Guidelines

The GGW Management Group needs to give a high priority to implementing 'The Great Glen Ways Event Guidelines', give guidance to not only the partners but to all prospective event organisers. Guidelines expected to be launched early 2008.

At the moment there are only a few events using the Great Glen Ways, but by continuing to promote the Event Guidelines there should be positive long term benefits for the routes. With potentially more events to take place, an even handed approach to management of all events is essential.

The Event Guideline document has addressed the following areas of concern:

- protecting the integrity of the route
- consideration to the impact on landowners and neighbours
- ensure community buy in and recognition
- promotion of the Great Glen Ways in all materials used for events
- secure and defined ratio of cost for use
- created a 'easy to use' set of documents that anyone can use

The Event Guidelines are currently in the final draft. Comments have been received from two national event coordinators who have used the document for their events in the Great Glen. These comments have been discussed by the events team, (eg Risk Assessment is much simpler and understandable now, contacts list), and changes made. The document has in the last year been to the legal team at Highland Council and is ready to be launched in early 2008.

In house Events

While the in house events program is interactive and includes community involvement, the numbers are often disappointing. The Rangers will need to work more effectively at creating a diverse and inviting summer and winter program that encourages participation from all sections of the community and continue to improve promotion and marketing methods.

The GGW Rangers need to ensure that:

- press release for every event
- advertising on more related web sites
- working with other agencies and businesses in the Great Glen
- forging new relationships with new and old businesses

It is already acknowledged that the Great Glen Way events market is different from other areas of the Highland Council Rangers so direct comparisons cannot be made. However, continued joint events must be encouraged with the Great Glen Way partners and other units of the Highland Council Rangers .

Key major events with partners need to be clearly defined and fit within the aims and objectives of the DMP. The next 3 year DMP will outline the major events that will be undertaken with partner and community participation for approval by the Management Group. Intended major events for the next 3 years are:

- 2008 Great Glen Ways Launch Schools Boot bike and boat days
- 2009 Witches Wizards and Woodland fairies
- 2010 Jacobite Quest

Considerable thought need to be given to hosting, facilitating or undertaking multi use events in the Great Glen, in conjunction with businesses, partners and agencies with a clear outcome of being inclusive to all types of access takers having the ability to attend events in the countryside with the Rangers. The Long Distance Route week / Day concept will bring this to action with the focus being on encouraging groups of traditional non users into the countryside for 2008 as a pilot program for continuation in 2009 and beyond,

A greater focus on multi access events is needed to accommodate other access takers. The 2009 Great Glen Way walk will change to be a multi traverse event where route users will be able to kayak, bike, horseride or walk particular days. This will be a pilot for 2009 with thoughts to continue in the future.

Capital and Maintenance Works on the Great Glen Way

Appendix 1 shows the major works for implementation. This list is a compilation of requests from the survey results of walkers, brainstorming of the Great Glen Way Rangers, evaluation of walker questionnaires and wider liaison with partners. The projects are colour coded and no black project as yet has funding. The Manager will need to continually source funds to achieve any improvement works annually.

The main long term objective is to reduce road walking. The surveys have highlighted this as a major complaint from users. Being listed in the work program is not enough and funding sources need to be found, and a negotiated route, to enable them to be implemented.

The following sections are listed and some are currently being negotiated. They will take time and commitment to achieve:

- removal of A82 walking at Drumnadrochit
 - removal of minor road walking at Clunes, Bunloit, Blackfold
- other major projects are:
- providing a warm welcome for other users (horses, bikes, dogs, water borne users)
 - being inclusive of minority groups (eg ethnic, elderly)
 - provision of shelters
 - provision of drinking water
 - Link at Invergarry

Maintenance issues that will need to be worked into the existing programs are the cleaning and upkeep of the new monoliths and way markers. As yet it is not known how much or what is required but regular cleaning and painting will be needed.

The Invergarry link to be installed in 2008, will allow the village of Invergarry to be included and long distance walkers get to use both sides of the loch.

Path at
Inverlochy



Accommodation and Services Guide

The total number of advertising accommodation providers may change from year to year, but the quality of the guide needs to be maintained to a very high standard. Consideration should be given to charging for the guide, with the cost reflected in the charge. The issue of charging should be reviewed at each 3 year cycle of the DMP. At the conclusion of each season the Ranger team should continue to evaluate the guide and make appropriate changes.

The guide should change to accommodate other user groups, eg cyclists, kayakers, and horse riders more. Some of this lead work has already been done, with the guide showing kayak storage and how far from the loch, bike sheds and grazing for horses, but more needs to be done to make a inclusive guide. For example

- accomodation f or horse box parking
- farriers and vets
- bike repairs and supplies
- kayak repairs and services
- loch access closest to villages
- transport providers that accommodate kayaks, bikes

The guide should include all providers not just quality assured members of Visit Scotland.

If the quality system is implemented, alternative ways to inform and provide the information to the route customers would have to be investigated. This may only be achieved by working closer with Visit Scotland and businesses as individuals. Other avenues that should also be investigated are:

- green tourism options
- carbon neutral programme
- local tourism forum each year with Visit Scotland

Gaelic Use on the Great Glen Way

With changes to Highland Council policy on the use of Gaelic, more must be used in the media, general profile, web and all published information. Given that Gaelic already appears in the logo, and 'fun gaelic' was established in 2007, there is still more to be created to bring about the awareness of the use of the language. for example:

- cartoons in the accommodation guide for the fun Gaelic with the answers
- bring Gaelic into the education units delivered into schools
- write a Gaelic article for the newsletter
- include Gaelic greeting on the answer phone
- put up Gaelic words in the office to encourage team to use words

Section 3 The Development Plan

Priorities for Development

Additions to the priorities previously listed:

- Work with other user groups to ensure 'buy in' of route and facilities - eg National Cycle Route - NCN78, Step it Up Highland, Highland Disabled Ramblers
- Implementing the Communication Strategy is nearly complete, however adding to the work done by this group at other sites is important, eg interpretation at sites where the wind farm or hydro is visible
- Work collectively with partners to get better picture of users, not just walkers but cyclists, horse riders, kayakers, etc
- Continue to work towards a total off road experience for route users
- Creation of innovative programs to generate funds for projects and revenue funding stream
- Joint marketing with the other Scottish Long Distance Routes with a national and international context
- Creating a program for volunteers and work experience students that fits comfortably with the aims of the Great Glen Way outputs and meet the objects of the agency providing them
- Explore potential business models to improve the long term viability of Great Glen Way

Shared Use

With the recent legislative changes it is likely in the future that a long distance walker may, on most sections of the route encounter a horse rider, a motorised buggie, dog walker, mountain bike or a touring cycle. The table below indicates target to aim for in the next 3 year DMP.

	2004	2008	2011
Disabled access	82%	85%	90%
Mountain Bikes	100%	100%	100%
Dog walkers	100%	100%	100%
Horses	100%	100%	100%
Minor road walking	18%	16%	12%

Cycling in the Great Glen

NCN78 is due for public consultation. Sections investigated will improve access for all users, in that circular options are likely to be opened up around the lochs along with increase in services and accommodation facilities.

Forestry Commission and the Great Glen Way have come to an agreement in late 2007 with the Invergarry link being established. This will add to the experience of both walkers and other route users and confirm a circular route that is waymarked.

Accommodation Shortfalls

As already indicated, the potential shortfalls cannot be highlighted, as businesses may close, or change hands. The Great Glen Way users depend on the accommodation providers and businesses that have built up round the route.

The imminent sale of the old South Laggan Youth Hostel by the SYHA shows the potential gaps that can occur at any time in the accommodation market in the Great Glen. However it is also important to note that new businesses come into operation each year having seen a need from the customers using the route.

Planning permission is being sought in 1 location for a bunk house and cafe. Until the application is submitted the site is unable to be named in this report. The new bunkhouse at Gairloch is under construction and is intended to be open this season 2008. Advice has been sought from two further businesses for information regarding bunk houses at other sites along the route.

The Telfords House at Gairloch owned by British Waterways Scotland will be on the market shortly with options for businesses.

Sites where there are gaps in services:

- Gairloch & Clunes
- South Laggan
- Abriachan

Liaisons

The Manager and staff must continue to forge new relationships with all areas of the community, key stakeholders, landowners, customers and service providers. Notwithstanding what has already been achieved the following need to be addressed:

- Ethnic groups
- Social inclusion groups
- All local community businesses throughout the whole of the Great Glen
- Neighbours of the GGW
- Business initiatives
- National Trail Officers forum
- Secondary schools
- Specialist community groups
- Highland Council Rangers in both Lochaber and Inverness
- Youth
- New businesses in the Great Glen
- Destination Loch Ness

Visitor Numbers

A benchmarking survey of all 4 long distance routes was conducted in 2007. The Great Glen Way Rangers collected data on visitor numbers and undertook face to face survey work to complement the national process. Alongside the face to face surveys, a web link was set up to capture other route users. The software was bought by the collective LDR group and was installed on a PC in each LDR office.

For the Great Glen Way the target was 600 returns.

This target will be achieved by a combination of the following:

- posting out surveys to each enquiry for information
- encouraging customers to complete surveys at Clunes each Monday
- available on line and using the link extensively
- handing out surveys to customers
- posting out surveys to each enquiry for information when rangers are undertaking other outdoor activities and events
- utilising the group email distribution lists for organisations
- distributing surveys to large user groups eg schools adjacent to GGW

In addition the following surveys are planned to occur:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ■ Accommodation providers Survey | 2 yearly, (2003, 2005 & 2007) |
| ■ Guided walks and events | every event and annually |
| ■ Neighbours Survey | 5 yearly, (2005 & 2010) |
| ■ Walker Questionnaire | annually |
| ■ LRD Survey | 5 yearly, (2007 & 2012) |

Staff training

The Great Glen Way Rangers have been proactive and should continue to be, in jobshadowing on other long distance routes, firstly in Scotland, then UK and later internationally, where the opportunities arise and where practical this should be fostered and encouraged.

The Great Glen Way Rangers must ensure that there are no gaps in the delivery of the service when staff resign. The skills audit and gap analysis should be completed every year, so that every task can be undertaken by another member of staff. The core items of Health and Safety and maintenance must prevail over all other work tasks, as these are statutory.

Business Workshop Outcomes

The first Business Workshop, in 2006 and subsequent one in late 2007 were great successes. Follow up work has also been successful. It is important to not let these links and relationships falter and fail. Resources need to be made available to implement the ideas, infrastructure and further workshops facilitated as part of the future growth of the Great Glen Way.

Full list of outcomes from the 2007 workshop are in Appendix 2, however given the remit of the Great Glen Way not all of the outcomes are the responsibility of the Manager and Ranger team.

The following list outlines what is possible for the Great Glen Way Manager within the remit of the team. Many of them have been previously listed in Development Management Plans and already have projects allocated to achieve them.

- Maintain the route
- Timber monoliths for diverging route access
- Voluntary Contribution Programme Trial
- Managing installation of seats and focal points
- Provision of information regarding the route
- Continued data collection of route users
- Work towards route improvements that improve the visitor experience, particularly removal of road walking
- Web site management and up grading
- Work to an annual marketing plan
- Generation of income and potential ideas
- Maintain liaisons with businesses, partners and agencies alike



Great Glen Way on Bunloit Road

Bank Erosion at the Inverlocy River



The Great Glen Ways Communication Strategy

Throughout the life of the project the Great Glen Way Ranger team has been supportive and in constant communication with the Project Officer for on the ground issues and information.

The project is due for completion in January 2008 and is on target. The completion event is to be held in March, with an official launch of the project outcomes followed by 3 days of activities with local school children.

The working group has worked extremely well together to achieve a difficult and sometimes cumbersome project. The working group should consider another project to continue the relationships and building a better Great Glen for all.

The Great Glen Ways has enabled a higher profile of the Great Glen Way and the other means by which customers can access not only the countryside but also the alternative ways of doing so, eg biking, walking, kayaking, horse riding.



Great Glen Ways Exhibition at Black Isle Show

The Great Glen Way Information Strategy

Information provision remains an important element of each member of the team's daily outputs. Changes in the table on page 36 of the DMP include:

Existing elements:

- Guide to public transport - Up to date timetables are in the office for reference
- Events Guidelines - legal stance completed late 2006, finishing and printing of document due end 2007. Launched into public arena early 2008
- Official Guide book - shift to March 2008 some problems with mapping
- Codes of Conduct - largely due to the implementation of the Access legislation which may supersede the intent. SNH working on specific issues eg dog walking, camping etc . These are distributed and they are available.
- Newsletter to walkers and customers - annually and distributed to mailing list and all customers who have contact with Rangers
- Static display material - at TIC centres in the Glen and refreshed monthly. Static material also used at shows, open days and events where possible
- Revision of agreements with map/ book producers - annually or by terms of agreement
- Availability of both Annual Reports and DMP on the web along with Event Guidelines and other major documents

New elements to consider:

- Voluntary Contribution Program. Updates on web and in newsletters.
- Biodiversity sightings postcards
- John Muir Awards
- Eco Schools

The Great Glen Way Interpretative Strategy

The Strategy was commissioned and completed in November 1995. This document needs to be reviewed with the major partners, in light of the work being done with the Communication Strategy implementation, this has not happened to date but ideally should be accomplished in the time of the new full DMP.

The Great Glen Way Marketing Strategy

The subgroup of the Management Group developed the first Marketing Strategy with an update each year. The Marketing sub group no longer exists, however in 2007 valuable assistance was given from HIE Inverness with a Marketing Professional and as a result of this a new marketing action plan was drawn up. Most importantly the marketing needs of the Great Glen Way should be worked with other agencies and organisations to achieve the objectives.

A strong focus needs to remain on

- International scene and how to deal with it
- National collective advertising campaign with other Scottish LDR's

Appendix

1. 10 year Capital Improvement Plan
2. Business Workshop Outcomes

Appendix 1

Appendix 2- Business Workshop Outcomes



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