Sustainable Transport

While the percentage of visitors coming to the Yorkshire Dales by car has fallen slightly since 1994, the huge number of cars in the Dales is seen as one of the major issues facing the Park today. While most people accept the need for cars, everyone acknowledges the problems caused by large traffic volumes, including: congested, dangerous roads; increased risk of road traffic accidents; ecological disturbance; pollution; excessive energy consumption; visual intrusion; destruction of verges; land taken for car parking; inappropriate road improvements and developments.

The NPA aims to increase travel, to and within the Dales, which reduces the impact of traffic, by promoting car alternatives, especially public transport. A variety of initiatives provide information on transport options. The NPA works with agriculture, quarrying and other local industries to reduce the impact of goods movement. An 'Advisory Road Hierarchy' defines the highway network within which road traffic is to be managed.

Sustainable Tourism

Tourism provides enormous economic benefits and opportunities for the local community (valued at £266 million in 2003 for the wider Yorkshire Dales area). Huge numbers of visitors to the Dales make it vital that they follow the principles of sustainable tourism, minimising the negative impact of their visit on the very thing they've come to enjoy.

The challenge for sustainable tourism is to develop products, which drive economic development, while celebrating the special qualities of the National Park. This includes encouraging visitors to make visits for longer or outside of the peak season for example.

Healthy Living

The promotion of the public rights of way network can increase access to walking, cycling, sport and leisure opportunities, helping to increase levels of physical activity and improve public health. The Health Development Agency offers four main areas of proven benefits from being in the countryside:

- physical fitness through exercise
- improved mental health and well-being, including reduced stress
- social interaction and friendship through sharing activities and interests
- understanding of the natural world and the development of environmentally friendly lifestyles

Inclusion

Tackling 'social exclusion' is a national priority. The Government's Social Inclusion Unit defines 'social exclusion' as:

'... what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.'

Those who experience 'social exclusion,' for whatever reason, have limited access to benefits, which many people take for granted, anything from a job or a good home, to an outing to a nearby park, for example. NPA efforts to tackle 'social exclusion', have focused mainly on 'outreach work' in nearby urban areas, e.g. through the TARGET, MOSAIC and 'Beyond the Boundary' projects. The Authority also has a role in ensuring that people experiencing exclusion in rural areas, are not overlooked because of the general 'idyllic' perception of rural life.

ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE ACCESS?

Education File: YDNPA

The future of the National Park depends on balancing the conservation of the special qualities of the area, with the activities of a visiting population and the well-being of the local community. Achieving such a balance involves a complex of interrelated issues, in particular the health of the relationship between the growing variety of users, farmers, landowners and managers and the

Crucially, the local economy can be made stronger for having its foundations firmly rooted in the uniqueness of the National Park and in particular its access opportunities. Without question, recreational activity can not be allowed to damage what makes the area special and attracts people to it: users must increasingly be encouraged to act responsibly, making themselves part of the conservation of the access resource and not part of its destruction.

For further information please contact:

The Education Service

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Colvend, Hebden Road, Grassington Skipton, North Yorkshire BD23 5LB

Telephone 0300 456 0030 Fax 01756 751699

Email: education@yorkshiredales.org.uk Download your copy free from our website: www.yorkshiredales.org.uk

Information updated March 2005 Printed on environmentally friendly paper © Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Education File

Information for students and group leaders



Access Management

an integrated approach

THE ACCESS ISSUE

The Yorkshire Dales is a unique area, designated a National Park because of its many special qualities and the opportunities they offer for people to enjoy them. Managing these recreational opportunities is the work of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.

The YDNPA statutory purposes are to:

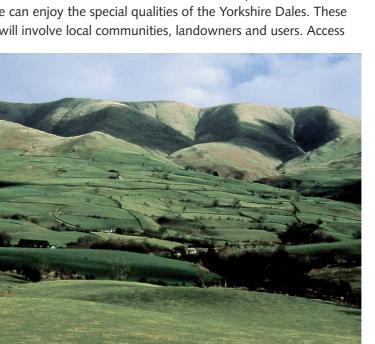
- conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park and
- promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of National Parks by the public.

One of the main reasons for creating National Parks in England and Wales, was the belief that visiting these beautiful landscapes is a highly beneficial experience, that should be available to everyone by right.

"National Parks are not for any privileged or otherwise restricted section of the population but for all who come to refresh their minds and spirit and to exercise their bodies in a peaceful setting of natural beauty." (John Dower, 1945)

Even though they are over 50 years old, Dower's words still reflect the vision for the National Park today, just as they continue to present a major challenge. The 'National Park Management Plan: 2000 - 2005' (NPMP) states the 'aims' for access in the Park today:

"Access and recreation in the National Park will be developed so that a wide range of people can enjoy the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales. These developments will involve local communities, landowners and users. Access



Ours to Enjoy. Howgill Fells. YDNPA. 2000.

and recreation will not damage what people come to enjoy and users will act responsibly. Integrated transport will enable people to get into and around the National Park for everyday life and for leisure."

The major outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease in 2001, highlighted the fundamental inter-dependence of the local economy and the access resource, a relationship which the NPMP focuses on:

'The conservation of the special qualities of the National Park will be achieved with a local economy which provides diverse employment and maintains thriving, balanced communities. The local economy will be stronger for having its foundations in the special qualities and uniqueness of the National Park.' (NPMP 2000)

Managing access involves a complex of inseparably interrelated issues, these include: access for all, inclusion, healthy living, sustainable transport, sustainable tourism, accessibility and visitor management. These issues are outlined here in relation to the access resource.

THE ACCESS RESOURCE

The access resource consists of open access areas, Rights of Way, cycleways, permitted paths and quiet lane networks. It includes access to other recreational opportunities, which are dependent on the special qualities of the area.

The key factor in managing access sustainably, lies in identifying the level of recreational use beyond which unacceptable consequences will occur. Management involves matching the provision of recreational opportunities, with visitors' needs and the impact of their activity on the conservation of the environmental resource.

Recreational Opportunities

The Dales provide opportunities for many forms of air, land and water based countryside recreation, offering some of the best walking, caving, paragliding, sport climbing and crosscountry mountain biking in the country. Beyond maintaining general visitor facilities, such as car parks, toilets and the PRoW network, many activities take place without formal management by the NPA. Intervention only becomes necessary where activities conflict with conservation interests and other users, e.g. use of 'green lanes' by motorised vehicles. There is some evidence of growth in cycling and canoeing and some activities are more significant for certain groups, young people for example, are drawn to 'high adventure' activities.



Mountain biking.Pennine Bridleway, Newby. Mark Allum 2004.

The Rights of Way Network

The extensive network of more than 2,100km of Public Rights of Way (PRoW), is identified as one of the primary assets of the National Park. The NPA is the delegated Highway Authority (on behalf of County Councils) for the PRoW in the Park. It maintains the legal record of rights of way, through the continuous review of the Definitive Map and has responsibility for the physical maintenance and improvement of the rights of way network.

Long Distance Routes

The Dales is criss-crossed by a network of long distance routes, including the Pennine Way, Dales Way and Coast to Coast, between them walked annually by around 15,000 walkers. Fifty four miles of the Pennine Bridleway National Trail runs through the Park.

'Open Access'

Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act), the public has new rights of access over mapped areas of 'open country' - mountain, moor, heath and down - and registered common land. This has increased open access land from 4%, to a massive 60% in the Park. The CRoW Act access rights entitle the public to use access land on foot for 'open-air recreation', e.g. walking, running and climbing. Under the CRoW Act, the NPA is responsible for ensuring reasonable access and determining restrictions.

Experience from existing open access areas, such as Barden Moor, has shown that informal visitor management is often the best way to manage conflict. Where this alone is likely to be insufficient, or to place an unreasonable burden of liability or cost on the land manager, the Act provides a legal system to restrict access.



Grouse Moors above Swaledale: 'a right to roam?' Gordon Hatton. 1999.

Education File: YDNPA

Vehicle Use of Unsealed Routes ('Green Lanes')

The use of 'green lanes' by recreational motor vehicles is a major issue, which affects the landscape and habitats of the Dales and the enjoyment of other users. Many of the 'rights to use' originate in what the NPA believes is an unsustainable approach, based on rights established by horse-drawn vehicle use, being claimed for modern, motorised vehicle use. The NPA holds the view that in specially protected areas like National Parks, motorised recreational activity is not appropriate as it conflicts with the interest of promoting quiet enjoyment.



'Green Lane' damage. YDNPA 2002

Organised Events

Events such as charity walks and challenges in the National Park, can bring huge benefits to organisations and their beneficiaries as well as the local economy. Unfortunately they may also have an adverse impact on the environment. Appropriate recreational use of the National Park for large-scale events is achieved by promoting appropriate use, at the right level, time of year or day of the week and in locations best placed to limit potential environmental damage.

MANAGING ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility can be defined as, 'the ease with which an individual can access services and facilities that he or she needs or desires. It also describes the catchment characteristics of a given location' (DfT 2004).

In this context the 'countryside' is seen as a 'facility' and accessibility planning seeks to ensure that anyone who wants to, can access the facilities they require.

Access for All

All visitors and residents of the YDNP, should be able to enjoy some access to the countryside, whatever their physical ability. They should be able to decide for themselves, whether or not particular recreational opportunities or the means of accessing them, are suitable for them as individuals. The NPA seeks to integrate the principle of 'Access for All' throughout its entire management of access provision.

Maintaining Diversity of the Recreational Experience

Overall, most people choose to visit the Yorkshire Dales because of the special qualities of the area: its landscape quality; opportunities for outdoor recreation; peace and tranquillity; outstanding wildlife, culture, settlements and built heritage. While the Dales as a whole should be as accessible to as wide a range of people as possible, access to sensitive areas needs to be managed to safeguard its particular special qualities. In some situations, increasing accessibility to specific locations could destroy the very thing people are seeking to experience.

Visitor Facilities

The scale, design and siting of visitor facilities needs to respect the location where the facility is required. The style of visitor facilities should prompt the expectation of a countryside, rather than an urban experience. Some places are valued for being wild and remote, while others, often being more accessible, have extensive facilities. This in itself can create an attraction, making some locations a focus for large numbers of people. Developing visitor facilities on a scale that provides for peak demand is not supported. (see YDNPA Local Plan)

Access Interchanges

Most visitors arrive by some form of motorised transport: bus, train, car, motorcycle, etc. This creates a need for an 'interchange', at the point of access to the countryside, on foot, cycle or horse, for example. The interchange may be as 'simple' as a bus stop or a lay-by, or as formal as a large developed area with extensive facilities.

Different levels of 'interchange' require different facilities, depending on the expected level and type of usage and the characteristics of the location.

Things to consider include: road safety, parking, meeting 'disability' needs, setdown facilities for motor vehicles, security, shelter, telephone, toilets, travel / access information, signage, way-marking, interpretation,

The Ranger Service

NPA Rangers work closely with land managers and countryside users, continually maintaining and improving the public rights of way network, increasing the amount which is 'easy to use'. Much of this work directly involves 'barrier reduction', e.g. resurfacing paths and tracks, providing and maintaining stiles and gates, along with building and maintaining bridges, waymarking generally and in particular, signposting rights of way which leave roads. Rangers are an important point of contact for NPA services for local communities and visitors.

Path surfaces are engineered when heavy use causes serious damage, which is unable to recover without intervention.



Aggregate Path: Freeholders Wood. YDNPA 2003

This path was surfaced and drained to prevent further trampling damage to the woodland flora and to guide visitors along a safe route to Aysgarth Falls. The path is wheelchair accessible.

Education File: YDNPA



Stone Pitched Steps. High Lot. YDNPA 2002

Stone pitched steps are used when the gradient is too steep for an aggregate path. Large stones are dug into the ground to provide a firm walking



Flagged Path. High Lot. YDNPA 2004

surface

Flag stones can be used to provide a hard, level walking surface on soft ground. They need less ground work during construction and are a useful, though expensive solution in areas



Subsoil Path. Thresfield Moor. YDNPA 2003

which are sensitive for nature conservation.

Here, subsoil is being dug out and placed on top to create a subsoil path. This forms a harder surface which can blend in well with the local landscape, especially in more sensitive peat and