



Community
Woodlands
Association

Multi-Trails Project Training Event



Monday 16th March 2020

10am – 3.30pm Venue - Laggan Wolftrax

EVENT REPORT

This training event was held as part of a transnational cooperation project between the Community Woodlands Association in Scotland and the Sjö, Skog & Fjäll LAG in Sweden for sharing innovative techniques and best practice for the construction, promotion and management of mixed-use trails

The aim of this event is to share and disseminate best practice in;

- a) Trail building and management for multi-use, and
- b) Strategies for promotion and enjoyment by multi-users

Programme for the day

9.30	Arrive and coffee		
10.00	Welcome and Introduction - Laggan Forest Trust and CWA		
10.15	Managing visitors on multi-use trails	Challenges and opportunities - balancing recreation and conservation, managing different user groups, H&S and liability	John Ireland – Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS)
10.45	Trails – making them fit for purpose	What trail types are needed? Achieving suitable accessibility. Practical guidance on construction and where to get support and resources	John Duffy – Paths for All
11.15	Short coffee break		
11.30	Widening your audience	Promotion and opportunities for increasing use and visitor footfall	Pete Crane – Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA)
12.00	The Wolftrax Experience	Introduction to Wolftrax prior to site visit – successes, opportunities and challenges	Cristian Pizarro - Laggan Forest Trust (LFT)
12.30	Lunch		
13.15	Site visit	Visit to Black Wood, Strathmashie to look at trail upgrade site and discuss site needs for widening audiences	Cristian Pizarro (LFT) and Brian Duff (FLS)
15.30	Return to car park and depart		

The Multi-trails project is funded by the Highland and Cairngorm LEADER programmes, co-financed by the Scottish Government and the European Commission.



Delegates and Speakers/hosts

First name	Surname	Organisation
Cristian	Pizarro	The Laggan Forest Trust
Colin	Morgan	The Laggan Forest Trust
Fiona	Chalmers	CWA
John	Ireland	Forestry and Land Scotland
John	Duffy	Paths for All
Pete	Crane	CNPA
Brian	Duff	Forestry and Land Scotland
Tim	Flood	Flood Films
Angus	Armstrong	Adac Structures
Andy	Singh	Badenoch & Strathspey Trail Association
Neil	Taylor	Forestry and Land Scotland
Julia	Duncan	Atholl Estates
Gordon	Cumming	Rothiemurchus Estate
Ruari	Watt	Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland
Terry	Rose	Ullapool Community Trust
Anna	Graham	Dunnet Forestry Trust
Colin	Graham	Dunnet Forestry Trust
John	Woods	Ullapool Community Trust
Mark	Hedderwick	Hitrak Ltd
Barry	Edmonson	Abernethy Trust
Ian	Hall	The Laggan Forest Trust

Summary of Talks

Welcome and Introduction - Laggan Forest Trust and CWA

Fiona Chalmers and Cristian Pizarro gave a welcome to the delegates and to the Wolftrax centre. Colin Morgan then gave a brief history and background to the Laggan Forest Trust (LFT) and the development of the Trail Centre at Wolftrax. He summarised the challenges and opportunities and gave a summary of the financial support for the building of the centre which came from the Scottish Government but was facilitated by the CNPA. LFT are working hard to ensure the new café business is a success and are keen to expand audiences to include e-bike users and family groups. They also wish to develop stronger and closer working relationship with both FLS especially with regard to large scale harvesting programmes. The visitor centre is now an entry point for the National Park and as such LFT are very happy to deliver the service to visitors working closely with CNPA.

Managing visitors on multi-use trails - *John Ireland* – Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS)

John Ireland gave a very informative talk on balancing recreation and conservation, managing different user groups, H&S and liability and the challenges and opportunities arising from that. He gave a background to health and safety in FLS and a detailed explanation of the legal frameworks that affect managers of recreational sites and his talk centred on law and liability.

[The slides from the talk are available on this link](#)

Trails – making them fit for purpose - *John Duffy* – Paths for All

John Duffy addressed the topic of what trail types are needed to achieve suitable accessibility. He concentrated on practical guidance on construction and where to get support and resources – this included making available hard copies of the Paths for All “How To” resources cards. John covered the background of the Land Reform Act in Scotland and the [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#) and what that means for managers of multi-use sites.

He questioned what ‘Fit for Purpose’ meant and suggested that it was always good to exceed expectations and regulations wherever possible. He demonstrated the need to have a path wide enough for ease of use and why 1.5m should be a minimum width. He emphasised the need for community connections and connectivity in particular having circular, rather than linear, routes wherever possible. John talked about the sensory experience people have when walking a trail and that context and setting is also important for enhancing a user’s experience.

[The slides from the talk are available on this link](#)

Widening your audience - Pete Crane – Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA)

Pete Crane talked about promotion and opportunities for increasing use and visitor footfall. He gave an introduction to the Cairngorms National Park and emphasised the Park was about 'People and Nature'. He described the distinct character and the special management requirement needed to ensure that conservation objectives are delivered along people having an enjoyable visit. He expressed the need for, and the importance of, partnerships and creating a network of visitor centres. There is a collective vision to 'slow visitors down' to enable them to have a richer and more sustainable visit to the National Park.

Pete talked about how mountain biking is developing and how communities are involved in developing new trails for recreation and active travel. This includes the CNPA working with communities to provide a branded suite of trail leaflets that are based on the same format giving visitors easily accessible information about trails length, grades, parking and facilities. Pete also talked about the number of websites springing up that help people make the most of their visit.

[The slides from the talk are available on this link](#)

The Wolftrax Experience - Cristian Pizarro - Laggan Forest Trust (LFT)

Cristian Pizarro gave an introduction to Wolftrax and talked about their successes, opportunities and challenges. He gave a history of LFT development and a summary of the mountain bike trails and the potential of undeveloped forestry road to create more accessible grade routes. He said one of the strengths of Wolftrax - the high quality 'expert' mountain bike experience - is also a weakness as he feels this puts off the more casual cyclist or family groups. Cristian explained that there is an opportunity to create a 'scale of progression' and especially fill in the gap for a 'blue trail' – one that is accessible for less experienced mountain biker and for family cycling. He felt that the blue trail would be important as a 'money maker' as it would attract families who would increase the café income and parking revenues. He emphasised the need to work in partnership and share knowledge.

[The slides from the talk are available on this link](#)

There was a Q and A session at the end of the morning.

Site visit - Cristian Pizarro (LFT) and **Brian Duff** (FLS)

After a hearty lunch served by the café at Laggan Wolftrax, all the delegates went on a site visit to Black Wood, Strathmashie to look at trail upgrade site and discuss site needs for widening audiences. Cristian and Brian led the visit and showed everyone where the new trail would go. Discussion ranged around different path users, types of trail and general networking.



Photo 1 - Colin Morgan LFT



Photo 2 - Cristian Pizarro talking about the new trail

Useful contacts:

[Cristian Pizarro](#) - [Laggan Forest Trust](#)

[John Ireland](#) – [Forestry and Land Scotland](#)

[John Duffy](#) - [Paths for All](#)

[Pete Crane](#) – [Cairngorms National Park Authority](#)

Event Feedback Summary

A total of 11 feedback forms were completed and returned (of 13 attendees) with the following feedback

Please rate the following by ticking the statement which best matches your opinion:						
	Organisation	Location	Venue	Catering	Speakers	Site Visit
very good	9	10	10	11	10	
good	2	1	1		1	
fair						
poor						
n/a						

Do you feel that the event delivered your expectations?

Yes: 11 No: 0 Partly: 0

Comments:

- *Wasn't sure of scope but good networking event and interesting discussion*
- *Good recap on trails and access*
- *Good networking and information sharing opportunity*

Are there any other training/events you would like to see CWA organise?

- *Practical skills (chain saw etc.)*
- *Trail inspection*
- *Trail design/building*
- *Organisation and management of volunteer event*
- *I would like an event organised around the theme of community woodlands and the potential for woodland crofts*
- *Land acquisition options*

Any other comments:

- *Thanks – this was great especially the H&S presentation*
- *Very useful to a community considering possible purchase of a forest. Helped to understand practical issues and future trends.*

Resources

Funding sources for paths and trails

- [Scottish Rural Development Programme](#) - LEADER, Forestry Grant Scheme, Improving Public Access. A new scheme to replace this programme is being planned post-Brexit.
- [Landfill tax](#) - SUEZ Communities Trust Ltd, Viridor Credits Environmental Company, WREN
- [Places for everyone](#) - to create safer, more attractive, healthier places by increasing the number of trips made by walking, cycling and wheeling for everyday journeys.
- [SCSP - Open Fund](#) to encourage people to change their behaviours to walk or cycle as part of their everyday short journeys.
- [Heritage Lottery](#) - *Landscapes and the countryside* large-scale rural projects that help improve landscapes for people and nature, by for example, restoring habitats and celebrating the cultural traditions of the land
- [Low Carbon Travel and Transport Challenge Fund](#)
- Over £13m capital grant funding from Transport Scotland available to support the development of Active Travel Hubs and/or path creation application
- Plastic bag schemes – Asda, Coop, Tesco

Online resources

Path Infrastructure

- [Outdoor Access Design Guide](#): A guide which gives consistent and clear advice on the selection and design of outdoor access furniture and structures such as gates, fences, seating, steps and boardwalks.
- [Surfacing Guide for Path Projects](#): A guide designed to help you choose the most effective and appropriate surfacing material for your path project. It provides details on a range of path surfacing options available within Scotland, many of which can be viewed at the [Paths for All National Path Demonstration Site](#) within SRUC Oatridge Campus
- [Lowland Path Construction Guide](#): This guide considers all aspects of lowland path development and management and looks at the different stages of path construction projects – planning, design, construction and maintenance.
- [The Path Managers Guide to Grading](#): a consistent approach to path grading developed and endorsed by SNH, FCS & Paths for All.
- [Shared Use Paths in Scotland](#): Guidance which focuses on the promotion, development and management of paths in ways which enable, encourage and sustain active travel, recreation and enjoyment by walkers, cyclists, horse riders, people with disabilities and other-non-motorised users.
- [Signage Guidance for Outdoor Access](#): Covering most aspects of outdoor access signage, this guide is aimed at access staff, countryside rangers, land managers, community groups (including health walk co-ordinators) and anybody involved in path or other access/site management.
- [Estimating Guide for Path Projects](#): A simple guide which helps to estimate the costs associated with your path project.
- [Path Bridges](#): Designed to help you negotiate the complex factors involved in planning, designing, constructing and maintaining bridges.
- [BT Countryside for All](#): Setting the bench mark for good practice in meeting the needs of disabled people seeking access to the countryside.

Health & Safety

[Guide on Construction, Design & Management Regulations](#) a handy guide which both describes and provides examples of the 10 main duties that clients need to carry out for their path maintenance projects; in line with the Construction, Design & Management Regulations 2015.

Mapping

Several open source GIS options are available including [Umap](#) and [QGIS](#). Other options include [One Scotland Mapping Agreement](#) and [Ordnance Survey](#)

SATIN – the Scottish Access Technical Information Network - hosts a large web-based resource of technical information and knowledge: [A to Z Technical Information](#)

Event supported by:



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