Multi-trails: Community Trail Building Workshop

The Treehouse, Smithy Community Hub, Strathcarron
& Kirkton Wood, by Lochcarron, Wester Ross IV46 8YS

Thursday 15th August 2019   10 am – 4 pm

EVENT REPORT

AGENDA

10:00   Arrive @ Smithy Community Hub for tea/coffee, refreshments.

10:20   Welcome/Introductions
        – Chris Marsh (*Woodland Project Manager, CWA)*

10.30 – 13.00   Trail Building: Planning & Defining Your Ambition
        – John Duffy & Graeme Anderson (*Paths for All)*
- ***Setting Objectives***
- ***Surveying & Specifications***
- ***Resources & Costings***

        - a range of Paths for All info sheets, case studies and guidance documents were available to take away.

13.00   Lunch (@ Café Ceardach, Smithy Community Hub)

14:00   Kirkton Woods – *Site Visit*
        - Chris Marsh with LCDC's Lynda Beveridge & trail builder Chris Macdonald.

16:00   Finish & **Depart**

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

In Attendance:

Chris Marsh - Community Woodlands Association

John Duffy - Paths for All

Graeme Anderson - Paths for All

Chris Macdonald - Multi-trails project – local path contractor

Lynda Beveridge - Lochcarron Community Development Company

Barbara Williams - Broadford & Strath Community Company

Peter Henderson - Laide & Aultbea Community Woodland

John Rippin - Laide & Aultbea Community Woodland

Ken Smith - Laide & Aultbea Community Woodland

Roslyn Clarke - Applecross Community Company

Gregor Watson - Applecross Community Company

Helge Hansen - Aigas Community Forest

Sandy Underwood - Ullapool Community Trust

Steve Twitchett - Ullapool Community Trust

Cheryl McIntyre - Kyle & Lochalsh Community Trust

Introduction – Chris Marsh, Multi-trails project manager

Chris welcomed all to the event and to Lochcarron Community Development Company's Treehouse venue.

The format of the day was a series of morning presentations by Paths for All, followed by, in the afternoon, a guided walk around the community-owned Kirkton Wood, looking at a variety of access trail design specifications. This training event was the first of a series of four workshops that the Community Woodlands Association are running over the next twelve months as part of the LEADER-funded 'Multi-trails' project.

The objective of the wider project is to share innovation and good practice in the planning, construction and management of mixed-use trails. The project is being delivered by the Community Woodlands Association in Scotland but also collaborating with Swedish partner organisation, *Sjö, Skog & Fjäll LAG*, in organising a number of exemplar trail construction sub-projects, reciprocal study visits, seminars and joint publications over the project's 18-month lifespan.

At this inaugural event, the emphasis of training was on ***initial contemplation and planning of new access trails***. National paths and access charity Paths for All had kindly agreed to put together a condensed sequence of presentations – ordinarily delivered as a full day's training – to give an overview of the process of conceiving and defining a new access project. The intention was to supplement the talk with a summarising document (i.e. this report) that brought together the main themes covered, the salient issues considered and to act as a 'signpost' to other sources of technical guidance, case studies and instructional online resources that could only be briefly referenced in the time available.

Attendees take an afternoon walk in Kirkton Woods – on the route of the old drove track

The following pages are a summary of the morning presentations by Paths for All.

SETTING OBJECTIVES

Whether you are looking for funding or simply trying to explain your ambitions or proposals within your local community, you need to be clear exactly what you are trying to achieve and why.

What difference will your new access project make?

List **Outcomes:** the specific changes that will result from your project.

Why are they important?
- Outcomes are the changes that your projects can make over time to address the need(s) you have identified.
- They are the result of what you do, rather than the facilities you provide.
- Outcomes are best described using words of change, such as: more, better, less, improved.

How do you know your project is needed?
- Provide statistics – local or national
- Reference existing policies and research
- Show how your project will fill a gap
- Show that demand outstrips supply
- Show any additional need highlighted by learning from your previous work
- Consult with your users

Identifying users and understanding their needs

Knowing who is going to use the path, what they use it for and how often, will help you to determine how wide your path should be and what materials and infrastructure you need to put in place. Design your paths and trails to comply with:
- [The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [British Standard for gaps, gates & stiles BS5709:2018](#)

Guiding principles for the installation of any new access infrastructure
- Always choose the least restrictive option
- Site it on firm, level ground.
- Provide clear space around it and on the approach to it, to ensure people can easily and safely access it.
- Ensure all integral mechanisms, e.g. latches, handles, are accessible and easy to use.

How do I evidence the need for my project?

[Walkipedia](#): is a new online resource which brings together the key sources of information and evidence relating to walking, pedestrians, and active travel and which highlights some of their key points.

[Scot Gov: National Walking Strategy](#)**:** The strategy outlines the government's vision of a Scotland where everyone benefits from walking. It contains recommendations from a working group to create a walking culture.

Who should you consult?
- **Local community**. You will want to know who uses the path or could potentially use the path. What demand is there for the paths you intend to improve or promote? Are the community supportive of your plans?

- **Landowners.** Are they happy with what you have planned? Do they have other priorities or different ideas of their own?
- **Access officers.** Let your council access officer know of your plans. They might be able to offer ideas for your plans or even financial or practical support.

What's the best way to consult the community?

There are different ways you can consult with your local community, depending on the size and the type of information you are looking to get back. You'll probably have a good feeling for what will work well in your area. Some possible approaches are:

- Put a questionnaire in your local shop/ pub/ community centre to ask for people's views.
- Ask (and record) people's views at a local event.
- Hold a formal consultation event where you ask people to discuss and prioritise ideas.
- Evidence - such as a user count. This doesn't have to be anything onerous. Simply recording the number of people you see out using the path at different times of the week for an hour or two.

By consulting the community, you can build a strong case for developing your project and if you are looking for funding you will probably have to demonstrate there is a need for it. People live busy lives, so you need to use a range of methods:

- Hold open meetings and drop in events.
- Piggy back on popular events or meetings.
- Go door to door with surveys.
- Catch people at the right time   Rhythm of daily life - parents at the school gate, people walking their dogs in the morning.

Some Information Gathering Methods:

'H' form - you can use this form to capture the following information:
- Where do you live?
- What you like about the route?
- What you dislike about the route?
- What would make it better?
- What would you score the route now?
- How often do you use the route?
- What do you use it for?
- Your gender & age?
- Would you like to be kept informed?
- Your contact details & the best way to contact you?

Questionnaires – you often get a poor return on questionnaires.

Social media – Don't post too much info at any one time, it's best to keep posts short.

How will you know (& record) you are making a difference?

Keep it simple - don't over-commit yourself by telling a funder that you are going to do anything too complicated that will take up too much of your own time. Quick indicators of the success of your project could include:

- Before and after photos
- A visible increase in the number of users
- Quotes from people using the path
- Posts on your facebook page
- A user survey

CARRYING OUT A PATH SURVEY

You need to survey any proposed access route to record what condition it is in now and to identify what work is needed to bring it up to the standard you want.

What to survey:
Record the distance and location of:
- any notable features;
- the surface condition;
- the path width;
- all gradients along and across the path;
- drainage and water damage;
- services e.g. power lines;
- hazards;
- physical barriers e.g. stiles, steps;
- any access points.

A number of standard survey template forms (with differing levels of recorded detail and mapping complexity) and were circulated and discussed.

When to survey:
Drainage problems are likely to be the biggest issue on your path, so the best time to survey is when the path is wet (either on or after a rainy day).
- Look for water standing on or running down the path surface;
- Look for water flowing onto the path from ground adjacent to the route.

Using this information from your survey you will be able to pull together a path design and:
- Itemise the materials and infrastructure you need;
- Breakdown what work you will need to carry out;
- Work out how much your project is likely to cost.

Surveying equipment
What equipment you want to use is up to you. Some people will prefer to use trundle wheels, measuring tapes, clinometers and cameras, whilst other people will be happier using an app on their phone or tablet.

How to use a traditional clinometer:

http://www.pathsforall.org.uk/pfa/creating-paths/dont-make-the-mistake-of-guessing-a-gradient.html

Clinometer app:

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.plaincode.clinometer&hl=en

Survey Apps:

Routeshoot: http://www.routeshoot.com/routeshoot/

GPS essentials: http://www.gpsessentials.com/

COSTINGS

Use this estimating price guide to help you cost your project:

https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/mediaLibrary/other/english/estimating-price-guide-for-path-projects.pdf

Other costs to think about:
- Professional fees may be around 15% of your overall project costs;
- Always add an extra 5% to your overall project costs to cover contingencies or sundries;
- Add in the costs for publishing, promoting and launching your project;
- Think about the maintenance cost of your project – who is going to be responsible for maintaining the path? Do you need to buy equipment?
- Do you need training? Could training costs be built into the application?
- Check with your funder if you can include in-kind contributions.

MAINTENANCE

Chose materials and infrastructure that you will be able to maintain easily. Making the right decision now will save you time and money in the future.

Maintenance Term	Definition
Replacement	A path, or related structure, needing complete replacement when it has reached the end of its design life, or has worn beyond the point of repair.
Repair	Making a path, or related structure, safe and fit for purpose again after damage or failure of part of that path or structure.
Planned Maintenance	Regular tasks done on a routine basis to prolong the life of a path, and its related structures, to make sure they remain safe and fit for purpose.
Regrade	Levelling out and compacting a path surface to remove water scouring or ruts without adding any new material.
Upgrade	Improving a path, or related structure, and changing its purpose to allow access by a wider range or greater number of different users. Or to correct a defect which is causing repeated failure.

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](#)

Finally…

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

FUNDING SOURCES

- **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

Useful contacts:

Paths for All Contact: John Duffy (Senior Development Officer)

Paths for All Contact: Graeme Anderson (Technical Officer)

Supported by:

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

Afternoon Site Visit: Kirkton Woodland

Hosted by Chris Marsh, Chris Macdonald and Lynda Beveridge

Kirkton Woodland was bought from Forestry Commission Scotland in Spring 2015. It is a 92-hectare commercial conifer plantation, originally afforested in the 1970's with mainly lodgepole pine with some smaller quantities of larch, Sitka spruce and Scots pine. At the time of acquisition there was no vehicle access into the wood and an old drove track (a Core Path) was the only formal access route into and through the property.

The first few years of ownership have focussed on some harvesting and marketing of timber from mature (and often windblown) conifers – including constructing new vehicle access into the wood and establishing a firewood business there. Owners Lochcarron Community Development Company have secured a number of different funding packages over the same period and delivered a variety of community (especially local school children) activity and educational programmes as well as volunteering work. During 2017, a new all-abilities 'heritage trail' was constructed using LEADER funding, Postcode Local Trust, Awards for All and community development funding from a local hydro scheme.

The site visit looked at: the all-abilities Heritage Trail; the new 'as dug' link trail (Multi-trails LEADER project-funded), the old drove track; the new forest roading and the future internal forestry trails to consider the different objectives, specifications, capital costs, maintenance legacies. From LCDC's perspective it was important at the outset of ownership to draw up a forest-wide Recreation and Access Plan (copy available here) . This is allowing them to contemplate new access in a phased and prioritised way in tandem with future forest management obligations as well as other community-oriented objectives envisaged in the woods (i.e. new social housing). It also serves as a compilation of component 'sub-projects' – any of which can be fairly swiftly worked up into a discrete and costed stand-alone project if and when a source of funding appears.

All-abilities trail – a circular pram/wheelchair accessible path around old Kirkton village ruins and new wildlife pond – 2 contractors using 5T digger, 1T dumper and whacker plate and all imported stone for formation and surfacing

As dug trail – completed just weeks ago – one contractor with one 5T excavator using borrow pits to provide all formation and surfacing (holes used to bury cleared soil, stumps and harvesting residues)

New timber haulage road to Cat1A forest road specification - constructed using one operator with 16T excavator, 8T dumper and roller – all formation and surfacing materials won on site from adjacent 'rotten rock' quarry cutting

Old drove track *(N.B. mid-winter photo so vegetation died back)* – core path (i.e. in theory: council-managed) but mid-summer bracken a problem. Some new waymarking paid for by local business group.

A future internal network of forest trails (for walkers but also compact tractor/trailer forest management) is planned – following roughed out forwarder tracks. Possible use of recycled membranes and as-dug materials to make all ability spec.

Event Feedback Summary

A total of 7 feedback forms were completed and returned (of 12 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	7	5	5	7	7	7
good		2	2			
fair						
poor						
n/a						

Do you feel that the event delivered your expectations?

<div align="center">

Yes: **7**   **No:**   **0**   **Partly: 0**

</div>

(1 supplementary comment given)

    Comprehensive & useful.

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

    Clearfell and replanting considerations.

    Updates on eco-friendly options/openings.

    LANTRA certification courses local to Skye.

    Community woodlands information/promotion.

Any other comments:

    It might be worth having a slide on the legal aspects of building and maintaining paths especially for those undergoing a Community Asset Transfer

    Very good, well organised day.

    Great opportunity to network.

    Very good!