

**Recreation Plan
for Muirshiel Country Park 2005 – 08.
Within Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park**

Prepared by C. Woodward
Regional Park Manager.

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Introduction

Muirshiel Country Park is one of two Country Parks within Clyde Muirshiel, Scotland's largest Regional Park. It lies at the head of the River Calder in Renfrewshire.

Recreation was the principal purpose for its designation in 1970 and for the Regional Park's designation in 1990. Accordingly, it is highly appropriate that this area is the subject of a detailed recreation plan. The resulting Recreation Plan for Muirshiel Country Park 2005 – 08 should be viewed as a site specific refinement and detailed statement of proposed actions derived from the Park Strategy 2005 – 08, as adopted by the Park Authority in December 2004.

Park Strategy 2005 – 08

Park Vision

The new Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority developed a vision through its Integrated Land Use Strategy, which can be summarised as:

“to provide a well managed, high quality landscape offering tourists and day visitors access to a wide range of sustainable recreational opportunities.”
(ILUS 1996)

The Charter Aims

To achieve this vision the Charter Aims adopted at the inauguration of the current Park Authority in 1996 were:

- **to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, heritage and natural history of the area**
- **to promote the enjoyment of Clyde Muirshiel by tourists and residents**
- **to promote the social and economic well-being of the people and communities within the area.**

The development and implementation of a Park Strategy is fundamental to the achievement of these Charter Aims.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles are used in the implementation of the Park's Strategic Aims. The principles should be assumed to permeate all objectives without re-statement.

- 1 Quality
- 2 Sustainability

- 3 Access
- 4 Partnership

Purpose of Recreation Plan for Muirshiel Country Park 2005–08.

The Recreational Plan will:

- Provide a description of Muirshiel country Park and its resources and assets
- State the Park Authority's Vision for the site.
- Show how the Park Authority's Charter Aims are translated into 6 Strategic Aims and a number of Objectives
- Communicate the strategic direction of the site to partners, stakeholders and staff
- Support applications to funding bodies, showing how any particular activity or project fits into the work of the Park

Park's Strategic Aims

The Park's Strategic Aims are specific statements about the purpose of the Park in six areas of activity chosen to be inclusive of all the work of the Park. Within the strategy clearly defined objectives are described for each aim and tables show the principal actions anticipated over the 3-year planning period. It is from these objectives and actions that the annual workplans, operational guidelines, action plans and the Recreation Plan for Muirshiel Country Park 2005 – 08 are directly derived.

A copy of the Park Strategy 2005-2008 is appended to this Recreational Plan.

Recreation and Access

Strategic Aim:

To manage the Park's resources to provide for a wide range of sustainable recreational activities for the enjoyment of all and to improve the health and well being of our users whilst minimising the impact on farmers, land managers, other land users and those who live and work in the area.

Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

Strategic Aim:

To conserve and enhance our wildlife and habitats including semi-natural woodlands, wetlands and moors in harmony with a thriving land-based economy while allowing for public enjoyment.

Education and Understanding

Strategic Aim:

Through our environmental education, interpretation and communication activities raise the awareness, understanding and appreciation of the special qualities of Clyde Muirshiel and the work of the Park Authority in its conservation and enhancement.

Landscape & Built Heritage

Strategic Aim:

To conserve and enhance the character of this landscape and its man-made features by integrated management and through the provision of services that help visitors understand and enjoy it.

Tourism

Strategic Aim:

To provide a wide range of quality, sustainable tourism products, facilities and services to visitors. These will be appropriate to the qualities of the Park and will bring economic benefit to the area.

Management

Strategic Aim:

To provide efficient, effective and sustainable utilisation of resources to achieve the 3 Charter Aims and the Strategic Aims of the Park Authority as stated in this Strategy.

Recreation Plan For Muirshiel Country Park 2005 – 08

Description of Muirshiel Country Park

Size of MCP 30 ha

Geomorph – valley NW to SE; road on north side of r. Calder; visitor centre in woodlands at end of road and approached from SE. Open moorland beyond the centre.

After the Ice Age, 12 000 years ago, Muirshiel would have been wooded with birch and hazel. Settlers cleared these trees around 3000 years ago and grazing by deer, cattle and sheep prevented tree growth.

Two hundred years ago there were 2 farmsteads and a few trees at Muirshiel. Muirshiel Lodge was built as a shooting lodge between 1830 and 1875. Exotic specimen species such as the Rhododendron and the Chilean pine (monkey puzzle tree) were planted. These were well looked after until the outbreak of World War 1 but after the war far fewer people worked in rural jobs and the rhododendron began to spread over much of the countryside.

Renfrew County Council became the owners in 1952 and planted commercial woodlands to provide timber for future income generation. Recreational benefits were not identified until Muirshiel was designated as a Country Park in 1970.

Visitor facilities:- 6 car parks, 2 roofed BBQ areas, archery site, picnic sites and camping area. Visitor centre with 363 day free opening, refreshments, toilets, ranger service, gift shop, seasonal events and exhibitions, Since 2003 live TV pictures of nearby nesting Hen Harriers (June & July)

Recreational Vision

To enable visitors to enjoy a wide variety of countryside recreation by providing a microcosm of Scotland's woodlands together with access to other landscapes and habitats, and supported by quality services

To achieve this long term (25 year) vision involves the interaction of all the Park's six strategic aims not just the first, which is Recreation and Access. The other five aims, together with the objectives over the plan period that are appropriate to Muirshiel Country Park are listed below. This will establish the context for recreation in Muirshiel Country Park. Recreation and access follows and is considered in greater detail. The discussion of these objectives will include relevant actions, in tables, extracted from the Park Strategy 2005-08 and extracts from the current years Ranger workplans. In both sets of tables the actions most directly relevant to Muirshiel are indicated by **bold** text.

Aims, Objectives and Actions

Aim: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

Objective 1. To contribute, safeguard and enhance biodiversity in the Park

Objective 2. To develop priorities for Woodland Management

Objective 3. To deliver priorities for Moorland Management

Aim: Education and Understanding

Objective 1. To maintain the Park's commitment to environmental education

Objective 2. To develop understanding of the countryside

Objective 3. To maintain the infrastructure of the Park that supports Education and Understanding

Objective 4. To raise the profile of the Park

Aim: Landscape and Built Heritage

Objective 1. To conserve and enhance the landscape character of the Park

Aim: Tourism

Objective 1. To provide Visitor Centres that meet the needs of tourists and visitors

Objective 2. To provide a range of services and products that meet the needs of tourists and visitors

Objective 3. To generate sustainable numbers of visitors to the Park

Objective 4. To manage the impact of visitors in the Park

Aim: Management

Objective 1. To maximise achievements by implementing appropriate management systems

Objective 2. To ensure effective and efficient management of personnel resources

Objective 3. To ensure effective and efficient management of financial resources

Aim: Recreation and Access

Objective 1. To work with Local Authority partners to implement Access Legislation

2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Quantify expectations arising from legislation on the Park: * Local Authorities * Scottish Natural Heritage * Other Stakeholders 	Review implementation of legislation in the Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Local Authorities * Scottish Natural Heritage * Other Stakeholders 	Review implementation of legislation in the Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Local Authorities * Scottish Natural Heritage * Other Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Report annually on path network : status, ownership, condition, usage etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Report annually on path network: status, ownership, condition, usage etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Report annually on path network: status, ownership, condition, usage etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Prepare Action Plan for path network with resource implications 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Seek resources to implement Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Implement and review Action Plan for path network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Implement and review Action Plan for path network
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Consult with Access Officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Consult with Access Officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Consult with Access Officers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Work with Access Forums and Access Steering Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Continue work with Access Forums and Access Steering Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Work with Access Forums and Access Steering Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Promote responsible access in accordance with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Promote responsible access in accordance with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Promote responsible access in accordance with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code

Objective 2. To deliver recreation and access opportunities

2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
* Deliver activities and events programme including Ranger Events, Land based activity courses and Special Events. Review at end of season and implement changes for future years	* Deliver activities and events programme including Ranger Events, Land and Water based activities and Special Events	* Deliver activities and events programme including Ranger Events, Land and Water based activities and Special Events
* Maintain the infrastructure of paths, car parks, visitor areas, picnic tables, playgrounds, campsites etc. within the Park for recreation and access	* Maintain the infrastructure within the Park for recreation and access	* Maintain the infrastructure within the Park for recreation and access
* Ensure recreation and access issues are consulted on using Park Consultative Forum	* Continue consultation on recreation and access	* Continue consultation on recreation and access
* Seek resources and implement access elements of agreed Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme programme (year 2 of 5)	* Year 3 of 5	* Year 4 of 5
* Be responsive to current lifestyle trends including health and well being when delivering activities and events programme		
* Maintain and renew elements of equip for delivery of recreation to appropriate standards	* Maintain and renew equip to appropriate standards	* Maintain and renew to appropriate standards

These strategic actions are translated into Ranger and Management workplans

Conclusion

Specifically, to achieve the recreational vision in the next 25 years, we will in the next 3 years:-

- Develop the “microcosm of Scotland’s Woodlands” theme.
- Promote the Muirshiel woodlands for formal and informal recreation.
- Promote Muirshiel as a “gateway” to the hills for walking and cycling.
- Encourage the use of the outlying car parks to alleviate congestion at peak times.
- Provide a welcome and interpretation in the Country Park and at the visitor centre.
- Provide a range of visitor facilities.
- Ensure a safe, healthy and monitored site.