Our Great Outdoors

The Outdoor Recreation Action Plan For Northern Ireland
Our Great Outdoors

“"A culture of dynamic, sustainable outdoor recreation in Northern Ireland.”"
Ministerial Forewords

I welcome this Outdoor Recreation Action Plan for the North of Ireland which has the potential to provide many and varied opportunities for people to participate in sport and recreation in the natural environment. Being outside and active in areas of green space has been shown to provide great benefits to individuals’ health and mental wellbeing. In a time when people are under greater pressures and stresses from their everyday lives it is essential that they have opportunities to get out and relax, reinvigorate and re-energise.

This Action Plan highlights the importance of making the outdoors accessible to everyone and the opportunities that there are to participate, not only in rural areas but also in the urban fringes. This Action Plan shows how it can help deliver the targets within ‘Sport Matters’ to increase levels of participation.

I am encouraged by the commitment in this Action Plan to put in place effective grant application and funding opportunities to reach all sectors. This will provide a tremendous opportunity to deliver on issues associated with social exclusion, rural and urban deprivation and community cohesion.

We now need to build on the all-Ireland opportunities that exist. This Action Plan is the result of a joint approach between a range of Government Departments and Agencies which highlights the cross-cutting nature of outdoor recreation. Partnership working ensures efficiencies and more effective delivery that can meet a range of needs, and is therefore to be welcomed.

I endorse this Action Plan and encourage all to work in partnership for its successful delivery.

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Northern Ireland’s rich natural environment, landscapes and built heritage provide a wealth of opportunities for everyone to enjoy when being outdoors.

From the geology of our mountain peaks, the red squirrels in our woodlands and marine life in our rock pools, the outstanding landscapes in our countryside, to the roots of our ancestors in our built heritage, there is much to explore, to find and to cherish.

To conserve natural and built heritage and the wonderful landscapes within Northern Ireland it is important for each of us to feel a sense of ownership and connection with them. This Plan articulates a vision to provide improved recreational opportunities for engagement with our environment, and will work with our partners to actively involve communities and businesses in protecting our natural and historic places for the enjoyment and benefit of everyone.

It gives me great pleasure to support and commend this Outdoor Recreation Action Plan.

Explore... Enjoy... Cherish.

Mark H Durkan MLA
Minister of the Environment
I welcome the Outdoor Recreation Action Plan for Northern Ireland which will provide support and encourage development for the outdoor activity tourism sector, which is continuing to grow and contribute to the local economy.

Northern Ireland has extensive natural resources and wonderful landscapes which have the potential to be fully maximised through our great outdoor activities.

The Northern Ireland Tourism Board (NITB) aims to deliver quality, authentic visitor experiences, and outdoor recreation products appeal to the key visitor market segments identified by NITB; ‘young and lively’, ‘time together’, ‘mature cosmopolitans’, and ‘family fun’. They also cross at least two of NITB’s experience pillars; ‘Unique Outdoors’ and ‘Coasts and Lakes’.

To achieve further tourism growth in this sector it is important that quality information is available to visitors to make them aware of how they can make the most of our wonderful outdoor activities be it as a participant or spectator.

The action plan highlights the development of key hubs for outdoor recreation activity which will provide multi-activity offerings and appeal to several target visitor segments. This should help encourage visitors to have quality memorable experiences and also provide an opportunity for an increase in spend in the local economy.

I am confident that this plan will not only help deliver authentic tourism experiences but it will also showcase our iconic outdoor landscapes.

Arlene Foster MLA
Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Northern Ireland has a combination of extremely varied land and seascapes that have beautiful scenery within a very small geographical area. Mountains, moorlands, winding river valleys, green rolling countryside, extensive inland waterways, a spectacular coastline, woodlands, and forests all make up the Northern Ireland environment. However, not all of our natural environments are rural; the towns and cities in Northern Ireland tend to be relatively small and there is often local access to hills, forests and parks that can make the outdoors a place that everyone in society can use.

Our outdoor environment therefore provides a resource that has tremendous potential for supporting the delivery of long-term social and economic transformation. The promotion of equality and the need to tackle poverty and social exclusion are fundamental aspects of this Action Plan. Access to green space and opportunities for enjoying the outdoors must be improved for all sections of the community, especially those that live in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas or who do not have access to services.

This Action Plan highlights that promoting healthy and active lifestyles for local people from any background or identity can effectively deliver on these priorities. Access to green space has been recognised across the world to be very important for people’s health and especially mental wellbeing. Helping people to be active outdoors in groups or as individuals has proven potential to deliver on the issues associated with social exclusion, rural and urban deprivation and community cohesion.

Our natural environment combined with the facilities and new developments (such as the world class mountain bike trails developed in the Mourne) has the ability to attract visitors, promote economic equality and development through activity tourism, and create employment opportunities in various related sectors.

However, for our natural environment to continue to do this the landscapes and ecosystems within them must be protected and looked after so that such usage can be enjoyed by future generations for years to come. Ensuring that any developments are sustainable and sensitive to the environment is a critical element of this Action Plan.

This new seven-year Action Plan to 2020 to continue to develop outdoor recreation was coordinated by a Steering Group comprising a range of Government organisations, Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (ORN) (formerly the Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN)) and land owning representatives. This coordinated approach demonstrates a strong commitment to realise the value of the outdoors.

It provides key recommendations for actions and challenges that need to be addressed to make Northern Ireland a place where outdoor recreation can deliver:

- Healthy active lifestyles for local people from all communities;
- Economic growth through encouraging visitors to come and enjoy the outdoors; and
- Protection of landscapes and ecosystems for future generations.

The development of this Action Plan is a result of an extensive examination of the issues and a wide consultation with interested groups and individuals who contributed to the process in a range of meetings and written responses. A list of those organisations that responded to the consultation can be found in Appendix 2.

The Vision

The vision for the Outdoor Recreation Action Plan is: “a culture of dynamic, sustainable outdoor recreation in Northern Ireland”

To achieve this vision the aim is for Northern Ireland to be a place where:

- There are increasing opportunities and improved access and infrastructure for sustained and increased participation for everyone in a broad range of outdoor recreation activities;
- There are accompanying benefits to local communities, especially those who are socially excluded in terms of health, social inclusion, cohesion, equality, and economic development; and
- People enjoy the outdoors and show a high degree of responsibility for themselves, towards others and towards the environment they are using, and play their part in maintaining, supporting and enhancing our environment and heritage.
**Why have an Outdoor Recreation Action Plan?**

A love for the natural environment, its special landscapes, secret places, fantastic coastlines, and the wildlife that inhabits these areas is a strong part of the fabric and culture of many people in Northern Ireland. However, the opportunities to benefit from the resources that are offered by the natural environment are not necessarily accessible to all in equal measure. Despite our fantastic natural resources, Northern Ireland has relatively limited infrastructure to make this resource accessible and the legislative framework that provides for opportunities for outdoor recreation has been revised and superseded in most other European countries including Great Britain, but this has not yet happened in Northern Ireland.

It is necessary for the Government, businesses and voluntary organisations to work together to achieve greater accessibility to the outdoors in a sustainable and responsible manner in order to realise its full potential. The Outdoor Recreation Action Plan will be the key driver to make this happen.

Outdoor recreation for relaxation and enjoyment brings a range of significant benefits to society, communities and to individuals and also for the protection of the environment.

These benefits include:

**Health and wellbeing, social inclusion and cohesion, as well as enjoyment for everyone**

An accessible environment is an important resource for local people to enhance their quality of life by enjoying the outdoors. There is clear evidence highlighting the very strong connection between health and green spaces, including research undertaken by the Countryside Recreation Network in 2005. ORNI research in 2008 and 2010 into trends in outdoor sports¹, walking, cycling, and horse riding² has also shown that there has been a significant growth in demand for outdoor recreation activities, especially those that are undertaken independently, rather than through an organised club or body.

The costs associated with using the outdoors can be relatively low and it is a resource that can often be free to the end user and so is available to all sections of society and not just to those with the financial means to participate. Many outdoor recreation activities develop opportunities for people to work together in a non-competitive and non-threatening way thereby supporting community cohesion and development.

**Economic equality, benefit and sustainability**

The spectacular landscapes, seascapes and heritage of Northern Ireland are a vital tourism product. There has been a very significant growth in the adventure and activity tourism sector – with only a handful of commercial providers in 1998 and now well in excess of 100 businesses operating across Northern Ireland. The growing number of retailers and outlet stores selling outdoor equipment also reflects the growth in this sector. There is increasing recognition in other parts of the UK and Europe of the economic benefits that outdoor recreation can bring. Studies in Wales³ and Scotland⁴ have demonstrated the wider economic value of the sector for not only activity providers but also accommodation providers, cafés, restaurants, pubs and bars. Emerging research from the Sports Institute Research Centre in Sheffield Hallam University has highlighted that outdoor recreation provides over 3500 full-time equivalent jobs across Northern Ireland.

**Education about the environment, self and others**

There is a long history of the Education and Library Boards providing high quality educational courses for their own schools and youth groups through the use of the outdoors. In recent years there has been matched by a significant growth in the number of pupils opting to do outdoor activities as part of the GCSE PE curriculum. Outdoor environments have also been extensively used for team development in the corporate sector. The development and value of volunteering is now a strong feature of the work undertaken by organisations such as the National Trust, ORNI and Mourne Heritage Trust bringing with it a wide range of benefits to the individuals and organisations involved.

**Connection with and protection of the environment and heritage**

Outdoor enthusiasts feel a strong connection with wild landscapes and coastlines and it is in the interests of the users themselves, land managers and those who organise activities to work in partnership with conservation bodies to ensure that these areas are protected and their special qualities maintained. Engaging people and especially young people with the natural environment is crucial so that they feel a strong sense of ownership of the environment and a desire to look after “their patch” is engendered. Exclusion from nature leads to a lack of care and so it is essential that people are given opportunities to experience nature and to develop a love for it.

Outdoor recreation therefore has a very broad range of benefits and spans many social, economic and environmental fields, as Diagram 1 (page 10) highlights. The importance of joint working between the organisations that recognise these benefits of outdoor recreation is critical, and the inter-relationships between users, agencies, land owners/managers and providers is fundamental for success in the delivery of this Plan.

**Case Study 1:**

**Developments of a young rock climber from Ballywalter, Co. Down**

Thirteen year old Carson has been climbing since he was nine years old. He started in a small climbing wall based at the Gannaway Activity Centre on the Ards peninsula on a school’s programme, supported by the Youth Development Officer from Mountaineering Ireland, the National Governing Body for Climbing and Mountaineering. The programme is funded by Sport Northern Ireland (Sport NI).

Carson already has some very significant accomplishments for someone his age, including participating at competitions on a regional, national and European level, and participating in training camps and trips in France and Spain.

He has already experienced some of the wonderful rock climbing Ireland has to offer, with two separate trips to Glendalough, Co. Wicklow and The Burren, Co. Clare. He has succeeded climbing the first ascent of a new rock route in the Mournes; this is often the peak of a rock climbing career but Carson has already achieved it at the age of 13.

Carson, along with his climbing peers involved in the Mountaineering Ireland Youth Development Programme, have become a real inspiration, not only to some of the younger climbers in the programme, but also to the coaches, leaders and other experienced rock climbers.
The Breadth of Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor Recreation

- Social Inclusion and Equality
- Education and Engagement
- Sport and Recreation
- Volunteering and Community Cohesion
- Environmental Protection and Promotion
- Rural Development
- Planning
- Land and Water Management
- Economy and Tourism
- Health and Wellbeing

Background

Northern Ireland’s first Countryside Recreation Strategy was developed by the Environment and Heritage Service of the Department of Environment (now the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)) and the Sports Council of Northern Ireland (now Sport NI) in 1998.

The vision of the Strategy was “to develop and sustain a vibrant countryside recreation culture in which responsible and well informed people enjoy high quality, sustainable and appropriate activities in an accessible, well managed yet challenging environment; where landowners and managers are welcoming and there are accompanying benefits to local communities both in social and economic terms.”

There were three principles underpinning this vision:
1. Mutual respect between all interested parties;
2. Sustainable access; and
3. Quality of the experience

One of the main outcomes from the Strategy was the creation of a network of key stakeholders through CAAN and an associated company limited by guarantee which was to deliver the products and the infrastructure required for the implementation of the Strategy.

In 2010 CAAN rebranded as ORNi and over the past 13 years it has been extremely successful in developing outdoor recreation across Northern Ireland. Through its work the prominence of outdoor recreation has significantly increased but it has been recognised that more continues to need to be done. ORNi is not just recognised for the quality and quantity of work that has been undertaken within Northern Ireland, but is increasingly highlighted within the UK and abroad as an exemplar organisation that has driven significant developments in outdoor recreation.

The scale of these developments is exemplified by just some of the more significant ones highlighted below:
- ORNi has secured over £8 million in additional funding over the past 10 years for outdoor recreation projects and development;
- ORNi has completed over 40 significant development projects including the first canoe trails in the UK, eco-trails, horse riding trails, way-marked ways, and cycle and mountain bike trails;
- ORNi has undertaken 27 significant pieces of research into the benefits, management and strategy for outdoor recreation either by activity or location;
- Training has been provided to over 3000 participants;
- Seven new websites to provide key information have been created; and
- Over £30 million worth of PR through articles, TV and radio on outdoor recreation has been achieved.

The work done by ORNi was instrumental in the success of the 1998 Strategy and sets the standard for achievement through this Outdoor Recreation Action Plan.

In March 2009, Sport NI and the NIEA commissioned an independent review of this Strategy. The review concluded that the majority of the overall ‘agendas’ and actions set out in the Countryside Recreation Strategy and subsequent Operational Plans for CAAN had been achieved and indeed exceeded. It concluded that, given changing priorities and responsibilities, there now needed to be an agreed wider framework for action linking public health, personal wellbeing and economic agendas, tied-in with the role for Local Government with the anticipated reform of that sector.

The key recommendation emanating from that review was that Government should prepare a new Outdoor Recreation Strategy for Northern Ireland.
Process of Developing the Outdoor Recreation Action Plan

Following discussions between Government Departments it was agreed that the logical way forward would be to develop an Outdoor Recreation Action Plan that feeds into Sport Matters: the Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation, 2009–19. Targets for increased participation, sustainable access and improved infrastructure have already provided the focus for a wide range of bodies to work together. Sport Matters has been adopted by the Executive and is a cross-departmental Strategy with the necessary governance and monitoring arrangements already established.

Associating the Outdoor Recreation Action Plan with Sport Matters offers the potential to deliver on a range of other Government strategies and policies including:

- Our Passion, Our Place, NIEA Strategic Priorities 2012–2022;
- A Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020;
- A Fitter Future for All – Framework for Preventing and Addressing Overweight and Obesity in Northern Ireland 2012–2022;
- Shaping our Future, The Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025;
- Everyone’s Involved, The Sustainable Development Strategy;
- The Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007–2013;
- The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy – People and Place;
- The Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014–20; and

Early in the discussions amongst the stakeholders it was agreed that this Action Plan had to be backed up by clear targets and actions to be undertaken.

The development of this Action Plan was commissioned by Sport NI and NIEA with support from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) Inland Waterways Branch. ORNI was also critically involved throughout the process.

“Opportunities for enjoying the outdoors must be improved for all sections of the community.”
Consultation Process

October 2011
Preparation of nine Issues Papers by Outplan and G and L Hughes
Visit: www.outdoorrecreationni.com

Based on issues identified, Sport NI, NIEA, DCAL and NITB, issued a Consultation Document in December 2011. This was followed by an extensive round of consultations with various stakeholders including eight public meetings throughout 2012.

Large number of responses (over 100) considered in detail by Sport NI and NIEA with Outplan and G and L Hughes, and the Draft Action Plan was produced in April 2012.

Following consultation with key partners on the Draft Action Plan by Sport NI, NIEA, DCAL and NITB a final draft was issued in September 2012 for a statutory consultation process.

The statutory consultation responses were analysed and incorporated into the final plan which was signed off by the Steering Group in May 2013.

Sport NI, in partnership with NIEA, DCAL and NITB, commissioned a contractor to prepare a series of nine papers to identify the primary issues surrounding outdoor recreation. The topics identified were:
1. Healthy Lifestyles;
2. Widening Participation;
3. Environmental Awareness, Engagement and Sustainability (supporting conservation through outdoor recreation), Incorporating Education;
4. Governance and Partnership Working (integrated outdoor recreation management), Incorporating Access;
5. Promotion and Raising Awareness;
6. Volunteering and Community Engagement/Participation;
7. Activity Tourism and Entrepreneurship (rural and economic development);
8. Facilities; and

These Issues Papers provide valuable background information, identifying more than 189 issues that could be addressed to develop outdoor recreation in Northern Ireland.

A number of key and recurring themes emerged from the Issues Papers:
• A need to create the appropriate structures for the implementation of a plan and the importance of partnerships and structures for developing, managing and advocating a coordinated approach to outdoor recreation;
• A need for a review and development of legislation, policy and responsibilities;
• The provision of facilities and infrastructure that meets the needs of those who wish to take part to ensure that current and future participation is sustainable;
• The critical issue of investment; whether that is time, energy or resources;
• The importance of communication, marketing and promotion; and
• The importance of research, monitoring and evaluation to provide a strong evidence base to provide the rationale for the development and management of activities and facilities.

Following the preparation of the Issues Papers, the Steering Group developed a wide ranging consultation programme to examine the key themes and issues to ensure that the development of outdoor recreation meets the needs of land owners, users, statutory authorities, governing bodies, and activity providers. The consultation took a number of forms:
• Web-based survey for individuals and/or organisations;
• Meetings with Focus Groups such as Countryside Officers, activity providers, governing bodies, etc.; and
• A series of regional open meetings for interested parties to hear first-hand about the proposed Action Plan and feed in their views on the emerging issues.

The consultation exercise generated widespread support for the preparation of this Action Plan and the key recommendations and actions to move forward are based on the extensive responses provided. The detailed examination of the responses received has led to 33 key recommendations being identified that, if implemented, will help to address the opportunities, benefits, barriers, and issues and enable the realisation of the vision.
Our Great Outdoors

Key Themes

The main themes to emerge from the Issues Papers and confirmed by the consultation process are outlined below and the actions in this Action Plan highlight which theme and issues they will address:

Theme 1: Structures and Partnerships
The opportunity to have a clear voice for the importance of outdoor recreation at both a local and national level was articulated on numerous occasions throughout the consultation. The consultation events highlighted the value people have placed on being able to come together and discuss issues.

There is a great range of organisations and agencies that have an interest in outdoor recreation and consequently there is a risk of independent working, duplication of effort and neglecting of actions as a consequence of a lack of a joined up approach. While there are some very good examples of coordination, there are further opportunities to create stronger mechanisms to help achieve the vision and a more joined up approach.

Theme 2: Legislation, Policy and Responsibilities
The issue of the differences in and inadequacy of access legislation in Northern Ireland compared to the rest of the UK and Europe was very extensively highlighted in both the Issues Papers and through the vast majority of the responses to the consultation. This is clearly the biggest issue that recreational users feel that they face in Northern Ireland. The consultation also brought up a very high level of response on the importance of policy on access to public land and how various public bodies deal with liability issues. The complex arrangements and responsibilities for policy and provision of outdoor recreation were also highlighted across a number of the Issues Papers.

Theme 3: Making the Outdoors More Accessible
The growth in demand for outdoor recreation which is being experienced has to be managed. There is a need to ensure that the full potential of taking part can be realised in a way that does not compromise the habitats and ecosystems on which the experience relies. Given the current access legislation in Northern Ireland and the lack of rights of way and path networks, not all communities have easy access to the natural environment for recreation. It is essential that creating opportunities for outdoor recreation is focused on areas of high social need and where access to services is limited.

Theme 4: Investment of Time, Energy and Resources
As public funding is likely to continue to decline in future years, the importance of innovation, sustainability, volunteering, and buy-in from users and private sector businesses will become increasingly important. It is also critical that any resource investment is used to best effect to develop needed facilities, infrastructure and opportunities.

Theme 5: Communication, Marketing and Promotion
With good evidence of the growth in interest and participation in outdoor recreation there is a need to ensure that participants and visitors know where they can go, how to behave responsibly and what opportunities exist.

Theme 6: Research and Monitoring
Although not a “hot topic” as part of the consultation, it is clear from the Issues Papers that Northern Ireland lags behind the rest of the UK and other parts of Europe in having a needs and evidence base to underpin investment decisions in outdoor recreation. With scarce resources it is necessary to answer the question “what works and why?”

“Outdoor recreation for relaxation and enjoyment brings a range of significant benefits to society.”
### Theme 1: Structures and Partnerships

This key series of actions relates to the creation or continued use of a number of committee and networking structures. These will allow for the proper consideration of and action on matters highlighted both in the Issues Papers and affirmed through the consultation process. The table below and on the following pages highlight the relationships between these structures.

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<th>Action</th>
<th>Details/Outcomes</th>
<th>Lead Body and Partners</th>
<th>Success Indicator</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Action Number: 1A</strong></td>
<td>Create a Strategic Outdoor Recreation Group to ensure overall delivery of the Plan.</td>
<td>The Strategic Outdoor Recreation Group will report to the Sport Matters Implementation Groups for Places and Participation, thereby ensuring accountability for the delivery of the actions. The Group will enable and support development of sustainable outdoor recreation where practicable and appropriate and will also have a responsibility to: • Ensure that the key actions are delivered within anticipated timeframes by the relevant lead body; • Address any strategic issues identified by Departments, Local Authorities or other national organisations; and • Address relevant matters raised by the proposed National Outdoor Recreation Forum (referred to below). This Group will comprise Agencies, Government Departments and Local Authorities with responsibility for outdoor recreation and must have an acknowledged role in agreeing a joined-up approach to policy on access, inputting to/advising on proposed legislation, requesting consideration of legislative changes especially in the area of access and liability, and in considering the appropriate role for and ongoing responsibilities of Local Authorities post the review of public administration. The Group may form specific and time-limited Working Groups as required. Early consideration should be given to: • Cross-border access issues and an all-Ireland approach to development of activities where appropriate; • Ways to focus opportunities on areas of highest need; • Ways to work with the health sector; and • Potential to improve the economy. A clear “Terms of Reference” for the role and membership of the Group will be drawn up and agreed. The necessary administrative support mechanisms will be provided via the lead body.</td>
<td>Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association (CLOA) • DCAL • Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) • Department for Education (DE) • Department for Social Development (DSD) • DOE • Forest Service Northern Ireland (FSNI) • Loughs Agency • NIEA • NI Water • Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) • ORNI • Public Health Agency (PHA) • Sport NI • Waterways Ireland By 2014 to create a Strategic Group to facilitate the monitoring and implementation of this Action Plan.</td>
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<td><strong>Action Number: 1B</strong></td>
<td>Establish a ‘National Outdoor Recreation Forum’ to address strategic issues, solutions and actions. This Forum will sit outside Government and will provide a clear and joined up voice for dealing with issues that cannot be resolved at a local level. Membership will be comprised from representatives of the Local Outdoor Recreation Forums (1C) and national representative organisations including but not limited to: • National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) for Outdoor Sports; • Landscape management bodies; • Education centres and organisations including the education for Sustainable Development Forum; • The Activity Tourism Forum; • Landowner representatives i.e. Ulster Farmers Union and the Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers Association; • The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme; • Sustrans; • National Trust; • Rural Community Network; and • Local Authorities Countryside Officers. A clear “Terms of Reference” for the role and membership of the Forum will be drawn up and agreed. A Secretariat and professional advisory service for the Forum could be provided by ORNI and supported by Sport NI.</td>
<td>• Independent Chair • The National Forum to be supported by Sport NI • ORNI Secretariat By 2014 to create a National Forum that can provide a unified voice and address strategic issues for the development of outdoor recreation.</td>
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<td><strong>Action Number: 1C</strong></td>
<td>Create a network of ‘Local Outdoor Recreation Forums’. These will identify local issues, potential solutions and actions. Unresolved or ‘common’ issues should be referred to the National Forum. The involvement of Local Authority representatives (Access Officers, Biodiversity Officers and/or Sports Development Officers as required) is seen to be important for these Forums to be effective. Forum membership is likely to be comprised of activity tourism providers, education staff, outdoor sports clubs representatives and users, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or land management bodies and land owners as required. As many of the key areas that outdoor recreation takes place in are geographically very different in their size, type of landscape and community make up, it is recognised that a “one size fits all approach” to the operation of the Local Forums would be inappropriate. Therefore each Forum may choose to operate in a slightly different manner to others. However, appropriate “Terms of Reference” for the role and membership of each Forum will be drawn up and agreed locally. Appendix 3 lists the current Forums.</td>
<td>• Chairs selected locally • Secretariat ‘in house’ or from Local Authorities • Supported by Sport NI/NIEA By 2015 to have a minimum of seven local outdoor recreation Forums established and operational to deal with local issues.</td>
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Case Study 2: The Development of the Mournes Outdoor Recreation Forum

On 2 July 2009, a number of partners who have an interest in outdoor recreation solely met in Newcastle with the Mourne Heritage Trust (MHT) to seek to develop better working relationships between the Trust, the councils and the enthusiasts and providers of outdoor recreation in the Mournes. This led to the establishment, in November of that year, of a new Outdoor Recreation Forum for the area. The focus of the Forum was to ensure that there is a suitable flow of information between the users, activity providers, the statutory agencies and Mourne Heritage Trust.

Over the past four years the Forum has met twice per year to look at the key issues with respect to outdoor recreation in the area. This has led to a number of pieces of work being developed; not least of which was the strategic path review undertaken by Trails Wales on behalf of MHT which was funded by NIEA and Sport NI in 2012. The path review has highlighted the trails and paths both in the uplands and lower reaches of the Mournes in terms of:

- Current route condition;
- Current and anticipated future recreation demand;
- Environmental and aesthetic impact;
- Access demands; and
- Visitor services.

The Forum has dealt with a range of local issues including best practice for upland path works, events, wild camping issues, the 2012 wildfires, and associated issues. Whilst there is not always agreement at the Forum meetings, they are well attended and supported by the local providers and users and have ensured that there is better communication between local clubs, activity providers and agencies.
Case Study 3: The Development of the Activity Tourism Forum

The Activity Tourism Forum (ATF) was formed in Northern Ireland in May 2006. The catalyst for the formation was the NITB Strategic Framework for Action 2004-2007 which identified activity tourism as one of its ‘Winning Themes’ to generate competitive advantage in Northern Ireland.

ORNI was contracted by NITB to assist in the delivery of the ‘Activity Tourism - Winning Theme’. Following consultation with a range of private sector activity providers it was agreed that the ATF should be established with meetings held twice a year.

The ATF was established to create stronger links between activity tourism providers and NITB marketing and market development activities to:

- Allow NITB to understand any gaps in commercial skills and facilitate training; and
- To promote the sharing of information and best practice within the industry.

ORNI continue to act as Secretariat for the ATF which consistently attracts between 30-40 private sector businesses and is chaired by a private sector activity provider rotating every two years. The ATF also has an annually elected working group that decides the agenda of the ATF meetings and also provides detailed input to NITB and ORNI on areas such as marketing campaigns, training programmes, etc.

The ATF faced initial challenges such as unwillingness of private sector activity providers to work collaboratively with ‘rival’ businesses. Private sector operators could also become frustrated with the speed of operation of public sector bodies.

Whilst these issues still exist they have been significantly reduced following production of tangible outputs including:

- Best practice learning journeys to Lake District, North Wales and Killarney;
- Best practice seminars; and
- Marketing campaigns such as Northern Ireland Adventureland Weekend and incorporation of the Adventuremark accreditation scheme.

Moving forward it is important that the ATF continues to adapt to changing trends not only within the activity sector but also within the wider tourism industry.

The Reporting and Monitoring Structures for the Plan

This Action Plan was developed under the auspices of Sport Matters. The Strategic Group will be required to report to the Sport Matters Implementation Groups on the work being undertaken in the Plan. However, through the consultation there was a clear call for a more effective joint voice for outdoor recreation. The National Forum will be made up of non-governmental organisations and will have the freedom to be an advocate for outdoor recreation and can have direct access to Government. The National Forum will also hold the Strategic Group to account for the actions within this Plan being delivered.
Theme 2: Legislation, Policy and Responsibility

The areas of policy and legislation featured heavily in the Issues Papers prepared for this Action Plan and also had the highest response rate of any topic in terms of the consultation document. It is clear that a broad body of opinion thinks that changes are fundamentally necessary for progress to be made. The actions that follow are intended to address such matters but will require determination and political support at a national level.

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<td>2A</td>
<td>To develop policies and to support appropriate legislative priorities, changes and developments to optimise the benefits and opportunities for outdoor recreation.</td>
<td>Strategic Group</td>
<td>2015 to have provided clear information on the social, health, economic and environmental benefits of outdoor recreation, in an agreed and coordinated manner.</td>
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| 2B | To provide clear information on the social, health, economic and environmental benefits of outdoor recreation, in an agreed and coordinated manner. | Strategic Group | 2016 to have provided clear information on the social, health, economic and environmental benefits of outdoor recreation, in an agreed and coordinated manner.  
One of the aims of this process is to provide a strong evidence base for giving outdoor recreation greater visibility within the Programme for Government. |
| 2C | Ensure that full account is taken of outdoor recreation in any Management Plan for each AONB. | AONB Management Plans | By 2020 to have Outdoor Recreation embedded into all AONB Management Plans. |
| 2D | Embed the value of outdoor learning in providing the steps towards lifelong, healthy and active lifestyles and care for the environment. | DE, Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), Colleges Education for Sustainable Development Forum, Wardens Association, Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, LNT, Sport NI | By 2015 to have established baseline figures for the number of schools involved in outdoor learning projects. By 2016 to have ‘Outdoor Learning’ established and embedded into Teacher Training Programmes. |

The Strategic Group (as in 1A) will not only concern itself with the implementation of the plan but will also actively seek to develop joined up policy amongst statutory bodies that support outdoor recreation.

Greater clarity is required on what each public body is responsible for and how these responsibilities are implemented.

The Strategic Group needs to lead the thinking and guide the policy makers on the post review of public administration responsibilities.

A range of legislative developments need to have further consideration including:

- Statutory access to all appropriate public land;
- Developments of public rights of way and permissive paths;
- Statutory arrangements for access and management of outdoor recreation within protected landscapes, especially the AONB’s;
- Planning policy - with respect to the role of both Area Plans and the associated Planning Application process;
- Access to inland waterways; and
- Coastal access.

As AONB Management Plans are developed or revised, the need to provide guidance for the development of local Action Plans for outdoor recreation in these areas was also highlighted through the consultation.

This also requires an Officer or an organisation who can lead on this aspect within each of the AONB’s.

It is noted that the development of Management Plans for AONB’s is not a statutory requirement and the Strategic Group (1A) should look into the options for developing legislation to give greater scope for outdoor recreation within Management Plans within the existing designated areas.
Theme 3: Making the Outdoors More Accessible

This requirement received considerable coverage in the Issues Papers. Furthermore the consultation process showed that there is a strong desire for more facilities and equality of access to them. The need to develop concept plans and core path networks also featured highly in responses to the Consultation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Number</th>
<th>Details/Outcomes</th>
<th>Lead Body and Partners</th>
<th>Success Indicator</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3A</td>
<td>Audit current hubs for outdoor recreation and identify geographical gaps and mechanisms to develop access and opportunities.</td>
<td>NIEA, Sport NI, CLOA, ORNI, Local Authorities</td>
<td>By 2014 to have developed a framework for the creation of Master Plans. By 2016 to have created a suite of a minimum of eight recreational Master Plans across Northern Ireland for key sites/areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3B</td>
<td>Develop and provide information and guidance tools for Local Authorities and land managers on how to manage and develop recreation.</td>
<td>CLOA, Sport NI, NIEA, ORNI, Local Authorities</td>
<td>By 2017 to have produced guidance on standards for a range of outdoor recreation facilities including: trail development; management and maintenance of facilities; visitor monitoring and management; signage; and safety and risk management in the outdoors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3C</td>
<td>Develop a systematic toolkit for community path and the national cycle network development.</td>
<td>Joint approach to be taken between Local Authorities, Central Government Departments and voluntary sector bodies to develop a toolkit that highlights the path network needs in conjunction with the national cycle network, the existing opportunities and the associated costs and benefits of development. To establish a trial for this toolkit (with funding package) for two target areas.</td>
<td>DOE, DOE Planning, PHA, Sustrans, ORNI, Local Authorities, Voluntary sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3D</td>
<td>Identify special areas of significance for outdoor sport.</td>
<td>Through utilisation of the existing ORNI research on trends in outdoor sports and liaison with governing bodies and other relevant organisations to identify the critical sites that are used for specific outdoor sports. This will also identify gaps in site and club provision. An audit of angling is being undertaken by Sport NI and NITB as there has been historically limited data on the scale and governance arrangements for angling.</td>
<td>Sport NI, DCAL, Local Authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3E</td>
<td>Signposting and supporting training and skill development.</td>
<td>The &quot;Trends in Outdoor Sports&quot; research undertaken by ORNI in 2008 and 2010 had highlighted a significant growth in participation in outdoor recreation and this has been verified by the Sport and Physical Activity Survey (SAPAS) in 2012. However, much of this activity is unaligned to clubs or NGBs. Participants who use the outdoors need to have a certain level of competence in the activities that they do in order to manage the risks that are inherent in outdoor recreation (especially adventure activities). Therefore the provision of increased opportunities for training in skill development is important. The promotion and provision of information on training opportunities should be incorporated into marketing information. The role of Tollymore National Outdoor Centre is important in maximising the delivery of training and development in outdoor recreation in Northern Ireland.</td>
<td>Sport NI, NGBs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Action Details/Outcomes

**Provide clearer information of what people can do near to where they live.**

- Develop websites and downloadable information (including Apps and social media) and ensure websites are connected to show:
  - Where you can go and what there is to do on a local basis - and not necessarily as a tourism product;
  - Information on accessibility (disabled toilets, paths for buggies, wheelchairs and people with limited mobility, how to get there, etc.);
  - Events; and
  - Local clubs and providers.

This information needs to highlight the health benefits of outdoor recreation.

**Success Indicator**

- ORNI
- Local Authorities

By 2014 to have a fully functional web portal and other information that provides key information on opportunities to participate at a local level.

### Action Details/Outcomes

**Provide diversity and social inclusion training for activity providers, clubs and recreational land managers.**

ORNI in partnership with Disability Sports Northern Ireland (DSNI) and Sport NI has designed and been delivering training to encourage diversity through innovative approaches and including an understanding of the motivations and aspirations of different user groups.

Further discussion between providers and clubs, etc. on how diversity can be embedded.

**Success Indicator**

- ORNI
- DSNI
- Sport NI

By 2014 to have a range of toolkits for the implementation of the recommendations from the “Barriers to Participation” study 2008.

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“Engaging people and especially young people with the natural environment is crucial.”
Case Study 4: Social paddling

The five canoe trails in Northern Ireland which were developed between 2005-2009, were the first of their kind in the UK and Ireland and were seen as a significant asset for outdoor recreation. However, the Canoe Association of Northern Ireland (CANI) recognised that, while they were being used in an ad hoc manner by individuals and clubs, there was no coordinated approach to maximise the use of the canoe trails and increase participation.

In 2009 CANI employed a Club Development Officer and one of their key tasks was to develop a series of recreational paddles to engage clubs and individuals to make more use of the trails.

The trips are kept to around 10 kilometres so that they are inclusive for all and they are open to families, clubs and paddlers of all ages and abilities. By nature the events are extremely sociable and this has been a very important factor in developing the family friendly nature of the events. On the trips there has been just about every type of craft including inflatables; sit on tops; general purpose kayaks; sea kayaks; white water kayaks; all styles of open canoes; and even some currachs.

Over the three years there has been a very significant increase in the number of people attending these paddles and over 1700 participants have been on trips. The recreational paddles have now become a very effective mechanism for the different canoe clubs to interact with each other and it has also been a springboard for newcomers to the sport to link to clubs in their area. As a result the club membership has grown and is continuing to grow rapidly.

A Recreational Steering Group has been established and they meet quarterly to plan the events and now organise a recreational paddle trip outside of Northern Ireland each summer.

Initially CANI staff organised and ran these events centrally, but in 2013 the clubs began organising all of the events and trips themselves.

Recreational Paddle on the Lough Erne Canoe Trail

Theme 4: Investment of Time, Energy and Resources

Funding is crucial for the development and maintenance of infrastructure, for the promotion of opportunities and to lever other funds. It was a key issue which emerged from the consultation. The role and importance of volunteers in outdoor recreation provision and management should never be underestimated. There is widespread understanding of the need to mobilise and properly utilise this valuable resource.

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<tr>
<th>Action Number</th>
<th>Details/Outcomes</th>
<th>Lead Body and Partners</th>
<th>Success Indicator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4A</td>
<td>Investigate, develop and implement appropriate opportunities for funding that supports sustainable outdoor recreation in the natural environment.</td>
<td>• DARD • DOE • DETI • PHA • NIEA • NITB • Sport NI • FSNi • Local Authorities</td>
<td>By 2016 to have created a mechanism between key funding bodies on mainstreaming the value and importance of outdoor recreation and ensuring its place within funding programmes. By 2015 to have resolved issues over Single Farm Payments and access and to have investigated ways to provide incentives for farmers and landowners who are prepared to support access.</td>
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<td>4B</td>
<td>Promote information and provide guidance on applying for funding programmes which can be used to develop outdoor recreation.</td>
<td>• ORNI • Sport NI • NITB • NICVA</td>
<td>By 2016 to have provided guidance on effective grant application. By 2016 to have a mechanism to provide information about new funding streams for outdoor recreation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Details/Outcomes</td>
<td>Lead Body and Partners</td>
<td>Success Indicator</td>
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| 4C     | Through the consultation, there has been a clear call for a funding programme that is specifically focused on capacity and confidence building with respect to access.  
The creation of a funding pot for staffing and project funding to develop greenways, community path networks and remedial works on high pressure sites to maximise opportunities for local access and reconcile conflicts.  
There are currently 1304km of open National Cycle Network route in Northern Ireland with 198km of traffic free paths and 1106km of on-road routes. There has been an identified need to review and further develop the National Cycle Network including:  
• Maximising the potential of current greenways;  
• Developing new linear greenways; and  
• Developing greenway links to communities. | DOE  
Sport NI  
Department for Regional Development (DRD)  
Local Authorities  
Sustrans | By 2015 to have created an access funding stream that can be used to build capacity and deal with access related issues in the key sites and hubs for outdoor recreation.  
By 2020 to have increased the traffic-free sections of the National Cycle Network by 20%. |
| 4D     | Current funding for events tends to be focused on very large scale or international events.  
Events that encourage participation or that showcase the wonderful landscapes and natural facilities in Northern Ireland are important. However, the provision of such events needs to be done sensitively and sustainably to minimise their impact. | NITB  
Sport NI  
Waterways Ireland  
Loughs Agency  
Local Authorities | By 2016 to have a range of funding streams that include eligibility for events and linked to good practice guidelines in 5C. |
| 4E     | Dialogue with insurance industry based on evidence needs to take place. Also the opportunity to work with Mutuals including the Adventure Industry Mutual, and the National Farmers Union Mutual need to be further explored. | ORNI                                                                                                         | By 2016 to have produced guidance on insurance schemes and opportunities and ways to reduce costs for the management of outdoor recreation. |
| 4F     | Provide further training for groups starting out using volunteers.  
Promote the opportunities for volunteering for individuals and organisations including businesses.  
Support the development of “Friends of” groups within organisations.  
Support the up-skilling of volunteers within outdoor recreation. | DSD  
National Trust  
Landscape Management Bodies  
ORNi  
Volunteering Now  
NGBs | By 2015 to have produced a joint programme of training and development opportunities for volunteers. |
| 4G     | Develop a partnership approach to support the training of volunteers and to reduce duplication. | DSD  
National Trust  
Landscape Management Bodies  
ORNi  
Volunteering Now | By 2015 to have produced a joint programme of training and development opportunities for volunteers. |

“There has been a very significant growth in the adventure and activity tourism sector.”
Case Study 5: Community Based Publically Accessible Woodland Development

Carntogher Community Association (CCA) successfully bid for over £512,000 of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and £255,000 from NIEA to purchase 130 acres of land near Maghera adjacent to the Drumnaph woodland site, which was acquired and is managed by the Woodland Trust. The area contains ecologically significant habitats and trees dating back to the 1600’s. This project creates a large publicly accessible woodland site and secures the future of the trees and rich heritage of the site.

The site is a wildlife haven, approximately 130 acres in size and includes native woodland, grazing meadows, wetlands, river bank habitats, and bog land. As it is adjacent to the Drumnaph Woodland Trust site there will be over 200 acres of accessible public green space for community access.

Including the CCA’s existing 90 registered volunteers, the scheme will train school children, university students, conservation groups, and new community volunteers. They will help carry out research, gather information and gain management skills in conservation, including pre-project health and safety training.

Niall O’Kane, Director of Carntogher Community Association, has stated: “This is a dream come true for the local Community Association. This is a grassroots, community-driven project that will provide the opportunity for the entire community to get involved in a landmark heritage project over the coming years. This will bring the size of the Drumnaph reserve to over 200 acres, giving a critical mass of inter-linked habitats that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the reserve. The involvement of the wider community in developing access and managing the reserve will also help develop the sense of community ownership, further underpinning its long-term sustainability for generations to come”.

Learning about Meadows on the Drumnaph Reserve

Theme 5: Communication, Marketing and Promotion

The consultation responses in particular highlighted the need to disseminate good news stories about access, to promote good practice and to increase awareness about both opportunities and personal responsibility. Good communication from the full range of organisations involved in outdoor recreation is also essential in maximising partnership working.

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<th>Action</th>
<th>Details/Outcomes</th>
<th>Lead Body and Partners</th>
<th>Success Indicator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action Number: 5A</td>
<td>Develop and promote clear messages about personal and social responsibilities in the context of Occupiers’ Liability.</td>
<td>• Sport NI • DOE • HSE • NGOs • ORNI • Local Authorities</td>
<td>By 2013 to have produced guidance on personal responsibility in the context of occupiers’ liability aimed at users. By 2014 to ensure that all dog license holders receive very clear messages about responsible dog management in the outdoors with their license. By 2016 to ensure that information and guidance is embedded within training courses, Local Authority websites and land management ‘bodies’ information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Number: 5B</td>
<td>Provide clear communication on environmental responsibility for users and providers in the outdoors.</td>
<td>• NIEA • Sport NI • DE • LNT Ireland • Forest Service • Waterways Ireland • Landscape Management Bodies • Fire and Rescue Service</td>
<td>By 2016 to have embedded the ethics of LNT into the leadership training programmes for outdoor sports. By 2018 to have the ethics of LNT embedded within the developments in outdoor learning. By 2016 to have established mechanisms to coordinate existing schemes and the development of training for activity providers.</td>
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Learning about Meadows on the Drumnaph Reserve
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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Details/Outcomes</th>
<th>Lead Body and Partners</th>
<th>Success Indicator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action Number: 5C</strong></td>
<td>Disseminate information on good practice in the management of recreation and especially large scale events on protected sites and habitats and minimise disturbance of protected species.</td>
<td>• ORNI • Sport NI • NIEA • AONB Bodies • Landscape Management Bodies • Local Authorities</td>
<td>By 2014 to have the website for guidance on managing events fully functional and to have major land management bodies and the main charities signed up for the process for events.</td>
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</table>

Initial work has been done on this by ORNI to create a process for recreation providers to carry out Habitat Regulation Assessments (HRAs) when holding events or carrying out outdoor recreation project work especially on Natura 2000 sites. There is a need to provide succinct and critical information to charities, activity providers and to the various land management organisations and local authorities to ensure they operate within National and European nature conservation legislation. The development and role of local outdoor recreation forums are important in further communicating these processes.

**Promote 'good news' stories and developments.**

ORNI has been extremely effective at promoting developments, opportunities and events through the media in Northern Ireland and have achieved a Public Relations equivalent value of over £1 million per annum in this area.

It will be important that this work continues and that there are also opportunities by which other organisations both on a local and national level including governing bodies of sport, local forums and land management bodies can learn from the approach taken by ORNI.

Supporting training and developing further engagement with broader media and personalities will be instrumental in this process.

Messages to be consistent that highlight the benefits to society including healthy lifestyles and social inclusion as well as benefits to the economy and to local communities.

**Action Number: 5D**

Promote the value of external accreditation to demonstrate compliance regarding safety and quality of provision.

In Northern Ireland adventure activity providers are not required by law to be licensed in the same way as providers in Great Britain. However, in lieu of this statutory licensing DCAL and Sport NI have been supporting and implementing Adventuremark as a mechanism for the accreditation of activity providers to show that they work to industry standards.

There are a number of other accreditations for facilities and sites such as the quality walks, the green flag awards, blue flag awards and country parks accreditation. The encouragement of facilities to achieve accreditation standards is important.

**Market Northern Ireland/Ireland as a tourism destination for outdoor recreation.**

This action is important to boost the local economy through the promotion of outdoor recreation to out of state visitors and to encourage greater spend and economic activity.

The importance of attracting national and international events was highlighted and there is the opportunity to boost the profile of the region and the opportunities presented for more specialist activities.

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Theme 6: Research and Monitoring

The consultation reiterated the importance of relevant and focused research as highlighted in the Issues Papers. Feedback clearly supported the need for studies on the economic value of outdoor recreation and its benefits to participants and value to society. There was also felt to be an immediate need to evaluate existing provision and identify gaps at a strategic Northern Ireland wide level. Partnerships with academic institutions present improved opportunities to undertake research that will be of benefit to both the institution and organisations with responsibility for management of outdoor recreation. The actions under 3A and 3D, while focused on accessibility, are also linked to research needs: 6B is required in order to effectively communicate the value of outdoor recreation (2B).

### Action Details/Outcomes Lead Body and Partners Success Indicator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Number: 6A</th>
<th>Undertake public surveys to identify recreation demand.</th>
<th>Sport NI • NIEA • NTBI</th>
<th>By 2017 to have an agreed framework for undertaking research to get baseline data on demand and usage of the outdoors for recreation.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action Number: 6B</td>
<td>Undertake research into the economic and social benefits of outdoor recreation.</td>
<td>Sport NI • NIEA • NTBI • PHA</td>
<td>By 2016 to have baseline data on the economic and social value of outdoor recreation across Northern Ireland.</td>
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### Action Details/Outcomes Lead Body and Partners Success Indicator

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Action Number: 6C</th>
<th>Develop a joined-up approach (systems and procedures) for monitoring and evaluation of facility use at a national level.</th>
<th>The Strategic Group defined in Theme 1A.</th>
<th>By 2015 to have an agreed framework for the monitoring of data provided through outdoor recreation facilities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action Number: 6D</td>
<td>Research into current and needed infrastructure for camping in key areas.</td>
<td>• Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme • Sport NI • DARO • Landscape Management Bodies</td>
<td>By 2014 to have baseline data on the extent of levels of wild camping in the Mournes, Antrim Hills and to a lesser extent the Sperrins and Lough Erne. By 2018 to have developed a mechanism to capture all the various data sources and provide collated information.</td>
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</table>

Wild camping is an integral part of the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and is a fundamental element to self-sufficient journeying in the outdoors whether on land or water. Some sites are extensively used for such camping activities particularly in the Mournes and Antrim Hills. However, wild camping can produce significant problems in terms of human waste and litter, as well as overcrowding of certain sites and the risks associated with campfires.

Our Great Outdoors
Theme 6: Research and Monitoring
Resourcing the Action Plan

As Outdoor Recreation is such a cross-cutting theme that a number of Government Agencies and organisations are committed to, there will need to be a genuine partnership approach to funding the implementation of this Action Plan. Early in the implementation phase the Strategic Group needs to consider how this is best achieved.

There already has been a very significant joined-up government approach to outdoor recreation:

- ORNI is core funded by four Government Departments/Agencies through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU);
- The development of this Action Plan and recent research undertaken into the economic benefits of outdoor recreation and a review of angling were undertaken through partnership agreements between departments; and
- The development of new facilities for outdoor recreation usually involves a cocktail of funding from a range of sources and agencies.

These partnerships will need to be continued and extended to ensure the effective delivery of this Action Plan.

Emerging research from the Sports Industry Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University into the economic impact of outdoor recreation has highlighted that in 2011 there were over approximately 3500 full-time equivalent jobs in the sector and that consumer spending was just under £132 million in outdoor recreation. These figures do not include secondary employment or spending on associated activities such as hospitality, accommodation, etc. but are purely related to the spending on outdoor recreation products and facilities. The overall Gross Value Added (GVA) by outdoor recreation exceeds £100 million.

This Action Plan highlights 33 new actions that are deemed to be instrumental for the development of outdoor recreation across Northern Ireland and that these new actions will inevitably require a level of investment to ensure that they are effective. There is already public investment in outdoor recreation from both central and local Government and since the 1998 Countryside Recreation Strategy there have been very significant developments. The investment in ORNI by the four Government Departments and the engagement with Local Authorities has been instrumental in making this happen.

Many of the new actions are about resources of people and organisations working effectively together and so the cost of this in financial terms is not high. However, in order to effectively deliver this Action Plan (excluding staff time within departments and organisations) additional financial resources of approximately £2.9 million over seven years between 2013 and 2020 will be required. This is envisioned to be built into future budgets between the various delivery partner organisations and through effective joint working between these organisations.

It should be noted that the mapping of hubs for recreation and the resulting strategic plans for development are likely to highlight specific developments of trails and facilities that are not included in the costs for this Action Plan. These developments will need additional capital resources to ensure that they can be delivered. Further, once a toolkit has been developed for the creation of local community-type path networks there may well be a significant drive from local communities and Forums for the development of such routes. Again the capital costs associated with such developments have not been included within this Action Plan and will need to be costed separately.

“A love for the natural environment is a strong part of the fabric and culture of many people in Northern Ireland.”
Appendix 1: Steering Group Members

The following individuals and organisations are members of the Steering Group for the development of this Outdoor Recreation Action Plan.

**Chairman**
Murray Cowan  
Sport Northern Ireland Board Member

**Vice-Chair**
Maia Taylor  
Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Caro-Lynne Ferris  
Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland

Pat Wilson  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure - Inland Waterways (to 2013)

Lawrence Stanford/Rosemary Petrie  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure - Inland Waterways (from 2013)

Richard Schaeble  
Forest Service Northern Ireland

Sean Fitzpatrick  
Northern Ireland Agricultural Producer’s Association

Martin Carey  
Northern Ireland Protected Areas Network

Alan Moore  
Northern Ireland Water

Niall McAleenan  
Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Rosemary Lightbody  
Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Michael Lipsett  
Chief Leisure Officers Association

David Gray  
Department of Environment Environmental Policy Division

Barbara Muhly  
National Trust

Jason Rankin  
Ulster Farmers’ Union

John News  
Sport Northern Ireland

Mike McClure  
Sport Northern Ireland

Appendix 2: Organisations which Provided Input into the Consultation Process

1. Activities Ireland
2. Antrim Borough Council
3. Ardhnabann Outdoor Education Centre
4. Armagh District Council
5. Ballyholme Yacht Club
6. Ballymena Borough Council
7. Ballymoney Borough Council
8. Banbridge District Council
9. Belfast Canoe Club
10. Belfast City Council
11. Belfast Hills Partnership
12. British Association of Shooting and Conservation
13. British Horse Society
14. C3 Canoe Club
15. Canoe Association of Northern Ireland
16. Carrickfergus Sailing Club
17. Causeway Coast Adventure Racers
18. Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust
19. Causeway Coast Kayak Association
20. Causeway Open Award Centre
21. Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
22. Chief Leisure Officers Association
23. Climb NI
24. Cloughwood and District Community Association
25. Coleraine Borough Council
26. Colmcille Climbers
27. Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland
28. Cookstown District Council
29. Corrlea Activity Centre Ltd
30. Countryside Alliance Ireland
31. Countryside Access and Activities Network (now ORNI)
32. Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside
33. Cragavon District Council
34. Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
35. Department of Culture Arts and Leisure - Inland Waterways Branch
36. Department of Education
37. Department of Enterprise Trade and Industry
38. Department of Environment Environmental, Policy Division
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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Department for Social Development</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>Derry City Council</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>Down District Council</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>Dungannon Borough Council</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>East Antrim Boat Club</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>Far and Wild</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>Fermanagh District Council</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>Fermanagh Ramblers and Hillwalkers</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>Forest Service Northern Ireland</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td>Foyle Hill Walking and Rambling Club</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>Francis McCrory</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>Gortatole Outdoor Education Centre</td>
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<td>52</td>
<td>Green Party</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>Harps Cycling Club</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>Inland Waterways Association Ireland Newry and Portadown Branch</td>
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<td>55</td>
<td>International Mountain Biking Association</td>
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<td>56</td>
<td>Island Wheelers</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>Jill Montgomery</td>
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<td>58</td>
<td>Jungle NI</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>Killowen Outdoor Education Centre</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>Lagan Canal Restoration Trust</td>
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<td>61</td>
<td>Lagan Valley Regional Park</td>
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<td>62</td>
<td>Lagan Valley Orienteers</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>Larneth Borough Council</td>
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<td>64</td>
<td>Leave No Trace Ireland</td>
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<td>65</td>
<td>Limavady Borough Council</td>
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<td>66</td>
<td>Lissburn City Council</td>
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<td>67</td>
<td>Lisian House, Cookstown</td>
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<td>68</td>
<td>Lough Neagh Partnership</td>
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<td>69</td>
<td>Loughs Agency</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>Magilligan Field Centre</td>
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<td>71</td>
<td>Maple Group Practice</td>
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<td>72</td>
<td>Martin Crossin City Tours</td>
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<td>73</td>
<td>Mencap</td>
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<td>74</td>
<td>Mid Ulster Walking Club</td>
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<td>75</td>
<td>Mountaineering Ireland</td>
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<td>76</td>
<td>Mourne Heritage Trust</td>
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<td>77</td>
<td>Moyola Angling Association</td>
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<td>78</td>
<td>National Trust</td>
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<td>79</td>
<td>Newry and Mourne Council</td>
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<td>80</td>
<td>North Down Borough Council</td>
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<td>81</td>
<td>Northern Ireland Environment Agency</td>
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<td>93</td>
<td>Shannaghmore Outdoor Education Centre</td>
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<td>South West College - Omagh campus</td>
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<td>Sperrin Harriers Running Club</td>
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<td>Sperrins Gateway Landscape Partnership</td>
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<td>Sport Scotland</td>
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<td>St Colmcille Climbing Club</td>
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<td>Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership</td>
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<td>Ulster Angling Federation</td>
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<td>Ulster Farmers Union</td>
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<td>Ulster Federation of Rambling Clubs</td>
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<td>Ulster Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club</td>
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<td>112</td>
<td>Ulster Rural Riders Association</td>
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<td>113</td>
<td>Ulster Society for the Protection of the Countryside</td>
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<td>114</td>
<td>Ulster Wildlife Trust</td>
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<td>Upperlands Community Group</td>
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<td>Visitor Monitoring Ireland</td>
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<td>Waterways Ireland</td>
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Appendix 3: Current and Potential Local Outdoor Recreation Forums

The consultation highlighted that these could be aligned to new Council boundaries under the Review of Public Administration (RPA) within AONB management areas or linked to tourism destination areas.

Current Forums

1. Mourne Outdoor Recreation Forum (Facilitated by Mourne Heritage Trust)
2. Causeway Coast and Glens Outdoor Recreation Forum (Facilitated by Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust)
3. Lagan Valley Regional Park Outdoor Recreation Forum (Facilitated by LVRP)
4. Antrim Outdoor Recreation Forum (Facilitated by Antrim Borough Council)
5. Sperrins Outdoor Recreation Network and Forum
6. The Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership (SLLP) effectively acts as a Forum but a new Outdoor Recreation Sub Group for the partnership has now been developed

Potential new Forums

1. Fermanagh
2. Ring of Gullion
3. Lough NeaghyLower Bann
4. Belfast Urban Fringe

Appendix 4: Glossary of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Body/Organisation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AONB</td>
<td>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATF</td>
<td>Activity Tourism Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>CANI</td>
<td>The Canoe Association of Northern Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCEA</td>
<td>Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLOA</td>
<td>Chief Leisure Officers Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>DARD</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCAL</td>
<td>Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure</td>
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<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>DETI</td>
<td>Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOE</td>
<td>Department of the Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>DoFIE</td>
<td>Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>DARD</td>
<td>Department of Regional Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSD</td>
<td>Department for Social Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSNI</td>
<td>Disability Sports Northern Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSNI</td>
<td>Forest Service Northern Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>LNT</td>
<td>Leave No Trace</td>
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<tr>
<td>MHT</td>
<td>Mourne Heritage Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDPR</td>
<td>Non-Departmental Public Body</td>
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<tr>
<td>NICVA</td>
<td>The Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIEA</td>
<td>Northern Ireland Environment Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>NILGA</td>
<td>Northern Ireland Local Government Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>NTB</td>
<td>Northern Ireland Tourist Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGB</td>
<td>National Governing Body</td>
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<tr>
<td>ORNI</td>
<td>Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (Formerly CAAN)</td>
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<td>PHA</td>
<td>Public Health Agency</td>
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<td>RPA</td>
<td>Review of Public Administration</td>
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<td>SLLP</td>
<td>The Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership</td>
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<td>Sport NI</td>
<td>Sport Northern Ireland</td>
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