

# PART B MANAGING FOR ACCESS

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## INTRODUCTION

This report, Part B Managing for Access, is a component of the Report of the Access Review Working Party, Open Countryside. It describes the important attributes of access and its impacts on and integration with other National Trust purposes.

Recommendations are given throughout in **bold** type.

Part B should be read in conjunction with Part A Principles for Access and Part C Recreational Activities, covering eighteen activities in detail.



## CHAPTER 1 - ACCESS AS A PRINCIPAL PURPOSE

Access to the countryside is a principal **purpose** of the National Trust, being one of the main interpretations of 'benefit to the nation'. The Trust is empowered to 'maintain and manage ... lands as open spaces or places of public resort ...', (National Trust Act, 1907, Section 4 (2)). A further purpose is to promote 'access to and enjoyment of' places of natural interest or beauty (National Trust Act, 1937, Section 3). On commons, access is not only a purpose, but also an **obligation**: the obligation is imposed on the Trust to 'keep commons ... as open spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public (National Trust Act 1907, Section 29).

The **benefits of access to people** are many: pleasure and enjoyment; better health; opportunities for knowledge and appreciation, fulfillment and enhanced personal experience.

The **benefits of access to the National Trust** are: support from members and the public; opportunities to increase awareness of the countryside and its management; opportunities for education; political support for the countryside; stimulus for environmental enhancement and income for Trust tenants.

Access has **relevance** to the Trust as a primary land use in its own right. The 'leisure versus livelihood' distinction is no longer marked: tourism is due to become the world's largest industry; and there is a high proportion of the population which does not work in the traditional sense. 'Leisure is no longer to be understood as the trivial use of spare time. Instead it is becoming a key element of meaning in people's lives ...' (Clark et al, 1994).

Since the Trust owns 1% of the UK, its **responsibility** for providing access is great. The Trust is undoubtedly the single most significant provider for walking, for example. It owns a greater variety of landscapes than any other organisation and therefore has the most scope for providing for a wide range of activities and experiences. In addition, it is well-placed to integrate access with its other purposes and land uses, and to ensure that access can be provided in perpetuity.

There is a demand for more access in the UK: for more land accessible to walkers, particularly in the lowlands, and for several other activities poorly provided for at present (1.2). Although the dramatic increase in recreation of the 1970s and '80s has now slowed, participation in many activities is continuing to rise, and active leisure is still increasingly seen as of benefit to health and personal development. Many Trust properties are under pressure from these demands.

**To fulfil its purpose and responsibility and remain relevant, the Trust will continue to provide access and should respond to the demand for more access, in the context of its conservation purpose and policies.**

*RI*

This chapter outlines the provision for access currently made by the Trust, and highlights new ways of extending it. Chapter 2 establishes the context in which access is provided.

## 1.1 PERCEPTIONS, VALUES AND EXPECTATIONS

In order to benefit the nation and remain relevant, it is necessary to appreciate the perceptions, values and expectations of visitors. These are diverse, reflecting the variety of countryside visitors, their ages, abilities and the activities they pursue. The main needs are identified in Table 1.

**Table 1 Visitor Values and Expectations**

- \* Open and unrestricted countryside.
- \* Well waymarked and surfaced routes for a variety of ages, abilities and inclination.
- \* Quiet and tranquil areas.
- \* Populous areas - busy and active.
- \* Areas which are remote and hard to get to.
- \* Areas easy to get to, close to good communications.
- \* Diverse and distinctive landscapes.
- \* Unchanging and traditional landscapes.
- \* Countryside with a wealth of plants and animals.
- \* Variety of route lengths and difficulty.
- \* Easy access with kissing gates, in preference to stiles, and dog gates.
- \* Areas which are adventurous and challenging.
- \* Areas which are safe where people feel secure.
- \* A feeling of being welcome.
- \* Good informative signing, including information on features and hazards.
- \* Areas free from signs.
- \* Parking for cars, coaches, motorcyclists and cyclists.
- \* Areas free from cars and other vehicles.
- \* Unenclosed land free from fencing.
- \* Lavatories, tearooms and shops.
- \* Access without charge.

Source: Information gathered during Access Review.

It is obvious from this table that these needs are not only varied, but also conflicting and contradictory. The Trust can meet many of these requirements, but careful planning is necessary to identify which needs can best be met where.

Visitor needs are incompletely understood and recorded. There is little published work on *R2* visitor values. **Studies should be undertaken, in conjunction with others, to improve this understanding.**

The Trust should be able to influence values and expectations itself in order to ensure that people accept, support and share Trust objectives and reasons for management.

## 1.2 PROVISION FOR ACCESS AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

At least 50 million visits are made to Trust countryside properties each year. Many properties exceed the highest number of visitors to houses and gardens, ie over 200,000, for example Dovedale (2 million); Cheddar Gorge, Box Hill, Studland and Clumber Park (1 million or more), Carneddau and Calke Park (500,000) and Giants Causeway (450,000).

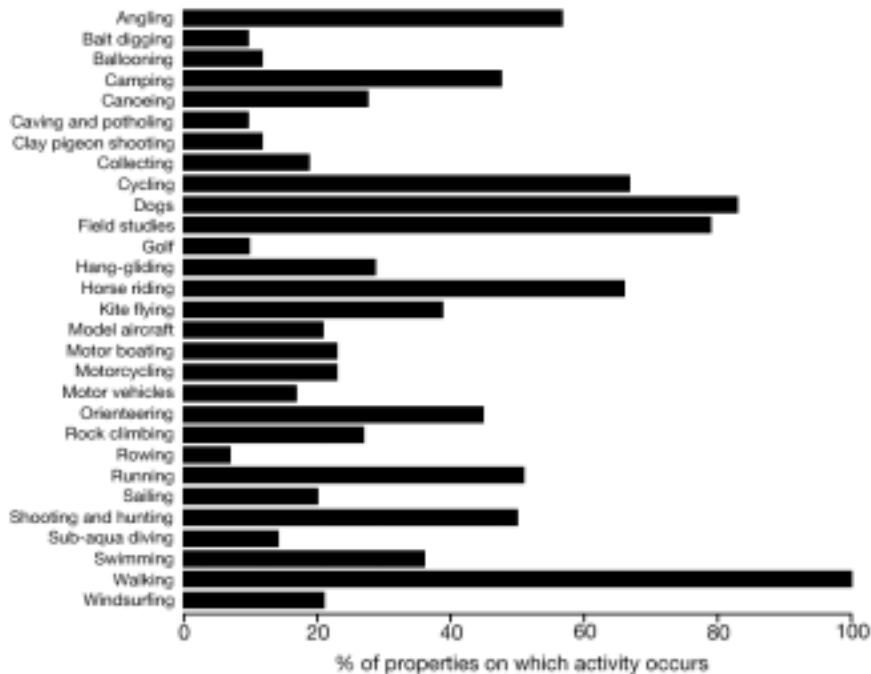
Virtually every countryside property has some access. Ownership is currently 235,000 ha (580,677 acres) and there is access to a very significant proportion of this, including large areas with free-ranging access. Information on the whereabouts of this property should be available from Ordnance Survey maps (see 5.5).

In addition, the Trust provides routes, facilities, staff, management mechanisms, information, education and high standards of safety, as outlined elsewhere in this report.

Over 40 different recreational activities take place on Trust land, including principally and not surprisingly, walking and dog walking. Field studies (ie bird watching and looking at wildlife, as well as more organised field studies), cycling, horse riding and rock climbing are also very popular (see Table 2).

Some properties cater for more than 20 different activities. The average in the sample taken for this review is 10 per property.

**Table 2 Recreational Activities on a Sample of 122 National Trust Properties**



Other activities taking place include: archery, ball games, car rallies, naturism, painting, picnics, sponsored walks.

Source: Information from properties, gathered as part of Access Review.

The demand for more access has been identified from published sources (eg Sports Council, Countryside Commission and National Park literature) and information gathered during this Review (from property staff, user groups and policy-making bodies). The demands are, particularly, for more Rights of Way, more access to lowland farmland and more provision for walking, field studies, horse riding, cycling and canoeing.

There are many factors to take into account before new provision is made (Chapters 2, 3 and 4 and Part C) and decisions should be carefully planned (Chapter 5). However, as all these needs and activities are appropriate in the context of Trust purposes, and welcome on its land, opportunities should be found to accommodate them. There are further activities for which more provision could be made if required, for example rowing, sailing and swimming.

R3 **Overall on Trust property, more provision should be made for access.**

### 1.3 RIGHTS OF WAY

The Trust's responsibilities for managing Rights of Way and establishing new routes, particularly for walkers, horse riders and cyclists, have been set out in an earlier review, Managing Rights of Way (National Trust, 1991). This considers the relative merits of Rights of Way and permitted routes.

R4 There are two key advantages of Rights of Way: the routes are legally secure, and comprehensively shown on Ordnance Survey maps. Rights of Way are a critical means of providing access to and through Trust properties. Extension to path systems by the Trust is usually made through the creation of additional permitted routes. The report, however, recommended the dedication of new Rights of Way, particularly to link with the wider definitive path system. This has not yet been achieved satisfactorily. **Regions should continue to identify new opportunities for dedications.**

R5 There are still deficiencies in the accurate recording of Rights of Way on definitive maps. Inaccurate information causes confusion and conflict between users and managers. **The Trust should ensure that Rights of Way are properly recorded and should not resist well-founded claims for rights.** When Roads Used as Public Paths are being reclassified as Byways Open to All Traffic the sole legal criterion is whether vehicle rights exist. Byway claims can no longer be opposed on grounds of suitability, but Traffic Regulation Orders remain a means of controlling inappropriate use (Appendix III, 4.1).

R6 Signing, waymarking and maintenance still require attention on some properties to help visitor orientation and ease of access. The responsibility of Highway Authorities in this respect is not adequately fulfilled. **The Trust should ensure that Rights of Way into and over its land are signed and maintained to a high standard and encourage Highway Authorities to fulfil their obligations.** Excessive waymarking can be a visual intrusion and should be avoided.

## 1.4 VISITOR FACILITIES

The Trust provides a wide range of facilities for visitors. The most common are shown in Table 3. Some of these have undesirable environmental impacts, as outlined in 2.1.

**Table 3 Examples of Visitor Facilities Provided by the National Trust**

- \* Car parks.
- \* Lavatories, including provision for disabled visitors and at some locations for parents with young children.
- \* Tearooms/restaurants and shops.
- \* Information centres with interpretative displays.
- \* Education rooms for visiting school groups.
- \* Basecamps which can be used for residential recreational visits.
- \* Holiday cottages, bothies, camping and caravan sites.
- \* Waymarked routes for walkers, horse riders and cyclists.
- \* Routes specifically designed for those with special needs to take wheelchairs and buggies.
- \* Viewing hides.
- \* On-site information/interpretive panels/information shelters.
- \* Guided walks and self-guided trails with accompanying leaflets.

Regions plan to continue increasing facilities for visitors with special needs and making properties more accessible to them. This subject features strongly in Regional Reports and Plans, and in the information provided for this Review. Educational facilities are also strongly supported. The Trust provides an extremely valuable resource in both respects and thus **the present emphasis on facilities for visitors with special needs and for education should be continued.**

R7

There is an identifiable demand for more countryside sitting, picnicking and playing spaces close to villages and towns, as envisaged in the 'Millennium Greens' initiative (Countryside Commission pers.comm.). **Provision of more such sites should be considered, where appropriate.**

R8

The Trust provides few facilities for individual activities, apart from maintained footpaths, bridleways, track networks and car parks. Facilities for cyclists, such as bicycle racks and gear stores, would help enhance the enjoyment and scope for cycling and encourage it as a means of transport to and between Trust properties. Specialist facilities for particular activities, for example hitching rails for horses and adventure areas for biking, have been identified as needs on Trust land. **Thus, where appropriate, more facilities for certain recreational activities, particularly cycling and horse riding, should be provided.**

R9

No other particular needs for new facilities were identified during this Review.

There are, of course, many properties where facilities are inappropriate, and are likely to remain so.

## 1.5 ACQUISITION

Access is included in the Principles for Acquisition established by the Council in 1985 (National Trust Council Paper, 1985). In summary, these principles are:

- \* The property must be of national importance because of its natural beauty, historic interest or nature conservation value, or of local importance because of the protection it would afford to a property already held for preservation.
- \* The property must provide benefit to the nation, which will usually include public access.
- \* The property must be in danger of deterioration if it is not acquired by the Trust, or of inappropriate alteration, or of development that would harm its character or environment.
- \* The property must be and be expected to remain financially self supporting.

Acquisitions are considered in more detail in accordance with subsequent guidance notes and tables contained in 'A More Rigorous Approach to Acquisitions' (Annexe IV to Executive Committee 921/91). These give an inadequate reflection of the full benefits of public access. Furthermore, the table implies that the significant aspect of access is visitor numbers.

- R10* **The profile of access should be raised in Criteria and Guidance for Acquisitions.** It should be considered in relation to the cultural, environmental and social character of a site. Attributes of access which are considered in this report, such as the variety of activities afforded by a property, the needs that can be met, the quality of experience, ease (or otherwise) of access, and the significance of the site in relation to access opportunities in the
- R11* surrounding area, should be assessed. Furthermore, **the Trust should continue to stress** (as stated in the Guidance Notes referred to above) **that public benefit can be as well served by low visitor numbers as by high visitor numbers, as long as those visitors are made welcome.**

Endowment calculations for new properties need to include costs associated with access survey and appraisal and, if appropriate, access management.

Some acquisitions would have particular benefits for access - see 5.1.

## CHAPTER 2 - ACCESS AND OTHER NATIONAL TRUST PURPOSES

Access is a principal purpose of the National Trust, but not the principal purpose. As noted in Part A, the principal purpose is to '... promote the permanent preservation for the benefit of the nation ... of lands ... of beauty or historic interest, ... their natural aspect features and animal and plant life' (National Trust Act, 1907). The Trust should encourage protection on and beyond its land and ensure that its own activities, including the provision of access, do not compromise the qualities of the environment which are deemed significant.

Access can, and does, have damaging impacts on the environment, landscape, nature conservation and archaeology, as summarised in Table 8. These impacts may not be as damaging as those from some other land uses (see Rowell, 1991), but it is important that they are investigated, predicted and mitigated. This chapter identifies the main impacts and the issues involved in integrating access with other purposes.

There is considerable emphasis on survey, assessment and evaluation, of both the positive and negative impacts of access, and then rational debate and consensus to decide on significance and acceptable change. This process is necessary in order to sustain both access and environmental quality. However, such appraisals are still in their infancy and no useful working examples (by the Trust or others) have been seen by the Working Party. The subject is further considered in Chapter 5 (5.1).

### 2.1 ACCESS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

#### 1. SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT, THE PRECAUTIONARY APPROACH AND THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

##### a) Sustainable Management

Much has been written about sustainable development and sustainable management, although as yet there has been little direct application to access. The principles summarised in Table 4<sup>1</sup> are those most relevant to the National Trust's management of the countryside for its various purposes, especially focusing on access.

Sustainability is regarded here as essentially a planning process. Change is inevitable and we cannot undertake to sustain all our current resources and values indefinitely. We can, however, institute a process of evaluation and planning in which thoughtful and intelligent predictions aim to maintain and enhance resources and values as far as practicable. The points listed in Table 4 can be used as a checklist when planning for new access or reviewing existing provision.

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<sup>1</sup> Sources for Table 4: Countryside Council for Wales (1992); International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources et al (1991); Scottish Natural Heritage (1993).

## b) The Precautionary Approach

This is embodied in Sustainable Management and is based on the principles of:

- \* foresight and vision; risk assessment and minimisation;
- \* 'preventative conservation', ie taking positive steps to pre-empt environmental impacts, and dealing with the cause rather than the effect of damage;
- \* the reversibility of impacts, so that wherever possible no permanent 'footprint' is left on the environment;
- \* the preservation of options, allowing decisions to be made in the future when improved knowledge may suggest different objectives, priorities or techniques.

The implications of the precautionary approach for access management, are, like Sustainable Management, to assess and plan on a whole landscape scale, to be cautious about new recreational facilities, to attempt to predict the impacts of access and to give our successors the option of developing new recreational opportunities rather than developing them now.

R12 **The principles of Sustainable Management and the Precautionary Approach should be applied in access planning to ensure, as far as practicable, that the environment on which access depends is not irrevocably damaged.**

## c) The Precautionary Principle

This has to date had a narrower (but nevertheless important) application. The basis of the precautionary principle is that the impact of a recreational activity will be modified or removed if damage is **suspected**. Damage does not have to be **proven**. The Trust should act on suspicion, rather than requiring unequivocal proof because the latter can be very difficult and very costly to provide. However, this principle should only be used when the suspicion of damage is well founded and fully discussed with all interested parties, ensuring that legal rights are not abused.

R13 There is strong support for the precautionary principle from many other organisations providing it is sensibly applied. **The Trust should apply the precautionary principle if damage to environmental interests is suspected, but only invoking this with sound reason, expert advice and through consultation with interested parties.**

The costs of applying the precautionary principle could be considerable. Survey, evaluation and consensus take time and skill and involve many organisations and interests. Nevertheless, the Trust should be prepared to undertake this exercise. Ultimately, however, the Trust has the responsibility to decide how best to manage its properties.

So that there is a sound and objective basis for decisions and some worked examples to follow, the Trust should recommend, draw on and participate with others in research and monitoring projects on access-related issues in the countryside (5.2) and model evaluations (5.1).

**Table 4 Principles of Sustainable Management**

**'Maintain biological diversity, life support systems and necessary standards of air and water quality'**

- \* Respect all life forms.
- \* Identify habitats, species and features of particular importance.
- \* Ensure appropriate ecological processes and management regimes operate for maintaining these.
- \* Apply environmental appraisals to major access operations, existing or planned.
- \* Apply high standards of air and water quality, and ensure access-related activities do not compromise these.

**'Maintain or enhance the stock of natural and cultural resource'**

- \* Identify and evaluate the important natural and cultural resources, including the access resource.
- \* Ensure non-renewable resources (groundwaters, soils, fossil fuels, peat, geological and landscape features, underground formations and the features of the historic environment) are used wisely and sparingly and only for essential purposes for which there are no renewable alternatives.
- \* Use renewable resources (eg fisheries, waters as waste repositories, timber) within their capacity for natural regeneration.
- \* Ensure neither access nor other land-uses significantly compromise the value of the natural resource, now or in the foreseeable future.
- \* Identify ways in which both cultural and natural resources can be enhanced.
- \* Specify the degree of enhancement required, or loss to be tolerated, as per 'specified limits' in the management plan.

**'Meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'**

- \* Identify the needs and values of the users.
- \* Intelligently predict, as far as practicable, the needs of the future.
- \* Ensure users are not damaging the environment they themselves value.
- \* Keep a maximum range of choices open for future generations, avoiding irrevocable developments.

**'Provide a framework in which change can be anticipated and progress reviewed'**

- \* Collect data, monitor, establish and predict trends and changes.
- \* Prepare property and Regional plans.
- \* Consult widely, including experts and users.

**'Involve people'**

- \* Investigate ways of involving people of all ages and abilities.
- \* Encourage enjoyment and appreciation of the access provided, where appropriate.

**'Integrate management and use of whole landscapes, areas or regions'**

- \* Liaise with other organisations/landowners.
- \* Establish forum of appropriate interests to agree and review management plans.
- \* Consider Trust properties with adjacent land and within the water catchments and natural areas.
- \* Avoid 'exporting' environmental problems to other areas (eg by closure of a site).

**'Be conservative unless the effects of management changes are known'**

- \* Avoid irrevocable action until the situation is well researched and changes anticipated as thoroughly as practicable.

**'Integrate economic, ecological and social goals'**

- \* Be aware of and refer to other planning processes within the area.
- \* Inform and be informed by those processes and plans.

## 2. THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM

The National Trust plays a major part in tourism, which is forecast to be the world's largest industry by the year 2000, rivalling agriculture and forestry as a major element of rural land-use.

All the recreational activities covered in this report may be said to constitute 'tourism', ie visiting, for any leisure purpose, away from home or work, on day trips or for longer periods. The environmental issues which arise from tourism in this general sense are discussed here; impacts of the individual activities are described in Part C.

Trends in tourism relevant to the National Trust include:

- \* A forecast increase of the 900 million day visits to the countryside recorded for 1993 (Countryside Recreation Network, 1993);
- \* more visitors anticipated from Europe via the Channel Tunnel and to Northern Ireland;
- \* even greater numbers of cars and improved road networks, making access into rural areas easier;
- \* more vigorous promotion of the UK countryside by tourism agencies in the struggle to remain competitive with overseas markets;
- \* people's increasing need for tranquil countryside and 'green' holidays and a need to cater for discerning visitors more aware of environmental issues.

Tourism has environmental benefits, mainly greater public and local awareness and increased finance for conservation work. There are also, obviously, damaging impacts, such as increased traffic (see 3 below), the impact associated with built facilities (see 4 below), land-take for development (a major impact off National Trust land) and the impacts associated with overcrowding (3.4). The report *Leisure Landscapes* (Clark et al, 1994) clearly describes the concerns that as the tourism industry strives to promote itself and the nation's heritage, so local distinctiveness and environmental quality will diminish.

The prime objective of any tourism strategy must be to protect the environment on which tourism depends: 'The environment has an intrinsic value which outweighs its value as a tourist asset' (English Tourist Board, 1991). Principles of Sustainable Management should thus be applied to marketing, promotion, development and management initiatives, as indicated in the following table (Table 5). Further guidelines on planning for Sustainable Tourism are given in 'Loving them to Death?' (Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe, 1993). **To protect the environment on which tourism depends, the Trust should apply principles of sustainable management to tourist initiatives which affect its countryside.**

R14

### **Table 5 Aims and Characteristics of Sustainable Tourism in the Countryside**

#### **Environmental Aims**

- \* Conservation in the long term - the essential over-riding aim.
- \* Better knowledge and awareness of conservation among local people and visitors.

#### **Social Aims**

- \* Visitor satisfaction and enjoyment.
- \* Improvement of living standards and skills of local people.
- \* Empowering local communities to lead in tourism initiatives.
- \* Demonstration of alternatives to 'mass' and package tourism and promotion of sustainable tourism everywhere.
- \* Making sustainable tourism part of local and national culture.

#### **Economic Aims**

- \* Improvement of the local and national economies.
- \* Provision of local business and employment opportunities.
- \* Generation of increased revenue to maintain protected areas.
- \* Feedback of revenue to the service or resource owner/provider.

#### **Characteristics**

Countryside tourism should:

- \* be small scale;
- \* be socially and environmentally considerate;
- \* draw on the character of the countryside, its beauty, culture, history and wildlife;
- \* develop slowly in a way that respects the landscape and environment;
- \* work through local control, supporting the local economy and employing local people;
- \* be value-conscious and care about quality;
- \* bring conservation and recreation benefits;
- \* re-use existing buildings and derelict land;
- \* retain and strengthen the rural economy;
- \* favour public transport and non motorised forms of access.

Sources: i) Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe (1993). ii) Countryside Commission (unpublished).

### **3. TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT**

The increase in car travel in the UK is one of the most serious issues to be addressed by this country. Between 1977 and 1987, car numbers grew by 41% and the forecast is for an 83 -142% increase between 1988 and 2025. This is unacceptable in terms of pollution from emissions, human health, noise, stress, land-take for new roads, associated developments and resource depletion.

The social and environmental impacts of the present unsustainable transport system are clearly described in the report by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, Transport and the Environment (October 1994). As a significant proportion of car travel is for leisure and social purpose, this is an important access and recreation issue. National Trust properties attract car-borne visitors. The Travel Demand Management Study (Oscar Faber for the National Trust, August 1994) estimates that Trust houses account for 12-13% of all visiting to historic houses; the Trust countryside too is likely to draw a significant proportion of the visitors, 90% of whom come by car.

There is considerable conflict inherent in public attitudes to car travel, outlined in *Leisure Landscapes* (Clark, 1994). There is increasingly vociferous resistance to the current transport policy and trends, but great reluctance to reduce use of the car. However, the STAR initiative (Strategic Traffic Action in Rural Areas) being implemented by the Countryside Commission and Surrey County Council indicates that '81% of the population would like to protect popular countryside tourist sites by restricting private car access', provided that an efficient alternative is offered. 30% of all countryside-visiting journeys in that county are under 5 km (3 miles). Encouraging walking and cycling, as well as use of public transport, is therefore relevant.

The Trust is already involved in initiatives to promote alternatives to car travel, for example schemes suggested for Green Transport Week, a database of accessibility by public transport and inclusion of bus and train services for access in the properties Handbooks. There is a wide range of measures which could be considered, as shown in Table 6, taking the varying characteristics of properties into account, to help reverse the current trends.

R15 This report cannot make detailed recommendations but suggests that **the Roads Advisory Group or some similar body should develop the relevant recommendations in the Royal Commission's report into a range of measures applicable to Trust properties.**

**Table 6 - Possible Ways of Reducing Access-related Countryside Traffic.**

**Minimising the Need for Private Transport**

- \* acquisition of properties which, while meeting other acquisition criteria, can be reached without a car;
- \* acquisition or promotion of corridors and links between properties, and between properties and centres of population, to enable foot, horse or bike access;
- \* ensuring that promotion of Trust properties in tranquil areas takes account of implications for traffic;
- \* ensuring close involvement with Local Authority land-use and transport planning so that traffic implications for Trust properties are considered;
- \* promoting some properties, where practicable, as accessible only on foot, bicycle or horse, and/or by public transport ('car-free' properties).

**Encouraging the Use of Other Forms of Transport**

- \* stressing the importance of other forms of transport in responses to Department of Transport or County Council road or development proposals;
- \* encouraging Trust visitors to use buses and trains by continuing to publicise routes to properties and promoting or implementing park and ride schemes or pick-up services;
- \* supporting the re-opening of disused railway lines and canals;
- \* encourage cycling and walking to Trust properties by providing or promoting safe cycle and pedestrian routes, providing secure stores for bikes and gear, setting up bike hire schemes, providing bikes at holiday cottages and promoting routes for touring Trust properties by bicycle/foot and public transport;
- \* positive discrimination in favour of visitors arriving by public transport, bike or similar at paying properties.

**Discouraging Use of the Car**

- \* applying car parking disincentives, ie high charges;
- \* reducing the size of car parks, or closing them.

**Modifying Driving Technique and Distance Travelled**

- \* promoting traffic calming schemes;
- \* marketing some properties locally rather than nationally (see Travel Demand Management Study).

**Promoting the National Trust's Concern and Policy through Publicity and Education.**

Some of these measures could have considerable resource implications, for instance car park reduction for those properties which depend heavily on parking income, but equally there will be savings on capital works and maintenance costs.

#### 4. THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF VISITOR FACILITIES

The Trust provides a wide range of facilities, as shown on Table 3 (1.4), large and small, simple and elaborate. While many facilities fulfil their intended function very satisfactorily, some have undesirable environmental effects, direct or indirect.

##### **a) Lavatories, restaurants, information centres, basecamps, holiday cottages and camp sites**

These can have damaging environmental and management impacts (the former listed on Table 8 (2.5). There are concerns about environmental standards, inadequate services, new access roads and inappropriate siting with regard to natural features.

Existing and planned facilities should be assessed to mitigate damaging effects, wherever possible. Assessment should investigate and analyse the need, the implications for water resources, water quality, materials use and energy, and the effects on the local roads network and the local community.

Environmental design standards are being incorporated into Trust buildings. Ideally buildings should be 'autonomous', ie independent in terms of waste disposal and energy supply, constructed from materials which can be recycled and in such a fashion that if necessary the whole building can be removed in the future without leaving a 'permanent footprint'.

Guidelines for such building design are available and are being developed further.

The principles set out in the Medium Term Plan, 1995-97 (National Trust, 1994), which should govern the development of facilities, with some additions italicised, are as follows:

- \* Facilities should be sufficient for their purposes - they should not be features in their own right.
- \* The location, *design*, size and appearance of restaurants, shops and lavatories, should always reflect the characteristics and individuality of the property on which they are sited, *and make minimum impact on the environment*.
- \* The financial return alone is unlikely to justify expanding facilities. Schemes should contribute to the overall conservation of the property concerned.
- \* Increases in visitor numbers caused by factors outside Trust control should be anticipated (*not necessarily accepted*).
- \* There should be clear management reasons for *installing and* expanding facilities.

**Facilities should be reviewed in the light of environmental impacts and the above principles, and proposed facilities subjected to environmental assessments and design criteria.**

R16

## b) Car Parks

Decisions on car park provision and size should take into account the benefits of reducing countryside traffic in the UK, as described above.

## 2.2 ACCESS AND THE LANDSCAPE

People gain all kinds of benefits from visiting and appreciating the diversity of landscapes of this country. The Trust owns many exceptional landscapes and viewpoints over surrounding countryside which provide considerable enjoyment and pleasure to millions of visitors.

It is important that the diversity of landscapes on Trust land is maintained and enhanced: 'local distinctiveness' is a feature of great value to access. The variety in geology, soils and semi-natural vegetation, land-use history and local vernacular style, is fundamental to this individuality. The Trust can conserve local distinctiveness by allowing these differences full expression and by discouraging land-uses and access-related development which impose uniformity.

*R17* **The Trust should work to ensure that local distinctiveness is protected, maintained and, where appropriate, enhanced.**

Informal access and recreation have had relatively little effect on the landscape compared with other land-uses but there are the obvious impacts of car parks, signs, paths and visitor facilities as well as less obvious impacts such as pollution from traffic.

People themselves have an impact on the landscape, the implications of which are considered in 3.1.

### 1. EROSION

Visitor-induced erosion and the resulting damage to the landscape is one of the Trust's major access-related issues. Other factors contribute to and exacerbate erosion, such as heavy sheep grazing in the uplands. With increased numbers of individual visitors and groups, and use all the year round with no recovery period, there are now many Trust properties where erosion, particularly on footpaths, has a major impact on the landscape.

Substantial resources are needed to repair eroded paths (at least ,500,000 per annum in the uplands alone). Most people consider that this repair bill is well justified in view of the pleasure that millions receive from Trust footpaths and that additional resources for more repair work should be vigorously sought. However, there may be further consequences: that other access-related issues are being neglected as a result of the path repair programme; that in the uplands, repair of lower-level sections results in easier access and more erosion at high levels, and that repaired paths attract even more people.

The present path repair programme is essential and a high priority. However, there has been no national assessment of the needs for repair, to ensure that other issues are not being neglected and to identify priorities and the resources required.

**Path repair should continue at least at the present level. In addition, assessment should be undertaken to ensure that resources are used most effectively.**

R18  
R19

Some useful guiding principles on upland path repair have been drawn up by the Trust's North West Region. These could be applicable elsewhere and so are included here (Table 7).

Controlling use by groups which seek permission (eg marathons) may help reduce pressure on eroded paths in the uplands. Reducing car parking space may also help. See 3.4 for comment on overused sites.

### Table 7 Upland Path Repair: Principles to be Adopted

- \* The repair and maintenance of paths in open country will be subject to the following considerations:
  - that the repairs are necessary to prevent or ameliorate visual intrusion and environmental damage;
  - works should be of a high standard of design and implementation, using indigenous materials sympathetic to the surrounding area and carried out on a scale appropriate to the route's use as a footpath or bridleway;
  - uniformity of construction should be avoided, eg steps;
  - techniques used should protect existing vegetation and, normally, only locally occurring plant species should be used in restoration. Non-local species will be acceptable only where necessary as a nurse crop and where natural succession will rapidly result in their disappearance;
  - the more remote the path, the more stringently the criteria for path repairs should be applied. This will be a matter of judgement but in general the more remote or wild the location, the less acceptable an obviously engineered path will be;
  - repaired paths should be fit for the appropriate use of the area. In particular, steps should be avoided if at all possible and surfaces should not be of a type that would lead unprepared or ill-equipped users into danger;
  - before any repair work is agreed the question should be asked 'Is there a better solution?'
- \* The use of waymarks, cairns or other intrusive features, other than those traditionally established on summits and path junctions, will be discouraged.
- \* A sustained commitment of resources to path management will be sought, so that small scale continuous maintenance can replace infrequent major repairs as the normal method of path management.

Prepared by: The National Trust, Lake District National Park Authority, and English Nature.

More grant-aid and financial assistance are needed to contribute to the repair bill, in order to share the burden more widely with other agencies. **The Trust should continue to press for greater contributions from other agencies and seek new sources of funding for erosion work.** The responsibility of the Highway Authority on Rights of Way is considered in Section 1.3.

R20

R21 **The precautionary approach should be applied when planning new paths**, especially in the uplands and on the coast. Provided visitor needs are being met in the general area, new paths should not be established if they are likely to become badly eroded.

## 2. DIFFERENT LANDSCAPES AND LAND-USE TYPES

This section outlines the recreational issues particularly associated with different landscapes, which are not covered elsewhere in the report.

### a) Tenanted Farmland

Tenanted farmland accounts for 38% of the Trust's ownership and the Trust is committed to viable family farms (National Trust 1993).

Traditionally, access to tenanted farmland has mainly been confined to Rights of Way. Now more and more Trust tenants are involved in access and tourism-related initiatives, and many Trust farms - particularly upland and coastal farms - are very heavily used. Yet there remains a considerable number of farms which have little public access.

Better access on to farmland is an issue throughout the UK, with requests for increased access, particularly in the lowlands. Alternative forms of farm income are being sought and there are opportunities for the provision of access facilities which tenants could pursue. There may be cases where access could be re-located from very sensitive sites on to less sensitive farmland. However, public access can constitute a threat to the farm business and there are other well-publicised conflicts between farming and access. Whilst recognising the fact that estates and circumstances differ, **opportunities should be sought to extend access on Trust farmland.**

R22

Needs and opportunities can be explored jointly with tenants, particularly during the preparation of Whole Farm Plans. New paths are likely to be the principal means of extending access. There may also be scope for particular activities (including licensed activities organised through a club, eg permanent orienteering courses, adventure biking areas and indoor climbing facilities), or for diversifying the farming enterprise (eg camp sites, bunkhouse barns, holiday cottages and riding centres).

R23 **The standard agricultural tenancy should include clauses related to access and access should be discussed fully with prospective tenants.** There will be opportunities to include access in the proposed Farm Business Tenancies (5.4).

R24 More ways need to be found to explain farming to visitors, eg farm trails, farm open days, locally produced leaflets and articles in recreational literature. **The Trust should raise the profile of access on tenanted farms, and of farming with the visiting public.**

The problem posed to stock management by uncontrolled dogs is becoming progressively acute. The Trust has already made provision for access without dogs on a few farms. More such sites should be found.

The provision of open, free-ranging access for walkers on farmland, as allowed in the Swedish 'Allemansraat' model, may be feasible on some Trust land. **It is recommended that a pilot study be carried out to investigate this form of access on farmland.** The study site should include some arable land. Criteria for success should include a public sense of obligation and responsibility towards farmland and farmers.

### **b) Uplands**

The Trust owns a substantial area of upland (c115,000 hectares; c287,500 acres), including significant holdings in several National Parks (Lake District, Snowdonia, Peak District, Brecon Beacons and Exmoor) and of tenanted farmland (c50,000 hectares; 123,000 acres). Much of this upland is very heavily used for a great variety of recreational activities (on average 16 per property in the sample taken for this Review, considerably higher than for other landscape types).

Many of the issues which apply to access elsewhere are particularly acute in the uplands because of the exceptionally high visitor numbers (20 million per year in the Lake District National Park; 22 million in the Peak District, for example), the need, expressed in visitor surveys, for 'unspoilt' and 'uncommercialised' landscapes and the extent of open (although farmed) country.

The main issues are as follows:

- \* Freedom to roam and the right to roam being sought for open country, primarily by the Ramblers' Association and the Open Spaces Society (3.2).
- \* Overcrowding, a problem in many upland areas, particularly in the Lake District and Snowdonia, causing traffic congestion on roads, footpath erosion and making it increasingly hard to experience 'quiet enjoyment' in some parts of the hills (3.4).
- \* Quiet enjoyment. The Trust provides for a wide range of opportunities in its upland areas, but recognises that remoteness and peace and quiet are qualities particularly valued in the uplands. This will affect decisions made by staff on activities deemed acceptable and management controls used, (Chapter 4).
- \* Increasing use of the hills by groups and commercial ventures, contributing to crowding, erosion, damage to the resource and compromising safety.
- \* Footpath erosion (see above), which in the uplands is exacerbated by increased sheep numbers.
- \* Disruption of farming routine and practices by visitors.

### **c) Freshwaters and Wetlands**

These are particularly fragile environments, with few sites in Europe which are in pristine condition. Water quality has been compromised by pollution and acidification, and river channels modified for flood control purposes. There are currently national and international initiatives aimed at improving water quality and allowing the re-development of more natural river courses. It is important that recreational interests support and further these objectives and act as a positive influence for change.

The Trust does not provide a great deal of access for water-borne recreational activities except fishing, and in general it could provide more, for example for canoeing, rowing and sailing (see Part C). However, conflicts between uses can be serious on freshwaters; the intrusion of some activities are particularly noticeable and wildlife is vulnerable to disturbance. It is necessary to assess the lakes and rivers in a Region and to decide on which activities can best be accommodated, and where. 'Remote Areas' should be designated for freshwaters as well as for terrestrial sites. Management of water-borne activities by licence and permit is generally more appropriate than uncontrolled use, because of the problems referred to above.

Recreational facilities on watersides (and elsewhere in catchments), fishery management and power boats can have damaging effects on water quality (see Part C). Similarly, flood protection works for campsites and car parks and wetland drainage for footpaths can damage nature conservation interests. Water quality and important natural features and processes should not be compromised by access, as noted elsewhere. Preventative management should be employed where possible.

R26 River Catchment Management Plans, prepared by the National Rivers Authority, describe recreational and fisheries use and make proposals for the future. **The Trust should contribute to these plans, making known its concerns, visions and long-term plans.**

#### **d) Coast and Shoreline**

The Trust protects 890 km (560 miles) of coastline, including 177 km (110 miles) of foreshore, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is a major provider of access to cliff tops, sand dunes, saltmarshes, beaches, estuaries and small harbours, often providing for a multiplicity of recreation activities.

R27 The coast is a dynamic and changing landform, undergoing processes of erosion in some areas and deposition in others. Such natural change is beneficial, and where it is occurring **the Trust should not undertake expensive work to maintain recreational facilities and paths in their existing locations** (eg paths on eroding sea walls). They should be re-sited in more stable locations, as the need and opportunity arises.

A similar approach should be applied to sea level rise caused by unnatural processes (global warming), ie the Trust should work with rather than against it, and consider acquiring land or re-siting recreational facilities behind submerging coasts.

Sand dune erosion is now seen as desirable in many sites. Many resources were devoted to preventing access-induced dune erosion in the 1970's and early '80's, but bare and eroding sand is now seen as essential to a 'healthy' (mobile) dune system. Boardwalks are quite justified to ease the visitor's passage through dunes, but not to control erosion. Parking on beaches compacts sand and prevents its movement.

R28 It is noted with concern that only 100 out of 500 British beaches meet the Marine Conservation Society's standards for seawater quality. The Trust owns some good and some poor beaches. Priorities for better sewage treatment should be identified. **The Trust should work with others to ensure that visitors to its beaches can expect standards of water quality which are as high as possible.**

Coastal Zone, Estuary and Marine Nature Reserve Management Plans are being prepared by other agencies. The Trust has a major part to play in managing coastal recreation and the access points to the sea, but has very little information on marine life. It is therefore important **that the Trust should work closely with other bodies in obtaining information and contributing to plans.** Emergency planning procedures for dealing with oil pollution incidents should be reviewed regularly with the Local Authority.

R29

Lease or ownership of foreshore and seabed give the Trust significantly more control in the management of coastal recreation. For example, dog bans and beach zoning can be implemented, and there can be controls on launching and mooring. **The Trust should continue to acquire or lease foreshore and seabed.**

R30

#### e) Woodlands

The Trust owns 25,000 hectares (62,500 acres) of woodland, 75% of which is broadleaf. This is a valuable resource for access, much valued for walking, dog walking, horse riding, educational visits and orienteering. Compared with other habitats, many woods are relatively resilient and can 'absorb' large numbers of visitors while still retaining peace and quiet. Most of the associated birds and mammals are either fairly resistant to disturbance, or can find alternative cover if disturbed. However, damage can occur, and assessment of the effects of access should apply to woods, as to other habitats.

As many woods are now restocked using natural regeneration, the current access policy 'there cannot be unrestricted access to ... young plantations and woods ...' (see Appendix V) is no longer appropriate. Rather, many woods can be promoted as sites where unrestricted access for those on foot is welcomed, as per policy in the Forestry Subject Paper (National Trust, 1991).

#### **Opportunities for extending public access in woods should be sought where appropriate.**

R31

For example, little has so far been provided for the cyclist in woods. More access for mountain bikes would be welcomed by cyclists and would be unlikely to damage the woods, as long as there is adequate wardening to control conflict with other users.

More use could also be offered to orienteers in places, if required. If sites for a few permanent orienteering courses could be found, they would be greatly valued.

There are several woodland properties where these increased opportunities would be best realised in conjunction with neighbouring landowners, eg where woodland rides stop at Trust boundaries. Areas of woodland and plantation leased to the Forestry Commission could also afford new scope for access.

Tree surgery work and felling for public safety reasons can be a damaging impact of access, see 2.3 and R42 below.

Paintball games are currently banned, but if thought appropriate they may be allowed occasionally (see Part C).

## **f) Parkland**

The Trust has 137 parkland properties, in many of which there is free-ranging access for people on foot. Parks provide opportunities for family use, picnicking, dog walking and occasionally horse riding, as well as being of value in their own right.

Opportunities are being taken, sometimes through Countryside Stewardship schemes, to restore parks according to historic precedent. Where extensively grazed permanent grassland is restored, this is of great benefit to access, as well as to landscape and nature conservation.

R32 Where appropriate, **programmes of restoration should be continued, to enhance access opportunities.** The increased number of parks open throughout the year is also welcome. The issue of tree surgery for public safety, noted above for woods, applies particularly to parks and should be taken into account when planning or reviewing access.

Free-ranging access for people on foot is appropriate in many parks. Where there are stock or deer, dogs should be on leads.

R33 The approach to charging in parks varies widely. **A common rationale should be devised.**

## **g) Countryside In and Around Towns**

Approximately 9% of Trust properties are close to cities and large towns and a further 14% are in highly populated areas. These properties serve an important role in education and are heavily used for informal recreation pursuits. There is an inevitable degree of vandalism and inappropriate use, but over the last few years the Trust has recognised the opportunities these properties present for local communities and has changed staffing and management accordingly, for example with the appointment of Community Development Officers.

An important part of the educational role is to enhance town dwellers' understanding of the countryside and vice versa. This should help bridge the gap in attitude between 'town and country'.

R34 **The Trust should work strongly to encourage access in urban areas, particularly in relation to education and community initiatives.** The importance of countryside near towns is also noted under Acquisition (5.1).

## **h) Commons**

The Trust protects 66,000 hectares (165,000 acres) of common land, in both the uplands and lowlands, amounting to 12.5% of all registered commons in England and Wales. Section 29 of the 1907 National Trust Act states that commons are to be kept as open spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. Section 23 of the 1971 Act refers to management associated with public enjoyment (see below).

The Trust's main objectives for commons, designed to benefit public enjoyment directly, include the maintenance of their particular character and the provision of unrestricted public access. Various management techniques are used to achieve these objectives, as outlined in the Code of Practice for Common Land (Estate Management Manual, National Trust, 1992). Controlled grazing, with specified numbers of stock, is one of the approaches most often needed.

On both lowland and upland commons grazing can conflict with access, if fencing is thought to impede free-ranging access.

Following the Trust's Annual General Meeting in 1994, the Open Spaces Society are applying for a declaration (a court ruling) as to whether section 23 of the 1971 Act includes the power to put up permanent fencing. This section concerns works deemed by the Trust to be necessary for providing or improving opportunities for public enjoyment.

In relation to the conflict between fencing and public access, **the Trust should take the lead in keeping lowland commons as representative as possible of their traditional character.**

R35

There are various alternatives to fencing which are practical on some sites. If fencing is erected it should obviously be as sensitively located as possible, contain a considerable number of access points and be large scale (without internal paddocking). The Trust should produce more information on the relative merits of grazing and other management methods, and work closely with local people, discussing proposals and problems from an early stage. There are already numerous examples of very positive liaison.

### **i) Air Space**

The Trust has many cliff and hilltops, viewpoints and escarpments which are ideal locations for launching hang gliders and paragliders, and flying kites and model gliders. However, they are not much used. Other than kite flying, use is largely organised and licensed through clubs, which are generally considerate and aware of the impacts that their activity can have on others. There are cases where extensions to flying areas are sought and although the Trust should continue to resist encroachment into remoter areas, some additional sites could probably be found.

Kite flying, particularly stunt kite flying, is gaining in popularity. It can be hazardous to visitors and worrying to stock. Good wardening is needed to resolve these problems. See also Part C.

## **2.3 ACCESS AND NATURE CONSERVATION**

Access and nature conservation are often assumed to be in conflict, but this is not generally the case. Indeed, the two can be of mutual benefit. However, as 'conflict' is often raised as an issue, the subject is given relatively detailed treatment in a separate report (Access and Nature Conservation, Hearn 1995). A summary is presented here. Details on the impacts of individual recreational activities are given in Part C.

### **1. BENEFITS OF ACCESS**

The benefits of access to nature conservation should be noted, encouraging public support, enabling promotion and enjoyment of wildlife, and providing opportunities for education. There are also some minor direct benefits of access, such as habitats associated with path surfaces and edges.

Nature conservation is of value to access, as wildlife adds greatly to experience and pleasure in the countryside. Of the 20 most popular activities carried out on Trust land (see Table 2 in Chapter 1), field studies ranks third, after walking and dog walking, and takes place on 79% of properties. Wildlife is a draw to Trust countryside. It is important to minimise any conflicts, therefore, not just for the wildlife, but also for the visitor.

## 2. DAMAGING IMPACTS OF ACCESS

Some species and habitats are tolerant of the effects of public access; others are vulnerable and susceptible. Some species and habitats are common and widespread; others are rare or localised, or otherwise of particular importance. Survey and assessment are required to identify those which are a) of most significance to nature conservation and b) vulnerable to public access. Nature conservation will not be well served if restrictions are imposed without due justification. **If relevant information cannot be gained from Biological Survey reports, survey and assessment should be undertaken before planning new access, or if conflicts are suspected in existing situations.**

R36

It is difficult to list the damaging impacts that access can have without giving the impression that it is a major constraint on access everywhere. This is not the case. Damage can be severe, but it is usually localised. For the most part, conflict can be minimised by good planning, zoning and some seasonal restrictions. It will seldom be necessary to curtail access altogether.

The following impacts are those which can cause most damage, and for which there are examples of damage on Trust land. For these, therefore, careful planning is most necessary.

### a) Disturbance

#### i) Birds

Disturbance can adversely affect both breeding and wintering birds. Species vary in their susceptibility. Certain habitats have a high number of vulnerable species of particular nature conservation importance, notably upland and lowland heaths, freshwater, large reed beds, shingle, saltmarsh and sand and mud flats. **Access should be controlled to minimise disturbance in these habitats if important species are present or likely to be present.**

R37

Controls are also needed for heronries and barn owl roosts and nesting sites. More detail is provided in tables in Hearn (1995). Mechanisms known to be successful for control include refuges, zoning by time or area, ensuring there is adequate distance between paths, strictly controlling dogs, discouraging event or group use and providing access to only one bank of a lake or river.

Virtually all recreational activities can cause disturbance to birds, especially if the source of disturbance is on the same medium (water birds are most disturbed by activities on the water, for example). The most disturbing activities are shooting, fishing and dog walking. A dog's presence significantly increases the 'disturbance distance' at which a bird will react and move away. Such distances can be as great as 1,000 metres (eg for curlew).

There are examples in the literature of disturbance caused by power boating, rowing, horse riding, sailing, walking, windsurfing, hang gliding, canoeing, cycling, bird watching and bait digging. Vehicles, horses and bikes are probably less disturbing than walkers.

## ii) Wild Mammals

To date only a few species or groups are known to be susceptible to disturbance, as listed below.

Bats are very sensitive to the changes in temperature caused by the presence of humans, and the light from torches, even for short periods. All bat roosts are vulnerable, and all are protected by law from disturbance for this reason. The impact on bats of caving and potholing, and of safety works (eg removal of old trees, capping mine shafts), can be lethal.

**Access should be prevented to sites important for roosting bats.**

R38

Female otters at the breeding holt are susceptible to disturbance, particularly from dogs.

Breeding takes place throughout the year. **Holts should be kept undisturbed and access discouraged.** The possible presence of otter can be advertised in site literature to explain the need for dog control and ask for quiet behaviour.

R39

There is strong circumstantial evidence that seals are intolerant of disturbance, at least at their breeding sites. It is unlikely that disturbance seriously compromises the long-term success of seal populations, but **breeding and haul-out sites where access is uncontrolled should be investigated.**

R40

Parkland deer, in deer parks, are vulnerable to disturbance from dogs. Therefore **dogs should be on leads in deer parks.**

R41

## b) Physical Damage

### i) Trampling

Walkers, horses, runners and compaction by cycles and vehicles, can cause a change in the soil structure and chemistry, damage to the vegetation and then soil erosion and loss. Trampled habitats become dominated by a small number of resilient plants, and floristic richness and interest are lost. The changes in vegetation will also affect the associated invertebrates.

However, damaged habitat is often only a small proportion of the whole, and soil erosion is more of a scenic than a nature conservation concern. There are only a few examples of properties where a significant extent of valuable habitat is severely degraded by trampling. Of most concern is the montane *Racomitrium* moss heath which is badly damaged by trampling (together with overgrazing) in most of its sites, on high summits in the Lake District and Snowdonia. Other habitats where trampling should be considered as a threat are wetlands and peatlands, salt marshes and habitats on skeletal soil.

## **ii) Mature Timber and Deadwood Removal**

One of the most damaging impacts of access is the removal of dead wood and tree felling for safety purposes. This seriously compromises the outstanding nature conservation value of sites which have had a continuity of over-mature trees, ie many parklands and wooded

R42 commons, and parts of some woodlands. **On sites important for old trees, access should be planned with a view to minimising the need for tree-surgery, eg keeping car parks, main paths and picnic areas away from old trees.**

## **iii) Damage in Caves**

Nature conservation and archaeological interests in caves can be (and have been) severely damaged by access. Cave floor sediments are compacted and damaged, stalactites and delicate rock formations broken and bats disturbed. Closure of some caves may be necessary, as on the Gower where the caves have been classified and "zoned" accordingly,

R43 in collaboration with cavers. **Area strategies for cave conservation should be prepared, to investigate and if necessary limit the damaging effects of caving.**

## **iv) Siting of Facilities**

There have been cases where facilities have been sited on or close to valuable habitats. The need for environmental appraisals before planning facilities has been referred to in Section 2.1.4. Biological Survey reports identify important habitats and features.

## **c) Grazing**

### **i) Disruption to Grazing by Dogs**

The National Farmers' Union (NFU) estimates that stock losses of 10,000/yr are attributable to dogs. Grazing, often essential for maintaining nature conservation interests, has been withdrawn from many sites as a result. This issue is well-recognised by Trust staff and it is usually possible to re-instate grazing, using a variety of mechanisms. Adequate wardening

R44 is essential. **The Trust should continue to ensure that grazing regimes are not severely disrupted or withdrawn due to dogs.**

### **ii) Complaints about Grazing from the Public**

These are increasing, especially in respect of dung and fencing. Maintaining grazing

R45 should be the priority in nearly all cases. **Information should be provided for visitors as to why grazing is essential to the quality of many habitats.**

## **d) Modifications of Rivers, Wetlands and Naturally Eroding Sites**

Stream and river channels have been modified in various ways (deepened, straightened, revetted, weirs inserted). In a few places wetlands have been drained and eroding cliffs, screes and dunes have been stabilised. Work has been carried out for fishery management, path installation and maintenance and to prevent flooding of paths and campsites. Such modifications can damage geomorphological and wildlife interests. Wherever possible, alternative sites should be found for paths and campsites, or some flooding or erosion

R46 accepted, and the natural channel used for fisheries. **Important natural features and**  
R47 **processes should not be compromised by access-related engineering. Similarly, new paths should not be routed through wetlands or, if they are, drainage should not be affected.**

### e) Irrigation, Fertiliser and Herbicide Use on Golf Courses

These practices damage valuable semi-natural grasslands, heaths and dune communities on most Trust-owned golf courses, and irrigation can affect adjacent valuable wetlands. Other practices associated with golf course management can also be damaging. **Conservation clauses should be included in golf course leases and the Trust's management objectives and their implementation discussed with the club.**

R48

### f) Accidental Fire

Accidental summer fires can be a serious consequence of access on lowland heaths and some upland heaths. Where this problem has not yet been addressed, **adequate provision should be made to prevent and control accidental fire on susceptible lowland and upland heaths** including, where practicable, closure of sites during periods of high fire risk.

R49

## 3. EUROPEAN COMMUNITY HABITATS DIRECTIVE

The Council Directive of 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora ('EC Habitats Directive') emphasises the international importance of certain habitats and species. Some of the habitats included are particularly susceptible to recreational disturbance and recreation-based developments (eg estuaries, sandbanks, saltmarshes and heathlands). There will be more emphasis on nature conservation in the future management of these habitats where they occur in Special Areas of Conservation, yet to be designated.

New implications for access on the species listed in the Directive are, on Trust land at least, minor. The most significant are the need to protect certain rare fish species and to subject exploitation of freshwater salmon fisheries to a management plan. Other species listed already receive protection under earlier legislation.

## 2.4 ACCESS AND ARCHAEOLOGY

### 1. BENEFITS OF ACCESS

The Trust is the largest private owner of sites, structures and landscapes of archaeological importance in the UK. These include internationally important sites such as World Heritage Sites, many hundreds of nationally important Scheduled Ancient Monuments, and innumerable sites and structures which illustrate the diversity of local vernacular landscapes and history. The Trust is undertaking a survey and assessment of the archaeological value of its properties and a Sites and Monuments Register is being compiled.

There are high numbers of visitors to many of the major monuments owned by the Trust. Access to archaeological sites encourages public support, promotion and enjoyment, as it does for nature conservation. It is likely that the Trust has benefited from the growth in interest in the history of the countryside, through increased membership and income from visitors.

## 2. IMPACTS OF ACCESS

R50 Archaeological sites and historic landscapes have their own unique characteristics in terms of composition of features, integrity and fragility. They are irreplaceable and if damaged or destroyed scientific evidence is lost forever. **Serious damage should be prevented by regular monitoring of access and protective management or remedial work as necessary.**

The Trust undertakes its responsibility to protect these sites and structures through careful management and where appropriate by presentation to the public. This work, an integral part of property management, carries cost implications and addresses problems caused by visitor access and impact.

A number of activities have been recognised as potentially or actually damaging to archaeological sites:

- \* Heavy visitor numbers at monuments;
- \* large numbers of walkers on footpaths and trails;
- \* horse riding;
- \* caving and potholing;
- \* hang-gliding launch sites;
- \* golf courses;
- \* use of off-road vehicles;
- \* mountain biking;
- \* sub-aqua diving on marine sites;
- \* treasure hunting and use of metal-detectors.

Walking, caving and potholing, collecting, mountain biking, horse-riding, off-road vehicles (including motorbikes) and golf can be particularly damaging. In recent years a number of important sites from the following categories have been destroyed or seriously damaged by intensive public access.

The following types of sites are examples of those most vulnerable to damage:

- \* Mountain top cairns, which are often Bronze Age burial cairns;
- \* Iron Age hill-fort ramparts, where the best views are gained by walking round or over the ramparts;
- \* Iron Age and later coastal promontory forts, often crossed by coastal footpaths with fine views;
- \* caves and cave deposits, susceptible to trampling, excavation and removal of artefacts;
- \* industrial sites, particularly those with potential safety problems, where insensitive and over-zealous use of derelict land-grants or application of health and safety requirements can be damaging;
- \* erosion and damage to historic field boundaries, particularly walls, on lines of footpaths;
- \* marine sites, particularly wrecks exposed to indiscriminate collection of artefacts by divers;
- \* countryside sites with potentially collectable artefacts or furniture (mileposts, finger-posts) lost through theft;
- \* buried archaeological deposits, particularly, those subject to ploughing on tenanted farmland or damaged through illegal use of metal detectors. **Treasure hunting is not allowed on Trust land and should continue to be banned.**

R51

### 3. APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Awareness of the problems of access is dependant on knowledge of the significance of sites. Archaeological Surveys are essential in identifying the importance of sites and the constraints and opportunities which this might impose on property management. **Evaluation of archaeological significance through survey or consultation should be undertaken before making plans for access.**

R52

There is a wide variety of appropriate management techniques which can be applied to prevent, reduce or repair damage caused by access. The following broad principles will generally apply:

- \* **Spreading the load to reduce erosion.** This is particularly relevant on sites such as hill-forts and can be aided by the control of scrub on earthworks, to prevent visitors being channelled into known paths where impact is exacerbated (but see also 3.4).
- \* **Locating and designing paths and car parks to minimise the impact on sites.** Where paths currently cross sensitive features, options for relocating or providing a hard or sacrificial surface should be considered. In the case of National Trails, as proposed for Hadrian's Wall, or coastal footpaths, the Trust needs to work in close liaison with local people and relevant agencies to reduce the impact on specific sites.
- \* **Preventing theft of artefacts.** This is relevant in banning indiscriminate treasure hunting and the use of metal detectors on Trust properties. The Trust actively works with caving clubs to promote the archaeological importance of caves and to prevent theft of artefacts and damage to cave sediments. Good liaison has been established with caving clubs operating on the Gower and some other sites. Protection of maritime sites and wrecks needs similar co-operation with the diving fraternity. The Trust is currently considering its policy on the protection of marine archaeological sites.
- \* **Repair and restoration.** The Trust has very wide experience of repair works and restoration of sites including earthworks and built structures. Before any treatment of the effects of impact, appropriate recording should be carried out and agreement reached on specifications and techniques. On Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Scheduled Monument Consent will be required.

**Access to sites of greatest sensitivity should continue to be restricted** and as noted, access elsewhere should be systematically monitored.

R53

## 2.5 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS OF ACCESS

This chapter has necessarily emphasised the damaging impacts of access, and these are summarised in Table 8. The table provides a provisional checklist which could be developed in environmental and other appraisals.

However, there are beneficial impacts of access, as listed in the introduction to Chapter 1; access generally has fewer damaging impacts than some competing land-uses, and, with knowledge of the factors and practices outlined in this chapter and in Part C, access can generally be fully integrated with the Trust's primary purposes.

<b>Table 8 Possible Damaging Impacts of Access on the Environment and Related Interests</b> Sources of damage: 1. Visitors in general; 2. Recreational Activities; 3. Visitor Facilities (cafes, lavatories, visitor centres, etc); 4. Access-related Traffic	
IMPACT	MAIN SOURCE OF DAMAGE (SEE ABOVE)
Soil erosion, compaction, disturbance, loss	2
Mechanical damage to natural and historic features	2
Damage/removal of vegetation	2
Disturbance of wild fauna	2
Disturbance/killing of farm stock	2
Fire (accidental)	1, 2
Water pollution	2, 3
Nutrient enrichment of soils	2
Lowering of water tables, abstraction, drainage	2, 3
Air pollution	2, 4
Disruption of local communities and tenants	1, 4
Habitat loss; land-take	2, 3, 4
Intrusion, crowding, noise	1, 4
Litter	1
Vandalism, theft, theft of artefacts	1, 2
Detrimental effects on health; stress	4
Resource depletion (aggregates; energy, water etc)	3, 4
Increase in traffic	1, 2, 3
Damage to built structures and boundaries	2
Damage to growing crops	2

## CHAPTER 3 - THE QUALITY OF ACCESS

A wide range of experiences and much enjoyment can be gained by access to Trust property. The quality of experience to the individual will reflect differing needs and values. The definable qualities might for some include visitor facilities, such as convenient parking and playing areas. This chapter considers the less tangible aspects of quality that have also been identified as of great value: quiet, freedom and remoteness, and conversely, crowding and conflict.

### 3.1 QUIET ENJOYMENT

There has long been a presumption in favour of quiet enjoyment on Trust land, even though this is not explicitly stated in the Trust Acts or in the existing 1986 Access Principles. Numerous organisations with remits similar to the Trust's have access policies which include an emphasis on quiet enjoyment, explicitly or by implication. The subject is receiving much attention at present during the passage of the Environment Bill currently before Parliament.

Many people value quiet in the countryside and the Trust should continue to place strong emphasis on it. However, quiet enjoyment is not more explicitly advocated in the principles of this Review, for the following reasons:

- \* The Trust already provides for both quiet and noisy activities;
- \* although quiet is valued by many people, others value company and the presence of other visitors. If the Trust is to welcome a diversity of visitors, both needs can be met in appropriate places;
- \* the concept of quiet is too simplistic to guide management decisions on acceptability. Intrusion is a more useful concept and many factors contribute to this, as well as noise, for example visual impact and speed of movement. The age and behaviour of the user and duration and intensity of use may be of more relevance than the activity itself. Landscape, land-use, location, time and tradition will also influence how the degree of intrusion is perceived;
- \* some quiet activities have a more damaging impact on the environment and nature conservation than some noisy ones;
- \* control of intrusion is already central to the Trust's recreation management, involving zoning, codes of conduct, wardening, control of numbers and repair of damage.

Therefore **the Trust should continue to emphasise quiet and unobtrusive enjoyment, but accommodate and manage intrusive activities as well, where appropriate.**

R54

### 3.2 FREE-RANGING ACCESS

The Trust has traditionally given free-ranging access on foot, subject to the needs of conservation, farming and forestry, to most of its upland, commons, downland, woodland and beaches.

Some visitors require free-ranging access; others do not. For example, it is highly valued by many walkers, mountaineers and rock climbers, whereas horse riders, mountain bikers and canoeists generally require defined routes.

Free-ranging access is a considerable asset for the Trust to present to the public and more could be made of it. Existing arrangements should be emphasised in publicity and free-ranging access should be extended to new areas of open countryside wherever possible.

The needs of forestry will seldom be a major constraint; free-ranging access is appropriate in woods. Nature conservation interests are unlikely to be damaged more by free-ranging access than by access on paths, except on sites important for breeding or wintering birds.

There are obvious constraints on enclosed farmland, but as increased provision is made on farms, opportunities for free-ranging access could be explored on an experimental basis (2.2).

Free-ranging access is not generally appropriate to freshwater because users are usually organised by permit or licence and freshwaters are particularly susceptible to wildlife disturbance.

R55 **The Trust should seek to provide additional free-ranging access in the appropriate landscape types listed above, including parklands.** Information about this type of access should be made readily available.

On all Trust land, other than commons, access is by permission. The Review has not attempted to assess the implications that could result from a legal right of access. However, this subject is on the agenda of various organisations and the Trust should contribute to the discussions. Lessons learnt from Countryside Stewardship access agreements will be important. The Trust should also consider a pilot scheme to test the principles embodied in Allemansraat (R25).

### 3.3 REMOTE AREAS

Visitors' needs in the countryside are extremely diverse, as outlined earlier, but the value placed upon remoteness, peace and quiet was repeatedly stressed during this Review. The Trust already provides considerable areas of land which are remote and quiet, but it is important that 'remoteness' is more formally recognised and protected.

Remoteness is especially valued for the following reasons:

- \* It is challenging for the adventurous to explore the countryside on their terms;
- \* there is a special experience associated with being free from intrusion, noise and frequent encounters with other people;
- \* it provides a contrast with more populous areas and can enhance an appreciation of the countryside in general;
- \* awareness that such areas can be beneficial to wildlife or have historically been remote.

As pressures of use and urbanisation grow, retaining remote areas will become increasingly important. Such areas can occur on any type of property - on land or water (inshore and inland), including urban fringe. They will generally have some or all of the following characteristics:

- \* Distance from a major road;
- \* negligible car parking nearby;
- \* difficult terrain;
- \* few paths;
- \* little or no promotion;
- \* few or no facilities;
- \* important or susceptible wildlife habitats;
- \* topography in which even low levels of use would be excessively intrusive;
- \* peace and quiet in contrast to surrounding populous areas.

Remote areas should not be closed to the public but visitors should be able to find them for themselves. Their management should include limiting promotion, restricting permission for events and group use and avoiding 'spreading the load'.

**The Trust should therefore formally recognise and protect areas valued for their remoteness and identify them as part of internal planning, for example in Regional Access Strategies.** Their value can also be emphasised in acquisitions. Two of the consequences of establishing 'remote areas' will be to prevent users from expecting the same standard of provision in all areas and to resist constant pressure for more access. It will also ensure that they are not lost by default.

R56

### 3.4 LEVELS OF USE

Identifying satisfactory levels of use and in particular addressing the issue of over-use, is a topic of concern in access management. 'Over-use' is difficult to define and will depend on the nature of the site, tradition and the expectations of visitors. Symptoms include traffic congestion, disruption of local communities, serious damage to vegetation, fauna and habitats, increased conflict between users, failure of management methods designed to control use and visitor dissatisfaction.

Levels of use, for example 'carrying capacity', can only be prescribed if a) the objectives are clear and b) if observed impacts can be correlated with numbers of visitors. There is very little information available to assist with b). More research and monitoring are needed (5.2). It is particularly difficult to alter firmly established levels and patterns of use and on a new site use can become established within a year.

The following are suggestions, most of which are already in operation, for addressing problems of over-use:

- \* Influence plans which would bring additional development and road capacity to the area;
- \* formulate joint strategies with other bodies for non-promotion (eg Peak Park Joint Planning Board/National Trust strategy for Dovedale);
- \* seek the sympathy of local users to prepare a strategy they will support;
- \* involve all National Trust departments in any decision to reduce use; remove reference in National Trust guides; embargo pictures from the photographic library for outside use;
- \* influence content of non-National Trust guidebooks;
- \* reduce car parking or move car parks;
- \* close access roads to private cars;
- \* close facilities;
- \* control use by groups and discourage events;
- \* if practicable, consider closure of sites for recovery, or introduce pre-booked entry;
- \* publicise dilemmas in local and national press, without being site-specific.

'Spreading the load', although an effective management mechanism on archaeological sites, linear features and footpaths, is not usually successful on a larger scale. The promotion of alternative sites to reduce pressure may result in these becoming over-visited, without reducing use of the original sites.

Nature conservation should not be used as a reason for reducing levels of use, unless well justified.

The Trust has not yet closed a countryside property because of over-visiting, nor has it investigated mechanisms used for over-visited houses and gardens. The impracticality in open countryside would generally preclude these options, but they may have to be considered in the future.

### **3.5 CONFLICTS BETWEEN USERS**

The range of recreational activities and the way they are undertaken can bring conflicts between users, which diminish the quality of access and require resolution. Of particular concern is the friction between:

- \* Walkers and mountain bikers;
- \* walkers and horse riders;
- \* horse riders and mountain bikers;
- \* canoeists and fishermen;
- \* dogs and other visitors.

To a lesser extent there is conflict between powered and non-powered boats. There is also conflict between group and individual use.

The nature of the conflicts are:

- \* Shock and danger to walkers from bikes and horses;
- \* surface damage to paths by horses resulting in complaints from walkers and bikers; \*
- \* fast bikers frightening horses and their riders;
- \* canoeists disturbing fish;
- \* fishing lines preventing canoeing access;
- \* dog fouling;
- \* wash and danger from speeding power boats;
- \* group users monopolising areas to the exclusion of individual enjoyment.

In many cases the exact nature of the conflict is not specified, and although it no doubt exists and engenders considerable concern for property staff and users alike, it is difficult to resolve unless examined closely.

The following are suggestions to settle such problems:

#### **Table 9 Measures to Resolve Conflicts Between Users**

- \* Identify the exact nature of the 'conflict'. Specify and record incidents and complaints to establish a clear picture of the extent and nature of the problem.
- \* Encourage the conflicting users to meet and discuss ways of resolving the issues themselves.
- \* Establish closer contact between Trust staff and the users, individually and officially.
- \* Zone areas, in time or space, for different users and for group use.
- \* Establish separate routes for bikes, horses and walkers where use is heavy.
- \* Promote codes of conduct and statements of co-operation.
- \* Ensure adequate wardening is carried out. Conflict is bound to arise in heavily used areas where wardening is inadequate.

The user bodies, as represented nationally, are very keen to help via their own communication networks. Therefore, the Trust should continue to develop its links nationally and locally with user groups to help resolve differences.

Good practice guidance and reference to statements of co-operation and codes of conduct are given for individual activities in Part C. There is further comment on the problems associated with groups in Chapter 4.

**Conflicts between users should be resolved by identifying the nature of the conflict and adopting appropriate management, in conjunction with the users themselves.**

R57

### 3.6 PROVIDING A WELCOME

Being made to feel welcome is to many people a significant part of an enjoyable experience. The Trust is conscious of this, and has devoted considerable effort to making people welcome. However, some user groups, albeit a minority, still do not regard the Trust as a welcoming landowner.

R58 **The Trust should continue to develop a welcoming approach.** This can be achieved through a range of methods which include:

- \* The production of good quality information on where to go, how to get there, what to do and what to see;
- \* positive and informative signs and notices;
- \* friendly staff and volunteers; and
- \* helpful farm tenants, keepers and water bailiffs.

## CHAPTER 4 - ACCEPTABLE ACTIVITIES

Part of the brief for this Review was to identify acceptable types of access for National Trust land. As outlined in section 1.2, over 40 recreational activities currently take place on Trust land. Those at present banned are paintball games and treasure hunting with metal detectors.

National Trust staff often have to decide whether or not an activity is acceptable, in response to requests from user groups or for other reasons. Decisions should be made with reference to the following:

- \* The objectives of management in the Property Management Plan (5.1);
- \* the context of the Regional Access Strategy, including provision elsewhere in the area or region (5.1);
- \* the principles of sustainable management (2.1);
- \* the principles for access (Part A);
- \* the impacts of the activity (Part C and Chapter 2);
- \* the impacts of visitors in general (Part C and sections on tourism (2.1), traffic facilities (2.1), quiet enjoyment (3.1));
- \* management controls, including resources (5.12) and safety considerations (5.9);
- \* the following criteria:
  - levels of use (numbers of people taking part);
  - frequency of use;
  - duration of use;
  - behaviour of the users;
  - requirements for facilities, space, etc.

The way an activity is conducted is often more relevant in decision-making than the activity itself. For example, motor sports organisations require access 'infrequently and for a short duration' and so may in fact have less impact than walkers who require access frequently, in large numbers, throughout the year. There should not be an automatic presumption against particular activities, therefore, **as long as the above points have been considered, all activities currently allowed on Trust land should be regarded as acceptable.** Having decided that an activity is acceptable, the user should be made welcome.

R59

However, experience has shown that attempts to accommodate too many activities on a property result in management and resourcing problems, and conflicts between users. Therefore **the Trust should resist pressure to accommodate too many activities on each property.**

R60

Treasure hunting with metal detectors should continue to be banned because of damage to archaeological sites. Paintball games can be allowed occasionally, under strict control, on certain sites, if required (see Part C).

## 4.1 INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND MANAGEMENT CONTROL

Although most activities can be regarded as acceptable, some require greater management control than others.

Individual freedom to undertake activities is highly valued. Activities which have relatively few damaging impacts, such as walking, running and informal field studies, can be managed without too many controls or restrictions; freedom of choice can be enjoyed to the full wherever possible.

By contrast, at the other end of the spectrum, many activities cannot be allowed without strict control because impacts on the environment and the character of the property could be significant and damaging, and the enjoyment and safety of other users compromised. For these activities individual freedom is usually subject to management control. These activities include freshwater fishing, shooting, camping, paintball games and motor vehicles.

Between these two extremes, individual freedom can be exercised, but will usually require some management control, depending on the type of property, the time of year, levels of use and staffing input. These activities include horse riding, canoeing, caving, rock climbing, model aircraft flying and cycling.

*R61* **Some activities need more management control than at present, and/or should be subject to review, particularly if new provision is being considered.** This is because at some sites unacceptable environmental damage is being caused and/or distress to other users, as well as compromise of wider access opportunities and other National Trust purposes. These activities include fishing, shooting, caving and potholing, dog walking, rock climbing (commercial training groups) and golf. This list will be subject to amendment.

## 4.2 GROUP USE

Use of Trust land by organised groups is increasing, particularly in the uplands. Group use is common in a variety of activities, such as walking, running and marathons, mountain biking, rock climbing, gully scrambling, canoeing and horse riding. Many of the damaging impacts of access are more serious for group than for individual use.

Groups may be acceptable and welcome on Trust land, especially if pre-arranged, but uncontrolled group use, without prior contact with Trust staff, is a particular cause for concern. The associated problems include:

- \* Monopoly of sites for a whole day, preventing use by others;
- \* selection of unsuitable sites for the level of skills of the group;
- \* increased chance of accidents;
- \* use of tenanted land without the tenant's permission;
- \* lack of scope for zoning or restrictions for conservation reasons.

These problems of uncontrolled use can only be resolved by making contact with the group. This has significant staffing implications.

Once contact is made, mechanisms for liaison and planning can be established. For example, the Upland Access Liaison Group and the Adventure and Environmental Awareness Group in the Lake District have the functions of identifying issues, publicising them, bringing interested parties together and agreeing management strategies, such as zoning and use of gullies. Groups also need to feel that the Trust is approachable and that there are benefits from making contact, so that respective needs may be accommodated.

**Staff should be allowed time to make contact with groups and their representative associations, at property, Regional and national levels.**

R62

### 4.3 COMMERCIAL USE

Records show that about 9% of the activities on Trust land sampled for this Review are 'commercial'. This term includes activities such as guided walks, for which a small management charge is made, and more obviously commercial enterprises such as cycle hire, camping and let trout fishing. Where the Trust retains control, commercial activities can provide a valuable contribution to property management and are acceptable, provided that they are assessed with reference to the principles and criteria listed earlier. Some commercial ventures are encouraged on tenanted farms as part of farm diversification. The use of Trust Basecamps for recreation and education was recommended by the Basecamp Review (National Trust, 1994).

Trust land is being used increasingly by other commercial operators, such as pony trekking establishments and management training centres. This use often causes problems similar to those already outlined relating to groups and does not contribute to management costs. **If commercial use is occurring off Rights of Way, local negotiation is needed to restrict use or plan acceptable levels of use,** impose zoning or other controls and seek contributions towards management costs. In some cases negotiation may also be needed on Rights of Way if use is excessive and is interfering with the enjoyment of others. Where practicable **the Trust should remain vigilant over planning proposals which may result in commercial use of Trust land, and react accordingly.**

R63

R64

Whether managed by the Trust or others, **the scope for large-scale commercial operations will be limited by the Trust's primary purposes,** especially impacts on the environment, nature conservation and other access needs. The pursuit of financial gain should not determine the availability of properties for the public.

R65

## CHAPTER 5 - PLANNING, MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCES

There has as yet been little long-term access planning in the National Trust and little formal consideration of how access is integrated with other purposes. There are several reasons for this. There is no clear national focus for the development of guidance on access and recreation issues, and indeed no co-ordinated national focus for access planning outside the Trust. There is a lack of access-related survey data, and little sharing of expertise on management and other issues. There is insufficient access detail in Trust property and Regional plans. Access planning has not been seen as a priority.

This chapter identifies means of addressing these needs and considers the resource implications of implementing this report.

### 5.1 STRATEGIC AND PROPERTY PLANNING

The need for good planning is emphasised throughout this report. There is much reference to assessment and evaluation, determining significance and acceptable change. Some new planning initiatives are needed, such as reviews of particular recreational activities, environmental assessments and Regional Access Strategies (see below) and in existing plans the rôle of access needs to be considered in more detail. Plans should take into account the principles for sustainable management outlined earlier.

Very little has been seen during this Review which could serve as a working example or model for access evaluations and plans. Guidance is needed, which may draw on the work of other organisations.

Checklists of relevant factors that should be considered, where appropriate, are provided in some of the tables in this report (for example Visitor Needs in Table 1, Sustainable Management in Table 4, Tourism Characteristics in Table 5, Traffic Considerations in Table 6 and Environmental Impacts in Table 8) and the impacts of individual activities are given in Part C. **These should be developed further into some specimen evaluations and plans by the Trust, or others.**

R66

Priorities for evaluations and plans might be as follows:

- \* Proposals for new access initiatives and new properties;
- \* sites where new opportunities are being sought;
- \* problem situations or suspected problems;
- \* sites where capital investment is proposed.

#### 1. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT PLANS

These are now extant for 80% of properties. The coverage of access tends to be brief and the plan usually aims to maintain the status quo.

**Access should be considered in more detail in Property Management Plans**, equivalent to the detail given to nature conservation, for example, and an increasing number of education plans. In particular, management issues need to be taken forward into projects, even if they are seemingly simple, such as 'make contact with training group leaders'. Priorities should be set for access projects with other projects and then considered fairly for resource allocation at Regional level.

R67

## 2. REGIONAL REPORTS AND PLANS

The objective of Regional Reports and Plans is to set out the way in which the Trust's purposes will be and have been realised. Large projects are singled out as examples. Access initiatives are not chosen to represent 'large projects' because they may involve activities spread across many properties and the sums of money involved are relatively small compared with those associated with historic houses. However, as access provision in the countryside is one of the chief ways of realising Trust purposes, some access projects could be exemplified.

Access issues are usually regarded as 'threats', 'constraints', 'weaknesses' and 'pressures'. These certainly need to be examined, but positive benefits and opportunities need to be presented too.

**Overall the profile of access should be raised in Regional Reports and Plans, recognising it as a major purpose.**

R68

## 3. REGIONAL ACCESS STRATEGIES

In order for access to be given full consideration, Regional Access Strategies should be prepared. These could be part of the Regional Report and Plan programme, or could stand alone. They should help to ensure that the individual character of properties is best realised, with suitable activities in the appropriate places, and that, to the Trust's best ability, needs are being met throughout a Region. Houses and gardens should be considered as well as countryside and, in collaboration with other access providers and managers, both Trust and non-Trust land.

Regional Access Strategies could identify:

- \* The distinctive and valuable access features of the Region - the natural and cultural resource;
- \* landscape and management processes essential for maintaining these features;
- \* the character of the 'access catchment' and features of the wider area;
- \* the main impacts of access on the environment;
- \* trends and predictions for future use and needs, including tourism-related planning developments by other agencies;
- \* the main needs of visitors;
- \* promotional and information strategies;
- \* objectives and management priorities or targets;
- \* funding requirements to meet objectives and targets.

R69 **The Trust should recognise the need for Regional Access Strategies.**

R70 There is a resource implication in producing such strategies, however. **A pilot strategy should be produced in 1996.** This will develop the scope, methodology and a suitable format, and examine the costs and benefits of such an approach.

#### 4. COAST AND COUNTRYSIDE STRATEGY PLANS

The purpose of Coast and Countryside Strategy Plans is to identify landscape that merits protection, taking a broad-brush approach across fairly large geographic areas. Landscape issues, including access, are identified and assessed. The existing format should provide a useful access appraisal, if there is emphasis on potential as well as problems and pressures.

R71 These plans could make a valuable contribution to Regional Access Strategies. **Access should continue to be included in Coast and Countryside Strategy Plans, emphasising opportunities and benefits as well as problems.**

#### 5. ACQUISITION IN STRATEGIC AND PROPERTY PLANNING

References have been made in this report to the particular benefits which acquisition can bring to the provision and management of access. These should be considered during the preparation of the plans outlined above, as opportunities arise, and include the following:

- \* Areas accessible by public transport (2.1);
- \* links to existing properties to provide easier accessibility by public transport (2.1);
- \* areas hard to get to - car-free properties and remote areas (1.1);
- \* areas easy to get to - countryside near towns (1.1);
- \* car parks - for future control, management or removal (2.1 and 5.3);
- \* foreshore and seabed leases, for better management of coastal access and recreation (2.2);
- \* existing shooting and fishing rights (Part C).

### 5.2 SURVEY AND MONITORING

There are very few survey and monitoring details on visitors and recreational use gathered for countryside properties, and even less collated to give a national picture of Trust land. There is a limited amount of information from some properties with entrance fees, car park ticket machines, permits and licences. The paucity of monitoring data for individual recreational activities is indicated throughout Part C.

While it would be impractical, and the benefits marginal, to survey and monitor all visitor and recreation activity on every property, there would be value in improving the current situation. The benefits would be:

- \* To establish trends and be better able to predict future needs;
- \* to quantify 'overuse' and be able to set limits on acceptable use;

- \* to provide sound reasons for altering management;
- \* to link numbers with observable impacts;
- \* to gauge the effectiveness of promotion campaigns, management mechanisms and/or codes of conduct;
- \* to provide justification for funding;
- \* to help target information and interpretive material to known audiences;
- \* to contribute to survey and monitoring of recreation by other agencies;
- \* to investigate people's values;
- \* to enable evaluation of access and environmental significance.

**Each property should identify, through the management plan, its own survey and monitoring requirements.** Some of this may be informed by Regional and national requirements. Initial suggestions for surveying and monitoring the impacts of individual activities are given in Part C. R72

Trends and predictions are relevant to countryside access, and forecasting, despite its difficulties and shortcomings, is an essential component of sustainable management. **The Trust should remain aware of national trends and predictions in recreational use, visitor values and needs and environmental impacts.** Trends for individual activities are given in Part C. R73

A national network of visitor survey points, on a representative sample of properties, would enable the Trust to monitor the changes and trends occurring in access and recreational use. This could be established and administered centrally with support from an appropriate research institute or consultancy. **Such a network should be established.** This proposal also features in the Travel Demand Management Study (Oscar Faber, 1994). R74

### 5.3 MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS

Most access is managed to some degree, even the 'informal' activities which account for most access on Trust land. The fact that at least 50 million visits a year are accommodated without any more serious impacts than outlined in this Report is testament to the value of management.

The main management mechanisms in use on Trust land are listed in Table 10, overleaf.

**Table 10 Access Management Mechanisms in Operation on National Trust Land**

- \* **Countryside staff** - contact visitors, implement other management mechanisms.
- \* **Specialist wardens** - organise particular activities (eg climbing, horse riding).
- \* **Honorary wardens, voluntary wardens, fishing bailiffs, keepers** - can perform some functions as per countryside staff.
- \* **Liaison with users and clubs for particular activities**, eg local riders' associations, liaison with fishing clubs and orienteers - identifies needs, suggests solutions, contributes to management.
- \* **Liaison with all users for a property or area**, eg all freshwater users - as above; sort out their own conflicting needs.
- \* **Regional Access Groups** involving other land owners, managers and representatives of user groups - zone the resource for different uses; produce codes of conduct.
- \* **National liaison** with user groups - identifies policy free from parochial interests; communicates issues to the properties.
- \* **Permits and Licences** - effect restrictions, ie controls on numbers, time, season and/or area, selected activities, eg fishing, boating, air activities, orienteering, shooting.
- \* **Access Agreements**
- \* **Zoning** within or between properties - affects restrictions on use. Can zone by time (time of day, days of week, time of year); space (areas where access allowed, areas which are 'no-go'), or condition (eg dry weather only for riders, spate for canoes, cold-weather bans for wildfowlers).
- \* **Codes of conduct** for individual activities - specify 'do's and don'ts' to varying degrees of sophistication.
- \* **Statements of Co-operation** for activities which can conflict, eg canoeing and fishing - specify 'do's and don'ts' aimed at reducing conflict.
- \* **Promotion, non-promotion** by the Trust, affects levels of use significantly. Compromised by promotion in non-Trust literature, without the Trust's knowledge.
- \* **Car parks**, presence, size and location, and amount charged are very frequently used to control the use a property receives.
- \* **Siting of access points and paths** - controls the type and level of use a particular area receives.
- \* **Condition of paths** - nature of path surface and maintenance - can encourage/discourage use.
- \* **Information** - signs, leaflets, articles, guided walks, open days etc.
- \* **Byelaws** - the Trust's legal framework for control of particular activities.

Problems of damage or conflict arise mainly as a result of insufficient staff time to make contact with users, assess impacts and plan and manage accordingly. These subjects are covered elsewhere in this chapter. The mechanism of permanent site closure has not yet been used for access reasons, but may possibly be needed in future (3.4). **Appropriate management mechanisms should be determined, properly resourced and implemented through the Property Management Plan.**

R75

Other comments on management mechanisms arising during the preparation of this Review are as follows:

R76

- \* Permits, licences and zoning all seem to work well. **A standard format and approach to permits and licences should be produced.** Zoning is acceptable to all users consulted, with a preference for voluntary restrictions.

- \* Some codes of conduct are good, some are not specific enough. Examples are given in Part C. **The Trust should prepare its own codes for some activities, eg fishing and rock climbing.**
- \* Codes of conduct may need to be more vigorously promoted if behaviour and practice are to be improved, eg arranging training days for young fishermen, cyclists or riders through local clubs, schools or youth clubs.
- \* There is a limit to the scope of management mechanisms. Most of those in Table 10 deal with the effects of problems rather than the cause. Other mechanisms can address the cause of problems, for example application of the precautionary approach (2.1), planning (5.1), liaison (5.5) and education (5.8).

## 5.4 LEGISLATION

The Review was asked to assess the desirability of any changes in the law governing access to the countryside. A paper setting out the legal framework for access, both in the terms of the National Trust Acts and national legislation, informed the Review (see Appendix III).

Only a limited study has been carried out. This indicates that current legislation does not compromise access to Trust properties and is generally satisfactory. There are access implications in various areas of law as follows:

- \* **National Trust Byelaws**, important to deter unauthorised use, currently being reviewed.
- \* **Section 23 National Trust Act 1971** (2.2, 2h) relating to fencing on commons, subject to a court opinion.
- \* The **highways legislation** and **safety legislation** are satisfactory, but interpretation and implementation are problematic (1.3 and 5.9).
- \* The **Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994** creates a new offence of 'trespass with the intention of disrupting a lawful activity'. There have been concerns expressed that the law regarding aggravated trespass could compromise access if unreasonably interpreted.
- \* The **proposed agricultural tenancy legislation**, under which Farm Business Tenancies will be established, allows for objectives other than 'good husbandry', with consequent opportunities for access.
- \* The forthcoming **Environment Act** will establish new purposes for National Parks and incorporate and amend the remit of the National Rivers Authority into a new Environment Agency. The consequences for access and recreation will need to be assessed.
- \* New **common land legislation**, if pursued, would have significant implications for the rights of access across all commons.

**The Trust should continue to monitor legislative changes relevant to access and seek to influence change when appropriate.**

## 5.5 PARTNERSHIP AND LIAISON

The importance of partnership and liaison with users, other providers and policy-making bodies is emphasised frequently in this report. National Trust access management is best viewed in the context of surrounding land and the wider geographic region. Trust purposes are more effectively served when the goodwill and co-operation of others are forthcoming, and the Trust should vigorously represent its interests to policy-making bodies.

Effective liaison is dependent on making contact early before developments proceed or objectives are formulated; being open, honest and receptive to others' opinions but promoting Trust principles and opinions; and advertising joint initiatives and being seen as a partner.

### 1. LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURS

Local people have most opportunity to make their views known, and the largest stake in the Trust's management. They are the most vocal: people dislike change, dislike being 'steam rolled' and feeling powerless, dislike large organisations and often dislike 'experts'. Their needs have not always been taken into sufficient account in the past, but equally the Trust can be deflected from good management by placing too much emphasis of them. Management Planning should consider their requirements, through consultation, and decide which ones can best be met, where and how. Trust staff should then stand by the resultant objectives.

Although the number and function of Local Committees has decreased and altered in recent years, they may still serve a valuable advisory function in representing local people's needs and concerns and disseminating Trust policy. The development of 'Friends of ...' is also an effective means of establishing dialogue with local communities.

*R79* **The needs of local communities should be assessed, involving representatives in the early stages of planning processes and keeping them well informed.**

There is a considerable resource implication in developing these links and inevitably a local assessment has to be made about the level of contact possible.

### 2. TENANTS, COMMONERS AND GRAZIERS

Partnership with these members of the local community is obviously very important. There have been various initiatives recently to involve them more with Trust concerns, eg meetings, dinners, newsletters and contract work, but there is still a legacy of different objectives for farmland and in-hand land, and on some properties limited countryside staff involvement.

If increased access opportunities are to be extended to farmland, as suggested, tenants will form a closer relationship with the Trust and be more concerned with its primary purposes.

*R80* **The Trust should continue to involve tenants more fully in all its main objectives, including access, via Farm Plans, regular contact with staff and other means.**

### 3. DONORS

Donors may impose conditions on access and therefore changes in policy and practice need to be discussed with them or their descendants. One of the Principles of access endorsed by the Trust's Council in 1986 (Appendix V) refers specifically to memoranda of wishes: 'The Trust endeavours to improve the terms of the agreement established in a memorandum of wishes, if access is considered inadequate'. This principle should still apply.

### 4. ACCESS AND RECREATION LIAISON GROUPS

There are many examples of liaison groups in which the Trust participates, for single activities or multiple activities across an area. These groups assess needs and conflicts, agree zoning strategies, organise monitoring, deal with new demands and prepare codes of conduct. **The Trust should continue to regard Liaison Groups as a valuable management mechanism and initiate the formation of more groups to meet Regional and property needs.**

R81

### 5. LOCAL AUTHORITIES INCLUDING NATIONAL PARKS AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Many policy-making and management bodies are key partners in planning and managing access and the Trust already works closely with them. However, Leisure Landscapes (Clark et al, 1994) identifies inadequacies in liaison between government and non-government bodies: 'new and energetic forms of interaction' are needed.

Two-way exchange is obviously necessary. These bodies will make an important contribution to Trust access policies and strategies. Equally, the Trust needs to promote its own vision, objectives and standards. Once access policies are identified Regionally and nationally, they should be presented to government bodies to help further change which will benefit the Trust.

**The Trust should continue to work closely with government agencies and other organisations involved in access, representing Trust standards and requirements more vigorously.**

R82

### 6. LINKS WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION

Regular contact is maintained with appropriate EU Directorates and the Trust benefits from grants available from its funding programmes. Funds have contributed to visitor facilities and the conversion of buildings to holiday cottages, for example. In some cases proposals have been made without adequately assessing need or the likely effects on the environment. Such links should be continued but projects should be fully assessed and not grant-led.

## 5.6 INFORMATION

The provision of information on countryside access, such as leaflets, information boards, maps and guides, is patchy both at Regional and property levels. There is very little information for individual recreational activities.

Provision of helpful and interesting information, where appropriate, can enhance the visitor's enjoyment and experience, contribute to a welcoming approach, promote responsible behaviour and influence expectations. More and better quality information is needed.

R83 **Existing information on properties should be evaluated** and improved or rationalised as necessary, with an emphasis on positive signing.

R84 **Additional information should be provided in appropriate places, particularly on where to go, what to do and reasons for restrictions. More explanation of natural processes in the countryside and land uses, past and present, is required.** The profile of countryside management, including access, should be raised at a national level.

The type of information which would enhance visitor experience is listed in Table 11, below.

**Table 11 - Examples of Access-related Information Needs**

- \* More welcoming signs at entrances (helpful information as well as byelaw-related restrictions).  
Small and inexpensively produced property panels.
- \* Countryside visitor leaflets describing where to go in the area, county or region.
- \* Information leaflets on the interest of properties (including reasons for restrictions).
- \* Local leaflets on particular themes, eg heathland grazing, off-shore wildlife, local farming and rhododendron control.
- \* Information on public transport and travel in the area without the car.
- \* Better directional signing for paths.
- \* National leaflets and codes of practice on selected access-related topics, eg fishing, grazing.
- \* A national Access Guide.
- \* National, up-to-date and digestible leaflets on Trust policies.
- \* Property newsletters for tenants and the local community.
- \* Continuing use of temporary notices describing management or topical interests.

Information requirements could be identified in Regional Access Strategies or in Interpretive Plans, closely linked with marketing (see below). More use could be made of information packs produced for schools as interpretive material for the general public (eg on farming and conservation).

Ownership boundaries shown on Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 and 1:25,000 maps are a valuable and readily available source of information on the extent of the Trust's land holdings. The arrangement agreed with the Ordnance Survey (see Estate Management Manual, National Trust, 1992) is that all inalienable land should be shown, but this is not consistently achieved, thus restricting the comprehensiveness of the information. **Boundary**

R85 **maps should be sent to the Ordnance Survey more regularly**, including maps of existing property not yet submitted, notwithstanding the need on some properties to provide no further promotion.

## 5.7 PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY

Marketing and promotion of the countryside involves identifying, anticipating and satisfying the needs and requirements of visitors as far as is consistent with other objectives. Survey and monitoring are important components of marketing.

The Trust has a list of Property Marketing Categories, identifying the degree to which individual properties should be promoted, which mainly applies to houses and gardens. **This should be extended to countryside properties** as part of a fuller access strategy. Some areas of countryside would be considered as fragile and vulnerable in the same way as historic houses in the 'sensitive' category. R86

A great deal of publicity for the Trust's countryside is given by external bodies and publishers, and the Trust needs to work with and influence these groups for the benefit of fragile countryside properties. An example of this process at work is the three-way agreement between the Trust, the Peak District National Park and the East Midlands Tourist Board not to promote Dovedale, which is already under very considerable pressure from visitors.

Promotion or non-promotion strategies can be an effective means of influencing levels of use. However, they can be compromised by external guidebook publishers and compilers who make no contact with the Trust. **Responsibility should be identified at Head Office and in the Regions for closer working with external publishers.** R87

## 5.8 COUNTRYSIDE EDUCATION

The aims for Countryside Education are set out in a Council Paper of 1991, 'The National Trust and Education: Recent Developments':

- \* To provide opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment and skills needed to protect and improve the environment.
- \* To encourage pupils to examine and interpret the environment from a variety of perspectives.
- \* To arouse pupils' awareness and curiosity about the environment and encourage active participation in resolving environmental problems.

Subsequently even more emphasis has been placed on this aspect of the Trust's work, for example in Medium Term Plans and through the 'Minerva' (life-long learning) initiative.

The scope of the Countryside Education Programme is set out in Table 12.

**Table 12 Scope of the National Trust's Countryside Education Programme**

- \* Supports a National Countryside Education Officer to guide and develop the programme.
- \* Appoints property/area based education officers to run increasingly wide ranging programmes for schools and colleges.
- \* Produces teacher resource material for selected coast and countryside properties.
- \* Publishes thematic resource books for teachers, eg on landscape and coastal issues.
- \* Runs Coast or Countryside Guardianship schemes targeted at schools close to Trust properties which involve pupils in a range of curriculum related activities under the supervision of Trust staff.
- \* Produces free leaflets for teachers and children on aspects of the Trust's work in the countryside.
- \* Provides bases at 25 sites for use by visiting schools, including a residential centre at Stackpole.
- \* Identifies a network of 'key' houses and countryside sites for education, currently 5-6 per region, according to set criteria (see Environment Education Policy, May 1992).
- \* Promotes Education Group Membership offering free entry to members.
- \* Provides opportunities for training in the delivery of outdoor education at national, regional and property level.
- \* Maintains and develops contacts with other organisations involved in environmental and countryside education.

Countryside Education presents a direct way of promoting understanding of the Trust's purposes and rôle in countryside management. It also enables whole groups of people to benefit from Trust property, who otherwise might never come. Importantly it helps bridge the gap between 'town and country' as noted in 2.2, 2g. Education is now increasingly being undertaken by people of all ages. **The Trust should continue its strong commitment to the Education Programme and recognise its benefit to access.** Informal education is also greatly valued (see Field Studies in Part C).

R88

## 5.9 VISITOR SAFETY

Duty of care, in relation to visitor safety, is established under national legislation (Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984, Unfair Contract Terms Act 1977, Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992) and the Trust places great emphasis on meeting its obligations.

About one hundred accidents to visitors at countryside properties are recorded each year. The principal causes are falls from height, drowning, slips and trips. Other causes include falling objects (rocks and branches); hypothermia and heat exhaustion; animals, insects and pathogenic micro-organisms. Slips and trips account for the greatest number of accidents.

As part of the Statement of Intent contained within its Health and Safety Policy, the Trust has the following key objective for visitor safety:

'The Trust will endeavour to ensure that, while meeting its obligations under the National Trust Acts, all practicable measures are taken to minimise risks to its visitors, whether arising from its own activities, the characteristics of its historic buildings or the features of the natural landscape in its care.'

The most important mechanism for implementing this policy is the Property Audit, which is a form of structured inspection designed, among other things, to identify possible sources of accidents and evaluate the risks to visitors. Local decisions are then made on the appropriate precautions, taking into account the number and type of visitor, the nature of the property and the Trust's conservation obligations. Precautions may include:

- \* Physical safeguards which prevent or discourage access to a hazard;
- \* physical measures which enable safe access;
- \* supervision of visitors on Trust properties;
- \* provision of information through signs and leaflets.

This duty of care presents dilemmas for both people and place. Overly obtrusive safeguards can compromise people's sense of freedom and adventure and limit appreciation that land and water are hazardous. Indeed the Court confirmed, in the *Brimham Rocks* case (*Shaw v The National Trust* 1991) that the law does not impose on an occupier of land a duty to warn people of dangers which may reasonably be assumed to be obvious to them. People should learn for themselves how to move safely in the countryside, and the Trust can help: several initiatives are already in train and the centenary campaign 'Minerva' (life-long learning) is another opportunity.

Safety works can damage archaeological and nature conservation interests, for example making unstable cliffs and old trees safe. Also, introducing an alien sophistication to wild places can militate against the very qualities it is the Trust's duty to preserve.

These predicaments are becoming acute because of the greater number of visitors, many of whom are more active; the increased use by outdoor pursuit centres with poorly qualified supervisors; and a rise in violent and dangerous behaviour by visitors. Most importantly, society is becoming progressively litigious, transferring blame for accidents and making a more demanding interpretation of what constitutes reasonable care.

These dilemmas compromise access. **Clearly the Trust must continue its prime duty of care, but risk assessment mechanisms should critically assess the balance of responsibility between landowner and visitor. The Trust should foster education to help people become 'countrywise'; and should attempt, with other countryside agencies, to influence the public perception of what constitutes reasonable care.**

R89

## 5.10 CHARGING

The Trust has the power under its Acts, to make 'such reasonable charges ... as they may from time to time determine' to any of its property except 'to any common or to any other property to which the public has a right of access at the date when such property was acquired by the National Trust (National Trust Act 1907 section 30). However, the Trust may charge 'for the use by the public of any facilities, services, parking places', (National Trust Act 1971 section 23(3)) even when these are on common land.

## 1. INFORMAL ACCESS ON FOOT

The current practice is to make no charge for informal access<sup>2</sup> on foot. This is regarded by many as a fundamental aspect of individual freedom. It is also welcoming and non-discriminatory.

R90 This long-standing practice has led to an expectation which must not be undermined. There are, however, a few places where for example, tradition or the nature of the property enable the Trust to make a charge without undermining this expectation. **There should be a general presumption in favour of making no charge for informal access on foot.**

The majority of those who enjoy this free access do not realise the huge cost to the Trust of managing the countryside. To raise awareness and recoup some of the cost, the Trust wherever practicable, should charge for car parks.

Other forms of support, for example through appeals and donations, should continue to be exploited, alongside the raising of awareness of the costs of managing the countryside. In particular the costs of specific programmes of work recently undertaken or proposed at individual properties will help people understand the benefits of management.

## 2. OTHER TYPES OF ACCESS

R91 **Where there is a reasonable expectation to pay or no tradition of free access, charges may be made to cover administrative and management costs and contribute to property management.**

The Trust will normally charge for the following:

- \* Activities which are regulated or controlled;
- \* special facilities, however modest;
- \* events;
- \* commercial use;
- \* educational use involving Trust input.

Examples are fishing, boat launching, orienteering, horse riding, hang gliding and model aircraft. Conversely, individual and small groups of cyclists should not have to pay.

When considering a levy, account should be taken of the possible effects of displacing the activity on to neighbouring land and no charges should be made which interfere with established rights of access.

The costs noted in 1 above are equally relevant to other types of access, and thus so are payments for car parks and the need to engender further financial support.

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2 'Informal access' is defined here as access which is managed informally, ie not organised by permit, licence or other means, not conducted by an organised group or commercial establishment, and not carried out according to the rules of a sport.

## 5.11 STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

The responsibility for access management involves Managing Agents and staff in several departments of Regional Offices, with input and advice from Head Office. However, most management is carried out by countryside staff. The following staff spend major parts of their time on the management of access:

* Countryside staff (wardens & foresters)	422
* Footpath workers	28
* Education/Interpretation staff	14
* Riding wardens	1
* Climbing wardens	1

In addition, 14,000 volunteers play a key role in countryside management.

There was a 44% increase in the numbers of countryside staff between 1984 and 1990, partly due to higher management standards and partly to increased land ownership. This increase has now slowed, due to current financial strictures.

On average it is estimated that countryside staff spend 30%-40% of their time on access-related management. Management for walking, such as the maintenance of paths, takes up 22% of staff time and up to 80% at some properties.

The current situation is that many staff are now over-stretched. This is because management standards continue to rise, countryside staff responsibilities are broadening, and new acquisitions continue. Importantly, the access-related trends described in Part C are placing ever-increasing demands on staff time.

As this report makes recommendations for providing more access and enhancing the quality of existing access, there are significant implications for staff time, for Regional as well as countryside staff (see 5.13 below).

Initiatives which could help, other than increasing countryside staff numbers, include further integration of forestry staff with wardens, thereby giving the former more involvement with access management; and delegation of more access projects to volunteers and regular users, such as specialist wardening of a particular activity and monitoring.

Training has been given in various access-related subjects such as path repair, visitor care, interpretive planning and countryside education and is essential for skills development and the exchange of ideas and good practice. There is a need to **continue with the programme of training already in operation, and to provide training in new fields**, particularly management and strategic planning, evaluation of impacts and visitor surveys.

R92

## 5.12 FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Part of the Review brief was to consider the financial implications of access. This has not been done adequately, due to current accounting procedures which make it difficult to distinguish access-related costs from other countryside costs, and/or countryside access from house-related access.

The information below merely provides a guide to the scale of income and its sources.

## 1. EXPENDITURE

In the year up to February 1994 £44 million was spent on Trust properties (total routine expenditure). Of this, 34% (£15.1 million) was spent on open spaces, estates and woods. It is not possible to estimate the proportion of this figure that is spent on access. However, it is known that staff costs are the most significant element of expenditure, and that staff devote approximately 40% of their time to access. From this it can be estimated that expenditure on access is at least £6 million per annum.

Expenditure on capital projects is greatest for path repair (£546,000 in 1994/5), buildings for visitor use (£605,000), car parks, toilets and outdoor information (panels, leaflets etc).

## 2. INCOME

Income is received from a number of sources:

- \* Visitors to open space properties, largely through car park fees and donation boxes (up to £80,000 per property but generally a few hundred pounds a year).
- \* National Trust Enterprises in the countryside: tea rooms, shops and holiday cottages.
- \* permits and licences, mainly for fishing, shooting and boating - average approx £300 per property per annum for these activities, up to £7000. Nil or negligible from most activities;
- \* grant aid: in the 12 months to February 1994 the Trust as a whole received £16.34 million in grant aid. Grants specifically for the countryside include:

Countryside Commission	£1.5 million
Countryside Council for Wales	£251,000
Department of Environment, Northern Ireland	£329,000
Forestry Commission	£453,000
Tourist Boards	£142,000

The Woodland Grant Scheme, Countryside Stewardship, Tir Cymen and Environmentally Sensitive Area grants all include payments for access to the Trust and its tenants. It is not possible to break down the various elements of these payments but the figures do give an impression of scale. The level of grant aid for access-related work is declining in England, as the priorities of the Countryside Commission change.

The validity of accepting these grants is sometimes questioned, but because of the very high costs of access provision and the benefit the nation receives, the Trust should take full advantage of grants and payments, notwithstanding its purpose to provide access.

- \* Sponsorship from companies for countryside work is an important source of income eg British Gas sponsorship over 5 years is supporting many access projects.

\* Countryside appeal funds which, in part, contribute to access, achieved the following results in the period February 1994 - January 1995:

Enterprise Neptune	£4,360,000
Lake District	£515,000
Yorkshire Moors and Dales	£159,000
South Downs	£109,000
Snowdonia	£80,000
Derbyshire & Peak District	£36,000
Mourne Mountains	£25,000
Shropshire Hills	£20,000

The Enterprise Neptune Appeal includes legacies of £3.25 million.

Detailed financial information on access is required in order to advertise the need for resources and the amount the Trust already spends; to help with estimating the cost of access projects; and to justify funds from internal and external sources. Trust accounting systems currently provide insufficiently detailed information for this requirement.

**In order to estimate the scale of resources related to access, financial reporting systems should be redesigned.**

R93

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION

The recommendations of this report have been assessed and those with financial implications, two-thirds of the total, summarised and categorised, as listed in Table 13. The categories necessarily overlap, but the list could serve as a checklist and help in the assessment of priorities by Head Office, Regions and properties, recognising that Regions have varying circumstances and needs. Many of these recommendations, such as planning and liaison, will benefit other Trust purposes, as well as access.

It is not possible for this report to set priorities for access needs in the context of all the competing claims for resources, as only access has been reviewed; this is for Regions and Head Office to do, with knowledge of other priorities. For the same reason no suggestions are given as to the phasing or timing of the recommendations, nor the implications for new sources of finance as opposed to reallocation of existing resources.

**Regions should assess the financial implications of implementing the recommendations through Property Management Plans and the Regional Access Strategy, probably basing priorities on those given in Table 13.**

R94

**Likewise, Head Office should assess implications through national and departmental plans.**

R95

**Table 13 Summary of Recommendations with Resource Implications**

\* = suggested highest priority

<b>MAIN RESPONSIBILITY</b>			<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>IMPLICATION</b>
<b>PROP. REG. HQ</b>				
			<b>Staff contact with visitors *</b>	
Y			Explanation (R84)	Staff time
Y			Being welcoming (R58)	
Y			Investigating conflicts (R57)	
			<b>Liaison and partnership with:</b>	
Y	Y		Tenants * (R23, R80)	Staff time
Y	Y	Y	User groups * (R62)	
	Y	Y	Government agencies * (R82)	
	Y	Y	Guidebook Editors and Publishers (R87)	
	Y	Y	Researchers (R66)	
Y	Y	Y	Other landowners/access providers * (R82)	
			<b>Planning</b>	
			More reference to access, and incorporation of sustainable management principles in: Property Management Plans * (R67) Regional Reports & Plans (R68) Coast and Countryside Strategy Plans (R71)	Staff time or contract staff
Y	Y	Y		
Y	Y		Regional Access Strategies * (R69, R70)	Some savings
	Y	Y	Evaluations & appraisals for: visitor facilities (especially new ones) * (R16)	
	Y	Y	path repair (R19)	
	Y	Y	individual activities, including zoning plans* (R61)	
	Y	Y	Contribute to plans by others: (Catchment Management Plans (R26), Marine Nature Reserves (R29) and Coastal Zone Management Plans)* (R29)	Staff time or contract staff

<b><u>MAIN RESPONSIBILITY</u></b>			<b><u>RECOMMENDATION</u></b>	<b><u>IMPLICATION</u></b>
<b>PROP. REG. HQ</b>				
<b>Y</b>			<b><u>Property Management Work</u></b>	
			Path repair and maintenance, gates, stiles etc, especially on Rights of Way* (R6)	Staff time and materials.
<b>Y</b>			Safety work * (R89)	Some saving when precautionary principle is applied.
<b>Y</b>			New routes to install/maintain on: farmland * (R22) Rights of Way* (R4) other	Staff time and materials.
<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>		Car Parks - in due course some rationalisation and reduction (R16)	Net saving
<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>		Other works relatively minor	
			<b><u>Survey, Monitoring, Research, Projects</u></b>	
<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	Visitor needs * (R2)	
<b>Y</b>		<b>Y</b>	Visitor numbers * (R73, R74)	Staff time and contract work
<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	Environmental (R13)/archaeology (R50)/nature conservation impacts * (R36)	
	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	Traffic study * (R74)	
<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>		Allemansraat pilot (R25)	
		<b>Y</b>	Collating existing research and disseminating * (R73)	
		<b>Y</b>	Dilemmas re safety work (R89)	
			<b><u>Visitor Information</u></b>	
<b>Y</b>			Rationalise and improve on present provision, especially signs * (R6, R83)	Staff time and specialist writers
	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	New information on where to go * (R84) what to do * (R84)	
<b>Y</b>			Better information on reasons for restrictions * (R84)	
<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>		Information on countryside processes & land uses * (R84)	

<b>MAIN RESPONSIBILITY</b>			<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>IMPLICATION</b>
<b>PROP. REG. HQ</b>				
		Y	<b>Information contd...</b>	as previous page
		Y	'Issues' leaflets (R84)	
			Information for individual activities and codes of conduct (R77)	
			<b>Visitor Facilities</b>	Net saving
	Y		Appraisals for new and existing facilities - see above	
Y	Y		Paths and car parks - see above	
	Y		Sitting places eg "Millennium Greens" (R8)	
Y	Y		Minor facilities, eg gear stores (R9)	
			<b>Countryside Education</b>	
Y	Y	Y	Continuing with present commitment (R88)	
			<b>Training</b>	
	Y	Y	Various needs to be identified, mainly for property staff, and staff with new responsibilities. Continuing with present commitment. (R92)	
			<b>Direct Expenditure/Saving</b>	
Y	Y		Closing car parks/fewer new car parks	
Y	Y		Loss of income from shooting and fishing	
Y	Y		More grants, eg for farmland diversification?	
Y	Y		More income from permits, licences, etc especially from 'commercial' use	
			<b>Acquisition (R10)</b>	