

ERYRI NATIONAL PARK RECREATION STRATEGY

2023 - 2028



■ Parc Cenedlaethol Eryri
■ Eryri National Park



Record of Input and Review

Name	Date planned/completed
Initial input from relevant internal staff: Partnership Manager, Head of Engagement, Heads of Wardens and Head of Conservation and Agriculture	June 2022
Initial Input from Chief Executive	
Management Team	January 2023
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Thank you to everyone for their collective contribution to this strategy.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Recreation Strategy

Section 1 of this strategy will set out how we will fulfil the relevant Outcomes of the National Park Management Plan (Cynllun Eryri) and in Section 2 it will set out our policy position and any relevant actions in relation to specific recreational activities. The strategy will be concurrent with current Welsh Government policies affecting all aspects of recreational activities and access relevant to the National Park, which includes its key role in the health and well-being agenda through the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The Strategy introduces a series of strategic Outcomes and Actions which will be addressed over the next five years. It is important to note that this document has the ability to adapt to any future changes that may be made to the National Park's Management Plan in terms of recreational management. This document has also considered the effects of the Covid pandemic and changing patterns of use experienced by local communities and visitors alike for access and recreation and the value of those recreational networks for Health & Well-being.

Section 2 is organised according to individual activities; some are cross-cutting, have been updated, and identified as being vital in providing sustainable recreation management for one of the nation's most iconic areas. Setting our clear policy statements for these activities and delivering on the identified actions will help capitalise upon the positive aspects of recreation whilst managing other aspects such as increasing traffic levels, localised habitat degradation, conflicting land use and the dilution of Eryri's sense of place. A number of actions addressed do cross-over and are relevant to other activities.

Although published and coordinated by the Eryri National Park Authority, the Strategy is relevant to all those communities and stakeholders who may be affected by recreational activities, particularly those who are closely involved in managing, promoting, and taking part in those activities. Section 3 sets out how we will implement, monitor and review the strategy. Accordingly, the Outcomes and Actions presented here should be implemented jointly with partner organisations taking forward agreed principles and actions. The Authority will provide leadership if progress is lacking in any aspect of the Strategy's content – either through direct action, by way of Officer intervention or establishing effective and targeted partnerships where appropriate with other organisations and stakeholders to manage specific issues.

It is accepted that not all Actions may be completed within the initial 5 years; this strategy follows the original Recreational Strategy document 2012 – 2017 and its aims must follow in the relevant sections of the Cynllun Eryri (2020-2025) and also our partners' ways of working. It is a Strategy based on positive ambition with sustainable outcomes.



Special Qualities

Special Qualities are the defining characteristics of a National Park; they are distinctive and pronounced and set the area apart. Although some qualities may be present in areas outside the Park boundary, it is within the boundaries that they are most prevalent and marked. Providing a definitive list is difficult as many aspects, such as Eryri's inspirational features tend to be intangible and perceived and appreciated differently by individuals. However, through consultation and discussion with organisations and communities, a range of Special Qualities have been identified as important and distinctive to the area. They are:

1. Diverse landscapes: the diversity of high-quality landscapes and coastal areas within a small geographic area - ranging from coast to rolling uplands to the rugged mountains for which Eryri is famed.
2. Community cohesion: the robust sense of community cohesion, belonging and vibrancy which combine to give a strong 'sense of place.'
3. Vibrancy of the Welsh language: as the primary language in many social and professional environments. This aspect is evident in local place names that reflect the area's cultural heritage.
4. Inspiration for the Arts: an area which has inspired some of the nation's most notable culture, folklore, art, literature and music, an influence which continues to the present day.
5. Tranquility and solitude: the opportunity for people to understand and enjoy the National Park actively, whilst maintaining areas of tranquility and solitude, thus promoting aspects of health, well-being, and personal reflection
6. Extensive recreation: opportunities for recreation, leisure and learning for people of all ages and ability.
7. Historic landscapes: landscapes and townscapes which chart human interaction over centuries, from Neolithic times to the present day. This is evident in archaeological remains, place and field names, oral and written history, and present-day land management practices. Eryri's architectural heritage is reflected in the density of Listed Buildings and the wider historic environment.
8. Renowned Geology: complex, varied, and renowned geology, vital in influencing the disciplines of geology and geography internationally.
9. Internationally important species and habitats: varied biodiversity reflecting Eryri's landscapes, geology, land management practices and climate. Some species and habitats are of national and international significance, for example species which are remnants of the last Ice- Age, providing a glimpse of semi-Arctic habitats. Eryri is the most southerly point in the UK for many such species.



Scope

For the purposes of this document, recreation is defined as “any leisure activity being undertaken for enjoyment.” Recreation activities may also be termed as active or passive/non-active. Fundamentally seeking `recreation` and enjoyment is a fundamental part of the human psyche in terms of health and well-being.

Although there is recognition that certain areas are used more intensely or recreation, most notably yr Wyddfa, the Ogwen Valley (Carneddau and Glyderau) and the Conwy Valley and the ‘honey-pot’ villages of northern Eryri such as Capel Curig, Betws y Coed, Beddgelert, Llanberis, Nant Peris and Rhyd Ddu. Certain other areas in the south and east of the National Park also find themselves busier such as Cader Idris, Harlech, Dyffryn Ardudwy, Aberdyfi, Dolgellau and Llyn Tegid, Y Bala.

However, no areas are explicitly focused upon within the Strategy as the pressures facing those areas are similar in nature, although their scale may vary from place to place. Specific action plans will be developed as necessary to address such instances – the role of this document is to provide a Park-wide strategy for sustainable recreation management. In addition, trying to define a single area or specific activity using linear borders may deflect attention away from the Strategy’s content and only prove to be academic whilst detracting from the ethos of appreciation and enjoyment of Eryri’s Special Qualities.

Whilst the strategy focuses on the NP area, we acknowledge the importance of areas outside our boundary including nearby towns, three adjacent Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the UNESCO World Heritage site of Harlech Castle the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage status, and parts of the Dyfi Biosphere Area. We will work with other Local Authorities and stakeholders on cross boundary issues when required.



Strategic Context

This plan will be delivered in the context of a number of organisational and local/national strategies as well as legislation including:

- Cynllun Eryri 2020
- SNPA Wellbeing Objectives and Corporate Work Program
- Gwynedd and Eryri Visitor Economy Strategy
- Well-Being & Future Generations Act (2015)
- Highways Act 1980
- Countryside Act 1968
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Countryside & Rights of way Act (Wales) 2000
- Environment Act 1995
- Equality Act 2010
- Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIP) – Gwynedd and Conwy Councils
- National Parks Act 1949
- Gwynedd & Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan to 2035



Background

Eryri National Park

Designated in 1951 following the Hobhouse Report (1947) which was the basis for the establishment of all National Parks in Britain, and Eryri National Park (NP) was the first to be established in Wales and is the most extensive. The NP covers 2,132 square km (823 square miles) and stretches from Conwy in the north towards the Aran Mountains in the east. Its boundary then follows the Dyfi Valley as its southernmost point towards Cardigan Bay in the west, before following the coastline back towards the slate quarrying areas of the north and to the north coast. It contains Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon) the highest mountain in Wales.

The National Park Authority has two statutory duties to:

Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage of the area.

Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public.

The National Park Authority is also duty-bound, in pursuing these purposes to foster the economic and social wellbeing of local communities.

It is also important that any activity or development that takes place within Eryri National Park should be mindful of the `Sandford Principle`:

“If there is a conflict between protecting the environment and people enjoying the environment that cannot be resolved by management, then protecting the environment must always take priority.”



The Special Qualities of the National Park define our reason for designation as a National Park in 1951, they are:

1. Diverse Landscapes
2. Community Cohesion
3. Vibrancy of the Welsh Language
4. Inspiration for the Arts
5. Tranquility and Solitude
6. Extensive Recreational Opportunities
7. Historic Landscapes
8. Renowned Geology
9. Internationally important species and habitats

Whilst relating to many of the above Special Qualities, this strategy directly concerns itself with Special Quality 6 i.e., Extensive Recreational Opportunities and its potential impact on the other special qualities.



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In terms of governance, the National Park Authority has three strategic plans:

- A National Park Management Plan (Cynllun Eryri 2020-25): a partnership document that outlines a shared vision for the area.
- Local Development Plan: as the local planning authority for the National Park area, the LDP seeks to express Park purposes and duties in terms of land use, planning and development policies.
- Well-being Statement: which sets out how we utilise our resources as an organisation and sets priorities for the work of the Authority.

Cynllun Eryri and the LDP have a shared vision which has been agreed through wide consultation with many of our partner communities and organisations, which is:

A culturally rich National Park with a thriving green economy, world class visitor experience and a major contributor to the well-being of our nation.

By 2045 Eryri will continue to be a protected and evolving landscape, safeguarded, and enhanced to provide a rich, varied, and resilient natural and historic environment; providing wellbeing benefits locally, nationally, and internationally.

National Park purposes will be delivered through a diverse and prospering economy adapted to the challenges of climate change and founded on natural resources – its landscape qualities, opportunities for learning and enjoyment, cultural and natural heritage.

With thriving bilingual and inclusive communities, partnership working will have demonstrated that more can be achieved through working together.

Communities will have adopted innovative solutions in a changing world – a low carbon economy will have strengthened residents' link with the environment, providing a better standard of living and ensuring Eryri's reputation as an internationally renowned National Park and one of the nation's breathing spaces.

This Recreation Strategy will be guided by the above vision and the principles set within Cynllun Eryri.



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Recreation in Eryri

For generations Eryri has provided a world-renowned recreational venue and a long association with a wide variety of outdoor activities using promoted routes, the Rights of Way network and under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) `access land`. Footfall figures are substantial and the most recent visitor monitoring figures (2019) for the mountainous areas indicate that over 560,000 thousand people alone visited Yr Wyddfa itself, 140,000 in the Ogwen Valley and 75,000 on Cader Idris.

The area is also of significant importance to local communities for outdoor recreation, and health and well-being.

The area was influential particularly during the early days of mountaineering, an association which was endorsed by Sir John Hunt and his team before the first successful ascent of Everest. Countless artists have gained inspiration from the Special Qualities of the NP. During the nineteenth century the area was visited by leading scientists such as Adam Sedgwick, Charles Darwin, and James Hutton, who were all influential in developing our understanding of our natural and physical environment and the study of Eryri's biodiversity, geomorphology and geology are still very popular leisure, recreational and educational activities.



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Initially recreational activities had little impact upon the environment and communities of Eryri, mainly because they were not accessible to the wider public. Over the past 60 years with increasing leisure time and the area's accessibility from the centres of population particularly in the northwest and the midlands of England, Eryri has become increasingly popular for an ever-widening range of recreational activities, from our coast to the mountain peaks, gaining a reputation as one of the UK's premier adventure destinations.

Whilst the health and economic benefits of recreation are significant and encourage people to get outdoors, increasing numbers of users in specific areas can be detrimental to those features that the NP is tasked to protect.

Most `people pressure` is felt in the uplands of northern Eryri, primarily Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon) due to the number of people enjoying its summit and vistas. Elsewhere villages such as Betws y Coed and Beddgelert can suffer from acute traffic congestion particularly during the summer months. Such intense and concentrated activity can inadvertently harm Eryri's Special Qualities which people come to enjoy, for example tranquillity which sometimes creates unease between user groups, local communities and landowners, and their need to sustain a viable agricultural economy and a protected landscape. This document seeks to balance people's recreational needs with the need to conserve and enhance Eryri's Special Qualities for future generations.



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Due to its longstanding reputation for providing diverse opportunities, the area benefits from a good recreation infrastructure which is enjoyed by millions of individuals annually; notwithstanding those issues relating to the upkeep and maintenance of those resources. The National Park, its hinterland, coast, and periphery also host a number of outdoor activities, education centres and associated private businesses which make a significant contribution to the regional and local economy. The most notable of these are the National Mountain Centre at Plas y Brenin in Capel Curig, Gwersyllt Yr Urdd Glanllyn, and the Trawsfynydd Lake Angling Centre, all of which attract visitors, organisations, and groups from the UK and beyond.

The area also contains the National White-Water Centre at Tryweryn, the Outward-Bound Centre at Aberdyfi, Treetops Adventures in Betws y Coed, Dolgarrog Surf Centre, the various Zip Wires and Go Below activities in Blaenau Ffestiniog on the National Park's periphery. The National Water Sports Centre for Wales at Plas Menai, also close to the National Park, also uses sites within Eryri. The existence of these centres, alongside other multi-activity centres such as Natural Resources Wales Coed y Brenin Forest Park, allow people to experience a wide range of activities. These are in addition to other areas managed for public benefit by the Eryri National Park Authority, Natural Resources Wales (NRW), the National Trust and the Woodland Trust.

Cultural recreation is also important to Eryri. The National Park's landscape, language, history, traditions, culture, and historic environment combine to provide a unique sense of place enjoyed and appreciated by millions of people each year. Eryri and its environs support several centres of cultural and historical excellence, for example the National Welsh Slate Museum in Llanberis, Llechwedd Slate Museum in Blaenau Ffestiniog, Yr Ysgwrn, Trawsfynydd and six separate heritage steam railways. These are in addition to an UNESCO World Heritage site at Harlech Castle and the World Heritage Site of the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales, as well as numerous sites managed by Cadw - the Welsh Government's historic environment service.

The region also hosts many local outdoor activity clubs and associations including those for canoe and kayaking, cycling, fell running, orienteering, swimming, walking, climbing, angling, paragliding, and caving.



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In terms of land use, most of the land within the National Park is privately owned and exclusively used for agriculture or forestry.

In terms of its access provisions within the NP boundary we have:

- 42km permissive paths
- 2400km of Public Rights of Way
- 268km bridleways
- 50km restricted byways
- 25km byways
- 98,000 Ha CRoW¹ access land (which accounts for some 46% of the Eryri National Park)

It is important to consider that the National Park is not the statutory highways authority for Public Rights of Way. This duty lies with both Conwy and Gwynedd Councils within their respective areas. However, the SNPA undertakes considerable work on their behalf under limited management agreements - although the SNPA is the authority for matters pertaining to CRoW access land and manages CRoW restrictions and exclusions and some longer distance routes within that access land.

The modern cultural landscape continues to be moulded by local farming communities proud of their association with this exceptional area. Recreation management and development must have regard for agriculture and the landscape's productive functionality and its role in shaping Eryri. Conversely, land management sectors should be aware of the wider social, economic, health and well-being benefits that the recreation sector can bring to the local and visiting public, which is the role of the NPA and our second statutory purpose.

¹ Land designated as 'access land' by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000 which is freely accessible to the public.



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The National Park Authority's Aim for sustainable Recreation within Eryri National Park

The National Park adheres to the definition and principles of the United Nations World Tourism principles for sustainable tourism and recently adopted by the Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan 2025

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

“Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”

United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)

Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan 2035

The Principles of the Gwynedd and Eryri National Park Visitor Economy Following a number of consultation sessions with Elected Members, communities, the visitor economy sector and other organisations, we have agreed on the following Sustainable Visitor Economy Principles:

1. Celebrate, Respect and Protect our Communities, Language, Culture and Heritage
2. Maintain and Respect our Environment
3. Ensure that the advantages to Gwynedd and Eryri communities outweigh any disadvantages



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In terms of sustainable recreational management, our Recreation Strategy must align itself closely with the broader and agreed principles outlined within Cynllun Eryri the Eryri National Park Management Plan.

Eryri National Park will continue to be a renowned, high-quality destination that provides a wide range of recreation opportunities, catering for all levels of experience and expertise. The National Park's diverse landscape will continue to inspire and provide a range of experiences for local people and visitors alike, becoming an exemplar and ambitious destination celebrated for sustainable, innovative, and effective recreation development.

Whilst the NP Authority understands that recreation can make a significant and positive contribution to the local and regional economy the Authority's emphasis will be on sustainable recreational management and where recreation will at best enhance the quality of Eryri's Special Qualities and at worst be neutral in impact and that the NP will seek to ensure that recreational activities should occur only where appropriate and when they are not detrimental to its special qualities. The NP and its partners, through discussion, cooperation and by the promotion of good practice will be ready to give appropriate advice and also mediate when and where required between user groups, individuals, and other stakeholders, to ensure that activities are appropriate and sustainable.



Sustainability will permeate the sector demonstrating: respect for the natural environment, the agricultural sector, our cultural heritage, and the Welsh language, by exceeding legislative requirements.

It will base itself on being carbon-aware by encouraging more use of sustainable transport methods – i.e., shared transport and the use of public transport services and promoting the sourcing of goods and services as locally as possible. It will exemplify good practice in encouraging reductions in energy use and focus on waste and plastic reduction. Recreation’s positive economic and social impacts will be maximised for the benefit of those living and working locally and where its positive contribution can be valued by local communities and businesses.

Recreation opportunities shall be available to all, irrespective of age, ability and social or ethnic background, with the needs and expectations understood and catered for wherever possible. Recreation in Eryri does and will continue to deliver significant health and wellbeing benefits for individuals the local communities and our wider society.

Recreation will play its part in helping the National Park Authority and its partners in making Eryri a good place to live, enjoy, work, visit and invest in for the future.

The National Park will also work together with other relevant authorities and lead bodies in the promotion of good practice ncluding the Countryside Code and any other useful information.



Section 1 - What are we going to do?

In recent years, the outdoor sector has grown significantly within the NP – more especially following post Covid lockdown where the level and demands for outdoor activity has been unprecedented. This requires that the NP ensures that our fundamental purposes are not compromised and that we inspire a more sustainable approach to recreation throughout the recreational sector and seek to mitigate against those that may be prejudicial to local communities, other users within the NP and our landscapes.

All principles and subsequent actions arise from the NP Management Plan and the outcomes required from this sector are as follows:

Sustainable Tourism

Outcome A1 of the NP Management Plan to ensure that sustainable tourism principles are achieved.

A1.1 - Develop guiding principles and thresholds in relation to visitor impacts on the environment and landscape. The principles will define when further action in the form of area-based management plan is required.

A1.2 – Ensure upland paths are well maintained to manage the impact of erosion and prioritise work based on the number of footpath users.

A1.3 – Take a pragmatic approach to reduce litter.

A1.4 – Reduce the impacts of parking and transport on the environment and landscape.

A1.5 – reduce any negative impacts of recreational activities.

Actions

- Where there is a proven adverse effect then the SNPA will promote mediation, encourage dialogue, and sponsor good practice including the use of specific national and/or agreed Codes of Conduct, specific Recreation Charters and general advice given in the SNPA's Event Guidance. These will guide and assist individuals, user groups, conservation, and land managers to plan accordingly and to achieve positive outcomes from recreational activity management.
- Improve communication, interpretation, and site management to reduce instances of habitat or wildlife disturbance by providing information specifically targeted at the recreational sector on why sites are protected and how people can adjust or moderate their activities accordingly whilst enjoying the outdoors.
- Improve interpretation / signage, which discourages inappropriate recreational activities which impacts upon the environment, tranquillity, and traditional land management practices.
- Address any negative impacts of recreation on biodiversity and landscapes, especially in areas of high use with mitigation measures detailed in the local action plans.
- Provide guidance and advice on best practice for those organising and taking part in events, advising on suitable dates, routes, the use of sustainable transport, litter minimisation and control, mountain safety and post event management and to provide other relevant stakeholder information (*within the constraints of data protection*). We will work closely with events teams of both Gwynedd and Conwy Councils when required.
- Discourage any events which are proven or likely to be illegal or are detrimental to Eryri's local communities, special qualities, biodiversity, and habitats, or to other people's enjoyment of the Special Qualities of the National Park.
- Review research into the capacity of areas to cope with the recreation demand, commissioning new research if required, including aspects such as erosion, habitat degradation and sustainable transport and parking. Any new recreational developments must ensure that they are appropriate and are able to mitigate against any adverse effects that increasing use or a wider range of activities which may occur in the longer term.
- Tranquillity and solitude are an important and special feature of the National Park and high-volume activities in areas such as the Rhinogydd will not be favoured to enable them to remain as quiet areas for recreation and enjoyment by the public.

To work with other authorities and by using relevant legislative powers to reduce the negative effects of irresponsible illegal off-road vehicular recreation on the Special Qualities of the area and work with formal stakeholders within this sector to promote good practice on those legally available routes.



Climate Change

“Climate change models predict that Yr Wyddfa will experience higher instances of drought and heat in the summer, mirrored by more extreme rainfall and stormier, milder winters. These changes may alter the NP’s ability to sustain some of its special qualities.” (NPMP 2020)

Outcomes A1 (as above) & A3: We are prepared for the impacts of climate change and are reducing our carbon footprint.

A1.4 – Reduce the impacts of parking and transport of the environment and landscape.

A3.1 – Reduce the carbon emissions of the Eryri National Park

A3.2 – Safeguard and increase the amount of carbon stored in Eryri.

A3.3 – Implement climate change mitigation measures.

Actions

- Manage the effects of extreme weather events upon upland and other promoted routes and build/repair/maintain these to be as resilient as possible for the future.

Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment

“The cultural heritage and identity of Eryri are not as notable as the landscapes and biodiversity. Our cultural heritage has evolved over centuries of human interaction with the land by way of farming, quarrying, and mining as well as its intangible associations through legends, stories, and distinctive names.” NPMP (2020)

Outcome A6 – Cultural Heritage and the Historic Environment – Eryri is a leading example in Wales of how to care for and champion cultural heritage and the historic environment.

A6.3 - Develop and implement landscape scale projects which benefit the historic environment.

The cultural identity of Eryri is as notable and unique as its landscape and natural heritage. Several of the National Park’s Special Qualities relate to its language, cultural heritage, historic environment, and cultural associations. These factors combine to provide a strong sense of place which makes Eryri, in the context of recreation, unique whilst enhancing recreation opportunities within it.

The Strategy seeks to enhance enjoyment and appreciation of Eryri’s sense of place.

Actions

1. Develop the concept of ‘cultural gateways’ to improve access to cultural recreation by supporting cultural attractions in key locations and for specific themes e.g., industrial heritage, archaeology, and Welsh culture.
2. Support events and festivals which celebrate the National Park’s Special Qualities by providing publicity and advice.
3. Support regional strategies and projects which highlight Eryri’s inspirational qualities and promote relevant associated recreation activity.
4. Highlight the value of sense of place and improve consideration and understanding of the areas uniqueness and intangible cultural heritage, including the Welsh language, within the recreation sector, for example by providing mountain guides and accommodation providers with advice and training on aspects of cultural and linguistic heritage. Support and deliver improvements to the physical linkages between heritage sites and attractions by improving or providing new access points, trails, and information where appropriate.
5. Emphasis will be placed on the use of original local Welsh place names to protect them and promote awareness of their origins and highlight their significance and meaning within Welsh culture.



Access including access for all.

Outcome B2 and elements of B1 - Residents and visitors can access a variety of routes in the National Park aimed to improve physical and mental health.

B1.2 (Health & Well-being) Promote and enable a diverse range of activities that improve well-being.

B2.1 Create a plan and focus resources on promoting, developing, and maintaining well marked long distance trails, accessible trails, multiuser trails (particularly cycling and mountain bike routes), promoted routes and links and loops between towns and villages.

B2.2 Ensure that the Rights of Way network is effectively prioritised, and that responsibilities and standards are clear, with the NP focusing on multi users trails and upland paths.

B2.3 – Improve access opportunities for disabled people and those socially excluded groups.

Providing an infrastructure appropriate to the needs of a wide range of recreation user groups is vital to the delivery of the Strategy's Aims. For the purposes of this Strategy, the recreation infrastructure includes Public Rights of Way furniture, car parks and visitor facilities. Providing such improvements, will encourage a wider section of the public to take part in recreational activities whilst improving the distribution of recreation opportunities throughout Eryri.

The NP will adopt a least restrictive option and such as a `miles without stiles` philosophy to create a more accessible Eryri and seek to work with local authorities and other agencies to remove barriers and to provide more opportunities for the less able, disabled and socially excluded users' wherever possible. Providing more opportunities and improving infrastructure also creates wider opportunities for improved social inclusion, health and well-being and has wider socio-economic benefits.



Actions

- Continue to improve access and maintain upland footpaths especially on those routes and Public Rights of Way where our service level agreements allow, access to open access land and the suite of promoted routes throughout the National Park.
- Seek agreement for the use of redundant railway track beds for use as recreation trails wherever resources allow.
- Identify the needs of specific recreation groups to ensure that new or upgraded routes and infrastructure are built to the proper standard particularly those routes highlighted as all ability and/or accessible routes for the disabled or less abled with an adherence to the least restrictive option as a fundamental principle. wherever conditions allow.
- Identify potential long distance and circular family friendly community routes that add value to existing trails.
- Improve connectivity and standard of the bridleway network when resources and opportunities present themselves.
- Develop a more sustainable approach for any new and innovative recreational activities that may develop in Eryri whilst protecting its Special Qualities. *This may be influenced by any future legislative changes made by WG for example `shared user routes` on Public Rights of Way or any future changes to allowable activities within CRoW access land.*
- Through their day-to-day work and Service Level Agreements, the National Park Authority and Gwynedd and Conwy Councils we will work to improve the condition and signage of the National Parks suite of promoted Leisure Network routes and upland footpaths, in conjunction.
- Continue to monitor visitor numbers in areas of high use to enable properly informed decisions to be made in terms of recreational management and any future developments. This information will be made public on an annual basis.

Access for all

No one should be deprived of experiencing the Special Qualities of Eryri because of physical or social barriers – either perceived or otherwise. However, it is recognised that people from the less able, disabled and those from socially excluded communities, access the countryside less frequently than the general population on average. Therefore, additional efforts are required to address these accessibility issues specifically to ensure equitable societal opportunities.

Actions

- Seek to increase the length of multiuser and less restrictive paths potentially using redundant track beds and upgrade existing trails where opportunities present themselves and if sufficient resources are available to encourage and enable greater participation.
- Provide a series of facilitated events to encourage opportunities for all to enjoy and experience Eryri's Special Qualities.
- Seek additional resources, targeted by evidence and research, to provide proactive support and encouragement for people from disadvantaged areas to enjoy and experience Eryri's Special Qualities.
- Ensure recreation destinations provide appropriate, affordable, and fully accessible facilities and services for all users by encouraging, supporting, and advising potential providers in this sector.
- Regularly review and report upon the effectiveness of the SNP's current provision for disabled users.
- Encourage the organisers of elite events to provide 'taster' sessions to encourage new participants including those from within local communities.
- Identify sites at which access to inland waters can be improved for disabled and less able people through cooperation with key stakeholders. More especially if there are additional legislative changes that may help facilitate this.
- Work in Partnership to achieve the Park-wide strategic objectives outlined in Cynllun Eryri relevant to this aim. They will include the disabilities access groups and Local Access Forums. See Appendix 3.



Health and Wellbeing

Outcome B1 - The National Park is having a positive impact on well-being.

B1.1 – Expand work with partners, health services and Public Service Boards through social prescribing schemes.

B1.2 – Promote and enable a diverse range of activities that improve people's well-being.

B1.3 – Plan a community-based project exploring a range of long, reciprocal relationships between the people of Eryri and the land.

Eryri has an important role to play in promoting and delivering improvements to the nation's health and its wellbeing policies and objectives (and as outlined within the Well Being & Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015). Recreation, both active and passive, helps improve physical and mental wellbeing.

By promoting enjoyment of the National Park's Special Qualities, the Authority and its partners can achieve goals relating to fostering healthier and more active lifestyles for local communities and for visitors alike. Achieving these aims will also encourage more people to enjoy and understand Eryri's Special Qualities.



Actions

The following actions are specific to all ability recreation within the NP.

- Develop and promote trails / organised walks and other projects which increase awareness among local communities and highlight the health and wellbeing benefits to be found within their local environment.
- Promote Eryri as a destination for healthy recreation activity both nationally and internationally by working with the tourism and health sectors.
- Build upon the successes of the Leisure Networks initiative and seek to increase their use and support promoted circular routes in communities throughout the National Park when opportunities arise, and resources are available.
- Continue to develop a high-quality multiuser network.
- Continue to seek new CRoW `access land` routes and work with landowners to provide access/egress points where such routes present themselves.



Delivering Economic Benefit

Outcome C2 – Jobs and Opportunities encourage people to remain in the area.

C2.2 – Support and promote training employment and business-related opportunities related to – or complimenting – the National Parks first purpose and Special Qualities including environmental related sectors.

C2.3 – support and promote training, employment, and business opportunities relating or complimenting the National Parks second purpose and Special Qualities, and the health and well-being theme.

Studies show that activity-based recreation provides at least £1.35b to the regional economy whilst employing some 4,000 people; mostly based on Eryri's mountainous terrain and coast. National studies have also proven the economic value of the historic environment within Eryri there is a high concentration of historic sites such as archaeological, World Heritage sites and a number of listed buildings and notable gardens. Their contribution to the area's economy is significant so their protection is vital to the region's economy, whilst enhancement could bring further sustainable economic development.

Actions

1. Provide businesses with information on how to engage more fully with this sector with an emphasis on sustainable development.
2. Highlight the economic importance of recreation and improve and encourage consideration in spatial and economic planning.
3. Support programmes aimed at increasing training and skills levels for local young people and groups in this sector.
4. Work with existing partnerships to consider the merits of visitor payback schemes in Eryri to help protect and improve infrastructure and facilities.
5. Encourage and promote the circular walks around villages and smaller settlements. Smaller scale developments of this type can contribute significantly to local communities' health and well-being. The Covid pandemic has stimulated particular interest for locally available community routes within the NP.
6. Work within strategic plans to reduce the seasonality of outdoor recreation activity by promoting sustainable 'out of season' events and Eryri as a 'year-round' destination.
7. Focus future development to areas able to accommodate growth in terms of visitor capacity, access, and public transport and landscape considerations in line with the LDP.

Actions

1. To encourage and increase community and farmer/landowner participation in managing recreation facilities and services by working within existing partnerships.
2. Maintain existing working partnerships and agreements, seeking to work with stakeholders to promote sustainable practices and approved standards in relation to recreation.
3. Develop and support trails which add value to existing / in- development routes, for example the All-Wales Coastal Path, Taith Arduwly, the Slate Trail, the Cylchdaith Yr Wyddfa.
4. Increase opportunities and support for volunteers by providing logistical support and assisting in identifying priorities and developing work programmes.
5. Deliver appropriate actions in tandem with the Tourist Destination Management Plans for Gwynedd and Conwy.
6. Implement Rights of Ways Improvement Plans (ROWIP's) for Gwynedd and Conwy Councils, considering communities adjoining the National Park boundary.

Ensure partners recognise Eryri's Special Qualities in publicity material whilst acknowledging the areas fragility from potential over development and the need for promoting safe and responsible use.



Integration and Quality

Policy B3 - Our Special Qualities are recognised.

B3.1 - Develop a brand marketing strategy for Eryri based on Special Qualities that is consistently implemented across the public and private sectors.

B3.2 - Encourage visitors to come at different times of the year and to different areas in order to ease pressure during peak season and help businesses with seasonality issues.

B3.3 - Using the brand marketing strategy as a foundation, develop a shared plan with partners on the information we provide to visitors, with an emphasis on the Special Qualities and behavioural change.

Eryri provides a wide range of high-quality recreation opportunities with facilities catering for novices and experts alike. Maintaining this diversity and quality is vital in encouraging local users and visitors to enjoy the National Park's Special Qualities. Managing and integrating the range of activities is important in attracting new audiences, mixed interest groups such as families and those from socially excluded groups and to encourage repeat visits.

Delivering actions centred on this theme will require substantial cooperation between the public and private sectors.



Actions

1. Develop interactive web-based maps of recreation opportunities and cultural sites across the National Park including Apps and Smartphone interfaces.
2. Improve trails to access land and routes historic and cultural sites when opportunities present themselves.
3. Support centres of excellence within and close to the National Park boundary to provide exemplars in the outdoor recreational sector.
4. Work in partnership to develop and implement destination management plans for key sites within Eryri to channel funding and resources as required by the Welsh Government.
5. Disseminate good practice and standards to ensure high quality facilities are provided at recreation centres.
6. Encourage recreation providers to offer complementary activities which broaden their appeal and encourage repeat visits particularly for disabled, less abled, and socially excluded users.
7. Encourage joint marketing between similar recreation activity providers.
8. Encourage the use and support codes of conduct/ practice for a range of potentially damaging recreational activities and work with others from the respective sector to promote and develop these.

Outdoor Safety Statement

Public safety is an important issue for the Authority and its partners and many recreational activities in the outdoors carry a degree of risk. Whilst individuals and groups are responsible for their own safety whilst partaking in outdoor activities the NPA will continue to support and promote any initiatives and safety codes from within the relevant sector that help people make more informed decisions about their personal safety whilst partaking of their chosen activities. We will also work with those voluntary groups such as the Mountain Rescue Services and Adventure Smart UK to ensure consistency in our messaging.



Section 2- Recreational Activities in the outdoors

Activity Statements

Below are the main outdoor activities given consideration whilst developing the Strategy's actions. The Authority and its partners will strive to ensure that these are undertaken in a sustainable manner and that any given activity complies with national codes of conduct and standards expected for each sector.

- Regardless of the recreational activity we will continue to encourage all recreational users to consider adopting sustainable modes of transport and reducing their dependency on car/s and to consider alternative public transport services and shared car use when visiting the area. Future use of private transport in the local area will be heavily influenced by recommendations made in parking and transport reviews taking place under Cynllun Yr Wyddfa (the Snowdon Partnership Plan) and Cynllun Eryri and its subsequent objectives and actions.
- We will strive to provide as much information for the activities outlined below by means of our website, Apps and web based maps for promoted routes on our and social media platforms and dissemination via relevant third party linkages.
- Apart from general information this will also include information relating to safety and links to the relevant good practice guides, codes of conduct and advice from lead bodies where these are known.
- The role of the NP's Local Access Forums (northern and southern) is important to the work of the Authority in supporting sustainable recreational management and will work closely with its LAF's when considering new initiatives and will seek their guidance and advice when required. Their role is also crucial in responding to and advising the Authority on the various national Welsh Government and other consultations in relation to access and recreation.



Walking

Undoubtedly low level, hill and mountain walking is the most popular recreation activity in Eryri. The draw of the landscape offers walking opportunities of varying degrees of difficulty across the National Park for hundreds of thousands of people – from the challenge of summiting Yr Wyddfa

- Mount Snowdon to the ease of the Mawddach Trail. In addition there are 2470km of Public Footpaths within the NP available to the public.

Although walking is popular throughout the National Park *and monitoring figures show clearly that numbers are increasing annually*, some areas are more heavily used than others most notably the Wyddfa Massif, Cader Idris and the Ogwen Valley (Glyderau and the Carneddau) and managing this pressure in a sustainable manner is vital in ensuring its environmental protection. In 2019 Snowdon was climbed by almost 560,000 people using its six principal paths, whilst over 140,000 were recorded in the Ogwen Valley including Cwm Idwal and 75,000 ascended Cader Idris.

The NPA and Highways Authorities will work constructively with landowners to improve route infrastructure and follow the `Miles without Stiles` philosophy wherever possible. *Although it must be appreciated that in some upland locations in particular this may not always be practicable, but all cases should be assessed on the least restrictive option criteria.* This will make the network and facilities more accessible to as many users as possible.

The NP also hosts a number of well-known sections of longer distance routes such as the Cambrian Way, Taith Mary Jones, the All-Wales Coastal Path, the North Wales Path, the Pilgrims Way, the Eryri Way, Taith Ardudwy Walk, the Carneddau Circular, the Slate Trail. Both the McMillan Cross Britain Way and the Dee Way also begin (or end) their trails in Eryri. All of which bring great opportunities to explore and enjoy the NP. The National Park will also continue to develop the Cylchdaith Eryri-Snowdon Circular Initiative- this is a variable route around the periphery of Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon) using some sections of public footpath, access land and existing bridleways (available to cycles). This initiative is supported by Welsh Government.

Additionally, over 60% of the NP is access land which is freely available on foot to members of the public. These areas provide great opportunities for recreation, health, and wellbeing and for those seeking quieter recreational opportunities.

Currently the number of access land `through routes` are limited and where opportunities and resources are identified then the NP will work with landowners and seek to increase the number of these routes and improve their connectivity.

Opportunities will also be explored for the creation of longer distance user routes using old redundant railway track beds. This will mean working closely with our local authority partners and other stakeholders to enable development of these routes when resources are available.



Dog Walking

Dog Walking is one of the most important ways that many local people and visitors' access and exercise in the countryside and to engage with their local environment. It is good for people's mental health and physical well-being; However, this activity has the capacity to bring unwanted consequences and the NP is keen to ensure that dog owners take their responsibilities seriously whilst in the countryside. This includes `dog poo` issues, disturbance to stock, land management activities and wildlife - particularly ground nesting birds in the spring.

To further this the NP will work to positively engage with stakeholders and the public at every opportunity over these issues to promote and encourage good practice and by providing relevant public information on our social media platforms and on our managed sites.

We will also support and promote the NRW's suite of Countryside Codes including the dog walking code and any other useful public information relating to the responsible exercising of dogs in the countryside. *The NP will always encourage dog owners to have their dog on a lead in the vicinity of livestock regardless of whether they are within access land or on a Public Right of Way.



Rock-Climbing, Scrambling & Bouldering

Eryri is one of the worlds centres for rock-climbing, bouldering, and scrambling. The natural features and rocky nature of the terrain attracts climbers from all over the UK and indeed the world to test themselves on the rock faces found within the National Park. There are rock-climbs and scrambles of all standards, from easier novice routes to some of the most technically challenging rock-climbs in the world.

The ease of access to some of the finest climbing venues, puts Eryri among one of the top locations in the UK for these activities. The opportunity for climbing in Eryri has resulted in the area being closely linked to the sports' history and has been at the forefront of its development globally.

There are several areas that are popular climbing destinations, with the focus primarily being on the Snowdon Massif, the Llanberis Pass, the Glyderau and Ogwen, and the more remote Carneddau peaks. In the south of the park, rock faces on Cader Idris and Craig Yr Aderyn are also popular, while the low-lying cliffs at Tremadog are also very popular when the weather is less favorable in the higher mountains. In general, climbing is a well organised and documented activity, frequently carried out by climbing clubs or through designated providers such as outdoor centres and private individuals, although the area is also popular with individual climbers. Bouldering (which is un-roped climbing on low boulders, using large mats or pads to protect from falls) as a sport has also seen a significant increase in recent years.

Most climbing activities co-exist with the natural environment and there are agreed voluntary agreements in place between the conservation bodies, land managers and owners and the British Mountaineering Council (the national body for mountaineering, rock climbing and hill walking) to protect the unique and special flora or fauna of the Park. The SNPA will continue to support those initiatives where they apply. The specific agreements for individual sites can found by searching the BMC's Regional Access Data base <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/modules/RAD/>

The NP will continue to liaise closely with the BMC and other stakeholders over issues of mutual concern and in the promotion of good practice.



Cycling

Eryri is popular for all types of cycling experiences including excellent on-road cycling opportunities and the area is used throughout the year for road cycling and cycle touring by local cycling clubs as well as those from further afield.

Given the Welsh Government's emphasis on health and wellbeing combined with the need to reduce our use of cars the NP will support cycling initiatives particularly those family orientated routes and linkages between local communities.

The impact of lockdown restrictions during the Coronavirus pandemic (2020) has led to a considerable uptake in cycling as a useful means of healthy exercise and to access the countryside. Therefore, the opportunity to encourage this trend after the pandemic must not be lost and the NP should be ready to play a vital role in future strategic recreational planning and provision for cycling initiatives.

Eryri is served by 6 National Cycle Network routes and has the popular Ffordd Brailsford Way circuit within it²

It also offers low-grade off-road trail cycling such as the Mawddach Trail, Lon Gwyrfai. The SNP will also seek to encourage and develop other routes particularly those linking local communities when and where opportunities present themselves and if adequate resources are available.

² <https://www.visitEryri.info/ffordd-brailsford-way-cycle-routes-Eryri>



Mountain biking

During the past two decades, mountain biking has grown rapidly in popularity and Eryri has become one of Britain's premier destinations. This growth has been accommodated in dedicated sites owned and managed by the Natural Resources Wales (NRW) the most well-known being Coed y Brenin near Dolgellau, Penmachno (Dolen Machno and Dolen Eryri) and Betws y Coed – Gwydir Mawr/ Fach (formally known as the Marin Trail), the Llwybr Traws Eryri long distance cycle route with other routes around Beddgelert and the Dyfi Valley forest blocks also being popular and now complimented by more recent privately sponsored trails coming into play such as Antur Stiniog's dedicated downhill mountain routes based in Blaenau Ffestiniog and the Dyfi Bike Park.

In some areas there is potential to improve connectivity both by upgrading sections where appropriate to create longer distance routes using existing tracks. The NP will seek to be as proactive as possible within this sector when resources are available.

The development of purpose-built facilities has reduced the potential for conflict between mountain bikers and other user groups in the countryside particularly on Public Rights of Way (bridleways) providing opportunities for novices and experts alike and whilst at the same time creating local business opportunities. Although some mountain biking away from these centres has the potential to cause footpath erosion and conflict with other path users there are many routes (using existing bridleways or byways) that are popular so it is imperative that any future route improvements or development that the NP considers must be built to sustainable standards and ready to reduce their maintenance burden in the long term particularly given the extreme patterns of weather we are experiencing due to our changing climate.

There is active collaboration with the sector specifically in the formulation of the Snowdon Mountain Biking (voluntary) Agreement. The SNP has well established links to the sector and national cycling organisations representing the sector which have proven successful.

Where issues arise then the SNPA will act with stakeholders to agree sustainable management solutions if necessary and encourage the use of the sectors code of conduct.

*Under currently legislation cycles (regardless of their type) are allowed on bridleways under the Countryside Act 1968. However, if legislative changes occur, for example, for the joint use of some additional Public Rights of Way or within CRoW access land within the coming years then this will undoubtedly change the type and degree and use in some areas - therefore the NP will need to be prepared and adapt to such changes given that undoubtedly user expectations will be raised.



E Bikes

E Bikes are growing rapidly in popularity and are simply cycles which are motor assisted and most must be pedalled to activate the motor assistance. * *The use of such cycles requires additional rules such as a minimum age of 14 and that they cannot be electro/mechanically assisted for a speed more than 15mph.*

They are also allowed on any routes in the same manner as normal cycles such as bridleways, cycleway, byways, restricted byways, unclassified roads, and roads.

Even in a rural environment such as the NP E-bikes present unique opportunities for us to reduce our carbon emissions. They can also be beneficial to other users such as the less able to enable access into the countryside. Where appropriate the NP will support their responsible use particularly when the use of cars between communities can be reduced.

The SNPA will offer to provide users with relevant information and advice on the legal use of e Bikes (based on the criteria required under the Road Traffic and Highways Act). Certainly, as Ebikes become more affordable – particularly Emountain cycles there may be a need to be proactive to discourage any `off piste` mountain cycling activities. The NP will monitor this activity in coming years to ensure that only those legally available routes are used and promoted. And to actively discourage inappropriate activities.



Accessible Eryri.

An `accessible Eryri` plays an important role in people`s health and well-being and the NP and its partners will always seek to be inclusive irrespective of people`s race, age and abilities including the disabled, the less abled and socially excluded groups.

There are already several fully developed all ability or multi user`s routes available such as Lon Gwyrfa, the Mawddach trail, Dol Idris, Foel Ispri and others. which are popular. However, the NP and its partners will work steadily to further developed this network and upgrade others (particularly those that link communities) when new opportunities and adequate resources present themselves. All will be based on the `least restrictive option` philosophy. Rather than a prescriptive approach The NP will work to make information relating to those sites and their qualities readily available to enable users to make route choices which are relevant to their needs.

We will continue to work closely with the disabilities sector, the Local Access Forums, the Authority, other local authorities and other stakeholders to seek their advice and guidance on projects.

Future developments will also include more sensory adaptations in some areas to appeal to a wider spectrum of users such as the blind or hard of hearing. We will also actively seek and engage with those socially excluded groups and work with various public and relevant agencies to further this.

Relevant information for any all ability or other accessible routes will be regularly updated on partner website and Apps. Those pages will also include up to date information on special needs accommodation, location of toilets, disabled car parking and the nearest `changing rooms` facilities.

The NP also currently provides on request two electric Tramper type vehicles and an electric four-wheel off-road buggy type of vehicle. These have proved very popular with a wide variety of users with varying degrees of disabilities and this service will be maintained and enhanced when and where resources allow.

The NP will review and audit its provision biannually. Any changes in relation to new or upgraded developments will be put in the public domain as soon as available.



Water sports

Eryri has a long coastline and is peppered with lakes, estuaries, rivers, and streams and are a popular attraction for recreation as well as bringing huge health & well-being benefits. Whilst coastal activities are well established the opportunities for activities on inland water are confined to a limited number of locations. This is compounded by the lack of formal legislation and clarity relating to this recreational sector resulting in access to water occurring in a *de facto* manner which is unsatisfactory. However, water sports such as canoeing, sailing, paddle boarding, wind surfing, kayaking and wild swimming are becoming increasingly popular with more people taking part in these activities on a regular basis. The NP and Local Access Forums are fully supportive of any proposed changes to legislation which would enable additional access to inland waters in a responsible and controlled manner and which is not detrimental to land management, infrastructure, or biodiversity.

Whilst there are some exemplars for access to inland water within the NP such as Llyn Tegid, Canolfan Tryweryn – National White-Water Centre in Fron Goch Y Bala and the arrangements on the upper Conwy, Llyn Gwynant and the middle Glaslyn river (courtesy of the National Trust) these are few and although the NP has been proactive in this area it is eager to work with all stakeholders, including users and landowners, to see if such arrangements can be developed more widely where opportunities arise. However, such arrangements will only be supported using best practice such as agreed water levels, agreed access and egress points, appropriate signage (to include information guidance on any specific sites use or limitations), advice relating to bio security and conservation and to have limited parking provision wherever possible.



If legislative changes occur in the future which expands access to inland water then the NP will need to be both prepared and proactive in this sector.

Gorge walking, coasteering and canyoning are self-regulating activities and take place on well-known sites. The NP has been fully supportive of the Environmental Charter Groups Codes of Practice for these activities to ensure that the NP's special qualities are not compromised. However, in the case of any local difficulties then the NP will work with other stakeholders and statutory bodies to help resolve any issues where they may occur. The National Park will not support these activities if they are proven to be detrimental to our special qualities. The placing of permanent fixings in rivers and falls in what may be designated areas will not be supported.

The SNPA will not support any motorised water sports activities other than activities that are directly related to the use of rescue craft or those where prior arrangements exist.



Angling

Angling - Angling is an important recreation activity in Eryri, with considerable activity on the coast and where many lakes and rivers are managed and stocked to cater for anglers, whilst the backdrop combines to provide a world leading venue.

Similar to other activities, angling is popular among residents and visitors alike with local fishing clubs, associations and societies heavily involved in managing the sector. Due to its high-quality environment, the fishing sector is active in improving local habitats and relevant publications highlight the importance of conserving and enhancing the environment for the future of the sport. There are also some opportunities for angling for the disabled in various locations around the NP and we will work with this sector to increase this capacity where opportunities present themselves. The NP will continue to support such initiatives and promote this information on our website.

The SNP will work with the various associations when and where required to ensure equitable and balanced representation of their views and to mediate and resolve local issues if there are any conflicting interests in relation to access to water that may arise.

If legislative changes occur in the future in relation to access to inland waters, then the NP will be ready to assist and offer advice to users and landowners alike on how to take initiatives forward and encourage best practice for access and shared use where necessary based on our existing access to water pilot schemes.



Mountain running

Eryri hosts a number of fell and mountain races and the benefits of well managed events can far outweigh any negative impacts. Many of these activities take place along Public Rights of Way and open access land. Although there are far fewer numbers who take part compared to the total daily average of mountain walkers, there are potential impacts similar to those associated with mountain walking – particularly in terms of erosion, the requirement for additional car parking spaces and localised disturbance to local communities.

The NP will support these activities as long as we are confident that they are planned well in advance, do not damage the environment, and do not cause disruption to land management or local communities and are clearly sustainable. Organisers of larger events should demonstrate that they have undertaken adequate landowner and other stakeholder discussion and that they adhere to the requirements and advice contained within the NP's Events Guidance and adhere to the relevant national [governing](#) codes of conduct. In addition, the NP would expect that activity organisers are mindful of any environmental constraints *e.g., specifically designated sites should be avoided if advised to do so*. The NP and its partners will only support and work with organisers that consistently demonstrate organisational competence within this activity sector, and to ensure that good practice is predominant. Those failing to do so will not be supported by the NP.

The NP will work closely with their counterparts both in Gwynedd and Conwy Councils, National Resources Wales (where required) and other land managers such as the National Trust, the Woodland Trust, and private landowners to ensure best practice and consistency in this sector.



Orienteering

Orienteering is an endurance running activity based on using a map and compass to navigate a series of fixed points. These events have a number of courses spread over a greater area. In general, the sport is well organised and uses nationally recognised guidelines and codes of conduct. The NP would expect that all organisers plan well in advance and consult with stakeholders, including landowners and statutory bodies, to avoid issues or difficulties, especially any activities that take place within designated areas.

Triathlons

Triathlons (and Quadrathlons and Duathlons) combine outdoor endurance activities - swimming, running, and cycling (and kayaking for Quadrathlon) in both formalised race distances for competition as well as ad hoc distances for participation. These are increasingly popular with locally based competitors and those from farther afield (especially now as an Olympic event) and they attract high numbers of competitors of all ages and most events of this type have junior competitions. The NP will support those events when organisers can demonstrate good practice and have undertaken sufficiently (and lengthy) preparation. Due to frequent use of public roads, and spread out start times, when required the NP works closely with both Gwynedd and Conwy Councils events teams to ensure that the various requirements are met and that issues such as road or path closures are not disruptive to local communities or the general public.



Organised Events

Due to its reputation, landscape and high-quality environment, Eryri hosts a number of recreation events and races, and figures show that the number of events taking place in Eryri has increased in recent years.

These fall into two categories; **charitable events** which benefit both local and national charities and which form the majority of such activities and secondly the **commercial events** of which there are fewer but with higher numbers of participants for any given activity and also by default they are more visual to the casual observer. We recognise that most events are well organised and can provide positive experiences for all particular health & well-being, whilst also benefiting the local economy.

Most organisers are by now very familiar with the NP and Local Authorities requirements and guidance for successful and sustainable event management. If they are: planned well in advance, are in suitable locations, have ensured stakeholder engagement, promote the use sustainable modes of transport, have adequate control of litter/waste (including organic waste), encourage the use of identifiable and bi-lingual signage, have considered their responsibilities for safety generally and that they are at suitable times of year which avoid clashes with other users. If these criteria can be met, then events can be highly successful.

The NP is also actively encouraging organisers to consider spreading these activities over a longer season to relieve the pressure over the `peak months` and over weekends in particular.

Other smaller group-based events may be less obvious such as the UK Three Peaks Challenge or the Welsh Three Peaks Challenge - *many of which are also charitable events*. Regardless of their size again the NP would always seek assurances from these event organisers that they have considered the recommendations contained within the NP Events Guidelines for successful and sustainable event management. The NP will continue to work with the Three Peaks Partnership (comprised of the Lake District National Park, the Nevis Partnership and Eryri NP) and the organisations to ensure best practice at all times based on our guidelines and the Codes of Conduct recommended by the Institute of Fundraising and its specific guidelines on Three Peaks Challenges to ensure that any potential negative effects of their activities can be avoided. This will include safety, sustainable transport and litter control.



However, in the case of proven, continual poor practice, the NP will not support those organisations that fail or cannot meet those requirements.

Given the challenges we face particularly on Yr Wyddfa in terms of the numbers of events, any **new** larger events of over 250 participants – charitable or commercial - proposed during peak times on Yr Wyddfa i.e., June – September will have to clearly demonstrate that they can fulfil our requirements for good event management and that they do not clash with established events. From January 2021 all events organisers of over 50 persons will be asked to participate in our new joint application scheme – a joint initiative between Gwynedd Council and the NP to allow us to have more information on planned events in any given year.

The SNPA will also continue to work closely with both Gwynedd and Conwy Events teams their respective Safety Advisory Groups (SAG), local communities and stakeholders to ensure good communication and best (and sustainable) practice.



Educational and Outdoor Centres

Organised group activities are invaluable in furthering knowledge and understanding of the NP whilst offering opportunities for personal and group development. This is important for younger people by enabling them to engage with their natural environment (a fundamental purpose of the NP) whilst meeting the needs of many parts of the National Curriculum.

The area affords a wide array of opportunities not only for young people but also for adults wanting to acquire proficiency in outdoor skills as part of their personal development, and there are many high-quality centres of excellence in outdoor sector training located in Eryri. The NP strives to maintain a close relationship with these centres and is also fully supportive of the Outdoor Partnership initiative.

There are opportunities for centres to extend their appeal to new markets and encourage wider participation particularly those from those harder to reach or socially excluded groups and the NP would encourage and support such initiatives.

Equestrian

Although Eryri has 268km (171) routes classed as bridleways, they do not form a park-wide network and where parking provision is limited. Individual riders make up the greater user group with some small numbers of organised groups making use of the existing linkages where possible. There is only one commercial trekking operator within the NP at this time.

Currently the network is of low quality and is badly fragmented and the NP will seek to work with the national user groups such as the British Horse Society (BHS), the Byways and Bridleways Trust and local user groups to identify and improve existing networks and create new safer linkages using the existing bridleway network where resources allow. This could spur a growth in equestrian activity for individuals or groups across the NP. In the case of any future legislative changes proposed by WG for more multiuser routes within the Public Rights of Way network or CRoW access land then the NP must be ready to take this forward if adequate resources are provided. The National Park will also ensure that the relevant standards are met wherever practicable.



Air Sports (non-motorised)

Several locations within Eryri are used as launch sites for paragliding and hand gliding with most users being members of organised associations or clubs. These sports are self-regulating with clubs being well organised and have existing private arrangements with landowners. Currently there is no legislation that allows para or hang gliding on CRoW access land. If legislative changes may occur in the future, then the SNP will be ready to work with those groups to promote best practice, help facilitate and advise on this activity and in a way which does not impinge on land management or agricultural activities by recognising and formalising their current locations.

Motorised Off-Road Activities

Areas of Eryri are used for both off-road 4x4 and motorbike recreation. Both pastimes have potential impacts upon tranquillity, habitat destruction and erosion. Importantly the SNP is not the highways authority and as such has no duties to maintain these routes - this duty lies with the respective highways departments within both Conwy and Gwynedd Councils. However, the NP works closely with those authorities and other stakeholders to resolve issues and conflict where they arise and to ensure that such routes are sustainable.

It is important to consider that there are two primary issues associated with the activity.

Firstly, where users are allowed to exercise their legal rights using the `Unclassified County Roads (UCR's) network within the NP and where it is important to the NP that these routes remain sustainable.

In recent times the NP has been working closely with those formal user's groups - Green Lane Association (GLASS), Land Access & Recreation Association (LARA), the Parc Eryri Green Lane Volunteer Group (PEGLVG) and the Trail Riders federation (TRF) in supporting best practice guidance as recommended by the groups themselves. The NP is also supportive and appreciative of the self-help efforts of the formal groups in terms raising funds for maintenance and in the promotion of the one-way systems they have recommended. The SNP will continue to work with these groups to ensure responsible and sustainable use of these routes.

Secondly there are areas where there is considerable 'illegal off roading' where users do not use any recognised legally accessible routes. This activity is restricted to those using motorcycles and can be highly damaging to landscapes and the special qualities of the NP. This is a recurrent problem for the NP and local authorities, and we continue to work with landowners, the Police, local authorities, and other stakeholders such as Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and seek to curtail this activity wherever it may occur in particular where the Special Qualities of the NP are threatened.



Drones

The use of drones is expanding rapidly both for commercial purposes and those used by private individuals. However, their use now requires a Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) registration and licence and their requirements for this activity are set within strict guidelines. The NPA will always strive to ensure that these activities do not become problematic or antisocial in nature and that the CAA rules will apply.

The NP will continue to give relevant up to date advice to users via our social media platforms based on the CAA requirements and refer to the current Drone Safe link and Drone Code³.

Consent is also required from NRW for flying over any designated reserve or conservation area such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI`s), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC`s) or Local and National Nature Reserves (LNR/NNR).

The use of balloons and lanterns for any activity will be actively discouraged due to the inherent dangers they pose to the environment, forestry, crops, livestock and to properties.

³ <https://www.caa.co.uk/Consumers/Unmanned-aircraft-and-drones/>
<https://dronesafe.uk/drone-code/>



Wild Camping

The NP owns little land within its boundary and wild camping is an activity that can only be undertaken by landowner consent anywhere within the NP (including any areas of `access land`). Subsequently the NP cannot give consent for this activity on other people's land *and under the General Data Protection (GDPR) regulations we cannot pass on landowner's details without their specific consent*. However, when consent is given the NP will encourage people to adhere to the Wild Camping Code at all times and `to leave no trace`.

Following the various difficulties encountered by `fly campers` in particular following the lifting of Covid lockdown which unfortunately resulting in a great deal of poor practice such a littering and waste, poor roadside parking, open fires, and damage to designated areas. Subsequently the NP continues to receive high numbers of complaints from landowners and the general public.

Therefore, the NP would encourage people to use formal campsites in their area of their choice for this purpose. There are many of these across the NP and all have an online presence. People should also book early to avoid disappointment.

For those who have consent users are advised to follow the Countryside Code and the Wild Camping Code and adhere to the leave no trace philosophy.



Camper vans and Motor homes.

This activity, which is a form of passive recreation, has increased in recent years with many users visiting Eryri - both from within the UK and also from the continent.

Although not the highways authority the NP will endeavour to work with other stakeholders such as Gwynedd and Conwy Councils to encourage good practice and to discourage irresponsible parking and off-road camping and to ensure that this activity remains legal and sustainable and not disruptive to local communities.

This means promoting the NP Guide to Campervan and Motorhome Users pamphlet and providing an up-to-date formal overnight sites location map, maintaining our website information and also provide any information for the less formal sites and overnight parking areas that may be provided by the local authorities such as Gwynedd Council's `Arosfan` sites.



Other activities

In preparing this document, the Authority has given due consideration to several other, less popular geo-caching and caving which all occur within Eryri.

Although distinct, many of these activities are highly localised and have less impact. However, the NP will monitor these activities and in the case where local issues occur will bring together the stakeholders and seek to resolve issues. It is expected that all such activities are carried out in a responsible and sustainable way, and which adhere to their recommended codes of conduct for their given activity.

Zip wires and other high intensity activities.

Most centres of this type are either outside of the NP boundary or on its periphery and all use redundant quarry locations. There is no doubt that these are popular but may be considered to be inappropriate within our boundaries for those seeking quieter enjoyment and recreation in the more traditional sense. However, it must be recognised that they are playing a pivotal role in providing additional visitor experiences and activities across the NP and relieve pressure in other core areas and are also important economic drivers.

Cultural & Environmental Recreation

The following headings have been identified as key cultural and environmental recreation activities have been given consideration during the preparation of the Strategy's Aims and Actions. All are based on the National Park's Special Qualities and their interdependence. In general, their impacts upon the Special Qualities are not greater or less direct than those attributed to activity recreation.

Driving & coach tours

Eryri's landscape and cultural heritage is a draw for driving and coach tours. These journeys usually follow similar routes, taking in the most iconic views and attractions of Eryri and provide economic opportunities for local businesses.

Although the impact upon Eryri's Special Qualities are not as direct as other activities, congestion, and illegal car parking impact heavily upon local communities and landscape. The NPA will strive to promote the use of park and ride public transport and to reduce the overall number of cars in the area, as well as implement the recommendations of a Park-wide parking and transport review undertaken by the Eryri Partnership.



Wildlife watching

Eryri is a popular year-round destination for wildlife watchers, particularly bird watchers, given the ecological diversity which flourishes in its varied habitats including its coastal margins. Except for the larger reserves such activity remains unmanaged as there are few sites which have been specifically developed for this purpose. However, some areas are more sensitive than others specifically particularly in the bird nesting season and the NP will work with other stakeholders to manage any disturbance to areas of high importance. Information of the most interesting areas such as NNR's and SSSI's can be obtained from the relevant SNP Officers, the NRW, the North Wales Wildlife Trust, Coed Cadw (the Woodland Trust Wales) and the RSPB.

There are several specific bird watching sites on the periphery of the NP namely the RSPB reserve at Llyn Vyrnwy, the RSPB at Conwy and the RSPB Ynys Hir site near Machynlleth.



Heritage sites & attraction visits

Throughout the National Park there are many sites of cultural, historical, and archaeological significance; some of which provide visitor facilities, whilst others are more minimal and remote. These sites provide a focus for visitors and are largely well managed therefore reducing impacts upon their Special Qualities. However, over development can lead to landscape impacts and local traffic problems. The NP will continue to monitor and work in partnership with stakeholders on all such sites within and adjoining the NP boundary and provide information for the most popular and interesting sites on our website where required.

Events and festivals

A number of events and festivals held in Eryri relate directly to its cultural heritage and environment, for example arts festivals, Eisteddfodau, walking festivals and several county/agricultural shows. Although these are well managed by organisers, localised impacts can include traffic congestion. The NP will continue to support such activities if they can clearly demonstrate that they are well organised and sustainable and will continue to work closely with both Gwynedd and Conwy Council events teams to ensure their success.

Study

Eryri's prominence in furthering our knowledge of the natural world continues to the present day. The area is popular with wide spectrum of educational groups from school children to post graduate education. In the main, these groups study the effects of glaciations upon the landscape and its flora and fauna and increasing attention is being paid to transport, agriculture and social economic issues including the effects of outdoor recreation. The majority of non-resident groups stay in one of the many study centres located around the NP. Heavily used sites, such as Cwm Idwal, and will always require additional management measures to cater for the higher footfall from this sector and the National Park will work in partnership with other stakeholders to ensure that this site is managed sustainably.

Any such negatives are usually outweighed by the wide variety of benefits they bring in terms of fulfilling requirements for the National Curriculum and specific outdoor sector training elements whilst providing further understanding and enjoyment of the NP and is one of the NP's key purposes.



Art & photography

Eryri's landscapes, communities and wildlife continues to provide inspiration for artists and photographers as it has done for generations. Good access into the countryside fosters this reputation and strengthens the understanding of the NP Special Qualities.

Those areas of high use such as those particularly interested in low flying aircraft (for example the Mach Loop) will be monitored to ensure that their activities are not damaging or detrimental to the NP special qualities.



Dark Skies

Eryri National Park is the second area in Wales to be designated as an International Dark Sky Reserve. There are just twelve of these reserves in the world, and on a clear night in Eryri you can see the Milky Way, all the major constellations, nebulas (bright clouds of gas and dust), shooting stars and comets.

The NP collaborates with local communities and the relevant Local Authorities in maintaining the quality of dark skies we have in Eryri, as well as improving the quality of the night sky experience by better managing lighting and encouraging businesses and private residencies to use appropriate external lighting around their properties. In addition, we hope to provide opportunities for local business owners to benefit from this designation.

A number of sites are being developed to enable people to get out and see the night sky within the NP, with additional information provided on the NP website through the Dark Skies Partnership initiative.





Section 3 – Implementation, Monitoring & Review

Stakeholder involvement

As a lead partner, the Authority will coordinate and oversee progress. It will do so by monitoring progress against the Actions whilst offering solutions where progress is defective; the monitoring will be reported in the annual NP Man Plan updates. Key actions will also be included in the annual Corporate Work Program which sets out the Authority's corporate well-being objectives.

Implementation of this strategy cannot be done in isolation; many organisations will be required to cooperate and help deliver the Strategic Aims and Actions included in the document.

To achieve the actions established in this Strategy, the Authority must collaborate with partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors and working with established partnerships relating to countryside access, sustainable transport initiatives, tourism and economic development will be crucial.

Other key partnerships include landowners, local community councils, our respective local authorities - Gwynedd County Council and Conwy Borough Council, primarily in their respective roles as highway authorities with overall responsibility for producing their respective Rights of Ways Improvement Plans ROWIP's). The SNPA is the responsible authority for CROW access land and will continue to work with our Local Access Forums on access issues and policies across the park.



By doing so, Eryri and the wider region will benefit from a cohesive and strategic approach to recreation development and management, allowing for appropriate and sustainable growth within the sector. Partnership working will also improve service delivery and give greater value for money.

The recreation sector in Eryri benefits from several effective partnerships, such as the Northern and Southern Eryri Local Access Forums, the North Wales Outdoor Partnership, and the Yr Wyddfa Partnership. The outdoor recreation industry is also well represented by organisations such as Eryri Active. Cultural interests are represented through several local history and cultural organisations, Cadw, and tourism trade associations. Accordingly, it is not considered necessary at present to establish a new forum or partnership to implement the actions established in this strategy. In addition, Eryri is serviced by two Tourism Partnerships and other tourism groups which have direct connections to many of the aims and may assist in their delivery.

Review

The Recreation Strategy will be reviewed every five years; this review will follow revisions made to the National Park Management Plan and State of the Park Report. This cyclical review process is designed to ensure future revisions of the Strategy and other relevant documents. By reviewing the content every five years the Authority ensures that the Strategy can be flexible and can respond to new and emerging trends in addition to national changes to legislation and policy relating to access.

Given that this Strategy marks a starting point, future revisions will benefit from improved evidence and data gathering which will in turn influence future policies.