



Press Release

14 August 2019

For immediate release

Mountaineers call time on dirty camping

Joint approach needed to tackle littering problems in highlands

Responsible mountaineers have called for action to be taken against the growth of 'dirty camping', which sees irresponsible campers leaving rubbish, fire damage and even whole campsites in their wake.

Mountaineering Scotland is calling for a multi-agency approach to work with communities on local management solutions, along with a public information campaign to educate people about their responsibilities as well as their rights.

In a summer which has seen the problem of dirty camping becoming increasingly common in rural hotspots across the country, Mountaineering Scotland's Access & Conservation Officer Davie Black said: "Antisocial camping can and should be dealt with. Hotspots for dirty camping are usually known to local authorities.

"We call for all those who are concerned about this to come up with local management plans that identify the problem and its causes, and identify the resources needed to tackle it.

"There is already legislation covering anti-social activity. What we need is coordination of resources to enforce it."

Roadside camping is where the problem is worst, where people pitch camp close to where their car is parked, and leave behind plastic and glass, burnt ground and even camping kit and human waste.

It's a problem that angers local people who live and work in affected areas, other visitors to the areas, and responsible hill-goers and campers everywhere.

Davie Black said: "It is easy to associate all informal camping with rubbish and pollution, but the truth is different. Walkers and climbers going into the hills – wild camping – tend to leave little trace of where they have been. Roadside campers who leave no trace are also 'invisible'. But the trail of dirty roadside camping is only too visible and is what gives all campers a bad reputation."

Wild camping is usually done well away from roads and buildings, is lightweight, done in small numbers and only for two or three nights in any one place. Roadside camping is not usually considered wild camping, although it does take place and is lawful if done responsibly.

Stuart Younie, Chief Executive Officer of Mountaineering Scotland, said: “We have seen a lot of camping this summer and it’s great to see people getting out to enjoy Scotland’s stunning scenery and the outdoor lifestyle, with all the health benefits it brings. But the downside has been the number of campers ruining beauty spots for other visitors and those who live there.

“We have enlightened legislation that allows people the freedom to camp and at the same time provides for tackling anti-social behaviour where it is required – although we acknowledge that the police and local authorities don’t have the resources to monitor every hill and glen.

“Mountaineering Scotland does what it can to promote responsible behaviour. We think greater emphasis should be placed on government agencies, councils and national organisations working together with communities to develop local management solutions. We know where the pressure spots are.”

And he added: “Almost 15 years on from the publication of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code we think it’s also time to consider a public information campaign to remind people about their rights and responsibilities, including the impact that irresponsible camping has on local people and the environment.”

Mountaineering Scotland provides advice on minimising your impact when in the mountains:

www.mountaineering.scot/conservation/campaigns/minimal-impact

Through its Tak It Home campaign Mountaineering Scotland also urges everyone who loves walking and climbing in the hills to avoid littering and to pick up any litter they find:

www.mountaineering.scot/conservation/campaigns/tak-it-home

Ends

Notes for editors:

Image: An abandoned tent and rubbish on Harbour Hill in the Pentlands. Photo courtesy of Pentlands Regional Park.

http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/Abandoned_tent_and_litter_Harbour_Hill_2019.JPG

Rubbish and fire damage at an abandoned campsite near Bonaly Reservoir in the Pentlands. Photo courtesy of Pentlands Regional Park.

http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/Bonaly_Sanctuary_Woods_14_Aug_2019_TM.JPG

Further information contact:

Neil Reid, Communications Officer, on 01738 493941 or 07444545293 or neil@mountaineering.scot

About Mountaineering Scotland:

- Mountaineering Scotland is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers and ski-tourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland's mountains.
- Mountaineering Scotland provides training and information to mountain users to promote safety, self-reliance and the enjoyment of our mountain environment.
- The Mountaineering Scotland is a membership organisation with over 14,000 members representing hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers, funded through a combination of membership subscriptions, non-governmental grants and investment from sportscotland, which supports public initiatives and services in mountain safety, mountain training and the development and promotion of mountaineering activities.
- Mountaineering Scotland also acts for 75,000 members of the BMC or British Mountaineering Council on matters related to Landscape and Access in Scotland.
- Mountaineering Scotland landscape and access work is supported financially by the Scottish Mountaineering Trust and the BMC
- Mountaineering Scotland has launched the ClimbScotland initiative to encourage young people to participate in climbing and support their progression. It offers a dedicated website and a development team, which will introduce young people to climbing at schools, climbing walls and via youth organisations with a range of activities and events, while developing kids clubs and providing specialist support to parents, volunteers and teachers.
- Mountaineering Scotland is the national governing body for sports climbing. It offers pathways to climbing coaching, organises and promotes a range of regional and national climbing competitions, and manages the Scottish climbing and bouldering teams. It contributes to the management of the GB teams with the ultimate aim of seeing a Scottish athlete achieve a podium position in the Olympic Games.
- The MCoS is a not for profit company limited by guarantee and incorporated in Scotland. Company number SC322717.
- Mountaineering Scotland, The Granary, West Mill Street, Perth PH1 5QP