



**Press Release**

**2 July 2018**

**For immediate release**

## **Too hot for the hills? Dehydration and wildfire – unusual dangers in Scotland's mountains**

With the forecast remaining warm and dry for the coming week, hillwalkers in Scotland are facing an unusual challenge – not enough water!

As well as meaning people should carry more water than usual to avoid dehydration, the dry conditions make it essential that extreme care is taken to avoid the risk of wildfires.

Heather Morning, Mountain Safety Adviser with Mountaineering Scotland, said: "It has been great to see so many people inspired to walk and climb in our hills and mountains in this hot and dry spell.

"But sunshine brings its own problems.

"In fact if you were out on the hill last weekend you may have found conditions pretty hard going and unpleasant for walking up hill – sweating profusely and trying to avoid being the next meal for the influx of horse flies or 'clegs' which seem to be thriving this season in the hot, dry conditions.

"I do not remember conditions underfoot so dry. Bogs are dry, peat is cracking, burns are very low or non-existent and small lochans are either dry or disappearing at an alarming rate. Vegetation on much of the higher ground is parched and lifeless."

And forecasts for the week ahead suggest that most areas of Scotland will get no rain for at least the next week, with the risk of fire a very real issue.

Heather said: "My advice if you are heading out in the next few days is to ditch some of the usual kit that you carry in your rucksack such as duvet jacket and waterproof trousers and swap them for an extra litre of water, sun hat and high factor sun cream.

"Hydration is a real issue and the normal one litre of fluid I carry is just not adequate. At the moment I'm carrying two litres, replenishing on the hill if at all possible and ensuring that I drink a lot of fluid both before and after my days out on the hill.

"Protecting yourself from the sun and ensuring you drink enough liquids is about more than your health – it also makes the difference between having a miserable time and enjoying a great day out in the mountains."

However, there is another issue that walkers have to consider. The underfoot conditions mean the fire risk will only increase, with tinder-dry vegetation and dry peaty ground.

Heather said: “A good amount of common sense should be used to ensure that we don’t trigger the start of a fire which would have devastating effects on the vegetation and wildlife. A discarded cigarette, a camp fire, a barbecue... any of these could start a fire straight away or after smouldering for many hours.”

Grant Moir, CEO of the Cairngorms National Park Authority, said: “A smouldering cigarette or one campfire ember can ignite in a gust of wind and even the smallest fire can spread uncontrollably and devastate entire hillsides. Livestock, wildlife and protected woodland can all be devastated by these fires. The message is quite simple – do not light a fire during long dry spells of weather. We want people to enjoy the Cairngorms National Park but not at the expense of our wildlife and the important habitats that supports it.”

## Ends

### Notes for editors:

**Image:** Drinking water from a clear mountain stream

[http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/drinking\\_from\\_the\\_burn\\_\(2\).JPG](http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/drinking_from_the_burn_(2).JPG)

Campfire blaze. Despite being circled with stones (still visible in the centre of the photo) this campfire burnt into the peaty ground below and spread. Firefighters had to dig out the whole area to prevent the fire spreading further through the ground.

<http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/079.JPG>

This fire in the Cairngorms some years ago destroyed over an acre of naturally regenerated young Scots Pines.

<http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/104.JPG>

### Further information contact:

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### 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.
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