



SOUTH KERRY DEVELOPMENT
PARTNERSHIP LTD.



Comhshaol, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government



MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Development Assessment



South Kerry Development Partnership Limited

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Executive Summary

The development assessment for the pilot MacGillycuddy¹ Reeks Mountain Access Project (MAP) aimed to assess the potential for structured permissive access to the Reeks uplands and to identify the most appropriate management structure to ensure the sustainable management of the integral environmental and cultural heritage of the Reeks, while providing long term clarity on permissive recreational access to the mountains.

An intensive consultation process was conducted through Summer 2013, which aimed to identify the concerns and aspirations of key stakeholder groups, in particular those of the landowners. Additional consultations were held with local community groups, commercial recreational entities and recreational users, as well as the responsible local and statutory authorities. The process identified a range of concerns and suggestions for remedy of legacy issues. In all, consultees realised that 'business as usual' was not an option given the lack of clarity on access and potential for ongoing misunderstandings among stakeholders. A number of supportive partners for the MAP were identified, most notably the landowners themselves, but also a number of community actors, recreational interests and the key agencies and decision makers.

An early review of a selection of management partnerships in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and England, was conducted to identify sustainable models of management and partnership in practice, the most likely success factors to achieve this, and also potentially, pitfalls to be avoided. Following this review and taking on board strategic lessons, the most appropriate model was selected, to be called the **MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Forum**, while providing clear priorities under an agreed strategic action plan.

The environmental heritage of the MacGillycuddy Reeks uplands is exceptional, but is potentially threatened by anthropogenic and recreational pressures. However, low impact activities based on environmental understanding of SAC/ SPA/ NHA designations, and planning requirements, could be considered and explored with relevant farming and recreational organisations, and in terms of the adjacent Killarney National Park. Provision for appropriate infrastructure to manage and enhance the visitor experience, while protecting the environmental integrity of the Reeks is essential.

The long term needs and funding requirements of the project were assessed by SLR: an early voluntary management model could evolve gradually towards a more permanent management structure such as registered charity, based on the shared vision and commitment of the members of the management partnership. Strong leadership is essential to achieve the objectives.

The study aimed to deliver a well-founded but ambitious Mountain Access assessment report, based on best practice and our combined experience in dealing with mountain access issues.

The study proposes a forward-looking 5-year Strategic Action Plan with scheduled timelines to promote the outstanding natural and cultural heritage of the MacGillycuddy Reeks as a sustainable recreational destination, while retaining its environmental integrity.

Key Conclusions:

The MacGillycuddy Reeks is one of Ireland's leading outdoor recreational destinations. The lands are 100% privately owned, which is unusual in the context of other uplands areas reviewed. Unlike many British and European countries, Ireland does not have a dedicated network of publically owned upland paths, and all recreational access to the uplands in Ireland, except in publicly owned lands such as national parks and forests, is dependent on permissive

¹ There are variable spellings of the name of the MacGillycuddy Reeks on maps and in the literature – this is the preferred option of the Steering Group and is used throughout this Report.

access and goodwill of private landowners. Various schemes have been attempted in lowland (<300m) farms to support permissive access, such as the Walks Scheme (now closed) to maintain certain approved trails such as The Kerry Way, which tracks across private lands in the southern foothills of the MacGillycuddy Reeks.

The key lessons from the Development Assessment are as follows, which have been harnessed in developing the proposed model.

The proposal in this report for a participative **MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Forum**, based on a shared vision among landowners, community, recreational users, enterprise and the public partners, will provide for a long term socio-economic framework for the sustainable development of the catchment, centred on the environmental conservation of the Reeks Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) and protection of the core asset.

An **Integrated Management Plan**, with a linked **Conservation Management Plan**, will be required to provide the framework for all actions.

It is proposed that a **representative partnership**, comprising panels of elected stakeholders sourced from a range of stakeholders (landowner/ public/ private/ community/ recreational), will work to an agreed Strategic Action Plan to achieve measurable targets. A small Steering Group is proposed, supported by representative and flexible Working Groups. The members must focus on organisational vs. sectoral interests, to ensure the success of the overall initiative. Good leadership will be key to achieving this.

A **shared vision** and core principles must be established at the start, to provide a sound basis from which the proposed Forum can grow. It is in all stakeholders' interests to foster this vision and use it to resolve matters arising. Landowners must be at the core of decision making; thus the Forum will need excellent and ongoing landowner engagement and a relationship management process. It will be necessary to bring all issues and problems to the Forum table to find resolutions in a spirit of constructive debate.

The suggested **5 year Strategic Action Plan** proposes defined and measurable targets, linked to broader conservation principles and sustainable land management. As well as immediate land issues, the focus should be on broader rural development and enterprise opportunities for the benefit of all communities residing in the shadow of the Reeks. The agreed strategic plan should link to clear national targets and directives, which will help to guide local decision making.

It is suggested to keep the overall work programme simple at the start to allow the group to evolve and to set targets that it is comfortable with. Many 'wise heads' who were involved in establishing previous upland partnerships advised to be 'realistic', and to prove the Forum's ability to deliver before thinking about expansion.

In legal terms, it is suggested to move progressively from an unincorporated **voluntary management group** to registered **charitable status**; this will allow the Forum to grow at a realistic pace and to then move ahead as early wins are 'won' and confidence and momentum are built.

Core funding supports will be required from a mix of public sources at the outset through DECLG, SKDP, Kerry County Council and Fáilte Ireland in a spirit of co-financing partnership. All reviewed models of mountain partnerships retained sustained public support throughout their histories. Supports from other sources for project specific purposes such as the Heritage Council or Lottery funds may also be sought, as well as philanthropic donations - without adequate human and financial resources it will be difficult to 'make it happen'. A range of revenue raising measures are proposed in this report including establishment of 'Friends of the Reeks', modest car tolling, capitation levies for major challenge/ charity events; annual permitting of commercial guides; and a range of merchandising measures.

The review of other models for upland management makes it clear that the proposed **Forum can be an agent of enormous positive change** in reversing socio-economic decline by using the natural assets of the Reeks to stimulate sustainable economic activity, both for landowners and other micro- to small enterprises. It is recommended that a new system to support recreational access to the uplands, such as payments for path maintenance; tailored training schemes in farm-related recreational tourism and/or dedicated agri-environmental schemes be investigated for MacGillycuddy Reeks uplands into the future.

There must be a clear and central focus on maintaining the core asset, the mountains, to the **highest environmental standards**. Any proposed works must be assessed in relation to the Integrated Management and Conservation Plans respectively, and screening for appropriate assessment may be required. Linked to this will be engagement of the landowners and harnessing of fully trained Landowner and Volunteer corps to help deliver the strategic targets.

Path maintenance and erosion control measures will be needed to stabilise many of the highly eroded paths; this can be carried out by a cadre of highly trained landowners, meeting best practice in peat and scree management. The conservation of the uplands is requisite and while the Forum will aim to encourage recreational tourism, it must be managed, and in particular, high impact events will require to be managed by the Forum. Such management measures may include pre-booking and levying of a capitation fee on each participant to manage environmental impacts and resource the maintenance works.

The Macgillycuddy Reeks are one of the great iconic outdoor destinations in these islands. The Forum should work to create and deliver an **integrated outdoor recreational experience** to the highest standards. It is currently unclear how many recreational users are accessing the Reeks on an annual basis ; the figure of 25,000 cited in the terms of reference for this study are likely to be a major underestimate. It is requisite that ongoing data gathering (via gate counters) and systematic analysis of visitor information is undertaken, so that future planning may adequately provide for visitor numbers. This could be achieved with assistance from Tralee IT adventure tourism student research.

A well honed communications plan is proposed for adoption by the Reeks Mountain Forum, to ensure that clear and positive internal and external communications are adopted from the outset.

The landowners involved in the Mountain Access Project are to be congratulated for their participative approach and resolve to find long term solutions to sustainable management of the MacGillycuddy Reeks.

Recommendations

It is strongly recommended that the proposed pilot **MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Project** be activated as soon as possible, based on the results of this study and on the suggested Strategic Action Plan.

The 'early' wins' in the suggested Strategic Plan should commence in late 2013 by appointment of an Interim Chairperson. The full Forum should be convened in early 2014. A full Chair can be appointed after c. 9-12 months by the functioning Reeks Mountain Forum and Working Groups.

It is recommended that the process be as representative and participative as possible, allowing the organisation to evolve organically, while within the overall framework of an Integrated Management Plan and Conservation Plan for the Reeks.

It is recommended that requisite resources be committed by the public partners, where feasible, to ensure that the pilot Mountain Assess Project is delivered in a timely fashion. This model, if successful, could be rolled out to similar upland areas in Ireland to provide long term assured

provision for recreational access while allowing landowners to actively participate in decisions pertaining to their lands.

The landowners of the MacGillycuddy Reeks have engaged actively in the consultative process and are to be congratulated and thanked for their positive commitment and constructive suggestions throughout. It is recommended that landowners expectations are met and not 'dashed to the ground' after their exceptional engagement with the MacGillycuddy Reeks' pilot Mountain Access Project.

PART 1

DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT MACGILLYCUDDY REEKS MOUNTAIN ACCESS PROJECT



Waymarking on the Lisleibane/ Cronin's Yard Loop

1.0 INTRODUCTION

SLR Consulting Ireland (SLR) was commissioned in June 2013 by South Kerry Development Partnership Ltd (SKDP) through the INTERREG IVB NWE Rural Alliances Project, in association with the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government (Rural Recreation Section), and Fáilte Ireland (collectively referred to as 'the Partners'), to carry out a **Mountain Access Development Assessment for MacGillycuddy Reeks** in South Kerry. Funding for the project has been provided through the Rural Alliances Programme (an ERDF funded project through INTERREG IV B), administered through SKDP.

1.1 Background to the Study

Recreational access to the Irish uplands has proven to be an on-going, and sometimes intractable, issue among private landowners and recreational users of the Irish uplands. This Mountain Access Project (MAP) is one of two pilot schemes being carried out in Ireland (*Binn Shléibhe/ Mount Gable* in Galway being the other) and is an initiative of Comhairle na Tuaithe to develop a sustainable model for the management of selected Irish uplands, based on permissive access to predominantly privately owned lands, with the collaboration of the landowners.

The Partners are seeking to provide a new integrated model for responsible access to the extensive MacGillycuddy Reeks upland area between the Gap of Dunloe and Glencar Valley (Fig 1.1.), one of the most iconic mountain ranges in the country. Fundamentally underpinning such an approach is the need for permissive access agreements with landowners, both of commonage and privately owned lands, within a partnership-based management framework. The objective of this project was to assess the potential for establishment of an appropriate management structure (including support facilities and services), to manage the *MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Scheme* in County Kerry, to ensure its long term viability.

The concept of countryside recreation has been well defined by *Comhairle na Tuaithe*, which has attempted to address the access issue through its access parameters (2005), the *National Countryside Recreation Strategy* (2006) and the *Walks Scheme* (2008), underpinned by the appointment of Rural Recreation Officers in twelve areas in the country also in 2008.

Access to the countryside of Ireland is locally contentious due to new demands with respect to recreational activity from a more affluent (and predominately urban) society. Alongside this demand comes the recognition that rural recreation has the potential to generate significant revenue and could provide a catalyst for rural and regional development (Fáilte Ireland, 2005). However, there are serious problems relating to access provision. This is because, unlike many of its European counterparts, Ireland does not have legislative or customary agreements which allow the general public freedom to walk on private land in the countryside. At present public access to the countryside in Ireland is dependent largely upon by-product provision; such as access to public forests (Buckley et al. 2009b).

The montane environment of the MacGillycuddy Reeks in south County Kerry offers a diverse array of natural and cultural heritage sites, many amenable to hillwalking, climbing, photography and other recreational activities. However, the uplands are sensitive environments and are under pressure due to increasing numbers of recreational users accessing the Reeks over the past decade, with the growth in popularity in particular of hillwalking among domestic and international visitors. Coupled with this is the growth in activity based, fundraising and challenge /charity events, which puts additional 'flash' pressure on sensitive montane habitats. A number of towns, villages and isolated rural communities lie within the hinterlands of the Reeks (see Map in Figure 4.3) which provide services to recreational users of the mountains.

Realisation of a *Mountain Access Scheme* has the potential to offer significant socio-economic opportunities within the hinterland of the Reeks, as well as contributing to landowner, community

and economic wellbeing. A broad, consultative partnership has the potential to both motivate landowners and host communities, and embed confidence of delivery among public and private activity providers, providing a positive and strategic mechanism with which to advance. South Kerry retains a Rural Recreation Officer, a key role in the implementation of the recommendations of this report.

It is worth reiterating the balance to be achieved in the debate on permissive access, as set out in the *Access Parameters & Countryside Code* agreed by members of Comhairle na Tuaithe at the outset of this project. Access to the countryside must be based on mutual respect in acceptance of the rights of farmers and landowners over access to their lands and acceptance of the need of recreational users to have reasonable access to the uplands. Central to this is the acceptance that recreational users must be responsible for their own safety when accessing the countryside.

1.2 Terms of Reference

The terms of reference (TOR) for delivery of the Mountain Access Development Assessment for the MacGillycuddy Reeks were clearly laid out by the Partners:

Responsibilities of the consultant will be to:

1. **To advise and report on the most appropriate management structure (and/or support facilities and services) necessary to ensure the long term viability of the project.** Such advice shall also include;

- identification of stakeholders to be represented on the proposed management structure,
- Consideration of a number of different types of management structure and a recommendation as to the most suitable management structure to be utilised
- One to one engagement with key stakeholder groups in order to achieve buy in/agreement to participate on the proposed management structure and identification of their key priority actions for the management structure.
- an assessment of the funding necessary to support such a management structure in the short, medium and long term,
- recommendations for priority actions to be undertaken by the management structure on establishment, including strategic objectives,
- proposals for consideration regarding the leveraging of available funding resources both public and private, including grants, user charges, licensing, philanthropy, commercial sponsorship and levies or contributions from commercial operators and beneficiaries,
- proposals to ensure local landowner benefits arising from increased access and commercial development,
- Identify indicators of success for the management structure, including key performance indicators.
- recommendations for similar or alternative management structures for the further roll out of the mountain access scheme,

It is not intended that any recommendations be overly prescriptive and they may suggest a management model that moves incrementally from a voluntary organisation to a more structured model based on a limited company, trust or registered charity model.

2. **In addition, the report could suggest and identify some additional aspects for the management committee to address** such as ;

- identify a range of additional, appropriate recreation activities that may be developed or encouraged within the Reeks Mountain Access area. Such activities should take account of the specific nature of the various environmental designations such as SACs, SPAs and NHAs etc. that exist in the area and its proximity to Killarney National Park, including the concept of sustainable development,

- suggest initial local engagement and community consultation strategies to identify areas of cooperation and mutual interest with a primary focus of job creation and local enterprise development (current landowners to be a primary consideration)
 - Outline a promotion strategy identifying clear targets, timelines and benchmarks,
 - indicate if any additional items, proposals, themes or actions not requested in this specification that might require to be addressed subsequently.
3. **Provide a preliminary report to the key stakeholders** when 50% of the work is completed
 4. **Having completed the final report the consultant will do a presentation of the key elements/findings of the report to the key stakeholders**

Additional background is provided in Appendix A

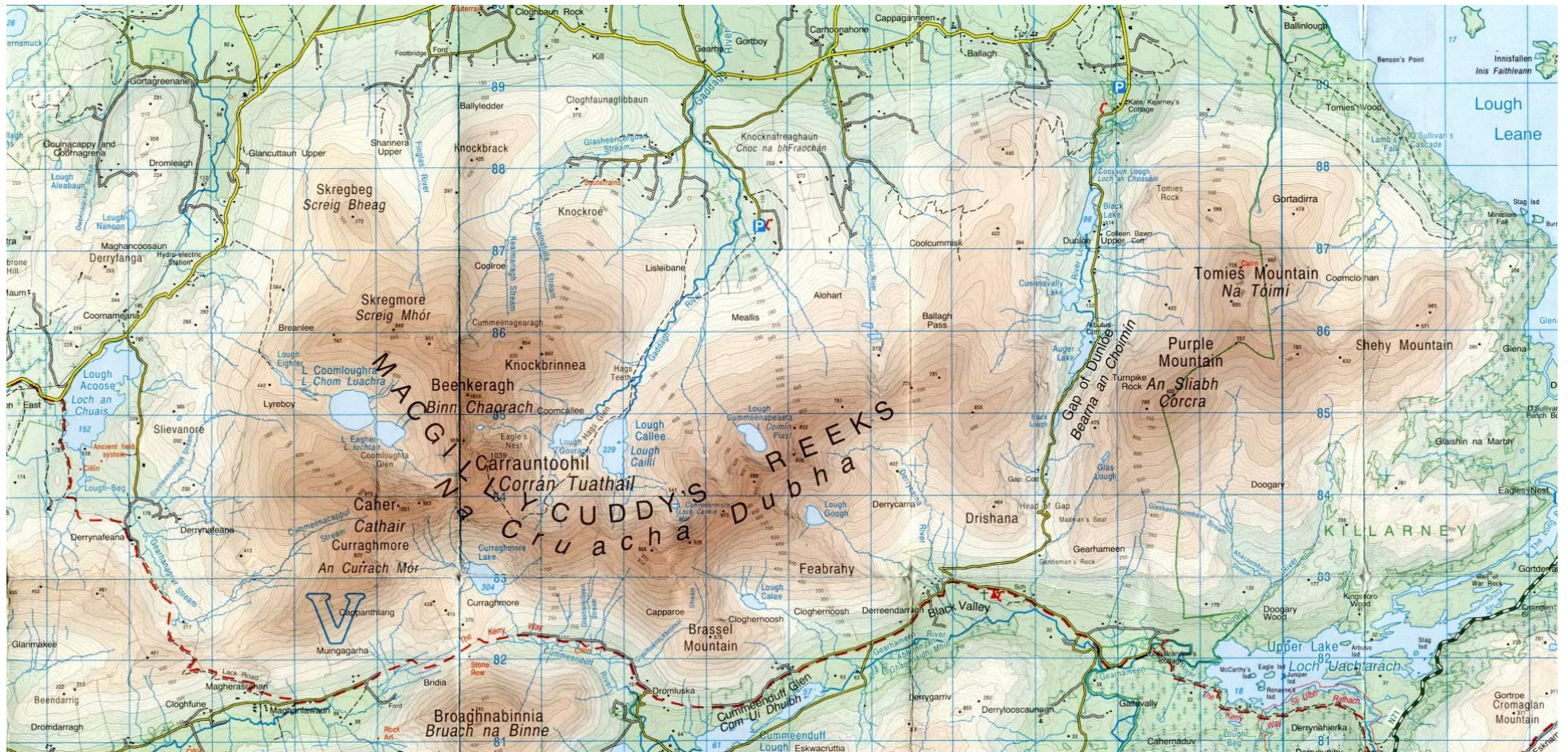


Figure 1.1 MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Scheme: Map showing 'Area of Interest' from Tomies/Purple Mountains in the east to the Lough Acoose area in the Caragh Valley in the west; and from the Black Valley in the south to the 'yellow road' in the northern foothills of the Reeks.

Note: the Killarney National Park straddles the eastern margin of the Area of Interest, its western boundary defined by the green line (see Fig. 2.1)

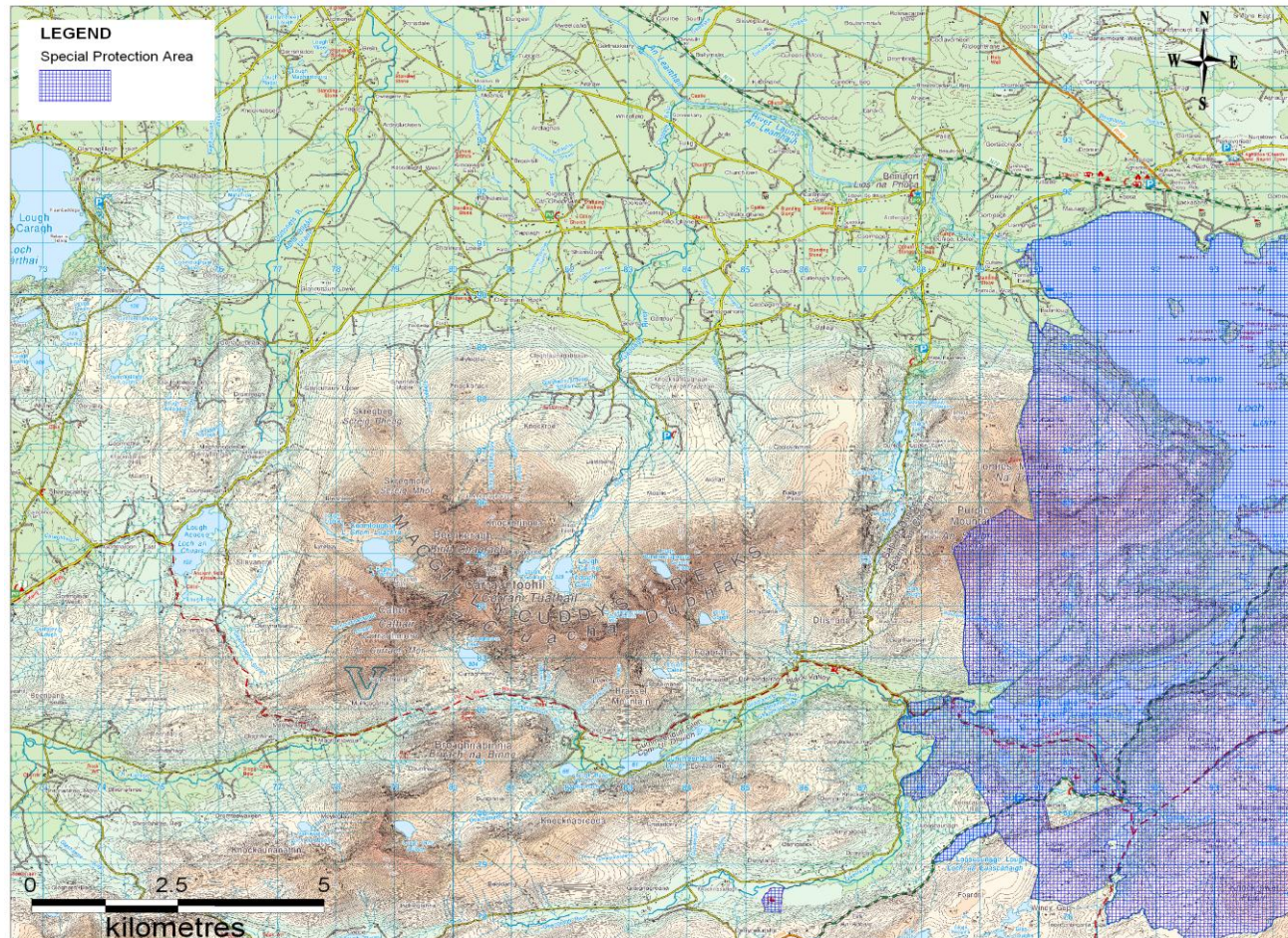


Figure 1.2 MacGillycuddy Reeks: Map showing Killarney National Park and its Special Protection Area (see also overleaf)

The blue area shows the Killarney National Park SPA - note no SPA exists on the Reeks immediately to the west of the Park

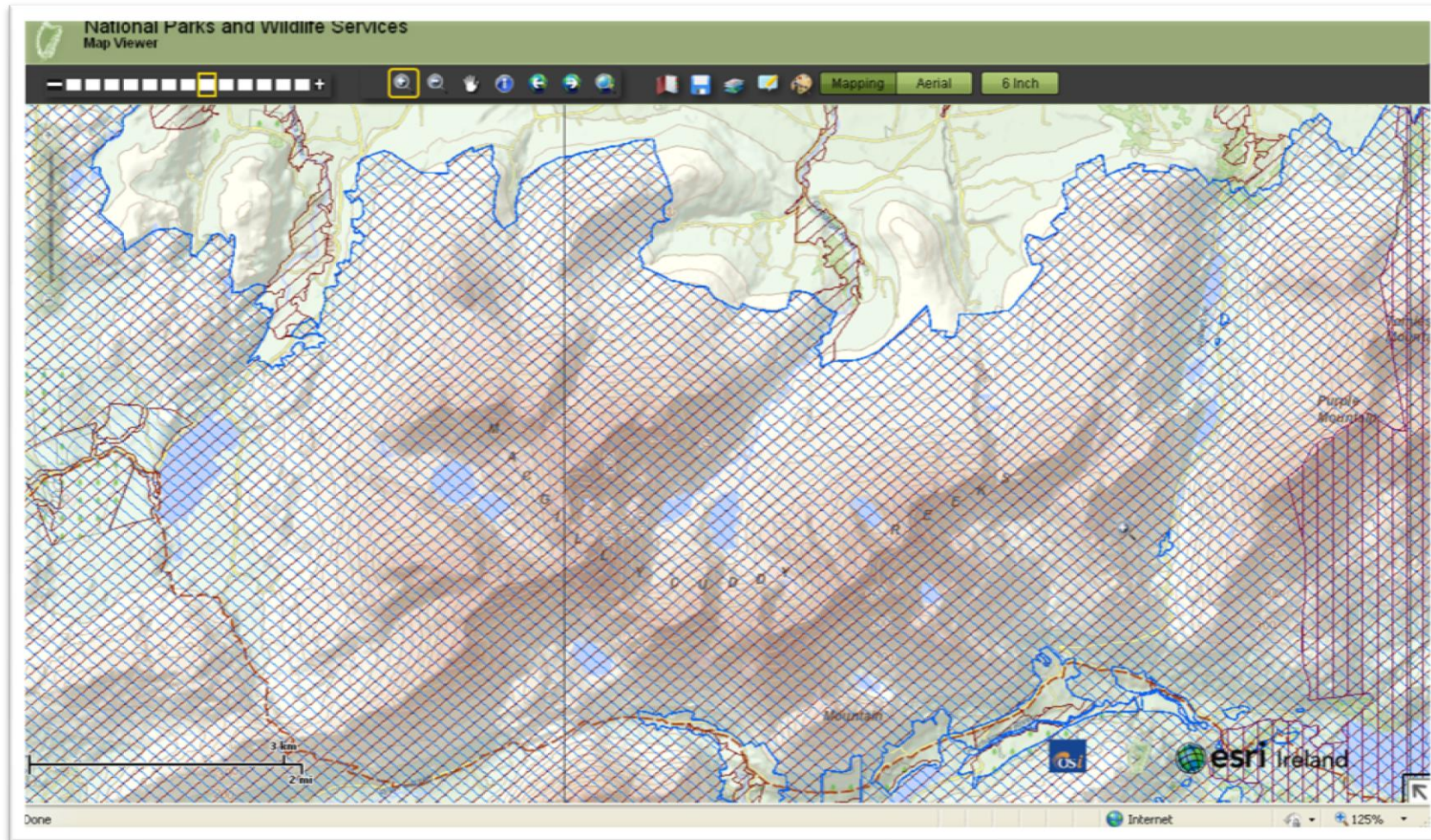


Figure 1.3 MacGillycuddy Reeks: Map showing key environmental designations *courtesy of NPWS website 2013*

The brown cross-hatch zones are SACs; the blue cross-lines are pNHA, (overlapping SAC and pNHA) on the Reeks, while the pink vertical lines represents the Killarney National Park SPA. The dashed red line in the south shows the Kerry Way along the Blackwater Valley

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted informed this assessment to define a model in which full permissive access to the MacGillycuddy Reeks could be achieved, with the agreement of the landowners, to deliver a world-class recreational destination, based on international best practice.

Key stakeholders were identified among landowners, community, trade, recreational users and service providers, local authority and statutory agencies. During the course of the consultations, SLR identified a number of strong stakeholders/ groups suitable for representation on a defined management structure. Extensive consultations followed based on one-to-one dialogue with individual landowners, plenary meetings of small groups of landowners, community activists; public meetings with recreational users, statutory and local authorities, and representative farming and recreational groups. Commercial operators from accommodation, food, guiding and ancillary services were also included in the consultations and their feedback was incorporated into the final analysis.

The issue of landowner indemnification as an element of participation in the Mountain Access Scheme was discussed in order to assuage relevant fears of landowners. At the start of this assessment, a national indemnity scheme had been proposed by DECLG, and was hoped would be in place by end-2013, which information was communicated to landowners by the consultants. However, by end of the year, it is unlikely that such a scheme will be in place in the near term. However, this does not preclude the implementation of a dedicated scheme for mountain access participants in the Reeks, at least until the national scheme is in place. The details will require to be worked out by the partners to the process.

The review of a range of management models in Ireland and internationally highlighted the key elements of success at start-up, progress and on longer term: how these models moved from early *ad hoc* access to controlled access and generation of significant revenues. All report the need for partnership with a shared vision, setting realistic and flexible goals within an agreed action plan, and with strong leadership.

Key land ownerships (via Land Registry www.landdirect.ie) and recreational access routes were mapped out, to ascertain the pressure points in terms of recreational visitor numbers, and likely requisite supporting infrastructure. During the course of this study, three counters were emplaced at the three key northern approaches to the 'high Reeks' to Carrauntuohil. The results are not yet available due to malfunction of the equipment, but future measures will go some way towards quantifying the actual numbers of recreational access to the Reeks. This is critical in terms of any future visitor management planning.

The sustainability of the proposed model(s) was reviewed, in terms of human, administrative and financial resources, and a number of options were selected as viable. Public supports may be available through the Rural Social Scheme, crowd-sourced funding and/ or philanthropic funding. The role of both the Common Agricultural Policy and the Rural Development Programme are unclear at this stage, due to current changes and transitional period into the 2014-2020 programmes. However, SKDP have given assurances that the Reeks Mountain Access Project will be a priority programme, resources permitting in the next 5-year period.

Options for engagement of landowners in activities linked to expanding recreational tourism were explored. Many farmers wish to remain farming and are not inclined towards other economic activity; however, others expressed interest in training for guiding, accommodation, on-farm demonstrations of e.g. lambing/ animal welfare/ sheep dog herding etc. All of this must be linked to accredited standards in training and certification, where applicable, while building confidence among the landowners themselves.

While Killarney is a world-renowned tourism brand and service hub within 15-20km of the Reeks, the role of service providers in local communities in providing services was explored, with a

possible focus on locally produced food (for breakfast, packed lunches, dinner), branding of Kerry produce and integrated transport options, with a focus on servicing recreational demand in the rural setting.

As part of the project, SLR Consulting made a formal presentation on the MacGillycuddy Reeks Access project at the *Rural Alliances Conference* (Killarney, 8th October 2013). An associated workshop staged in Glencar, in which thirty international delegates engaged positively, formally addressed access issues with the draft Mountain Access Plan for the Reeks at the heart of the discussion. The session was addressed by three speakers, namely Patricia Deane, Rural Recreation Officer in South Kerry, who described the role of the RRO and highlighted core aspects of her work notably with the Reeks and the Kerry Way. This was followed by Alan Hill of SLR, who outlined the process and findings of the Reeks MAP study to date, and latterly by Richard Tyler (Tourism Marketing Manager, Brecon Beacons, Wales), who is currently engaged in a similar process in developing their first strategic plan. There followed an extensive and lively Q&A Session to complete the session which addressed long term vision for rural uplands areas, leadership and building partnerships, appropriate management structures, action planning, conservation and education, among other topics.

A community engagement and communication plan was developed based on the above research findings.

Key performance indicators were identified, with high level costings for delivery of the Mountain Access Scheme, based on permissive access and a fully engaged partnership.

Finally, a management structure was proposed with effective actions for co-ordination and management. Linked to this, a suggested **5-year Strategic Action Plan** was delivered, based on the research, consultations and findings of the study.



Stone-flagged stream crossing in the Hags' Glen (Lisleibane Loop)

3.0 POLICY CONTEXT

SLR examined relevant recreational and agricultural development strategies in order to contextualise the proposed Mountain Access Project (MAP) within national, regional and county objectives. The rationale was to ensure that the MAP would not operate in a policy vacuum, rather that it could be designed to provide a workable management structure and transparency for landowners, as well as a high quality and consistent experience for recreational users. Fundamentally underpinning the 'permissive access' concept is that while landowners will not receive direct payment for access, the study explored other avenues for landowners to receive some benefits for participating in the scheme. The benefits of working in unison to achieve a common goal was also emphasised, particularly in seeking agri-environmental support schemes dedicated to traditional upland farm practices, while conserving the unique biodiversity of the uplands.

Meetings were held with Kerry County Council, Fáilte Ireland, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Irish Uplands Forum, Mountaineering Ireland, the Irish Farmers Association (IFA), *Comhairle na Tuaithe* and other key agencies/ representative bodies to ensure consistency with national, regional and local policy directions as well as compliance with any legal obligations in relation to environmental protection. Those policies are tabulated below and a series of summary policy reviews are presented in Appendix 2.

3.1 Review of Strategic Plans

A series of relevant European, national, regional and local strategies were reviewed, to inform and provide context to the assessment for mountain access:

Europe	The Common Agricultural Programme (CAP), post 2013 Rural Development Programme (RDP), post 2013 Specifications for Agri-Environment Options Scheme and Natura 2000 Sites - AEOS 3 (2007-2013)
Ireland	Comhairle na Tuaithe : National Countryside Recreation Strategy 2007 Irish Sports Council: Irish Trails Strategy (2007) National Trails Office: Guidelines for Planning & Developing Recreational Trails in Ireland (NTO, 2011), and NTO: Management Standards for Recreational Trails in Ireland (2008) The Walks Scheme: Dept of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht (2008) Criteria for Development of Loop Walks and Coastal Paths (2006) Submission by Working Group on Future National Upland Rural Development Measures to Dept. Agriculture, Food & Marine on measures to be implemented in the Common Agricultural Policy 2014-2020 (Nov. 2012) Submission by Mountaineering Ireland on Rural Development Programme for Ireland (RDP) 2014-2020 to Dept. Agriculture, Food & Marine (Jan.2013) Heritage Council of Ireland: Strategic Plan 2012-2016 Fáilte Ireland: National Tourism Development Strategy (2006-2013) Dept Transport, Tourism & Sport: Issues Paper and Request for Submissions on developing a Tourism Policy Statement (Aug. 2013)
Kerry	Kerry County Development Plan 2009-2015 South Kerry Development Partnership Corporate Plan 2008-2013 Kerry Recreation & Sports Partnership: Strategic Plan Kerry Activity Tourism Strategy 2010-2014 Let's Get Kerry Walking! <i>Farming in the Iveragh Uplands</i> (UCC, 2010)
Value of Recreation	Economic Value of Trails and Forest Recreation in Ireland 2005 Walking/ Hillwalking Research Fáilte Ireland Slán Attitudes to Lifestyle & Nutrition

3.2 Europe: Strategic Plans of Relevance

The Common Agricultural Policy & Rural Development - post 2013

The overall aim of both the Common Agricultural Policy (2007-13) and the associated Rural Development Programme which are now concluding, was to improve the quality of life in rural areas while encouraging agriculture, forestry and diversification of rural economic activity, including conservation of our culture and heritage.

The Common Agricultural Programme (CAP) 2014-2020 is currently in preparation following extensive EU-wide consultations. "*The CAP towards 2020*" outlines options for its future roll-out to ensure a more effective policy for competitive and sustainable agriculture and vibrant rural areas. In June 2013 a political agreement on the reform of the CAP was reached between the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council.

In 2005, a decision was taken that a single legal framework for financing CAP spending would operate. The CAP's budget is spent in three different ways under two 'Pillars':

Pillar 1: Agriculture & Markets (financed by European Agricultural Guarantee Fund)

1. *Income support for farmers in complying with sustainable agricultural practices*: farmers receive direct payments, provided they comply with strict standards relating to food safety, environmental protection and animal welfare. These payments account for 70% of the CAP budget. Under the June 2013 reform, 30% of direct payments will be linked to European farmers' compliance with sustainable agricultural practices which are beneficial to soil quality, biodiversity and the environment generally, such as crop diversification, the maintenance of permanent grassland or the preservation of ecological areas on farms.
2. *Market-support measures*: these come into effect e.g. when adverse weather conditions destabilise markets. Such payments account for < 10% of the CAP budget.

Pillar 2: Rural Development (financed by European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development)

3. *Rural development measures*: these are intended to help farmers modernise their farms and become more competitive, while protecting the environment, contributing to the diversification of farming and non-farming activities and the vitality of rural communities. These payments are part-financed by the member countries, generally extend over a number of years, and account for some 20% of the CAP's budget.

These two pillars are closely interrelated and must be managed coherently e.g. direct payments provide farmers with a steady income while rewarding them for providing environmental benefits which are in the public interest. Likewise, rural development measures make it easier to modernise farms while encouraging diversification of activities in rural areas.

The *CAP Outcome Details* (October 2013) summary document was recently published by the Dept. Agriculture, Food & Marine (DAFM). There is significant emphasis under the new CAP placed on agri-environmental schemes, with reference to Areas of Natural Constraints (ANC) which include mountainous areas and delimited areas of important ecosystems². Ireland's discretionary funds for such measures are estimated at €60 million. Single Farm Payments from 2015 can be adjusted to include additional payments for participating farmers in approved ANC

agri-environmental schemes; however, these are voluntary measures for Member States and Ireland's detailed voluntary payment schemes have yet to be presented.

The total Rural Development Programme (RDP/ Pillar 2) allocation to rural funding in Ireland is dependent on national co-financing. As the expected EU contribution will be 53%, to be matched by 47% national financing, the expected total allocation to the RDP will be in the region of €4.133 billion over the seven years of the CAP. The final figure will be dependent on available matched funding.

The new rules for Pillar 2 of the CAP provide a more flexible approach than at present, as measures will no longer be classified at EU level into "axes" with associated minimum spending requirements per axis. Instead it will be up to Member States to decide which measures they use (and how) in order to achieve targets set against six broad "priorities", one of which includes "Restoring, preserving & enhancing ecosystems". Member States will have to spend at least 30% of their rural development funding from the EU budget on agri-environment/ agri-climate programmes, forest-related measures, organic farming, NATURA 2000 areas and ANCs (thus with significant competition for the funds from different sectors).

Examples of proposed funding programmes under the *Agri-Environment - Climate Payments* measure (according to IFA reflections on the new CAP³) include: "Joint contracts, link to adequate training/information, greater flexibility when extending initial contracts – payments given only where activities go beyond greening requirements". The IFA document also notes that "Higher payments can be made when groups of farmers come together in an agri-environment plan." It also noted "anticipated higher payments for mountain areas (and farmland above 62° N), aid amounts can be up to 450 €/ha (increased from 250 €/ha)".

The latest EU CAP measures, the details of which are yet to be finalised in Ireland, may be directly relevant to enhancing group landowner participation in the Mountain Access Scheme under consideration in the MacGillycuddy Reeks.

3.3 Ireland: Strategic Plans of Relevance

National Countryside Recreation Strategy 2007

Comhairle na Tuaithe

Comhairle na Tuaithe was established in 2004 by the then Minister of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs as a *de facto* national countryside council. It comprises representatives of policy makers, farming organisations, recreational users and relevant state agencies.

Objectives of the strategy:

1. to achieve sustainable and responsible recreation in the countryside;
2. to promote caring recreational use of the countryside,
3. to develop a national framework which promote the rights and responsibilities of both users and owners;
4. To develop a suitable structure to deliver a national countryside recreation service
5. To secure funding to deliver on the objectives of the strategy

Underlying the development of the strategic objectives are core principles:

- a) Recognition of the value for the countryside in terms of quality of life, economic, social and health benefits
- b) Protection of natural, cultural and built heritage and the natural environment
- c) Recognition of the legal rights and concerns of land owners

³ IFA Analysis July 2013/ MFF CAP BUDGET 2014-2020 - see www.ifa.ie

- d) Acceptance of the need of reasonable access to the countryside and uplands by recreational users
- e) Education and awareness programmes to promote responsible use of the countryside for recreation
- f) Encourage farmers and other landowners to provide for countryside recreation and to develop rural enterprises based on outdoor recreation.
- g) Develop and maintain the infrastructure
- h) Control the quality of recreational areas ensuring they are planned, designed and managed to the highest standards and embracing an access for all approach.

This strategy provides a set of guiding principles, which may be reflected in the Mountain Access Scheme.

The Walks Scheme ***Dept of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs 2008***

An early task was the development of a national recreation strategy and a mechanism to deal with permissive access to open / rough / upland farmlands for recreational purposes. From this emerged the 'Walks Scheme', launched in March 2008, which provided a mechanism to engage farmers, private landowners and landlords/users in the development, enhancement and maintenance of National Waymarked Ways and priority walks. Farmers/ landowners could be paid for maintenance works on walking trails on their land(s), which in turn allowed for permissive access.

The mechanism at the heart of the Walks Scheme is a maintenance payment that is made available to successful applicants to maintain, enhance or develop agreed work on approved waymarked ways and looped walking routes. This maintenance payment offers €14.50 per hour for between 50 and 200 hours per year to carry out this work.

The latter was successful where it was rolled out. By 2013, the scheme had closed to new entrants (except where rerouting of existing trails had to take place), but existing contracts have been renewed at a reduced rate of €12.50 per hour.

Irish Trails Strategy ***Irish Sports Council 2006***

This strategy focuses on the development of recreational trails in Ireland and is currently under review (2013). The purpose of the strategy is to guide the development and maintenance of a world-class network of trails that bring positively influence the three primary beneficiary groups:

- Irish people – primarily health and well being benefits through engagement with outdoor activity
- Tourists - through engagement in walking and cycling lengthening the tourist season and bring economic benefits to the country
- The rural community - providing rural tourism opportunities and alternative means of stimulating the rural economy

A recreational trail is considered to be a route (land or water based) which is primarily intended for recreational usage including hiking, walking, cycling, canoeing or horse riding,

One of the key objectives of the strategy is to introduce a standardised approach both to the development and maintenance of trails in Ireland so as to create a consistent quality accessible trail product and engage all key stakeholders in the ongoing issues relating to trails in Ireland.

Some of the key recommendations presented in the Strategy were:

- the establishment a National Trails Office and trails advisory Committee, *which was subsequently implemented;*

- an Irish Trails standards system incorporating a classification systems and signage policy; *which was subsequently implemented*;
- a mechanism for evaluation and monitoring; *which was subsequently implemented*
- Co-ordinated marketing and promotion , *in association with Fáilte Ireland through www.discoverireland.com*

Following the recommendations in October 2008, the National Trails Office published two relevant documents, which are widely used in commissioning and maintaining trails:

- (i) Classification & Grading for Recreational Trails and
- (ii) Management Standards for Recreational Trails.

Guidelines 'Notice Nature' (Tourism & Biodiversity) Fáilte Ireland /Dept Environment Heritage & Local Government 2007

FI & DEHLG launched their Guidelines on 'Notice Nature' in 2007, linked to the National Biodiversity Plan, for three sectors tourism, construction and business. See http://www.noticenature.ie/files/tourism_guidelines.pdf.

The purpose of the 'Notice Nature' guidelines is to assist the tourism sector to identify ways in which it can contribute to the protection and sustainable use of Ireland's biodiversity. The guidelines cover the sustainable development and management of tourism policies, strategies, projects and activities".

On **Hillwalking** it identifies the following issues:-

- Erosion of walkways due to over-use
- Litter along walkways from users
- Over-picking of plants
- Users wandering off set trails causing habitat damageLoss of ground cover

and offers the following solutions:-

- Trail managers should ensure that active trail management plans are in place
- Smaller groups of walkers will help to minimise erosion of walkways.
- Use managed and prepared trails and encourage walkers not to wander off the track.
- Set out guidelines at the start of walks and nature trails that ask visitors not to pick plants, and to leave nothing behind them.
- Promote the '**Leave No Trace**' code of outdoor ethics to all trail users. The seven 'Leave No Trace' Principles could be listed on trail-head signage.
- Have routes and trails that can be varied if signs of erosion are showing on trails in use.

Tourist Product Development Strategy Plan 2007-2013 Fáilte Ireland

Fáilte Ireland defines a tourism and recreational destination as places that are generally " ... known for a key attraction or activity that makes them market leaders and instantly recognisable as a must-see place. Their brand, product, reputation and marketing efforts are built around that key identity. Supplementary products and attractions are then developed to give the tourist a complete experience. Destinations need to have a critical mass of product and services."

The current FI national tourism product development strategy is coming to the end of its life. It was forged in the heady days of the Celtic Tiger and as a consequence many of both the targets and of the proposed investments have not met by the government or the private sector.

"Tourism is the largest internationally traded services sector in Ireland ... every euro spent by overseas visitors directly generates an additional 30.2 cent to the Exchequer and including indirect receipts the annual tax contribution is over €2.5 billion".

The encouraging aspect of rural tourism is that money is spent locally to help to sustain and grow employment in the tourism / recreation sectors.

Fáilte Ireland has flagged the following issues as critical in sustaining Irish tourism into the longer term, these considerations will inform this recreation strategy:-

- ✚ Importantly there is long-term **growth potential** for Irish tourism;
- ✚ There is a **need to respond** to changing customer needs (domestic & overseas);
- ✚ There has been an aggressive response by our **competitors**, not just in marketing, but in product development and market research;
- ✚ Without **investment** we will lose market share;
- ✚ Seeking continuous **product innovation** is key;
- ✚ Any recreational product requires physical investment but at the same time must be accessible, well presented and **meet customer expectations**.

Within a long term tourism development context, Kerry should strive towards delivering a world class integrated recreational experience.

Some of the gaps identified in the Strategy pertinent to Kerry's rural recreation are:

- Issues of access surrounding access to privately owned land;
- Lack of co-ordination between national, local government and public bodies in relation to development of the walking product;
- On-going management and maintenance for walks/trails to ensure an on-going quality product; (*much of which has been addressed locally by The Walks Scheme*)
- Needs of both casual and specialist recreation seekers must be catered for.

3.4 Kerry: Strategic Plans of Relevance

Kerry County Development Plan 2009 -2015

Kerry County Council delivers a wide range of services necessary to the physical, economic, social and cultural life of the county, leading to the continued development of the county as a location of choice for people to live, work, invest and visit. The Council's Corporate Plan focuses attempts to meet new economic, social and environmental challenges over the years. Kerry County Council strives to deliver quality services through the job creation, sustainable economic development and the promotion of tourism, culture and importantly heritage and recreation through some iconic sites across County Kerry.

The scale and economic importance of tourism is acknowledged in the latest Plan thus "*...Kerry's tourism industry is a significant economic and social force in the county with 15% of the county's workforce employed in this sector in 2006. A total of €1,233m was spent by 3.6 million visitors to the south west region in 2006...*".

In relation to future product development, the Council sees broad recreation as playing a significant role. Fáilte Ireland has "...*have identified the nature and heritage sector, as a market in which Kerry's natural resources make it well placed to succeed. These resources also lend themselves to the further development of the recreation sector through the development of niche markets, for example cycling/ walking holidays, archaeological and nature tours, English language learning tours, and specialist markets such as activity holidays, environmental or cultural based tourism.*

Each of these activities provides the opportunity to diversify and grow Kerry's tourism product and benefit from the generation of spin-offs and demand for additional services. Kerry is well positioned to become a significant destination for the growing market for culture and arts based activity holidays through the development of its indigenous cultural assets. The latter are often a

complimentary activity supporting other holiday experiences. These niche activities also extend the tourist season.”

There is a natural affinity between the objectives of the existing County Development Plan and those of the proposed Mountain Access Scheme.

- ✚ Will strengthen rural community infrastructure in order to increase the capacity of the sector to have influence on the economic, social and cultural development of the County.
- ✚ Tourism and recreational development will support and encourage the development of rural community initiatives in micro tourism, the environment, education and small business development that have potential to enhance and assist in the development of the whole of Kerry.
- ✚ Will work in partnership with other key recreational offerings to maximise the opportunities for the region.
- ✚ All actions will be delivered in a responsible and sustainable manner.

The protection of water bodies used for drinking water and ‘branded’ lakes in County Kerry, under the Water Framework Directive, is expressed strongly in Chapter 11 (Natural Environment) of the current CDP. Lough Callee at the head of the Hag’s Glen in the Reeks is one such named body for drinking water, while Coomloughra on the west side of Carrauntoohil is a branded lake (important for salmon/ trout fisheries). At all times, the precautionary principle applies when considering the impact of any activity such as soil erosion, increased turbidity etc, on the fish and invertebrate life in these water bodies.

The CDP also commits to the maintenance of the conservation status of the SACs, SPAs and pNHAs within the county. The planning process seeks to both protect and enhance the status of animals and birds listed under Annex IV of the *Habitats Directive* (SACs), and those listed in Annex 1 of the *Birds Directive* (SPA) under European law. Furthermore, the County recognises that habitats and landscape features cannot be sustained in the long term in isolation from one another. The CDP states that there must be a network of protected areas, ecological corridors and ecological ‘stepping stones’ available to support the movement of species and to sustain the habitats, ecological processes and functions necessary to maintain biodiversity.

In Chapter 9 (Social, Community, Cultural, Recreation, Amenity) of the existing CDP, the Council committed to ensuring that due regard be given to the conservation of the natural and cultural environment in the development of any facilities and amenities for access to and interpretation of heritage. Additionally, KCC recognised that properly maintained walking routes provide an invaluable educational, recreational and conservation role, but that these routes cannot come into, or remain in, existence without the full co-operation of the owners of private property. Thus the council aimed to facilitate the provision of a network of quality pathways and associated carparks for walkers and cyclists that are free of vehicular traffic.

Linked to this, the Council facilitated the recent provision of a carpark for hillwalkers / climbers at Lisleibane and Breanlea, for access to Carrantuohill following an Appropriate Assessment and granting of planning permission. Furthermore the Council committed to co-operation with representative bodies to support the development, maintenance and enhancement of walking routes in an environmentally sustainable way, while protecting public rights of way and access to traditional outdoor amenities.

Kerry Recreation & Sports Partnership: Strategic Plan 2009-2013

Kerry Recreation & Sports Partnership (KRSP)’s mission is to “encourage, *promote and support the people of Kerry to participate in sport and physical activity, providing information and training, and implementing, coordinating and supporting a wide variety of programmes, activities and initiatives across the county ... to develop a pro-active culture towards active living.*”

KRSP is approaching the end of its second strategic plan in 2013. The strategy has *three* distinct themes namely **Participation; Partnership and Profile**. These are applied on a county-wide basis and do not address the issues on a sub-county or regional basis.

KRSP promotes active community participation in sports and recreation with emphasis on older citizens; women and girls; and people of physical and intellectual disabilities. It is encouraged through training e.g. Physical Activity Leaders (PALs); Buntús Start; child protection training for Children's Officers; Physikids; and Sports First Aid, among a host of other initiatives.

In relation to complementarities with the North and East Kerry recreation strategy, the following observations can be made in relation to specific action:

To assist the development of sport in County Kerry through (among others):

- ✚ Work with clubs and sports organisations to create opportunities for young people to participate in sport
- ✚ Facilitate and support creative sporting development initiatives and ideas
- ✚ Provide targeted funding to support clubs to increase participation for young people
- ✚ Deliver sports for people with a disability and provide disability awareness training programmes within the club setting
- ✚ Act as a Focal point for information provision

Also relevant is the action '**to increase participation through the Community programmes**':

- ✚ Co-ordinate the delivery of quality programmes in local communities to priority target groups
- ✚ Promote the conservation and use of the County's unique natural environment

'Let's Get Kerry Walking'

The '*Let's Get Kerry Walking*' initiative is being promoted throughout Kerry by the Kerry Sports and Recreation Partnership, aimed at increased participation in walking by all citizens, starting with 'small steps' and building up levels of confidence and fitness through walking for improved public health.



It is nationally recognised that walking has the highest participation rates for any form of recreation or sport, with a recent survey by the Irish Sports Council demonstrating that 59% of people in Ireland walk regularly (ISC 2012). This has enormous implications for public health policy and community efforts must be supported and sustained to provide citizens of all abilities (and visitors) with safe, off-road walking amenities.

Kerry Activity Tourism Strategy 2010-2014
South Kerry Development Partnership & Fáilte Ireland

The Kerry Activity Tourism Strategy (2010-14) is intended as an overarching strategy to capture the potential and develop a realistic *roadmap* to enable Kerry to benefit from one of the most 'dynamic and rapidly growing' sectors of the global tourism economy. The strategy was created in May, 2010 and relates to the whole county, but with an obvious weighting towards the more developed south Kerry 'destination'.

Background

Overseas activity markets show a 2.5 times growth compared to other sectors, with activity visitors spending up to 50% more than traditional visitors. In 2009, Fáilte Ireland estimated that activity tourism alone brought in 350,000 visitors spending €125 million in the county economy. This represents about one third of every euro spent on tourism in the county. However, the starting point of the strategy is that Kerry (and indeed Ireland) is only capturing a small fraction (between 1-4% on average) of this business from our six core markets.

Competition is 'intense' both domestically (e.g. Ireland West, Northern Ireland and closer to home, Ballyhoura) and internationally (e.g. Scotland, Lake District and Snowdonia) with each of the above having integrated development and marketing strategies firmly in place allied to strong brand recognition and a critical mass of operators.

Vision and Objectives

The overall vision is to create a '*world class adventure tourism destination*'. The objective is to achieve this vision in a systematic manner, through the following initiatives:-

- ✚ Create one overseeing management structure
- ✚ Quality driven product development
- ✚ Unified and smart branding and marketing embracing new technology
- ✚ Support operators on the ground to raise their capacity
- ✚ Build and help sustain networks and clusters of businesses and
- ✚ Continue to measure and evaluate the roll out of the strategy

Any recreational or adventure tourism strategy for an aspiring, emerging or established destination must recognise that the conservation of the environmental integrity of the uplands (*the golden goose*) must underpin all subsequent actions and /or developments (*the golden eggs*): 1) product development 2) operator capacity 3) marketing and brand building and finally 4) management and financial sustainability.

An analysis of the above strategy is relevant for South Kerry under each heading:-

Product Development

Greater *interpretation* of the natural environment.

Identify a small number of key products like walking and/or marine tourism with high potential for growth (and bundling) and deliver an integrated business support service. It takes years to develop a 'world class' product(s) and must start with an agreed joint vision.

Products must be seen in their totality e.g. not just linear or looped walks, but the total walking experience from pre-walk planning through visitor support services on the walk to post-walk evaluation;

Road cycling: can do a number of 'simple' things to improve the experience.

Capacity

Poor broadband remains a barrier to growth.

Networking of operators through the likes of "Walkers Welcome" or "Anglers Welcome" has proved successful elsewhere.

Ensure local operators are fully aware of all products within their area.

Invest in ongoing bespoke training for operators.

Communications

The domestic market is the critical market for recreational tourism, while being the cheapest and easiest to reach; it is also an all-year round market.

Avoid duplication through a proliferation of sub regional recreational brands.

Research indicates that the most successful activity brands have a geographical identity.

Develop an aspiring world class web portal. All existing sub brands should be accommodated under this umbrella.

Strategic Management & Sustainability

Avoid duplication and confusion through more joined up planning / resource sharing and implementation.

Develop an agreed 'recreational destination management' organisation.

Have one clear achievable and unanimously agreed 'action plan'.

Ensure ongoing research to help in decision making e.g. auditing, supply side and demand side research.

Recreational Specific Strategies/Guidelines

The National Trails Office of the Irish Sports Council has spearheaded the coordination and integration of the walking/ cycling/ canoeing/ equestrian trail product in Ireland, to ensure best practice and to standardise the approaches taken to trail development, management and maintenance. To this end, they have been working with the Local Development Companies through the Rural Recreation Officers, where applicable the Dept. of Environment, Community & Local Government, County Sports & Recreation Partnerships, Fáilte Ireland, Coillte, Heritage Council, and Comhairle na Tuaithe, as well as Mountaineering Ireland (MI), 'Leave No Trace', Canoe Ireland and other recreational stakeholder groups.



3.5 Summary

It is clear that the policy framework for recreation and health in Ireland has moved forward significantly over the past decade, with a series of linked policy documents setting national objectives for landowner and citizen engagement, recreational access and setting of standards for development, maintenance and approval of trails. There is also a national recognition that recreational access to the outdoors is good for tourism and is a major contributor to both the wellbeing of citizens and the national coffers. The marketing of Ireland as a green adventure destination hinges fundamentally on access to the outdoors and particularly the upland mountain ranges.

Unlike many British and European countries however, Ireland does not have a dedicated network of publically owned and accessible trails and bridle paths, and all recreational access in Ireland, except in publicly owned lands such as national parks and forests, is dependent on permissive access and goodwill of private landowners. The Walks Scheme has been successful in allowing maintenance of certain approved trails such as The Kerry Way, which tracks across private lands in the southern foothills of the MacGillycuddy Reeks.

A new system to allow recreational access to the uplands, such as payments for path maintenance, tailored training schemes in farm-related recreational tourism and/or dedicated agri-environmental schemes must be investigated to support and assist sustained permissive access to the uplands into the future.

Additional relevant policies are presented in Appendix B.

4.0 MACGILLYCUDDY REEKS: ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL CONTEXT

The MacGillycuddy Reeks form the iconic mountainous 'spine' of the Iveragh Peninsula, hosting the three highest peaks in Ireland, Carrauntoohil (1039m), Beenkeeragh (1010m) and Caher (1001m), respectively. They host a complexity of physical environments and ecologies based on their natural history and geological evolution over millions of years.

4.1 Geology

The bedrocks forming the MacGillycuddy Reeks are comprised of Upper Devonian-aged sedimentary sandstones, mudstones, gritty sandstones and conglomerates, known collectively as the Old Red Sandstone (ORS), laid down c. 410 million years ago when proto-Ireland lay in arid climates south of the Equator. Due to the extreme climate at that time, there are few fossils preserved in these rocks, but an observant walker will notice ripples and flute marks on the rock surfaces, indicating the fluvial depositional environment of some rock formations. Over time, these deposits were buried and consolidated to rock, as the continental plate drifted gradually northwards to its current position. The mountains of the Dingle, Iveragh, Beara and Mizen peninsulae subsequently formed east-west trending anticlines (up-folds) and synclines (down-folds) through compressional folding of the ORS during the Variscan mountain building period.

Carrauntoohil and the highest peaks in the Reeks are formed of reddish sandstones and siltstones of the Ballinskelligs Sandstone Formation (*pink on map below*), with occasional pebbly conglomerates, surrounded by rocks of the older Lough Acoose Sandstone Formation, 'red bed' sandstones with distinctive cross-bedding (*brown on map below*)⁴.

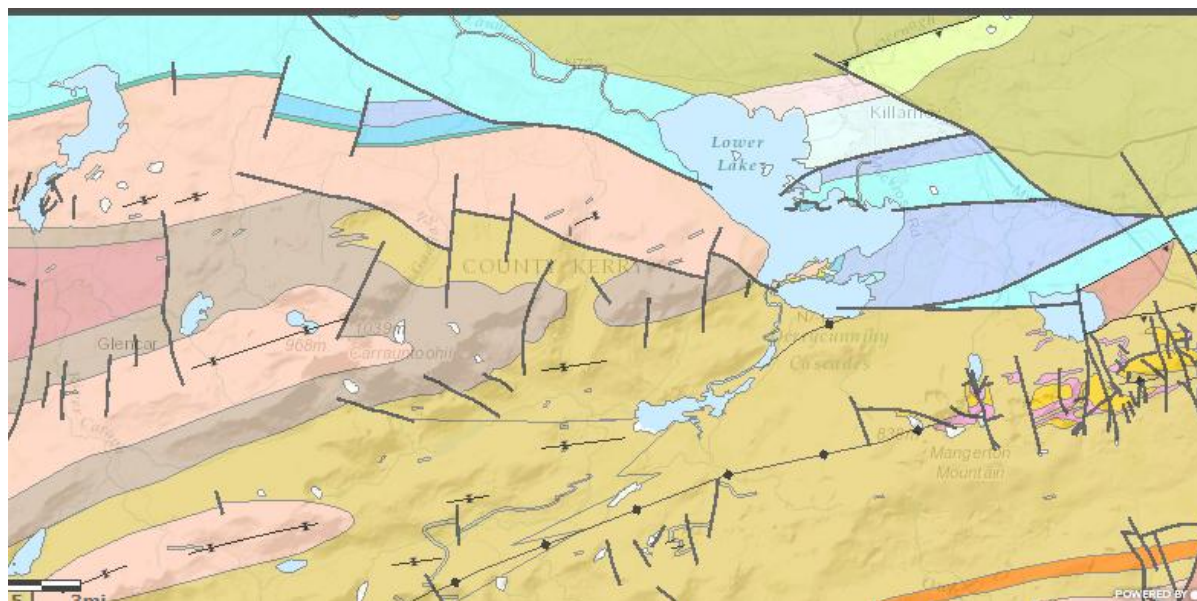


Figure 4.1 Geological Map of MacGillycuddy Reeks, Co Kerry (from Sheet 20, GSI, 1996)

In the more recent geological past, the last Ice Age, which ended 13,000 years ago, saw Ireland and most of Europe covered by an extensive ice sheet up to 1 kilometre thick, with consequent reduced sea levels. There were two major advances of ice in Ireland, the most southerly of which covered south Munster and the Reeks. Extensive freeze-thaw action and subsequent movement of valley glaciers sculpted the spectacular land forms such as peaks, corries, arêtes

⁴ In; *Geology of Dingle Bay, A Description to accompany the bedrock geology 1:100,000 map series, Sheet 20 Dingle Bay*. Geological Survey of Ireland (1996)

and U-shaped valleys which we see across the Iveragh Peninsula today. It is of course these ice-sculpted landscapes that provide the backdrop to Ireland's stunningly beautiful scenery that citizens and tourists enjoy.

4.2 Cultural Heritage

As well as the recreational potential of the Reeks, the mountains are home to ancient field systems, ritual sites, burials, ring forts, souterrains, buaile huts and other antiquities in a largely untamed landscape⁵.

These invaluable cultural and spiritual field monuments must be protected from any material damage and cherished in any future proposed management of the mountains.

4.3 Social Context

The Iveragh Peninsula has shown a decline in population over the past five years of national recession. In particular the youth population has declined through outward migration in search of education and employment opportunities. A recent study by University College Cork (2010⁶) noted this decline, compounding observed trends in rural depopulation since the post-Famine years. The landowning and farming population in the catchment of the MacGillycuddy Reeks is ageing, with few young farmers taking up the challenges of hill farming. Various agricultural policies since the 1970s have initially encouraged high density upland grazing and more recently encouraged destocking, each of which has very significant impacts on sensitive vegetation and habitat balance. There has been a decline in traditional upland farm grazing practices with resultant scrub encroachment and loss of husbandry skills in hill farming. In the course of this study, many older members of the farming population expressed fears that such skills may be in terminal decline and lost in a generation or two.

The Reeks provide a major geographical barrier to north-south movement and those living on the north and south sides of the range have little enough contact in terms of shared parishes, schools, football teams or similar daily social contact points. Thus in terms of the management of the Reeks as a single 'mountain access' recreational entity, ongoing internal communications among the landowners of commonage and privately held lands across the Reeks, will be requisite.

In terms of tourism demographics, it was conservatively estimated that 25,000⁷ people per annum visit the MacGillycuddy Reeks, although the numbers are likely to be significantly higher, given national trends in hillwalking and outdoor recreation.

It is recognised that there are acute pressures on rural communities within the Reeks' catchment; however, there are positive agents of change e.g. the impact of the SKDP-administered Rural Development Programme, the implementation of the Walks Scheme, the Rural Social Scheme, and targeted rural social and economic supports e.g. the Back-to-Work and Short Term Enterprise Allowance Schemes (BTWEAS/ SEA) respectively, which have supported 284 businesses in 2012 in South Kerry, with over 78% continued in business after the programme and supports finished (2008-2010 Enterprise Survey, SKDP).

⁵ Beaufort Community Council: Reeks Action Plan

⁶⁶ Kramm, N; Anderson, R; O'Rourke, E; Emmerson, M; O'Halloran, J; Chisholm, N; (2010) *Farming the Iveragh Uplands: A tale of humans and nature*. Cork: UCC

⁷ Figure cited in the Terms of Reference for this study and also in Ryan, Jim (2009). *Carrauntoohil & MacGillycuddy's Reeks, A Walking Guide to Ireland's Highest Mountains*. The Collins Press, 2nd ed.

4.4 Environmental Designations

The Iveragh Peninsula, including the MacGillycuddy Reeks, comprises a highly valuable environmental and recreational resource, with intrinsic value in terms of complex hydrological and ecological systems, as well as an ancient cultural landscape of anthropogenic importance.

Under the European 'Natura 2000' habitats protection framework, the MacGillycuddy Reeks are a designated 'Special Area of Conservation' (SAC) and under Irish national law, are a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA), the two designations forming a contiguous zone in the uplands. The adjacent Killarney National Park is zoned both as an SAC and NHA, as well as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EU Birds Directive (See Figure 1.2, Figure 1.3).

These environmental designations reflect the ecological importance of the Reeks, but currently, there is no dedicated Management Plan for the protection of the SAC (*at least not available on the NPWS website*). However, the designations mean that these habitats require protection and a conservation management plan will be required as part of an overall Integrated Management Plan for the Reeks.

The stringent environmental designations of the Reeks (SAC/ pNHA) will require that under the current legislation, Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) will be required, prior to any action, including emplacement of carparks, signage, bridges, stiles, or any mitigative erosion control measures along pathways within the SAC. Depending on the screening outcomes, Stage 2 AA and /or Stage 3 planning permission may be required.

However, if a Conservation Management Plan is developed and the planned works are to be carried out within the framework of meeting conservation objectives, then the works will be viewed by the planning authorities within that context.

The Natura 2000 designation means that certain activities will be prohibited and under environmental legislation, all activities will require Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment of the potential impact of any proposed activity within the bounds of the SAC. Should an activity be deemed to require Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment and environmental impact assessment, then planning permission may be required under Stage 3 of the process. This has significant implications for activities such as management of path erosion or migration or related recreational management measures. A Conservation Management Plan will be required to provide a prioritised approach to managing the habitats as part of the overall Integrated Management Plan for the Reeks.

4.5 Land Ownership

The McGillycuddy Reeks are held in private ownership, both in individually owned freehold parcels in the lower reaches and in commonly owned, open upland zones ('commonage'). A spatial register of landownership was established during this study along principal access routes. A useful summary of landownership is also given in Jim Ryan's book on walking the Reeks⁸.

The almost 100% private ownership marks the Reeks out as different to most other upland recreational amenity areas in Ireland, which generally have significant public ownership through national parks (www.npws.ie), forests and related recreation zones (www.coillteoutdoors.ie).

This private pattern of ownership thus requires a radically different approach to attain permissive access to the principal access routes to the high Reeks and for permission to address some of the environmental problems along the informal path network, such as path migration in the Hag's Glen, erosion along Bothar na Gíge (the 'Zig Zags') and the 'Devil's Ladder' access paths to

⁸ Ryan, Jim (2009). Carrauntoohil & MacGillycuddy Reeks, A Walking Guide to Ireland's Highest Mountains. The Collins Press, second edition.

Carrauntoohil; along the Turf Road to Strickeen in the Gap of Dunloe; and severe peat erosion at Lough Eighter at the top of the Hydro Road

The landowners recognise that recreational walkers have been climbing Carrauntoohil for generations and have been hospitable in the past to all-comers. However, with increasing recreational, commercial and environmental pressures due to ever-increasing user numbers and events, the landowners require a new approach to managing mountain access in the Reeks.

4.6 Kerry County Development Plan: Environment & Recreation

The current County Development Plan is reviewed in Section 3.4 above. In the current document, the local authority committed to the principle of taking all necessary measures to ensure that the natural environment of the County was managed and protected in a sustainable manner, while at the same time, promoting the interaction of the public with the environment through environmentally sustainable projects which can improve access without detriment to the environment.

The Kerry County Development Plan 2016-2022 is currently under review and KCC officers are actively working on the next Draft CDP for review by elected members in November 2013. This document will go to public consultation in early 2014 with a view to completion within 2014.

The high level aspiration to have a well-resourced MacGillycuddy Reeks recreational access zone, based on permissive access, within the context of an Integrated Management Plan, has been submitted to the Draft document for review by the elected members.



*View eastwards via Lough Callee in the Hag's Glen, from base of Devil's Ladder
Note path erosion and migration*

4.7 Recreational Patterns of Usage

The Reeks are accessed by at least 25,000 recreational users per annum. It is highly likely that the numbers are a factor of 4 times higher based on observation of the year-round level of usage – but data is required to ascertain the visitor numbers.

The most popular activities are hillwalking, climbing and mountaineering, while others include photography and general environmental enjoyment of the 'wilderness' factor that the Reeks offer.

The most popular routes are those eastern routes leading to Carrauntoohil through the Hag's Glen from Cronins' Yard and the new Lisleibane carparking facilities. A further popular access is from the new Breanlea carpark, along the 'Hydro Road' on the western approach to Carrauntoohill via the Coumloughra Valley (see Figure 4.2 below) or via Derrynaferna near Lough Acoose.

These routes are under significant recreational pressure, with path erosion and migration a typical expression of the numbers accessing the mountains. Many are 'in-out' users on challenge events, and leave very little behind and most certainly not an appreciation of the fragility of the mountains.

Following extensive discussions on how best to manage the increasing recreational pressure on the Reeks, there is an argument to manage the increasing numbers of challenge events and hillwalkers by designating a well-managed, principal access route to Carrauntoohil via the Hag's Glen (see also Appendix C).

There is also an argument that by doing so, it would increase the confidence of inexperienced users to climb to Carrauntoohil, when they may not be suitably prepared for the likely adverse conditions on the ascent and descent.

Such a proposal would require very significant capital investment in stabilising the Devil's Ladder and associated approach routes from the Hag's Glen.

A map showing this proposed route is presented in Figure 4.3 below.

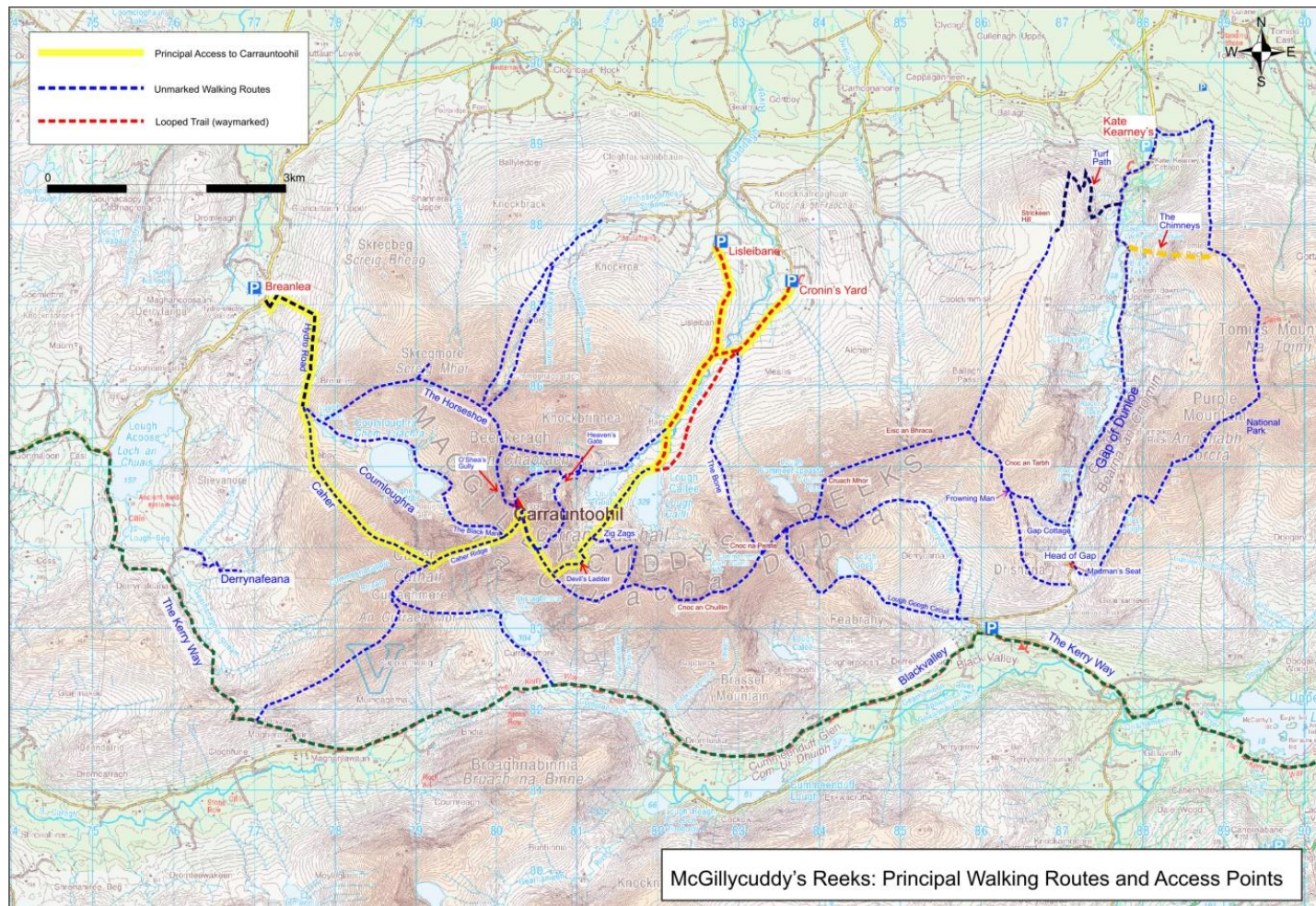


Figure 4.2 Map showing principal paths on the MacGillycuddy Reeks (paths after Ryan 2009, op cit)

The principal access routes to Carrauntoohil via the Hag's Glen and Caher Mountain are shown in yellow. The Lisleibane/ Cronins Loop in Hag's Glen is shown in red. General access routes to the high Reeks are shown in blue. The dark line across the base is the Kerry Way.

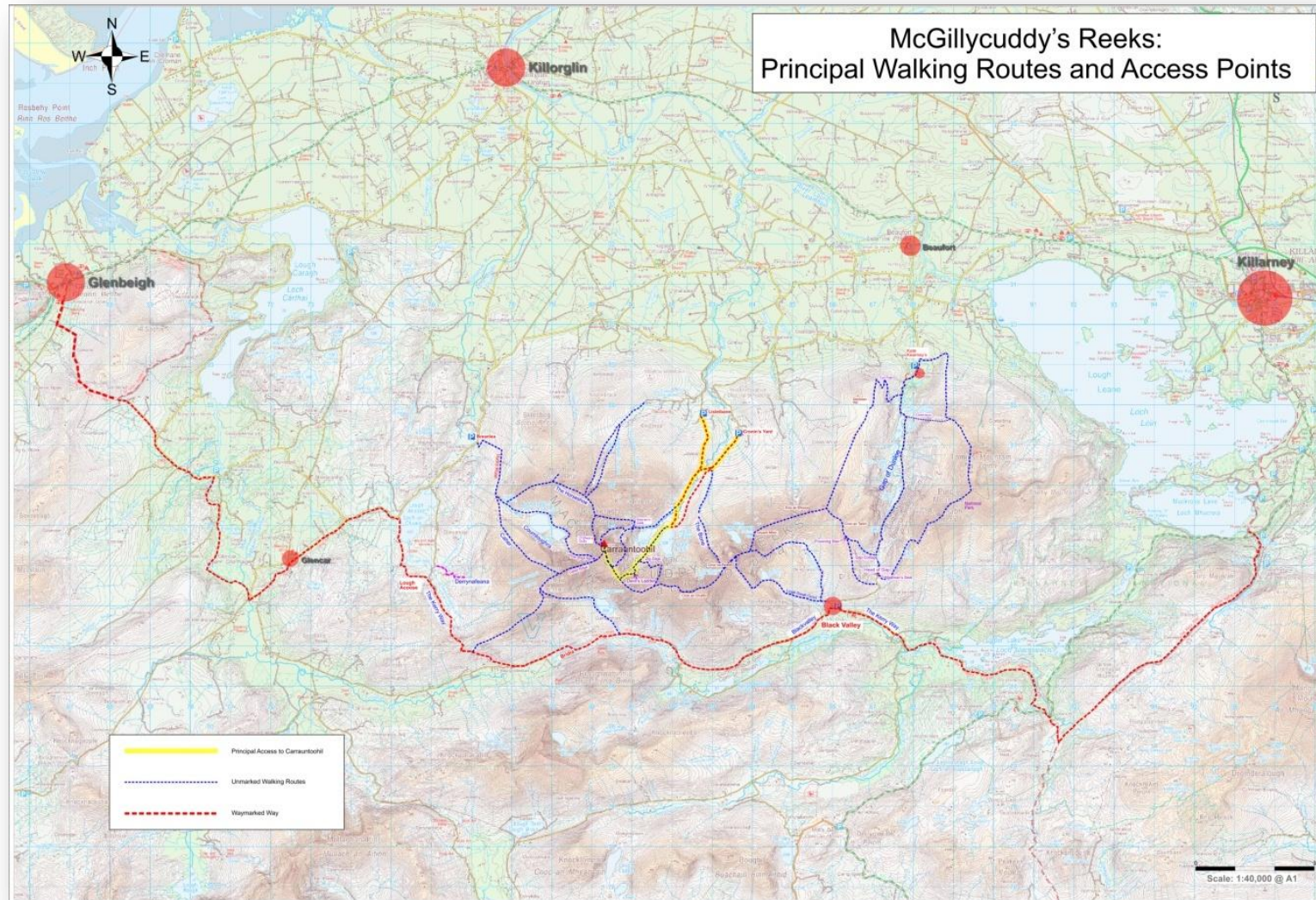


Figure 4.3 Map showing principal pathways, MacGillycuddy Reeks, within context of hinterland
The proposed principal access route to Carruntoohil via the Hag's Glen is shown in yellow.

4.8 Conclusions

The concept of developing an ***Integrated Management Plan*** for a mountain recreational zone, based on permissive access to the MacGillycuddy Reeks, has been agreed in principle by all the core stakeholder groups.

This concept of an IMP was submitted during the development of the revised Kerry CDP, for consideration by Kerry County Council elected members in November 2013. Linked to this must be the development of a formal ***Conservation Management Plan*** for the SAC, to ensure best practice in conservation of fragile upland ecosystems and management of the upland path network to highest sustainability principles.

The environmental integrity and sustainable management of the MacGillycuddy Reeks is crucial to the long term sustainability of the Reeks, as a source of livelihoods of upland farmers, as a recreational adventure zone and as a driver of rural development in the immediate catchment.

In terms of managing the ever increasing numbers of recreational users climbing to Carrauntoohil with ensuing erosion along the keys pathways, there may be a case to consider designating a 'principal access route', as a highly well managed trail to the summit. This concept has been adopted in Snowdonia and Ben Nevis to contain most users, especially inexperienced, to a single path that is actively managed.

Landowner participation in environmental management and decision-making will be central to sustaining long term permissive access agreements.

5.0 MACGILLYCUDDY REEKS: CONSULTATIONS

The methodology employed to carry out this development assessment was intentionally ‘hands on’ in approach through consultations with key stakeholders. Following desk research on related policy initiatives (Chapter 3 above) an intensive programme of direct consultations was undertaken from June-September 2013, aimed principally at engaging proactively with key landowners, as well as a full range of community, enterprise, local and statutory authorities and representative groups in recreation and agriculture.

5.1 Landowners

Initially, Patricia Deane, the Rural Recreation Officer (RRO) for South Kerry, introduced the researchers to a group of key landowners for the three principal access routes on the north side of the MacGillycuddy Reeks (namely Mealis/ Lisleibane/ Breanlea). The RRO also assisted in identifying some of the other landowners along the southern and western fringes of the Reeks. It is evident that more than 130 families own lands in the fringes of, and leading up to, the Reeks uplands. However, the principal access routes to the high Reeks are shown in Table 5.1, and the study focused therefore on engaging with those landowners along these routes.

A detailed search of the national Land Registry records during the assessment established a complex matrix of landownership in the uplands of the Reeks. A map was compiled based on these data to spatially display the patterns of ownership (see Figure 5.1 below and Map 3). A list of registered landowners along the principal access routes was provided to the Steering Group. There are 7 key landowners on the principal northern access routes and upwards of 10 landowners along the Gap of Dunloe/ Black Valley access points. A small number of landowners on the western approaches to Carrauntoohil in the Lough Acoose area were also consulted.

Mountain	Principal Access Point	Carparking
Carrauntoohil via Hag's Glen	Mealis/ Lisleibane	Cronin's Yard (private) Lisleibane (public)
Carrauntoohil , via Caher, Skregmore or Coomloughra Horseshoe	Breanlea Lough Acoose	Breanlea (public) Lough Acoose (informal) Derrynaferna (informal)
Carrauntoohil via Bridia Valley	Curraghmore/ Lack Road	Drumluska / Derrynaferna- (informal)
Strickeen	Kate Kearney's/ Turf Path, Gap of Dunloe	Kate Kearney's (public)
Drishana/ Feabrahy via Black Valley	Black Valley/ Head of Gap of Dunloe	Black Valley – (informal)
Purple/ Tomies	Kate Kearney's/ Head of Gap of Dunloe	Kate Kearney's (public) Black Valley (informal)
Reeks Ridge Walk <i>(note that Reeks Ridge walk is currently fenced off- Dec. 2013)</i>	Kate Kearney's/ Lough Acoose	Kate Kearney's (public) Lough Acoose (informal)

Table 5.1 Principal Access Routes to Reeks

The largest landowner in the Reeks is Hotel Europe (owned by the Liebherr Group), with significant holdings in the Eastern Reeks centred on the Gap of Dunloe, as well as the water rights of all the lakes in the Hag's Glen and the Gap of Dunloe.

The landowners may be grouped into three core sub-groups:

- (i) Northern access
- (ii) Black Valley/ Bridia Valley and
- (iii) Lough Acoose/ Derrynaferna

Significant and repeated consultations were held over a period of four months with these landowners, the main access route holders.

SLR engaged with the landowners through direct consultations, presenting the concept of the Mountain Access Project (MAP) and identifying possible concerns. Each landowner in the core groups was approached privately and in plenary groups.

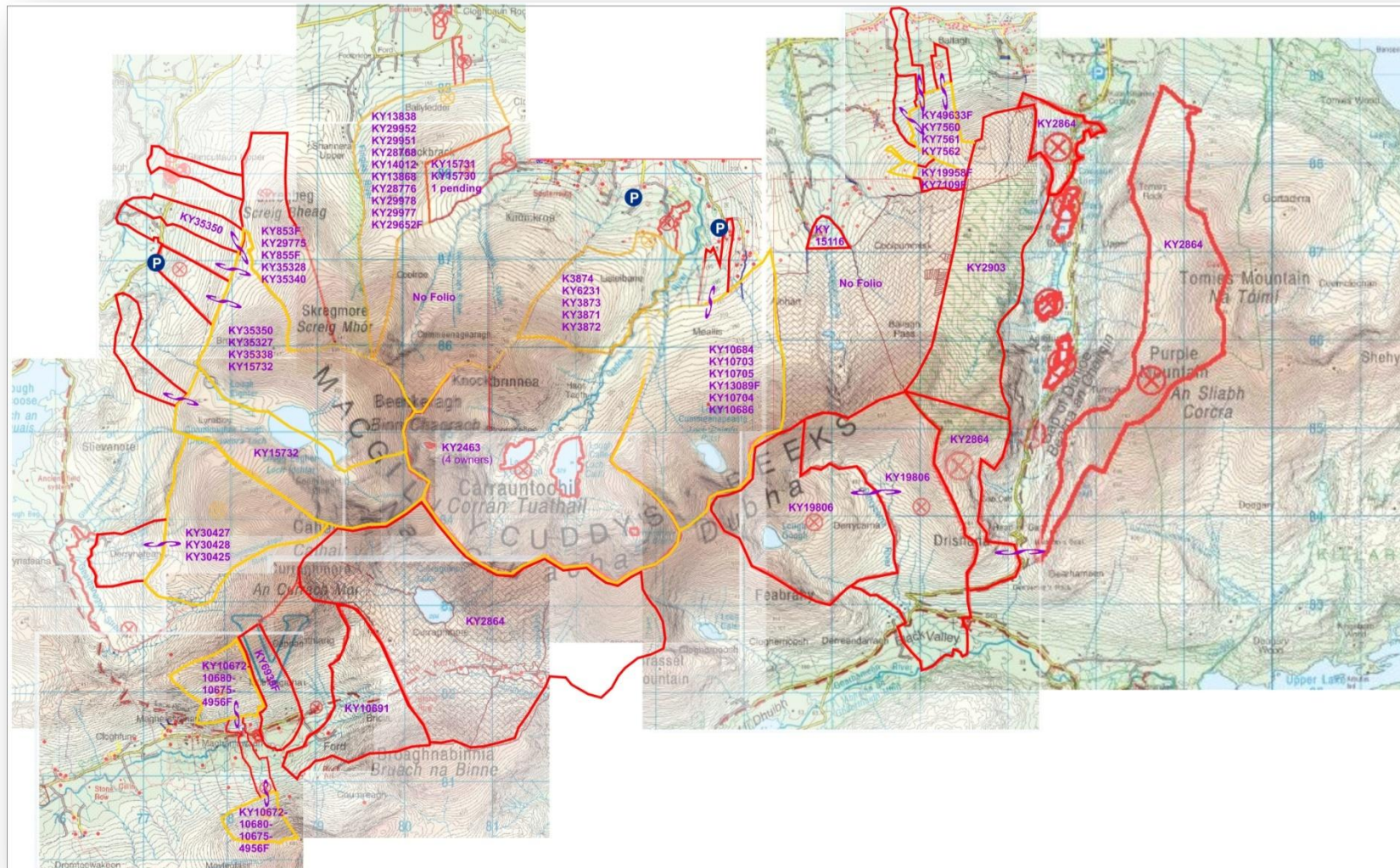
Meetings were held on a monthly basis through Summer 2013, with a full meeting of the three principal groups held in late September. A meeting was also held with a Hotel Europe/ Liebherr representative, Mr Adrian Stehr, to discuss the proposals, with follow-up email correspondence.

Each meeting focussed on building trust through information on the study's progress, feedback from other stakeholders and frank discussions on core concerns. The latter included issues pertaining to permissive access, including clarity on non-payment for access; insurance & liability matters; erosion control; potential for indirect payments for works e.g. path maintenance; and the need for a management structure to represent the range of farming, community, commercial and user interests in a non-combative manner.



Mike Sullivan, Jimmy Shea and Paul Sheehan, joint owners of the Breanlee Commonage, with Lough Eighter in the Coomloughra Glen and Carrauntoohil in the mist in the background (June 2013)

Figure 5.1 MacGillycuddy Reeks Map showing complex matrix of Landholdings
(see Appendix G for detailed map and list of registered land owners along principal access routes).



The key concerns of the landowners initially focussed on the lack of awareness amongst the public that the lands on the Reeks are privately owned – this needs to be addressed through appropriate signage and ongoing education of recreational users and commercial interests. The **lack of respect** shown to landowners by a small number of recreational walkers was raised, but in particular the lack of respect shown by some commercial guides who gain financially from the mountains but may not have the courtesy to seek permission in advance. It is galling for landowners who have seen **declining agricultural incomes** to observe others making a living from their lands, with no recompense. Some landowners reported financial penalties in their Area Aid payments by Department of Agriculture⁹ due to path erosion and damage to the upland SAC by increasing recreational numbers, **over which they have no control**.

A further issue of concern focused on recreational users bringing **uncontrolled domestic dogs** onto the Reeks, with frequent reports of dogs aggressively chasing sheep and causing harm to vulnerable stock. Signs banning dogs have been erected at access gates to the Reeks, but this matter will require to be addressed on an ongoing basis through a combination of education and appeals for respect and responsible behaviour.



Signs were erected in Summer 2013 advising users that the lands were snared to discourage dogs on the mountains following several incidences of uncontrolled chasing of sheep

It can be reported that there was a gradual shift in thinking from individual landowners' perspectives to a more **collaborative approach** and recognition that a unified group can have more effective inputs to the future planning and management of recreational access in the Reeks.

There is also recognition among landowners that the Reeks are a resource to be managed and that a **partnership approach** will be required, including public agencies, community and commercial operators, as well as recreational users. The landowners regard themselves as the long term 'stewards' of the landscape, proud of their heritage and farm traditions. They are exercised about the erosion and damage being done to the mountains by increasing recreational numbers, particularly the commercial groups and the charity/ challenges events.

There is an **increasing recognition of the opportunities** that may exist for landowners and their families in off-farm activities including guiding, farm demonstrations (e.g. sheep dog herding), and/or accommodation options. Interestingly, the current level of engagement of

⁹ In a discussion on land eligibility for area aid payments at a Teagasc agri-environment conference in November 2013, it was reported by Dept. of Agriculture personnel that exposed rock on uplands would be deemed ineligible, while recreation induced erosion of footpaths should not normally incur penalty. The cross-compliance inspectorate of Department is currently reviewing eligibility of lands for payments under EU regulations, which may increase the amount of land deemed to be ineligible.

farmers directly in tourism in the Iveragh Peninsula is less than 3%, although up to 15% of farm households receive indirect income from tourism¹⁰.

However, there was a **natural caution** expressed about who might be sitting 'around the table' of any proposed Mountain Access management structure. Some strong feelings were expressed about past behaviour of commercial operators and also of small groups of walkers showing a lack of respect. In the event, over a period of months, there was a recognition that the best way to deal with any problems was through an open forum where opinions can be openly voiced and hopefully resolutions found.

Critically, in the course of Summer 2013, there was a **strong resolve built to engage with other stakeholders through a Mountain Access project**, based on a transparent structure with proportionate representation of landowners. It was stressed that a *Code of Conduct* for those accessing the Reeks will be required. The generosity and leadership shown by the respective landowners must be acknowledged in undertaking this project¹¹.

In late September 2013, a plenary meeting of all principal route access landowners was convened in SKDP offices. The concerns expressed may best be summarised as follows:

Landowners Plenary Meeting, held 8pm 27/9/13 /SKDP

- Summary of work to date and emerging management model presented by Deirdre Lewis/ Alan Hill , SLR Consulting
- All agreed that the model represented a way forward and offered hope of control of asset and potential returns to landowners & communities in the longer term.

Key Issues of Concern included:

- ✚ Control of own asset as a means of generating sustainable revenues
- ✚ Communication with all landowners is vital >> need to hold a plenary meeting
- ✚ Inclusivity is vital
- ✚ Define clear objectives – what are we trying to achieve
- ✚ What is on offer to farmers?
- ✚ Resources must be put in to support the initiative
- ✚ Income for landowners (not at the gate, but indirectly/ agri-schemes)
- ✚ Permit for commercial guides
- ✚ Code of conduct for all users
- ✚ Training and accreditation for 'branded ' guides as offering to visitors

In October 2013, the landowners from the principal access routes were invited to Wicklow to meet members of the Wicklow Uplands Council, including farming colleagues, who are engaged in a participative forum with multi-party stakeholders for more than a decade. The Kerry RRO organised the two-day visit which was of extreme benefit for the landowners to see a sustained working model of mountain access and partnership building, based on permissive access. In particular, the landowners were interested in the plans for an agri-environmental scheme which is focused on farming in 'high nature value' uplands, with compensatory agreements for specific ecologically friendly practices. Such an approach is fully in line with the new CAP proposals (see Section 3.2 above), and will be of interest in the short to medium term for the landowners in the Reeks model.

¹⁰ In: Kramm, N. Anderson, R; O'Rourke, E; Emmerson, M; O'Halloran, J; Chisholm, N; (2010) *Farming the Iveragh Uplands: A tale of humans and nature*. Cork: UCC

¹¹ The authors gratefully acknowledge the inputs and leadership shown by Mr. John Doona, one of the landowners of the commonage over Carrauntoohil, who died suddenly in August 2013. His family have continued to engage actively despite their loss, and for this, we are very grateful.

5.2 Community

A number of community groups and activists were interviewed as part of the consultation process. The principal rural population centres are Beaufort, Glencar and the Black Valley, with a significant dispersed rural population around the fringes of the Reeks from the Bridia Valley to Lough Acoose to Breanlea to Gap of Dunloe, within an area of c. 100km².

The key concerns of the communities focus on social and economic decline in rural areas and how recreational tourism in the Reeks could be harnessed to generate local employment and enterprise. While Killarney (and to a lesser extent Killorglin) is a major economic driver in the sub-region, with many people resident in the Reeks catchment working in the urban tourism infrastructure, very little distributed spend from the annual 25,000 recreational visitors to the Reeks remains in the host communities.

Significant voluntary effort has been mobilised in Beaufort to create a very active community council, achieving awards in Tidy Towns and 'Pride of Place' national competitions. The recently closed Garda Station is to be converted to a community facility, while the GAA club provides activity for young people.



Rural communities around the Reeks are actively involved in voluntary improvements

The Black Valley community has recently come together to create a community plan with emphasis on enterprise that will generate jobs (with SKDP/ Rural Development support). The community sees many walkers enter the valley but would like to realise more economic opportunity from their visitors.

Similarly, the Glencar community has been facilitated by SKDP in the recent past to examine ways in which the community can realise economic opportunities, with local activists and business community. Given the depopulation in these areas, it can be difficult to make tangible progress in the short term. All communities welcomed the integrated approach proposed under the Reeks mountain access project, in that it may deliver a cohesive mechanism to generate employment, enterprise and rebalancing of recreational spin-offs to rural areas.

5.2.1 Legacy Issues to be Addressed

In recognition of both the environmental impacts of uncontrolled erosion on the Reeks, as well as the recreational potential, the Beaufort Community Council developed a '**Reeks Action Plan**' to principally address:

1. Improved access roads at Lios Leadhbáin (Lisleibane)

2. Establish carparking at Lios Leadhbáin
3. Establish information signage at Lios Leadhbáin and Maol Lios (Meelis)
4. Establish footbridges in Com Cailí (Hag's Glen)
5. Erosion control and footpath on Devil's Ladder approach to Corrán Tuathil (Carrauntoohil)

A number of items have been achieved in the interim: critical servicing for recreational users (parking at Lisleibane and Breanlea), two bridge crossings have been emplaced over the River Gaddagh in the Hag's Glen, but erosion control of the Devils' Ladder continues to be unresolved. In attempting to address Point 5 of the Action Plan, a number of misunderstandings arose between BCC, Mountaineering Ireland and a number of key landowners.

Previous legacy issues were discussed with some landowners during the Summer 2013 meetings. They agree in principle that certain remedial measures are required given the level of recreational access and potential for a serious incident to happen.

The **MacGillycuddy Reeks Community Trust** was established in 2012 by a group of people living in the foothills of the Reeks. The initiative established an integrated socio-cultural-environmental vision for the region and is "committed to the socio-economic development of our community and the conservation of our natural culture and heritage" (see www.reekstrust.org). The Reeks Trust conducted ongoing consultations among local communities in 2012-13 through conversations, facilitated workshops and public meetings, seeking ideas and options for resourcing and support for a range of community and enterprise initiatives. It has established charitable status and receives funding from voluntary donations.



The expressed principles of the MRCT are very much in line with those of the proposed Reeks Mountain partnership. The Reeks Community Trust is still active, and its leaders are willing to work with the new mountain partnership to deliver the ultimate objectives of integrated community-based management of the Reeks in future.

5.3 Enterprise & Tourism

A number of small to medium enterprises and commercial operators in the Reeks were interviewed as part of the consultation process to examine their views on the MAP proposal.

5.3.1 Commercial Guides

Key commercial recreational operators in the Kerry mountains were interviewed both privately and in groups to examine their views on how a Mountain Access scheme might work in practice and how their enterprises might be impacted by any management structure.

This group is of particular concern to landowners who feel that they get little in return for allowing the operators access to the privately owned high Reeks, while the operators charge significant daily rates to recreational visitors for professional guiding.

Many of the operators work on a very small scale basis, while others are highly professional in their marketing and delivery.

Although many local and external operators bring recreational users to the Reeks, the principal operators are shown on Table 5.2. It is recognised by landowners that these operators are critical partners in the proposed management of the Reeks, in that they bring in crucial visitor numbers to sustain many small businesses and generate tourism spend in the locality.

Operator	Website	Comment
Con Moriarty Hidden Ireland Adventures	www.hiddenirelandadventures.com	Local operator with 34 years of outdoor recreation experience. Guides small select groups along various routes to Carrauntoohil, emphasis on the rich cultural and environmental heritage of the Reeks. Moriarty is also one of the founders of the <i>Reeks Community Trust</i> (see 5.2)
Pat Falvey	www.patfalvey.com	Falvey is an experienced mountaineer worldwide and with a local base at the Gap of Dunloe, offers guided walking/ climbing to the high Reeks, as well as mountain accommodation. Also skills training, expedition guiding, bootcamps etc. and adventure worldwide.
Nathan Kingerlee Outdoors Ireland	www.outdoorsireland.com	Based in the west of Ireland, Outdoors Ireland offers training in mountain skills/ hillwalking/ rock climbing/ kayaking/ skills building and a range of team / corporate skills building
Linda Woods South West Walks	www.southwestwalksireland.com	Walk/ hike/ bike in the peninsulae and uplands of west – full range of packages. Strongly active in managing & promoting Dingle Way
Murt Dineen Black Ridge Mountaineering	www.blackridgemountaineering.com	BRM was founded in 2010 to promote mountaineering & hillwalking/ climbing to engage and challenge participants.
Julie Reeves Cork	www.juliereeveswalking.com	Small scale operator, teaches mountain skills/ leave no trace across ranges of Munster. Brings small groups to Carrauntoohil a few times a year
John Healy Cork	www.simplymountains.com	Offers guiding and instruction in hill walking, scrambling, rock climbing, cycling and mountain-biking. Brings small groups to the Reeks

Table 5.2 List of Principal Commercial Operators in the Reeks

All of these operators have significant overheads, due to the high costs of adventure/ water-based insurance, training of highly skilled staff, employment costs and ongoing costs in marketing nationally and internationally in a highly competitive environment. Many of the smaller operators report low margins, despite the headline daily charge to their clients.

A number of these operators were contacted over the Summer 2013 to discuss the proposals for the Reeks. All expressed environmental concern for the asset, the Reeks, and were open to engage in any management structure that would (i) allow permissive access with certainty, and

(ii) provide a mechanism for managing the increasing recreational pressure and consequent erosion on the Reeks.

All of the operators interviewed were aware that they were accessing private lands. The idea of paying an **annual permit or licence fee** for commercial operators to access those private lands met with mixed response:

- Many commented that this concept is unheard of in their experience in working internationally and could potentially set a dangerous *economic* precedent (i.e. that operators would take their business elsewhere).
- Some commented that if annual permit fees were re-directed to a Management Plan for control of erosion and path maintenance on the Reeks, then they would be happy to contribute a fair amount;
- For the smaller operators, if such a permit fee were excessive, it could mean that they might not be able to afford to pay for access to the Reeks; thus sums of €100 per annum to a maximum €400 per annum might be acceptable, based on the size of the operation (for instance, the Killarney National Park charges €80 per annum for a permit to access the lakes for kayaking).
- Some felt that (philosophically) the uplands of Ireland should be open for access for all citizens, since tax payers effectively pay farm subsidies through EU/ national mechanisms.
- The proposals for a new national Adventure Licensing system, akin to that in the UK, could be linked to any permit system in the Reeks.

Finally, all of those spoken to were prepared to pay a moderate permit for access to the Reeks, providing that the monies so raised were redirected to management of the uplands in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner, under the auspices of a participative Reeks Mountain Access forum.

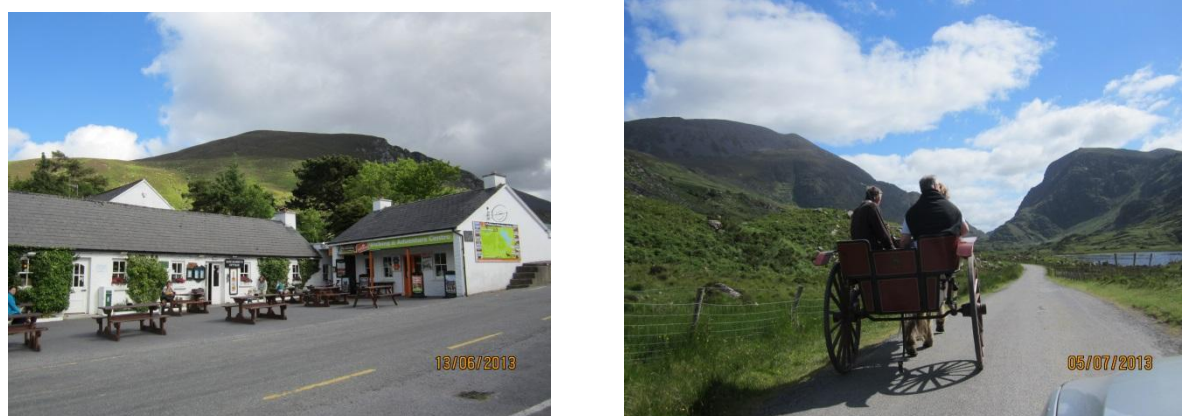
5.3.2 Accommodation/ Food

A range of accommodation and food operators in the Reeks catchment in Mealis, Glencar, Lough Acoose, Beaufort, Black Valley and Killorglin were consulted in relation to the proposed Reeks access scheme.

All without exception were keen to engage, as they are aware that practically all recreational spend remains largely within Killarney, and any project that could provide a more equitable distribution to rural enterprises would be most welcome.

In the eastern Reeks at the Gap of Dunloe, the iconic *Kate Kearney's Cottage* provides all season parking, restaurant and entertainment, supporting a cluster of enterprises in the Gap, including accommodation, guiding, jaunting car rides, biking and outdoor retail outlets, all of which contribute to meeting the needs of recreational users as well as general tourists.

Beaufort village provides a range of food, entertainment and accommodation services for access to the Reeks.



The Kerry Way winds along the Black Valley/ Bridia Valley in the southern foothills of the Reeks and provides critical revenue to many providers' small enterprises along the route.

The *Climbers Inn* in Glencar (situated on the Kerry Way) and the Glencar Hotel in the Caragh Valley could potentially provide critical accommodation mass for groups of hillwalkers/ climbers / clubs/ scouts etc. on the western margin of the Reeks. Similarly, Killorglin could provide accommodation and an excellent 'slow food' eating experience for recreational visitors, who wish to really sample the best of local agricultural produce. The Black Valley could expand the existing excellent experience linked to walking/ jarvey/ boat trip for day-trippers from Killarney through the Gap of Dunloe and return via the Lakes.

'*Cronins Yard*' in Mealis, a well-known facility at the principal access point to the high Reeks, provides an excellent, privately-run enterprise for servicing hillwalkers and mountaineers, through provision of safe parking for a voluntary fee (€2/car/day), enhanced recently with a café, toilets and showers and limited pod camping. The business is family run and highly authentic in terms of the visitor experience. However, the facility is reaching full capacity and there may be scope to replicate the model on e.g. the west or southern side of the Reeks.



Cronins' Yard has added new toilets/ showers and café, as well as modern camping facilities (pods), to its traditional carparking services in recent years

However, very significant numbers of recreational users access the Reeks from the north side and leave very little spend in the rural catchment of the mountains. This could be redressed by developing a network of recreation-friendly service providers, with drying rooms, packed lunch & evening meals, daily transport pick-up/ drop offs etc, as well as local accredited guides trained to full standards for mountain guiding.

There is great potential in the medium to long term to develop a local service base for outdoor recreation in the fringes of the MacGillycuddy Reeks. The mountain access scheme could provide the driving mechanism for a more integrated servicing approach.

5.3.3 Outdoor Recreation Gear

There are a number of excellent outdoor retail outlets in Killarney, offering a full range and good value in recreational gear, outdoor equipment, rainproofs and boots for all types of recreational users. In consultation with Kerry Outdoor Sports' proprietor and member of Kerry Mountain Rescue, Eileen Daly, there is enormous scope for more visitors to access the Reeks safely, through provision of transport, certainty of access, safety awareness and appropriate preparation for changeable montane conditions, maps, transport and guiding.

5.4 Outdoor Education

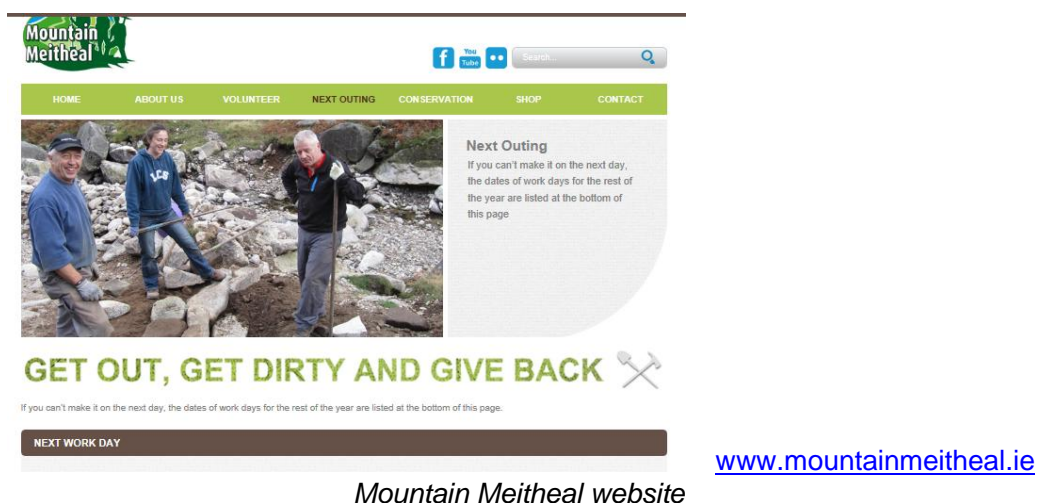
As well as the commercial guides working in the Reeks, there is a small number of registered outdoor educational training centres providing formal training in mountain skills, guiding, leadership, team building and general capability in dealing with the vagaries of the natural environment, based in Co. Kerry.

The **Cappanalea Outdoor Education Centre** (<http://www.cappanalea.ie>), overlooking Lough Caragh in the western Reeks catchment, is a publicly owned facility run under the auspices of Kerry Education Service. The Centre offers programmes in full range of adventure sports and field study activities as a means of building personal skills through individual confidence and team building. Adventure education and outdoor / wilderness experiences are designed to suit schools, individuals or corporate groups.



As part of the consultation process, the concept of permissive mountain access to the Reeks was discussed with the management. Cappanalea has expressed an offer to provide tailored training as a contribution to the effort, for e.g. local farmers as guides. Such bespoke training could certainly assist in building local enterprise and retaining value locally.

Mountain Meitheal is a voluntary organisation which works to manage and control path erosion on Irish uplands, generally in small groups to tackle specific 'black spots' on the mountains. The group works with state agencies such as Coillte and the NPWS to ensure consistency of approach. MM offers an excellent model for voluntary engagement and training in caring for the Irish uplands, a model which could be replicated in the ongoing management of the Reeks path network.



5.5 Recreational User Groups

The key recreational users of the mountains are key stakeholders in the future planning and sustainable management of the MacGillycuddy Reeks.

5.5.1 Mountaineering Ireland

Mountaineering Ireland (<http://www.mountaineering.ie>) is the national representative body for walkers and climbers on the island of Ireland. It is recognised as the National Governing Body for mountaineering, hillwalking, rambling and climbing by both the Irish Sports Council and Sport Northern Ireland.

MI is an active member of *Comhairle na Tuaithe* since its foundation and was involved in developing the terms of reference for the pilot Mountain Access scheme. MI also convened the 'Working Group on Future Upland Rural Development Measures', a multi-party group of farm bodies and landowners, state bodies, environmental NGOs, educational institutes, and recreational users. The group formulated joint proposals for future upland management measures, advocating a recognition of the ecological value of high nature value (HNV) farming methodologies in fragile environments, requiring support under the 'greening measures' of the next CAP 2014-2020. The working group made a high level submission to Department of Agriculture, Food & Marine in preparation for the Europe-wide CAP negotiations in 2013.

Mountaineering Ireland currently has a membership of c. 200 registered hillwalking, climbing and mountaineering clubs across the island, representing more than 15,000 individual recreational users. MI provides extensive training in mountain skills, environment and conservation of the uplands, as well as information services to their members. It has been instrumental in establishing the 'Helping the Hills' initiative in 2012 which aims to enhance our knowledge and understanding of the singular habitats of the upland environments, while embracing best management practices in path construction and erosion and mitigation of recreational impacts on upland environments. It has strong links to the 'Fixing the Fells' initiative of the British Mountaineering Council, with significant sharing of knowledge and practice among the two groups¹².

¹² In September 2013, Deirdre Lewis of SLR Consulting and Patricia Deane, RRO with South Kerry, were invited to join a Mountaineering Ireland 'Helping the Hills' Study Visit to the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks respectively, to examine aspects of recreational management; path construction and maintenance in peatland and rocky environments; signage; visitor management and volunteerism, within the context of 'Fixing the Fells' expertise. This provided an extremely timely exposition of best practice in action and an opportunity to tease out critical challenges for managers.

Mountaineering Ireland was consulted throughout the consultative process both with the officers of MI, and also directly through their membership (see below).

Based on the international *Natura 2000 Special Area of Conservation* (SAC) status accorded to the Reeks, MI as a body is keen that the wilderness factor of the Reeks be preserved as much as possible. MI staff are highly engaged in the process of supporting the ecological integrity of the Irish uplands with landowners (see above) and have advocated that HNV farming should be embraced and 'greening' supports given to traditional farm practices in managing stocking densities and scrub encroachment.

The significant inherent risks attached to mountain walking and climbing, coupled with adverse weather conditions, is well documented by the almost weekly call-outs of the Kerry Mountain Rescue teams, and unfortunately fatalities on the Reeks. This means that climbing the Reeks is not suited to ill-equipped or inexperienced walkers, and that emplacing waymarking to e.g. Carrauntoohil, may have the effect of encouraging those with poor mountain skills and lacking experience at altitude or dealing with inclement conditions. In principle, MI is opposed to waymarking in the Reeks, as in their view, it detracts from the 'wildness' and core principles of 'Leave No Trace'¹³, but also is contrary to the principles of retaining the intrinsically unspoiled natural environment of the SAC¹⁴.

Considerable concern was expressed by Mountaineering Ireland's management team about the number of challenge and charity events being run on the Irish uplands and the level of consequent erosional pressures on high-use pathways, littering and irresponsible parking, as well as leaving very little behind in the local economy due to the 'in/out/high speed' mentality associated with such events. They are working with the national body for professional fundraisers to establish standards for responsible organisation of fundraising events, a welcome move.

MI is keen to see the roll out of the Mountain Access Project across a select number of primary recreational upland 'honeypots' in Ireland, to ensure that the uplands, with permissive access and direct management inputs of landowners, are managed to retain the inherent integrity of their ecosystems, while permitting responsible recreational access.

Mountaineering Ireland will be a partner in the delivery of the Mountain Access Project in the MacGillycuddy Reeks. It is the primary link to recreational users in Ireland, with significant influence in integrated policy development for the uplands and best conservation management practices nationally, and linkages to other recreational bodies internationally.

5.5.2 Hillwalkers / Climbers/ Mountaineers

At an internal strategy meeting of MI's Munster Clubs held in Killarney on 29th May 2013, the SLR consultants were invited to introduce the study at the outset of the assessment. Following further engagement at individual and group level, a plenary consultative workshop of Mountaineering Ireland affiliated clubs, trainers and commercial guides, mainly based in the Munster sub-region, was convened in Killarney (6/9/13), designed to present draft findings and provide useful feedback from active recreational users of the Reeks.

¹³ www.leavenotraceireland.org

¹⁴ Under current Irish environmental planning laws, any activity which would potentially impact on the integrity of the SAC would require *Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment* for any introduction of signage, path erosion controls, mitigation of recreational impacts etc, the results of which may require *Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment* and potentially full *Stage 3 Planning Permission*.



*Members of Mountaineering Ireland Hillwalking, Mountaineering & Climbing Clubs, as well as commercial and educational interests
Consultative Workshop held in Killarney, 6 September 2013*

Following the Killarney workshop, an online *User Survey* was carried out among MI clubs and trainers. In total over 100 individuals / businesses and clubs were invited to participate and given three weeks to respond to a simple one page / seven question survey. While the responses were limited, some consistent views were expressed among frequent recreational users of the Reeks.

The survey provided useful baseline data, which will allow evaluation of future progress and performance of the mountain access project by employing a similar process. The detailed outcome of the primary research is presented in Appendix C, but key outcomes included that most users (83%) come to the Reeks multiple times (> 3 per annum) and 91% of respondents were prepared to pay a small charge for parking, with revenues to return to management.

5.5.3 Other Issues Raised

The authors met a number of individual (non-affiliated) recreational users during the summer 2013 and asked a few general questions regarding access and payment for parking.

Visitors from Northern Ireland responded that although they are not used to paying for parking to access mountains, they would be prepared to pay a small fee if the revenues were to sustain an overall management plan.

Other small groups of 2-3 young people from Europe commented that they enjoyed the Reeks experience but felt unsafe on the Devil's Ladder. They had no particular opinion on parking fees.

One young German walker encountered at Ross Castle commented that he would have liked to visit the Reeks but as he had arrived by train to Killarney, there was no means for him to access the mountains by public transport.

5.5.4 Orienteering

Orienteering is a growing sport in Ireland, but there is no fixed O-course on the Reeks, nor are the authors aware of any major orienteering events held within the Reeks catchment. However, it is our view that well managed events, through Orienteering Ireland member clubs, would be compatible with the objectives of sustainable use of the mountains.

5.6 Mountain Rescue

Kerry Mountain Rescue www.kerrymountainrescue.ie is one of the largest and most active voluntary rescue teams in the country, with more than 35 members. All team members are qualified to Advanced Rescue Emergency Care (REC) First Aid Level, and first Aid training is undertaken on a regular basis to ensure that the skills of each team member are continually maintained, and the most up-to-date developments in emergency medicine are utilised.

KMR provide useful advice to intending hillwalkers/ climbers through signage at access points (see below) and on their website, including lists of equipment and minimal planning requirements. This underlines the ongoing safety issues and need for careful preparation prior to accessing the mountains. On their website, they encourage all walkers to learn basic navigational skills in use of compass in low visibility situations.



KMR are experiencing continuous call-outs, with c. 13-15 call-outs in the first six months of 2013¹⁵. Many calls are from people who are disorientated or lost, but unfortunately there are too many fatalities. There were 17 fatalities between 1996 and 2000, while there are up to 2 fatalities per annum since 2000¹⁶ which require search and evacuation.

KMR is a registered charity, non-aligned voluntary group and members did not wish to comment on any aspect of the proposed management structure for the Reeks, to maintain their independent status. KMR retain keys to all gates for emergency access along principal routes; this arrangement will continue as normal.

5.7 Farmer Representative Groups

The *Irish Farmers Association (IFA)* in South Kerry was consulted extensively and representatives were positively disposed to the MAP concept, and opportunities for farmers to engage in off-farm activities linked to recreation. The new CAP proposals had not been clarified at the time of the consultations, but the feeling was that the 'greening' measures in Pillar 2 would be supportive of an integrated approach to management of the uplands' 'high nature value' while offering landowners the ability to earn revenues from guiding/ accommodation or other supporting activities.

¹⁵ John O'Sullivan, KMR volunteer, *personal communication*

¹⁶ Cited in: John Ryan, *Carrauntoohil & MacGillycuddy Reeks: A Walking Guide to Ireland's Highest Mountains*, p. 4, where he says, "many come ill-prepared, lacking proper gear and possibly without even a map".

The IFA representatives were concerned about insurance but were aware of the proposals for a national insurance indemnity scheme under the DECLG proposals. Certainty must be provided by the MAP partners when dealing with this issue, as some form of early indemnity assurance will be required for participation in the pilot mountain access project.

In terms of the Mountain Access partnership, the IFA reps suggested that clear objectives need to be set at the outset, with a representative structure and clear communications to partners. They suggested that the initiative should not be overly ambitious at the start, but to be flexible and allow organic growth of the forum.

The consultants met a representative of the IFA who was also a member of the Irish Rural Dwellers Association, Mr James Doyle. He is very focused on self-reliance and resourcefulness of rural communities and to that end was supportive of the concept as a bottom up initiative. He is also involved with local food production and branding of 'Kerry' foods for promotion to visitors in hotels and restaurants. Such an initiative could offer a further support to local farm producers.

5.8 National & Local Authorities

5.8.1 Department of Environment, Community & Local Government (Rural Recreation Section)

The DECLG/RRS has been a key driver in the national effort to improve recreational access to the outdoors, based on the principle of permissive access.

The Rural Recreation Section has been directly involved in commissioning this current assessment for a pilot Mountain Access Project (MAP) and is keen to see the establishment of a representative management structure, based on best practice, to provide reasonable recreational access to the Reeks through direct engagement with the landowners and other key stakeholders. The DECLG has engaged, with the partners of *Comhairle na Tuaithe*, in efforts to establish a national indemnity scheme for all landowners who permit recreational access to lands. It had been hoped to have the scheme in place by end-2013, which would have been excellent in terms of the MAP; however this is unlikely to be delivered in the short term. Thus indemnity provision, an ongoing issue for landowners, will continue be adjudicated under the *Occupiers Liability Act (1995)*, which in fact provides for a reasonable balance between the rights and duties of both occupiers (landowners) and recreational users providing there is not reckless disregard for the other party¹⁷.

5.8.2 South Kerry Development Partnership

SKDP, as one of the key stakeholders and drivers, commissioned this assessment together with the other partners in the Steering Group (DECLG; Fáilte Ireland) and have invested significant time and resources in supporting the establishment of a Mountain Access Project in the Reeks.

There is a strong sense that 'business as usual' cannot continue on the Reeks and that there is a moral imperative on all public agencies to provide leadership in terms of stewardship of the mountains. SKDP see, that with the correct partnership structure, there could be a win:win situation for landowners, recreational users, commercial activity and the physical environment.

SKDP are conscious that landowner expectations have been raised through this process and need to be carefully managed, but that also, a commitment to action is critical, through a mountain access partnership, with transparency and broad representation. It is vital to build linkages and develop trust among all key players; leaving the legacy issues behind.

¹⁷ *Report of Expert Group established to examine and make Recommendations on the Legal Issues of Land Access for Recreational Use*. Presented to Éamon Ó Cuiv, Minister for Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs (July, 2007).

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/Community/RuralDevelopment/FileDownload,27109,en.doc>
publications)

Rural Recreation Officer

The Rural Recreation Officer (RRO) has been successfully working on issues of land access for some time and administers and manages the Walks Scheme in South Kerry. The RRO coordinates and oversees the development, management and enhancement of trails and loops in South Kerry, as well as assisting local communities in developing new trails and looped walks, as well as other recreational activities in their areas (canoe, pony trekking, cycling, heritage trails etc). The RRO also assists in marketing and promotion of trails in the region through production of map cards, National Trails Day etc.

The RRO works to develop:

- Trail management plans; coordinate trail maintenance;
- Protect the natural and cultural environment of a trail and its locality against damage through usage, while promoting the 'Leave No Trace' principles;
- Liaises regularly with landowners to ensure that goodwill is maintained and concerns are addressed in a timely fashion, while seeking to resolve access issues on the ground;
- Liaises with trail users, to gather feedback, comments and address concerns where they arise
- Liaises with other stakeholders and state agencies such as National Trails Office, Coillte, Fáilte Ireland and National Parks & Wildlife Service.

The RRO will be critical in supporting the overall management and delivery of the proposed actions of the Reeks Mountain Access project.

Rural Social Scheme

SKDP believe that the RSS is an effective mechanism in which 138 farmers engage in community based activities across South Kerry. The RSS would possibly be in a position to support the Mountain Access pilot project through provision of administrative services, which will be vital in supporting the work of the proposed Chairperson and management steering group. The RSS could not duplicate work that the landowners themselves could carry out e.g. maintenance works.

Rural Alliances

The *Rural Alliances* project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund through the Interreg IVB North West Europe Programme. Alliances act as a catalyst for change using business and community networks to provide win-win opportunities to gain value from each other.

SKDP is one of 12 EU partners in the project, and a recent conference of the partners was held in South Kerry in October 2013, at which the Mountain Access Project was presented as an example of partnership building based on environmental and social sustainability. The aim of RA is to form a new type of alliance (Enterprise-Community-Alliance) between enterprises and local communities, mobilising rural residents of all ages, backgrounds & residential status to work together to adapt to changing demography in modern rural society. The idea is to create new relationships between the public sector & rural communities to work together to enhance rural resources & services, including innovative finance methods.

The MAP is a good example of the potential to be derived from local partnerships working together and the pilot may help to stimulate similar models elsewhere in Europe.

5.8.3 Kerry County Council¹⁸

KCC has engaged throughout the assessment of the MAP, with a number of officers, including the County Manager, sports & recreation, planning, transport, tourism and environmental staff working to provide advice on a range of relevant matters. The principles of the MAP are in line with the recreational aspirations of the county's various recreational, tourism and environmental strategies (see Sections 3.4; 4.4) and have been incorporated into the discussion document of the County Development Plan (2015-2020) which is currently under revision. KCC has recently appointed a Walking Officer, who may provide a useful resource for the MAP.

The KCC officers are keen that the management structure of the proposed MAP be not unduly unwieldy, with representative working groups established to ensure that relevant stakeholders may engage on specific issues of interest. The council is also concerned that the safety aspects of the Reeks be considered under any future management plan.

The environmental designations of the Reeks (SAC/ pNHA – see section 4.4 above) will require stringent screening prior to any works; however, the planning authorities will provide advice on mitigative activities such as erosion control within the context of a Conservation Plan for the SAC.

KCC has committed to supporting the Reeks Mountain Access Project in as much as is possible under current public funding constraints. In particular, the local authority may be able to support via the Walking Officer inputs, advice on transport and parking matters, advice in relation to environmental and planning issues, as well as strategic support for future initiatives as may be defined under an Integrated Management Plan for the Reeks. Critically, KCC have no objections to defined public carparks being tolled, to provide a sustainable revenue stream to support the Reeks management structure.

5.9 Statutory Bodies

5.9.1 Fáilte Ireland

Fáilte Ireland is a member of the Steering Group for this assessment for development of a mountain access scheme. FI have been actively promoting and marketing Ireland as an activity destination over the past decade www.discoverireland.com. It recently hosted the 'Get Out There Adventure Tourism Forum' in Clare in September 2013, and has managed to attract the international *Adventure Travel World Summit* to Killarney¹⁹ in 2014. This has major implications for how the Reeks are promoted, and creates some urgency in having consistent and clear permissive access for adventure activities in the coming years.

Fáilte Ireland have maintained vital research data on recreational activity by international visitors/ holidaymakers and domestic users over the past decade through their 'Fact' files www.failteireland.ie/research, which allows trends in visitor activity and demand to be monitored. The Tourism Barometer in September 2013 measuring 'Business Sentiment' indicates that most accommodation providers (61%) are positive about a future upswing in tourism activity.

In 2011, more than 760,000 overseas visitors (including 551,000 holidaymakers) participated in 'hiking/ hillwalking' when in Ireland. They mainly come from Mainland Europe (43%), Britain (32%) and North America (18%)²⁰. In the same year, 60% of recreational visitors' spend was on accommodation and food, much of which is outside of mainstream urban areas, and creates opportunities for local enterprises. Only 9% availed of a formal guide, 84% are independent travellers and booked ahead on the internet, where 12% brought their own car, 36% hired a car,

¹⁸ The expert advice and inputs of the KCC team is gratefully acknowledged by the authors.

¹⁹ [http://www.failteireland.ie/News-Features/News-Library/Ireland-to-host-Adventure-Travel-World-Summit-\(1\).aspx#sthash.PZC1YobJ.dpuf](http://www.failteireland.ie/News-Features/News-Library/Ireland-to-host-Adventure-Travel-World-Summit-(1).aspx#sthash.PZC1YobJ.dpuf)

²⁰ Fáilte Ireland research: "Profile of overseas visitors who went Hiking/ Hillwalking in 2011"

but more than 52% did not use a car, which has implications for transport planning for the Reeks. 41% visited to southwest to recreate, while 42% want walking distances longer than 5km and 19% want distances longer than 10km. Thus 61% are interested in half day/ full day experiences in hiking/ hillwalking.

However, in 2012, just 578,000 overseas participants engaged in hiking/ cross country walking according to recent Fáilte Ireland data²¹ (*note: there may be some discrepancy in how data were gathered, but it is unlikely given apparent activity trends that there was a 30% decrease in walking/hiking in Ireland in 2012*). In 2013 to date, there has been a marked increase in overseas visitors, particularly from USA, France, Benelux and Scandinavian countries²², likely due to *The Gathering* initiative and linked marketing.

Fáilte Ireland does not currently have capital funding available to support the Reeks MAP, but if funding becomes available in 2014, it would have to be applied for on a 'project basis'. However, if appropriate, training supports could be considered on a case-by-case basis to support 'soft' development of the initiative.

5.9.2 National Parks & Wildlife Service

The NPWS is the statutory agency responsible for management and administration of the State's national parks and wildlife assets including the Natura 2000 sites (SACs/ SPAa) and nationally designated areas of natural heritage significance (NHAs). The NPWS manages Killarney National Park in Killarney and is responsible, among its other activities, for the protection of the MacGillycuddy Reeks SAC and pNHA.

The consultants met the NPWS Regional Manager, Mr. Pat Dawson, who was pleased to see the MAP initiative being undertaken. The Killarney National Park attracted almost 1 million visitors in 2012, with an income of €300,000 from Muckcross House and Farm. It hosted more than 3000 people in marathon events in 2012. It was observed that one paid admission equates to almost two non-paying visitors, with more people accessing the wilder areas of the Park.

The Killarney National Park has adopted a more open philosophy in recent years – on the basis that it is better to engage with the public via facilitated events and education, if the authorities expect them to support the concept of National Parks through taxation.

Although the NPWS has responsibility for the Reeks, recent staff resource cutbacks has meant that it is impossible to 'police' the levels of activity there. Thus, the NPWS can offer educational and advisory/ overview support to the MAP, but unfortunately little direct support. They would be open to supplying practical measures such as panels for information/ advisory notes to recreational users of the Reeks.

In discussions on *Visitor Management on the Reeks*, based on National Park experience, the NPWS indicated that a Management Plan would be requisite, particularly as many visitors unwittingly 'bleed' from the NP onto the Reeks. It was suggested that zoning of different areas may be effective in managing different sectors, such as cultural/ natural heritage/ services/ education to allow improved people management and visitor experience. Increased numbers to the Reeks in recent years is having an impact on the local environment, particularly country roads, and traffic planning with e.g. shuttling or 'park and ride' facilities could be enabled.

²¹ Fáilte Ireland research: "Tourism Facts 2012" (published October 2013)

²² Fáilte Ireland research: "Overseas Visitors to Ireland January-September 2010-2013"

The *carrying capacity of the Reeks* would need to be assessed. The fact that counters²³ have been emplaced will help to establish baseline data, but this will need continuous assessment and monitoring.

In discussions regarding *the future management structure for the Reeks*, NPWS suggest, based on recent experience in forward planning for Killarney, that a small structured management team would be most effective, with a rotating Chair supported by broad-based working groups and a secretariat.

The NPWS confirmed that any proposals for land restoration (linked to e.g. stocking densities) would constitute notifiable actions if they were to interfere with habitats, and would require screening for Appropriate Assessment. The philosophy of 'do no harm' can be very effective in working with landowners and recreational users to achieve environmental objectives in sensitive upland habitats.

5.9.3 Inland Fisheries of Ireland

IFI were not directly consulted in the current phase of assessment, although Mr James Doyle, a local IFI activist, was consulted. Each of the rivers draining the Reeks are designated SACs, and consequently require care in terms of any pathways and erosion control in their head waters. The Caragh River catchment on the western end of the Reeks is host to the indigenous freshwater pearl mussel, a key indicator of the health of the river's ecology. The IFI, with NPWS, SKDP, landowners and other partners, has applied for an EU LIFE programme there to manage and monitor the sediment loads and inputs to this important salmonid catchment over a 4-year programme.

5.10 Key Issues to be Addressed

The following key issues to be addressed were identified during the consultations.

Issue

Land is 100% privately owned on the MacGillycuddy Reeks, but landowners have no control on recreational access to the lands at present; significant environmental damage is done by recreational users on the path network, as well as uncontrolled dogs.



²³ Counters were emplaced at 3 access points in Summer 2013; however, the equipment failed so there are as yet no hard data on the numbers of recreational users accessing the Reeks along the principal northern access points.

Issue

The Reeks are designated as Special Area of Conservation (SAC, Natura 2000) and proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) with consequent environmental responsibilities in habitat protection.

This applies equally to landowners, recreational users and all stakeholders who care about the environmental integrity of the Reeks.



Uncontrolled burning on western Reeks, July 2013



Increasing numbers of hillwalkers, climbers and recreational users are accessing the Reeks annually; in particular, charity and challenge events are attracting large numbers of high impact groups to the mountains



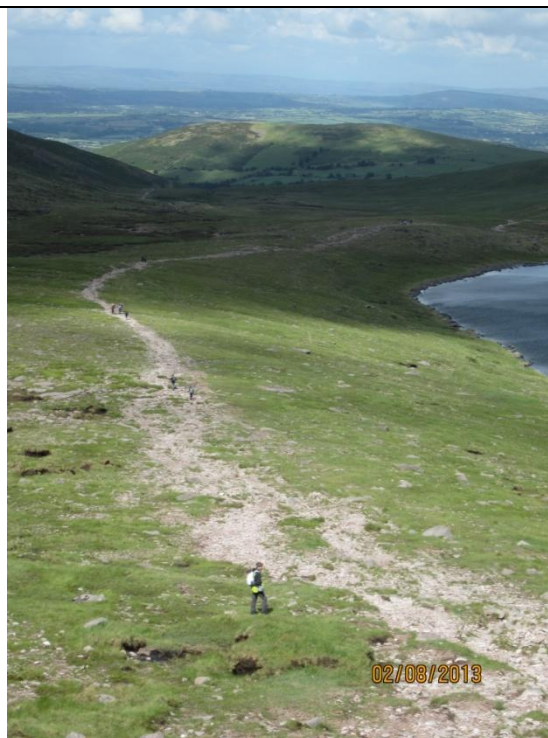
Issue

Commercial guides are operating in the Reeks without formal access agreements to private lands; this is a particular source of irritation to landowners;



Recreational pressures have created additional environmental pressures, with marked path erosion and migration on the most popular routes to Carrauntoohil and the high Reeks;

View eastwards along the Hag's Glen showing path migration on the most popular access route to Carrauntoohil (note walker in centre foreground for scale). There may be a case for a highly managed route along this valley, to direct the bulk of recreational users to the mountain via the Devil's Ladder through Lisleibane commonage.



Many users are ill-prepared for the challenging physical conditions and inclement weather at altitude, thus creating safety risks;



Issue

In socio-economic terms, due to unemployment and emigration, the Reeks' rural catchment is suffering marked flight from upland farming, with consequent loss of traditional farm practices and scrub encroachment.



The Reeks have the potential to become a model for sustainable management of upland areas, through agri-environmental measures and high nature value farming



The communities in the hinterland of the Reeks are not benefiting from the recreational potential of the mountains in a way that adds sustainably to their economies.

The Reeks have the potential to provide economic stimulus to recreational micro- and small enterprises and recreational servicing of responsible users of the mountains.

The Reeks can become a driving force in the social, agricultural and economic sustainability of landowners and communities in the hinterland of the mountains.



5.11 Summary

Findings from the consultations with each of the core stakeholder groups are summarised on the table overleaf.

Consultees are agreed that a shared vision, to be delivered through a representative Management Forum with an agreed and prioritised Action Plan will be required to achieve integrated environmental, social and economic sustainability.

It is clear than many of the individual and collective concerns may be addressed by a participative partnership approach (*Mountain Forum*) where issues can be raised and addressed prior to conflict situations developing.

In particular, the landowners are in agreement that the current situation cannot continue, and are in favour of a participative structure, where core issues, such as commercial access, charity/ challenge events and environmental management, can be dealt with face to face among all parties as they arise. A code of conduct, including '*Leave No Trace*' principles, needs to be established for recreational users, similar to that in use in the Cairngorms in Scotland.

All of the landowners who have committed exceptional amounts of time to the process are to be congratulated for their efforts and openness to change.

To assist in how such a Management Forum might be structured and operated, a review of national and international models was undertaken to identify best practice to ensure sustainability of the Reeks initiative. The results are presented below in Chapter 6.0.

A full list of consultees is presented in Appendix G.

GROUP	ISSUES OF CONCERN	OBSTACLES	SOLUTIONS
LANDOWNERS	Respect Jobs/ youth employment Non-conflict Modest Return Management of 'commercial' activity Indemnification Dog control' Kerry food / link to way of life	Dwindling incomes Rural decline Loss of way of life Deliberate ignoring of private lands Ignorance of farming life Reduced public supports/ changes in CAP	Respect & Empowerment Permissive Access Multi-party engagement Representation Forum for communications Indemnification Integrate 'food' & 'recreation
AGENCIES	Environmental protection Economic development Community sustainability Avoidance of replication & fragmentation Safe permissive access for users	Degradation via increased recreatn. usage Dwindling resources Poor management No channel for integration Avoidance of issues	Buy-in to integrated planning 'Shared Vision' Joined up thinking via Management Forum Education Recreational services
USERS	Clear access to uplands Non-conflict Environmental management Management of "Events" H&S/ Mountain Rescue	Potential conflict/ legacy Uncertainty re Access Relatively poor infrastructure & services No channel for engagement	Management Forum Environmental management of uplands Certainty of permissive access High standards of management
COMMUNITY	'spin-offs' in rural economy Jobs / youth employment Sustainable communities Infrastructural investment Loss of heritage	Dwindling resources Emigration/ unemployment Weak public investment in recreation Economic models	Integrated planning for recreation Management of Reeks Empowerment Resourcing (own + public) Local opportunities
BUSINESS	Commercial sustainability of business & job creation Recreation-based micro-business Public supports for SME Tailored response to needs (eg training/ start-ups etc)	Fragmentation Uncertain economic environment Lack of leadership for exploitation of 'Reeks' recreational assets Shadow effect of Killarney	Integrated planning Forum for communication/ networking Resource supports Leadership

Table 5.3 Summary of Consultations/ Potential Solutions

6.0 NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT MODELS

6.1 Introduction

A range of national and international partnership models were reviewed to establish best practice management structures for upland areas.

As well as desk research and telephonic interviews, a number of visits were made to existing partnerships by the consultants, such as Wicklow and the Burren in August 2013. A study visit in September 2013 to the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales, organised by Mountaineering Ireland under the 'Helping the Hills' national initiative, was attended by the South Kerry RRO and one of the consultants to examine UK models of uplands management, path and erosion control and practical visitor management measures in sensitive environments.

A further Study Visit was organised by the South Kerry RRO to Wicklow Uplands Council in October 2013, to introduce a group of Reeks landowners to the practical aspects of partnership and how, in particular, to engage and gain benefit from participation. The proposed agri-environmental scheme (SUAS) for Wicklow was of particular interest to the participants.

The objective of this review was to identify the most appropriate Mountain Access management model, as well as provision of appropriate recreational infrastructure in partnership with landowners. Key elements are summarised in Table in Appendix E.

6.2 National Partnership Models for Uplands

A number of key managers of partnerships in Ireland were consulted to establish to core principles of partnership and how it works to best effect.

6.2.1 Wicklow Uplands Council

The Wicklow Uplands Council www.wicklowuplands.ie is an independent, voluntary organisation, registered as a limited company with charitable status, which represents the shared interests of over 50 member groups and individuals. It takes a partnership approach to sustainable development and promotes projects "to support the sustainable use of the Wicklow uplands through consensus and partnership with those who live, work and recreate there". It is the longest established management partnership for the Uplands in Ireland, being established in 1997, and is fully operational since 1999. Its stated mission is:

In discussion with some of the founding members, it was clear that early in its history, the WUC established core values and guiding principles, which proved central to its success.

- ✚ **Consensus:** All decisions made are through consensus. By its nature this requires the resolution or mitigation of minority concerns and objections. This process of consensus building is central to the work of the Uplands Council.
- ✚ **Community Participation:** the WUC believes that the people who live, work and recreate in the Uplands must be provided with opportunities to participate in the various local, regional and national decision making processes. The Council represents the views of the local people and presents their case to statutory decision-makers.
- ✚ **Partnership & Collaboration:** WUC is committed to work for the sustainable use of the Wicklow Uplands in partnership with statutory stakeholders in the spirit of *Local Agenda 21*. It recognises the necessity for, and benefits of, collaboration and partnership.

The Council has up to twenty-seven (27) elected Board Members, representatives of stakeholders engaged in all aspects of life in the Wicklow Uplands. Eighteen (18) of these representatives are elected by the four member panels at the AGM. The elected Board can

nominate an additional nine (9) directors as co-options. The WUC members also participate and contribute to a range of county panels such as heritage, tourism and recreation.

Representation is critical, but it is communicated that people who go onto the Council are expected to 'do' versus 'talk'. Membership is open to all stakeholders²⁴, divided into 4 panels:

1. **Farmers & Property Owners**
2. **Environment & Recreation**
3. **Community**
4. **Economic & Tourism**

The elected representation from each of the four panels varies over time, with currently landowner and community sectors having highest representation, with lower representation from commercial/ tourism sector and the recreational interest groups²⁵.

In terms of **leadership**, the WUC embraced local leadership where possible. Based on a defined Terms of Reference, it was chaired by Dermot Hand (of Roundwood Community Council) for first 10 years, then a co-Chairing arrangement was enacted with IFA's Declan O'Neill for a further three years. Philip Geoghan (WUC/ An Taisce) is the current Chair.

Administrative support (even if only part-time) is critical for the workings of the Council, either via LEADER/ Local Authority or a statutory body. Cara Doyle Heraty is the part-time Co-Ordinator, funded via the Heritage Council, but having that committed time leverages a major amount of additional voluntary inputs.

Core funding is sourced from the Heritage Council and Mr. Denis O'Brien. WUC has very good relations with the RRO who works in the Local Development Company (Wicklow Leader) and is a Board member. It was advised that LEADER/ RDP and the statutory bodies should be centrally involved as they are key to resourcing the structure in long term. Funding has been largely project based from Wicklow Co Council; Wicklow Partnership (Leader), Heritage Council; DECLG and Fáilte Ireland, while local communities and individual donors also contribute.

The key message from the Wicklow Upland Council model is to establish clear, shared vision at the start, which can be fallen back on at any time of conflict. It is suggested to encourage a common attitude of "*working together to promote respect for the mountains, and for those own them, make their living from them, and those who enjoy them recreationally, for the benefit of all*".

It was advised to keep the Mountain Access model simple, based on a clear strategy with a practicable work programme and defined tasks, and should not overly prescriptive. This allows the partnership to build trust over time, particularly if early wins and measurable targets can be attained to build and sustain momentum. The WUC Board oversees implementation of its 3-Year Strategic Plan (currently under revision) and progress is assessed twice annually using performance indicators. They however are realistic about what can be achieved. Focus is on a small number of key priorities /projects which contribute to shared vision of WUC.

²⁴ Annual Membership Fee: €10 individual / €70 group with focus on building numbers. Payment is via a PayPal facility on the website.

²⁵ One longstanding member of WUC expressed doubt as to the panel concept, because he felt it encouraged sectional attitudes, primarily concerned with protecting sectoral interests, rather than promoting initiatives serving the benefit of all. He suggested that it should be understood that the members of any Board are there primarily in the interest of the organisation as a unit, and not primarily for the protection of sectoral interests.

Examples of WUC Achievements:

- + **Wicklow Countryside Access Service** : joint Wicklow Partnership/ WUC initiative which commenced in July 2005 to establish a network of access routes on private lands in the Wicklow uplands via permissive voluntary agreements with landowners. This has led to the successful development of three walking routes at Glenmalure, Lough Dan, Little Sugar Loaf, which are covered by the Walks Scheme. More recently Pound Lane near Lacken has also been developed. The Glenmalure route was developed in partnership with Mountain Meitheal volunteers.
- + **The Wicklow Sustainable Trails Network Project** was established to co-ordinate management of the *Wicklow Way* and *St Kevin's Way* and other trails in Wicklow. Resulted in marked improvements on these long distance walking routes. Partnership of key stakeholders and major landowners along Wicklow Way, managed by WUC. Commenced in July 2004 and completed in February 2007. Total budget for the project was €235,000, 50% granted by Fáilte Ireland and 50% contributed by project partners.
- + **Guide to Developing Trails** for communities
- + **PURE Protecting Rural Environments:** Combating dumping & fly tipping: WUC with WCC/ DLRCC/ SDCoCo/ DECLG, Coillte, NPWS as partners, including:
 - o **PURE Mile** competitions for communities for rural roadscapes
 - o **PURE Wicked** – short animations on enviro themes with Arts Council
- + **Vegetation Management:**²⁶ Applied for EU Life funding (2012) to address uplands farming/ conservation/ biodiversity/ burning/ SACs etc with Teagasc/ IFA/ NPWS and Cooley/ Comeraghs as partners. It also aims to reduce both legal and uncontrolled burning and protection of SACs etc.

It was suggested to aim for incremental development and change, to let the organisation evolve organically, and let the forum make its own decisions to engender a democratic sense of ownership of the process. It was commented that while the WUC can contribute to public consultations, it has no status to influence policy or decision making, thus potentially lacks real power 'teeth'.

It was suggested by one experienced consultee that an *Active Educational Programme* for the Reeks landowners would be beneficial e.g. study visits to other localities in Year 1; and to similar models in Scotland or Wales in Year 2. This would build their confidence in the early stages.

It is important to promote and communicate what the organisation is trying to achieve, both internally to local members and communities and externally to the wider public/potential funders and recreational visitors. WUC produces a regular e-Newsletter and e-bulletin (sign up), with Blog/ Facebook to make calls for specific voluntary actions (e.g. leave dogs at home; control of vegetation) and notice of events/ exhibitions. See www.wicklowuplands.ie / info@wicklowuplands.ie

Lessons to be learned are:

- + **Shared vision and core principles established at the start, provide sound base; original membership still actively involved**
- + **Progressive move from voluntary group to limited company, registered as a charity**
- + **Work to 3-year Strategic Plan, defined and measurable targets, linked to conservation, land management, rural development, tourism and enterprise**

²⁶ This project was discussed recently with Reeks Landowners who visited the WUC in October 2013

- ✚ **Representative partnership across diverse range of stakeholders (public/ private/ community) works well with directly elected panels of stakeholders working to achieve strategic targets, with track record over 14 years**
- ✚ **Mix of public (National Park) and private land ownership, managed by the Wicklow Uplands Council, with excellent landowner engagement process**
- ✚ **Core funding supports through the Heritage Council with Loal Authority/ Leader/ RDP programme, National Park, Coillte in the mix**
- ✚ **On negative side:**
 - **The panels can focus on sectoral vs organisational interests**
 - **Small corps of people do most of the work**
 - **WUC lacks political ‘teeth’ for policy making**

6.2.2 *Irish Uplands Forum*

The IUF www.irishuplandsforum.org was founded in the 1990s as a voluntary group to provide a forum where the views of diverse stakeholders who live, work and recreate in uplands could meet, and where best practice ideas could be discussed and exchanged. It is a small group, focussed on Research; Promoting Partnership; Education and supporting *Comhairle na Tuaithe* objectives.

IUF retains significant ‘moral authority’ in matters of uplands management. It is not however, a locally based organisation, with direct responsibility for dealing with issues of landowner access, recreational development or tourism enterprise.

In 2008 the Forum became a Limited Company, governed by a Board of Directors who are elected at the AGM which is held in Spring each year. Its current Chair is Frank Nugent and Secretary is Dr Mary Tubridy.

The IUF is dedicated to partnership approach to sustainable upland management, centred on local community integration and involvement, and:

- Conducts workshops and study visits
- Provides practical support to established, and start-up local partnerships to support sustainable local community management in upland areas
- Undertakes research on current socio-economic and environmental issues
- Supports the Leave No Trace principles
- Contributes as an active member of Comhairle na Tuaithe to the preparation and implementation of the National Countryside Recreation Strategy,
- Studies upland management in other countries where it may be relevant to Irish situations
- Provides a resource centre on sustainable development in upland areas.

6.2.3 *BurrenBeo Trust*



Burrenbeo Trust Limited is an independent, registered charity (CHY 16834) with four Directors and is also supported by a panel of notable Trust Patrons and a corps of volunteers to supplement the work of the officers. Burrenbeo employs one person fulltime and two persons part-time. See www.burrenbeo.ie/

The *Burren Community Charter* is a community led approach in designing the future of the Burren, based on ecological sustainability. The Heritage Council supports the project in recognition of this ‘bottom-up’ approach to landscape management in Ireland, and a range of methodologies are employed to connect with local community members including ‘world cafés’, consultative sessions and town hall meetings.

The Trust is resourced by membership fees, which comprise:
€1000 – Lifetime Trust member
€30 concession to- €50 / annum –single/ family / gift etc
Business Member: €100 – 250 – 400

The Burrenbeo Trust also receives a range of project related finance from Galway GRD (for Kinvara Interpretative Centre); Clare LEADER funding for website; Galway CoCO has provided a publication grant for 'Burren Insight' magazine, while the VEC gives a small grant for adult heritage programmes. Also in 2013, Burren Beo submitted applications to The Heritage Council, Department of Health (Lottery Fund) and The Ireland Funds. The Trust also has an active web-shop selling merchandise such as maps/ books/ guides and educational materials.

Communications are coordinated by a Communications Officer via website, events, e-zine newsletter and educational activities communications@burrenbeo.com



Burren Beo successfully coordinates a corps of *Burren Conservation Volunteers* working on sustainable management of the Burren & conservation issues. Volunteers receive training in rebuilding stone walls/ completion of ecological/ archaeological surveys, while the *Burrenbeo Recorders* act as the 'eyes and ears' in conservation terms and note ecological/ faunal floral activity. A recent weekend in October 2013 was organised by the volunteers to celebrate the traditional wintering out of cattle, with landowners and host communities.

The *Burren Farming for Conservation Programme* (BFCP) is a pioneering (and award winning) agri-environmental programme designed to conserve and support the communities, environment and heritage of the Burren through conservation-based farming. There are 159 active farmers involved. It is based on the findings of the BurrenLIFE Project (2005-2010) and is jointly funded by the Dept. of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (of the Dept. of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG)). It is administered directly and cost effectively on contract by Burrenbeo (see Appendix D) and won an EU-wide award in 2013 as a best practice model to be replicated elsewhere.

BFCP is based on individual farm/ field based targets which are evaluated annually to measure progress in biodiversity (species targets, scrub management and husbandry) management and has been one of the most successful projects of its kind across Europe. Farmers like working with this approach as it is easy to administer and operate, with limited paperwork, and auditors like its transparency. This project is of relevance to the Reeks landowners in that it provides a model for an effective agri-environmental scheme within a defined geographical area, which

would assist in meeting conservation targets for the Reeks. The challenge will be to source DAFM funding for a similar scheme in Kerry.

Lessons to be learned for the Reeks Mountain Access project are:

- + Shared vision and core principles established at the start, provide sound base;
- + Representative partnership across diverse range of stakeholders (landowner, public/ private/ community)
- + Successful roll-out of award winning agri-environmental scheme, *Burren Farming for Conservation*, which could be replicated elsewhere in Ireland
- + Work to Strategic Plan, linked to conservation and land management, with measurable biodiversity targets at individual farm level;
- + Project based funding through Local Authorities, DAFM, the Heritage Council with Leader/ RDP project based funding
- + Excellent use of Volunteers
- + On negative side:
 - o Small corps of people do most of the work
 - o Focus on land management/ conservation only, not access issues or tourism development

6.2.4 Dublin Mountains Partnership

The Dublin Mountains Partnership (DMP) was set up as an unconstituted partnership in May 2008, to improve the recreational experience of users of the Dublin Mountains, one of the most highly used recreational zones in the country, sitting on the 'doorstep' of south Dublin. The DMP was established following clear felling of mature forest in a high amenity zone by Coillte and the ensuing public outcry, while recognising the objectives and constraints expressed by landowners.

The partner organisations involved are Coillte, three local authorities (South Dublin County Council, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, Dublin City Council), National Parks & Wildlife Service and the Dublin Mountains Initiative, an umbrella group representing the recreation users of the Dublin Mountains. Coillte coordinates the initiative, with the three local authority partners, NPWS and the *Dublin Mountains Initiative*, an umbrella group of recreational users. Funding has largely been sourced through Coillte and the three Dublin local authorities for specific projects e.g. the Tibbradden Trail €100,000.

The DMP addresses the key need to manage the area as an integrated entity and also provides for commitments on funding and resources to underpin the DMP's work. The partnership, convened by Coillte, has developed a strategic plan, focussed on activities such as walking, hill running, orienteering, mountain biking, hiking and bouldering. It also has a strong conservation ethos, recognising that maintenance of the core asset is crucial to the long term sustainability of the activities of the partnership.

A key element of the Dublin Mountains model has been the harnessing of a volunteer corps to achieve a range of 'public good' measures in conservation, litter management, guiding, general 'eyes and ears' on the mountains and public advocacy. Each volunteer is trained to a high standard and asked to 'donate' 2 days/ month to the partnership.

An Action Plan is under implementation and a range of initiatives including new and upgraded trails, improved signage and the preparation of a DMP trail map were key targets. A significant amount of work has been achieved to date:

- + **Dublin Mountains Way** from Shankill to Tallaght along a 40 km trail, some of which has been resurfaced with Mountain Meitheal and volunteers help
- + **Mountain Biking Trail** at Ticknock
- + **Volunteer Ranger Service** (*closed to new entrants 2012*): Guides/ litter/ patrol/ conservation etc by trained volunteers/ 2 days per month

- + **Adopt-A-Trail programme** cooperative effort by DMP and Coillte/Mountain Meitheal. , clean drainage / cut back, check waymarking and signage. Keep your trail in the best condition!
- + The pilot **Dublin Mountaineer Bus** provided a gateway to the Dublin Mountains on weekends and bank holidays. The Bus did not operate in 2012, but was due to be reinstated in 2013 on a seasonal basis, to reduce vehicular traffic entering the mountains.

Mountain Meitheal also operates on the Dublin Mountains in concert with Coillte on path restoration.

Lessons to be learned for the Reeks Mountain Access project are:

- + **High pressure recreational amenity zone on Dublin's doorstep can be managed through a partnership approach among landowners and users**
- + **Representative partnership, convened by Coillte, across diverse range of landowner, public/ private/ recreational community stakeholders**
- + **Work to Action Plan, linked to conservation, recreational access and enhancement of visitor experience targets**
- + **Principal funding through Coillte, 3 Local Authorities, and other public sources of project based funding**
- + **Excellent use of Volunteers Corps to achieve conservation and visitor experience targets (*over subscribed, now closed*)**
- + **Attempts to introduce sustainable transport option via shuttle bus**

6.2.5 Other Irish Uplands Models

Other Irish uplands models were considered as part of the review, including the Knockmealdowns Active (Tipperary); Knockmealdowns Forum (Waterford); Galtee Mountain Forum, and the Comeragh Mountains Forum.

The Knockmealdowns/ Galtee models are in their infancy, trying to determine sustainable models of upland management and recreational development for their own localities, while the Comeraghs model is largely driven by Waterford County Council, but is inactive at the moment. It has developed some environmentally contentious trails in the Mahon Valley.

A watching brief should be kept on these upland areas, as they develop, by the proposed Reeks Mountain Forum. The Irish Uplands Forum is planning to host a meeting in Spring 2015 to host an information exchange for an evolving network of upland zones, to ensure all are working to the same high principles of partnership building, environmental conservation and recreational management.

6.3 Northern Ireland: Mourne Heritage Trust

In 1997, the Mourne Heritage Trust (MHT) was established as a partnership of central and local government agencies, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and environmental, community, recreational, landowning and business interests to provide for the management of the *Mourne and Slieve Croob Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty* (AONB).

The Trust is an independent body and a registered charity, without statutory powers, and its mission statement is:

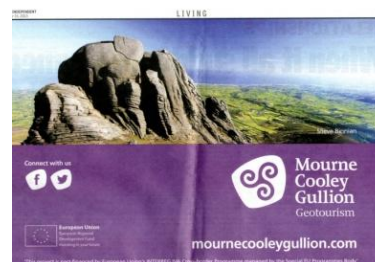
'To sustain and enhance the environment, rural regeneration, cultural heritage and visitor opportunities of the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and contribute to the well-being of Mourne's communities.'

Its membership is mainly sourced from the environment, farming & local authority interests, with additional members from tourism and recreational interests.

The Trust works in four key areas under a defined and agreed strategic Management Plan:

- ✚ Natural Environment Enhancement and Protection
- ✚ Visitor Management and Visitor Services
- ✚ Built and Cultural Heritage
- ✚ Sustainable Tourism

It retains staff resources (CEO, with Conservation, Tourism, Recreation etc officers) and is also managing the newly established cross-border Mourne-Cooley-Gullion Geopark. MHT also retains a very strong Volunteer programme and ethos.



MHT receives critical public agency support through the three local authorities involved (Newry & Mourne/ Down/ Banbridge), as well as Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Sport NI, and the Heritage Lottery Fund on a project basis. MHT also receives a range of project based funding including the EU/ SEUPB (Special EU Programmes Body for Northern Ireland).

Examples of its budgets were:

Annual Grants	£151,000 (2011-12)
Annual Voluntary Income	£160,000 (2011-12)
Landscape Conservation Plan	£1.52 million (£3 mill toto) / funding by Heritage Lottery
Mourne Uplands Paths	£200,000

The MHT can source funding for specific projects from the heritage Lottery Fund, which has funded skills training for path maintenance and management. Additionally, the Challenge Fund is a source of funding for environmental projects, derived from plastic bag levies. However, MHT would insist that sustained funding is always a challenge, and maintenance of paths in particular is a rolling requirement that is difficult to sustain without core funds.

The Trust conducted a Strategic Path Review in 2012 to establish the current condition of the path network in the uplands. The Path Review allowed the MHT to develop a 3-year Management Plan, with priorities for attention in terms of erosion control and to examine the impact of any intervention on the broader mountain ecosystems, wilderness and landscape heritage of the Mournes and Slieve Croob. It has been recognised that existing path lines may not always be the best and that diversions/ re-routing may be in order in some cases.

The MHT has also convened the *Mourne Outdoor Recreation Forum*, encompassing the full range of recreational interests in strategic planning and priority development. It is recognised that it is essential to have a trained corps of skilled Volunteers to assist in labour intensive conservation works and educational programmes and this has been successfully developed, with Volunteer team leaders frequently leading work teams. Maintenance skills are sourced from local retrained skilled/ semiskilled personnel as much as possible, working to clear specifications, while MHT also uses imaginative 'corporate team-building' exercises as a means to harness 'hands on deck' for specific path maintenance projects.

Recent achievements of the Mourne Heritage Trust include:

- ✚ Strategic Path Review & management plan
- ✚ Visitor facilities at Silent Valley
- ✚ Upgrade of 10 amenity sites on the Mourne Coast
- ✚ Implementation of the Mourne brand through signature entrance features, site furniture and bespoke interpretation
- ✚ Finalised plans for Mourne Coastal Route signage
- ✚ Establishment of the Mourne-Cooley-Gullion Geotourism program
- ✚ Mourne Public Art programme of seven pieces across AONB

The model is interesting in that it has similarities to the Reeks, with significant amounts of private land ownership, as well publicly owned lands. The work in distinctive representative panels, similar to the Wicklow Uplands, also has applicability for the Reeks. The use of an agreed Management Plan to direct their effective work programmes, e.g. Strategic Path Review, is a key to their ongoing success and local buy-in. Use of volunteers is exemplary and could be replicated elsewhere.

The agencies in Northern Ireland work effectively to achieve strategic targets for management of the uplands. Thus, MHT has access to (i) sustained public agency supports (ii) Local authority & Heritage Lottery funds, and (iii) EU/SEUPB funds for site specific and cross-border programmes, which are not available to the Reeks.

Lessons for the Reeks

- ✚ **The concept of a well-resourced public-private partnership, working together to achieve clearly defined actions based on four focal areas, has worked successfully, with the Mountains of Mourne & Slieve Croob being now one of the primary recreational destinations on the island of Ireland**
- ✚ **Based on a high degree of conservation management, linked to clear recreational access, education and tourism development targets.**
- ✚ **Significant public funding for Mournes (from Local Authorities/ Heritage Lottery/ EU/ SEUPB) unlikely to apply in the Reeks MAP**
- ✚ **Establishment of Outdoor Recreation Forum to garner inputs and support**
- ✚ **Use of volunteer corps to address labour intensive path maintenance work.**

6.4 Britain: Partnership Models for Uplands

A number of international mountain management models in the UK were reviewed to assess how their organisations are managed, funded and directed.

The legislative framework for recreational access to the countryside is very different to that which pertains in Ireland. Under the *Countryside Act 1968*, rights-of-way legislation in Britain permits recreational access along waymarked public paths and bridleways. Public pathways are 'highways' in legal terms, which are managed generally by the local authorities (or national park authorities in certain instances). The user is allowed 'passage' but cannot roam into surrounding farm lands, or cause obstruction. Dogs are allowed, but only if 'controlled' (not necessarily on a lead).

The *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000* ("the CROW Act") provides further access opportunities to the open countryside. From 28 May 2005 people were given new rights to walk on 'access land' (mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land). This important legislation grants:

- Unambiguous freedom to explore open country on foot
- Creates a duty for Highway Authorities and National Park Authorities to establish Local Access Forums

- Provides a cut-off date of 1 January 2026 for the recording of certain rights of way on definitive maps and the extinguishment of those not so recorded by that date
- Offers greater protection to wildlife and natural features, better protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and more effective enforcement of wildlife legislation
- Protects Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty with legislation similar to that for National Parks

In Scotland, access legislation is even more liberal, and recreational users are free to roam on lands responsibly, based on a code of conduct in cognisance of the rights of landowners and other stakeholders.

It is also important to note that the UK is significantly different to Ireland in the way that public agencies actively manage and resource integrated partnerships among local authorities, national park authorities and environmental, forestry and heritage statutory agencies, to manage public lands and recreational access. The partnerships also include landowners, communities and recreational interests, but fundamentally are 'top down' management models. These agencies also provide significant resources towards landscape management and path erosion control in wild areas (e.g. Scottish Natural Heritage supplies 75% of path costs²⁷).

A further difference is that the National Parks in Britain are established under Category V of the IUCN National Parks framework, which encompass privately owned and 'managed' cultural landscapes within the Parks, while in Ireland, our six National Parks are convened under Category II, with all of Park lands being in public ownership, with focus on conservation, protection and recreation.

All of the following reviews are framed in this understanding of public management and resourcing, and unambiguous access to the countryside.

6.4.1 Cairngorms, Scotland

The Cairngorms National Park (CNP) in the Blair Atholl / Pitlochrie area of northeast Scotland is the largest in Britain, and is managed by Scotland National Parks Authorities as a National Park (4,500 km²). The National Parks do not own the lands, rather the Park is managed in partnership with public sector agencies, businesses, land managers and communities. The CNP partnership retains a huge list of national partners from all walks of life (education, environment, tourism, health, recreation, forestry, uplands).

The Park is managed by the Cairngorms National Park Authority and is funded by Scotland RDP and LEADER. The £1.6 billion SRDP for 2007-2013 provided the framework for EU and Scottish Government funding for promotion of the social, economic and environmental benefits of rural Scotland.

More than 17,000 people live in the area designated as a National Park, with very low population densities. It had suffered significant socio-economic decline in the 20th century, but with good management and focus on recreational tourism in ski-ing, walking, fishing, shooting and stalking, 1.4 million people now visit annually. Micro-enterprises have flourished and the Park's population has started to grow again since 2001.

²⁷ Bob Aitken, ex-Manager, Scottish Mountain Footpaths Project, Helping the Hills Conference 2013.



None of the Cairngorms National Park is owned by the Park Authority. Instead, the Cairngorms is owned by a variety of individuals, charities, government agencies and businesses. While more than 75% of the Cairngorms is privately owned in estates, charities such as the National Trust for Scotland and the RSPB also own large tracts of land, while Government bodies including Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage own and manage substantial areas and a number of National Nature Reserves. .

There are about 60 privately owned estates in the Cairngorms National Park, many owned by families since the 13th Century. These estates, covering c. 75% of the Park, are extremely important in maintaining and sustaining the integrity of the Park. They vary from being highland retreats for wealthy owners to providing a living for local farmers or recreational access to the public. Most undertake a range of activities, from farming and forestry to traditional pursuits like deer stalking, grouse shooting, and other outdoor activities like quad biking or land rover tours.

Half of the area of the National Park is designated as being of European importance for nature conservation. The National Park is centred on the largest area of arctic mountain landscape in the UK and contains the largest extent of semi-natural pine forest in the UK. It hosts five of Scotland's six highest mountains. The National Park is home to 25 % of the UK's threatened species.

The CNPA works to a strategic action plan, currently *Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017*, which links to Scotland's National Development priorities and targets. Within the Plan are practical targets for 5-10 years duration with measurable outcomes (e.g. increase in tree cover by 5%; Broadband for 75% of residents; Active conservation plans for habitats; Increase volunteer days by 50%, etc.) across a range of sectors, including specialist elements such as Biodiversity or Geodiversity.

The CNP hosts a *Land Management Forum* which was initiated jointly by Scottish Land & Estates and the Cairngorms National Park Authority <http://cairngorms.co.uk/look-after/land-management-forum>. Its purpose is to bring together a wide range of stakeholders with an interest in land management in the Cairngorms National Park to:

- Help improve viability and sustainability of land based businesses

- ✚ Share and compare information and experience
- ✚ Develop opportunities to benefit the environment, economy and communities
- ✚ Provide practical advice

The CNP hosts an *Enterprise Forum*, with four focal areas:

- ✚ Economic strategy development & implement
- ✚ Skills and training
- ✚ Food and drink development
- ✚ Grow Cairngorms Business Partnership

The CNP also convene the *Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust*, with 6 staff which deals with:

- ✚ Establishing base line data on paths/ features
- ✚ Surveying path network for erosion/ requirements
- ✚ Establishing annual priorities for management & maintenance
- ✚ Work to national Scottish standards & guidelines (Uplands Path Advisory Group)
- ✚ Train 6-8 people per annum, with vocational qualifications in path repair

Key issues include new policies, local and national initiatives and funding that may effect and benefit the sustainable management of the National Park. There are links from these forums to *Advisory Forums*, including Farmers, Association of Cairngorms Communities, Deer, Developers' Forum etc.

Additionally, *Cairngorm Mountain Limited* (CML) is a limited company set up to run the mountain railway to the summit of Cairn Gorm, including its built infrastructure and car parks, and to control & monitor access. CML at the Railway employs 70 full time rising to 120 during the winter months. CML have c.200,000 visitors pa (120,000 walkers / sightseers non winter & 75,000 winter skiers) using the railway. About the same number again of mountaineers / experienced walkers will not use the rail to the summit, preferring to leave cars at the base car park. There is no restriction on this latter group other than they must control their dogs (which are allowed, but advised to keep on lead) and not disturb signed delicate natural habitats. A Memo of Understanding was signed by all landowners for the management of the railway to the summit by CML, who are reported to annually on activities. Data gathering is major role of the CML team.

For those visitors that travel up by rail, they are not permitted to leave the summit station except in an organised party with a guide. This is for environmental protection and was a key aspect of planning being secured. There has been some loosening of late and guided mountain biking trips to the base are now permitted. If people 'escape' the rules, it is simply recorded and reported upon to the relevant landowners. CML's Land Manager is responsible for this dialogue / communication.

The CNPA uses a *Ranger Service* to promote enjoyment and environmental understanding of the National Park, which is vital to the successful management and the delivery of the strategic plan. Twelve ranger services cover the National Park, which are employed by a variety of organisations including local authorities, private estates, charitable trusts and one community group. The work of rangers is paid for by their employer supported by grant aid and direct contributions from the public through donations, event charges, sale of guides and car park charges. CNPA directly grant aid nine of these services and works with all the services to co-ordinate the network of Cairngorms' rangers.

Cairngorm Mountain Ranger Service is an additional small team of one all-year ranger and two summer seasonal rangers operating from the Ranger Base at the Cairngorm Ski Area car park. The ranger service organises and carries out work on the mountain paths radiating from the car park and leads guided walks to the summit of Cairn Gorm in summer. A large part of the annual environmental monitoring in relation to the mountain railway by Cairngorm Mountain Limited, is fieldwork carried out and reported by the ranger service. Among other activities are counts of winter climbers, organisation of volunteers and educational visits from schools and colleges. The

rangers also operate the unique Cairngorm 'Snow White' facility to help mountaineers leave no trace on the mountain

Lessons to be learned for the Reeks Mountain Access project are:

- + The National Park model can work effectively for landowners, while retaining traditional models of ownership (in a situation with 75% private ownership, managed by public body (CNP Authority))
- + Partnership across diverse range of stakeholders (public/ private/ community) can lead to 'turn-around' of an area in socio-economic decline
- + Core public supports through the Leader/ RDP programme, National Parks, Heritage Lottery, Scottish Natural Heritage, etc
- + Strategic plan with ambitious & measurable targets, linked to clear national conservation, land management, rural development, tourism and enterprise targets and directives – this helps to guide local decision making
- + Planned and resourced path erosion control and management
- + Harnessing of Volunteer corps, well managed within strategic targets

Additional suggestions by CML management included:

- + Be 'realistic' in the beginning, prove ability to deliver and then think about expansion.
- + Give the outdoor recreational user what they want and deliver it to the highest standard.
- + Without adequate human and financial resources it will be difficult to 'make it happen'.
- + Professional gathering and analysis of visitor information for planning and landowner engagement.

6.4.2 Ben Nevis/ Nevis Trust

The **Nevis Partnership** is a Scottish company, limited by guarantee, with charitable status, which was formed in 2003 to *'guide future policies and actions to safeguard, manage and where appropriate enhance the environmental qualities and opportunities for visitor enjoyment and appreciation of the Nevis area'*. 'The Nevis Strategy' was completed after consultations among partners, and established the Nevis Trust as an area based partnership organisation. Notably, the land is not held in a National Park.

The Nevis Trust has a main Board with 10 representative groups holding voting rights. The directorships include:

- The Highland Council
- Fort William Community Council
- Inverlochy and Torlundy Community Council
- Glen Nevis Residents
- The John Muir Trust (*10,000 members*)
- The Mountaineering Council of Scotland
- Lochaber Mountain Access Group
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Sport Scotland

The Board meets once every two months in Fort William, and other associated organisations are represented at the meetings, including landowner, community, forestry and mining representatives: Bidwells (representing Rio Tinto Alcan); Glen Nevis Estate; associates including Forestry Commission Scotland and HOST - Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board, with 'Advisors in Attendance' of HIE Lochaber, representatives from the local farming and grazing communities and various additional advisers as required by the Board. In addition to the main Board there is an Executive Committee, which meets monthly and provides a support and advisory framework

to assist the Nevis Manager on all project management and operational issues. The Executive Committee is made up of representatives from the following organizations:

- The Highland Council
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Local Community Group representation
- Lochaber Mountain Access Group
- The John Muir Trust
- Forestry Commission Scotland (*permanent*)

The Nevis Trust adheres to a set of core principles, established at the outset.

- Sustainability
- Partnership and joint working
- Community/ landowners Government agencies Agreement and support for management initiatives
- Recognition of the area's international and national conservation, tourism and recreation importance
- Commitment to action and investment

The Nevis Trust is funded through a mix of public support and corporate philanthropy/CSR. The Trust spends 'six figure sums' on path maintenance per annum (Bob Aitken, op cit).

- **Care International** : litter/waste reduction in the Ben/Glen Nevis area, as part of the Ben Nevis Mountain Heritage Project
- **European Regional Development Fund** (2007-13 programme) to support path repairs on Ben Nevis and the Glen Nevis *Sense of Place* project.
- **Forestry Commission Scotland**: 3-year funding plan for integrated low level path network in the area.(= matched funding).
- **Heritage Lottery Fund** *Ben Nevis Mountain Heritage Project*, encompassing path repairs and restoration, environment protection, path skills training and mountaineering memorabilia archive.
- **Highlands and Islands Partnership Special Transitional program** 3-year funds that are matched against a combination of other funding bodies.
- **Highland Council Planning and Development Services**: capital construction, educational and interpretational projects & contribution to the running costs of the Visitor Management service. Significant in-kind donations committed in the form of management support and advice and other administration support facilities.
- **Rio Tinto/ Alcan** include management advice and guidance, in-kind donations of archaeological data, and significant access to match funding opportunities through mutual involvement with Forest regeneration

Examples of successful Nevis Projects include:

- *Landscape Partnership Project* – securing of jobs to manage the LPP with Heritage Lottery Funds 2013
- *Ben Nevis Paths Partnership*: £4 million awarded for path erosion management (a subgroup of main Partnership)

Lessons to be learned are:

- ✚ **Landownership in the Scottish Highlands is very different to Ireland's uplands, with large amounts of lands held in private trust and estates, as well as public ownership; small family farms are rare;**
- ✚ **The Ben Nevis model is 'top down' public management, but with representative stakeholders on Board and Executive**
- ✚ **Partnership across diverse range of stakeholders (public/ private/ community) can work effectively, including private mining companies**
- ✚ **Clear focus on environmental standards, path maintenance & conservation of uplands, while encouraging recreational tourism, but it must be managed.**
- ✚ **Sustained public supports through Heritage Lottery/ EU ERDF/ Highlands and Islands Partnership/ Highland Council/ Forestry Commission and Care, supplemented by private corporate partners**
- ✚ **Strategic plan with ambitious & measurable targets, linked to national conservation, land management, rural development, tourism and enterprise targets**

6.5 Lake District National Park, England

The iconic Lake District in northwest England is the largest national park (229,000 ha) in England and is home to c. 40,000 people. The lands in the LDNP are held variably in private and public ownership and is managed by the National Park Authority.

The focus of the national park management is on conservation of the landscape and ecology and not on public safety. There is an underlying principle that the landscape should not be overly tamed and people accessing the countryside must take responsibility for themselves. In 2006, key organisations with a role in the Lake District National Park committed to work together and agreed the *Vision for 2030*. The Partnership is made up of equal representatives from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors and operate to a Memorandum of Understanding. It meets on a quarterly basis and posts all of its agendae/ minutes and feedback on its website www.lakedistrictpartnership.co.uk.

The Partnership works to implement the 'vision' via an action-based Partnership Plan. All are based on agreed planning policies to manage development in the National Park, which are presented in a Local Plan. Prior to its establishment, conflict among different stakeholders was common; the Partnership now works together to resolve potential areas of conflict and find solutions. It has built a major presence and provides a number of consultative forums and established with local partners the seven collectively agreed priorities, namely - Housing, Farming & Forestry, Adventure Capital, Broadband & Mobile Phone Coverage, Transport, Low Carbon and Valley Planning. Each of these is addressed through the Plan, with performance published as a *State of the Park* report available publicly.

Since 1997, the LDNP manages 3,000km of public paths in the National Park in consultation with private landowners, on behalf of Cumbria council. There is an extensive, integrated recreational path network(150 paths) for walking, hiking, climbing, fell running, orienteering, equestrian and mountain biking. The Lake District by name also provides water-based activities, including angling, canoeing, kayaking, swimming and all sorts of festival and events around the lake network.

The Lake District NP one of the great outdoor recreational destinations in the world, but is under enormous pressure with 15 million visitors per annum (57% of which go hillwalking) and up to 8-9,000 challenge events annually. Guidelines are in place, but communication with the 'need to know' can be difficult.

To address recreational path erosion in the Park, '**Fixing the Fells**'²⁸ is contracted to manage path erosion and 'fix' /maintain the network. The focus is simply erosion, not ecology or safety, while minimising environmental impacts. Six partners oversee the work, including Cumbria Council Natural England, Friends of the Lake District, Lake District NP, National Trust and Nurture Lakelands. The NP and NT pay for 'Fixing' staff and commissioned works. Additionally, a corps of 90 volunteers works with 'Fixing', and are kitted with relevant equipment, modest travel expenses to site, and subsistence in mountain huts as required.

Approximately £1 million per annum is spent on sensitive path maintenance to highest standards. Notably, learning from experience, some older paths would not now be constructed in the same way if time were repeated. The emphasis is on low impact using local materials, water management, with skills and techniques built up over decades of experience. Materials are helicoptered in as needs arise e.g. on sensitive ecosystems in SACs, and mechanised equipment is used where absolutely necessary. Rolling maintenance is key message: address erosion problems early before it becomes a major issue. Drystone revetement walls are used where necessary to support older upland paths.

On peat eroded areas, novel ways of path management are used, inverting mineral soils below the peat to surface and/or using 'floating' solutions of locally sourced, rolled woollen fleeces emplaced below the substrate, to provide flexibility while using natural materials.

The Park is the major supplier of water to the Greater Manchester area, which is physically supplied by a private water authority. The Park has responsibility for management and control of upland erosion and overgrazing, to prevent siltation of the supply lakes. Broadleaf trees are planted to counteract this, which proves to be more cost effective (£5 million) than building treatment plants (£25 million).

The Park is funded publicly through Department of Food and Rural Development (DEFRA), but has suffered significant cutbacks in recent years; thus it also raises project funding through philanthropic donations and local fundraising. It dispenses funds also and has a DEFRA-derived grant scheme to support projects that combine economic, social and environmental benefits. Locally proposed projects that help support the agreed Partnership Vision in the Lake District National Park, or projects that increase understanding and enjoyment of the Lake District's special qualities, are considered for funding.

Lessons to be learned for the Reeks Mountain Access project are:

- ✚ **Partnership across diverse range of stakeholders (public/ private/ community) working effectively across large area with huge tourism numbers,**
- ✚ **Working to clear Vision and prioritised Management Plan**
- ✚ **Clear focus on landscape management & conservation of uplands, not public safety or ecology**
- ✚ **Path maintenance contracted to *Fixing the Fells* to support sustainable recreational tourism, but it must be managed.**
- ✚ **Sustained public supports through DEFRA, supplemented by local donors fundraising**

6.6 Sustainable Transport for Uplands

In the Cairngorms National Park (see Section 6.4.1), [The Cairngorms Explorer](#) allows visitors to plan their journey to, and around, the National Park without a car. Real time public transport timetables are available on the Traveline Scotland journey planner. There was a new bus

²⁸ www.fixthefells.co.uk – a 'sister' organisation called 'Helping the Hills' is evolving in Ireland to focus on management of path erosion in the uplands www.helpingthehills.ie

service for the east side of the CNP from July -September 2013. The Cairngorms also enjoys a mountain railway to take non-hillwalking visitors to the summit of Cairn Gorm.

In Snowdonia in North Wales, the *Snowden Sherpa* shuttles from the coastal towns and villages in the mornings and picks them hikers later in the day; this offers more options for access to the 6 principal routes to Snowdon, and cuts down on the volume of cars entering the mountain zone. Rural residents can use the shuttle also to access the urban areas for shopping/ banking etc.

(<http://www.visitsnowdonia.info/sherpa - bus timetable and snowdon walking paths-98.aspx>)

A recreational shuttle bus model is used to a limited extent seasonally in the Dublin Mountains, where a small bus, the *Dublin Mountaineer*, takes visitors from defined points in the city to drop off / pick up points along the Dublin Mountains Way.

It was trialled but struggled initially but was reintroduced for summer 2013.



Currently, practically all recreational access to the McGillycuddy Reeks is by car transport along narrow roads from Fossa/ Beaufort/ Kilgobnet on the north side, or via the Gap of Dunloe and the Black Valley on the east and south. There may be scope to run a morning shuttle bus from a fixed point in Killarney, such as the Tourist Office, for drop off to the Reeks' principal access points; this would provide more sustainable transport and distribution of users along different routes. The bus would leave the urban centre say on an hourly basis in the morning and provide hourly pick-ups from fixed points in the afternoons. The back-routes could potentially provide a rural transport link for the local population to visit the towns.

Lessons for Reeks

- ✚ The economics of a *Reeks Shuttle* would need to be teased out carefully given the overheads involved, but could be at least seasonally viable to reduce traffic on the small access roads to the Reeks.
- ✚ However, there are a number of local transport operators based in the sub-region who would give it careful consideration if the Mountain Access scheme were to promote more sustainable transport options for the Reeks.

6.7 Key Lessons from Partnership Review

The key lessons from the review are as follows, which have been harnessed in developing the proposed model.

- + Shared vision and core principles to be established at the start, provide sound base to fall back on;
- + Clear focus on environmental standards, path maintenance & conservation of uplands, while encouraging recreational tourism, but it must be managed.
- + Representative partnership across range of stakeholders (public/ private/ community) with panels of elected stakeholders to achieve strategic targets;
 - o Flexible steering group, supported by working groups
 - o Landowners must be at the core of decision making
 - o Need excellent and ongoing landowner engagement process
 - o Representative panels must focus organisational vs. sectoral interests
- + Core funding supports will be required from a mix of public and private sources - Leader/ RDP programme, DECLG, Fáilte Ireland,, Heritage Council/ Lottery / philanthropic donations - without adequate human and financial resources it will be difficult to 'make it happen'.
- + Partnership can lead to 'turn-around' of an area in socio-economic decline
 - o Keep it simple at the start; allow the group to evolve and set targets that it is comfortable with.
 - o Be 'realistic', prove ability to deliver and then think about expansion.
- + Progressively move from voluntary group to limited company/ or charity
- + Work to 3-5 year Strategic Plan, with defined and measurable targets
 - o Link to conservation and sustainable land management;
 - o Focus on broader rural development, tourism and enterprise
 - o Link to clear national targets and directives; helps to guide local decision making
- + Give outdoor recreational users what they want; deliver it to the highest standard;
- + Harnessing of Volunteer corps, well managed within strategic targets
- + Data gathering and analysis of visitor information for planning

The model adopted should take account of best available models of excellence e.g.

The **Wicklow Uplands Council** developed a partnership approach more than a decade ago, with elected representatives from four core stakeholder groupings (landowner/ community/ recreational/ enterprise), supported by ex officio local authority/ statutory agency and other interest groups. 'Working Groups' of the partnership work to achieve specific targets of their Action Plan based on a shared vision, and delivered to the strategic schedule. The MacGillycuddy Reeks core landowners recently completed a study visit to Wicklow (October 2013). From the landowner perspective, the **SUAS** (*Sustainable Uplands Agri-Environmental Scheme*) was particularly attractive, as it enhances traditional uplands farming practices, while supporting biodiversity and conservation measures targeted at fragile upland habitats.

✚ *Key issues: partnership, working groups, agri-environmental schemes*

The **Burren 'Farming for Conservation'** is an award winning agri-environmental scheme. In 2000, more than 75% of farmers in the Burren were in REPS, but this did not reflect the sensitive and unique biodiversity of the Burren. The EU BurrenLIFE Project was successfully piloted over 5 years (2004-09) on 20 farms, but the 'Farming for Conservation' project has since engaged more than 200 farmers in an administratively simple but ecologically effective project. Farmers develop a field-by-field farm management plan, and work these 'high nature value' lands to enhance the biodiversity, reduce scrub, maintain walls/ stiles etc, which based on independent verification, has had exceptional results. The scheme is funded by Dept. Agriculture & Food, but has been demonstrably more results-focused and cost effective than conventional agri-support schemes. The project recently won an EU award as a best practice model, which can be replicated in similar ecologically sensitive or uplands farm environments. A adapted scheme may be appropriate for MacGillycuddy Reeks.

✚ *Key issues: partnership, effective agri-environmental 'farming for high nature value'*

The **Dublin Mountains Partnership** was established in 2008 following clear felling of high amenity recreational areas in the Dublin Mountains by Coillte, close to Dublin City, due to commercial forestry requirements. This partnership established a Voluntary Ranger scheme in early 2010, seeking volunteers through newspapers, followed by training and capacity building of rangers over a period of months. The volunteers are asked to give up one weekend day every two months to patrol the mountains, offer guidance to visitors, pick up litter, report infringements, and generally maintain high standards of conservation and ecological protection. An adapted volunteer scheme may be appropriate for MacGillycuddy Reeks.

✚ *Key issues: partnership, volunteer rangers, enhanced visitor experience*

Croagh Patrick attracts over 100,000 people per annum, which combined with increasing charity and extreme sports events has significantly eroded the pathway to the Reek. A recent report by Elfyn Jones, Access and Conservation Officer in Wales for the British Mountaineering Council commissioned by Mountaineering Ireland (2013), states '*the erosion created by walkers on this mountain is of such a scale and is so severe that only a large scale intervention could have any impact on it*'. An estimate of the required investment in remedial works runs to €1.5 million to stem the 'severe' erosion. As well as proposing major restorative works by skilled personnel, he proposes more formalised management and monitoring of traffic on the mountain, and a forum to identify a best practise or code for hosting large gatherings and events.

The Murrisk Development Association welcomed the report and the call for development of Codes of Practise for the mountain. It has recently engaged with Mayo County Council, Fáilte Ireland, Mayo Mountain Rescue, the local church, as well as archaeological interests and the commonage owners, in devising such a framework.

✚ *Key: physical assessment of assets; remedial works; codes of practice; partnership*

PART 2

**PROPOSED STRUCTURE
FOR
MACGILLYCUDDY REEKS MOUNTAIN ACCESS PROJECT**



7.0 PREFERRED MODEL FOR REEKS MOUNTAIN FORUM

This section presents the preferred model for the future management of the MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Project following significant discussion and feedback from consultees, based on a series of suggested founding principles (see Figure 7.1 below).

7.1 The Vision

The vision for the *MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Project* (MAP) is to create a suitably resourced upland recreational activity zone, focussed principally on hillwalking, climbing, mountaineering, environmental and cultural heritage, all underpinned by permissive land access by the relevant landowners. The MAP will be delivered through a participative multi-stakeholder management forum, to support the livelihoods of landowners and local enterprises, while providing an excellent experience for recreational users. It is envisaged that the MacGillycuddy Reeks' MAP will become the exemplar for sustainable uplands management and permissive recreational access in Ireland, based on an agricultural and environmental sustainability ethos.

7.2 Strategic Objectives

Core strategic objectives were identified (see Figure 7.1), founded on the principles of social, economic and environmental sustainability for the greater Reeks catchment, which are:

1. **Management Forum:** The MAP will require an integrated and participative development forum, the '*MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Forum*' ('*the Reeks Forum*') with balanced membership sourced from landowners, community groups, recreational users, state agencies, representative groups, educationalists and local/ national policy and decision makers.
2. **Leadership:** From the outset, the Reeks Partnership will require a proactive *Chairperson*, as leader to provide strategic direction and build collegiality among the partnership, while ensuring that the shared vision and strategic objectives are met over the proposed time schedule.
3. **Shared Vision:** The Reeks Partnership will develop a '*Shared Vision*', which will provide the foundation stone and 'backstop' on which all other elements of the process will depend.
4. **Develop & Implement Strategic Action Plan:** The Reeks Partnership will devise and implement an agreed *Strategic Action Plan* and will work to achieve its targets within the recommended time frames. Working groups of the Partnership will address key actions of a Strategic Action Plan. The first action should include development of an *Integrated Management Plan* (see Table 7.3) to address all aspects of the environmental, social and economic development of the MacGillycuddy Reeks. A *Conservation Management Plan* will be required for management of the Special Area of Conservation covering the Reeks.
5. **Build Awareness of Integral Eco-Value of Reeks:** Build a stronger sense of the unique but fragile uplands ecosystems of the Reeks, and the need to protect these upland habitats education of users and conservation of the 'wilderness' aspect of the mountains; as well as through appropriate agri-environmental schemes.
6. **Develop Enterprise:** Develop a stronger sense of the recreational potential to drive local enterprise and jobs, by building critical partnerships among local SMEs (farmers, guides, restaurants, B&B/ guest houses/ hotels, restaurants, bike hire etc), Kerry County Council, Fáilte Ireland, SKDP/ RSS and initiatives such as *Go Kerry!*, Tidy Towns and community initiatives etc, to provide integrated servicing of visitors, signage upgrades, sustainable transport and litter management, with information panels at car parks and in villages. However, conservation of the uplands environments must be maintained, with minimalist, if any, infrastructure on the mountains themselves.

7. **Build Capacity:** Specific capacity building & training measures will be required to advance aspects of the Action Plan. In particular, specialist training in uplands path management, erosion control, user safety and visitor management will be required. At a later stage, increased business acumen, promotional skills, service development (e.g. guiding) as well as environmental knowledge will be required. Many of these skills can be delivered within the Partnership model.
8. **Develop Communications Strategy:** Design and deliver an effective internal and external communications strategy, based on an indicative Communications Strategy. Communicate to local and national audience on responsibilities, actions planned and completed, with outputs and targets clearly set out. Build internal (local communities) and external (decision makers/ users/ tourism interests) awareness and understanding of the Reeks Partnership's vision to promote environmental integrity, uplands agri-environmental schemes, SME enterprise and pride in the project:
9. **Secure Resources & Funding:** Resources will be required to implement the Strategic Action Plan into the short-, medium- and longer-terms through applications to public partners such as South Kerry Development Partnership, DECLG (Rural Recreation Section), Dept. Agriculture, Food & Marine, Kerry County Council, Kerry County Enterprise Board, Fáilte Ireland, Mountaineering Ireland, Mountain Meitheal, Kerry Education & Training Board (ETB), philanthropic enterprises and other potential funders such as the EU InterReg programme will be essential.
10. **Build Alliances:** Through the mountain access scheme, the Reeks Partnership will build strong alliances with established and emerging upland partnership in Ireland, including Wicklow, Connemara, Comeraghs, Galtees, Knockmealdowns, Leitrim/ Sligo, the Mourne and the Burren, to promote the principles of integrated mountain partnerships for permissive access and sustainable uplands management nationally.
11. **Monitor & Evaluate:** Develop a set of ambitious but achievable targets with which to measure and monitor progress. Consider facilitated workshops with landowners, community groups and SMEs to allow people to develop their own performance indicators.



Lough Callee, Hag's Glen

McGillycuddy's Reeks Mountain Access Project

The Vision

Create a suitably resourced *uplands recreational* activity zone, focused principally on hillwalking, climbing, mountaineering, environmental and cultural heritage, all underpinned by *permissive land access* by the relevant landowners. The Mountain Access Project (MAP) will be delivered through a *multi-stakeholder management forum*, to support the livelihoods of landowners and local enterprises, while providing an excellent experience for recreational users.

Strategic Objectives

Management:

Create & Manage an Inclusive Partnership
 Excellence in Leadership
 Develop a Shared Vision
 Develop and Implement a Strategic Plan
 Secure Resources and Funding
 Monitor & Evaluate Actions

Development:

Build Awareness
 Develop Enterprises
 Train and Build Capacity
 Excellence in Communications
 Build Alliances
 Design Landowner Specific Initiatives

Framework for Action

Core Shared Vision
 Agreed Strategic Action Plan

Guiding Principles

Partnership
 Landowner Respect
 Economic Spin-off to Landowners & Local Communities
 Inspire & Motivate Others
 Sustainable Rural Development

Environmental Integrity
 Community Empowerment
 Best Practice Learnings
 Fostering a Socio-Cultural Heritage

How it Will be Delivered

Forum: Leadership, Vision, Planning, Securing Resources
 Work Groups: Deliverable Agreed Actions Based on Available Resources
 Resources: Secure Sustained Resources Through External Partners & Co-Supported Through a Self Generating Income Stream

Figure 7.1 Suggested Principles for MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Scheme

7.3 Organisation & Management

It is recommended that a skilled Interim Chairperson be appointed immediately to lead the early critical stages by the MAP Steering Group and to develop the longer term vision for the Reeks with the representative partners. The full Chairperson can be elected by the Steering Group within 9-12 months once the structure has bedded down.

A strong partnership approach must be adopted in order to deliver these strategic objectives through the suggested Strategic Action Plan (see Section 8.0 below). Taking cognisance of the current economic climate, the Strategy will need to utilise existing resources where possible, while also seeking resource inputs from external agencies and public and private partners.

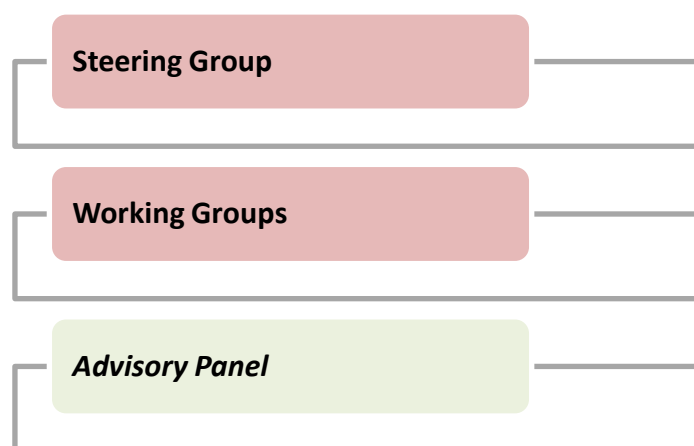
The responsibility to deliver the Strategic Action Plan will require a collegial approach among key landowners, community, private and public sector partners. The public sector cannot drive initiative this without sustained landowner, community and business commitment to the shared vision.

7.3.1 Organisation: 5 Key Steps

Step 1: Establish the MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountains Forum

It is suggested that the Reeks Forum will comprise two core groups (Steering Group and Working Groups), potentially supported by an expert Advisory Panel (see Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2 MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Forum: Proposed Structure



The Steering Group of the Forum would comprise a Chairperson and representatives sourced from core stakeholders including landowners, community, enterprise, statutory agencies, national and local authorities, recreational users and an elected representative of Kerry County Council. The SG would provide strategic direction and guidance, policy development, source core resources, set targets through an Action Plan and ensure that they are implemented.

A Membership registration process as happens in Wicklow could be considered, in order to confer voting rights from among the general stakeholders (see Appendix F for Wicklow model of election in their MOA). In that model, each member gets one vote; a community group gets a vote per group member to maximum of 20 votes/ group. Ex-officio groups may get one voting right per group. Only registered members may vote in elections to the Steering Group.

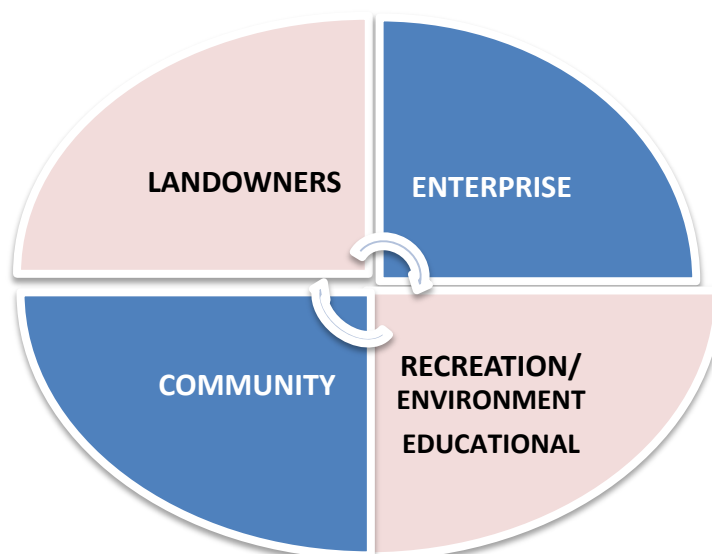
It is suggested that the following core stakeholders be represented at the heart of the Forum to provide strategic vision, direction and leadership to the initiative:

Table 7.1 Suggested Composition of Steering Group

Reeks Mountain Forum: Steering Group		No. Pax
1	Chairperson	1
2	Landowners representation	5
3	Community	1
4	SME/ Enterprise	1
5	South Kerry Development Partnership	1
6	Dept. Environment, Community & Local Government (Rural Recreation Section)	1
7	Fáilte Ireland	1
8	National Parks & Wildlife Service	1
9	Kerry County Council	1
10	Mountaineering Ireland or Irish Upland Forum	1
11	Elected representative of KCC	1
Total		15

Working Groups of the Forum would support the action plan of the Steering Group, with representatives selected from four key stakeholder groups:

- (i) **Landowners** particularly those with lands leading to the Reeks' uplands, with representation from Breanlea, Lisleibane, Mealis, Gap of Dunloe, Bridia Valley, Lough Acoose and Derrynaferna; also perhaps members of representative groups;
- (ii) **Community Groups** centred around the Reeks: Glencar, Beaufort, Kilgobnet, Gap, Black Valley, Bridia and possibly supply towns such as Killorglin;
- (iii) **Private Enterprise** e.g. micro and small enterprise in mountain guiding, accommodation, food, pubs, transport and specialist retail;
- (iv) **Recreational & Other Interest Groups:** walking/ climbing/ mountaineering/ orienteering and environmental interest groups; and educational interests.



Advisory Panel: Other statutory bodies such as Coillte, Inland Fisheries, An Taisce, as well as upland experts e.g. Irish Uplands Forum, Mountaineering Ireland, the MI 'Helping the Hills' Network, and environmental, academic or agricultural experts could be invited to participate for specific projects and/ or advise the Steering Group as needs arise.

Step 2: Appoint a Chairperson: it is recommended to immediately appoint an Interim Chairperson to drive the efficient establishment of the Forum. In time, under the direction of Forum members, it will be necessary to identify a highly skilled Chairperson, to be supported by the Rural Recreation Officer in developing the Forum network, coordinate activities, call meetings, manage expectations and drive the implementation of the Strategy. A Draft Terms of Reference for the Chairperson is provided in Appendix F.

Step 3: Agree the Core Vision and Action Plan among Forum members.

Develop and agree a shared vision to provide the basis for all subsequent workings of the Forum, based on sound principles of environmental, social and economic sustainability.

Based on the vision, develop a clear Strategic Action Plan, with clear and agreed actions, and timeframes for delivery. The actions should focus on achievable targets and establish a few 'early wins' to keep momentum up. A suggested SAP is presented in Section 8.0 below.

Identify 'early win' projects (as soon as possible) e.g.

- Establish the Forum, appoint Chairperson, set up Working Groups;
- Emplace effective counters at principal access points to the high Reeks, to generate baseline data
- Advance the tolling of public carparks to generate operational revenue, with KCC advice

Identify 'short term' projects (yrs 1-2) e.g.

- Development of an *Integrated Management Plan* to integrate the social, environmental and economic development of the Reeks and provide a long-term strategic framework for management of the assets;
- As part of the IMP, a *Conservation Management Plan* for the Reeks' SAC will be required, under the guidance of the NPWS and KCC Planning;
- Identify an appropriate *agri-environmental scheme* for the Reeks uplands, under the new round of the CAP programme, for participating landowners with DAFM

- Conduct/ Complete full physical audit of the path network to identify prioritised rolling management plans to control erosion, water and path migration;

- Formalise the access and insurance arrangements with the participating landowners, under auspices of DECLG (RRO); and the national MAP
- Undertake training programme to establish a corps of trained landowners/ volunteer rangers (*based on Dublin Mountains/ Mournes model*)
- Identify economic and other opportunities for landowner/ local benefit

Identify 'medium-longer term' projects (yrs 3-5) e.g.

- Data collection on visitor numbers and experience to inform *Visitor Management Plan*, with advice from Killarney National Park and similar uplands areas.
- Consider upgrade of visitor services at carparks (with KCC advice/ planning)

- Address safety aspects of the Devils Ladder and other access routes to Carrauntoohil;

Step 4: Establish small flexible Working Groups among the elected representatives to achieve specific aims and outcomes. Elections would take place based on basic rules set out in the Constitution (see Appendix F for draft rules). It is recommended to actively recruit additional members where specific skills are required for particular projects, and to use the Advisory Group expertise where niche expertise is required.



There are critical latent skills available within the MacGillycuddy Reeks catchment, which could be actively recruited to support the work of the Working Groups to bring in additional project-based inputs and activism. In particular, retired or unemployed professionals with knowledge, business acumen and managerial skills, and young people with energy, ideas and social media/IT skills, may be successfully harnessed in administration, management, financing, web and related IT promotion, recreational or environmental activism, under the responsibility of the Forum's working groups.

Step 5: Implement the (suggested) Strategic Action Plan and key targets as set out in Section 8.0 below to deliver the vision of the Reeks Partnership. These will require to be discussed, amended and signed off under the direction of the Chairperson and Forum steering group.

An *Integrated Management Plan*, accompanied by a *Conservation Management Plan* for the Reeks SAC, will be required in the early stages in which to embed the socio-enviro-economic vision for the Reeks into a decision-making strategic framework.

7.3.2 Administrative Procedures

The following administrative procedures are suggested:

Chairperson: The Chairperson will work to a defined Terms of Reference (see Appx. F).

Meetings: It is suggested that the Steering Group (SG) of the Forum would meet on a Quarterly basis, while the Working Groups would meet on a monthly basis to achieve project specific

targets. Each Working Group would require a Convenor (ideally sourced from a member of the Steering Group) to report back to the SG quarterly meetings on behalf of the working group.

Meetings can be held in Killorglin, using SKDP's offices at Library Place.

Admin/ Clerical: The Rural Recreation Officer (RRO) at SKDP is a critical resource and will assist the Chairperson to administer and co-ordinate the inputs and requirements of landowners and other key stakeholders. The RRO will support the Chairperson administratively in calling and hosting meetings, with clerical support to be provided also through SKDP, likely through the RSS or Tús schemes.

Legal Structure: Good governance is requisite in all management models reviewed. In the early stages, it would be sufficient to form an unincorporated voluntary structure, with agreed roles and responsibilities, operating procedures, based on an agreed Constitution similar to those used by community development groups. A tax clearance certificate should be applied for and a bank account opened. This will be sufficient to apply for and access funding.

In the medium term, it is recommended that charitable status²⁹ be sought (on the basis of 'purposes beneficial to the community' – see box below). Practical information on the establishment of a charity and related taxation issues are available directly from the Revenue Commissioners at: <http://www.revenue.ie/en/business/faqs-charities.html>.

In Ireland when an organisation has charitable status this means that it is recognised as charitable by the Revenue Commissioners for tax purposes and as a consequence it is exempt from certain taxes (although it must still pay all VAT as per any other business). Groups can apply to the Revenue Commissioners for exemption from certain taxes and separately to the Valuation Office for exemption from rates on buildings, important for fundraising and for exemption from certain taxes. 'Charitable status' does not give legal status to an organisation. In order to be recognised as charitable an organisation must have:

- ✚ Legal status by means of a specific legal structure with its associated 'governing instrument' (see below). This means that it has a written constitution or a Memorandum and Articles of Association;
- ✚ The constitution must include a clause stating that the organisation will use its money for charitable purposes only;
- ✚ The aims of the organisation as set out in the constitution must be exclusively charitable and must come under one of the following headings or definitions of charity:
 - The relief of poverty;
 - The advancement of education;
 - The advancement of religion; or
 - Other purposes beneficial to the community.

From 'Useful Information for Setting up a Voluntary Organisation': www.thewheel.ie
The Wheel, April 2013

It is suggested that the Reeks Forum remain as a voluntary partnership in the early stages, developing to a legal structure as the organisational issues 'bed down'. A co-operative structure could be considered, as landowners are generally comfortable with the concept, but the 'company limited by guarantee, registered as a charity' is the suggested option.

²⁹ The *Charities Act 2009* is to introduce a regulatory regime in Ireland for Charities for the first time. This will include establishing a Regulator which will maintain a publicly accessible Register of Charities. It will also set standard annual reporting requirements for charities for financial as well as impact reporting and it will have investigatory powers to satisfy itself that the charity is well run. The act has not yet been enabled in law (Dec. 2013) but is likely to be enabled in 2014.

Constitution: It is recommended that the Steering Group develop a Constitution at the earliest opportunity to establish the ground rules for the workings of the Forum. These should be discussed, agreed and adopted by the Steering Group of the Reeks Forum. Sample documents such as a typical Constitution are available at <http://www.revenue.ie/en/business/charities.html>.

A sample Constitution for the Reeks Forum based on the Revenue model is presented in Appendix F. When a legal structure is formed, it will be necessary to put in place a Memorandum and Articles of Association, and a sample Memo & Articles are provided in Appendix F. A Memo & Articles set out who the 'electorate' is; the 'rules' governing voting rights of the electorate and how quorums etc may be established. The version included in Appendix F, which was kindly furnished by Wicklow Uplands Council³⁰, is an example of a workable set of agreed ground rules for operation. These can be modified for the Reeks Forum according to local needs and conditions in due course. Key practical elements are summarised below:

Wicklow Uplands Council: from Memorandum & Articles of Association (2010)

Panel Compositions

The number of members which the panels may nominate for appointment to the Board of Directors, and the maximum number permitted for approval by the general meeting shall be:

- (i) the Farming and Property Owning Panel – 7 members;
- (ii) the Economic and Tourism Panel – 3 members;
- (iii) the Community Panel – 4 members; and
- (v) the Recreational and Environmental Panel – 4 members.

Membership Categories

1. There shall be three categories of members of the Company, as follows:
 - Category 1: Individuals;
 - Category 2: Groups or societies – to include any established local groups or societies not affiliated to any national organisations, but having a title and established committee structure, whether or not such a group or society is incorporated;
 - Category 3: Organisations – to include any national organisation or any body having affiliations with a national organisation, whether or not such body or organisation is incorporated.

Membership Subscription

2. An annual membership subscription of the Company shall be charged to any member, and the rate of any such subscription shall be set from time to time at the annual general meeting (AGM) of the members of the Company. There may be different rates set for each of the categories or membership, or for any subdivisions thereof.
3. The rights and liabilities attaching to any member of the Company may be varied from time to time by a Special Resolution passed at a general meeting of the Company.

Voting Rights

At any general meeting a resolution put to the vote of the members of the Company shall be decided in accordance with the following rules:

- a) Each individual member shall be entitled to one vote;
- b) Each group or society member, or each organisation member, shall be entitled to a number of votes equivalent to its own valid and paid-up membership, but in any event the maximum number of votes of any group or society shall not exceed 20 votes.

³⁰ Thanks to Cara Doyle Heraty at WUC

Such rules can be devised, amended and updated from time to time to reflect the organisational evolution of the Reeks Mountain Forum.

7.4 Training & Capacity Building

A key element of the future sustainability of the Reeks Mountain Forum will be having a 'cadre' of highly trained operators who can assess, design, manage and commission works pertaining to erosion control of the paths network. International best practice would suggest that 'less is more' and that well trained teams can cost-effectively manage erosion and stem further damage through 'future-proofed' design, water management and specific measures for dealing with peat erosion.

Ireland and Tasmania possibly have the thickest development of upland peat in the world (Bob Aitken, past Project Manager, Scottish Mountain Footpaths Project, 2013³¹), which requires site specific measures.

Good practice has been developed over 20 years in the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales and Scottish Highlands in that regard, and such practices and expertise should be adopted in future management of the Reeks path network.

Eroded path on Bothar na Gige (the Zig Zags)



It would be possible to train up an expert corps of Reeks landowners, many of whom have excellent knowledge and 'good hands', as well as potentially support volunteers, to manage the path network under the guidance of the Reeks Mountain Forum, with Mountaineering Ireland 'Helping the Hills' and Mountain Meitheal expertise.

The landowners fully recognise the need for erosion control. With their involvement, it will be necessary to conduct an Audit of the Paths Network, to ascertain the extent of the problems, while prioritising key actions in a rolling maintenance programme. Such works could be partially funded through the revenues to be generated from carparking and/ or permitting of events, with co-funding from public partners.

Training can also be applied in the 'softer' side of recreational access to the Reeks, in generating networks of micro- and small-to-medium scaled enterprises in walker friendly accommodation, mountain guiding and niche activities in photography; wildlife and environment, geology, sustainable transport etc. Cross-marketing and visitor management will be key elements.

There is considerable scope for a corps of interested landowners to be trained in guiding, involving aspects of farming, folklore, cultural history and storytelling, linked to a farm visit/ 'tea and scones' authentic experience for visitors.

³¹ Speaking at 'Helping the Hills' Seminar 2013, Ashling Hotel Dublin.

Food and accommodation service providers could focus on a stronger brand of local food production³² and sustainable networks of rural operators, particularly in the western Reeks/ River Caragh catchment. A 'get to know your neighbour' in terms of cross-referrals would be a very valuable study visit for such operators to know what is available locally.

Developing a network of accredited operators to participate in the economic regeneration of the Reeks communities will be potentially one of the most significant outcomes of this initiative.

7.5 Resourcing

The MacGillycuddy Reeks MAP is a national pilot, and will be observed closely as a model to be rolled out in other upland areas across Ireland if successfully implemented. It will require sustained resourcing in its early days to ensure the initiative goes forward.

7.5.1 Time

The biggest commitment which will be required is time, which can best be accessed through the proposed 'MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Forum', using the 'Working Group' model to harness goodwill and make effective use of voluntary time inputs to specific project actions.

If the Interim Chairperson can be appointed rapidly, with Rural Recreation Officer support, then the Forum has an excellent chance of moving ahead according to schedule and without losing the current goodwill of landowners. Management of expectations will be critical, particularly to ensure that stakeholder expectations are not dashed.

7.5.2 Potential Partner Supports

Sources of operational funding to support the work of the Reeks Forum may include:

South Kerry Development Partnership has supported the project to date through the EU InterReg *Rural Alliances* Programme. SKDP has offered administrative (RRO) support, a key element for any fledgling organisation, subject to sourcing additional admin budget from DECLG to enable prioritisation of the MAP. Part time clerical support may be available to the Reeks Forum through the RSS or Tus programmes. Additionally, SKDP has offered their office meeting rooms at Library Place in Killorglin for convening of the forum. Project based financial supports can be considered for a number of actions of the suggested Action Plan, subject to availability of 50% co-funding from non-EU sources to match the *Rural Alliances* inputs (to year 2015, when the latter ends).

The **Department of Environment, Community & Local Government (Rural Recreation section)** has given significant support to the MAP to date:

- Shared contribution with other partners towards the study preparation.
- Funding of the RRO's Study Visit to Lake District and Yorkshire Dales under the 'Helping the Hills' initiative.
- Funding of the study visit by a group of landowners to the Wicklow Uplands.

DECLG continues to make a sizable contribution towards the existing workload of the RRO through service level agreements with SKDP, including the work on the MAP to date. It is likely that the RRO will continue to have a high level of commitment under the MAP, supported by DECLG. SKDP will require additional funding support from DECLG to maintain this level of commitment by the RRO to the MAP.

³² e.g. the current management team at the Glencar Hotel are introducing such principles of locally sourced ingredients in their menus, based on past experience of living and working in West Cork.

DECLG remains committed to supporting the MacGillycuddy Reeks MAP in its early stages and would consider some contribution to the administration costs required to support the Chairperson in Years 1-2. It would require committed co-funding from the other partners to enable this.

Fáilte Ireland has co-supported the Development Assessment work for the MAP to date. However, it cannot commit funding in the current period, but pending the outcome of an ongoing internal strategic review, project based co-supports may be forthcoming in 2014; however, the situation is uncertain right now. FI can provide advice as the project evolves.

7.5.3 Revenue Sources

A number of potential revenue sources were examined to generate operational expenditure in particular. At a conservative estimate, the MAP initiative could, with careful negotiation, generate an annual income stream of € 46,500 from relatively modest sources. This money could be used to leverage other co-funding mechanisms to achieve incremental 'wins' and tangible progress for all partners in the Forum.

Table 7.2 Potential Operational Revenue Streams

	Potential Operational Revenue Stream:	€
1	Parking Levy at Public Carparks (through toll barriers)	20,000
2	Commercial Permit: Environmental Levy for Commercial Guides	2,000
3	Charity & Challenge Event Management : capitation fee / per participant	10,000
4	'Sherpa Bus' : fixed point pick-up & package guide/ lunch/ maps	5,000
5	'Friends of the Reeks' Membership – corporate/ philanthropic/ walking clubs/ environmental NGOs/ family/ individual membership	5,000
6	Philanthropy/ Bequests – legacy/ wills/ philanthropic donations	2,000
7	Merchandise; branded quality Maps/ T-shirt / caps/ & Internet sales	2,500
		€46,500

These are discussed below.

Operational Revenues:

- 🚗 Carparking (€2 - €3 per car) can provide a sustainable revenue stream to support a range of project costs³³. KCC are in agreement that council carparks in designated mountain access areas may be used for this purpose³⁴. Cronins' Yard operates successfully on an

³³ Quantitative research, among Munster-based membership clubs of Mountaineering Ireland, indicates that 91% of respondents, representing c. 1000 members, are in favour of a nominal car park charge in MacGillycuddy Reeks as part of an integrated management plan (SLR survey Sept. 2013- see Appendix C).

³⁴ Based on conversation among KCC Executive staff and SLR, 6/9/13. Based on discussions with Tripwire (www.tripwire.ie) who supply Coillte's tolled barriers, for ticket-based entry and exit barriers, basic capital costs are €10-15,000 apiece, depending on final strengths and specifications. When installation, power supply and possibly solar solutions are considered, the installation cost is allowed at c. €25,000 each.

'honesty box' arrangement of €2/car. *Bonane Heritage Centre* near Kenmare operates a similar system to generate revenue for a community heritage facility.

- + Additional revenues may be raised through annual permitting of commercial operators: this would require to be tiered to reflect the size of operation/ likely numbers to be brought to the Reeks. It should be a modest figure (e.g. €100/ small operator per annum, rising to €400 max for a large scale operator).
- + Capitation fees may be levied on the increasing numbers of challenge and charity events at a rate of €2 per participant - this would be agreed in advance with the organisers and collected directly from the organisers post-event³⁵.

The above revenues should be ring-fenced for environmental works, to be commissioned through the Forum and carried out by fully trained landowners or local operatives, working to highest international standards in erosion control of pathways. This is critical for buy-in of those paying the levies, whereby tangible improvements in e.g. path erosion would ensure future engagement.

- + *Sustainable Transport*: schedule a chartered bus from morning fixed pick-up points in Killarney/ Killorglin/ Glenbeigh in summer months to designated Reesk Access points (such as Cronins, Lisliebane, Breanlea, Black Valley), with collection and drop off in the afternoon/ evening. This could work best with an existing transport operator, on a commission basis, and will require careful negotiation.
- + *Merchandising* of specialist outdoor gear, caps, T-shirts etc could generate a small revenue stream, both online and in shops;
- + *Friends of the Reeks* mechanisms can be established for voluntary donations (either physical or online), based on gold, silver, bronze and platinum levels of membership. Additional mechanisms such as bequests from 'Friends' may be sought, as well as tapping into international networks of fraternal funding for integrated recreational and environmental sustainability. Note that significant tax credits may accrue to donors to registered charities, based on guidelines issued by the Revenue Commissioners³⁶.

Capital Projects – potential Revenues:

- + Much of the resource requirements in the first two years will focus on environmental remedial works on the paths network. 50% of the funding to conduct an updated Audit of the Reeks Path Network can be provided by the SKDP Rural Alliances Programme³⁷. Matched funding will be required.
- + The significant works required to stabilise the highest priority zones: e.g. the Devils Ladder / ZigZags etc and severe erosion in areas of deep peat/ will require significant capital funding. It is likely that could be delivered by way of a definitive updated costing of phased works, supported by a number of co-funding agencies to deliver the improvements.
- + Kerry County Council, as the responsible local authority, may be able to support specific capital projects, based on resource availability and compliance with county planning policy objectives.
- + Note: it is impossible to determine in late 2013 the resources available through the LEADER/ RDP Programme in its next plan (2014-2020) as it is currently under

³⁵ Such a capitation approach is being successfully implemented in the Yorkshire Dales, England, as a form of environmental levy to manage the impacts of large events.

³⁶ [CHY3 - Scheme of Tax Relief for Donations of Money or Designated Securities to 'Eligible Charities' and other 'Approved Bodies' Under Section 848A Taxes Consolidation Act 1997](#) (November 2013) - this document applies to donations made on or after 1 January 2013.

³⁷ The balancing 50% must come from non-EU sources; all procurement > €5,000 must be tendered publicly.

development by the Government for submittal to EU early in 2014 for approval. Thus, eligible measures are unknown at this stage.

- ✚ Specific projects could attract 'crowdsourced' funding and / or voluntary donations through the '1% difference' campaign www.onepercentdifference.ie

Training/ Capacity Building

- ✚ The Rural Alliances programme could support 50% co-funding³⁸ of specialist training courses for participating landowners in path erosion and maintenance;
- ✚ Mountaineering Ireland and Mountain Meitheal could provide training in path erosion control, uplands recreational management and other related training, based on extensive experience and best international practice. Study visits to other areas to demonstrate best practice would be a critical element of this.
- ✚ SKDP through The Skillnet Programme could co-support capacity building projects for the Reeks Partnership, SMEs and targeted landowner training measures e.g. currently The Skillnet offers a 12-day *Mountain Guiding Course*. It provides subsidised training, up to 25% discount from open market rates of some training elements;
- ✚ NPWS (Killarney NP) has offered advisory inputs for visitor management and environmental management planning.
- ✚ *Cappanalea Outdoor Education Centre* offers an array of suitable courses in guiding/ environmental training programmes which can be accessed through the initiative and may be suited to some of the landowners in particular.
- ✚ *IT Tralee (Adventure Tourism)* could provide annual student research data through measuring e.g. visitor numbers/ requirements surveys in association with Forum;

Tourism Servicing Recreational Users

- ✚ The SKDP Rural Alliances Programme may provide 50% matched funding for upskilling/ Adding Value to service providers in the Reeks catchment;
- ✚ SME tourism development funding may be accessed through Fáilte Ireland, but as they are currently undergoing review, it is unclear what funding may be available until early 2014.

*Philanthropy*³⁹

- ✚ Philanthropic funding for capital projects may be sought at a later date. Hotel Europe (Liebherr family), as a major landowner on the Reeks, was approached for permissive access, and although not directly approached for philanthropic donations, the company has in the past funded the emplacement of safety bridges across the River Gaddagh in the Hags' Glen.
- ✚ Other sources of philanthropic funding may be established based on development of the shared vision and Integrated Management Plan for the Reeks communities. The SKDP Rural Alliances Programme could provide 50% co-funding of the Integrated Management Plan.

³⁸ The balancing 50% must come from non-EU sources; all procurement > €5,000 must be tendered publicly.

³⁹ See note above in Footnote 37 regarding tax relief for donors to registered Charities.

Table 7.3 MacGillycuddy Reeks Forum – Core Issues for Integrated Management Plan

Management Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish, based on best practice • Appoint strong Chairperson to lead Reeks Mountain Forum with Admin Support
Steering Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene Steering Group
Shared Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the Vision for the Forum
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree suitable Management systems & appropriate Governance structures
Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with landowners, community, commercial & relevant partner agencies • Agree priorities through suggested Strategic Action Plan • Participatory partnership model and vision agreed
Working Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will participate? • Focus the Working Groups: clear roles and responsibilities - who will do what, when, how?
Key Management Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Management Plan with clear responsibilities and timeframes/ resources
Resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engagement with partners in public/ private sectors ○ Engagement with KCC & statutory agencies
Landowners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship management with Reeks landowners
Access Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access agreements & Insurance indemnity for landowners
Inventory of Path Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory of path network/ current erosion conditions and prioritise areas for immediate/medium term redress
Skills Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Path skills: bespoke training for landowners in Path Erosion control and maintenance to best international standards
Environmental & Safety Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Management Plan for SAC • Safety management / mountain rescue alliance • Management of environmentally sensitive areas • Management of events • Parking/ servicing/ tolling • Signage for access points • Litter / Nuisance (e.g. dog control) management procedures
Realising Economic Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data gathering on Visitor numbers & requirements • Audit of existing enterprise assets – baseline data • Networking of local community & SMEs to deliver excellent supporting services • Bespoke training in recreational servicing (guiding/ walker friendly accommodation/ other)
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal & external communications plan • Web/ social media professional presence • Press/ e-zine newsletter
Monitoring & Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review group • Establish agreed process for review • Monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) • Physical results of path monitoring • SKDP / KCC / DCELG /FI roles

7.6 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The following KPIs are suggested (see Table 7.4), but can be modified by the Forum.

Performance Indicator	Measure	By When
Management KPIs		
Interim Chairperson appointed	1	End 2013
Reeks Forum established, with functioning Working Groups		Q1 – Q2 /2014
Integrated Management Plan & Conservation Plan for SAC in place	1	Q1/2015
Visitor Management Plan in place and activated for visitors accessing Reeks		2016
Path Audit Complete	1	Q1/2015
Measurable control of Path Erosion	Rolling plan	2018
Landowner/ Volunteer corps in place	Rolling programme	
Monitoring & Evaluation in place	annual	2015- onwards
Revenue Measures		
No. of cars tolled at public car parks	90 parking places ⁴⁰	2014
No. of permits issued to commercial guides	20	2015
Secured funding & co-funding in place (increase non-public by Y5)	Ongoing	2014-2018
Training/ Education/ Research		
No of Training events completed in path erosion & management	2/ annum	2015 - 2018
No of local Landowners trained in path management/ guiding	10-15	Start 2014 – rolling programme
Secure Agri-environmental scheme	1 integrated	2015
Improved biodiversity-linked environmental performance for HNV farming	ongoing	2015 baseline
Landowner/ Volunteer training in place	20 / annum	2015-2016
Research/ Segmented profiles of users: age/ nationality/ needs/ etc	Annual	2014-2018
Enterprise		
No of SME training events completed	1-2 per annum	2014-2018
Walking-Guide-Food-Transport packages established	5 products	Mid-2015
No. of new micro-/ SME business related to recreation in the Reeks	5-10	2016-2018
Communications		
Web-page/ twitter/ facebook etc established	Links Fáilte Ireland/ Go Kerry!	2014
No. of Website hits/ Facebook likes	1000 /month	End 2014
Updated walking maps produced/ digitally available	2500 per annum ⁴¹	Q4/2014
Reeks Apps available	Walks/ culture	Q2/2015

Table 7.4 Key Performance Indicators

⁴⁰ Based conservatively on 25 car spaces at Breanlea; 65 at Lisleibane public car parks.

⁴¹ Google Analytics and www.statcounter.com indicate that a modest website can typically expect 200-400 web hits per month; an iconic locality such as the MacGillycuddy Reeks can expect to at least equal that number of hits.

8.0 SUGGESTED STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

There are decisive key actions to be taken, particularly in organisational matters, agreement and ongoing management of permissive recreational access, environmental management and recreational services to meet the defined objectives.

8.1 Strategic Action Plan

The suggested Strategic Action Plan is presented overleaf as a 'road map' for action, categorised in 'short, medium and longer term' actions, to be achieved over a period of approximately 5 years.

See Table 8.1 below.

8.2 Estimated Budget

The estimated operating costs are almost €50,000 per annum, excluding the cost of RRO time, for specific measures and actions. It is anticipated that many of the 'soft' research and training elements can be co-funded/ part-funded through the public partners.

It is conservatively anticipated, based on Table 7.2 above, that revenues of €46,500 can be raised on an annual basis, rising with appropriate and pro-active management, although this will rely largely on assured implementation.

Capital expenditure requirements, primarily targeted at path erosion control measures and materials, are anticipated at €1,127,000, but with a major element of that targeted at the Devil's Ladder repairs (€750,000, based on an estimate by Elfyn Jones British Mountaineering Council on behalf of Mountaineering Ireland – *the figure may be reduced with prudent engineering*). Also provision is made for carpark tolling gates and possible upgrades to sanitary facilities. Considerable effort will need to be made by the Forum Steering Group to secure this funding from public and private sources.

See Table 8.2 below.

8.3 Schedule for Implementation

The Action Plan is designed as a 5-Year action programme, but by its nature the Mountain Access Project will run on indefinitely into the subsequent years.

Significant budgets will be required in the medium to longer term to address the critical path erosion and path migration issues on the Reeks – this will require rolling management plans and prioritisation of actions, as in the way such erosion is managed in e.g. the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales in England.

In the case of the Reeks this maintenance function could be filled by a highly trained corps of landowners, based on specific agreed works to the highest standards of path control and maintenance. Volunteer programmes could assist very substantively in labour intensive elements of such maintenance programmes under the direction of highly trained erosion control managers.

A proposed schedule for implementation is presented in Table 8.3 below.

Partnership is core to delivery, with all public partners working in unison with landowners, recreational users, community and enterprise under the 'banner' of the Reeks Mountain Forum.

Table 8.1 Suggested Strategic Action Plan and Indicative Estimates/ Costings

Action (A)	Priority No. (P)	Timeframe	Delivery	Indic Cost €	CAPEX €	Resources Available
'QUICK WIN' ACTIONS						
A1. Establish MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Forum	P1					
A1.1 Appoint voluntary Interim Chairperson immediately to provide leadership and professional guidance to the MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Forum – experienced person, with requisite skills and experience to lead the Partnership Operational support for Chairperson/ Forum Secure Admin / Clerical support for Forum/ Chairperson activities		Immediate	Mountain Access Project Steering Group	Time		RRO RSS/ Tus
A1.2 Establish Steering Group of MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Forum – invite willing partners to participate in Forum, including Landowner reps, SKDP, DCELG-RRS; Failte Ireland; Kerry CoCo, NPWS ; recreation MI, community, enterprise reps Consider <i>Advisory Panel</i> from recreation, DAFM/ environment/ socio/ academics etc.		Immediate	Facilitator RRO	Time	Do.	
A1.3 Convene meeting of core Landowners and all other Landowners in Reeks Mountain Access area to ensure permissive access is fully delivered and understood in the context of the evolving vision and partnership process –		Q4/2013	RRO/ SLR	Time		
A1.4 Convene the first plenary (facilitated) of Reeks Mountain Forum Agree a shared vision & review suggested Strategic Action Plan Agree priority actions from suggested Strategic Action Plan Agree Working Groups to deliver e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Management & Operations ✚ Resourcing & Finance ✚ Physical Projects & Path Maintenance ✚ Landowner Access & Agri-Schemes ✚ Recreational Users & Volunteers Management ✚ Education, Research & Training 		Q1/ 2014 Q1/2014 Q2/2014 Q2/2014	SKDP/ RRO Chairperson & Forum	Time (SLR to assist)		
Convene second plenary meeting in 2014	Q2/2014	Chair/ RRO	Time			

Action (A)	Priority No. (P)	Timeframe	Delivery	Indic Cost €	CAPEX €	Resources Available
A2. Commence Visitor Data Research & Tolling	P2					
A2.1 Emplace Data Counters at 3 principal northern access routes (<i>note: counter malfunctions through summer 2013</i>)		Q4/2013 – Q1/2014	RRO with DECLG	Time	1,200	
A2.2 Install toll/ barrier system at Lisleibane & Breanlea carparks <i>Will allow calculation of visitors accessing & revenue generating</i>		Y1	KCC Forum WG	Time	50,000	(KCC?)
A3 Landowner Specific Initiatives (<i>NB. Critical to devise specialist landowner measures to support permissive access inputs</i>)	P3		Forum WG			
A3.1. Formalise Access & Insurance arrangements with participating Landowners Under auspices of DECLG and the national MAP proposals Continue management of Landowner relationships		Q3/2014	DECLG/ SKDP RRO	Time		National Indemnity Scheme?
A3.2 Open discussions with Dept Agriculture for dedicated uplands agri-environmental scheme (<i>as per Wicklow/ Burren</i>) <i>Meet Ministers Coveney/ Deenihan/ Hogan to promote concept;</i> Meet other TDs to support concept of dedicated sustainable farm measures for Reeks Uplands under RDP; lobby MEPS		Immediate	RRO Chairman/ Forum WG/ Landowners/ IFA SKDP /RSS DAFM DECLG	Time		
SHORT TERM ACTIONS						
A4 Clarify Funding Resources Available Reeks Forum to allocate resources to seeking funds, building partnerships & strategic alliances Establish 'Friends of the Reeks'/ philanthropic fund for 'Special Projects'/ Bequests Explore partnerships within EU rural sub-regions (build on success of Rural Alliance/ Programme based in South Kerry) > make submissions	P4	Years 1-5 Ongoing activity	Chairperson Forum WG SKDP DECLG KCC / FI	Time		
			SKDP		Time	
A5 Develop an Integrated Management Plan (IMP)*, with short, medium & long term targets, with costed deliverables	P5					
A5.1 Submit objectives of Reeks MAP to revised CDP (2015-2020)		Immediate	SKDP/ KCC		<i>completed</i>	
A5.2 Develop IMP with NPWS, KCC Planning/ Environment to ensure policy, environmental and planning considerations are in line with core objectives and zonal designations. <i>*The IMP should provide a detailed framework for all subsequent actions, supporting the vision of integrated</i>		Y1	Forum WG with KCC Planning/ NPWS/ SKDP/ external expertise		20,000	

Action (A)	Priority No. (P)	Timeframe	Delivery	Indic Cost €	CAPEX €	Resources Available
<i>environmental, social and economic sustainability</i> A5.3 Conduct Conservation Management Plan for Reeks SAC			NPWS. Forum WG			
A6 Inventory & Mapping of Path Network A6.1 Conduct full Inventory / Mapping of the Reeks Path Network to establish current status, erosion, migration, water management etc to a standardised system of measurement based on best practice	A6	2014-15	Experts with Landowners Mountaineering Ireland/ Mountain Meitheal	15,000		
Establish a prioritised rolling management plan over years 1-5 and commission works for defined elements in Inventory based on best practice		2015-18				100,000
A6.2 Devise suitable scale walking/ recreational maps of the Reeks , showing designated access points, carparking and associated services such as accommodation, food, bike hire etc Develop e-maps, apps downloads for hiking/ climbing/ orienteering		Q2/2014	Forum WG MI Clubs (?)	15,000 <i>mapping/ printing/ e-maps/ apps</i>		
MEDIUM TERM ACTION		2015-16				
A7. Upskilling of Service Providers/ Enterprise/ Community	P7					
A7.1 Training for landowners in Guiding / Environmental & Cultural heritage of the Reek		Q1/2015	SKDP / Skillnet	10,000		50%
A7.2 Upskilling to Add Value to Service Providers (SPs)* Mentoring sessions for 6 providers in Reeks catchment Comprehensive audit of 6 x SP: what's good/ not Enhanced product/service for recreational clients/ groups		2015-16	Cappanalea SKDP/ Failte Ireland	20,000		50% gratis <i>*Link to SME enhancement measures</i>
A7.3 Work with local communities to enhance their recreational assets in complement with the Reeks - develop integrated / complementary measures in local area planning for recreation e.g. linking cycle trails/ sustainable transport options/ emplace safe bike lockups at principal access points to Reeks		2015-16	Communities SKDP/ KCC Planning	20,000		
A7.4 Establish a corps of trained Landowner Guides and Volunteers Recruit corps of volunteers Accredited training in mountain skills / environment/ safety/ customer service/ practical maintenance/ promo		2015	Mountaineering Ireland/ Mountain Rescue/ Coillte/ NPWS	25,000		
A7.5 Train 10 local guides in group leadership & local knowledge for <i>low level Reeks Walks</i> : non-elite walkers/ active retired/ schools in 'soft skills'/ communication/ safety issues		2016	SKDP/ Skillnet / Cappanalea MI Clubs	15,000		

Action (A)	Priority No. (P)	Timeframe	Delivery	Indic Cost €	CAPEX €	Resources Available
MEDIUM TO LONGER TERM MANAGEMENT ISSUES						
A8 Physical Management of Key Access Paths	P8			10,000		
A8.1 Assess the safety requirements of the Devil's Ladder, the ZigZags, Brother O'Shea's Gully etc – prioritise costed remedial actions over 2 - 5, year rolling management plan		2015	Landowners/ MI/ external expertise			
Screen/ Appropriate Assessment of works under SAC		2016	KCC Forum WG Partners	2,000		
Implement remedial actions subject to permissions		2017-18			750,000	
A8.2 Assess the potential for <i>Principal Access Route*</i> through the Hag's Glen to Carrauntoohil to contain tourist recreational pressure on a highly managed route		2015	Forum WG Mountaineering Ireland	Time		
Enact path control / migration measures as required, to best practice <i>**i.e. Contain environmental pressure to single managed trail, as per recent developments on Croagh Patrick/ Snowdonia/ Nevis</i>		2016-17	KCC/ Failte Ireland DECLG		50,000	
A8.3 Assess the recreational pressures on eastern Reeks: Strickeen/ Purple/ Tomies Mountains <i>access routes in Gap of Dunloe / Black Valley.</i> Devise management plans for 'day trippers'	2015	Forum WG/ NPWS/ Failte Ireland/ Private			15,000	
A9. Visitor Management Planning & Servicing						
A9.1 Establish baseline data of visitor numbers, visitor experience to develop <i>Visitor Management Plans</i>	P9	Start ASAP	DECLG/ RRO Students			
Survey recreational users at access/ egress		Q2/2015	TraleeIT/ UL/ UCC	2000/ Time		
A9.2 Work with Failte Ireland & Killarney Chamber to establish management requirements pertaining to needs of Adventure visitors		Q1/2015	Forum WG Fáilte Irl/ NPWS MI/ landowners	Time		
A9.3 Assess requirements for servicing of Carparks at Lisleibane/ Breanlea (water/ sanitary facilities)/ planning / screening AA etc		2016	KCC/ Forum WG	Time		150,000
A9.4 Programme of Study Visits to 'best-in-class' examples		Y 2, 3	SKDP		10,000	
Develop collegiality/ collaborate with other Mountain Upland areas – consider visits to UK/ Scotland best practice in upland path management						

Action (A)	Priority No. (P)	Timeframe	Delivery	Indic Cost €	CAPEX €	Resources Available
A10 Establish a long term environmental research project – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Conduct <i>environmental audit of the habitats</i> and floral/ faunal assemblages of the Reeks ✚ Develop sensitivity maps of key habitats ✚ Devise appropriate management plans for specific zones and prioritise for access/ non-access in terms of sensitivity 	P10	2016-18	Landowners with eco- consultant/ students Tralee IT/ LIT/ UCC	50,000 (10,000 pa/ 5 years)		
A11. Communications (2014-2018)		P11				
A11.1 Host Conference for Uplands Partnership Network* Invite national & international guest speakers in uplands management and partnership models/ with field trip to Reeks <i>* Irish Uplands Forum plan to host a networking for all Irish upland partnerships event in Spring 2014 in Wicklow</i>		Q4/2014	Forum WG / SKDP Rural Alliance Programme/ KCC	10000		
A11.2 Link to international Adventure Travel World Summit 2014 , in Killarney		Q1-2/ 2014	Fáilte Ireland			
A11.3 Build capacity in Communications Develop <i>website & social media products</i> Appoint webmaster Link to Go Kerry! / Kerry Tourism/ Fáilte Ireland Piggyback on other initiatives: Wild Atlantic Way/ Killarney Adventure Travel Summit		2014-15	Forum WG Fáilte Ireland, SKDP with CEB/ KETB Tralee IT	3000		
A11.4. Promote recreational Maps & e-Products Promote maps, apps downloads for hiking/ climbing/ orienteering Website – YouTube clips etc		Y2-5 ongoing	Forum WG Failte Ireland RRO	10,000		
A11.5 Develop <i>online Events calendar</i> for challenge/ charity event planning		Immediate	Forum WG IT Volunteers	Time		

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE REQUIREMENTS		
5 YEAR PERIOD 2014-2018		
Operating Expenditure OPEX (5yrs)		237,000*
Capital Expenditure OPEX (5yrs)		1,127,000**
TOTAL REQUISITE BUDGET (OPEX & CAPEX)		1,364,000
Estimated Operating Expenditure OPEX (per annum)		47,400
Estimated Operational Revenue per annum (see Table 7.2) p.a.		46,500***

Table 8.2 Estimated 5-Year Budget linked to Strategic Action Plan

Notes:

* These figures are indicative costings only

** These are indicative costings based on best estimates and will likely be refined as tendering process is rolled out for capital works.

***The estimated operational revenue per annum will be dependent on how soon some of the potential revenue generating sources, as identified in Section 7.5.3 above, can be put in place. These may take time to implement and will not all be in place in Year 1.

9.0 COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING

9.1 Background & Context:

The sustainability of the *MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Forum* is a primary aim from the outset. Effective communications is key to making this happen. Consistent, smart, often piggybacking and mostly self-managed *communications* will greatly smooth the pathway to successfully delivery of the agreed work programme.

Immediately for the Forum in early 2014, '*communications*' should be principally thought of as the *language and tools* used to link and build up local community / landowner / partner support and awareness.

Connecting and selling to the recreational visitor is a secondary objective. In other words the Forum need to communicate effectively firstly among themselves before they can *sell* the Reeks with confidence to the outside world.

Specifically by *communications* in the context of this study, we mean the employment of public relations & information, traditional marketing, e-marketing, social media and general selling tools and techniques in an *integrated*, planned and monitored manner to help deliver on the aims and objectives of the Forum.

The Wild Reeks

The marketing & communications role in recreational and activity tourism is changing fast. Traditional methods are being seriously questioned, such as print and conventional advertising on a cost benefit basis. Old skills and inherited knowledge need to be updated. Modern developments in everyday affordable palm / smartphone technology and their universal adoption by the majority of people across all accessible markets, socioeconomic classes and generations are certainly a 'plus' when devising a simple communications plan from scratch for 'a *new entrant*' like the Forum.

However there are major obstacles and limitations to be overcome especially if the Forum is mostly self-managing the plan. There is a distinct "*MacGillycuddy Reeks*" brand, albeit lacking an 'owner' with capacity to manage it. There is no incremental plan to nurture or sustain the Reeks in the public consciousness as Ireland's iconic mountain destination... effective brand building should be seen as a 'long game' which begins with a number of considered small steps, outlined below which are intended to be built upon. This will not work properly without *joined up thinking* by all the relevant agents around the Forum table. Challenges and opportunities include:

- ✚ The lack of any centralised, consistent and properly stored digital information on existing stakeholders / partners and existing and potential users (i.e. an inclusive **contacts database** which is up to date and proactively managed). This is a key priority for the Forum from day one. Much data can be imported from partners such as FI, KCC and SKDP.
- ✚ Likely to be a lack of priority for communications planning plus capacity & skills building within the Forum **to consistently deliver** on a multi-faceted and importantly time consuming communications plan. The Forum members may be stretched in terms of demands on individual time, in such a case communications may be a casualty.
- ✚ In the **absence of market ready product** (accommodation, food, services, transport, entertainment packaged up with activities), external communications are compromised and heavy expenditure is absolutely questionable ... *you can't sell what you don't have*. Therefore, public relations are central to the Forum's actions at the beginning rather than

conventional marketing. If the Forum has not got these skills then it either needs to upskill people within the Group or co-opt new member(s) who do? Perhaps this is the *investment in kind* partners such as FI can contribute?

- ✚ There is an absence of consistent & tailored **research data** (either primary or secondary) which could give the Forum genuine recreational user feedback, industry trends, identify models of best international practice enabling benchmarks being adopted. This in turn will aid activities such as package design, cooperative education bundling / festivals and events delivery with the likes of the Killarney National Park from an adventure tourism perspective. Good data collection and analysis will inform key decisions the Forum and its partners will need to take on future communications expenditure.
- ✚ There is a need for more structured **joint marketing** and **cross selling** between activity providers, accommodation operators and other tourism providers from an adventure perspective.... improved relationships will need to be built.
- ✚ The Reeks can be showcased in the *Adventure Travel World Summit* (Oct 6-9th 2014).



Adventure Travel Trade Association chooses Killarney in Ireland for its World Summit in 2014. Minister Leo Varadkar with surfer and President of ATTA, Sept. 2013⁴²

- ✚ In order to create a solid foundation to inform decision making it would be wise for the appropriate Working Group to simply audit existing communications material relating to the Reeks e.g. publications, maps, packages using the Reeks, community festivals and events related to the catchment area, direct web sites, public partner Reeks references / profiles all from a recreational / tourism / agriculture / educational / environmental & conservation / enterprise and culture & heritage perspectives. This task could be delivered in association with the likes of Go Kerry or the Tourism and Hospitality Department, IT Tralee or through SKDP's association with UL as part of the current EU funded Rural Alliance initiative.

However to help the Forum refine a modest and focused communications plan that delivers quantifiable results in the short to medium term we need to examine:-

- ✚ the likely 'tools' that can be mobilised by a *landowner and community focused recreational destination-building partnership with no operational or joint working history behind it* and with importantly modest agency financial support in the current economic climate.
- ✚ the best options for how to manage communications support in kind

⁴² <http://www.failteireland.ie/Utility/Media-Centre/Adventure-Travel-Trade-Association-chooses-Ireland.aspx>

- ✚ what targets / key performance indicators is it sensible to identify in this sphere?
- ✚ The communications plan should link to and be modified according to the final agreed Strategic Action Plan of the Forum.

9.2 Outline Communications Plan

The likely communications 'tools' needed (in the context of this studies scope) embrace a number of familiar and possibly new media. All actions are certainly within the capacity of the Forum and its partners to deliver. 'Ownership' of this work will require dedicated resources of one or two dedicated individuals working within the context of an IT-savvy Working Group. A sample menu and suggested guidelines are presented in Table 9.1 overleaf.

9.3 Conclusions

In conclusion, an *attractive and logical* communications strategy will require a simple plan, adequately resourced, being delivered by dedicated resources and people. From the outset a dedicated Working Group should be allocated to address all these issues and be tasked with delivering an action specific Communications Strategy linked to the agreed actions of the overall Strategic Action Plan.

Table 9.1 Suggested Communications Plan / Menu

Category	Audience	Objectives / Indicative Tasks
<p>1. Management & Forum Networking Tools e.g. email, SMS, and create a Facebook page</p>	<p>All <i>internal</i> partners who make up the Reeks Forum 'family' plus select external partners</p>	<p>1.1 Question all partners at the first meeting as to what media they would prefer to receive information through e.g SMS may work for notice of meetings while Agenda & Minutes may be emailed. Be ready to change things to see what works best for the objective is the effective & transparent delivery of the roll out of actions.</p> <p>1.2 Keep overhead costs to a minimum and execution simple and effectively.</p> <p>1.3 One person should be nominated to take responsibility (e.g. possibly a skilled IT worker under the Tús programme, or a community volunteer with requisite skills).</p>
<p>2. Website Possible domain names available: www.kerryreeks.ie / www.kerryreeks.com</p>	<p>Should be for <i>both</i> internal and external audiences with the latter PR focused on 'responsible access'. This will be the primary platform used to deliver the overall strategy into the medium / long term. Start modest and build.</p> <p>By aggressively having linkages to other sister sites around the world the Forum will rapidly build awareness of its activities, experience rapid page view increases and move up the Google / search engine rankings.</p>	<p>2.1 Design the site so it can easily be enhanced & self managed with room to grow organically over time. Use an innovative web designer in Kerry. Initial design should reflect the need to consistently grow the roll-out of the brand, graphic style and content over coming years. One person with the necessary skills, time and enthusiasm should have 'ownership' of the site supported by the Reeks Mountain Forum. In time there should be an overall web strategy with targets which should be reported back to the Forum on a regular basis.</p> <p>2.2 Create and manage an 'image bank' covering all aspects of the Reeks from historical imagery to high octane activity. Could a local camera club help? Possibly run an on-line competition promoted through all the camera clubs in Ireland for images under different categories of 'Life in the Reeks'. Possibly have this as an exhibition in the Killarney Library during the Adventure Travel World Summit in October, 2014.</p> <p>2.3 Review the 'history' of similar mountain sites regionally and thematically identified in the case reviews. What are the 'best practice' sites in Ireland and importantly overseas?</p>

Category	Audience	Objectives / Indicative Tasks
<p>3. Public Relations</p> <p>Reeks Mountain Forum</p> <p><i>".. the best ink is free ink .."</i></p>	<p>Broad and varied including the landowners and their families, local community via local press, parish notices, Post Office Notice Boards and local radio; key decision makers / agencies via letter / email tailored press releases; special interest groups e.g walking clubs via group email / ezines; specialist & recreational & educational tour operators and travel media via a series of themed Press Releases and importantly personal contact of Forum members with the general public. Finally through all these initiatives the potential customers will be informed and engaged.</p> <p>Ensure all copy written is of the highest possible standard. Are there recent communications / journalism graduates within the community who can help? Have any established journalists got holiday homes in the Reeks catchment? Could FI offer in kind support?</p>	<p>3.1 Set targets as to who, when and with what you focus on key groups as there is only so much a voluntary Forum can do?</p> <p>3.2 Keep the 'messages' consistent.</p> <p>3.3 Build up a 'relationship' with people who respond positively to your message.</p> <p>3.4 The <i>Reeks Mountain Forum</i> appears to have many friends and contacts in the national / international and specialist recreational media. These relationships need to be cultivated and relationships developed.</p> <p>3.5 The <i>Reeks Mountain Forum</i> is a good news story in a sea of bad news ... always capitalise on this while ensure you have the evidence to back-up and support your assertions.</p> <p>3.6 Ensure the Forum keeps a good press file (cuttings, pictures, on-line media coverage references) - don't assume someone else is doing it.</p> <p>3.7 Nominate the Forum's spokesperson for all relevant media interviews / comment. It may be the Chair but possibly not? Ensure they are suitably briefed prior to interview.</p> <p>3.8 Have ready made up Media Packs for visiting journalists or requests for information.</p> <p>3.9 Consider facilitating an attractive and innovative Reeks Site Visit(s) for the visiting world media / specialist tour operators coming to the Summit next October. Help FI deliver this <i>once in a generation</i> PR opportunity ... don't be passive give FI solutions. This is well within the capacity of the Forum to achieve ... experience and capacity will be enhanced and relationships cemented.</p>

Category	Audience	Objectives / Indicative Tasks
<p>4. Conventional Advertising</p>	<p>General awareness raising, brand building and marketing are all further up stream.</p> <p>Could be targeted like a Google Ad-words campaign.</p> <p>May be 'local' through the local media or 'global' through an advert in Tourism Ireland magazine or piggybacking a new set of packages for the 2014 Summit thus consistently high quality copy/graphic is essential.</p>	<p>4.1 Value for money.</p> <p>4.2 Consistent message.</p> <p>4.3 Focus on media outlets that work ... therefore evaluation of results is critical to inform decision making.</p> <p>4.4. Advertising requires creation of a compelling message and supporting visuals, appropriate media placement, fulfilling post advertisement enquiries, and measuring effectiveness. Consumers are so barraged with messages from the media that a <i>Reeks destination message</i> registers only if you repeat it and thus more ongoing expenditure. When do you start and when would it then end? Consequently it this is likely a medium to longer term strategy when product has been fully developed and more resources available. <i>Don't rule it out but not in current budget planning.</i></p>

Category	Audience	Objectives / Indicative Tasks
<p>5. Social Networking</p> <p>Note: Recognised as the most <i>cost effective marketing tool</i> today with the American Association of Online Marketing (2007 statistics) stating that for every \$1 spent there was a probable RoI of over \$46+</p>	<p>Likely social sites are Facebook, Twitter, My Space (over 55yrs), You Tube (video) and Flickr (picture gallery). Also ensure that the 'research community' is serviced well through Wikipedia when they seek information on the site.</p> <p>To secure fans / followers requires knowledge and time or else the results will disappoint. Well managed site will drive traffic and build up a relationship with a large community of loyal repeat friends /customers. It is cost effective and instant communications. From this virtual community, the Forum can seek voluntary helpers for events, sell material to and through them and fundraise.</p> <p>The Reeks offering is ready made for a suite of good quality themed 5min You Tube videos. Examine delivering these with Tralee IT or similar such educational partner. Ensure the 'brand' is being reinforced.</p>	<p>5.1 Firstly set your objectives clearly (e.g. grow followers by 20% per month, deliver 25% more enquiries per year, images uploaded, inputs recorded); Know your customer online for example if Facebook is your 'catch all' then perhaps there is some current confusion that needs ironing out about who / what the Reeks are e.g is it a national park?Perhaps some modest Facebook advertising could help in the initial months;</p> <p>5.2 Know how to talk and what to talk about ... this will likely be a learning experience for the person tasked with doing it but they need to know how to deal with negative comment and to listen not just talk; the page needs to be so much more than just a lazy events listing notice board. Finally because this is such a fluid medium the Forum should always be looking at gathering information on how effective or otherwise your efforts have been (including the amount of time you have put into up-keeping each social media account). Know what you are doing as this is a medium of communication not to be taken for granted.</p> <p>5.3 Are there a couple of members of the 'Reeks family' that would be willing to write a regular blog on topics such as conservation and farming, recreational adventure on the Reeks, starting a micro business in the Reeks, or related topics?</p> <p>5.4 Both SKDP and Fáilte Ireland can offer valuable insights and supports from their own experiences in this space.</p>

Category	Audience	Objectives / Indicative Tasks
6. Print	<p>Some key pieces of print will eventually be required like a simple generic destination brochure (<i>downloadable as pdf</i>),</p> <p>Ongoing <i>Reeks News Flyer</i>, and critically maps with interpretation and information for self guiding walks; separate activity / educational sheets (also downloadable) tailored for key educational markets such as Transition Year students.</p>	<p>6.1 Examine making as much print as possible self financing through advertising (keep ratio below 60% copy / 40% advertising).</p> <p>6.2 Always have a distribution plan for all printed material.</p> <p>6.3 Be consistent in employing the brand across all activity ... there should be a final editorial procedure / sign off to ensure this occurs.</p> <p>6.4 Finally in the age of greater environmental awareness we should always ask the question ... is there another less impactful medium we could employ to give us the same results?</p>

10.0 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The MacGillycuddy Reeks are an exceptional resource from an environmental, cultural and recreational perspective. The following summary conclusions and recommendations may be made.

10.1 Conclusions

The MacGillycuddy Reeks is one of Ireland's leading outdoor recreational destinations. The lands are 100% privately owned, which is unusual in the context of other uplands areas reviewed. Unlike many British and European countries, Ireland does not have a dedicated network of publically owned upland paths, and all recreational access to the uplands in Ireland, except in publicly owned lands such as national parks and forests, is dependent on permissive access and goodwill of private landowners. Various schemes have been attempted in lowland (<300m) farms to support landowners for such permissive access, such as the Walks Scheme (now closed) to maintain certain approved trails such as The Kerry Way, which tracks across private lands in the southern foothills of the MacGillycuddy Reeks.

The key lessons from the Development Assessment are as follows, which have been harnessed in developing the proposed model.

The proposal in this report for a participative **MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Forum**, based on a shared vision among landowners, community, recreational users, enterprise and the public partners, will provide for a long term socio-economic framework for the sustainable development of the catchment, centred on the environmental conservation of the Reeks Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) and protection of the core asset.

An **Integrated Management Plan**, with a linked **Conservation Management Plan**, will be required to provide the framework for all actions.

It is proposed that a **representative partnership**, comprising panels of elected stakeholders sourced from a range of stakeholders (landowner/ public/ private/ community/ recreational), will work to an agreed Strategic Action Plan to achieve measurable targets. A small Steering Group is proposed, supported by representative and flexible Working Groups. The members must focus on organisational vs. sectoral interests, to ensure the success of the overall initiative. Good leadership will be key to achieving this.

A **shared vision** and core principles must be established at the start, to provide a sound basis from which the proposed Forum can grow. It is in all stakeholders' interests to foster this vision and use it to resolve matters arising. Landowners must be at the core of decision making; thus the Forum will need an excellent and ongoing landowner engagement and relationship management process. It will be necessary to bring all issues and problems to the Forum table to find resolutions in a spirit of constructive debate.

The suggested **5 year Strategic Action Plan** proposes defined and measurable targets, linked to broader conservation principles and sustainable land management. As well as immediate land issues, the focus should be on broader rural development and enterprise opportunities for the benefit of all communities residing in the shadow of the Reeks. The agreed strategic plan should link to clear national targets and directives, which will help to guide local decision making.

It is suggested to keep the overall work programme simple at the start to allow the group to evolve and to set targets that it is comfortable with. Many 'wise heads' who were involved in establishing previous upland partnerships advised to be 'realistic', and to prove the Forum's ability to deliver before thinking about expansion.

In legal terms, it is suggested to move progressively from an unincorporated **voluntary management group** to registered **charitable status**; this will allow the Forum to grow at a realistic pace and to then move ahead as early wins are 'won' and confidence and momentum are built.

Core funding supports will be required from a mix of public sources at the outset through DECLG, SKDP, Kerry County Council and Fáilte Ireland in a spirit of co-financing partnership. All reviewed models of mountain partnerships retained sustained public support throughout their histories. Supports from other sources for project specific purposes such as the Heritage Council or Lottery funds may also be sought, as well as philanthropic donations - without adequate human and financial resources it will be difficult to 'make it happen'. A range of revenue raising measures are proposed in this report including establishment of 'Friends of the Reeks', modest car tolling, capitation levies for major challenge/ charity events; annual permitting of commercial guides; and a range of merchandising measures.

The review of other models for upland management makes it clear that the proposed **Forum can be an agent of enormous positive change** in reversing socio-economic decline by using the natural assets of the Reeks to stimulate sustainable economic activity, both for landowners and other micro- to small enterprises. A new system of compensation for recreational access to the uplands, such as payments for path maintenance; tailored training schemes in farm-related recreational tourism and/or dedicated agri-environmental schemes must be investigated to guarantee sustained permissive access to the MacGillycuddy Reeks uplands into the future.

There must be a clear and central focus on maintaining the core asset, the mountains, to the **highest environmental standards**. Any proposed works must be assessed in relation to the Integrated Management and Conservation Plans respectively, and screening for appropriate assessment may be required. Linked to this will be engagement of the landowners and harnessing of fully trained Landowner and Volunteer corps to help deliver the strategic targets.

Path maintenance and erosion control measures will be needed to stabilise many of the highly eroded paths; this can be carried out by a cadre of highly trained landowners, meeting best practice in peat and scree management. The conservation of the uplands is requisite and while the Forum will aim to encourage recreational tourism, it must be managed, and in particular, high impact events will require to be managed by the Forum. Such management measures may include pre-booking and levying of a capitation fee on each participant to manage environmental impacts and resource the maintenance works.

The Macgillycuddy Reeks are one of the great iconic outdoor destinations in these islands. The Forum should work to create and deliver an **integrated outdoor recreational experience** to the highest standards. It is currently unclear how many recreational users are accessing the Reeks on an annual basis ; the figure of 25,000 cited in the terms of reference for this study are likely to be a major underestimate. It is requisite that ongoing data gathering (via gate counters) and systematic analysis of visitor information is undertaken, so that future planning may adequately provide for visitor numbers. This could be achieved with assistance from Tralee IT adventure tourism student research.

A well honed communications plan is proposed for adoption by the Reeks Mountain Forum, to ensure that clear and positive internal and external communications are adopted from the outset.

10.2 Recommendations

It is strongly recommended that the proposed pilot **MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Project** be activated as soon as possible, based on the results of this study and on the suggested Strategic Action Plan.

The 'early' wins' in the suggested Strategic Plan should commence in late 2013 by appointment of an Interim Chairperson. The full Forum should be convened in early 2014. A full Chair can be appointed after c. 9-12 months by the functioning Reeks Mountain Forum and Working Groups.

It is recommended that the process be as representative and participative as possible, allowing the organisation to evolve organically, while within the overall framework of an Integrated Management Plan and Conservation Plan for the Reeks.

It is recommended that requisite resources be committed by the public partners, where feasible, to ensure that the pilot Mountain Assess Project is delivered in a timely fashion. This model, if successful, could be rolled out to similar upland areas in Ireland to provide long term assured provision for recreational access while allowing landowners to actively participate in decisions pertaining to their lands.

The landowners of the MacGillycuddy Reeks have engaged actively in the consultative process and are to be congratulated and thanked for their positive commitment and constructive suggestions throughout. It is recommended that landowners expectations are met and not 'dashed to the ground' after their exceptional engagement with the MacGillycuddy Reeks' pilot Mountain Access Project.

10.3 Acknowledgements

The consultants, Deirdre Lewis and Alan Hill of SLR Consulting, would like to thank the many landowners of the MacGillycuddy Reeks who gave so freely of their time throughout the extended consultation process during the Summer 2013.

The landowners involved in the Mountain Access Project are to be congratulated for their participative approach and resolve to find long term solutions to sustainable management of the MacGillycuddy Reeks.

We would also like to thank the members of the Steering Group for their exceptional advice, energy and commitment to the Mountain Access Project, including:

- ✚ Noel Spillane of South Kerry Development Partnership
- ✚ Patricia Deane, Rural Recreation Officer, South Kerry Development Partnership
- ✚ Des Moore and Michael McHale of the Rural Recreation Section of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
- ✚ Declan Murphy, Fáilte Ireland Southwest

Appendix A

Comhairle na Tuaithe

Background Document to the Mountain Access Scheme

Scope of Reeks Mountain Access Development Assessment

Background

Difficulties in a number of areas regarding access to private lands, including the uplands, for recreational purposes led to the establishment of Comhairle na Tuaithe (the Countryside Council), to address matters relating to countryside recreation.

Comhairle Na Tuaithe was established in February 2004. It has a primary focus on the following priority areas;

- access to the countryside,
- developing a countryside code and
- developing a countryside recreation strategy.

It comprises representatives of the farming organisations, recreational users of the countryside and state bodies with an interest in the countryside. Subsequently, the National Countryside Recreation Strategy was published in 2006 and “Leave No Trace” has been adopted as the prevailing code for recreational users of the countryside. “Leave No Trace” is a fundamental component of the recreation strategy.

Access to the countryside which had proven to be an on-going issue for private landowners, state landholders, recreational users and tourists alike has been progressed through the efforts of Comhairle na Tuaithe and the introduction of the Walks Scheme in 2008. Access to the countryside is based on a permissive access regime, whereby private landowners must consent to a trail development or to access by recreational users otherwise proposed developments or access agreements cannot progress. However it must be noted that much access continues with the goodwill and tolerance of landowners, but without any agreement.

Comhairle and the Department have developed a pilot Mountain Access Project, currently being piloted on Binn Shléibhe (also known as Mount Gable) in Co. Galway and Carrauntoohil in Co. Kerry, to be subsequently rolled out nationally.

Process

To formally agree recreational access with landowners on a mountain/mountain range or in selected uplands area. Subsequently to provide, mapping of designated access points, an indemnity to landowners against specified claims, adequate parking and related facilities and any additional infrastructure required to support the specified recreational activities. The purpose of the Mountain Access Scheme is to;

- to facilitate recreational access to the uplands in a way that minimises inconvenience for landowners and local residents;
- provide recreational access (according to best practice) to upland and mountain areas in a manner that protects and enhances the natural environment, local habitats and ecosystems;
- support rural development and enhancement of community, tourism and related facilities;
- develop the economic potential of local assets for the benefit of landowners, local communities and other stakeholders;

- leverage the available funding resources both public and private, including through user charges or licensing/donations/philanthropy, commercial sponsorship and levies or contributions from commercial operators and beneficiaries;
- ensure that use of the area and the associated facilities and services can be marketed and promoted, with clarity and confidence.

The Mountain Access Scheme is distinct from the existing Walks Scheme and is not generally intended to lead to development of marked walking trails or exchequer funded payments to landowners. However, where appropriate and in certain limited circumstances, such developments are not precluded. The scheme should not generally involve the development or marking of trails on a mountain, other than where trail repair or construction is required to avoid environmental damage, or where there is a pre-existing trail. Recreational users are expected to and will be advised to be appropriately skilled and equipped when accessing upland areas. They will be so advised in relevant media when seeking information on mountain access areas.

MacGillycuddy's Reeks Mountain Access Pilot Scheme

Two pilot mountain access schemes were agreed by Comhairle na Tuaithe in 2009. These were Binn Shléibhe (Mount Gable).in Connemara and Carrauntoohil. A pilot scheme is being progressed at Mount Gable. On examination of the proposed Carrantuohill pilot mountain access scheme, it became evident that because of the extensive nature of hill walking in the area and the numerous potential access routes, that a more expansive and holistic approach was required. In that regard, it is proposed the pilot scheme should now incorporate the complete MacGillycuddy's Reeks which are Ireland's highest mountains. The proposed area occupies about 100 square km. and stretches from the picturesque Gap of Dunloe in the east to Glencar in the west. The area is estimated to attract over 25,000 walkers annually. The majority of the land in the MacGillycuddy Reeks area is either privately owned by individuals or held in commonages. Coillte also have some parcels of forestry in the area.

Environment and Ecology

Upland landscapes have considerable cultural value and possess a long legacy of human settlement. In earlier times many of these areas were extensively farmed and were also exploited for their mineral wealth and woodland resources. This has created a rich legacy of monuments such as hilltop cairns, ancient field systems, hut sites and enclosures as well as particular types of vernacular architecture. The preservation of archaeological upland complexes has generally been due to extensive traditional farming practices and the continued survival of such practices is essential for the preservation and visibility of much upland archaeology.

Farming in Ireland's uplands is principally responsible for the rich biodiversity to be found in the hills and incorporates a large proportion of Ireland's High Nature Value (HNV) farmland. It needs to be supported and encouraged in the context of the proposed mountain access project, which should complement existing farming practices. Where possible, activities that facilitate the development of additional and complementary on-farm enterprise should be supported. One potential example might be accommodation provision (B&B, Farmhouse holidays, Bunkhouse Barns). Diversification into other non-agricultural activities including the development of niche tourism and educational services such as arts and crafts, speciality food provision, open farms, eco tours, guiding etc. should also be supported.

In a wider context, there is a need for a holistic and area-based approach to support upland areas, with a clearer integration of policies across government departments, agencies, authorities and interest groups. Policy measures, legislation and local supports should be focused on maintaining communities, supporting upland farming practices and conserving upland landscapes and the associated local communities.

Designated areas constitute virtually the entire area of the proposed Reeks Mountain Access area. The principal designations appear to be Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protections Areas (SPAs). Recent economic growth in Ireland and in some instances the growth of outdoor recreation has placed significant strains on our environment. As increasing numbers of people seek the beauty and freedom of outdoor recreation, our collective mark on the environment and its natural processes, increases. Litter, water pollution, disturbance to vegetation, wildlife, livestock and other people are all indicators of the need to develop a national ethic that protects both natural and cultural heritage. Techniques designed to minimise the social and environmental impacts to these areas are incorporated into Leave No Trace, an outdoor ethics education programme.

The MacGillycuddy Reeks are undoubtedly a high quality natural resource, both extensive and diverse in nature. The extensiveness and diversity of the resource base lends itself to the provision of opportunities for a wide range of countryside recreation activities for both the local population and for an increasing number of tourists. As pressure on our landscapes from recreational use continues to increase, it is necessary that a national system is put in place which will ensure that visitors to the Irish countryside, whether locals or tourists, visit with care. To address this, the Leave No Trace message should be promoted locally. The development of the Reeks Mountain Access Scheme should seek to build on the existing potential of its unique natural resources, while protecting them for future generations.

Potential Management Structure

Given the potential size of the proposed pilot scheme in County Kerry it is envisaged that a formal management structure may need to be put in place. It is anticipated that any successful management model will need to be structured on a partnership approach with landowner and community involvement and engagement central to the process. Such partnership should include inter alia central and local government agencies including, DECLG, South Kerry Development Partnership, Kerry Co. Co. NPWS, Fáilte Ireland, Irish Uplands Forum, landowners and environmental, community, recreation and business interests to provide for the integrated management of the area and its subsequent development.

Next Steps

It is proposed to engage consultants/specialists in the area of recreation management, to advise and report on the most appropriate management structure (and/or support facilities and services) necessary to ensure the long term viability of the project. Such advice shall also include;

- identification of stakeholders to be represented on the proposed management structure;
- an assessment of the funding necessary to support such management structure in the short, medium and long term;
- recommendations for priority actions to be undertaken by the management structure on establishment, including strategic objectives;
- proposals for consideration regarding the leveraging of available funding resources both public and private, including grants, user charges, licensing, philanthropy, commercial sponsorship and levies or contributions from commercial operators and beneficiaries;

- proposals to ensure local landowner benefits arising from increased access and commercial development;
- proposed indicators of success for the management structure, including key performance indicators;
- recommendations for similar or alternative management structures for the further roll out of the Mountain Access Scheme.

It is not intended that any recommendations be overly prescriptive and they may suggest a management model that moves incrementally from a voluntary organisation to a more structured model based on a limited company, trust or registered charity model.

In addition, the report should suggest and identify some additional aspects for the management committee to address such as;

- identify a range of additional, appropriate recreation activities that may be developed or encouraged within the Reeks Mountain Access area. Such activities should take account of the specific nature of the various environmental designations such as SACs, SPAs and NHAs etc. that exist in the area and its proximity to Killarney National Park, including the concept of sustainable development and erosion management,
- suggest initial local engagement and community consultation strategies to identify areas of cooperation and mutual interest with a primary focus of job creation and local enterprise development (current landowners to be a primary consideration)
- indicate if any additional items, proposals, themes or actions not requested in this specification that might require to be addressed subsequently.

Note

Regarding potential management structures the following may represent structures or operational models worthy of consideration; Irish Uplands Forum, Wicklow Uplands Council, Dublin Mountain Partnership, Burrenbeo, the Mourne Heritage Trust, the Nevis Partnership and the Cairngorm National Park Authority.

Appendix B

Strategic Plans

A Short Review of Relevant Plans

The Common Agricultural Policy & Rural Development - post 2013

The overall aim of both the Common Agricultural Policy (2007-13) and the associated Rural Development Programme which are now concluding, was to improve the quality of life in rural areas while encouraging agriculture, forestry and diversification of rural economic activity, including conservation of our culture and heritage.

The Common Agricultural Programme (CAP) 2014-2020 is currently in preparation following extensive EU-wide consultations. "*The CAP towards 2020*" outlines options for its future roll-out to ensure a more effective policy for competitive and sustainable agriculture and vibrant rural areas. In June 2013 a political agreement on the reform of the CAP was reached between the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council.

In 2005, a decision was taken that a single legal framework for financing CAP spending would operate. The CAP's budget is spent in three different ways under two 'Pillars':

Pillar 1: Agriculture & Markets (financed by European Agricultural Guarantee Fund)

4. *Income support for farmers in complying with sustainable agricultural practices:* farmers receive direct payments, provided they comply with strict standards relating to food safety, environmental protection and animal welfare. These payments account for 70% of the CAP budget. Under the June 2013 reform, 30% of direct payments will be linked to European farmers' compliance with sustainable agricultural practices which are beneficial to soil quality, biodiversity and the environment generally, such as crop diversification, the maintenance of permanent grassland or the preservation of ecological areas on farms.
5. *Market-support measures:* these come into effect e.g. when adverse weather conditions destabilise markets. Such payments account for < 10% of the CAP budget.

Pillar 2: Rural Development (financed by European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development)

6. *Rural development measures:* these are intended to help farmers modernise their farms and become more competitive, while protecting the environment, contributing to the diversification of farming and non-farming activities and the vitality of rural communities. These payments are part-financed by the member countries, generally extend over a number of years, and account for some 20% of the CAP's budget.

These two pillars are closely interrelated and must be managed coherently e.g. direct payments provide farmers with a steady income while rewarding them for providing environmental benefits which are in the public interest. Likewise, rural development measures make it easier to modernise farms while encouraging diversification of activities in rural areas.

Direct payments, with a yearly budget of around €40 billion, are payments granted directly to farmers under certain support schemes such as Single Payment Schemes (SPS), Single Area Payment Schemes (SAPS) and other targeted schemes. Direct payments ensure a safety net for farmers in the form of a basic income support, decoupled from production, stabilising their incomes which are subject to market volatility. Direct payments also contribute to providing public goods and 'eco-services' delivered through sustainable farming.

In order to face challenges such as climate change, bio-energy, better water management etc. in the framework of the rural development policy, it was decided during a 'health check' of the CAP to transfer money from Pillar 1 to the rural development envelope, the so-called 'progressive modulation', from 2010 onwards.

Agriculture and the Environment:

Integrating environmental concerns into the CAP aims to avert the risks of environmental degradation and enhancing the sustainability of agro-ecosystems. Agricultural land management

has been positive in developing the rich variety of landscapes and habitats, woodlands, wetlands, and extensive tracts of an open and upland countryside. It is recognised that the ecological integrity and the scenic value of landscapes make rural areas attractive as places to work, live, and recreate.

The links between the natural environment and farming practices are complex. Many valuable habitats in Europe are maintained by extensive farming, but inappropriate intensive agricultural practices and land use can also have an adverse impact on natural resources, including pollution of soil, water and air, fragmentation of habitats and loss of wildlife.

The CAP ensures that its rules are compatible with environmental requirements, to promote the development of agricultural practices preserving the environment and safeguarding the countryside. Farmers are encouraged to continue playing a positive role in the maintenance of the countryside and the environment.

This is achieved by targeting aid at rural development measures to promote environmentally sustainable farming practices, like agri-environment schemes (such as REPS or the subsequent Agri-Environment Options Scheme, AEOS); and by enhancing compliance with environmental laws by sanctioning the non-respect for these laws by farmers through a reduction in support payments from the CAP.

Under previous **Rural Development Programmes**, the Irish Government decided that the measures would be delivered using RDP/ LEADER methodology, centred on the wider rural community such as off-farm diversification, support for business creation, encouragement of tourism activities, basic services for rural populations, village renewal and development, training and the conservation and upgrading of rural heritage. In South Kerry, this has been administered to date by South Kerry Development Partnership.

The ongoing integration of the two pillars of the EU CAP programme (agriculture and rural development, respectively) may have positive implications for the land management of the MacGillycuddy Reeks uplands areas.

Under the **Agri-Environment Options Scheme and Natura 2000 (AEOS 3)** regulations, there were strict guidelines for the management of upland blanket bogs, heaths and grasslands, including those held under commonage, whether Natura (SAC/ SPA) designated or not. Each farmer must develop a Sustainable Management Plan, prepared by an agri-expert, to include a Commonage Framework Plan where relevant. The latter included measures to preserve grasslands, protect natural vegetation and habitats, and guidelines for stocking rates (ewe equivalent per hectare) for undamaged blanket bog, wet heath, dry heath and grasslands, respectively. Protection of watercourses and natural habitats is a priority: spraying, burning and use of pesticides is strictly prohibited in such environments, with some derogation for control of noxious weeds or invasive species.

The *CAP Outcome Details* (October 2013) summary document was recently published by the Dept. Agriculture, Food & Marine (DAFM). There is significant emphasis under the new CAP placed on agri-environmental schemes, with reference to Areas of Natural Constraints (ANC) which include mountainous areas and delimited areas of important ecosystems⁴³. Ireland's discretionary funds for such measures are estimated at €60 million. Single Farm Payments from 2015 can be adjusted to include additional payments for participating farmers in approved ANC agri-environmental schemes; however, these are voluntary measures for Member States and Ireland's detailed voluntary payment schemes have yet to be presented.

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<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/farmingschemesandpayments/commonagriculturalpolicy/cap/captowards2020/CAPOutcomeDetailsOctober2013.pdf>

The total Rural Development Programme (RDP/ Pillar 2) allocation to rural funding in Ireland is dependent on national co-financing. As the expected EU contribution will be 53%, to be matched by 47% national financing, the expected total allocation to the RDP will be in the region of €4.133 billion over the seven years of the CAP. The final figure will be dependent on available matched funding.

The new rules for Pillar 2 of the CAP provide a more flexible approach than at present, as measures will no longer be classified at EU level into "axes" with associated minimum spending requirements per axis. Instead it will be up to Member States to decide which measures they use (and how) in order to achieve targets set against six broad "priorities", one of which includes "*Restoring, preserving & enhancing ecosystems*". Member States will have to spend at least 30% of their rural development funding from the EU budget on agri-environment/ agri-climate programmes, forest-related measures, organic farming, NATURA 2000 areas and ANCs (thus with significant competition for the funds from different sectors).

Examples of proposed funding programmes under the *Agri-Environment - Climate Payments* measure (according to IFA reflections on the new CAP⁴⁴) include: "Joint contracts, link to adequate training/information, greater flexibility when extending initial contracts – payments given only where activities go beyond greening requirements". The IFA document also notes that "*Higher payments can be made when groups of farmers come together in an agri-environment plan.*" It also noted "*anticipated higher payments for mountain areas (and farmland above 62° N), aid amounts can be up to 450 €/ha (increased from 250 €/ha)*".

The latest EU CAP measures, the details of which are yet to be finalised in Ireland, may be directly relevant to enhancing group landowner participation in the Mountain Access Scheme under consideration in the MacGillycuddy Reeks.

National Development Plan (2007 – 2013)

The National Development Plan (NDP) 2007 – 2013 was launched in January 2007 and was entitled "*Transforming Ireland – A Better Quality of Life for All*" which pledged to spend €184bn on a variety of projects in the period 2007 – 2013. The National Development Plan set out a road map clearly marking out the landmark challenges which face Ireland such as:

- Removing the remaining infrastructural bottlenecks that can strain the economic development and inhibit balanced regional development and environmental sustainability;
- Redistributing the product of wealth to foster inclusive society.

The NDP 2007-2013 prioritises spending across a number of key areas including Economic Infrastructure, Enterprise Science and Innovation, Human Capital, Social Infrastructure and Social Inclusion. These investment priorities are influenced by strategic policy goals in the following areas:

- ✚ Regional Development;
- ✚ Rural Economy;
- ✚ All-Island Co-operation;
- ✚ Environmental Sustainability; and
- ✚ Social Inclusion.

Of particular relevance are a number of proposed complementary initiatives to the NDP:

⁴⁴ IFA Analysis July 2013/ MFF CAP BUDGET 2014-2020 - see www.ifa.ie

- ✚ Infrastructure for recreation
- ✚ Social inclusion through increased access to recreational amenities;
- ✚ Health/ Quality of Life; and
- ✚ Innovation & Heritage Regeneration

National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) for Ireland was designed as a twenty year planning framework designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic and physical development and population growth between regions. The NSS was officially discontinued by Government in 2013, but its principles still inform policy, with a focus on:

- ✚ A better quality of life for people;
- ✚ A strong competitive economic position; and
- ✚ An environment of the highest quality.

The NSS identified nine, strategically located, medium sized *hubs* including Tralee / Killarney. It says of *Killarney is a nationally strategic tourism centre with important retailing and employment functions and is also on the national road and rail networks. Through integrated and co-ordinated development, these strengths can be combined, resulting in enhanced critical mass and enhanced potential for development in a regional and local sense which can energise the wider County Kerry area.*"

This latter point is relevant to the Mountain Access Scheme ... bringing visitors in via the hub and distributing to rural areas through attractive recreational offerings.

Criteria for Development of Loop Walks and Coastal Paths

Fáilte Ireland 2006

In line with the Irish Sports Council's suggested standardised approach to Trail development and management, Fáilte Ireland developed guidelines to guide the appropriate development of Looped Walks and Coastal Walks. The purpose of the scheme was to ensure high quality and consistency in the Irish walking product.

The demand for looped walks is increasing especially from the occasional walker, whether Irish or from abroad. Fáilte Ireland took the decision to promote a series of Looped walks in Ireland and to that end the guidelines offer a mechanism whereby these walks can be comparable in relation to length, walking duration, map guide, off road, assured access, offering a memorable experience, risk assessed to avoid severe walking challenges and with a clear plan for maintenance and marketing. The coastal walk guide offers guidance on similar issues.

Economic Value of Trails and Forest Recreation in Ireland – *Irish Sports Council and Coillte 2005*

In 2005 the Irish Sports Council in conjunction with Coillte commissioned research into the socio-economic benefits of trail and forest recreation in Ireland

The research concluded that:

- Direct spend by Irish trail users was estimated to be €307million each year;
- Direct economic impact of forest users by Irish residents was estimated to be €268million annually
- Non-market value of trails (uncollected revenue) was valued at €95million per year

Heritage Council of Ireland Strategic Plan 2012-2016

The Heritage Council — championing active citizenship, creative communities and meaningful public participation — plays a unique role as the advocate of best practice and quality in the conservation and presentation of the heritage, and of knowledge-based decision-making in all component parts of a recreational strategy. The Strategic Plan has outlined 16 key objectives and actions related to supporting employment, educational resource, heritage-based tourism and broad recreation. The strategy emphasises the need for heritage to contribute to social and economic development which can be illustrated by recent Fáilte Ireland figures (2010) confirming that cultural tourism is increasing, with three million cultural tourists spending nearly €1.7 billion in 2010. This is an area which South Kerry can embrace, by refining existing product or creating new offerings.

The principles of the Mountain Access Scheme support the Heritage Council's Strategic Planning framework, as it seeks to promote and enhance distinctiveness and character, with a particular emphasis on cultural and natural heritage of the Reeks. This strategy aims to support a vibrant economic, social and cultural life for all inhabitants, while building our understanding of our own heritage in an Irish and European context through the medium of recreation and leisure.

Survey of Lifestyle, Attitudes and Nutrition SLAN (2007)

SLAN 2007 resulted from interviews with 10,364 respondents and incorporates a sub-study on body size with 967 younger adults (18-44yrs) and a detailed physical examination with 1207 adults (45 and over).

Some of the significant findings relevant to this strategy are:

- One in ten of the respondents (11%) reported a long term illness, health problem or disability that limited their daily activity;
- Long term illness was more common among respondents in lower social class groups;
- The most chronic illness in the past year was back pain, with 16% reporting this;
- 6% of respondents reported major depression, while another 3% had generalised anxiety disorder;
- In general men, younger people and those in higher social class groups reported lower levels of mental health problems;
- A total of 46% of respondents were considered as physically inactive – being physically active is defined as taking part in exercise or sport 2-3 times per week for 20 or more minutes at a time or engaging in activities such as walking, cycling or dancing 4-5 times a week accumulating to 30 minutes per day
- In relation to those who were considered inactive, the main reason for their level of inactivity was given as 'lack of time – 41%'; other reasons cited were ill-health 18%, lack of interest 14% and interested but unwilling to commit the time 14%.
- More than one third of respondents (36%) reported themselves as being overweight and 14% reported being obese – a total of 1 in every two people having weight issues.
- In relation to high blood pressure about 6 in every 10 respondents had high blood pressure. Of these 57% were not on medication for controlling their blood pressure. Of those on medication 70% were not maintaining their blood pressure levels below 140/90mmHg (normal)
- 80% of respondents who were tested for cholesterol showed a 'high' reading (≥ 5.0 mmol/L). Almost two thirds of these were not on cholesterol lowering medication. A third of all those on cholesterol controlling medication were not managing to keep it below the upper limit of normal.

Appendix C

Results of Survey of Recreational Users

*(conducted in September 2013 among clubs/ trainers & commercial guides /
membership of Mountaineering Ireland)*

MacGillycuddy Reeks Recreational Users Survey – September 2013

Survey Findings

1 Introduction & Background

This *User Survey* represents probably the most extensive independent research into the reaction of frequent walking / recreational users to the Kerry Reeks. It is part of the development assessment of a Mountain Access Scheme for the MacGillycuddy Reeks based on permissive access of the landowners being conducted by SLR Consulting for SKDP, DECLG and Fáilte Ireland. The findings are intended to inform key recommendations.

2 Methodology

This online *User Survey* emerged from a formal consultative Workshop in Killarney with Mountaineering Ireland affiliated clubs, trainers and commercial guides on September 09, 2013. In total were over 100 individuals / businesses and clubs were invited to participate principally from the great Munster region. They were given three weeks to respond to a simple one page / seven question survey. There were 12 completed replies (12% approx return, considered positive for an online survey) of which there were two commercial operators, one public outdoor education operators with the remainder being hillwalking / mountaineering clubs. Each club formally took the survey to their management committees therefore it is safe to assume that between them the participating clubs survey represent is in excess of one thousand (1,000) frequent recreational users of the Reeks.

The questions were formulated to be clear and unambiguous covering four main areas, namely

- Profile
- frequency of use,
- reaction to 'offering', and
- sustainability of the Reeks into the future.

By its design this survey provides baseline data thus into the future we will be able to evaluate progress and performance by employing a similar process.

The information supplied is considered private and confidential and no contributor is named in the following analysis.

- ✚ 83% of recreational respondents visit the Reeks more than 3 times a year, demonstrating a significant pattern of repeat visits to the Reeks annually. It did not specify if these are the same users visiting multiple times or different sets of (club) visitors, but it is likely a mixture of both.
- ✚ 50% would typically visit with groups of less than 10 people, while 42.5% visit with groups of more than 15 people, and 8.5% with groups of more than 25 people. Both private operators and clubs favour smaller groups on the Reeks which likely relates to a mixture of environmental concerns; safety issues, walkers experience, and the likely usage of private cars to get there. It would appear that with less than 10% of users being in parties of 25 or more, it is probable that the *challenge/ fundraising events* constitute the bulk of larger groups. Consequently it should be possible to reach practical agreement with these large group organisers to manage these numbers more sustainably.
- ✚ Almost 82% rated the Reeks 'experience' as excellent to very good, a highly favourable rating, despite concerns about the environment, litter, parking, increased numbers on the hills etc.
- ✚ 91% of recreational users are in favour of a small parking charge (€2-5/ day), which from a financial sustainability perspective is encouraging. There is almost unanimous acceptance of a realistic car parking charge with revenue going back to develop and conserve the Reeks in a transparent manner. Implicit in this agreement is an expectation of a safe parking zone at a trail head, possibly with additional services to be added at a later date.
- ✚ Finally from a user / walker perspective there now appears an acceptance that within reason the user is prepared to pay minor charges in relation to access to the uplands with the context of a partnership management plan. This is in keeping with best practice in the UK and elsewhere It may be useful to trial a pilot initiative at the two public carparks (Lisleibane and Breanlea), subject to permissions.

- ✚ 91% of users consider that those who commercially gain from the Reeks have an obligation to formally contribute to their sustainability. The one objection was from a commercial operator, but yet who was 'open' to a sensible system that worked for all parties.
- ✚ 75% would be in favour of developing and maintaining one primary *tourist trail* or *route* for general access to Carrauntoohil e.g. via Hag's Glen/ Devil's Ladder. There is clearly significant support for a cooperative strategic approach to managing the Reeks into the future. The one negative approached the question from a 'purist' perspective that the mountain uplands were wilderness and should be left untouched by committees.

Q1. How many time a year does your club formally organise a walk to the Reeks? More than 3 a year; 1 or more a year or; Less frequently.

Frequency of Use:

Frequency	Reply	% of total
More than 3 a year	10 out of 12	83.00%
1 or more a year	1 out of 12	8.50%
Less frequently	1 out of 12	8.50%

Q1. Comment:

This figure demonstrated a significant pattern of repeat visits to the Reeks throughout the year by clubs / operators. It does not however tell us if these are the same users visiting multiple times or different sets of visitors. Commonsense would suggest it is a mixture of both in relation to the clubs in particular.

Further research would be useful to identify issues such as time of year; duration of visit; variance of route; experience and composition of walking parties; leadership of party; advance planning and servicing requirements.

Finally the high usage pattern of clubs located in the Munster region is encouraging in relation to being able to quickly / effectively communicate with a significant cohort of recreational users.

Q2. What would be the average size of your group to the Reeks?

25 or more; 15 or more; Less than 10

Party Size

Party Size	Reply	%
25 or more	1 out of 12	8.50%
15 or more	5 out of 12	42.50%
Less than 10	6 out of 12	50.00%

Q2. Comment:

2. This data suggests that both the private operators and the clubs favour smaller more manageable groups on the mountains. This preference likely relates to a mixture of safety, walkers available time and experience and the likely usage of private cars.
3. It would appear from this feedback that with less than 10% of walkers being in parties of 25 or more, it is probable that only the *fundraising operations* constitute the bulk of organised walkers of volume. Consequently it should be possible to speak to and reach practical agreement with these large group organisers.

Q3. How satisfied are you as a Club with the current Reeks' walking experience? (5= Excellent; 1= Poor)

User Satisfaction with the Reeks

Satisfaction Score	Reply (*11 out of 12 replied to this question)	%
Excellent = 5	5 out of 11	45.40%
4	4 out of 11	36.30%
3	2 out of 11	18.10%
2	0	0
Poor = 1	0	0

Comment

- These are encouraging figures with over 8 out of 10 'frequent users' giving the Reeks a very good or excellent score. Given the frequently expressed concern for environmental damage, access issues, non-experienced walker safety and the boom in charity-run events, this feedback exceeds expectations.
- Further research would be recommended examining reaction to key sub questions such as path erosion, environmental management, littering, car parking, visitor services and walker information.

Q4. As a Club are you in favour of a nominal car park charge (e.g. € 2 - €5 /car) to help sustain the Reeks recreational, social and environmental integrity?

(‘Yes’ / ‘No’)

Parking Charge

Options	Reply (11 out of 12 replied)	%
'Yes' to Parking Charge	10	91.00%
'No' to Parking Charge	1	9.00%

Q4. Comment

- From a financial sustainability perspective these are encouraging figures. There is virtual unanimous acceptance of a realistic car parking charge with revenue going back to develop and conserve the Reeks in a transparent manner.
- Implicit in the suggested 2e - 5e charge would be a safe parking zone at a trail head with in theory value added visitor service being further developed over time.
- Finally from a user / walker perspective there now appears an acceptance that within reason the user pays for access to the uplands with the context of a partnership management plan. This is in keeping with best practice in the UK and elsewhere with a pilot initiative being an obvious next move.

Q5. As a club are you in favour of a *permitting or licensing system* for large organised sponsorship/ challenge events and commercial activity on the Reeks? ('Yes' / 'No')

Commercial Permitting

Options	Reply (11 out of 12 replied)	%
'Yes' to Permitting	10	91.00%
'No' to Permitting	1	9.00%

Comment

- A clear endorsement of the concept of those who commercially gain from the Reeks have an obligation to formally contribute to their sustainability.
- The one objection was from a commercial operator however this objection was 'open' to a sensible system that worked for all parties.
- Further research needs to be conducted with the professional event management companies who are the principle organisers of charity events in the Reeks. Much can be learned from examining in detail models of best practice elsewhere that are transferable.

Q6. As a Club would you be in favour of developing and maintaining one primary *tourist trail* or *route* for general access to Carrauntoohil e.g. via Hag's Glen/ Devil's Ladder? ('Yes' / 'No')

A Tourist Route?

Options	Reply	%
'Yes' to Primary Tourist Route	9	75.00%
'No' to Primary Tourist Route	3	25.00%

Q6. Comment

4. A clear cut confirmation by 3 out of 4 respondents that they would favour one dedicated 'tourist' route to Carrauntoohil. This can largely be explained by underlining concerns for the safety of non-experienced independent walking visitors to the Reeks. This is especially true of families.
5. There may be recognition that remedial work and possibly light touch waymarking are implicit in this approach.

Q7. As a club would you be favour of a new *partnership approach* to managing and sustaining the Reeks to address environmental and recreational pressures? ('Yes' / 'No')

Partnership Management Approach

Options	Reply	%
'Yes' to Partnership	11	91.00%
'No' to Partnership	1	9.00%

Q7. Comment

- There is clearly significant support for a cooperative strategic approach to managing the Reeks into the future.
- The one negative approached the question from a 'purist' perspective that the mountain uplands were wilderness and should be left untouched by committees.

4. Comments or Suggestions

- I am a commercial provider and one thing I would like, if a payment system develops, an access key to two of the gates (Hag's Glen and Hydro Track) so if we need to evacuate a minor injury, etc, we can do so easily with one of our jeeps.
- Dedicated Tourist Route - better ask Mountain Rescue views?
- As a training officer and guide I feel that if you charge all commercial activity this would be unfair to guides. There are some large operators on the Reeks who have guides working for them charging €75.00 per head and they make a considerable amount of money. Then there are many guides like myself who are qualified mountain leaders who only guide a couple of times a year for friends/ tourists and sometimes only charge for expenses or €50.00 per group.
- I feel that if you charge all guides the same amount for an annual permit then those who are earning considerably less will be unable to afford to purchase these permits and it will prevent a large majority of us from being able to afford to guide in the future and the area will only be guided by the larger operators so you would only have 2 /3 large operators working in this area who will dominate that area and possibly push prices higher.
- May I suggest that if you were to ask all large organized charity groups to gain a permit prior to walking that if a large amount of rubbish (like the one left up there recently) is found, then the organizers should be charged for this.
- Any intervention in the Reeks will create an artificial experience thus taking away from the wilderness and rugged aspect of the mountains. If climbers/walkers can't handle the rough nature of the climbing then perhaps they should try a less arduous mountain.
- The main problem with access is the fact that professional guides are earning a living using other person's lands.
- Permitting or Licensing - fully depends on compliance from both the operators side and the continued access by landowners?

Appendix D

Burren Farming For Conservation Summary Statistics

The Burren Farming for Conservation Programme

Briefing Document (May 2013)

The Burren Farming for Conservation Programme (BFCP) is a pioneering - and award winning - agri-environment programme designed to conserve and support the communities, environment and heritage of the Burren. It is based on the findings of the BurrenLIFE Project (2005-2010) and is jointly funded by the Dept. of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (of the Dept. of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG)).

It is managed by a dedicated project team based in the Old Schoolhouse in Carron, Co. Clare.

Summary statistics (2010-12):

Participants:	159 (selected on a competitive basis from over 350 initial applicants),
Area:	c.14,654 ha of prime European (Annex 1) habitat.
Budget:	Funded through Pillar 1 of CAP (Article 68 funding of up to €1m p.a.) €2.85m allocated by DAFM directly to farmers 2010-2012 Average allocation per farmer 2012: €7,530 or c. €82/ha Additional co-financing by farmers estimated at c. €22.5/ha (€840k)
Timeframe:	2010 to 2013 inclusive (4 years)
Outputs:	Measurable improvements in habitat condition on participating farms 152ha of invasive scrub removed, including 65km of paths (€858k) 55,258m of stone wall repaired (€212k), 445 gates installed (€72k) 293 water troughs, 60 tanks, 26 pumps etc installed (€151k) 146 feed troughs and 83 feed bins purchased (€28k) 28,500m of limestone track installed/upgraded (€86k)
Feedback:	BurrenLIFE – EU Best of the Best LIFE Nature Projects Award 2010 Over 90% approval from participating farmers (Dec. 2011) Best Practice" award at the Atlantic Biogeographic Seminar, December 2012
Innovations:	Unique 'output-based' payment system for habitat management. High degree of farmer input, flexibility and discretion. Simplicity: 1-sheet farm plan, updated annually, minimal paperwork. Value for money: payment for measurable outputs, farmer co-funds.

Broader Potential: Huge demand within Burren (relevant to c.7-800 farmers)

Flagship Project for NPWS, DAFM and within EU.
Generating interest from farmers in Kerry, Connemara, Wicklow, Arans etc
Ideal model for 'High Nature Value' (HNV) farmland in Ireland.

Objectives: Full Burren roll-out under new RDP: 30,000ha; 650 farmers and an estimated cost of €4-5m p.a.

BFCP: Tailor-made farming solutions rooted in the best interest of the land and it's people.

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Appendix E


Review of National & International Partnership Models for Uplands/ Recreational Management


MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES / UPLAND MODELS

Uplands Model	Ownership/ Management	Key Elements	Resourcing/ Finance/ Projects	Comment
<p>Wicklow Uplands Council</p> <p>Roundwood, Wicklow Co</p>	<p>Independent, voluntary organisation which represents the shared interests of over 50 member groups and individuals: <i>To support the sustainable use of the Wicklow uplands through consensus and partnership with those who live, work and recreate there' – on principle of concensus</i></p> <p>WUC Board of up to 27 directors elected annually. 18 reps are elected by the four member panels at the AGM. The elected board can nominate 9 additional directors as co-options – <i>*Current :very strong representation of IFA and community / low enough rep from commercial/ tourism sector and the recreational interest groups</i></p> <p>Membership is open to all via WUC, divided into 4 categories: 5. Farmers & Property Owners 6. Environment& Recreation 7. Community 8. Economic & Tourism</p>	<p>The Membership panels elect members to Board and co-opt as necessary.</p> <p>STRATEGIC PLAN 2011-2013</p> <p>Priority 1 Engagement tasks to build consensus</p> <p>Priority 2 Represent uplands shared interests</p> <p>Priority 3 Development of innovative projects to support Uplands sustainability</p> <p>Priority 4 Organisational development and implementation of communication strategy</p> <p>The Board oversees implementation of the Strategic Plan, progress is assessed 2x pa using performance indicators. Due to part-time officers, are realistic about what can be</p>	<p>The WUC employs a part time Co-ordinator (Monday to Thursday) and a part time Administrator (Monday and Thursday).</p> <p>Cara Doyle / Coordinator cdoyle@wicklowuplands.ie</p> <p>Funding is largely project based, and</p> <p>Wicklow Co Co; Wicklow Partnership (Leader), Heritage Council; DECLG, and local communities contribute.</p> <p>Comhairle na Tuaithe, Fáilte Ireland</p> <p>Annual Membership Fee €10 indiv/ €70 group > focus on strength in numbers</p> <p>PayPal facility</p> <p>Wicklow Countryside Access Service: joint Wicklow Partnership/ WUC; commenced July 2005 to establish network of access routes, on private lands in Wicklow uplands via</p>	<p>Communications:</p> <p>Produce regular e-Newsletter and e-bulletin (sign up)</p> <p>Blog/ Facebook to make calls for specific voluntary actions (e.g. leave dogs at home; control of vegetation) and notice of events/ exhibitions</p> <p>www.wicklowuplands.ie</p> <p>info@wicklowuplands.ie</p> <p>Key Project Achievements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave No Trace • Wicklow Outdoor Recreational Strategy 2009-2013 • Countryside Access Service <p>(funded by Comhairle na Tuaithe, Wicklow CoCo, Wicklow Partnership and WUC.</p>

Uplands Model	Ownership/ Management	Key Elements	Resourcing/ Finance/ Projects	Comment
	<p>Partnership / Local Agenda 21</p> <p>Forums that WUC participates on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Board of Wicklow County Tourism ·Wicklow Heritage Forum ·Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Committee ·Wicklow Joint Policing Liaison Committee ·Irish Uplands Forum ·Dublin Mountains Partnership ·WUC, member of Leave no Trace Ireland and the EuroParc Federation 	<p>achieved. Focus on a small number of key priorities /projects which contribute to shared vision of WUC</p>	<p>voluntary agreements with landowners. Successfully developed 4 routes at Glenmalure, Lough Dan, Little Sugar Loaf and Pound Lane, Lacken. The Glenmalure route was developed in partnership with Mountain Meitheal volunteers.</p> <p>The Wicklow Sustainable Trails Network Project established to co-ordinate management of the Wicklow Way, St Kevin's Way and other trails in Wicklow region. Resulted in marked improvement on the long distance walking routes in Wicklow. Partnership of key stakeholders and major landowners along Wicklow Way, managed by WUC. Commenced in July 2004 and completed in February 2007. Total budget for the project was €235,000, 50% granted by Fáilte Ireland and 50% contributed by the project partners.</p> <p>PURE Protecting Rural Environments</p> <p>Combating dumping & fly tipping: WUC with WCC/ DLRCC/ SDCoCo/ DECLG, Coillte, NPWS</p> <p>Vegetation Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Recreation Officer (funded by DECLG, Fáilte Ireland and Wicklow CoCo) • Rural Security • Winter Alerts • Village Signage – consistent <p>Wicklow Trails Network</p> <p>Guide to Developing Trails for communities</p> <p>Also do</p> <p>PURE Mile competitions for communities for rural roadscapes</p>

Uplands Model	Ownership/ Management	Key Elements	Resourcing/ Finance/ Projects	Comment
			<p>Applying for EU Life funding (2012) to address uplands farming/ conservation/ biodiversity/ burning/ SACs etc – with Teagasc/ IFA/ NPWS and Cooley/ Comeraghs.</p> <p>Also aim to reduce both legal and uncontrolled burning / SACs etc</p>	<p>PURE Wicked – short animations on enviro themes with Arts Council</p>
<p>Irish Uplands Forum</p> <p>Chairs Dr Mary Tubridy and Frank Nugent</p> <p>P.O. Box 11659, Rathmines, Dublin 6</p> <p>Tel: 00 353 87 6563840</p>	<p>Founded by Adrian Phillips, 1990s. Voluntary group to represent views of diverse stakeholders who live, work and recreate in uplands. IUF dedicated to partnership approach to sustainable upland management, centred on local community integration and involvement.</p> <p>In 2008 the Forum became a Limited Company, governed by a Board of Directors who are elected at the AGM which is held in Spring each year.</p> <p>Focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research ▪ Promoting Partnership ▪ Education ▪ Comhairle na Tuaithe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct workshops and study visits ▪ Provide practical support to established, and start-up local partnerships to support sustainable local community management in upland areas ▪ Undertake research on current socio-economic and environmental issues ▪ Support the Leave No Trace ▪ Contribute as an active member of Comhairle na Tuaithe to the preparation and implementation of the National Countryside Recreation Strategy, ▪ Study upland management in other countries where it may be relevant to Irish situations ▪ Provide a resource centre on sustainable development in upland areas 	<p>Voluntary group – small numbers</p> <p>Annual subs:</p> <p>€10 individual and €50 organisation</p>	<p>Communications</p> <p>www.irishuplandsforum.org</p> <p>enquiries@irishuplandsforum.org</p> <p>Uplands = all those areas >300m and Burren etc</p> <p>Newsletter</p> <p>All publications on website</p>

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<p>Dublin Mountains Partnership</p> <p>www.dublinmountains.ie</p>	<p>DMP set up in May 2008 to improve recreational experience for users of the Dublin Mountains, recognising objectives and constraints of the landowners.</p> <p>Partners are Coillte, South Dublin CoCo, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown CoCo, Dublin City Co, NPWS and the Dublin Mountains Initiative, an umbrella group of recreational users.</p> <p>DMP addresses the key need to manage the area as an integrated entity and also provides for commitments on funding and resources to underpin the DMP's work.</p>	<p>Activities</p> <p>Walking</p> <p>Hill Running</p> <p>Orienteering</p> <p>Mountain Biking</p> <p>Conservation</p> <p>Mountain Meithil</p> <p>Bouldering – <i>climbing without ropes on boulder s & crags at Three Rock & The Scalp</i></p> <p>The pilot Dublin Mountaineer Bus provided a direct gateway to enjoy the beauty of the Dublin Mountains on weekends and bank holidays. Unfortunately the Dublin Mountaineer Bus will not operate in 2012.</p>	<p>Funding:</p> <p>Coillte</p> <p>3 x Dublin Local Authorities</p> <p>Comhairle na Tuaithe (Tibradden Trail €100,000)</p> 	<p>PROJECTS</p> <p>Action Plan is underway & range of initiatives including new and upgraded trails, improved signage and the preparation of a DMP map</p> <p>Flagship Projects :</p> <p>Dublin Mountains Way (DMW) from Shankill to Tallaght = 40 km trail</p> <p>Mountain Biking Trail at Ticknock</p> <p>Volunteer Ranger Service (closed 2012): Guides/ litter/ patrol/ conservation etc by trained volunteers/ 2 days per month</p> <p>Adopt-A-Trail programme cooperative effort by DMP and Coillte/Mountain Meitheal. , clean drainage / cut back, check waymarking and signage. Keep your trail in the best condition !</p>

Uplands Model	Ownership/ Management	Key Elements	Resourcing/ Finance/ Projects	Comment
<p>Burren Beo</p> <p>www.burrenbeo.com</p>	<p>Burrenbeo Trust Limited is an independent, registered charity (CHY 16834) that employs one person fulltime and two persons part-time. Burrenbeo could not exist without the major efforts of all our volunteers especially the many unpaid volunteers who continue to apply professional standards in all that they do for Burrenbeo.</p> <p>Trust Directors: Martin Hawkes, Richard Morrison, Stephen Ward and Sean Braiden</p> <p>Trust Patrons: Tom Arnold, David Bellamy, Olive Braiden, Gordon D'Arcy Michael Davoren, Mary Hawkes Greene, Seamus Heaney, Michael Houlihan, Carleton Jones, Mary Angela Keane, Michael Longley, Ann Madden Le Brocquy, Patrick McCormack, Ann O'Connor, Michael Viney, William Walsh.</p> 	<p>The Burren Community Charter is community led approach in building a charter for the Burren. Recognising the value of the proposal, the Heritage Council came on board. Radical departure in participatory democracy & is a new approach to landscape management in Ireland, with world cafes, 'Petcha kucha' sessions and town hall meetings being employed ; local communities are empowered in their landscape and destiny.</p> <p>Also active in this area (politics??) and working separately but now agreed to work to single plan (thus The Community Charter)</p> <p>Burrenbeo Trust Burren Farming for Conservation Project (ex BurrenLife project), Burren Connect Project Burren IFA</p>	<p>Burrenbeo website supported by Clare County CEB, the Heritage Council and by Clare LEADER.</p> <p>In 2008, Burrenbeo received funding for Failte Ireland & Clare CoCo driven project called Burren Connect, which supported Burrenbeo in Phase 2 of 'Eco-Beo' .</p> <p>Clare CoCo also paid for a licensing fee that helped Burrenbeo provide content to nine information hubs across the region and ENFO provided funding for interactive multimedia modules incorporated into the website.(learning section)</p> <p>Burrenbeo Trust received funding from Galway GRD (Kinvara Interp centre);</p> <p>Clare LEADER funding for website. Galway CoCo has provided a publication grant for 'Burren Insight' magazine. The VEC small grant for adult heritage programme. Also 2013, applications to The Heritage Council, Department of Health (Lottery Fund) and The Ireland Funds.</p> <p>Membership of Trust €1000 – Lifetime Trust member €30 concession to- €50 / annum – single/ family / gift etc Business Member: €100 – 250 - 400 Any donation over €250 can receive tax rebate of 45% (?) Also very active web-shop: maps/ books/ guides/ educations etc</p>	<p>info@burrenbeo.com</p> <p>www.burrenbeo.com</p> <p>Communications and Corporate Sponsorship: Áine Bird Communications Officer. Formerly, an education officer for NPWS, communications@burrenbeo.com</p> <p>Trust Coordinator Brigid Barry. Formerly a Biodiversity Officer with Clare County Council, organises Burrenbeo's education courses and other trust activities. trust@burrenbeo.com</p> <p>The Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers working to sustainable management of the Burren & conservation issues – receive training in (rebuilding stone walls/ ecological/ archaeological surveys)</p> <p>Burrenbeo Recorders – note eco/ fauna/ flore activity – log on</p>

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<p>Mourne Heritage Trust</p> <p>www.mournelive.com</p> <p>Newcastle Centre, Donard Room, 10-14 Central Promenade, NEWCASTLE, BT33 0AA Tel: 048 43724059</p>	<p>In 1997, established as partnership of central and local government agencies, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, DARD and environmental, community, recreational, landowning and business interests to provide for the management of the Mourne and Slieve Croob Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).</p> <p><i>(mainly environment, farming & local authority: 3 tourism; 1 recreation)</i></p> <p>The Trust is an independent body and a charity and its mission statement is:</p> <p>'To sustain and enhance the environment, rural regeneration, cultural heritage and visitor opportunities of the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and contribute to the well-being of Mourne's communities.'</p>	<p>The Trust works in four key areas as follows: under a Management Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Natural Environment Enhancement and Protection ✦ Visitor Management and Visitor Services ✦ Built and Cultural Heritage ✦ Sustainable Tourism <p>Significant staff resources, but also very strong Volunteer programme and ethos</p>	<p>Key Officers/ Recreation Martin Carey, Chief Executive Matthew Busby: Access Officer Emma Cunningham, Volunteer CoOrdinator Emma.cunningham@mourne.co.uk Camilla Fitzpatrick – Tourism Officer Camilla.fitzpatrick@mourne.co.uk John Murtagh, Countryside Officer John McEvoy, Mourne Ranger</p> <p>PRINCIPAL FUNDERS</p> <p>Critical public agency support Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Sport NI. Heritage Lottery Fund, 3 Local Authorities (Newry & Mourne/ Down/ Banbridge) Plus range of project based funders including EU/ SEUPB</p> <p>Annual Grants £151k (2011-12) Annual Voluntary Income £160k do.</p>	<p>Landscape Conservation Plan</p> <p>£1.52 million (£3 mill toto) – funded by Heritage Lottery</p> <p>Mourne Uplands Paths £200,000</p> <p>Highlights 2011-2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Visitor facilities at Silent Valley • Upgrade of 10 amenity sites on the Mourne Coast • Implementation of the Mourne brand through signature entrance features, site furniture and bespoke interpretation • Finalised plans for Mourne Coastal Route signage • Letter of Offer for Mourne-Cooley-Gullion Geotourism program • Mourne Public Art programme of seven pieces across AONB

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<p>Cairngorm National Park Authority</p> <p>www.cairngorms.co.uk</p> <p>Colin Kirkwood, CEO, Cairngorm Mountain Ltd Cairngorms National Park Authority 14 The Square Grantown-on-Spey Moray PH26 3LE Tel: 01479 872328 Fax: 01479 873527 Email: enquiries@ Cairngorms.co.uk</p>	<p>Blair Atholl/ Pitlochrie region</p> <p>Managed by Scotland National Parks Authorities as a National Park (4,500 km²), but managed in Partnership with public sector, businesses, land managers and communities – huge list of national partners from all walks of life (education, environment, tourism, health, recreation, forestry, uplands)</p> <p>Link to Advisory Forums, including Farmers, Assoc of Cairngorms Communities, Deer, Developers' Forum etc</p> <p>All plans link to Scotland's National Development priorities and targets</p>	<p>Recognise fragility of environment: Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment Parks for All Innovation Tourism and visitor management Acting on climate change Partnership – focus on priorities: environment/ climate adaptation; economy / people and access/ recreation <p>5-Year plans for each</p> <p>Measurable indicators & targets</p> <p>Programmes of Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enterprise Forum Recreation & Access Strategy Range of learning mechanisms 	<p>FUNDING</p> <p>Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP) and LEADER: The £1.6billion SRDP for 2007-2013 provided the framework for EU and Scottish Government funding promoting social, economic and environmental benefits in rural Scotland.</p> <p>About 17,000 people live in CNP, growing steadily since 2001.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> About 1.4million people visit the National Park each year. The National Park is home to 25 % of the UK's threatened species. Half of the area of the National Park is designated as being of European importance for nature conservation. The National Park is centred on the largest area of arctic mountain landscape in the UK and contains the largest extent of semi-natural pine forest in the UK. Five of Scotland's six highest mountains 	<p>Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017</p> <p>Biodiversity</p> <p>Geodiversity</p> <p>Set practical targets for 5-10 years (eg increase in tree cover by 5%) Broadband for 75% of residents etc Active conservation plans for habitats Increase volunteer days by 50%</p> <p>Enterprise Forum, 1a economic strategy development & implement 1b. Skills and training 1c. Food and drink development 1d. Grow Cairngorms Business Partnership</p> <p>http:// Cairngorms.co.uk/look-after/moorlands</p>

Uplands Model	Ownership/ Management	Key Elements	Resourcing/ Finance/ Projects	Comment
	<p>Unlike many National Parks around the world, none of the Cairngorms National Park is owned by the Park Authority. Instead, the Cairngorms is owned by a variety of individuals, charities, government agencies and businesses.</p> <p>There are around 60 privately owned estates in the Cairngorms National Park, many still owned by families whose involvement stretches back as far as the 13th Century. Covering nearly 75 per cent of the Park, these land managers are extremely important in maintaining and sustaining just what makes this such a special place. The estates in the Park have lots of different purposes, from being a highland retreat to the most wealthy of owners to providing a living for local farmers or giving the public lots of things to do and see. Most undertake a wide variety of activities, from farming and forestry to traditional country sports like deer stalking and grouse shooting - many provide a Ranger Service and other outdoor activities like quad biking or land rover tours. You can even get married in some of the stunning Estate Lodges, surrounded by centuries of history and heritage. Read about some of the more well-known estates, including the Queen's estate of Balmoral, in the east of the Cairngorms National Park here.</p> <p>Charities such as the National Trust for Scotland and the RSPB also own large tracts of land, including the Mar Lodge Estate (NTS), Abernethy and Insh Marshes (RSPB). Government bodies including Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage own and manage substantial areas for the benefit of the Nation including Glenmore Forest and a number of the National Nature Reserves (NNRs).</p>			

<p>Nevis Partnership</p>	<p>The Nevis Partnership is a Scottish company, limited by guarantee, with charitable status. Formed in 2003 to:</p> <p><i>'guide future policies and actions to safeguard, manage and where appropriate enhance the environmental qualities and opportunities for visitor enjoyment and appreciation of the Nevis area'</i></p> <p>'The Nevis Strategy' was completed after consultations among partners</p> <p>Nevis Trust has a main board with 10 representatives holding voting rights. The directorships include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Highland Council • Fort William Community Council • Inverlochy and Torlundy Community Council • Glen Nevis Residents • The John Muir Trust • The Mountaineering Council of Scotland • Lochaber Mountain Access Group • Scottish Natural Heritage • Sport Scotland <p>The Board meets once every two months in Fort William. There are other associated organizations represented at the meetings:</p> <p>Members' Representatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Sustainability ✚ Partnership and joint working ✚ Community/landowners Government agencies Agreement and support for management initiatives ✚ Recognition of the area's international and national conservation, tourism and recreation importance ✚ Commitment to action and investment <p>In addition to the main board there is an Executive Committee. This group meets every month and provides a support and advisory framework to assist the Nevis Manager on all project management and operational issues. The Executive Committee is made up of representatives from the following organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Highland Council • Scottish Natural Heritage • Local Community Group representation • Lochaber Mountain Access Group • The John Muir Trust 	<p>FUNDING</p> <p>Care International : litter/waste reduction in the Ben/Glen Nevis area, as part of the Ben Nevis Mountain Heritage Project</p> <p>European Regional Development Fund (2007-13 programme) to support path repairs on Ben Nevis and the Glen Nevis <i>Sense of Place</i> project.</p> <p>Forestry Commission Scotland : 3 year funding plan for integrated low level path network in the area. = match funding.</p> <p>Heritage Lottery Fund Ben Nevis Mountain Heritage Project, encompassing path repairs and restoration, environment protection, path skills training and mountaineering memorabilia archive.</p> <p>Highlands and Islands Partnership Special Transitional program 3-year funds hat are matched against a combination of other funding bodies.</p> <p>Highland Council Planning and Development Services : range of capital construction, educational and interpretational projects & contribution to the running costs of the Visitor Management service. In addition to the supply of funds, significant in kind donations have been committed in the form of management support and advice and other administration support facilities.</p>	<p>Landscape Partnership Project - jobs to manage via Heritage Lottery Funds 2013:</p> <p>£4million awarded for Ben Nevis Paths partnership (a subgroup of main Partnership)</p>
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Appendix F

Operational Matters

Draft Terms of Reference for Chairperson Of MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Forum

Sample Constitution (see also www.revenue.ie)

Sample Articles of Association (Wicklow Uplands Council*)

(thanks to Cara Doyle Heraty for providing this document,
which can be adapted for any organisation)*

(Draft) Terms of Reference

Chairperson

McGullycuddy's Reeks Mountain Forum

November 2013

Background:

Extensive research and consultations have occurred over the last six months on the establishment of an innovative multi-party approach to managing the McGullycuddy's Reeks. It is part of the assessment for development of a Mountain Access Scheme for the Reeks, based on permissive access of the landowners, being conducted by SLR Consulting for a Steering Group comprising of South Kerry Development Partnership (SKDP), Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and Fáilte Ireland. It is viewed as a pilot project for the country in relation to permissive access for outdoor recreation, while conserving and sustaining our upland areas.

The project is now at its final drafting stage with a set of concrete recommendations anticipated over the coming weeks. Chief among these will be the establishment of an integrated management system for the project including the identification of the inaugural Chairperson whose task it will be to *drive* the project forward in line with the agreed actions ensuring all necessary partners are fully engaged. The objective is to establish a representative Forum to implement the recommendations under the direction of the Chairperson.

This document outlines the principal roles of the job coupled with the necessary skills and experience required. It is intended as a supporting document to the discussions that potential Chairs will have with representatives of the commissioning Steering Group mentioned above.

Essential Requirements:

- An awareness of the primary issues in relation to mountain access / permissive access and their impact on the sustainable development of the Reeks.
- Experience of chairing multi party committees / forums.
- A strong strategic sense of the Reeks in relation to county, regional and national policy and the recreational potential of the mountains.
- High level project and resource management experience.
- Leadership, authority and sensitivity in dealing with often complex multi-parties.
- Excellent communication and motivational skills.
- Time availability, especially for the initial 6 - 9 months, to ensure the Forum creates an internal momentum and self belief delivering its 'quick wins'.
- No conflicts of interest.

Indicative Work Programmes (Dec, 2013 – Aug, 2014):

Chairing of the meetings of the Forum; which are anticipated to be held quarterly. The chairperson, with administrative/clerical support from SKDP, will be responsible for calling & chairing these meetings.

Agree the *vision* for the Reeks with the Steering Group, and how it might be implemented.

Meet all the Steering Group members.

Help plan and deliver the inaugural meeting (early 2014).

Ensure the Forum participants know each other and know you. All should demonstrate a degree of common purpose and buy-in to the grand vision.

Lead the new Forum internally; help establish sensible systems for governance and management given the work programme and available resources. Note: this will be achieved with *tangible supports* from the Steering Group and other friends of the project.

Guide the establishment of the internal Working Groups of the Forum ensuring they are properly focused and delivering on agreed work programmes.

Engage at an early stage with necessary external stakeholders promoting the role and responsibility of the new Forum. This includes the general public.

Help drive from the outset an income generating strategy enabling a full programme of work to be delivered. This will ensure the long term sustainability of the Forum.

Engendering a *culture of sustainability* for the Forum is considered critical. This is especially true in relation to the possible *transferability of this model* to other upland mountain destinations across the country.

Be conscious of *succession planning* recognising that 'leadership' is a key factor to developing a capable, motivated and sustainable Forum.

(Draft) Constitution

of

MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Forum

1. NAME: The name of the body is the **MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Forum (hereinafter referred to as the 'Reeks Forum')**.

2. MAIN OBJECTIVE:

The main objective for which the Reeks Forum is established is to support recreational access to the MacGillycuddy Reeks, Co. Kerry, through permissive access agreements with the private landowners of the mountains, to secure clear and unambiguous access for walking, hiking, climbing and related recreational, educational and environmental purposes, to the upland areas of the Reeks, while actively conserving the status and quality of the interlinked natural and cultural environments.

3. SUBSIDIARY OBJECTIVE(S):

In furtherance exclusively of the foregoing main object, the body shall have the following subsidiary objectives:

To support the landowners and communities of the MacGillycuddy Reeks uplands, through a participative Mountain Forum, to realise sustainable socio-economic opportunities, in association with enterprises, recreational interests, national and local authorities and relevant statutory agencies.

To develop an Integrated Management Plan, including a Conservation Management Plan, for the MacGillycuddy Reeks, to conserve and enhance the environmental integrity of the Reeks' Uplands, through active management of recreational access and tourism.

To actively increase the appreciation and understanding of the unique cultural and natural heritage of the MacGillycuddy Reeks through educational and research programmes.

4. POWERS.

To the extent that the same are essential or ancillary to the promotion of the main object of the body as heretofore set out the body may exercise the following powers:

Insert here any powers required by the organisation to fulfill their Main Object (e.g. to raise funds.)

To conduct the business of the Reeks Mountain Forum based on the principles of good and transparent governance

To develop and implement Strategic Action and Management Plans

To raise and manage Funds and Resources to meet Strategic objectives

5. RULES

Insert here any rules of the organisation e.g. re. membership, executive committee, meetings including AGM and any other rules.

AUTHORITY OF THE MACGILLYCUDDY REEKS MOUNTAIN FORUM

The executive authority of the Reeks Forum shall be vested in the Steering Group composed of the following members:-

Chairperson

Vice-Chairperson

Secretary

Treasurer

At least ten (10) ordinary Steering Group Members

The Steering Group shall have general executive control and management of the affairs and funds of the Company; to include but not limited to:

- a) general management of the MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Forum
- b) supervision of election of officers to working groups and filling vacancies;
- c) accepting, creating, and administering funds for purposes of enacting the agreed Strategic Action Plan of the Reeks Forum;
- d) appointing trustees to manage such funds as may arise;
- e) establishing appropriate administrative, fiscal and good governance policies; and
- f) performing such other duties as required to accomplish the objects and purposes of the Reeks Forum.

The Forum Steering Group will comprise a Chairperson and up to **fifteen (15)** representatives sourced from core stakeholders including landowners, community, enterprise, recreational users, and ex-officio statutory agencies, national and local authorities, as well as an elected representative of Kerry County Council.

The role of the **Chairperson** will be to coordinate activities of the Forum membership, call meetings, manage expectations and drive the implementation of the agreed Strategic Action Plan.

The role of the **Steering Group** is to provide strategic direction and guidance to the Forum, policy development, source core operational resources, set targets through an agreed Action Plan and ensure that the Plan is implemented. The Steering Group may also appoint members to Working Groups to achieve specific targets.

The Forum will have elected **Working Groups** to address specific aspects of the Strategic Action Plan, sourced from the membership of the Forum. The Steering Group may appoint additional external (to the Forum membership) expertise to the Working Groups as needs arise, potentially sourced from a broad Advisory Panel (see below).

The Steering Group will appoint an **Advisory Panel** of experts in for example, uplands management, agricultural management, outdoor recreational management, enterprise development, business and managerial skills, environmental issues, education & research, social media and/or IT skills. This Panel can be called upon for expert inputs as may arise.

MEMBERSHIP

A **Membership registration process** will be enacted annually to confer voting rights to elect the Steering Group from among the general stakeholders (including landowners, community, enterprise, recreational users) and ex-officio representatives (statutory agencies local authorities, national representative bodies), any of whom may be represented on the Steering Group.

It is anticipated that the membership of the MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Forum will be sourced from local landowners, communities, recreational users and enterprises resident within the catchment of the MacGillycuddy Reeks. Membership can also be open to supportive non-resident recreational users and clubs, that support the objectives of the Reeks Mountain Forum.

Only registered Members of the Forum are entitled to vote at Annual and Extraordinary General Meetings and they shall have a vote at any such Meetings as follows:

- Each general member will have a single (one) vote.
- A community group will have a single (one) vote per group member to a maximum of 20 votes/ group.
- Ex-officio groups may get one voting right per group.
- Only registered members may vote in elections to the Steering Group.

Only registered Members may hold the office of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer of the Reeks Forum.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Steering Group shall be authorised to fix reasonable annual membership fees; such fees may be altered at the recommendation of the Steering Group and approval at the AGM or EGM called for the purpose. Subscriptions become due on the first day of January of each year.

Any member of whatever classification who resigns, or who forfeits his or her membership for non-payment of dues, or who is expelled by the Steering Group for ethical reasons, ceases to have any voting rights in the Reeks Forum.

GENERAL MEETINGS

All general meetings of the Reeks Forum shall be held in South Kerry. The Forum shall in each year hold a general meeting as its annual general meeting (AGM) in addition to any other meetings in that year and shall specify the meeting as such in the notices calling it. Not more than 15 months shall elapse between the date of one AGM of the Forum and that of the next.

The AGM shall be held at such time and at such place in South Kerry as the Steering Group shall appoint.

All general meetings other than the Annual General Meeting, or Ordinary Meetings, shall be called Extraordinary General Meetings (EGM). The Steering Group may, whenever they see fit, convene an EGM. Any two (2) members of the Steering Group, or any fifteen (15) registered members, of the Forum may convene an EGM in the same manner as nearly as possible as that in which meetings may be convened by the Steering Group.

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETINGS.

An AGM (Annual General Meeting) and a meeting called for the passing of any special resolution shall be called by 28 days' notice in writing (or by email) at the least and a meeting of the Forum (other than an AGM or a meeting for the passing of a special resolution) shall be called by 28 days' notice in

writing at the least. The notice shall specify the place, the day and the hour of meeting and in the case of special business, the general nature of that business.

The accidental omission to give notice of a meeting to, or the non-receipt of notice of a meeting by any person entitled to receive notice, shall not invalidate the proceedings at that meeting.

QUORUM

No business shall be transacted at any general meeting unless a **quorum** of registered Members is present at the time when the meeting proceeds to business; save as herein otherwise provided, **fifteen (15) registered Members** present in person shall be a quorum.

If within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting, if convened upon the requisition of members, shall be dissolved; in any other case it shall stand adjourned to the same day in the next week at the same time and place, or to such other day and at such other time and place as the Steering Group may determine, and if at the adjourned meeting a quorum is not present within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting, the members present shall be a quorum.

The Chairperson of the Steering Group shall preside as Chair at every general meeting of the Forum, or if s/he is not present within 15 minutes after the time appointed for the holding of the meeting, the Steering Group members present shall elect one of their number to be Chair of the meeting.

VOTES OF MEMBERS

At any general meeting a resolution put to the vote of the meeting shall be decided on a show of hands unless a poll is demanded (before show of hands):

- (a) by the Chairperson, or
- (b) by at least three members present in person or by proxy, or
- (c) by any member or members present in person and representing not less than one-tenth of the total voting rights of all the members having the right to vote at the meeting.

Unless a poll is so demanded, a declaration by the Chairman that a resolution has, on a show of hands, been carried or carried unanimously or by a particular majority or lost, and an entry to that effect in the book containing the minutes of proceedings of the Forum shall be conclusive evidence of the fact. Where there is an equality of votes, whether on a show of hands or on a poll, the Chairperson of the meeting shall be entitled to a second or casting vote.

No registered Member shall be entitled to vote at any general meetings unless all fees immediately payable to the Forum have been paid. Votes may be given either personally or by proxy.

ORDINARY MEETINGS

Ordinary meetings to discuss proposals, planning actions etc, will be held at times and places designated by the Steering Group.

Meetings: The Steering Group (SG) of the Forum will meet on a Quarterly basis, with meetings fixed by the SG in advance.

The Working Groups will meet on a monthly basis to achieve project specific targets. Each Working Group will appoint a Convenor (sourced from a member of the Steering Group) to report back to the SG quarterly meetings on behalf of the working group.

MEETINGS OF THE STEERING GROUP

The Steering Group shall meet at quarterly periods of the year and at such places as designated by the SG or at the call of the Chairperson or four ordinary members of the Steering Group. Notice of at least five (5) days by email/ mail or otherwise shall be given to the Steering Group prior to meetings.

A quorum of the Steering Group shall consist of **six (6) members**, which shall include at least two officers. No proxy votes shall be allowed and no alternatives may be appointed for absent members of the Steering Group.

In meetings of the Steering Group, all members shall have equal voice.

TERMS OF OFFICE

The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, shall ordinarily serve a two (2) year term. The terms of office shall commence immediately after the Annual General Meeting.

Members nominated to serve as Officers will previously have served for two (2) years as ordinary members of the Steering Group.

6. INCOME AND PROPERTY

The income and property of the body, shall be applied solely towards the promotion of its main object as set forth in this Constitution. No portion of the body's income and property shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit, to the members of the body. No Officer shall be appointed to any office of the body paid by salary or fees, or receive any remuneration or other benefit in money or money's worth from the body. However, nothing shall prevent any payment in good faith by the body of:

- a) reasonable and proper remuneration to any member of the body (not being an Officer) for any services rendered to the body;
- b) interest at a rate not exceeding 5% per annum on money lent by Officers or other members of the body to the body;
- c) reasonable and proper rent for premises demised and let by any member of the body (including any Officer) to the body;
- d) reasonable and proper out-of-pocket expenses incurred by any Officer in connection with their attendance to any matter affecting the body;
- e) fees, remuneration or other benefit in money or money's worth to any Company of which an Officer may be a member holding not more than one hundredth part of the issued capital of such Company.

7. WINDING-UP

If upon the winding up or dissolution of the body there remains, after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever, it shall not be paid to or distributed among the members of the body. Instead, such property shall be given or transferred to some other charitable institution or

institutions having main objects similar to the main objects of the body. The institution or institutions to which the property is to be given or transferred shall prohibit the distribution of its or their income and property among its or their members to an extent at least as great as is imposed on the body under or by virtue of Clause 6 hereof. Members of the body shall select the relevant institution or institutions at or before the time of dissolution, and if and so far as effect cannot be given to such provisions, then the property shall be given or transferred to some charitable object.

8. ADDITIONS, ALTERATIONS OR AMENDMENTS

No addition, alteration or amendment shall be made to or in the provisions of this Constitution for the time being in force unless the same shall have been previously approved in writing by the Revenue Commissioners.

9. KEEPING OF ACCOUNTS

Annual audited accounts shall be kept and made available to the Revenue Commissioners on request.

Signed:

Signed:

Chairperson

Secretary.....

Signed:

Date

Treasurer.....

COMPANIES ACT, 1963 to 2009

**COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE AND NOT HAVING
A SHARE CAPITAL**

ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

of

COMPANY NAME LIMITED

("the Company")

(As amended by Special Resolution on **Date)**

The Regulations contained in Table C of the Companies Acts, 1963 to 2009 shall apply to the Company save insofar as they are excluded or modified hereby.

4. In these Articles:-

“the Act” means the Companies Act 1963, as amended;

”the Directors” means the Directors for the time being of the Company, or the Directors present at a meeting of the Board of Directors, and includes any person occupying the position of Director by whatever name called;

“Secretary” means any person appointed to perform the duties of the Secretary of the Company;

“the seal” means the Common Seal of the Company;

”the office” means the Registered Office for the time being of the company.

Expressions referring to writing shall, unless the contrary intention appears, be construed as including references to printing, lithography, photography and any other modes of representing or reproducing words in visible form.

Unless the contrary intention appears, words or expressions contained in these Articles shall bear the same meaning as in the Act, or any statutory modification thereof in force at the date at which these Articles become binding on the Company.

MEMBERS

5. The total number of members of the Company shall not exceed 500 in number, but the Directors may from time to time register an increase in members at their discretion.
6. (a) The subscribers to the Memorandum of Association and such other persons as the Directors shall admit to membership shall be members of the Company. The Directors may refuse to accept an application for membership, and shall not be required to state any reason for so doing.
(b) Every member of the Company shall be allocated by the Board of Directors to one of four panels consisting of:
 - (i) the Farming and Property Owning Panel;
 - (ii) the Economic and Tourism Panel;
 - (iii) the Community Panel; and
 - (iv) the Recreational and Environment Panel.

- (c) The allocation of members of the Company to each of the aforementioned panels shall be done at the discretion of the majority of the Board of Directors but may be changed at the request of any particular member in regard to his or her panel. A meeting of the Directors shall be held at least 7 days before the date of any duly convened general meeting at which a special resolution is proposed to allocate a new member or members to any one or more of the four panels.
- (d) A separate meeting of each of the panels shall be held either before the annual general meeting, or (the annual general meeting being temporarily adjourned for the purpose) after the commencement of the annual general meeting, and each panel shall nominate from amongst its members, persons to the Board of Directors for approval of the members of the said annual general meeting. The panels shall decide, each for itself, the manner in which nominations shall be agreed.
- (e) The number of members which the panels may nominate for appointment to the Board of Directors, and the maximum number permitted for approval by the general meeting shall be:
 - (i) the Farming and Property Owning Panel – 7 members;
 - (ii) the Economic and Tourism Panel – 3 members;
 - (iii) the Community Panel – 4 members; and
 - (iv) the Recreational and Environmental Panel – 4 members.

7. There shall be three categories of members of the Company, as follows:

Category 1: Individuals;

Category 2: Groups or societies – to include any established local groups or societies not affiliated to any national organisations, but having a title and established committee structure, whether or not such a group or society is incorporated;

Category 3: Organisations – to include any national organisation or any body having affiliations with a national organisation, whether or not such body or organisation is incorporated.

8. An annual membership subscription of the Company shall be charged to any member, and the rate of any such subscription shall be set from time to time at the annual general meeting (AGM) of the members of the Company. There may be different rates set for each of the categories or membership, or for any subdivisions thereof.
9. The rights and liabilities attaching to any member of the Company may be varied from time to time by a Special Resolution passed at a general meeting of the Company.
10. (i) The Directors may terminate the membership of any member if the relevant member has not paid the appropriate subscription, or has been deemed to have acted in a manner inconsistent with the objects of the Company as set out in the Memorandum of Association, provided that –
 - a) notice has been given to all of the Directors of the intention to propose the termination of a member's membership, with the notice convening the meeting of the Board of Directors; and
 - b) similar notice has been given to the member concerned, and the member concerned shall be given the opportunity to attend part of the meeting of the Directors at which the matter is to be considered in order to present a case against termination, prior to a decision being taken in the matter by the Directors.
- (ii) The termination of the membership of a member shall not be effective unless at least 75% of those attending the meeting of Directors and entitled to vote, vote in favour of the termination.

GENERAL MEETINGS

11. All general meetings of the Company shall be held within the State.
12. (1) The Company shall in each year hold an annual general meeting of its members in addition to any other meetings in that year, and shall specify the meeting as such in the notices convening it; and not more than 15 months shall elapse between the date of one annual general meeting of the Company and that of the next.

(2) Subject to Article 8, the annual general meeting shall be held at such time and at such place as the Directors shall direct.
13. All general meetings of the Company other than annual general meetings shall be called extraordinary general meetings.
14. The Directors may, whenever they think fit, convene an extraordinary general meeting, and shall do so if requested in writing by not less than four group/society and/or organisation members, and extraordinary general meetings may also be

convened by such requisitionists as are provided by Section 132 of the Act. If at any time there are not within the State sufficient Directors capable of acting to form a quorum to hold a meeting of the Board of Directors to convene a general meeting of the Company, then any Director, or any two members of the Company, may convene an extraordinary general meeting in the same manner as nearly as possible as that in which meetings may be convened by the Board of Directors.

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETINGS

15. Subject to Sections 133 and 141 of the Act an annual general meeting (and a meeting called for the passing of a special resolution) shall be called by 21 days' notice in writing at the least, and a meeting of the Company (other than an annual general meeting or a meeting for the passing of a special resolution) shall be called by 14 days' notice in writing at the least. The notice shall be exclusive of the day on which it is served or deemed to be served, and of the day of the meeting, and shall specify the place, the day and the hour of meeting, and in the case of special business the general nature of the business, and shall be given in manner hereafter mentioned to such persons as are under the Articles of the Company entitled to receive notices from the Company.
16. Any notice convening an annual general meeting shall have attached to it the agenda for the meeting, a copy of the audited financial statements of the company for the accounting period ending next before the meeting, a report from the chairman or the secretary summarising the activities of the Company since the date of the last preceding annual general meeting, and a copy of any motion of which prior written notice has been given under Article 16 below.
17. The accidental omission to give notice of a meeting to, or the non-receipt of notice by, any person entitled to receive notice shall not invalidate the proceedings of the meeting.

PROCEEDINGS AT GENERAL MEETINGS

18. All business shall be deemed special that is transacted at an extraordinary general meeting, and also all that is transacted at an annual general meeting, with the exception of the consideration of the audited financial statements, the reports of the Directors and the Auditors, the approval of nominations to the Board of Directors, the re-appointment of the retiring auditors, and the fixing of the remuneration of the auditors. No special business shall be transacted at a general meeting unless notice has been given of the nature of such business in accordance with Article 12 herein.
19. Motions and/or resolutions for consideration at any general meeting of the Company shall be in writing and shall be submitted to the Secretary at least one week before the date for issue of the notice convening the general meeting and shall be attached to that notice.
20. Subject to Article 18 hereunder no business shall be transacted at any general meeting unless a quorum of members is present at the time when the meeting is

called to order by the chairman of the meeting; and save as herein otherwise provided, three members (as defined in Article 4 above) present in person shall be a quorum if the total membership of the Company is 20 or less, and ten members (including at least 2 from each of at least three of the panels referred to in Article 28(1)(a) present in person shall be a quorum where the total membership of the Company exceeds 20. For the purpose of establishing the quorum of a general meeting, a group or society member, or an organisation member shall be deemed in each case to be one member irrespective of the number of individuals present representing the group, society or organisation.

21. If within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting, if convened upon the requisition of members, shall be dissolved; in any other case it shall stand adjourned to the same day in the next week at the same time and place, or to such other day and at such other time and place as the Directors may determine, and if at the adjourned meeting a quorum is not present within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting, the members present shall be a quorum.
22. The chairman (if any) of the Board of Directors shall preside as chairman of every general meeting of the Company, and if there is no such chairman, or if he is not present within fifteen minutes after the time appointed for the holding of the meeting, or is unwilling to act, the vice-chairman (if any) of the Board of Directors shall preside at the meeting. If there is no such vice-chairman, or if he is not present or is unwilling to act, then the members present shall elect one of their number to be chairman of the meeting.
23. The chairman of any meeting may with the consent of the members present at any meeting at which a quorum is present (and shall, if so directed by the meeting) adjourn the meeting from time to time and from place to place, but no business shall be transacted at any adjourned meeting other than the business left unfinished at the meeting from which the adjournment took place. When the meeting is adjourned for 30 days or more, notice of the adjourned meeting shall be given as in the case of an original meeting. Save as aforesaid, it shall not be necessary to give any notice of an adjourned meeting or of the business to be transacted at an adjourned meeting.
24. (1) Every effort shall be made to arrive at decisions by the unanimous decision of the members of the Company present in person or by proxy.

(2) At any general meeting a resolution put to the vote of the members of the Company shall be decided in accordance with the following rules:
 - a) Each individual member shall be entitled to one vote;
 - b) Each group or society member, or each organisation member, shall be entitled to a number of votes equivalent to its own valid and paid-up membership, but in any event the maximum number of votes of any group or society shall not exceed 20 votes.
- (4) All voting at a meeting of the members of the Company shall be by way of a poll of those present and entitled to vote, unless a postal poll of all members is (before or on the declaration of the result of those present at the meeting) demanded –

- a) by the chairman; or
 - b) by at least five members present in person or by proxy.
- (5) A poll or a postal vote shall be conducted in such manner as the chairman directs and the result of the poll shall be deemed to be the resolution of the meeting at which the poll was held or at which the postal vote was demanded.
- (6) Where there is an equality of votes, the chairman of the meeting at which the poll was held, or the postal vote demanded, shall be entitled to a second or casting vote.
25. Subject to Section 141(8) of the Act, a resolution in writing signed by all the members of the Company for the time being entitled to attend and vote on such resolution at a general meeting shall be as valid and effective for all purposes as if the resolution had been passed at a general meeting of the Company duly convened and held, and if described as a special resolution with the meaning of the Act.
26. No member shall be entitled to vote at any general meeting unless all moneys immediately payable by him to the Company have been paid in full and received by the office at least 14 days before the proposed date of the general meeting.
27. No objection shall be raised to the qualifications of any voter except at the meeting or adjourned meeting at which the vote objected to is given or tendered, and every vote not disallowed at such meeting shall be valid for all purposes. Any such objection made in due time shall be referred to the chairman of the meeting whose decision shall be final and conclusive.
28. (1) Votes may be given either personally or by proxy.
- (2) The instrument appointing a proxy shall be in writing under the hand of the appointer or of his attorney duly authorised in writing, or, if the appointer is a body corporate, either under seal or under the hand of an officer or attorney duly authorised. A proxy need not be a member of the Company.
- (3) The instrument appointing a proxy and the power of attorney or other authority, if any, under which it is signed, or a notarially certified copy of that power or authority, shall be deposited at the office not less than 48 hours before the time for holding the meeting or adjourned meeting at which the person named in the instrument proposes to vote, or, in the case of a postal poll, not less than 48 hours before the time appointed for the taking of the poll, and in default the instrument of proxy shall not be treated as valid.
- (4) An instrument appointing a proxy shall be in the following form or a form as near thereto as circumstances permit:

THE **XYZ** LIMITED
I/we of in the County of , being
member/members of the above named Company, hereby appoint
of or failing him of as my/our
proxy to vote for me/us on my/our behalf at the (annual or extraordinary
as the case may be) general meeting of the Company to be held on the
day of and at any adjournment thereof.

This form is to be used against/in favour of the resolution of

Unless otherwise instructed, the proxy will vote as he thinks fit.

Signed this day of

(Strike out whichever detail is not desired.)

- (5) The instrument appointing a proxy shall be deemed to confer authority to demand or join in demanding a postal poll.
- (6) A vote given in accordance with the terms of an instrument of proxy shall be valid notwithstanding the previous death or insanity of the principal or revocation of the proxy or of the authority under which the proxy was executed, if no intention is received by the Company at the office before the commencement of the meeting or adjourned meeting at which the proxy is used.
29. Any body corporate which is a member of the Company may by resolution of its directors or other governing body authorise such person as it thinks fit to act as its representative at any meeting of the Company, and the person so authorised shall be entitled to exercise the same powers on behalf of the body corporate which he represents as the body corporate could exercise if it were an individual member of the Company.

DIRECTORS

30. The number of the Directors and the names of the first Directors shall be determined in writing by the subscribers of the Memorandum of Association or a majority of them. At the first general meeting of the company all the first directors shall retire, and new Directors shall be appointed in accordance with the procedures set out in Article 29.
- 28 (a) The Board of Directors shall consist initially of not more than 22 members appointed or co-opted under the following Articles, subject to Article 28(b) below.
- (b) Subject to Article 28(d) below, the directors may co-opt a number of members to the Board of Directors not exceeding 50% of those elected at the annual general meeting. Where a meeting at which the officers of the company are to be appointed under Article 44 herein, it is intended also to co-opt additional directors, the co-options shall take place before the appointment of officers. Co-options to the Board of Directors shall be made by consensus of the members of the Board of Directors. If a co-option, or co-options, are not agreed through consensus there should be a secret vote with a majority of at least 75% of those voting required to secure the co-option of each Director to the Board of Directors.
- (c) All the Directors shall retire each year and shall be eligible for re nomination.

- (d) If any Director absents him or herself from three meetings in succession without an explanation which is considered adequate by the Directors he/she shall be deemed to have resigned, and his or her place may be filled by co-option from the relevant panel, having consulted with the former Director's organisation.
- (e) The total number of Directors, the numbers allocated to each panel of Directors and the numbers authorised for co-option to the Board of Directors may be changed by a special resolution passed at a duly convened general meeting of the members of the Company.

PROCEEDINGS OF DIRECTORS

- 29. The Directors shall meet at least six times a year. Subject to the foregoing, the Directors may meet together for the dispatch of business, adjourn and otherwise regulate their meetings as they think fit. The Secretary shall call a meeting of the Directors at any time if requested by at least three Directors.
- 30. Matters shall be decided in the meetings of the Directors as far as possible by consensus. If, however, there is a vote, then each member of the Board of Directors present and entitled to vote shall have one vote. In the event of equality of voting the chairman of the meeting shall have a casting vote.
- 31. The quorum for any meeting of Directors shall be eight or such other number as a 75% majority of all the Directors present shall at any time decide.
- 32. The Directors may pay all expenses incurred in promoting and registering the Company, and may exercise all such powers of the Company as are not by the Act or by these Articles required to be exercised by the Company in general meeting, subject nevertheless to such Directors, not being inconsistent with the aforesaid provisions, as may be given by the Company in general meeting, but no direction given by the Company shall invalidate any prior act of the Directors which would have been valid if that direction had not been given.
- 33. The Directors may from time to time and at any time by power of attorney appoint any company, firm or person or body of persons, whether nominated directly or indirectly, to be the attorney or attorneys of the Company for such purposes and with powers, authorities and discretions (not exceeding those vested in or exercisable by the Directors under these Articles) and for such period and subject to such conditions as they may think fit, and may also authorise any such attorney to delegate all or any of the powers, authorities and discretions vested in him.
- 34. All cheques, promissory notes, drafts, bills of exchange and other negotiable instruments, and all receipts for moneys paid to the Company shall be signed, drawn, accepted, endorsed or otherwise executed, as the case may be, by such person or persons, and in such manner as the Directors shall from time to time determine.
- 35. The Directors may exercise all the powers of the Company to borrow money and to mortgage or charge its undertaking a property or any part thereof, and to issue debentures, debenture stock, and other securities, whether outright or as security for any debt, liability, obligation of the Company or of any third party.

36. The Directors or the Secretary shall cause to be made minutes of all meetings of the Company, of every general meeting thereof, of meetings of the Directors, and of the Executive Committee.
37. A general meeting of the Company may by ordinary resolution of which extended notice has been given in accordance with Section 142 of the Act remove any Director before the expiration of his period office, notwithstanding anything in these Articles or in any agreement between the Company and such Director. Such removal shall be without prejudice to any claim such Director may have for damages for breach of any contract of service between him or her and the Company.
38. The continuing Directors may act notwithstanding any vacancy in their number but, if and so long as their number is reduced below the number fixed by or in pursuant to the Articles of their Company as the necessary quorum of Directors, the continuing Director or Directors may act for the purpose of increasing the number of Directors to that number or of summoning a general meeting of the Company, but for no other purpose.
39. Each meeting of the Directors shall be chaired by the Chairman of the Company, or by the Vice-Chairman in the absence of the Chairman, or by any Director decided upon by those present in the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.
40. All acts done by any meeting of the Directors or by any person acting as a Director shall, notwithstanding that it is afterwards discovered that there was some defect in the appointment of such Director or person acting as aforesaid, or that they or any of them were disqualified, be as valid as if such person had been duly appointed and was qualified to be a Director.
41. A resolution in writing, signed by all the Directors for the time being entitled to receive notice of a meeting of the Directors, shall be valid as if it had been passed at a meeting of the Directors duly convened and held.
42. A provision of the Act or these Articles requiring or authorising a thing to be done by or to a Director and the Secretary shall not be satisfied by its being done by or to the same person acting both as Director, and as, or in place of, the Secretary.

DISQUALIFICATION OF A DIRECTOR

43. The office of Director shall be vacated if that Director:
 - (a) holds any other office or place of profit under the Company, or
 - (b) is adjudged bankrupt in the State or in Northern Ireland or in Great Britain or makes any arrangement or composition with his creditors generally, or
 - (c) becomes prohibited from being a Director by reason of any order made under Section 184 of the Act, or
 - (d) becomes of unsound mind, or
 - (e) resigns his office by notice in writing to the Company, or

- (f) is convicted of an indictable offence unless the Directors otherwise determine, or
- (g) is directly or indirectly interested in any contract with the Company and fails to declare the nature of his interest in manner required by Section 194 of the Act.

OFFICERS

44. The Board of Directors shall each year appoint from among its members a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Secretary and a Treasurer, and these four shall be called the Officers of the Company. Normally an office bearer shall be obliged to retire from office for a minimum of one year, if he or she has occupied that particular office for three consecutive years.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

45. There shall be an Executive Committee, which shall consist of the Officers of the Company together with three other members appointed by the directors from amongst their number. All members of the Executive Committee shall retire each year but shall be eligible for re-appointment by the directors. If a member of the Executive Committee retires or his office becomes vacant for any reason during the year his or her place shall be filled at the next meeting of the directors. The Executive Committee may invite any person to attend all or part of any meeting in any advisory or consultative capacity.
46. The Company may from time to time by ordinary resolution increase or reduce the number of members of the Executive Committee.
47. The quorum necessary for the transaction of business of the Executive Committee may be fixed by the directors, but unless so fixed shall be two.
48. The Executive Committee shall carry out such duties as are delegated to it from time to time by the Directors, and shall give a report at each meeting of the Directors of matters dealt with by it since the last meeting of the Directors.

PAYMENT OF EXPENSES

49. A Director may be paid or reimbursed any expenditure properly incurred by him or her in the course of acting on behalf of the Company, and with the authority of the Directors as the case may be. If the Directors so decide a director may be paid all travelling, hotel and other expenses properly incurred by him or her in attending and returning from meetings of the Directors, or general meetings of the Company.

VOTING ON CONTRACTS

50. A Director may not vote in respect of any contract in which he or she is interested or any matter arising thereat.

THE SEAL

51. The seal shall be used by the authority of the Directors, and every instrument to which the seal shall be affixed shall be signed by a Director and shall be countersigned by the Secretary or by a second Director, or by some person appointed by the Directors for the purpose.

ACCOUNTS

52. The Directors shall cause proper books of account to be kept relating to all sums of money received and expended by the company and the matters in respect of which the receipt and expenditure takes place; all sales or chargeable services given by the Company, and all purchases and services received by the Company; and the assets and liabilities of the Company. Proper books shall not be deemed to be kept if there are not kept such books of account as are necessary to give a true and fair view of the state of the Company's affairs and to explain transactions.
53. The books of account shall be kept in the office or, subject to Section 147 of the Act, at such other place as the Directors think fit, and shall at all reasonable times be open to the inspection of a Director.
54. The Directors shall from time to time determine whether and to what extent and at what times and places and under what conditions or regulations the accounts and books of the Company or any of them shall be open to the inspection of members not being Directors and no member (not being a Director) shall have any right of inspecting any account or book or document except as conferred by statute or authorised by the Directors or by the Company in general meeting.
55. The Directors shall from time to time in accordance with Sections 148, 150, 157 and 158 of the Act cause to be prepared and to be laid before the annual general meeting of the Company such income and expenditure accounts, balance sheets and reports as are required by those sections to be prepared and laid before the annual general meeting of the Company.
56. A copy of every balance sheet including every document required by law to be annexed thereto which is to be laid before the annual general meeting of the Company together with a copy of the Directors' report and the Auditor's report, shall, not less than 21 days before the date of the annual general meeting, be sent to every person entitled under the provisions of the Act to receive them.

NOTICES

57. A notice may be given by the Company to any member either personally or by sending it by post or by facsimile or e-mail to him at his registered address. Where a notice is sent by post, service of the notice shall be deemed to be effected by properly addressing, repaying and posting a letter containing the notice, and to have been effected in the case of the notice of a meeting 24 hours after the letter containing the same is posted and in any other case at the time at which the letter would be delivered in the ordinary course of post.

58. Notice of every general meeting shall be given in any manner hereinafter authorised to:

(a) every member, and

(b) every person being a personal representative or the Office Assignee in Bankruptcy of a member where the member but for his or her death or bankruptcy would be entitled to receive notice of the meeting, and

(c) the persons prescribed in Article 8 herein, and

(d) the auditors for the time being of the Company.

No other person shall be entitled to receive notices of general meetings.

Appendix G

List of Principal Consultees

(June – October 2013)

NAME	Address/ Organisation
CARRAUNTUOHIL ACCESS ROUTES/ LANDOWNERS	
John Cronin Eileen Cronin	Cronins Yard access point (1)
Mike Sullivan	Breanlea (2)
Paul & Vera Sheehan	Breanlea (2)
Jimmy Shea	Breanlea (2)
John (RIP) & Sheila Doona Mark (son)	Lisleibane (3)
Donal Doona & Kathleen Doona	Lisleibane (3)
Kieran O'Shea	Lisleibane (3)
James (Jimmy) O'Sullivan	Lisleibane (3)
Geoffrey O'Connor	Lisleibane
OTHER REEKS ACCESS LANDOWNERS	
Patrick O'Sullivan	Landowner, Gap of Dunloe – also Professional Jarvey in Gap
Flor McCarthy	Landowner, Gap of Dunloe & Black Valley <i>Chair of IFA Nat. Rural Development Committee</i>
John Sullivan	Black Valley
Pa Donoghue	Black Valley
Vincent O'Donoghue	Black Valley
Sean O'Donoghue	Cloghernooosh, Black Valley
Denis Sheehan	Carraher, Beaufort
Noel Sheehan	Beaufort
Dan Casey	Black Valley
Adrian Stehr	Gap of Dunloe/ Reeks
Donal Foley	Landowner – west end Reeks
Community/ Voluntary	
* Timmy Moriarty (Chair) Michael Flynn Padruig O'Sullivan	Beaufort Community Council
Ms. Margaret O'Sullivan Mrs Sheila O'Sullivan	Black Valley Community Development
Eanna O'Malley BL	Reeks Community Trust / <i>hillwalker / cyclist</i>
Pat O'Driscoll, Valentia	IFA County Chairman
James McCarthy Sean Brosnan	IFA Kerry IFA Chair, Kerry

NAME	Address/ Organisation
Sean O'Donoghue	IFA Paps (East)
Joe McRohan	SKDP RSS/ Tús Programme Manager
Noel Murphy	ICMSA
George Kelly	Farmer, Agri-Tourism/ SKDP Board member Chair: Regional Tourism Board
Recreational / USER/ Representative GROUPS / Upland Partnerships	
Karl Boyle / Helen Lawless	Mountaineering Ireland
Frank Nugent (Chairperson) Dr Mary Tubridy (Secretary)	Irish Upland Forum
Pat O'Sullivan Jane O'Brien Peter O'Sullivan	Kenmare Walking Club (meeting in Kenmare)
John O'Sullivan / photographer	Kerry Mountain Rescue
Marie Kehoe-O'Sullivan	Hillwalker/ MI member
Donal Dowd	Cappanalea OEC
David Rowe	Irish Upland Forum - – founder member of WUC
Pat Ewen Achill Island	Mountaineering Ireland – founder member of WUC
Briggs family, Northern Ireland	Recreational hill walkers
Mountaineering Ireland workshop	Killarney, 6 September 2013
Helen Lawless, Mountaineering Ireland; Ian Hassell Tralee MC; Stephen Thompson Laune MC; Margaret Kennedy & Rosarie O'Connor, Cork MC; Donal Dowd, Cappanalea OEC; Peter O'Sullivan/ Jane O'Brien/ James O'Farrell Kenmare WC; Julie Reeves JR Walking, Bishopstown; John Healy, Cork; Eileen Daly Kerry Outdoor Sports; Darach O'Murchú	

NAME	Address/ Organisation
Business / Tourism	
Liam & Eilis Hodnett	Glencar House Hotel, Glencar Valley
Eileen Daly	Kerry Outdoor Sports
Con Moriarty	Commercial Guide/ navigator
Pat Falvey	Commercial Guide/ Gap of Dunloe
Nathan Kingerlee	Outdoors Ireland : Commercial Guide/ Reeks/ Galway based
Michael Crawley	Mór Active/ Managing Director Caherciveen, Co. Kerry
Murt Dineen	Black Ridge Mountaineering
John Aherne*	Ex-Manager of South West Walks (*no longer with SWW, Dec. 2013)
Linda Woods	South West Walks
LOCAL / STATUTORY & DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY/ AGENCY	
Noel Spillane	SKDP
Patricia Deane	SKDP/ RRO pdeane@skdp.net
Seán de Buitléar	SKDP/ Rural Alliances Programme sdebutlear@skdp.net
Declan Murphy	Faite ireland
Des Moore**	DECLG Rural Recreation section <i>**note - now retired from DECLG, replaced by:</i>
Michael McHale	DECLG Rural Recreation section Michael.McHale@environ.ie
Pat Dawson	NPWS Recreation Manager for Killarney National Park
Padruig O'Sullivan	NPWS – Park Ranger
Tom Curran	Kerry County Manager
Paul Stack	Kerry Co Co/ Senior Planner
Eoin Kelleher	Kerry Co Co/ Planning: Ecologist
Charlie O'Sullivan	Kerry Co Co / Transport
Ger MacNamara	
Cora Carrigg	Kerry Recreation & Sports Partnership
Dr Noreen O'Mahony	Kerry Co Co/ Economic Development
John Griffin	Kerry Co Co/ Tourism
MOUNTAIN PARTNERSHIP MODELS	
Cara Doyle	Wicklow Upland Council, Rathdrum
Brendan Dunford	Burren Beo, Kinvara, Co Galway
Colin Kirkwood, CEO	Cairngorm Mountains Ltd

	NAME	Address/ Organisation
	Matthew Busby	Mournes Heritage Trust