

## Appendix 2

### **Mountaineering Development Framework Mountain Walking**

This framework identifies the structure and arrangements that MCofS should deploy to support the development of mountain walking.

#### **Status in Scotland and Worldwide**

1. The mountains of Scotland offer some of the best mountain walking to be found anywhere in the world. The lack of way marked paths, ready access to wilderness and the scale and grandeur of the scenery all contribute to the unique Scottish mountain walking experience. The Scottish mountains in winter offer the mountain walker magnificent and demanding days with a degree of challenge completely at odds with the diminutive size of the mountains.
2. It is estimated that 6% (300K) of the Scottish population are active hill walkers and 33% of all visitors to Scotland enjoy the mountains by participating in hill walking or rambling; a recent MCofS survey indicated that 96% of members go mountain walking Mountaineers contribute £150 million to the Scottish economy each year.

#### **Description of Activity**

3. The term “mountain walking” covers all aspects of the ascent of Scottish mountains on foot. It is generally understood that the activity rarely requires the use of the hands for progress but may involve travel through and over steep and craggy ground, on precipitous ridges and on terrain covered by snow and ice. Mountain walkers need to be self-reliant and have a high level of personal skill and mountain awareness. Rock scrambling occupies the no mans land between rock climbing and mountain walking.
4. The activity of mountain walking can be conveniently split into two:
  - Mountain walking in summer conditions
  - Mountain walking in winter conditions (it is well recognised that winter conditions can occur in virtually every month of the year in the Scottish mountains)

The nature of the Scottish landscape requires that mountain walkers have a very wide range of skills. They must be able to choose routes where no paths exist, navigate to a high level in poor visibility and bad weather, negotiate difficult terrain which may require the skills of the climber for short sections; in addition they need to be fit, self-sufficient and well equipped.

Most mountain walkers will have learned through a progressive experience in the hills. Those who operate in winter conditions also need to master the use of ice axe and crampons and have a working understanding of mountain weather, snow and avalanche.

### **What does the activity need from MCofS?**

5. By virtue of the high level of participation, mountain walking is the core activity of the Council. Even when it is not being pursued as an activity in its own right it still features prominently in other activities (the approach to mountain crags for rock climbing or winter climbing, for example). Since this is such a big area of responsibility for the Council it may be appropriate for the staff team to share responsibility and expertise.
6. This staff team should be supported by a group of experts (the Mountain Walking Development Group). The MWDG must actively recruit recognised experts and Scottish opinion leaders – it should be clear that it is THE expert mountain walking body in Scotland.
7. The Mountain Walking Development Group will submit an annual work plan to the Executive for approval and will meet at least three times per annum with other meetings by tele conference or other means. as required.
8. The Council should take pains to ensure that mountain walking gets a level of support and attention in policy and operation that reflects its great importance as an activity.
9. The Council has a strong advocacy role in helping mountain walkers liaise with the National Park Authorities, land owners and land managers, The National Trust for Scotland, John Muir Trust and so on.
10. The unspoilt nature of the Scottish mountains is fundamental to the enjoyment of mountain walking. The MCofS needs to continue to promote the protection of the mountain environment and to educate mountain users as to their responsibilities in relation to access, erosion and other legitimate interests (such as deer stalking). The Council needs to work with SNH to promote the SOAC.

### **How is the Development Plan to be delivered?**

11. Dedicated MCofS web pages should be arranged to provide access to information on the sport including:
  - Advice to walkers who want to progress to the mountains
  - Advice to mountain walkers taking up winter mountain walking
  - Ethos
  - Equipment

- Access
- Navigation
- Mountain safety
- Mountain weather
- Avalanche safety
- Winter skills and general winter mountain safety
- “Leave no trace” philosophy in the sport
- Venues
- Geology, flora, fauna
- Maps and GPS
- Guidebooks and literature
- Clubs
- Members’ forum
- Current conditions
- The Munros
- Notable news in the sport
- Sources of training
- Qualifications for formal leaders
- Photo gallery
- Bothies

12. The staff team should be confident to give advice in all of the above areas both to Council members and the general public. They need to have a very good knowledge of the work of the Council’s partner organisations (MLTS, MLTUK, BMC etc) and a firm grasp of the various organisational remits and boundaries.

13. MCofS should aim to become the first choice source of information on the sport for established and would be participants, journalists, government policy makers (such as SNH and **sportscotland**) and filmmakers in Scotland and the UK as a whole.

14. Issuing of press releases and stimulation of magazine and newspaper articles on mountain walking in the Scottish Mountaineer and elsewhere should be done on a targeted and regular basis. MCofS should produce press statements in response to critical media coverage of mountain incidents, rescues etc. in which the fundamental ethos of the sport is made clear.

15. It may be appropriate to adopt a policy which will minimise the promotion and publicising of truly wild places to avoid them being overused. This policy is likely to attract accusations of “elitism”.

### **Liaison, Partnership and working with kindred bodies**

16. The Council should give due prominence to mountain walking in its campaign and advocacy work with government and other national agencies. Support work such as monitoring participation numbers, and drawing comparison with arrangements in England, Wales or further afield should be undertaken. MCofS could stress the particularly useful contribution that mountain walking makes to a “healthy nation”.

17. Links are desirable with like-minded representative bodies e.g. BMC, MCofI, Ramblers’ Association.

18. MWDG should work with MLTS and MLTUK to ensure that the syllabi for the mountain walking qualifications are relevant and appropriate to the

needs of novice mountain walkers and that they are delivered with due regard to the ethos of the sport.

19. The Council should lead the development and delivery of model training events (navigation, mountain safety, winter skills, snow and avalanche etc) which can then be “franchised out” to approved providers and clubs. It is likely to be inefficient for the Council to be a “deliverer” rather than an “enabler”.
20. The statistics available would suggest that most mountain walkers are not currently members of the MCofS and may be a target group for membership growth.
21. MWDG should liaise with MLTS, Mountain Leader Training UK, British Mountain Guides, Association of Mountaineering Instructors, Mountain Leader Association, Glenmore Lodge, clubs etc. to ensure that skills coaching programmes appropriate to mountain walkers exist and that such programs contribute to the ongoing development of the individual and provide routes for participants to progress to other disciplines within the sport.
22. Mountaineering clubs report diminishing memberships and the Council could usefully assist by steering newcomers to mountain walking into the clubs where they can develop their experience alongside more accomplished members.
23. The nature of the Scottish mountain environment requires high levels of skill from mountain walkers – skills that are often not required in many of the worlds other mountains. The MCofS should actively work with its partners (BMC, UIAA etc.) to make visitors (and residents alike) aware of the inherent hazards of the Scottish mountains (the absence of way marking, short hours of winter daylight etc).

### **Development Milestones – Year 1**

- Links established with Ramblers Scotland
- Website updated to include items identified in 11 above
- Training opportunities made available through clubs
- Navigation training provided through partners
- Work with MLTS, clubs and others to ensure that newcomers to the sport understand their environmental and ethical responsibilities
- Engage with the tourist industry to ensure that visitors have a good understanding of the unique environment that is the Scottish mountains
- establish good relationships with the Scottish media so that mountain walking is perceived in a good light.
- More active mountain walkers become members of MCofS

22. All of above to be reviewed on an annual basis by SMDG and then a new work program submitted to Executive for approval. Budget and officer time to be allocated in a manner that reflects the importance and ethos of the sport within the overall work of the Council.