

# ACCESS AND RECREATION

## Cultures of Access

**Katrina Brown:** Socio-Economic Research Group, The Macaulay Land Use Research Institute, Aberdeen AB15 9QH • k.brown@macaulay.ac.uk

A deeper understanding of access and recreation involves attention to the relationship between **PLACE** and **CULTURE** and helps us to address a number of issues



### HOW DOES GREENSPACE LINK TO HEALTH?

Evidence suggests that green and open spaces contribute positively towards health and wellbeing. However, the factors that shape this relationship are little understood.

We are exploring how perceptions and experiences of green or open spaces link to senses of mental, physical and social well-being.

Particular attention is being paid to the ways that mental and social constructs relate to the material qualities of particular environments, and how this might relate to health outcomes.

### WHAT WILL DEMAND FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION BE LIKE IN THE FUTURE?

This SNH commissioned research examines: the socio-economic, cultural and environmental factors underpinning patterns of outdoor recreation, and current and future trends in terms of people, activities and settings.

The most likely future pattern is a greater range of people and activities concentrated into smaller areas. This is due to:

- Re-localisation of recreation (due to pressures on free time and mobility constraints in a low-carbon economy)
- Concentration of activity in most accessible or iconic areas

### CULTURES OF ACCESS: investigating senses of entitlement and responsibility

People's access practices are guided by their conscious or subconscious ideas and assumptions of **entitlement** (who has most right to do which activities in particular times and places) and **responsibility** (what are reasonable steps to respect the interests of others and care for the environment)

These in turn depend on:

- people's mobilities and modes of movement
- people's identities (e.g. walker, mother, farmer)
- sensory and emotional experiences (past and present)
- the circulation of (sometimes competing) knowledges

*The official access framework (Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code) plays a greater or lesser role in this for different people at different times.*

*Preliminary findings suggest that prior cultural norms of access can be at least as influential in shaping access practices as the law.*



### REQUIRES INNOVATIVE METHODS

#### 'Go-along' interviews

Participants discuss their experiences, rationales and motivations with the researcher **during** the course of a recreational outing.



#### Headcam Video Ethnography

Participants record headcam footage of their outing (narrating their experience as it unfolds, if desired). The audio-visual data is both analysed directly, and used in subsequent interviews to elicit and put into context further **discussion** of participants' thoughts and experiences.

