

A Drivers' Countryside Code of Conduct

1. Respect the life of the National Park.

Be courteous to all other users, and take great care when passing horses, cyclists and walkers. Be prepared to stop your engine if needed. Always fasten gates and take particular care near sheep and livestock.

2. Use only vehicular rights of way -

Not all "green roads" have vehicular rights. Even those that have, may not be appropriate for all vehicles at all times. The NPA and LARA groups can help with information.

3. Keep to the defined track,

and deviate only to pass immovable obstructions. Report obstructions, including low branches and very soft ground, to the NPA or highway authority. If the correct route is not obvious on the ground, ask the local users, or check the details held at the NPA, highway authority and local record offices.

4. Travel at a quiet and unobtrusive pace,

and in small groups (recommended 4 cars or 6 motorcycles per group). Remember that others seek to get away from bustle and rush. Don't use routes after dark.

5. Ensure that you and your vehicle are fully road-legal.

"Green roads" do not mean you are 'off-road' and you are subject to the same laws as surfaced roads. Obey all traffic and advisory signs. There is no public right to drive from a road on common land, moorland or fell, sand dunes or beach.

6. Pay attention to 'the Four Ws'

WEATHER:

Do not travel on green roads when they risk being damaged beyond a point of natural recovery when the weather improves. In wetter conditions routes can be especially prone to damage.

WEIGHT:

Do not use roads that may be seriously damaged by the wheel pressure of your vehicle. LARA does not support the use of heavy vehicles on green roads.

WIDTH:

Do not use roads that are too narrow for your vehicle. Avoid damage to walls, trees and hedges.

WINCHES:

Don't get yourself into a position where you need one. If you do, use it only as a last resort. Always avoid damage to trees, walls, and surface while recovering.

7. Remember that wildlife faces many threats,

and green roads can be valuable habitats. Take special care in spring and early summer.

Towards a Sustainable Future

The motor vehicle has brought great mobility and opportunity to most of us. However, the numbers of all-terrain vehicles bring particular problems. Concerns about pollution, noise, erosion and the needs of other trail users are issues to address. It is against this background that the NPA and organisations representing motor vehicle users have produced this Code. The Lake District is a special place that deserves the highest standards of environmental protection.

The Code is promoted by
The Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA)
and is supported by:

The Land Access & Recreation Association (LARA)

Cumbria County Council

Sport England

The Cumbria Group Trail Riders Fellowship

North Lakes 4 x 4 Club

Cumbria Rover Owners Club

Red Rose Rover Owners Club

Clews Competition Motorcycles Ltd

Over the Hills Safari

Auto Cycle Union

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The Lake District National Park

The Lake District National Park is a special place. Created in 1951, it is one of a family of National Parks in England, Wales and Scotland. The national park covers some 2,292 square kilometres and within its boundary it includes England's highest mountain (Scafell Pike) and deepest lake (Wastwater), as well as a stretch of coastline and busy tourist towns like Keswick and Bowness-on-Windermere.

The Lake District National Park Authority

The Lake District National Park Authority is a local government body which has two purposes:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

In pursuing these purposes we will also seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.



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THE LAKE DISTRICT GREEN ROAD CODE FOR VEHICLE USERS

To support the conservation principles of National Parks production of the paper used in this booklet/leaflet minimises environmental pollution.



2002 EDITION

Motor Vehicles in the Countryside

Using vehicles on unsurfaced roads in National Parks is an emotive subject - there are many who would like to see this recreational activity banned. Although the National Park Authority has stated that green road driving is not compatible with National Park purposes, it is following current Government advice in looking for management solutions.

Members of the Land Access and Recreation Association (LARA), believe that all users of the countryside can enjoy their pastime without upsetting others, and without destroying the green roads themselves, so long as care and consideration is exercised.

The NPA's Green Road Code of Conduct aims to promote responsible driving in order to ensure sustainable use of green lanes in the Lake District.



It is intended to make all drivers aware of the NPA's and LARA's approach to trails management and to enjoy their recreation in a sensible manner. Please ensure its success by giving it your full support.

Rights of Way and Restrictions

Vehicles can be used legally on all 'Byways open to all traffic' (BOATs) while use is presumed but not proven on 'Unclassified County Roads' (UCRs).



If in doubt, check with the NPA, highway authority or a LARA member organisation. The use of some vehicular routes has been suspended by Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) - you must obey the signs at the ends of these routes.

Voluntary Restraint

As an alternative to more formal measures, LARA operates a system of 'voluntary restraint' to help solve specific problems on particular green roads. This system is supported by the highway authority and in the Lake District by the NPA. Signs are erected where the system is in operation; they carry the logo of the supporting organisations, a local contact telephone number, and location details. This system is only applied after agreement with local users, and all motor vehicle users are asked to obey the signs. Failure to do so may lead to permanent closure.

Maps and Signs

Do not assume that Ordnance Survey maps give correct information on rights of way. Many maps contain out of date detail, or have serious omissions, especially on green roads. The latest editions of the 1:25000 Outdoor Leisure Map series of the Lake District have classified many UCRs as 'Other Routes with Public Access'. These routes are marked with a green dot symbol. This does not imply that such routes carry vehicular rights. With this new map classification the OS is attempting to show which roads are public UCRs and which are private access roads.

Do not assume that every minor road is public. Some highways shown on maps or on signs as 'bridleway' or 'footpath' may have vehicular rights, but unless you have evidence of this you must not drive on any footpath or bridleway without the landowner's permission.



Trails Management in the Lake District National Park

WITH RIGHTS COME RESPONSIBILITIES

From summer 2002 the 108 UCRs and BOATs within the Lake District National Park will be managed under a new and simplified system that has resulted from the two year Hierarchy of Trail Routes Experiment. Each route will be assigned to one of three categories based on a number of considerations, including the quality and impact of the route, popularity with other users and levels of conflict, whether the route is sustainable at any particular time and the levels of recorded vehicular use.

ROUTES WITH MINIMAL USE & INTERVENTION (*also known as 'green routes' proceed with caution*): these routes are assessed as being sustainable for recreational motor traffic at all times. Recorded use is minimal and no problems or valid complaints over vehicular use have been identified. Some routes may be short, dead end routes where no or little use has been recorded and turning round may be a special problem. The management policy here is one of non-intervention unless problems arise, when consideration will be given to moving a route into another category. These routes will not be signed but the advice contained in this Code still applies.

ROUTES WITH MODERATE USE & INTERVENTION (*also known as 'amber routes' proceed with special care and attention and follow advice given by signs*): these routes are subject to moderate levels of use by recreational motor vehicles and a greater degree of sensitivity and responsibility is necessary to drive or ride them. They may also be used by a significant number of walkers, cyclists and horse-riders. They could also pass by houses, go through farmyards or close to stock pens. The surface of the route may mean that use by recreational motor vehicles is not sustainable in all weathers. These routes will be signed, and advice specific to each route as well as general green road code information will be provided. Please heed this advice.

ROUTES WITH SIGNIFICANT USE & ACTIVE INTERVENTION (*also known as 'red routes' proceed only with great care and follow advice on signs explaining special controls in place*): these routes experience significant use and attract the greatest number of valid complaints regarding vehicular use. They are under the greatest pressure and are subject to the greatest conflict between different classes of user and between users and the environment. Some of the routes cross the high fells and are badly eroded. For these reasons they need more active management. Recreational vehicle users are asked to comply with a variety of voluntary restraint controls. For example, 4x4s will be advised not to use certain routes, one way traffic will be recommended on others or users may be asked not to use a route between holiday dates when it is heavily used by walkers and horse-riders. Red routes will be signed, and advice given specific to each route as well as general green road code information will be provided. Please heed this advice.

All 'green' use routes are surveyed once a year while the 'amber' and 'red' routes are surveyed twice each year by joint teams of National Park staff and representatives of vehicle user groups. The 'red' routes are also monitored in detail for levels of vehicular use. Changes in condition or an increase or reduction in valid complaints could lead to a route being moved into a different colour code. Lack of compliance with the voluntary restraints on the 'red' routes may lead to more restrictive legal controls through Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). This innovative management approach does not prejudice the legal status of routes however.

Management of routes will also include maintenance and repair. This could range from large-scale drainage and re-surfacing projects involving National Park Authority (NPA) Estate Teams and private contractors through to manual maintenance tasks carried out by NPA Voluntary Wardens and local users acting as voluntary lengthsman.

This trail management scheme will be operational from autumn 2002 and will run for two years once the advisory signs are out on site. For further information please contact either the NPA or LARA.