

# DELIVERING POSITIVE MESSAGES TO DOG OWNERS

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JESSICA ROBINSON  
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Supervisor: Dr. Evan Fraser  
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**School of Earth and Environment  
The University of Leeds  
Leeds, LS2 9JT**

**University of Leeds**  
**School of Earth and Environment**



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**Name: Jessica Robinson**

**Signed:**

**Date: 26/08/05**

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The management of multi functional landscapes is changing to reflect the post-modern paradigm. Now, more than ever, the multiple potential values of a single resource are taken into account and managed accordingly. One way of accounting for the multiple uses of a resource is to utilise participatory multi criteria evaluation techniques. Such approaches have often helped to achieve better management. However, there are limitations to the approaches.

Moors for the Future identify the need for delivering more positive messages to dog owners on the moors of the Peak District National Park. There have been conflicts between this recreational function and the economic and ecological functions of the park.

In this study, participatory multi criteria evaluation (PMCE) techniques were utilised to help manage conflicts over the moors of the Peak District. A two-step approach was used. The approach balanced qualitative and quantitative methods as dictated by the idiosyncrasies of the case study.

The quantitative element of the study was found to be largely inaccessible to the stakeholders involved in decision-making and qualitative analysis was heavily relied on. However, the process enabled stakeholders to successfully identify strategies to address the issues.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 PROJECT AIMS

Land management has, in the past been characterised by focusing on specific attributes of the land. For example, many forest areas have been exploited purely for the economic value of timber. More recently, attempts have been made to account for the multiple functions of landscapes and provide integrated, participatory approaches to land management. However, questions remain as to the best way to successfully achieve such management.

This study attempts to address the land use conflicts between recreation, economy and conservation with regard to dog walking on the moors of the Peak District National Park. The study will utilise a participatory approach that accounts for the multiple attributes of the land.

### 1.2 THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

The participatory aspect of the participatory multi criteria evaluation (PMCE) process is important if management issues are to be addressed effectively. Initially, identification of the appropriate stakeholders is critical as it is the identified stakeholders who will decide the nature of the problem on which potential management solutions will be based. Thus if any group is excluded from this stage, their perspective on the nature of the problem will not be heard and as such, solutions cannot be recommended.

Thus, all relevant stakeholders must be identified and efforts must be made to elicit marginalised stakeholders. Indeed, such inclusiveness can help to challenge the boundaries of what is accepted within the context of the process and this can help refine it (Bloomfield et al, 2001). In Waza Logone, a wetland in Cameroon, management that encouraged the participation of women not only led to better ecological management, but “the entire community benefited from revisiting and changing traditional gender taboos” (Gawler, 1998 p8). In consulting stakeholders who may have hitherto been marginalised in the management of multi-functional landscapes, and with the new perspectives that this offers, the PMCE process may help to push the boundaries of what is considered to be accepted knowledge, further increasing the effectiveness of the decision making process and helping to increase access for other marginalised stakeholders (Bloomfield et al, 2001). The value of participation in environmental management can be further illustrated by the potential danger of full dependence on centralised governance for such management. Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, abolished the Federal Forest Service and State



Committee for Environmental Protection in 2000, and placed the forests of Russia under the care of the less environmentally concerned Russian Ministry of Natural Resources. This led to the rapid disappearance of old-growth, high conservation value forests, the over-cutting of more accessible forests and the increased risk of extinction of endangered plant and animal species (WRM, 2000).

The decision making process should be iterative in nature and the participation of stakeholders pro-active throughout. Successful processes have had the effect of inspiring in some stakeholders levels “of confidence they did not have before the process began” (Fraser et al, in press, p10-11) (in both themselves and the participatory process). Such processes also help to generate an increased sense of ownership, arguably increasing the legitimacy of any outcomes (Gawler, 1998).

However, participatory processes can be time consuming and may slow progression towards project aims to the point of compromising the validity of the project as a whole. This has been seen in the case of management of the multi-functional Metolius Basin, Oregon. Here, the extra judicial, time and expense requirements due to increased participation resulted in failure to successfully manage the “conflicts inherent in land management decisions” (USDA Forest Service, 2005).

### 1.3 MULTI CRITERIA EVALUATION (MCE) TOOLS

MCE techniques can help to ensure the true preferences of each stakeholder are elicited, by making it impossible for stakeholders to vote tactically. This helps to ensure the process is more systematic and transparent (Erickson, 2005). The tools need not function as ends in themselves but more to generate results to work from in the context of the decision making process. Evidence has shown that having results to work with is very helpful for stakeholders and can help avoid stagnancy of the decision making process (ibid). Multi criteria evaluation techniques were successfully utilised to promote sustainable forest management in British Columbia. Participants were “positive about the (...) process” (Sheppard, 2004, p17). The techniques employed helped to avoid confrontation and allowed each stakeholder an equal voice (ibid). The project aimed to address multi functional landscape management on behalf of all the interested stakeholders allowing for “inclusion of peoples’ values in the forest planning process” (Sheppard et al, 2004 p2). Indeed, Stagl (2004) argues that MCE is useful for allowing decision makers to “take multiple dimensions of impacts of the considered projects into account without the need for full monetarisation” (Stagl, 2004 p53).

#### 1.4 CASE STUDY

The Peak District National Park was Britain's first National Park. It covers 1438 square kilometres, is situated at the southern tip of the Pennines in the north of England and is home to 38,000 people (PDNPA, 2005).

Nearly all of the land in the Peak District is privately owned. There are about 2700 farms in the Peak Park and most of these are small (less than 40 hectares). Some of the farms are not owned by the farmers but by other landowners including the National Trust and the Water Companies (ibid). Of all the moorland of the Peak District, 32,143ha is open to the public (ibid).

There are up to 30 million visits to the Peak Park each year and numbers are expected to rise (ibid). The advent of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act means that those who do visit will have increased access within the park (ibid). Around 5% of the visitors to the moors are accompanied by a dog. The number of dogs off leads varies from 90% on some southern heathland sites, to around 50-66% on the high moors of the Peak District. Dogs out of control off the lead average from 6-18% (Taylor et al, 2005, p5).

##### 1.4.1 ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

As a national park, the Peak District is an area of international ecological importance. Thirty percent of the park has been designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) by English Nature "because of the importance of flora, fauna geology or geomorphology" (Scottish Moorland Forum, 2005). Also, the Ministry of Agriculture has designated the North and South-West Peaks Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs). The moorlands of the Peak District are open, semi-natural habitats with dwarf shrub heaths (PDNPA, 2005). The moors include dry and wet heaths, blanket bogs and rough grasslands (SMF, 2005). These areas are home to a diversity of wildlife. Arguably most vulnerable to recreational disturbance are ground nesting bird species such as Golden Plover, Curlew, Merlin, Lapwing, Red and Black Grouse, as they breed on the ground for five months of the year (Taylor et al, 2005).

##### 1.4.2 ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

Around 46% of the Peak District is farmed land (PDNP Info, 2005). These farms are of great economic importance to the rural economy. Another major form of income for the rural community as a whole, and in particular the Peak District is the income generated by grouse shooting. Tourism, largely funded by related spending by grouse shooters, is also an important industry within the Peak District.

In accordance with the Environment Act 1995, the National Park Authority Policy on tourism is “to conserve and enhance (...) natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage” (PDNPA, 2005 p7) and “to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities” (ibid). The National Park must also “foster the economic and social well-being of the local communities” (ibid).

## 2. ISSUES OF CONFLICT REGARDING DOGS ON THE MOORS OF THE PEAK DISTRICT AND CURRENT AND POTENTIAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

### 2.1 VALUE OF THE MOORS OF THE PEAK DISTRICT

#### 2.1.1 ECOLOGICAL

Large areas of the peaks are protected for their internationally important populations of birds including Golden Plover, Curlew, Merlin, Lapwing, Red and Black Grouse, that breed there. The legislation that protects them instructs a “precautionary approach” (Slater, 2005 p1). The birds rely on moorland to nest and feed. “If a species cannot breed, it will either become locally extinct or dependent on ingress of other birds” (Anderson et al, 1990:5.8). These birds are vulnerable as they nest on the ground and it has been claimed that dogs off leads can cause them “exceptional disturbance” (The Moorland Association, 2005). Ground nesting bird disturbance has been identified as the “greatest risk arising from disturbance on sites where visitor and dog numbers are high” (ibid).

#### 2.1.2 ECONOMIC

The maintenance of the moors for the shooting of Grouse is partly what maintains high levels of biodiversity there (ibid). There is concern that specific disturbance to Grouse not only affects conservation interests but also may adversely affect the rural economy. This activity brings around £137 million purely from associated tourism. Grouse shooting is now “the only significant income earner which is not heavily subsidised by the taxpayer” (ibid). It helps to pay for conservation management and to maintain employment in remote rural areas (ibid).

Sheep and cattle are kept on many of the farms of the Peak District. The sheep’s wool and meat generates income as does the meat and milk of the cattle. The animals are also used as a grazing management technique (PDNP Info, 2005).

Dog walking in the Peak District generates income from the sale of dog-related goods and more general expenditure in the Park by the dog owners (PDNPA, 2005).

### 2.1.3 RECREATIONAL

Grouse shooting is a popular and traditional sport that provides recreation for many people on the Peak District moors (The Moorland Association, 2005). The Countryside Agency and National Trust recognise the importance of dogs to outdoor enjoyment for many people. Both those for whom the main purpose of an outing is to exercise their dog and also those who are primarily walkers but enjoy the company of a dog (The National Trust, 2005). It is recognised that “dogs play an important positive role in British society” (Taylor et al, 2005, p73). Dog walking helps to promote the health and well being of dog owners and their children (ibid) as dogs tend to be a key motivation for people walking (The Countryside Agency, 2005). Dog walking is also an important social activity. Participants meet and talk to people they might otherwise not know (Taylor et al, 2005, p73) and the larger numbers tend to make people feel safer in going out (The Countryside Agency, 2005). This is particularly important for people who are isolated in the community (Taylor et al, 2005). Dogs may also be used for work and can provide crucial assistance to people with illness or disabilities (ibid).

Dog walking may be beneficial to people but similarly, a healthy dog relies on such exercise. It has been argued that lack of dog exercise due to them being kept on leads may be detrimental to their health (The Kennel Club, 2001). A press release by the Kennel Club in 2001 explained how a local vet had reported that she and her colleagues had begun to see behavioural problems with dogs brought to the practice “due to lack of exercise and being kept on the lead” (Taylor et al, 2005 p73). She had explained how “dogs get far more exercise off the lead and this form of exercise gives the greatest pleasure to both dogs and their owners” (ibid).

It is questionable whether the positive aspects of dog ownership are currently being promoted enough on behalf of the “significant minority of regular access users [who] are dog owners” (ibid, piii). The needs and preferences of dog owners are “similar to non-dog owners, although they like to have opportunities to let their dog safely off its lead” (ibid). Systems are in place to help ensure that authorities address the needs of dog owners. For example, under Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act, 2000, it is a legal requirement for every highway authority in England and Wales to prepare a Rights of Way Improvement Plan. In doing so they must “assess the current and future needs and demands of the potential visitors to the countryside” (Taylor et al, 2005, p97). The Countryside Agency have led the way (in the form of their ‘Exemplar

Project') for authorities throughout England and Wales who are looking to identify the needs and demands of visitors to the countryside (ibid). The project found that walkers appeared to stick to the same routes when walking their dogs, they tended to avoid tall vegetation, preferring to walk on the paths but they wandered more amongst short vegetation like moorland. The project found that dog walkers' needs included availability of litter bins that were regularly emptied, methods of enforcing fouling laws (to keep non-compliant dog owners from leaving dog mess on paths), safe areas for their dog to run off lead, drinking opportunities for dogs, clear signage, clear routes across fields and circular walking routes as they tended to dislike having to turn back. The project highlighted the importance of delivering clear messages and increasing the convenience of compliance with regulations.

A recent study by Anderson Associates and English Nature on the effects of dogs on the Peak District National Park has found that dog walkers are generally unaware of potential for dogs to impact ground nesting birds or for enrichment of soils to occur due to dog urine and faeces (ibid). Sometimes they were also unaware of the Sight of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) significance of an area (ibid, p73). It may be that ignorance of the reasons why dogs should be put on leads is one of the reasons for there being strong resistance to such requests.

## 2.2 EFFECTS OF DOGS

The Kennel Club recognises 172 breeds of dog grouped into 7 major categories "based on the characteristics for which they have been bred" (ibid pi). Some of the most popular breeds have been bred for 'putting up' birds for shooting or pursuing mammals. Dogs can frighten off the parent birds and the eggs they protect can become chilled, killing the chicks inside or hatched chicks can be scattered and may be "unable to return to the parent for protection from predators and the cold" (The Moorland Association, 2005). Other research suggests that this disturbance "exposes the eggs or young to a greater risk of loss to opportunistic predators, especially Corvids" (Taylor et al, 2005, piii). Research suggests that the presence of dogs provokes disturbances at "greater distances and for longer periods than stimuli from recreational activities" (ibid) (including people without dogs), that breeding can be improved when dogs are managed and that some ground nesting bird species "demonstrate no behavioural response but appear to produce less fit young" (ibid) for example Marsh Harriers. Also, the reactions of ground nesting birds to dogs, has an energy cost and this can be significant in winter (Anderson et al, 1990). Even if a dog

does not harm a bird, the response of the bird is to react as if from a predator and this induces high stress levels (ibid).

Ground nesting birds are most vulnerable for five months of the year during nesting season, which varies between breeds but falls from around April to August. Also, patterns of disturbance vary between wildlife species and at different times in the breeding cycle of the birds (ibid).

Hence there is concern that disturbance by dogs threatens conservation interests.

Little work has been done on effects of dogs on other mammals and other animals but it has been suggested that all dogs have “an innate tendency to chase a moving object, such as a wild animal” (Taylor et al, 2005, piii). There is evidence to suggest that dogs may affect behavioural changes in badgers and disturbance of deer, yet there is no evidence that this affects overall populations (ibid).

Allowing dogs to roam free can cause “considerable stress to sheep in lambing time” (ibid p30) and can lead them to abort or give birth to defective fetuses.

Hefting is the shifting of livestock, in particular of sheep, and Fiona Draisey described in a phone conversation on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2005 how this it can lead to sheep becoming lost. This causes problems for farmers including the disruption of grazing management techniques. Grazing has occasionally been prevented or altered due to the presence of dogs (Taylor et al, 2005, piii).

There is a danger to dogs and their owners if they come between cattle and their young, that the cow might charge to kill in defence of their young (ibid).

Dog fouling can cause many problems. Research shows dogs can contribute to “nutrient enrichment of infertile habitats through defecation and urination” (ibid pii). This tends to encourage dominance of nutrient-loving species and reduced species diversity. It is “smelly, unsightly” (Canine Crisis Council, 2005), disturbs other park users, and “can spread dangerous diseases” (ibid), especially to children. It has been suggested that of an “average sized class of school children” (ibid), it is likely that about three, i.e. ten percent of them “have suffered ill health due to toxocariasis” (ibid) and “some performance impairment as a result” (ibid). According to the same study, of all the children in England, an estimated 200 a year will suffer visual impairment due to toxocariasis and some of these “will lose the sight in one eye” (ibid). Toxocariasis “is caused by dog faeces” (ibid) that is often “dumped where others can unknowingly be contaminated by [it]” (ibid). Fouling on farmland can also be detrimental to livestock quality assurance. Contamination by dogs can cause farmer produce to be rejected by buyers (Taylor et al, 2005, pii).

The above problems can be exacerbated by lack of control that owners have over their dogs. Behavioural problems may be bad training but there are also behavioural problems inherent in some breeds (Jagoe et al, 1996).

Despite all the above potential problems, disturbance “is an effect and does not necessarily mean that long term impacts at population level will arise”. Indeed, “in certain cases, there is no evidence of impact on overall populations” (Taylor et al, 2005 p139). Thus there is little evidence to suggest that dog activity affects populations or economy overall. However, the advent of the CRoW Act in mapping area 2 (including the Peak District National Park) in 2004 (The Countryside Agency, 2004) means there is concern these effects, although arguably minimal at the moment, will increase as more people visit the Peak District and as visitor access rights increase.

## 2.3 COMPLEXITY OF THE LAW

### 2.3.1 LAW

There are many old and new laws that relate to the management of dogs under different types of owned land. Under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act, dogs can use the land if they are under close control. Under the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953, it is an offence to allow a dog to be at large in a field with sheep and this law allows farmers to shoot dogs that they believe to be a threat to their livestock (Slater, 2005). Under the Animal Act 1971, an owner may have to pay for the damage caused by their dog. Under the Litter Order of 1991, local authorities are obliged to keep areas clear of litter including dog foul and under the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act, 1996, local authorities must designate areas for dogs to foul in. More recently, the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, 2005 empowers local authorities to issue controls over various aspects of management including fouling. The other concerns that controls can be issued over are dogs on leads, exclusion of dogs, and the number of dogs any one person can walk at once. Under the Control of Dogs Order, 1992, dogs must wear collars with the name and address of their owner. There are also laws protecting wildlife that could apply to dog control. It is an offence to recklessly disturb any bird listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. Also, “any person who recklessly disturbs the fauna of an SSSI” will be fined £20,000 (under new section 28P (6) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981; as amended under the CRoW Act) (ibid).

The number of visitors to the Peak District National Park increases yearly. The introduction of the CRoW Act and associated changes to regulation regarding access land has increased the numbers of visitors who can roam off paths and onto moorland and other areas. Organisations such as the Countryside Agency are looking for ways to best communicate the varied, sometimes seemingly conflicting legal messages to the public in a clear and consistent way.

The CRoW Act came in to effect in the Peak District in 2004. It is a law that allows increased roaming rights to all walkers but requires dog owners to keep their dogs on leads between 1st March and 31st July, and at all times in the vicinity of livestock (The Countryside Agency, 2004). Different types of land have different legislation protecting them. This can be confusing for dog owners who may encounter many types of land on one walk with their dog. For example, there is a popular five mile walk across Ilkley and Rombalds Moor in West Yorkshire. The entire walk is on heather moorland shot for grouse. People on this walk are likely to encounter the following types of land:

- Old and new open access land
- Public rights of way
- 'Requested routes' across open access land
- A seasonal dog restriction for nature conservation
- A spring/summer/autumn 'dog on fixed lead' stipulation under section 24 of CRoW act
- A dog exclusion under section 23 of CRoW act

As a general rule, the exclusion of dogs seems to take priority where there are grouse. They seem likely to be excluded all year round. On rights of way access, dogs do not have to be on a lead but have to be under close control.

### 2.3.2 ENFORCEMENT

Owners not adhering to these regulations can be banned from the particular moor in question for 72 hours. However, on land not protected by the CRoW Act, dogs are not really mentioned, little action is taken when non-adherence is encountered and third party prosecutions are "very rare" (Slater, 2005 p5). English Nature officers, the prosecuting body on SSSI's, "do not have the power to take names and addresses and must prove the offender was aware the land was SSSI and that disturbance was caused" (ibid). There is no record of prosecution of a dog user under a byelaw on moorland (ibid).



Evidence shows that “few people understand or adhere to the notion of ‘close control’ and often ignore restrictions (...) when out of site of other people”(ibid).

Thus, variability in restrictions can be confusing and may not be adhered to, making enforcement difficult (Slater, 2005).

The majority of dog related problems are in fact already addressed under law but these still occur and it is unlikely the law will be changed in the near future (ibid). Thus some other method of communicating the message seems essential.

A new publication that attempts to communicate the legal messages in an accessible way is the leaflet ‘You and your dog in the countryside’. This was produced in 2005 by The Kennel Club, English Nature, the Rural Development Service, and the Countryside Agency. The leaflet addresses issues of fouling, ground nesting birds and other wildlife, worrying of sheep, danger of being chased by cattle and disturbance to other members of the public. It attempts to present the detailed legalities in a more palatable format, advising the times of year when dogs should be kept on leads and in the presence of which wildlife this may apply. It also explains the rights of farmers in shooting a dog they believe to be worrying their livestock. The reasons for the regulations are given in each case, to enable the dog walker to understand why the requests are being made of them. There are also explanations of the consequences of non-compliance. There is an attempt to induce positive compliance. For example, the compliant dog owner is promoted as helping to “protect vulnerable wildlife” (The Countryside Agency et al, 2005).

#### 2.4 MANAGEMENT SO FAR

Management of these conflicts in the past has partly consisted of campaigns and a significant number of dog walkers have been responsive “particularly when they are made aware of the effects” (Taylor et al, 2005 pii) of their actions. Requests to keep dogs on leads at certain times, and signs are made via signage and via literature such as ‘The Countryside Code’ and ‘The Moorland Code’. A report by English Nature has found that generally, wardening, steering and regulations work best in inducing compliance with regulations whereas leaflets and signage are less effective except as part of a comprehensive strategy (ibid). The report finds that signs, either making requests or demands have “moderate levels of effectiveness” (ibid p113). The report advises that a “multi-faceted” and “integrated” (ibid pii) policy is likely to be more effective than one policy (ibid). Indeed, The National Trust have “reviewed dogs on site issues and developed an overall strategy” (ibid p130). Pembrokeshire County Council places emphasis on the delivery of more positive messages with a view to

encouraging movement of dog walkers away from sensitive areas (PCC, 2002). Indeed, as a strategy, “steering people away from sensitive sites” (ibid) seemed to be most effective regardless of the level of restrictions already in place. Much of the focus of dog management in the Peak District appears to have been on negative messages with the banning of dogs or the requirement that dogs be kept on leads (Taylor et al, 2005). Also, reasons for regulations were often not given. This has resulted in less compliance than the Park Authorities, landowners and compliant dog owners would like. Thus a closer look at the methods in which messages are communicated may be desirable (PDNPA, 2005).

## 2.5 POTENTIAL WAYS TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT

### 2.5.1 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DOG MANAGEMENT

Eurobodalla Shire Council in Sydney, Australia have developed a ‘Companion Animal Management Plan’ that focuses on inducing voluntary compliance via the use of polite and positive requests and meeting dog owner concerns by providing facilities such as foul bins (Eurobodalla Shire Council, 2005). Pembrokeshire County Council in Wales make a point of sending positive messages to dog owners. They state with reference to the beaches, “Pembrokeshire welcomes your best friend” (PCC, 2002). They provide details of restrictions that exist and advise the best times to visit. They refer to “miles and miles of beach where your dog can run” (ibid), arguably addressing what is important to dog owners and making compliance the easier and more attractive option. Education can help to achieve management objectives. Many site managers who encounter issues of dog management believe “educating visitors to their land is one of the most effective means of managing access” (Slater, 2004). Given education, visitors will be able to “associate their actions with either beneficial or harmful behaviour” (Miller 2001, cited in Taylor et al, 2005, p131). Indeed, Miller et al (2001) have found that visitors who spoke to rangers were less likely to disturb wildlife and that “in all cases, visitors are more likely to comply with the restrictions placed if they understand the benefits that are likely for the wildlife” (ibid).

Much work has been done on the psychology of compliance with rules. Sam Ham, a behavioural psychologist, suggests that “influencing human behaviour requires changing attitudes, but communication that directly targets attitudes or the behaviour itself usually will not work” (Ham, 1997 p5). James Carter, also a psychologist, suggests that people are more likely to comply with regulations if the requests are positive. He also suggests that compliance can be induced by giving the reasons for the rules, by offering freedom within certain parameters and by invoking fear of

personal harm as this tends to be more effective than explaining the environmental consequences of non-compliance (MFF, 2005). Based on this, previous non-compliance may be due to the fact that messages were not appropriately 'marketed' to the target audience. Indeed, such work can be useful in determining how "the pattern of people's behaviour can be influenced (without breaching their rights)" (Taylor et al, 2005 p35) for example, through steering and use of signs to direct people towards areas where the impacts of dogs will be less significant (ibid).

### 2.5.2 CONTEXT SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING DOG MANAGEMENT

Recommendations for management of dogs have been made with specific reference to the Peak District. A report by English Nature suggests that management may be improved by the use of campaigns that engage with local communities, promoting responsible behaviour amongst dog owners (ibid). The report finds that "trying to engage with local communities over access can help pre-empt problems emerging, or escalating to serious levels" (ibid, p134). Work in the community can also help create "social pressure against irresponsible dog owners" (ibid).

For similar reasons, a permit system has been recommended. This is not necessarily to restrict the use of a site but allows site managers an opportunity to meet with dog owners and "impress on them the importance of responsible dog control" (ibid). It also provides a mechanism for withdrawing permission where the dog owner behaves irresponsibly (ibid). The mere availability of such a sanction may act as a deterrent (ibid). However, the permit system can only be used where access is by permission of the site manager, thus it is of no use where rights of access cross a site or on land under the CRoW Act. Also, this strategy requires a reasonable number of managers present to deter walkers.

Other potential strategies include identifying sacrifice areas to deal with the problems associated with fouling and providing better facilities including more foul bins. Zoning is recommended to better clarify the legal requirements of dog walkers (ibid). Also to clarify messages to dog walkers, it is recommended that a number of organisations be engaged in determining a common approach to the issues (Cornwall County Council, 2004).

### 2.6 RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Using the participatory practices that have previously been adopted to manage multi-functional landscape conflicts, this study will seek to address the issues of conflict

surrounding dog walking and the moors of the Peak District National Park. PMCE methods will be utilised to help identify the best strategies to deal with the conflict. Careful balancing of the benefits of participatory techniques, with the benefits of MCE along with an awareness of the limitations of both may help to address the issues of this particular case study effectively and within the given time frame. This study may shed light on the relative benefits and limitations to the PMCE process.

### 3. METHODS OF ADDRESSING MANAGEMENT CONFLICT ISSUES ON THE MOORS OF THE PEAK DISTRICT

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the methods employed to help address the initial project goal set by Moors for the Future; delivering more positive messages to dog owners on the moors of the Peak District. The chapter describes the methods employed in achieving this aim and the rationale behind the techniques used.

The scientific paradigm from which this study is launched must be alluded to due to inevitable biases and assumptions that will be made as a function of working within this paradigm. The post modern perspective is that there is no one universal truth, that “no one discourse is superior or dominant to another” (Kitchin et al, 2000 p16) and accordingly, “no-one’s voice should be excluded from dialogue” (ibid). The management conflict under scrutiny has many interested parties each of whom has much to lose or gain depending on the outcome of the study. Also, although possible consequences of off-leash dogs on the moors may be known, there is uncertainty over what the impacts of this will be. Given these high stakes and the uncertainty of impacts, it might be said that this issue exists in the realm of “post-normal science” (Funtowicz and Ravetz, 1997 p57). Such issues are perhaps more effectively addressed by methods that account for their high level of complexity. As such, the methodology employed in this project took the form of participatory multi criteria evaluation (PMCE). The participatory aspect necessitates identification of multiple stakeholders who come together to offer their perspectives and provide integrated solutions that account for the complexity of the situation. This helps to avoid over-simplified solutions and helps to better ensure any bias and assumptions are elicited. Bias and assumption is further elicited by the use of multi-criteria evaluation tools. The DETR (Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions) suggest that the

multi criteria evaluation has the following stages and these can apply to the development of “a policy, programme or project” (DETR, 2000, p13):

1. Identify objectives: these should be clear, measurable, specific and realistic
2. Identify strategies for achieving these objectives
3. Identify criteria to be used to compare the strategies
4. Analyse the strategies
5. Choose strategies
6. Feedback: good decisions require continuous feedback

Using this technique, the decision makers establish preferences between options. A key feature of this is “emphasis on the judgement of the decision making team in establishing objectives and criteria” (DETR, 2000 p23). This was done in the form of identification and ranking of strategies. The ranking aspect was useful because it forced stakeholders to make trade-offs between the strategy options and thus think carefully about their choices. As these were relatively simple circumstances, the exercise was conducted with the assumption that the process of identifying objectives and criteria would be enough to provide the required information to enable decisions to be made (ibid). Attempts were not made to weight criteria as it was felt this would introduce unnecessary complexity that would not contribute to achieving the objectives at hand as there was a danger of intimidating or losing the trust and interest of the stakeholders.

It was decided that the most effective forum for decision making would be a focus group. Focus groups tend to be useful in obtaining data that is difficult to obtain using other methodological procedures (Krueger, 1994). It might be said that strategies to deal with dogs on the moors in a way that is acceptable to all stakeholders is one such set of data. Focus groups also tend to be useful forum in which to identify how potential strategies are perceived “by a variety of parties” (Krueger, 1994 p21).

### 3.2 PHASE 1: STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

The first step was to identify the sample, namely the stakeholders who would be attending the focus group. In this case, the stakeholders seemed to be determined by the nature of the study, as the need for certain goals to be achieved in a certain time frame, necessitated quickly identifying those most informed with relation to the topic under study. Thus, stakeholders were identified by a sampling process known as snowballing. This technique is based on a number of initial contacts who are asked for the names and details of any other people who might fulfil the sampling

requirements (Kitchin et al, 2000). The stakeholders were each contacted by email and follow up telephone conversation. Each was asked to recommend any other people they felt might be interested in or have something to contribute to discussion of the issues. The identification of stakeholders needed to be as inclusive as possible without compromising the validity of the progression towards the goals of the project (that is implementation of effective strategies). Thus it could not be too comprehensive as there would not have been enough time left to complete the project. However, attempts were made to identify any marginalised stakeholders. Dog walkers themselves seemed un-represented at the non-expert level. Attempts were made to include non-expert dog walkers at the meeting.

### 3.3. PHASE 2: FOCUS GROUP PROCEEDINGS

The focus group was arranged to take place on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2005 in the Methodist Church Hall in Castleton in the Peak District. Those present were:

Jessica Robinson: Facilitator

Natalie Suckall: Supporting (note taking)

There were five stakeholders present:

Stakeholder 1: Dan Boys (Moors for the Future (MFF))

Stakeholder 2: Mike Rhodes (Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) Access Officer)

Stakeholder 3: John Lees (Chairman, Peak Park Moor and Tenants Association)

Stakeholder 4: Fiona Draisey (PDNPA Ranger for Longdendale)

Stakeholder 5: Steve Trotter (The National Trust)

The room was set up with chairs around a table; the intention was that this set up would help people to feel less intimidated and more at ease with speaking. Prompts were used from a white board and this is where most of the meetings proceedings were recorded. An agenda for the meeting can be found in Appendix 3. Notes were taken of the meeting and it was recorded on mini disc.

Initially, strategy ideas were presented to the group to stimulate discussion. In accordance with the list of stages suggested by the DETR, the first step of the focus group was identification of the objectives and this necessitated accurate identification of the problem. Stakeholders were asked for their view of the issues, in order to gain consensus on the nature of the problem.

Then, strategies were listed and the 'pros' and 'cons' of each strategy were assessed. This helped to elicit the criteria by which each strategy was then ranked.

The intention was that ranking and finalising of the strategies would be completed within the allocated three hours but this was not the case. The stage of ranking was not yet reached by the end of the three hours so it was decided these would be completed in the stakeholders' own time. Explanations of how the ranking should be completed were then given at the meeting and then again over email. Each stakeholder was to rank the strategies from favourite (1) to least favourite (10) in terms of each criteria.

It was explained how, though averaging of the results, the ranking of these strategies would determine the preferred strategies.

As such, decision making took the general form of a two-step process, the first step being qualitative discussion and the second being quantitative ranking of strategies. The concern that the PMCE process could have become too long-winded to be effective (as has been seen in previous studies) was addressed by attempting to keep the process simple, i.e. within two-steps. However, within this, it was intended that the process was iterative in nature, to ensure the inclusion of all stakeholders in decision making throughout. The iterative nature of the exercise was stressed and participants were invited to comment on the final list once it had been determined and sent round via email. There was a balance to be struck between the iterative nature of the process and the need for simplicity to allow for the addressing of issues. The results were analysed by the researcher and the numerical information was triangulated with the qualitative comments that were sent in with many of the completed charts.

### 3.4 LIMITATIONS

#### 3.4.1 STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

The trustworthiness of the data collected may have been compromised due to the fact that the stakeholder identification process was not as comprehensive as it could have been, due to time limitations and due to the fact that not all of the identified stakeholders were present. To ensure fuller participation, that is, identification of the more marginalised stakeholders, it might have been possible to utilise some stakeholder identifying procedures but investing time in this had to be weighed up against the importance of achieving objectives within a given time period and the judgement was that this exercise would be counter productive to the progression of the project.

Some stakeholders identified could not attend the meeting.

There was a request by one of the stakeholders to see the initial stakeholder list. It was recommended by this stakeholder that two of the other original participants should not be invited to the focus group. Further discussion with a disinterested party led to the decision that it may indeed be counter productive to have these people at the meeting.

Although there was a variety of stakeholders, and most people recommended by initial stakeholders were invited, there may have been some that were not identified at the initial stages. The demographics of the decision makers at the focus group must be alluded to as, “the subjectivity that pervades [MCE] can be a matter of concern” (DETR, 2002, p23). Most stakeholders were white middle class males. There was one female and there was concern that, however subtle, power relations may have come into play that meant her voice was heard less than the others. Having said this, she may simply have had less to say and also there was a male participant who spoke less than she did. There were power relations aside from this, in the capacity in which the stakeholders knew one other (as they all did). Some were more familiar and therefore, perhaps, more comfortable speaking. Some had more powerful roles professionally, which may have increased their confidence and influence within the group. However, it was difficult to make adjustments to mitigate the effects of this without knowing any of them individually, or what their relationships with the other stakeholders were like. Addressing this may have taken the form of inviting the quiet ones to speak more but this introduced the possibility of making them feel uncomfortable. Also, on the whole people seemed to feel comfortable with speaking, even if some were more comfortable than others.

#### 3.4.2 CHART RANKINGS

The initial idea was to average the results for each strategy and determine a list of preferred strategies. However, many of the stakeholders interpreted the exercise in different ways, meaning any quantitative analysis would be less meaningful and informative than initially predicted. One stakeholder did not grade each strategy in terms of each criterion but graded the strategies overall, stating that he did not find some of the criteria relevant to all of the strategies. This raises an important limitation of the exercise, that it assumes equal importance of all the criteria. It had been the intention that not addressing this limitation would simplify the exercise, but instead it complicated matters. The complexity and sensitivity of the issues at hand may have been better addressed by a more complex MCE method, but time did not allow for



this. It may have been at the cost of coming up with and beginning to implement any strategies at all, and it must be remembered that this was of high priority.

Multi criteria evaluation methods may generate distrust in the process as they take control of the decision making away from the stakeholders and pass it to the facilitator (Martin et al, 200 cited in Sheppard et al, 2004). For this reason, the iterative nature of the exercise was accentuated and every effort was made to involve stakeholders at each stage of the process.

The nature of many of the MCE exercises is that they compound error at each stage. The exercise used for this project was interpreted and conducted differently by each stakeholder meaning there was a need to compile different types of data into one descriptive set in order to identify final rankings. This may have compounded error further. As such, the results of this exercise may not have been as reliable as expected.

#### 3.4.3 ETHICS

A mini-disc recording was made at the focus group. Permission was first granted by all present. Those present were informed that if at any point they wished to, they could press stop on the player and it was indicated how this could be done.

In this report, although the names of each stakeholder can be determined, their name and allocated stakeholder number are only referred to once, after which they are referred to as their number to help increase confidentiality.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The initial stakeholder list was representative of a wide variety of interested parties. It seemed clear that the parties most critical to the effective addressing of the issues were present. Initially, calls were made to each of the stakeholders to identify the general nature of the issues and the differing perspectives. As well as being informative for the researcher, this was also an opportunity for any stakeholders with anger or distress about particular issues to discuss them on the phone, decreasing the likelihood of such grievances interfering with the process of strategy identification.

### 4.2 RESULTS OF STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

Although most of the stakeholders present at the focus group were experts in their field, they were concerned with the interests of others, whom they represented, and most were in fact dog walkers themselves. Efforts were made to involve dog walkers that were not experts in the subject. The possibility of contacting the dog walkers themselves was investigated by Steven Jenkinson of the Kennel Club and Dan Boys of Moors for the Future but this was unsuccessful. Steve Jenkinson could not attend the focus group and he would have been most representative of dog walkers. However, every attempt was made at the focus group meeting to represent the interests of people who could not be present including Steven Jenkinson of the Kennel Club and David Slater of English Nature.

### 4.3 RESULTS OF FOCUS GROUP MEETING:

The results of the meeting were the identification of 10 strategies. These were;

1. Clarify dog shooting message
2. Card: with photo of dog and information for owners
3. Bottom line deterrent (e.g. high fine)
4. Identify most important target areas for outreach work
5. Taking steps to improve understanding and access to information for farmers and landowners
6. Identify dog exercise areas
7. Improve responsibility for consistency of delivery of messages to dog owners
8. Provide incentives for dog owners
9. Arrange meeting for dog owners
10. Look into marketing and interpretation of messages for dog owners

The benefits and drawbacks of each strategy were then discussed. These were determined to be:

4.3.1 TABLE 1: 'PROS' AND 'CONS' OF STRATEGIES

Strategy	Pros	Cons
1. Clarify dog shooting message	This will work Improves communication	Negative/mixed message Lack of human resources Alienating
2. Card: with photo of dog and information for owners	Improves communication Simple Positive message	Cost (monetary) Might not work
3. Bottom line deterrent (e.g. high fine)	Can stop persistent offenders (will work)	Implementation difficult Negative message
4. Identify most important target areas for outreach work	Good use of resources	No comments
5. Taking steps to improve understanding and access to information for farmers and landowners	Resolve tensions	Dismissive 'Wooly' (unclear) Absconding responsibility
6. Identify dog exercise areas	Positive message Good way to communicate with dog owners	Resistance to change Affect local ecology Difficult to identify areas Difficult to police
7. Improve responsibility for consistency of delivery of messages to dog owners	Better communication of legislation	More restrictive: not allowing for local variance
8. Provide incentives for dog owners	Increased communication and understanding Positive message	Monetary cost Difficult to police
9. Arrange meeting for dog owners	No comments	Target audience will not go
10. Look into marketing	Improve communication	Labour intensive

and interpretation of messages for dog owners	Could work Self-working (needs no policing)	
-----------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------	--

From this, it became clear which criteria each strategy would be judged by. For example, a drawback of strategy (1) was that this may be perceived as a negative message, so it was decided all strategies would be reviewed in the light of how positive or negative a message they delivered.

In the group context, such potential criteria were circled on the white board and it was explained to the group that this was how each strategy was to be judged. In the end, sixteen criteria were identified. A chart was compiled, away from the group context (due to time pressures). For the chart please refer to Appendix 1. This was sent off to each stakeholder to be completed. All but one stakeholder filled in and returned the charts.

Two stakeholders who were invited to but not able to attend the meeting were invited at the request of all the stakeholders present at the meeting, to contribute to the decision making process by completing a rankings chart. The results from these two stakeholders are used below to reconfirm or shed new light on the findings of the initial focus group. This is so as to not compromise the validity of the findings of those who were present at the meeting, and the common understanding on which the meeting was conducted.

#### 4.4. STRATEGY PREFERENCE OF THOSE PRESENT AT FOCUS GROUP

Some complication was involved in the interpretation of results as many of the stakeholders interpreted the task in different ways. The final results are presented below, followed by qualitative description of the complications of each case. Numerical detail of how these results were reached can be found in Appendix 2.

4.4.1 TABLE 2: STRATEGY PREFERENCE OF THOSE PRESENT AT FOCUS GROUP

	1 <sup>st</sup> favourite strategy	2 <sup>nd</sup> favourite strategy	3 <sup>rd</sup> favourite strategy	4 <sup>th</sup> favourite strategy	5 <sup>th</sup> favourite strategy	6 <sup>th</sup> favourite strategy	7 <sup>th</sup> favourite strategy	8 <sup>th</sup> favourite strategy	9 <sup>th</sup> favourite strategy	10 <sup>th</sup> favourite strategy
SH (1)	10	7	2	9	4	1	5	6	8	3
SH (2)	10	4	5	2	7	8	3	9	6	1
SH (3)	7	10	3	1	8	9	6	5	4	2
SH (4)	7	5	2 and 9	4	6	10	1	3	N/A	N/A

Stakeholder 1 ranked the strategies in order of preference overall, not in terms of each criteria. He indicated which criteria he felt were relevant to each strategy but this did not impact on the results of his rankings as these were already done. The fact that he felt some criteria were more relevant than others to different strategies is important as it touches on a weakness of this approach, as discussed above.

Stakeholder 3 did not rank the strategies, but scored them in terms of each criterion. If he thought a strategy would work (first criteria), he gave it a '1', but if he thought another strategy would work just as well, he also gave it a '1'. So there is no ranking here, but scoring. To elicit his preference overall, the total scores for each strategy were added up and the lowest scoring was taken to be his favourite, progressing up to the highest scoring as his least favourite. He did not make any comments, so this was identified as being the best way of handling these results.

Under strategy 6, criteria 5, stakeholder 4 has put '1/5', so an average of this was taken (3). Also, this stakeholder has put no results for strategy 8, just a question mark.

Overall, the favourite strategies seem to be 10: Look into marketing and interpretation of messages to dog owners, 7: Improve responsibility for consistent delivery of messages to dog owners and 2: Card: with photo of dog and information

for owners is popular but with one exception. This strategy seems slightly controversial given that most have ranked it quite highly with one exception who put it last. The controversy caused may be a sign that the strategy is worth investigating. It may help discover what should be done, by identifying what people strongly feel should not be done. Also, strategy 2 was popular at the meeting so may be worth looking into. Strategy 5 may not be an immediately apparent choice as dictated by the quantitative results, but may be worth looking into, due to its' popularity at the focus group.

#### 4.5 RESULTS OF THOSE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RANKING OF STRATEGIES

Two stakeholders who could not attend the focus group itself were invited to complete the ranking of strategies. These were Steven Jenkinson of the Kennel Club (stakeholder 6) and David Slater of English Nature (stakeholder 7). The above results can be reconfirmed or challenged by their contributions.

Stakeholder 6 made many notes with his rankings. He renamed the chart headings. He scored strategies and provided new columns entitled 'notes', 'benefits' and 'drawbacks'. He has not ranked but scored the strategies overall. He scored the strategies in reverse order (favourite strategy =10, least favourite = 1). These have been 're-reversed' so as to be comparable with the results of other stakeholders. Details of this can be found in Appendix 2.

In his comments that accompanies the rankings, stakeholder 6 said that strategies 4,5,7, and 10 were the most "immediately appealing" yet the results of his chart suggest otherwise.

Stakeholder 6 Strategy Preference, '1' being favourite:

1. Strategy 7 and strategy 10.
2. Strategy 5, strategy 6, strategy 8 and strategy 9
3. Strategy 2 and strategy 4
4. Strategy 3
5. Strategy 1

Stakeholder 7 ranked strategies 1 and 3 as his favourites. These were not consistent with the preferences of other stakeholders or with the 'positive' aspect of the messages. It happened that stakeholder 6s' preferred strategies helped to confirm the initial findings of the focus group.

The results of stakeholders 6 and 7 seemed to confirm the findings of the initial stakeholder group. Stakeholder 6s' preferences reconfirmed findings and stakeholder 7s' preferences highlighted the controversial nature of the strategies identified, indicating that they may be worth pursuing.

Initial favourite strategies:

Strategy 10: Look into marketing and interpretation of messages for dog owners

Strategy 7: Improve responsibility for consistency of delivery of messages to dog owners

Strategy 2: Card: with photo of dog and information for owners

Strategy 5: Taking steps to improve understanding and access to information for farmers and landowners

#### 4.6 TRIANGULATION OF RESULTS: QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

Many stakeholders scored the strategies instead of ranking them. Given the different interpretations of the ranking exercises, it was deemed necessary modify the initial MCE tool by eliciting rankings from the scorings. Then, due to the inability to rely solely on the numerical process to elicit the preferred strategies, and the higher level of subjectivity that had to be employed in analysis of rankings as a result of this, it seemed necessary to use some method of triangulation to reconfirm or challenge the findings of the initial exercises. This was done in the form of qualitative discussion of the notes that some stakeholders attached with their completed rankings charts. These discussions follow. The following comments look to reconfirm or shed new light on the findings of the initial exercise, that strategies worth looking into are 7, 10, 2 and 5.

One stakeholder felt that some of the strategies suggested dealt with symptoms rather than causes. However, with regards to the strategies identified, it seems these all attempt to address problems at the root cause, which was often regarded to be a breakdown in communication. 'Dog owners' was perceived by some to be too broad a title. It was suggested that dealing with different dog owners would necessitate different, specifically targeted approaches. It may be that this is something that can be explored once the strategy has been identified as worth pursuing.

Concern was expressed regarding the difficulty of ranking the strategies without knowledge of the wider context of the strategies and what form implementation would take. Some difficulties were expressed with the methods employed, i.e. the ranking technique. For example, concern was raised that rankings may oversimplify the

issues leaving opportunity for misinterpretation. This would not be apparent at the stage where strategies have already been identified, but must be taken into account as a possible limitation of the exercise. Also, the fact that some strategies were actions and others were more general aims meant some found it difficult to rank them on the same scale.

#### 4.7 FINAL STRATEGY PREFERENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

##### 4.7.1 STRATEGY PREFERENCE

Although important points for consideration, the stakeholder comments do not seem to force reconsideration of the initial findings. These were presented to the stakeholders with ideas for implementation as follows:

Moderate agreement on:

Strategy 2: Card: with photo of dog and information for owners

Strategy 5: Taking steps to improve understanding and access to information for farmers and landowners

The following strategies were either very popular or very unpopular – this controversy may suggest they are worth looking into:

Strategy 10: Look into marketing and interpretation of messages for dog owners

Strategy 7: Improve responsibility for consistency of delivery of messages to dog owners.

##### 4.7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations of steps that may be taken to implement each strategy:

Strategy 2: Card: with photo of dog and information for owners.

- Identify design (size, shape, material, writing, picture etc), and planned number for production.
- Identify potential cost.
- Identify methods of informing rangers how to distribute them; what is the exact message that should be delivered when handing them over?

Strategy 5: Taking steps to improve understanding and access to information for farmers and landowners

- Gather further information on current understanding in the land manager community surrounding the issues of dogs (where the presence of dogs causes the most disruption to landowners).



- Idea put forward by Steve Jenkinson to identify aims of mooland managers (for example, are these to promote responsible behaviour or deter dog owners altogether?).
- Gather further information on the impacts of dogs on sheep and ground nesting birds and actual impacts on the economy.
- Arrange discussion and presentation of findings of above research for landowners to attend. This should be arranged in consultation with the Peak Park Moor and Tenants Association.

Strategy 10: Look into marketing and interpretation of messages for dog owners

- Identify exact target audience or audiences.
- Identify tried and tested methods of message deliverance based on the psychology of the target audience. Refer to the discussions by Sam Ham and other James Carter about how certain beliefs lead to certain behaviour and how this can be addressed.
- Develop marketing strategy for available literature and signage with regards to dogs in the Peak District National Park in association with the park authority.

Strategy 7: Improve responsibility for consistency of delivery of messages to dog owners

- Identify the organisations and authorities with the most leverage (resources, access, acclaim) in terms of reaching the dog walking public (again, the dog walking public needs clarification and may constitute several groups).
- Engage a representative from each organisation in assisting with the identification of messages that will be sent to dog owners (perhaps this would take the form of a focus group, preceded and followed up by email and telephone correspondence).
- Each representative becomes responsible for ensuring consistency in the messages promoted by their organisation.
- Annual or more frequent meetings to be conducted to ensure the methods are working and that consistency is being upheld, particularly in response to changes in the law etc.

This information was presented to the group by email with the request that comments be made in the near future so implementation could commence.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1 STRATEGIES IDENTIFIED

The results suggest implementing strategies 7 (Improve responsibility for consistency of delivery of messages to dog owners), 10 (Look into marketing and interpretation of messages for dog owners), 5 (Taking steps to improve understanding and access to information for farmers and landowners) and 2 (Card: with photo of dog and information for owners).

The identification of a strategy that looks at improving the consistency of messages is reminiscent of approaches recommended by Cornwall County Council (2004) and Taylor et al (2005) who advise that a number of organisations be engaged in determining a common approach to the issues and that policies should be “multi-faceted” and “integrated” (Cornwall County Council, 2004, Taylor et al, 2005, pii).

The identification of a strategy that places emphasis on the importance of marketing messages to the target audience is consistent with the findings of Ham (1997) and Carter (2005). They suggest that such work can help to identify how “the pattern of people’s behaviour can be influenced” (Taylor et al, 2005 p35). Also, the identification of strategy 2 that promotes communication between rangers and dog walkers and the education of dog walkers, supports the findings of Slater (2005) that education can help to achieve management objectives. It also supports the findings of Miller (2001), who identifies how educated visitors are “more likely to comply with the restrictions placed if they understand the benefits that are likely for the wildlife” (Taylor et al, 2005p131).

The identification of strategy 5 suggests that there are target audiences other than the dog walkers, i.e. farmers and landowners. The need to address this audience was not apparent at the initial stages of the project, as many stakeholders were reluctant to raise the issue due to its potentially confrontational nature. Over the course of the project people felt more able to discuss this aspect. This finding is supported by studies of participatory management of wetlands in Cameroon where the participatory decision making process has allowed eliciting of the real issues, perhaps not immediately apparent to an independent observer. The identification of strategy 5, that may have been perceived as the ‘singling out’ of one party, also demonstrates how the PMCE process was successful in enabling stakeholders to understand the issues from the perspectives of other stakeholders. In the case of the

Peak District project, the success in addressing emotive issues in a diplomatic way was also due to the open mindedness of the individuals involved.

All strategies are consistent with the findings of County Council (2002) and English Nature (2005) who emphasise the importance of ensuring messages that are delivered are positive.

## 5.2 THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

Although efforts were made to identify any potentially marginalised stakeholders, it was also important to consider the amount of time available for this potentially very time consuming pursuit. A balance was struck between the need to emphasise the participatory nature of the exercise and the need to have results at the end of the project. The importance of such a balance is reflected in the difficulties faced by the USDA Forest Service whose commitment to participation resulted in a failure to effectively address management issues (USDA Forest Service, 2005).

All those who attended the focus group were experts in their field. Also, all were white and 80% of attendees were male, suggesting that those who made the decisions were in positions of professional and social power. The process may have benefited from the inclusion of non-experts and community members, especially dog owners themselves. In management of the wetlands of Cameroon, such participation has helped to better identify management solutions and has increased the legitimacy of the decision making process (Gawler, 1998).

Attempts to reduce desertification in Botswana using participatory management found that engagement of relevant stakeholders increased the participants confidence in themselves as decision makers, providing opportunities that “conventional development approached (...) failed to provide” (Fraser et al, in press, p2). Also, the fact that outcomes were reached may have strengthened their confidence in the decision making process. These findings seem to support the findings of this research project. Although participants of the Peak District study arguably had more initial confidence in the decision making process and were not so marginalised as the community participants of the Botswana study, all who attended the focus group in the Peak District made positive remarks regarding the process and were hopeful about the outcomes of the project, even if they had been sceptical at first. This scepticism may have been demonstrated in the way some stakeholders tried to influence proceedings throughout the course of the project.

This scepticism may illustrate discomfort on the part of the stakeholder, as the MCE exercises can have the effect of removing power from the hands of the stakeholders

and placing it in those of the facilitator. Power relations both between the focus group attendees as a whole and the facilitator and amongst the focus group attendees, were mitigated as much as possible. Care was taken that stakeholders would feel empowered all the way through the process, particularly in the focus group context, and as much as was possible that the voices of the stakeholders were heard over that of the facilitator. However, stakeholders were generally happy with the balance of power in the proceedings perhaps because the issues, although emotive, were not highly politically sensitive.

### 5.3 MCE TOOLS

Care was taken that the participatory aspect of the process fed into formal decision making (MCE) processes as based on research in participatory management by Fraser et al (in press), so as to avoid the danger of the process being viewed as irrelevant by policy makers and participants (Fraser et al, in press, p2).

Due to the inconsistent methods that stakeholders employed to fill out charts, the chances for tactical voting were increased, and the process was less systematic and transparent than initially hoped for. However, there was still less chance for tactical voting than if the process had been fully qualitative, and similarly, the process was more systematic and transparent than if the methods had not utilised an MCE tool. These results suggest that such MCE methods, as recommended by the DETR for decision making, can be useful if adapted to suit a particular context, and if room for improvisation and error are allowed. The use of a relatively simple MCE tool resulted in high levels of confusion and misinterpretation by stakeholders. Attempts were made to communicate the task in an understandable manner and stakeholders voiced their understanding, but the task was still misinterpreted. The MCE tools may compound error even when conducted effectively. Considering the difficulties that were experienced in this aspect of the project, this error would be further compounded. As such, the methods suggested by the DETR may be too inflexible or confusing in some cases to promote effective decision making.

However, in the case of this study, the MCE methods proved useful in providing a structure for the project, in eliciting preferences that may not have been voiced in a purely discursive decision making process and helped to reduce confrontation between stakeholders. These attributes were very useful in keeping the process moving and avoiding confrontation given the potential for this due to the highly emotive nature of some of the issues at stake.

The use of the MCE tool allowed each stakeholder an equal voice in terms of their ranking or scoring preference, regardless of their input on the context of the focus group meeting. This level of inclusiveness was also found in forest management in British Columbia, where use of MCE tools allowed each stakeholder an equal voice in the decision making process (Sheppard, 2004).

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this project was to identify ways of addressing land management conflicts on the moors of the Peak District National Park and in particular to deliver more positive messages to dog owners. A two-step PMCE process was used to address the issues and identify potential strategies to help manage conflicts and promote positive messages. The main findings of the project are that messages to dog owners should be “multi-faceted” and “integrated” (Cornwall County Council, 2004, Taylor et al, 2005, pii), that they should be properly marketed and that education is key to helping achieve management objectives.

The methodology employed allowed eliciting of the real issues as opposed to initially perceived ones, and has enabled stakeholders to understand issues from perspectives other than their own. A balance was struck between the iterative nature of the process and the need to achieve results within a certain time frame. The project was limited by confusion over MCE tools utilised, and lack of time to proceed to the stage of implementation, although this will be handed over to the responsibility of Moors for the Future. Although it is not yet possible to tell, as strategies have not yet been implemented, it may be that the identification of the four strategies will lead to the delivery of more positive messages to dog owners on the moors of the Peak District National Park.

## 7. IMPLICATIONS

With regard to land management conflicts within other multi functional landscapes, the PMCE process can be helpful in identifying the issues that need addressing in each case, the relevant stakeholders and the true preferences of each stakeholder. The techniques can be particularly useful in mitigating power imbalances within stakeholder groups and can help to avoid conflicts among stakeholders, particularly politically sensitive or emotive conflicts. However, regard should be taken for the idiosyncrasies of each case and balances should be struck accordingly between the time and resources available for the project, and the level of detail that is required for effective management strategies to be identified. Also, it seems critical to identify an appropriate balance between the participatory procedures and the MCE tools, and for these to feed into and compliment one another. Best practice with regard to this may be dictated by how procedures and tools are received by stakeholders. The two-step approach utilised helped to ensure a balance between the more discursive and exhaustive aspects of the process with the more quantitative and simplistic tools,

both of which have merits and limitations. Future research in this area may look into standardising this two-step approach to PMCE.

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## APPENDICES

### 9.1 APPENDIX I: FOCUS GROUP AGENDA

#### **Dogs on Moorland**

#### **Castleton Methodist Church Hall**

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July 10:00 - 13:00**

Facilitator: Jessica Robinson assisted by Natalie Suckall (University of Leeds)

#### Confirmed attendees:

- Mike Rhodes (PDNPA Access Officer)
- Dan Boys (Moors for the Future)
- Fiona Draisey (PDNPA Ranger for Longdendale)
- John Lees (Chairman, Peak Park Moor and Tenants Association)
- Andy Farmer (Senior PDNPA Ranger)

#### Unconfirmed attendees:

- Fred Mitchinson (Game Keeper)
- David Slater (English Nature)
- Steve Trotter (National Trust)

#### **Agenda:**

1. Discussion: 'Dogs on moorland: the issues' (30 mins)
2. Potential strategies to resolve issues (20 mins)
3. Pros and cons of these strategies (30 mins)
4. BREAK. Over which ranking of strategies will be conducted (30 mins)
5. Presentation of final list of preferred strategies and alterations if necessary (30 mins)
6. The next step? Conclusion (10 mins)

Total expected time: 2 hours 30 minutes

The times allocated are estimates.

9.2 APPENDIX II: EXAMPLE RANKINGS CHART

		CRITERIA															
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
		This will work	This is simple and realistic to implement and enforce	This is cost effective	This is a good use of resources	This is a good outcome for farmers and landowners	This is a good outcome for dog walkers	This sends positive messages	This sends clear and simple messages	This will avoid alienating any particular interest group	This will improve communication between interest groups	This will help to resolve tensions	This will increase understanding	This will reach the target audience	This does not abscond responsibility of any particular interest group	This is a 'self – working' strategy that needs no further enforcement	This will not adversely affect the ecology of an area
STRATEGIES																	
1	Clarify dog shooting message																
2	Card: with photo of dog and information for owners																
3	Bottom line deterrent (e.g. high fine)																
4	Identify most important target areas for outreach work																
5	Taking steps to improve understanding and access to information for farmers and landowners																
6	Identify dog exercise areas																
7	Improve responsibility for consistent delivery of messages to dog owners																
8	Provide incentives for dog owners																
9	Arrange meeting for																

	dog owners																
10	Look into marketing and interpretation of messages to dog owners																

### 9.3 APPENDIX III: RESULTS OF CHART RANKING EXERCISE

#### Dan Boys:

As averages cannot be determined, scores are averaged for strategies overall.

Strategy	score
1	100
2	58
3	126
4	85
5	101
6	117
7	48
8	118
9	84
10	43

#### Strategy preference

11. Strategy 10: Look into marketing and interpretation of messages for dog owners
12. Strategy 7: Improve responsibility for consistency of delivery of messages to dog owners
13. Strategy 2: Card: with photo of dog and information for owners
14. Strategy 9: Arrange meeting for dog owners
15. Strategy 4: Identify most important target areas for outreach work
16. Strategy 1: Clarify dog shooting message
17. Strategy 5: Taking steps to improve understanding and access to information for farmers and landowners
18. Strategy 6: Identify dog exercise areas
19. Strategy 8: Provide incentives for dog owners
20. Strategy 3: Bottom line deterrent (e.g. high fine)

#### Mike Rhodes strategy preference:

1. Strategy 10: Look into marketing and interpretation of messages to dog owners
2. Strategy 4: Identify most important target areas for outreach work
3. Strategy 5: Taking steps to improve understanding and access to information for farmers and landowners
4. Strategy 2: Card with photo of dog and information for owners
5. Strategy 7: Improve responsibility for consistent delivery of messages to dog owners
6. Strategy 8: Provide incentives for dog owners
7. Strategy 3: Bottom line deterrent (e.g. high fine)
8. Strategy 9: Arrange meeting for dog owners
9. Strategy 6: Identify dog exercise areas
10. Strategy 1: Clarify dog-shooting message

#### John Lees

Strategy	Score
1	44
2	75
3	41
4	61
5	59
6	57
7	36

8	48
9	49
10	37

Strategy preference

1. Strategy 7: Improve responsibility for consistent delivery of messages to dog owners
2. Strategy 10: Look into marketing and interpretation of messages to dog owners
3. Strategy 3: Bottom line deterrent (e.g. high fine)
4. Strategy 1: Clarify dog-shooting message
5. Strategy 8: Provide incentives for dog owners
6. Strategy 9: Arrange meeting for dog owners
7. Strategy 6: Identify dog exercise areas
8. Strategy 5: Taking steps to improve understanding and access to information for farmers and landowners
9. Strategy 4: Identify most important target areas for outreach work
10. Strategy 2: Card: with photo of dog and information for owners

Fiona Draisey

Strategy	Score
1	47
2	33
3	59
4	36
5	26
6	38
7	22
8	N/A
9	33
10	40

Strategy preference

1. Strategy 7: Improve responsibility for consistent delivery of messages to dog owners
2. Strategy 5: Taking steps to improve understanding and access to information for farmers and landowners
3. Strategies 2 and 9: Card: with photo of dog and information for owners and arrange meeting for dog owners
4. Strategy 4: Identify most important target areas for outreach work
5. Strategy 6: Identify dog exercise areas
6. Strategy 10: Look into marketing and interpretation of messages to dog owners
7. Strategy 1: Clarify dog-shooting message
8. Strategy 3: Bottom line deterrent (e.g. high fine)

Steve Jenkinson:

- Strategy 1: Clarify dog-shooting message (scored 2)
- Strategy 2: Card: with photo of dog and information for owners (scored 7)
- Strategy 3: Bottom line deterrent (e.g. high fine) (scored 3)
- Strategy 4: Identify most important target areas for outreach work (scored 7)
- Strategy 5: Taking steps to improve understanding and access to information for farmers and landowners (scored 8)
- Strategy 6: Identify dog exercise areas (scored 8)
- Strategy 7: Improve responsibility for consistency of delivery of messages to dog owners (scored 9)

Strategy 8: Provide incentives for dog owners (scored 8)  
Strategy 9: Arrange meeting for dog owners (scored 8)  
Strategy 10: Look into marketing and interpretation of messages for dog owners (scored 9)

Strategy preference

To put these in order so they can be compared with the rest of the results they can be read instead as (if 1=10, 2=9, 3=8, 4=7, 5=6)

Strategy 1: 9  
Strategy 2: 4  
Strategy 3: 8  
Strategy 4: 4  
Strategy 5: 3  
Strategy 6: 3  
Strategy 7: 2  
Strategy 8: 3  
Strategy 9: 3  
Strategy 10: 2

David Slater:

Strategy	Score
1	36
2	77
3	47
4	91
5	111
6	88
7	153
8	66
9	78
10	140

Strategy preference:

1. Strategy 1
2. Strategy 3
3. Strategy 8
4. Strategy 2
5. Strategy 9
6. Strategy 6
7. Strategy 4
8. Strategy 5
9. Strategy 10
10. Strategy 7