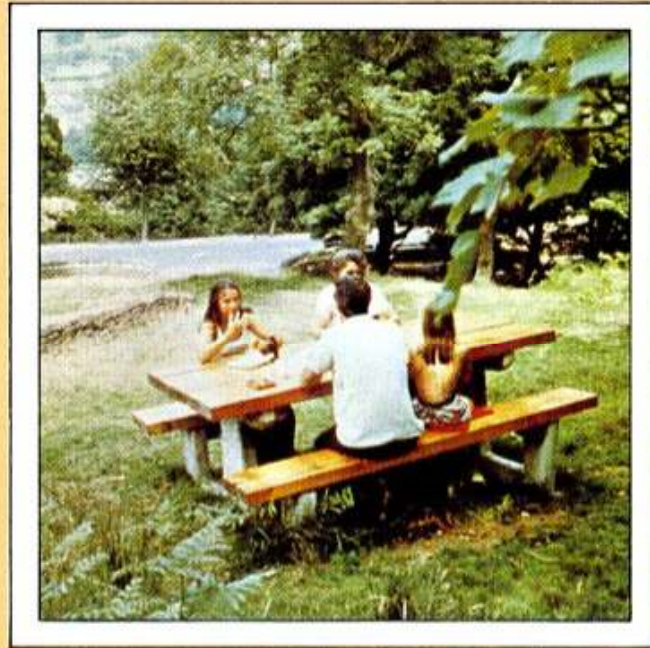
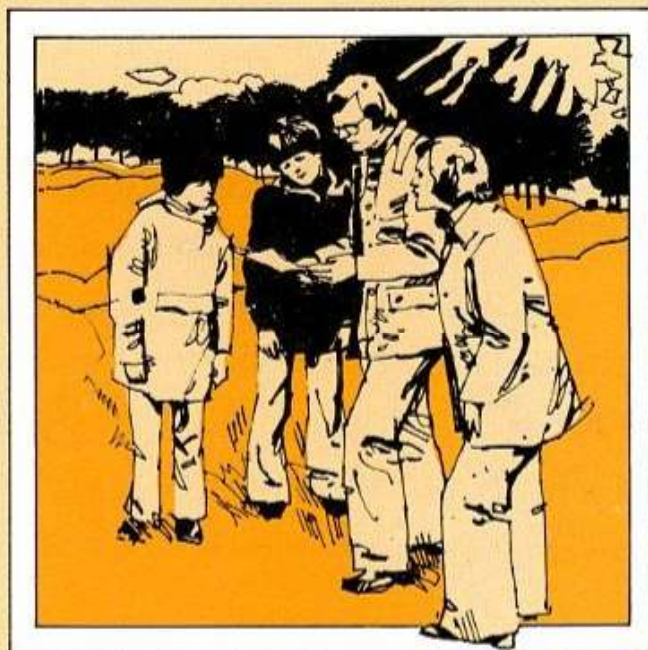


The Forestry Commission & Recreation



The Forestry Commission & Recreation



Published by the Forestry Commission,
231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 7AT

ISBN 0 85538 075 6

Introduction

There is a strong public demand for recreational facilities in the countryside. The Forestry Commission is in a unique position to help to meet this demand, since it is responsible for three million acres of land widely distributed throughout Great Britain, and has locally based and well trained staff with long experience in land management.

The Commission has a continuing policy of developing its forests for recreation, providing facilities for informal recreation and the enjoyment of quiet pursuits. This development conforms with the Commission's statutory powers and obligations, within the financial resources available and subject to the primary objective of timber production.

Recreational developments are designed to harmonise with the forest environment, to avoid conflict with the conservation of the forest, and also to be compatible with Local Authority Plans.

Account is taken of the legitimate interests of the Commission's lessors, tenants, neighbours and others who have priority rights, and byelaws are made for the protection of both the visitor and the forest.

Day Visitors

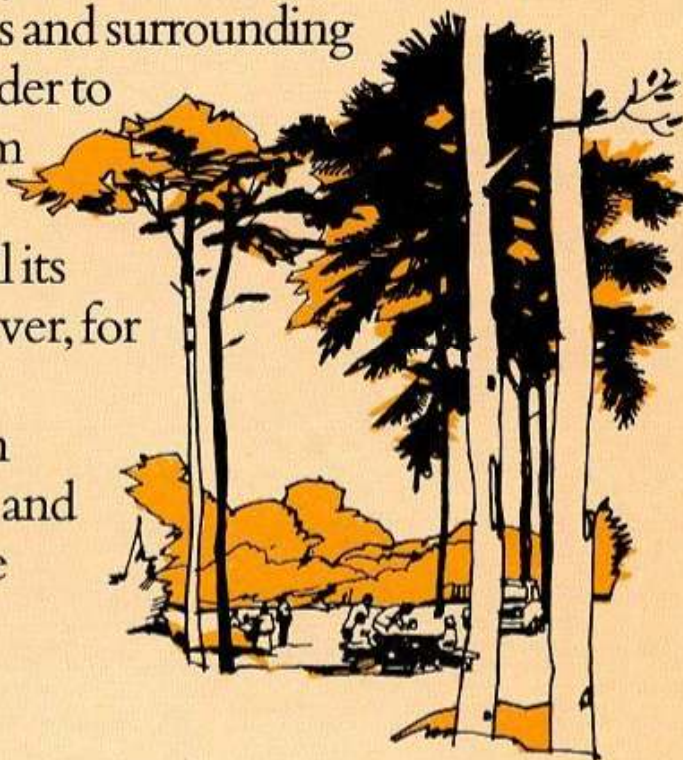
The main demand for countryside recreation is from those who want to spend a day in the country. They come mainly from towns, usually by car, and their principal requirement is for somewhere to park, to picnic and to walk for fairly short distances.

The Commission welcomes the public on foot to all its forests, provided this access does not conflict with the

management and protection of the forest, and provided there are no legal agreements which would be infringed by unrestricted public access.

The main emphasis is in the provision of facilities for day visitors, providing car parks, picnic places, viewpoints and forest walks, particularly where they are readily accessible to visitors from towns and holiday centres. Information and interpretation about the forests and surrounding countryside are provided in order to help visitors to appreciate them better.

Access on foot to all its forests is free of charge. However, for centres established to provide information and interpretation (Visitor Centres), for car parks and other facilities a charge may be made where its collection is feasible.



Forest Roads

The Commission has constructed almost ten thousand miles of forest roads for the efficient harvesting of timber and the management and protection of the forest. These roads also provide access to many beautiful and remote areas. Although the Commission believes this access should be for those on foot, a very small number of forest roads are used additionally as 'forest drives'.

The regular use of forest roads by motor vehicles for recreational purposes is prohibited, except where it is necessary for access to particular facilities, for example car parks, picnic places, and camping sites, within the forest.

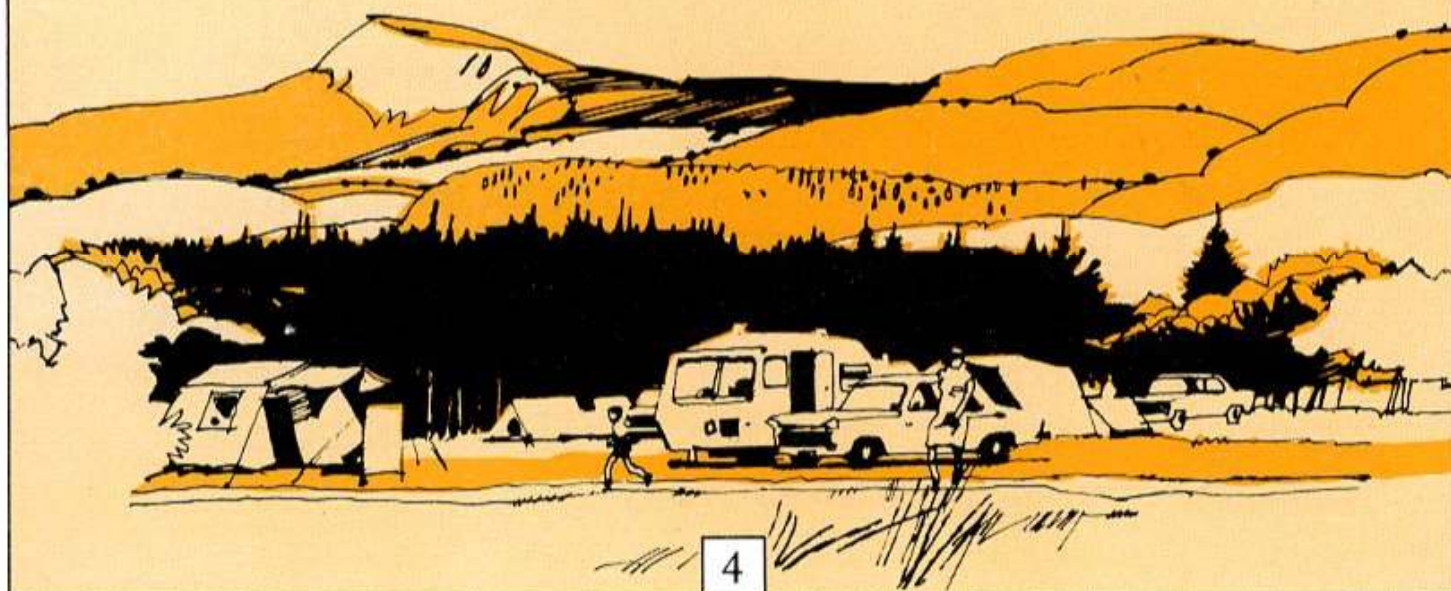
A limited number of 'forest drives', consisting of specially designated forest roads through scenic parts of the forest, are operated as toll roads.

Overnight Accommodation

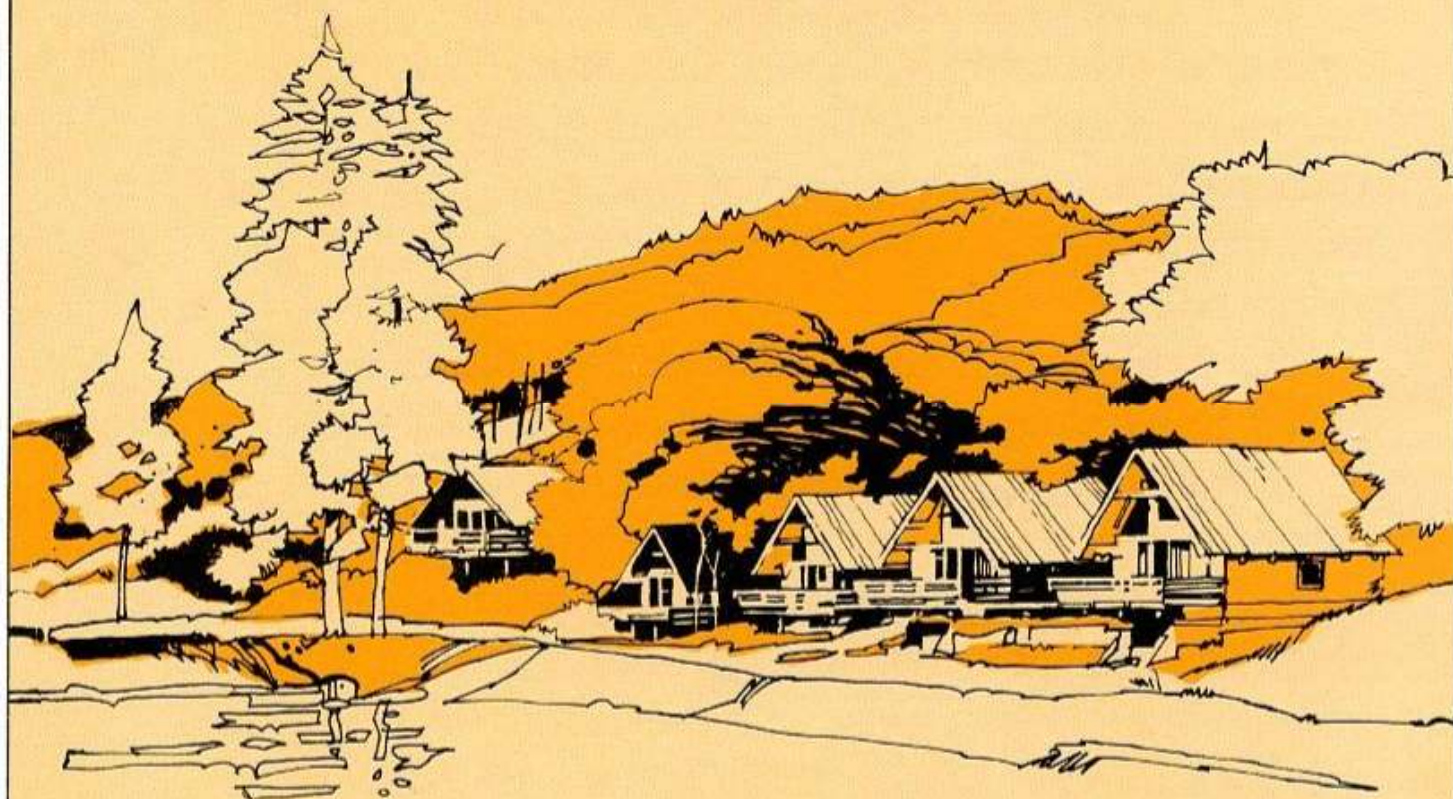
There is an increasing demand for camping and caravan sites and other facilities for overnight accommodation in the countryside. The Commission has run camping and caravan sites for very many years and is a major operator in this field of accommodation.

The aim is to promote forest recreation. There must be a clear demand for the sites and they must be financially viable. The sites are for tents and touring caravans only, although up to ten per cent of pitches may be used for seasonal letting for mobile touring vans. Normally the Commission manages the campsites itself, but the leasing of land or joint schemes with organisations such as the Caravan Club or with Local Authorities are not precluded.

There is also a demand for self-catering holidays in the countryside. Caravans, especially static vans, present many problems and a more environmentally acceptable alternative is a holiday house or a specially built cabin.



The Commission manages self-catering accommodation where appropriate, provided the operation is financially viable. The accommodation may be either its own staff houses which are not needed at the time, or specially built forest cabins, which the Commission may either build and operate itself, or work jointly with concessionaires.



Forest Parks

The first Forest Park was established in Argyll in 1935. Further Forest Parks in Wales (Snowdonia) and in England (Forest of Dean) were established before 1940 and four more in Scotland in the 1940s and early 1950s. The total area covered by these parks is now about four hundred and fifty thousand acres.

The Commission continues to maintain the special status of the Forest Parks. These are large areas of forest, often in mountainous country with extensive unplanted areas, where special provision has been made for public access and recreation.

Special Activities

As the Commission's forests occupy a wide variety of sites in almost every part of the country they provide opportunities for many types of countryside leisure pursuits.

The Commission offers facilities for field sports in accordance with accepted codes of practice, but where any conflict of interest arises, priority will be given to recreational activities by the general public.



Opportunities are extended for fishing and shooting, including deer stalking, and where feasible they are made available on a daily basis. Lettings to angling associations contain provision for the issue of day permits.

Facilities are offered for other sports, eg orienteering, which are compatible with the forest environment, wherever possible through agreement with the national representative body for the sport concerned. Charges are made where appropriate.

Permits are issued to allow other leisure activities in the forest, where these are compatible with the forest environment, eg horseriding, pony trekking, cycling, field archery and sailing. Charges will be made where it is considered reasonable to do so.

The use of the forest for car rallying conflicts in some ways with the quiet enjoyment of the forest, but without the use of forest roads Britain could not stage international events. The Commission therefore allows a limited number of car and motor cycle rallies by agreement with the Royal Automobile Club and under strict control. Special charges are made and agreed with the RAC.

Education

The Commission recognises that its forests have great value for nature conservation and an important part to play in countryside education.

It encourages the wide use of its forests for educational purposes and the study of natural history. For the general public such use is free of charge, provided no special facilities are required, but in certain circumstances the written authority of Conservators may be needed. Charges are made for any special facilities where there is a commercial objective in the study, eg professional photography.

For school visits, prior booking is generally required so that each visit may be properly rewarding, and charges may be made where special facilities are provided.

Sales and Information Points

At Visitor Centres, camp sites and some forest offices there is an increasing demand by the public for information in the form of guides and maps, and for souvenirs of their visit.

The Commission maintains sales outlets at convenient and popular sites for the sale and distribution of guides and other Commission publications, and high quality souvenir material.



Visual Amenity

If forests are to offer acceptable recreation, it can be only on the basis that what they have to offer is attractive, and it follows that developments for recreation must be based on good aesthetic principles. This is as true of forest landscaping as it is of the need for a high standard of design of recreation facilities themselves, including man-made features like buildings and car parks.

The Commission ensures that the management of its forests and the provision of recreation facilities meet these requirements.

Financial Accounting

The operation of camping and caravan sites, the letting of forest cabins, and fishings and shootings are managed so that they can earn a commercially acceptable rate of return on capital and annual maintenance. Provision for day visitors, for example car parks, picnic places, forest walks and Visitor Centres require no particular rate of interest as costs under this activity are considered to be a part of forest management expenditure. However, revenue will be obtained wherever it is reasonable to collect it.

