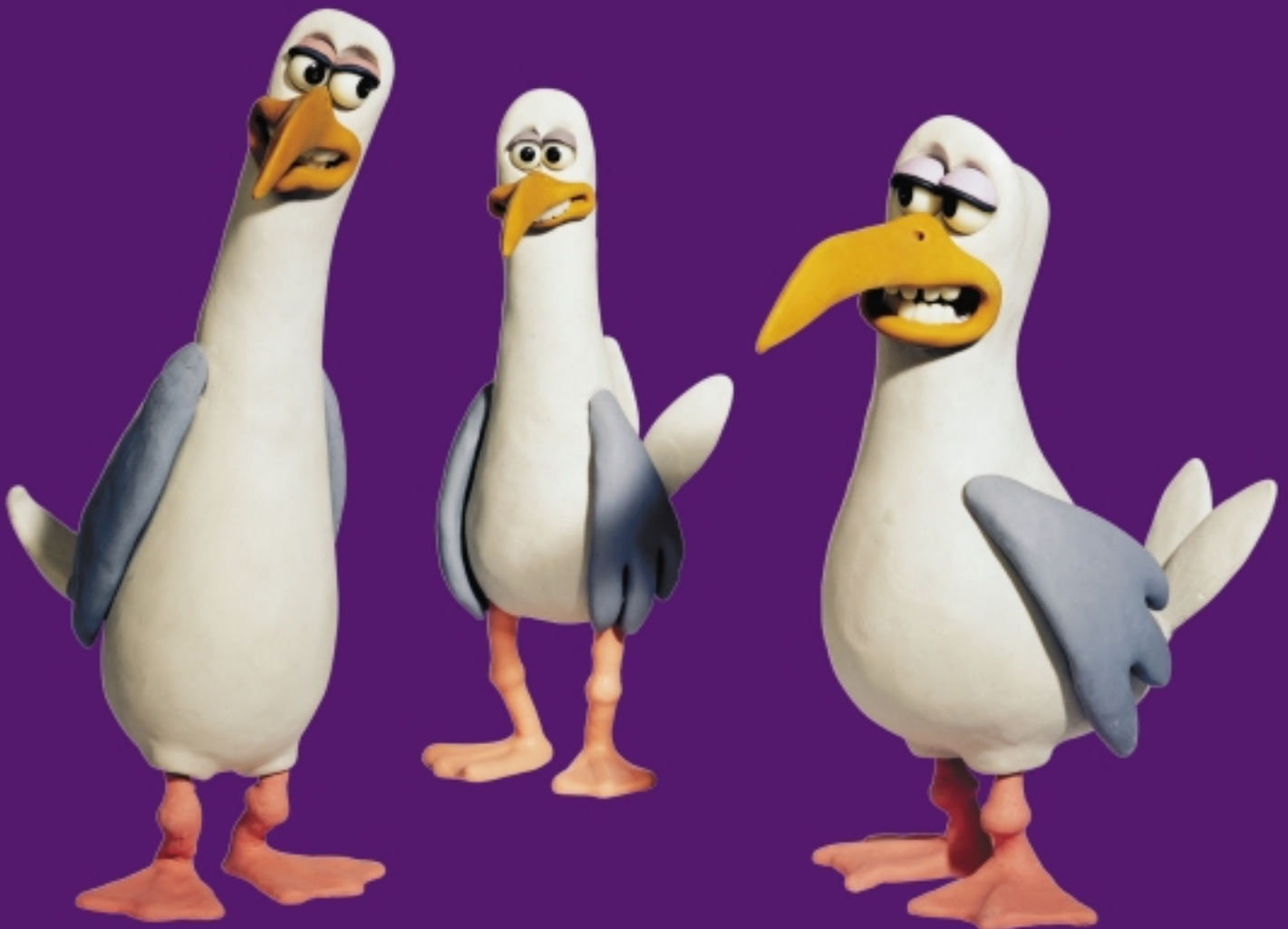


The Countryside Code



An activity guide for

VOLUNTARY GROUP LEADERS



The Countryside Code

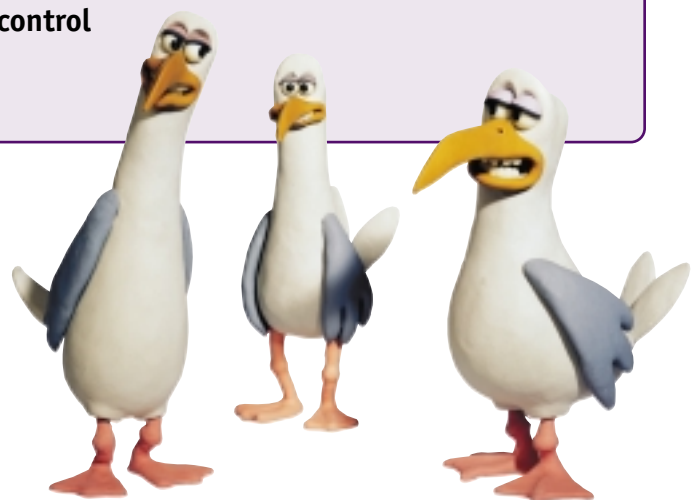


There are country parks, beaches, woodlands, rivers and forests, as well as thousands of miles of public rights of way and other signposted routes you can explore on foot, on a bicycle or on a horse.

You can now also walk freely across areas of mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land (known as 'access land') without keeping to a path.

Countryside Code - *advice for the public*

- **Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs**
- **Leave gates and property as you find them**
- **Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home**
- **Keep dogs under close control**
- **Consider other people**



The Countryside Code now also has advice for land managers. See www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk for further information.

Foreword

The countryside is our biggest and best natural resource. These days, most people in Britain live in towns and cities but have their lives enriched by visits to the countryside. These visits to the outdoors may be for leisure, sport or relaxation. The countryside is also an important first-hand resource for many aspects of education and offers opportunities for those with specialist interests, eg in natural history, geology, history, etc. The countryside isn't just a playground though; it is a living, changing environment where people work, live and manage the land. This environment is composed of every living thing and non-living components like the rocks, water and air. Together, this creates a rich tapestry of landscapes from the wild to the carefully managed. The Countryside Code helps us all to respect, protect and enjoy the countryside.

Introduction

Voluntary organisations represent a vast range of people from all ages and walks of life. Common to many of these organisations is that they exist to provide support for local communities and the environment. Central to all their beliefs is the idea that people can make a difference to the quality of life for their fellow human beings and to the world around them. Ensuring that the countryside is properly maintained and conserved for the benefit of this and future generations remains a key focus of many of these groups. Each has its part to play helping people gain greater understanding and pleasure from the countryside. Increasing public access to the countryside inevitably creates a need for improved knowledge of the rights of others, and awareness of our responsibilities in maintaining the environment and understanding health and safety issues. Whilst it is hoped this booklet will be of interest to a wide range of voluntary organisations it is perhaps of particular interest to the Scouting and Guiding movements and Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme participants.

Some of the main areas of voluntary group practice that may encourage greater support for and understanding of the Countryside Code are listed below.

Beavers can find out all about the Countryside Code as part of their environmental activities and through trekking and trailing activities, perhaps in a country park, where they can learn how the Code helps people find their way safely around the countryside.

Cubs and Brownies can find out about the Countryside Code in many ways. For example, The Outdoor Challenge involves acquiring new skills and experiences, many of which will take place in the countryside. The **OUT AND ABOUT** section of this booklet will suggest suitable activities to help Cubs and Brownies explore the world around them.

The Creative Challenge part of the Scouting and Guiding programme involves performing and presentational skills which are dealt with in the **CREATIVITY** section of this booklet.

A wide range of other challenges such as activities with others, team challenges and helping other people can be achieved by undertaking a variety of the activities outlined in this booklet.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme offers enormous opportunities for young people aged 14 to 17 to combine enhancing personal development, learning new skills, residential experiences and providing services to the community. This booklet will help young people to explore the way local communities use and have access to the countryside. By working with volunteers and professionals employed to maintain the environment, eg Country Park wardens, young people will be better able to learn new skills and support the public as they become acquainted with the changes in the new Code.






The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) provides a wide range of voluntary action for the environment and aims to encourage people of all ages to value and take practical action to improve it. Improving access to the countryside as well as enhancing its natural beauty is a key element of its work.

The activities have been presented as simply as possible and are designed to stimulate your own ideas. You may choose to use them exactly as they are included here, or to adapt them to better suit the needs of your group and the visits in which they are engaged. For example, if your group is in an urban area, you can adapt some activities to suit a visit to a park.

All of the activities are designed to reflect aspects of the Countryside Code. We recommend that you familiarise yourself with the Code and have a copy available for groups' reference as appropriate.

A copy of the Countryside Code leaflet is included in the education pack and is also available on the website www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk or on the pack CD-ROM.

The booklet is divided into five sections:

Section		Page No.
	Out and about – activities linked to field visits.	6
	Rights and responsibilities – activities to explore and express children’s own values and to consider other people’s points of view.	13
	Creativity – activities designed to help children make links with the natural environment, and learn how it affects their lives and those of others.	17
	Access – four discussion-based activities considering ‘Where can we walk freely?’	22
	Useful contacts and links	26

Note for group leaders

Many of the activities in this booklet can be adapted for use by young people of all ages. However, to help you select the most appropriate activities for your group, we have indicated the level of complexity as follows:

- ★ simple activity, useful for younger children or as a quick introduction
- ★★ moderate activity. Younger participants may need extra support and guidance and should be given plenty of time to plan, complete and evaluate their experience
- ★★★ complex activity, best suited to older or more able participants.

Annotations marked (*) indicate that these items are available to download from the Countryside Code Education Pack CD-ROM or the website www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

Introduction

Field trips to countryside locations are a common feature of many voluntary organisations; participants investigate land use and geographical features, visit heritage sites and participate in a wide range of outdoor and adventurous activities.

How often do they really look at the environment they are visiting or consider the impact of that visit?

Do they consider what the effect will be of the total number of visits that site will receive in a year?

Are they aware of the role they could play in helping others find out more about the countryside and how to gain access safely and enjoyably?

Activities based around aspects of the Countryside Code can add value to existing field trips. The activities provide opportunities for planning and preparation in advance of the trip, stimulate more considered awareness while out and about and provide evidence for follow-up work in a wide range of areas. The following activities can be used singly to complement the purpose of the trip, or combined to create a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of human activity on the natural environment.

Activities 16 'Golden Rules' and 17 'Diamond Nines for Changing Places' can be used to develop negotiated codes of conduct in advance of a field trip or visit.

Project

Visits to the countryside will provoke emotions and leave us with all sorts of memories and new ideas. To really get the best out of their visit, and to fully enjoy the environment, participants need to understand the landscape around them. Even a five minute walk will present them with a mass of information, from the familiar to things that are unrecognisable at first! The more information your group can gather by recording, counting and measuring, the better their understanding of the countryside will be.

Your group can collect a huge amount of information if they delegate tasks during the visit and decide who is going to do what. This means they need to talk before they walk and work out what kinds of data collection are going to suit the purpose of the visit.

A variety of methods of analysing the countryside are explained below. Before your visit, choose a selection that you think will give your group a broad range of appropriate information to analyse later.

Trip Timeline

For each location or stop on their visit to the countryside encourage participants to record the most memorable sights/images, smells, sounds and feelings and the time they recorded them. Back at base they can plot their memories onto a timeline to create a multi-sensory diary of their journey.

1

Equipment you will need:
paper, pencils



2

Equipment you will need:

paper, pencils,
digital camera
(optional)



Signs

On a walk, participants should record every sign they see by photographing it or recording the details. Group the signs under the following headings and discuss the decisions:

- a) **Information**
- b) **Warning**
- c) **Permission, eg private, no entry, etc**
- d) **Direction**
- e) **Bilingual, single language, pictorial or symbolic.**

3

Equipment you will need:

paper, pencils,
word bank, record
sheets*



Evaluations

Ask the participants to sort the word bank into pairs of opposites and decide which words in each pair they consider to be positive or negative. Can they think of any other pairs of words that describe the environment they are visiting?

Word bank

Closed, Dark, Managed, Noisy, Littered, No paths, Open, Clear, Light, Quiet, Natural, Wild, Good paths, Signs of erosion.

Devise a table like the one below to record their impressions of the various sites they visit on their trip. Explain how they can grade their values on a scale of one to five, with five being the highest.

BAD	1	2	3	4	5	GOOD

4

Equipment you will need:

paper, pens, digital
camera (optional),
record sheets*,
rubber gloves, heavy
duty polythene bags



Litter Count

During your field trip, record every piece of litter you see along a footpath. Think about how far it is from the car park and how far from the path itself. Could this problem be best solved by:

- a) **More bins**
- b) **More information about the problems of litter**
- c) **More warnings of prosecution and fines?**

(Collect up the litter as you proceed along the path and place in the nearest bin.)

5

Equipment you will need:

paper, pencils, digital camera (optional), species identification charts, access to library/internet

★★

Living Space

Invite each participant to choose one animal or bird they saw or heard about on their visit to the countryside. Help them to find out some of the following factors about its life:

- a) **What kind of food does it eat and where would it normally find it?**
- b) **When does it breed and how long does it look after its young?**
- c) **Which part of the environment (eg tree, hedge, grass) does it live in and how does it get about?**
- d) **Is it more active during the day (which part?) or night?**
- e) **Estimate how much room each one needs to survive**
- f) **Estimate how many examples you might expect to see on a three hour visit**
- g) **Is it wary of humans or easily approached?**
- h) **How and when might humans upset or disturb the life cycle of this creature?**

6

Equipment you will need:

50cm quadrat, paper, record sheets*, pencils

★★

Species Hunt

Using a quadrat with sides of 50cm in length, count the number of species (different types) of plants you can see in five random locations along the edge of a field. Participants may not need to recognise all of them, just call them A, B, C, etc.

Now use the quadrats placed end to end across a path and record the species variation created by people walking along or near the path. Are there fewer species? Which ones survive in the trampled areas and which don't? What can this tell us about how fragile the plants and ecosystems are?

7

Equipment you will need:

paper, record sheets*, pencils, bird species identification chart

★

Birds of a Feather

Using a common birds ID chart, help your group to identify and count the birds you encounter at various points during the trip. For each bird, record whether it was in a tree, hedge, field, verge or wood or on a path or road or on water. Which birds appear to flock together and which seem more solitary?

A-Z of British Birds www.rspb.org.uk/birds/guide/index.asp

8

Equipment you will need:

pens/pencils, record sheets*, risk assessment

★★★

Questionnaire

Please refer to your organisation's policy on risk assessment.

Before the visit, discuss the questions to be asked, and devise a questionnaire. Explain how the words chosen can affect the answers you will get. Agree how participants will respond to different types of people, eg those in a hurry, rude people, etc. Explain how they are going to use the information collected after the exercise.

Conduct a survey of people's attitude to litter and congestion at different sites around a local park. For instance:

- a) Car park
- b) Outside a shop/visitor centre
- c) At a popular location
- d) On a footpath.

Compare and contrast the responses given by the various contributors and their location/purpose for being there.

Use the findings from the survey to create a strategy to reduce litter/congestion in problem areas.

9

Equipment you will need:

map of area to be studied, paper, pencils, record sheets*



Built to Last

On a visit to an ancient building or an English Heritage/National Trust site in your local countryside, give participants time to make a simple sketch of the building and the land around it. Annotate the sketch to show what the building materials are, and any characteristic features they can identify. Try to work out what the land around the building is used for now, what it was used for in the past and if it is an important building.

10

Equipment you will need:

CD-ROM from Countryside Code Education Pack, CD-ROM player, paper, pens



Video

Find the sections of the Countryside Views video 'And it's not all pretty flowers and butterflies' and 'What would make it better?' Help the participants to conduct a similar survey to collect views from people in a range of different age groups. Compare their findings with those from the video. How do they vary? Why might this be?

11

Equipment you will need:

map of area to be studied, pens/pencils, rubbers, record sheets*, plain paper, clip boards, rulers



Mapping the Facilities

On a base map of your visit area, put on all the places where the following are located:

- a) Visitor information
- b) Facilities
- c) Paths
- d) Parking.

Discuss why these facilities have been sited in particular places.

During the visit, participants should confirm the presence or absence of these facilities. Evaluate them on a scale of one to five (five being the best/highest quality) and suggest how they could be improved, giving reasons for their point of view.

12

Equipment you will need:

none



Shadowing

Contact a Country Park Warden or volunteer. Arrange a visit for participants to shadow them for a day or part of a day to get a better understanding of how they help the public access the countryside.

13

Equipment you will need:

map of the area, tape measures, string, rulers, plain and graph paper, pencils, record sheets*



Worn Away

Footpath erosion survey – are we wearing the countryside away?

During your field trip, pick a footpath and identify three places, one near the busiest part (eg the bit that leads out from the visitor centre/car park), and the other two at an increasing distance away.

Mark 5cm divisions along a piece of string and at each of the three locations fix it taut across the path using two pencils driven into the earth. Use a ruler to measure the depth of the path every 5cms. This can be drawn as a graph back in group and the three locations compared.

Consider possible causes for the erosion.

Discuss ways the path could be managed to minimise erosion in the future.

14

Equipment you will need:

none



Residential

Arrange a visit to a youth hostel or other countryside location where it is possible to book an overnight stay. Ask your group to use their knowledge of the Countryside Code to help to explain to visitors how and where the Code can be of use to them on specific routes, eg help them to avoid key areas during lambing or sensitive/damaged areas and to read local signs.

15

Equipment you will need:

OS Explorer map, paper, pencils



Courses for Horses

We all have different expectations for the same areas of countryside. This activity is not about finding 'horses for courses' but the right courses or routes for the different groups of people. You will need a map (preferably a 1:25 000 scale OS Explorer map).

Using the existing rights of way for a limited area, eg a section of woodland, familiarise yourself with the paths and devise a series of routes or courses to be presented in a leaflet explaining to potential visitors which route they should take if they wanted:

- a) A 10 minute stroll (low challenge)
- b) A 30 minute scenic route (moderate challenge)
- c) A 50 minute run (high challenge)
- d) A 30 minute cycle ride (low challenge)
- e) A 60 minute cycle ride (high challenge)
- f) A 20 minute ride on a horse (moderate challenge)
- g) A 20 minute wheelchair-friendly route (low challenge).

You may need to indicate where any of the above options are not appropriate and suggest alternative/extra possibilities.

16

Equipment you will need:
paper, pens



Golden Rules

Before setting out on a trip, ask participants what rules they would expect a visitor to their home to obey; for example, which places are out of bounds or can they 'access all areas'? What would visitors be allowed to do or say and what would cause an offence or be against the rules in their family home. What would happen if they left the front door open or dropped sweet wrappers on the kitchen floor?

Ask groups of two to think of five golden rules on how to behave when they are in the countryside; for example, meeting people, closing gates, encountering animals, walking across unspoilt landscapes.

Get the twos to join into fours and compare their total of 10 rules and then decide which are the best five (avoiding repetition).

Let the fours join into eights and again agree the best five rules before feeding back to the rest of the group. They must give a reason for each rule.

Whilst on their trip or after returning from their trip they should mark out of five how important each rule turned out to be in reality and suggest which other rules they would now introduce.

17

Equipment you will need:
paper, pens, blank
postcards or similar,
record sheets*



Diamond Nines for Changing Places

From a set of group-derived rules about how to behave in the countryside (Activity 16) decide on the nine most important rules.

Arrange the cards into a diamond shape with one in the top row, followed by subsequent rows of two, three, two and one. Then rank the cards within this diamond shape to show the most important at the top and the least (relatively) important at the bottom.

Ask the group to rearrange these rules in order of importance for the following scenarios:

- a) **A 500 metre walk and a picnic**
- b) **A five mile hike**
- c) **A 500 person biking event**
- d) **A five day camping trip**
- e) **A daily 50 minute dog walk.**

Participants can select the diamond agreed for one scenario to stick down on display paper and then annotate the arrangement of rules with explanatory notes.

Case Studies

RSPB Wildlife Action Awards

The aim of the RSPB Wildlife Action Awards scheme is to help children to learn about wildlife through a variety of practical activities. The activities involved in achieving the bronze, silver and gold awards are divided into four categories:

- 1) **Finding out what's there** – the activities in this category are about discovering, identifying and counting wildlife, which are essential skills for any naturalist.
- 2) **Helping wildlife** – this category has eight practical activities that will create new places for wildlife.
- 3) **Being environmentally friendly** – these activities involve learning how to use fewer resources and less energy.
- 4) **Spreading the word** – this section contains activity ideas that will spread the word about why wildlife is important to your friends, family and other people. One of the ideas includes being creative by acting out a story, putting on a play, reading a poem or singing to an audience.

For more information visit:

www.rspb.org.uk/youth/makeanddo/do/actionawards/index.asp

Scouts Go Green

The 10th Scunthorpe Scout Group successfully completed their Group Go Green Environmental Award. The first Group in their area to win the Award, their work on the Frodington Nature Reserve is part of a long-term project to preserve a lasting retreat for wildlife and nature. The area was the first site in North Lincolnshire to become a local nature reserve and is rich in wild flowers and animal life.

Over the summer of 2004, the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts were involved in various activities including surveys, scrub clearance and wild flower seed collection. The Group also came up with ideas for a new promotional leaflet and recently spent time constructing bird and bat boxes to be erected on the site.

Explorer Scout Big Garden Birdwatch

One of the Explorer Scout Units in Stoney Middleton District, Derbyshire had a few members who had already taken part in the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch. They convinced the rest of the group that they should work towards the Environment Group Award by completing a project to increase bird life in their local area.

Just down the road from the Group's headquarters, there was a small area of wild countryside. The project team decided to approach the local council to see if they could carry out wildlife surveillance in the area – and were delighted when permission was received.

The Salhouse Sensory Garden Project

This project, set in the Norfolk Broads village of Salhouse, transformed a scruffy building site outside a new village hall into an eye-catching and scent-filled garden. It has a trefoil design at its centre and was designed and planted by members of Salhouse Brownies, Rainbows and Guides. Not only did it give the girls the chance to learn about and experience gardening first hand, it also provided a valuable amenity in the centre of Salhouse. The garden has been planted as a sensory garden, and was the girls' contribution to the You and Me Together Challenge, initiated by Girlguiding UK.

Introduction

The new Countryside Code has been developed to help people understand the rights and interests of everybody that lives in, works in, or visits the countryside. It addresses potential areas of conflict and indicates appropriate conduct to ensure a positive experience for all. However, participants could ask themselves what other situations might the Code have dealt with? Are the attitudes and values expressed ones that we all share? What would they like to see included in the Code and what would they take out?

The activities in this section offer participants opportunities to explore and express their own values and to consider other people's points of view. They also encourage participants to question and debate topical issues and promote negotiation and constructive compromise.

1

Equipment you will need:

copy of the bullet points from inside the Countryside Code leaflet* (1 set per pair)



Classification

Divide the group into pairs and ask them to:

- a) **Cut up the individual bullet pointed lists from the Countryside Code and present them as a card sort without the headings provided on the Countryside Code sheet**
- b) **Read the cards to each other to get familiar with the content**
- c) **Sort them into four to six groups of cards that display similarities**
- d) **Assign a heading to each group of cards**
- e) **Compare group headings and identify the main areas of concern before introducing the correct headings. Identify any differences or similarities between the group and official versions. Ask if the different groups of concern are in any way linked or dependent upon each other.**

2

Equipment you will need:

photocopies of the five key messages from the Countryside Code leaflet* (one per group), paper, pencils



Five Sets of Eyes

Organise your group into groups of five, with each person in the team taking a colour from the list below and assuming the role of that character. Throughout the activity each participant should try to see all issues through the eyes of their character.

Yellow lens: activity man/woman – keen mountain biker, climber.

Orange lens: motor man/woman – 4x4 off-road drivers, motorbike trail riders.

Red lens: farmers and landowners in the countryside.

Green lens: ecology-conscious people, birdwatchers and botanists.

Blue lens: walkers and ramblers.

Ask each group to consider one of the Countryside Code messages in turn and discuss the rights, responsibilities and restrictions it imposes and how they would affect each character in the group. Participants should record the reactions and opinions of each character.

Lead a discussion to summarise the views of each of the five groups; compare and contrast views of 'like-minded' people with those that have different interests and perspectives; discuss whether it is ever possible to balance every different point of view.

As an alternative exercise, consider how each group would respond to each of the Countryside Code guidelines (think about rights, responsibilities and restrictions).

3

Equipment you will need:

copy of the bullet points from inside the Countryside Code leaflet* cut out and stuck on cards (one set), scissors, glue or Sellotape

★★

Sort it Out

Give every participant in the group a card with one of the 26 bulleted points from the Countryside Code leaflet on it.

Ask them to form a line at random and read the card assigned to them. Tell them that the right end of the line equals **most important** and the left of the line equals **least important**.

They are only allowed to talk to a person on their left or right, one at a time. They must decide which has the most important card and shift their position in the line **one place at a time**.

Ask participants to explain why some cards were seen as important and others not. Which were the most difficult to decide on? Why are some rules easy to agree with and others controversial?

4

Equipment you will need:

copies of the five key messages from the Countryside Code leaflet* cut out and stuck on card (one per pair)

★

Top Three

Start off by organising the group into pairs and ask them to:

- a) **Provide the five Countryside Code points on cards and rank them in the order they consider to be most important**
- b) **Join into groups of four and try to compromise to reach a revised decision as to which points the larger group consider to be most important.**

Repeat this with groups of eight. Identify the top three from each group and ask them to justify and explain their choices.

5

Equipment you will need:

paper, pencils, record sheets*, and labels for opinion areas

★★

Stand Your Ground

Set up a room or open space with four clearly defined areas labelled:

- 1 – **Strict rules**
- 2 – **No rules** (opposing corner)
- 3 – **Some rules**
- 4 – **No view** (or do not understand).

Explain to the group that they are going to have to decide for themselves what their personal view is about ten different activities, one at a time. They will need to decide in turn, if the activity you call out needs:

- a) **Strict rules**
- b) **No rules**
- c) **Some rules**

in order that people can take part in this activity without conflict and in safety in the countryside.

Ask the participants to stand together in the middle of the room or allocated space. Call out each of the activities (listed below) in order. Ask all the participants to **walk** to the area that best reflects their view of the need for regulation for that country activity. If they have no view or do not understand they need to walk to area number 4. Record the response by counting the number of participants in each corner and recording the numbers against the activities on a prepared list.

Ask the team members to return to the centre after each activity is called and you have checked why, if any, participants have opted to walk to area number 4. For each activity ask a selection of participants to explain the reason for their choice of corner.

Activities:

- 1) **Tipping**
- 2) **Fishing**
- 3) **Picnicking**
- 4) **Camping**
- 5) **Walking**
- 6) **Mushrooming**
- 7) **Running**
- 8) **Dog walking**
- 9) **Shooting**
- 10) **Horse riding**

6

Equipment you will need:

CD-ROM from
Countryside Code
Education Pack,
CD-ROM player,
whiteboard/flip
chart, paper, pens



Video Opinion Line

Find the section of the Countryside Code video 'And what are your responsibilities?'

Ask the group to:

- a) **Listen to the comments from the young people and write down their key words or phrases on a board**
- b) **Place each phrase along an opinion line with totally agree at the right-hand end and totally disagree at the left-hand end**
- c) **Try to add three more comments of their own.**

Case Study

The Centre of the Earth

The Centre of the Earth is the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust's environmental education centre specialising in teaching and learning about sustainable development. The voluntary-run organisation offers many activities for young people and the local community, including visits to Northcote Farm, a local authority-owned 60-acre country park on the outskirts of Wolverhampton. The farm is of historical interest, and also has a number of grazing cattle.

During the visit, children are encouraged to look at the issues of sustainability and countryside rights and responsibilities by first reading the story of 'Busy Bee'. They follow a trail around the farm looking at the animals, where they are grazing (often on rights of way) and studying how the animals are looked after. They learn about correct behaviour in the presence of animals, and other issues such as the importance of leaving gates as you find them and not dropping litter.

To complete the visit, the children are asked to write their own story about responsible behaviour in the countryside, which is in effect their own Countryside Code.

RSPB code of conduct for birdwatchers

Whether children are drawing, photographing, sound recording, studying or just watching birds, it is important to remind them that the welfare of the bird must always come first. The following pointers are taken from the RSPB's code of conduct for birdwatchers information leaflet:

Habitat protection: its habitat is vital to a bird, and therefore we must ensure that our activities do not cause damage.

Keep disturbance to a minimum: no birds should be disturbed from their nests, in case opportunities for predators to take eggs or young are increased. In very cold weather, disturbance to birds may cause them to use vital energy at a time when food is difficult to find.

Respect the rights of landowners: do not enter land without permission unless open access is clearly permitted. If you are leading a group, give advance notice of a visit, even if a formal permit scheme is not in operation. Always obey the Countryside Code.

Respect the rights of other people: have proper consideration for other birdwatchers. Try not to disrupt their activities or scare the birds they are watching.

Rare birds and the law: never visit known sites of rare breeding birds unless they are adequately protected.

Keep records: much of today's knowledge about birds is the result of meticulous record-keeping by our predecessors. Make sure you add to tomorrow's knowledge by sending records of what you see to your local or county bird recorder.

Introduction

Creative arts projects using the countryside as a stimulus provide participants with opportunities to express their own experiences and emotions in a direct way. Visits to the countryside or to urban green spaces are multi-sensory experiences that can be used to help participants make sense of the world around them and their own place in it.

The activities in this section are designed to help participants think about the natural environment, its impact on their own lives and the lives of others, and the continuity of nature and rural communities. By recording, interpreting and representing their thoughts and experiences, participants will begin to gain a better understanding of the importance of the landscape and environment. These activities can be combined with activities in Sections One and Two to enrich field trips and visits.

1

Equipment you will need:
digital camera,
graphics software
package, colour
printer



Digital Designs

Take digital photographs of one feature in the countryside, eg a tree in a field or hedgerow. Take pictures at long range, medium range and close up. Supplement with pictures, from below and all around, of:

- a) **A single leaf**
- b) **Branch**
- c) **Twig**
- d) **Trunk**
- e) **Bark**
- f) **Leaf litter.**

The images can be sorted and selected and then printed out to make a poster or, using a computer graphics programme, a digital montage. Add captions or comments highlighting links to locations, wildlife or feelings and explaining why the images were chosen.

Mount an exhibition of the posters and montages.

2

Equipment you will need:
tracing paper,
crayons, pencils,
paper



Bark Rubbing

Please seek permission from the landowner before removing any materials.

Ask participants to:

- a) **Use a crayon and an A4 piece of paper to create a bark rubbing for at least five different types of trees. Collect fallen twigs and leaves for each type of tree and either trace or create rubbings of these**
- b) **For each type of tree arrange the bark, twig and leaf shapes to produce a simple design that could also be used to identify different trees**
- c) **Choose five words that they think best describe the look and feel of that tree and place these around the design.**

3

Equipment you will need:
pencils, paper



Questions

Ask participants to draw a gate to a footpath in the centre of a page and remind them of a particular path they walked along during a group visit – they weren't the first people to walk along it and they won't be the last.

Ask each participant to imagine a person who walked the path in the past or who might walk there in the future. Write down any words or phrases that describe that person and the reason for their journey.

Participants could take this activity a step further by turning their answers into a story.

4

Equipment you will need:
CD-ROM from
Countryside
Education Pack,
CD-ROM player,
whiteboard/flip
chart, pens, paper



Video

Find the section of the Countryside Code video 'And it makes you feel...?' Listen to the comments from the young people and write down the words or phrases they use as a spidergram. For each phrase create a diagram/cartoon or sketch that you think best illustrates that feeling.

5

Equipment you will need:
posters of early
Country Code
illustrated by
Norman Thelwell,
paper, pencils



Poster Points

Choose one of the early Country Code posters illustrated by Norman Thelwell. Photocopy the image in the middle of a page of A3 paper. Annotate the poster to show how the artist has:

- a) **Illustrated an issue**
- b) **Involved humour**
- c) **Accurately represented some aspects of the natural world**
- d) **Made the image appealing to young people.**

6

Equipment you will need:
posters of early
Country Code
designed by Norman
Thelwell and new
posters of Creature
Comforts™
characters, paper,
pencils, art materials
for designing posters



Posters for the Present

Consider the early Country Code posters illustrated by Norman Thelwell and the new version with Creature Comforts™ characters. Decide what the common features and main differences of these posters are. Design your own poster to highlight the key points of the Code.

7

Equipment you will need:

plain and graph paper, record sheets*, pencils, ruler



Living Graph

A different way of recording your journey is by plotting a graph. Before the visit, ask participants to consider positive and negative aspects of the proposed trip. Agree a short list of good and bad criteria.

During the visit, participants should rate each stop according to the agreed criteria based on a score of plus five to minus five. Remind them to make a note of the reasons for their score.

Back at base draw a graph with a time line along the X axis and up to plus five on the vertical Y axis above the line and down to minus five on the negative Y axis below the line.

Mark on the scores for each stop above or below the line. Join up these points with a freehand curve. To each high or low point add a comment recorded on the trip.

8

Equipment you will need:

musical instruments or sound effect instruments



Natural Music

Please consider and apply Health and Safety regulations here.

Use any instruments (real or home-made) or sound effects to create a three-piece composition. Each part must depict a different experience of a place in the country at different times, eg a) wind in the trees, b) a sultry summer's day, c) owls and foxes at night in the woods.

9

Equipment you will need:

art materials to create collage/sculpture etc, digital camera (optional)



First Impressions

Please seek permission from the landowner before removing any materials.

During the visit encourage participants to collect items that catch their eye: these could be anything from fallen leaves, twigs, stones, or souvenirs such as tickets, postcards or items that recall a particular place or experience. Remind them not to take anything that might disturb the local environment.

Arrange these materials to create an art installation (a pattern, picture or sculpture). The design should represent the ideas they associate with the recent trip to the country, eg feelings, freedom, nature, space, calm or humans versus nature.

Take a photograph of your collage/art installation.

10

Equipment you will need:tape recorder
(optional)

★★

Performance in the Park

Use drama to explore the possibilities of what could happen in a National Park, along a footpath or in a Country Park. Imagine the conversations and sounds that might be heard if you could listen in as people passed by, the weather changed and the day wore on. Use voices to produce a soundscape – a collage of overlapping snatches of speech and sound effects.

11

Equipment you will need:tape recorder/
Dictaphone/digital
video camera,
editing software

★★

Recording Times

Arrange for participants to leave a tape recorder on at key times during your visit to the countryside to record the different sounds of people and places. A Dictaphone could be used to record snatches of their own conversations, having asked permission first. A digital video camera will help them record images as well.

Edit and sequence the outcomes to provide aural clues of the key events on the trip. The clips could be as diverse as tapping tree trunks, a creaking field gate, the rumble of a cattle grid or rattling sticks along railings.

12

Equipment you will need:pens, coloured
pencils, paper

★

Total Recall

Ask each group member to think about the most memorable time they have spent in the countryside, or a specific moment from a recent trip, and try to recreate five minutes of events as a series of symbols. They do not have to be great works of art – cartoons and simplifications are fine – but there should be no words.

When they have finished, ask them to colour code the symbols to represent aspects such as busy/quiet, relaxing/stressful, solitary/communal or natural/managed.

Ask peers to see if they can reconstruct the experience just by looking at the sequence of symbols.

13

Equipment you will need:
paper, pencils, tape
recorder/digital
camera/video
camera (optional)

★★

Sculptural Sights

Find a park, cycleway or walk where sculpture has been installed to enhance the experience of the visitor. Study each sculpture using any of the following methods:

- a) **Sketch the sculpture**
- b) **Record your thoughts on how it feels (texture)**
- c) **Describe the materials used and their effect**
- d) **Describe the colours used and whether they complement or contrast with the land around**
- e) **Describe the design, including its size**
- f) **Does it depict or represent an actual thing or is it symbolic of a feeling or spirit?**
- g) **Does it make you appreciate the setting more or less? Explain why**
- h) **If there is a series of sculptures, can you work out any theme or relationship between them?**

14

Equipment you will need:
none

★★★

Clearing the Way

Volunteer to help a British Trust for Conservation Volunteer team or local woodland warden to help keep rights of way open, repair path surfaces, remove litter and ensure that signposts are maintained.

Case Study

The Disabled Young Adult Centre

The Disabled Young Adult Centre (DYAC), an Exeter based organisation for people with severe mobility problems, successfully completed a Dartmoor Conservation Project. The initial idea was to pick some brave individuals to do a pilot project aimed at getting out more and giving a greater educational purpose to their outings. DYAC chose conservation and Dartmoor as their favoured themes and so the Dartmoor National Park Authority's Education Officer was invited to put together a programme of visits.

The idea was to pick the same themes as one would for any educational group to enjoy the glories of Dartmoor. The best examples of wildlife, granite, archaeology and Dartmoor's culture and heritage were all studied on separate days. The last visit included an active tree planting session to round off the conservation theme. Very careful thought had to be given to wheelchair access and extra demands were made on the chair pushers, but armed with a sense of adventure and a good deal of endurance and humour, both staff and participants rose to the occasion.

There were some very memorable moments and the outings led to each participant producing some wonderful folders of written work and a magnificent array of artwork. Finally, BBC Radio Devon broadcast some interviews in which three of the participants expressed their enjoyment and appreciation of the project. The National Park Authority supported this with both staff and funding and hopes to be able to help in any future project.

Introduction

The launch of the new Countryside Code coincides with the introduction of new access rights in England and Wales. The Act creates new public rights of access to particular landscapes but also permits landowners to restrict access in carefully designed circumstances.

Where are we allowed to walk freely? How extensive should access be? Who stands to benefit or lose out if access is restricted? These activities explore some of these questions and develop further some of the issues raised in Section Two – Rights and Responsibilities.

Notes on new access rights

In 2000, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) provided new rights for the general public to walk more freely in England and Wales, without necessarily following public rights of way. The Act enables people to walk on mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land (known as 'access land') that was previously off-limits. This new right of access ensures the public's new right is in balance with nature conservation issues and land management needs.

September 19th 2004 is a historic date in England for all users of the countryside, when the new right of access was introduced in the first two of eight regions. More information can be obtained at www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

Access land is depicted on 1:25 000 Ordnance Survey Explorer maps, where it is shown by use of a pale yellow tint with a shaded orange border.

The introduction of the new right of access has resulted in a number of changes to the map symbols that leaders need to be aware of when teaching or revising mapping skills. The 1:25 000 map specification will now vary, depending on whether you have a map with the new access land shown or not.

When you are out in the countryside you may see this access symbol which indicates that you are entering or leaving access land.



1

Equipment you will need:
whiteboard/flip
chart, pens, paper,
pencils



A Question of Balance

Draw a large set of scales on the board or flip chart with **For** (left side) and **Against** (right side).

Ask the question 'Should people have unlimited access to the countryside?'

The participants should write each reason, for or against, in the correct position on the diagram (or on their own copy).

When they have completed this task, explain that some of these reasons are important and some less so. For each idea that is a 'big idea' (positive or negative) assign it a value of three. A 'medium idea' would be two; a 'small idea' would be one.

The participants should assign their own values and calculate the total number of positive and negative values.

Is the balance of feeling about this issue what they would expect? They should explain how their view differs from the group consensus.

2

Equipment you will need:

pencils, paper,
whiteboard/flip
chart, pens



Roam or Moan?

Explain to pupils that most of the land in the countryside is privately owned but has access rights for the general public in certain areas.

Divide the class into pairs or groups, allocate each group one of the following locations and ask them to imagine there are no access restrictions for:

- a) A field of wheat
- b) A field with sheep about to lamb
- c) A field with a bull in it
- d) A field ploughed for sowing, and
- e) A field of wildflowers.

Ask the group to choose one of the fields above and list three ways in which people visiting the countryside could cause a problem if they conducted their activity in that field. For example, think of damage, cost, and disruption.

For each type of field, decide what kind of controls on access could be used to reduce the problem. If younger children need some help thinking of strategies they could consider the following:

- a) Clearer paths
- b) Changing access rights at key times of year
- c) Fenced-off areas
- d) Fines
- e) Warning signs.

3

Equipment you will need:

paper, pencils, the
Countryside Code
leaflet



Speaking Your Mind

In threes, ask the participants to compose a small play lasting no more than three minutes to present in front of the rest of your group. The play should show how the new Countryside Rights of Way (CROW) Act could lead to conflicts of interest. One person should play the landowner, one person should play the visitor on their land and the third should be the narrator, explaining to the audience what they are discussing, how it relates to the CROW Act and suggesting a possible solution.

Scene starters:

- a) A farmer telling a walker that their favourite new moorland walk is closed for grouse shooting
- b) A walker telling a landowner why they have to cross the lambing field even in April
- c) A countryside warden explaining to a picnicking family why they should stick to the paths in a bluebell wood in spring.

Equipment you will need:
paper, pencils



Rights or Responsibilities?

Ask participants to read through the following scenarios and decide if it is a right, or a responsibility, or neither. They should be prepared to explain why they think their classification is correct.

- a) Walking along a public footpath
- b) Taking your dog for a walk on open access land
- c) Not starting fires in woodland
- d) Not dropping or picking up litter
- e) Riding a motorbike along a footpath
- f) Riding a horse along a footpath
- g) Closing gates after you walk through them
- h) Closing gates you find open
- i) Walking in a bluebell wood in spring
- j) Camping on common land
- k) Running along a bridleway.

Try to think up three more scenarios to add to those provided.

Case Studies

Community cycling in the countryside

The Anglican parish church of St George is situated close to Birmingham city centre and has members of all ages, backgrounds and nationalities. As part of its lively and outgoing ministry with young people it organises cultural and social events.

One such event encourages young people to go cycling in the countryside. Over the years, a range of locations have been chosen which have defined cycling tracks and cycle hire facilities. Some of these are local, such as Sutton Park, while others are further afield, including the Wyre Forest in Worcestershire and the Manifold Way in Derbyshire.

Transport is shared amongst the group to ensure that everyone can get there and one member of the church has a large trailer in order to take bicycles for those without cycle carriers. Families without their own bikes can borrow them, or can hire them at the start of the trail. A member of the organising group ensures that this is arranged before the day.

Everyone is briefed about appropriate clothing, safety precautions and first aid and the groups are given a plan of the cycle route on the day. Groups can go at their own pace but meeting points are arranged along the way for social activities and a communal picnic.

These days are valuable for the wellbeing of the young people. Not only do they help them to develop a sense of Christian community, they also offer them a chance to become aware of how to make the most of leisure opportunities in the countryside in a responsible manner.

Green and Pleasant Land for All

Among its many activities, the UK charity Black Environment Network (BEN) provides opportunities for city dwelling groups of black and minority ethnic people to go out into green, open spaces. As a result, many have been able to access the enjoyment of the countryside, and this has had a significant impact on their quality of life.

Few of the people taking part in BEN's activities have been into the UK countryside before. Landscapes in Britain can sometimes bring to mind landscapes elsewhere and by doing so spark a spontaneous response. For example, a group of 20 Pakistani women and their children from Swansea were inspired by the countryside they experienced. BEN's South Wales Project Leader recalls:

'It was on a trip to Craig-y-Nos Country Park in the Brecon Beacons. Being surrounded by mountains and cascading streams reminded the women of their own upbringing in rural regions and started them talking about their relatives who still live there. Prior to this trip, the majority of the group had been urban bound. Many of the women were surprised to realise that open countryside was just half an hour away from the city centre.

'The children didn't really know what to do at first, because being in the countryside was completely new to them. But after a while they wound down and the fact that it made an impression on them was borne out by the way they talked about their day in the countryside when I saw them afterwards. Their lives were enriched by the experience.'

Useful contacts and links

Access to farms	www.farmsforteachers.org.uk
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	www.aonb.org.uk
Association of National Park Authorities	www.anpa.gov.uk
Council for Environmental Education	www.cee.org.uk
Countryside Agency	www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk
Countryside Council for Wales	www.ccw.gov.uk
Countryside Foundation for Education	www.countrysidefoundation.org.uk
Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)	www.defra.gov.uk
English Heritage	www.english-heritage.org.uk
English Nature	www.english-nature.org.uk
Environment Agency	www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Farming and Countryside Education	www.face-online.org.uk
Farms for City Children	www.farmsforcitychildren.co.uk
Farms for Schools	www.farmsforschools.org.uk
Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens	www.farmgarden.org.uk
Field Studies Council	www.field-studies-council.org.uk
Forestry Commission	www.forestry.gov.uk
Learning through Landscapes	www.ltl.org.uk
National Trails	www.nationaltrail.co.uk
National Trust	www.nationaltrust.org.uk
Ordnance Survey	www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk
RSPB	www.rspb.org.uk
The Ramblers' Association	www.ramblers.org.uk
Wales Council for Voluntary Action	www.wcva.org.uk
Welsh Heritage (CADW)	www.cadw.wales.gov.uk
The Wildlife Trusts	www.wildlifetrusts.org.uk
Youth Hostel Association	www.yha.org.uk

The Countryside Agency is not responsible for the contents or reliability of the linked websites and does not necessarily endorse the views expressed within them. Listing should not be taken as endorsement of any kind. We cannot guarantee that these links will work all of the time and we have no control over the availability of the linked pages.

Rural Cycling Tips

Learning to ride a bicycle can be an immensely liberating experience, particularly for children. A bike is, after all, the first form of transport that most of us ever own and it offers previously unimaginable independence and the potential for adventure, let alone the obvious benefits to health and the environment.

With thousands of miles of rural tracks and roads to explore, the most important thing is to just get out there, but there are some basic tips that, if followed, will increase children's enjoyment and ensure that they stay safe:

Be ready

Check you have the appropriate equipment and can carry out simple repairs.

Be seen

Make sure your lights are working and wear appropriate clothes for the light levels.

Be safe

Take account of the weather, the terrain and other road or path users.

Be green

Always follow the Countryside Code.

Be equipped

Don't forget a well-fitting helmet, take a mobile phone and change, and make sure you have appropriate clothing. Plan your route ahead and take a map.

Be secure

Take a cycle lock and key and carry any removable items when leaving your bike unattended.

Be healthy

Take a full water bottle and light snacks. Don't forget the sun cream!

Be sure

Choose a route that is suitable for everyone in your group, never cycle alone and let an adult know where you intend to go.

Useful links:

www.sustrans.org.uk

www.raleighbikes.com

www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk



For further information contact:

Farming and Countryside Education
Stoneleigh Park
Warwickshire CV8 2LZ

Countryside Code education enquiries
9am-5pm (Mon-Fri)

Tel: **02476 853058**

Fax: **02476 414808**

Email: **countrysidecode@face-online.org.uk**

The Countryside Code is an initiative of the Countryside Agency and Countryside Council for Wales. Farming and Countryside Education (FACE) were commissioned to develop the Countryside Code education materials.

Published by:



John Dower House, Crescent Place
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 3RA

www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

CAX 184-3

