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Local Access Forum Chairs

From Dan Rogerson MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Water, Forestry, Rural Affairs and Resource Management

I would like to thank you for your work and achievements during the period of April 2012 to March 2013 in providing a local level body of expertise on public access and outdoor recreation issues.

The national annual report, compiled by Natural England, highlights the considerable range of achievements across the country by LAFs, and includes advice on coastal trails, managing dogs, working to ensure safer access, the protection of wildlife, and improvements for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

The report showcases an increased level of achievements since the previous report, and I particularly welcome the examples of partnership working across the sectors. I look to you to continue your involvement with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs), Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) and Health and Wellbeing Boards.

I also welcome the increase in your number reporting an initiation or contribution towards the engagement of volunteers to undertake path maintenance and improvement work; and the number of references to LAFs being directly involved in the delivery of an improved network, whether by contributing advice to a Paths for Communities project or practical initiatives to waymark routes or remove stiles.

I encourage you and your members to continue your work advising local highway authorities on the revision of their Rights of Way Improvement Plans. I am particularly keen that you ensure that revised ROWIPs cover access to woodland, as well as other land types, and consider how to provide improved provision for horse-riders.

I look forward to the continued achievements of LAFs in the future.