



Duke of Edinburgh Award Expeditions on Mar Lodge Estate

Mar Lodge Estate is an enthusiastic supporter of the DofE Award. Some of us even did the award, a long time ago! So we're keen for the estate to remain a worthwhile and rewarding destination for DofE Expeditions.

To that end, and to help protect the landscapes and wildlife for everyone to enjoy, if you are organising a DofE expedition on Mar Lodge Estate, please contact the Ranger Service with the following details, during your planning stage:

- School / Organisation name
- Route
- Camping plans (6 figure grid references)
- Number of people and tents (including leaders)

If your route/camping plans clash with other groups, busy locations or sensitive wildlife, we will work with you to find alternatives so that your expedition can proceed.

You can phone the Ranger Service on 01339 720164, or email us at marlodgeestate@nts.org.uk.

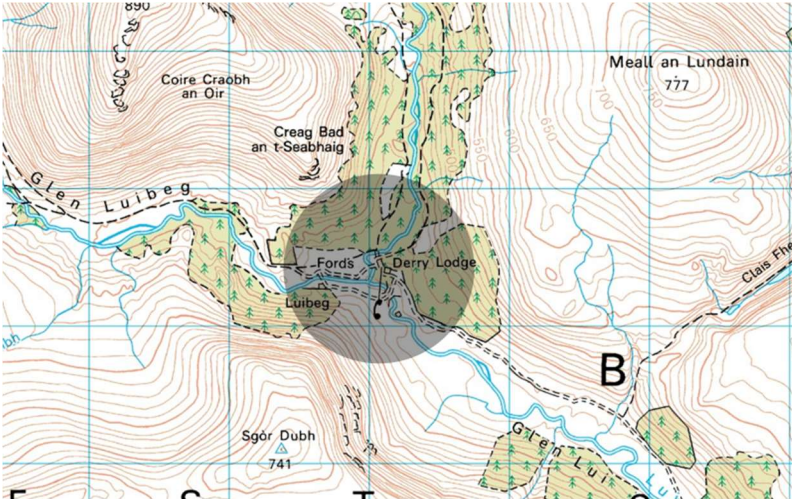
Camping

Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC) guidance states that camping should be 'lightweight and done in small numbers'. As an example, we have encountered some groups in recent summers who have had more than 20 participants camping in one place, with ten (or more) tents. We don't consider this to be compliant with SOAC.

We would ask expedition organisers to bear in mind that camping puts certain areas under greater visitor pressure, and that the cumulative impact of this, especially from larger outdoor groups, is considerable. DofE groups almost always use the areas around Derry Lodge and the Punchbowl, so due to their popularity, camping needs to be limited at these two areas to one DofE group per night, per site, with all human waste to be carried out.

Derry Lodge

Groups are asked not to camp without agreement from the estate within the shaded area on the map, including around Bob Scott's Bothy to the south and Luibeg Cottage in the west.



Punchbowl / Linn of Quoich

Groups are asked not to camp without agreement from the estate within the shaded area on the map. We no longer consider the immediate area around the Punchbowl / Linn of Quoich to be a responsible choice of campsite. The Linn and the Punchbowl are popular tourist attractions, the Picnic Lodge is now in daily use by the public between April and October, and the riverbank is a core path. Camping here is therefore very likely to interfere with other visitors' enjoyment of the area.



Lodge is now in daily use by the public between April and October, and the riverbank is a core path. Camping here is therefore very likely to interfere with other visitors' enjoyment of the area.

Please therefore avoid camping in the immediate area around the Punchbowl / Picnic Lodge. If this is unavoidable, groups should arrive late and leave early. There are good, flat campsites just five minutes further downstream, either side of the estate vehicle bridge.

Camping elsewhere on Mar Lodge Estate

Although we are limiting group numbers at Derry Lodge and the Linn of Quoich, groups are encouraged to use other areas of Mar Lodge Estate, but they should still run all camping plans past us first.

Toileting

Digging holes for human waste is still okay in most of the less-frequented areas, but in busy spots (such as Derry Lodge and Linn of Quoich) or in environmentally sensitive sites (Loch Etchachan and the Cairngorm plateau) this is no longer sustainable due to the cumulative impact of visitors.

We therefore appeal to all campers, whether part of an organised group or not, to carry human waste out where possible. See [this link](https://www.needlesports.com/Catalogue/Accessories/Medical-Cosmetic/Clean-Waste-Go-Anywhere-Toilet-Kit-Wag-Bag-MET-WAG) for an example of hygienic methods used these days: <https://www.needlesports.com/Catalogue/Accessories/Medical-Cosmetic/Clean-Waste-Go-Anywhere-Toilet-Kit-Wag-Bag-MET-WAG>

Between April and October there are public portaloos in the Linn of Dee car park.

Wildlife disturbance

The estate is also home to species that are easily disturbed during the breeding season (March to August), some of which, such as hen harriers or white-tailed eagles, have additional legal protection from disturbance. Most of the time, these birds nest far away from the kinds of places that people like to walk and camp, but sometimes they do build nests in inconvenient locations for visitors. In those instances, we might ask you to move your campsite by a few hundred metres to minimise the risk of disturbance, or we might suggest an alternative location altogether.

Vehicle Parking

You are welcome to park your vehicles at the Linn of Dee and Linn of Quoich car parks. The cost is £5 per day for cars, and £10 per day for minibuses / coaches. If you are parking overnight, the machines will allow you to pay for two (or more) days on one ticket.

If you think you will be parking overnight on several expeditions throughout the year, we recommend becoming a member of the National Trust for Scotland, as this is likely to save you money, and it means you are actively supporting our conservation work here at Mar Lodge Estate.

Meet a Ranger

If you would like your participants to meet a ranger and hear about our work here, however briefly, just get in touch. If our diaries allow, we are more than happy to chat to groups or answer their questions.

We aim to staff the ranger hut at the Linn of Dee car park every weekend between April and October, and every day during the school holidays, so we're usually around if you need to find us.

And finally....

We hope the weather plays ball, the midges aren't too midgey, and everyone has a lovely time! 😊

Thank you for your support.

