

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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BMC Environment Policy

As climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers, we practise our sport on relatively untouched summits and cliffs. We have the potential to affect those environments that are so valuable to our experience. We need to be aware of, and to protect, the special features of the environment we use, whether it is cliff or ground nesting birds, arctic-alpine flora, blanket bog or the fragile montane heath on the very highest summits.

The BMC recognises that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering impact on the environment, and acknowledges responsibility to take reasonable measures to safeguard the environment for both the present and future generations. The BMC will improve its own environmental performance and provide assistance and advice to climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers on environmental issues relating to their activities. These policies will be regularly monitored and subjected to audits at appropriate intervals to ensure that the policy objectives are achieved.

The BMC has determined the following key areas of impact for action:

In the Office

In its day to day operations and processes, the BMC has a significant impact on the environment, through the resources it uses such as paper, power, fuel and also through the waste products it produces, such as solid wastes and emissions from heating and transport.

We will seek to quantify these effects and implement measures to ensure day to day office practices have as small an impact on the environment as is possible. This will be achieved through improvements in; purchasing practices, transport use, energy efficiency, waste practices and reduced use of chemicals.

Transport & Travel

In common with the rest of the population, climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers are often reliant on their cars. However, increasing use of cars is having an adverse effect on our lives and the environment. In particular being a major contributor to CO2 emissions. We will encourage our members to:

- Reduce the need to travel, by promoting use of local crags and walking routes
- Reduce the need to fly to foreign destinations
- Use public transport
- Car share, particularly through club promotion
- Park considerately and use public car parks where provided.

Energy use

The BMC recognises that climate change will increasingly lead to changes that threaten to significantly affect our members' recreational interests. A Sustainable Energy position statement has already been adopted in regard to proposed major renewable energy sites in the upland areas of England and Wales, and other areas valued for their wild land character. The BMC will also actively promote and help climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers to understand how their activities contribute to climate change and provide practical advice and support to help them reduce their impact.

Enhance & Protect the Environment

A number of nationally and internationally protected flora and fauna species are found on crags, the mountain environment and other areas valued for their wild land character in

England and Wales. The BMC actively supports the protection of these species and will work with conservation bodies to ensure that appropriate restrictions are designed to have the least impact on member activities. The BMC will promote adherence by its members to such access restrictions through its Regional Access Database (RAD). On particularly sensitive sites, the BMC will support research and monitoring to ensure conservation programmes are effective. The BMC will actively promote good practice to climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers.

Sites owned by the BMC are actively managed as exemplars of good practice. This links the recreational interest of BMC members with an increasing improvement in the biodiversity of these sites.

Reducing the Impact of Users

The BMC advocates that all climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers should aim to create minimal impact on the environment and should respect the needs of people who live and work there and those of future generations. The BMC will continue to promote this core message to its members and work with other relevant agencies to ensure the quality of the environment is not degraded through recreational activities, advocating the Leave No Trace Principles.

Activities by other Parties

The BMC does not oppose all development in the upland and coastal environment. Such development should only be located where it does not destroy or detract from the natural environment. The BMC advocates local, sustainable development next to existing settlement when appropriate. It will participate in the planning process at regional and national level having regard for the type of development proposed, the scale, visual impact and design of proposals, the recreational importance of the area, the ecological affects of new developments and the social and environmental value of new development or land management.

Supporting Mountain Economies

Hill walking, mountaineering and climbing has brought economic opportunities to previously isolated and undeveloped areas of the UK. The economics of hill walking, mountaineering and climbing are vital to the conservation and development of many mountain regions. The BMC will continue to promote the local, economic benefits of hill walking, mountaineering and climbing and encourage members to contribute to the economies of local communities.

Implementation of the Environment Policy

The BMC Environment Policy is a statement of our commitment to help reduce the impact of our activities on the environment. The policy is supported by an Action Plan, which specifies how the policy will be implemented, complete with targets, dates, and a named person responsible for delivering it. The BMC will provide clear leadership on environmental issues through its policies, programmes and the way it conducts its business. The BMC will ensure that climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers understand and are enabled to take responsibility for their environmental impact through the provision of quality information and future publications.