**Ross MacKay (2020)**

Upland footpaths as a public good: Understanding land manager behaviour

With a right to responsible access across almost all land in Scotland, millions of recreationists

make free use of a network of over 1100 km of upland paths. These paths provide easy access

to some of the most spectacular, but most fragile habitats in the country. As such, Upland

Path Management (UPM) is centered on ensuring ecological and landscape damage is

minimised. This path network is expected to come under increasing pressure from both use

and climate. With many hundreds of kilometres already in poor condition a new strategy to

sustainably manage this important resource is required. As key stakeholders in the

management of upland paths, understanding land managers is an important first step.

Using the Theory of Planned Behaviour as a construct, this research sought to identify land

manager UPM behaviour types and identify influential factors and how they relate to

different approaches. This was achieved through semi-structured qualitative interviews with

land management representatives from 11 properties across the Cairngorm National Park,

and engagement with several other key informants.

Six behaviour types are proposed. The principal factors are; availability of and access to

appropriate funding, land manager awareness of upland path associated issues, land manager

ownership of UPM responsibility and land manager appraisal of benefits or drawbacks of

UPM. By remodelling the funding mechanism and influencing land manager attitude, UPM

may be better equipped to cope with future demands.