



Press Release

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Launch of the Revised Muirburn Code

By Roseanna Cunningham MSP,
Cabinet Secretary for Environment Climate Change and Land Reform
Friday 22nd September 2017

The Muirburn Code has been updated to ensure that it provides effective and up to date guidance for the people who manage Scotland's moorlands. The review was commissioned by the Scottish Government, and the work was undertaken by Scotland's Moorland Forum, an independent body made up of key stakeholders from across all areas of land management.

Over the course of several months, Moorland Forum representatives gathered opinion on muirburn from a wide range of agencies, groups and individuals, and the process included a series of 'talk and walk' workshops which were held across Scotland, from Skye to the Borders. A final workshop was then held in Central Scotland to discuss and incorporate all the feedback and refine a draft version of the Code. The review adopted an inclusive approach, and this process engaged with different ideas on what should and could be included in the Code. Careful drafting aimed to ensure that the end product is representative of the many interests involved in and affected by muirburn.

Commenting on the publication of the updated code at a launch event at Blair Castle on the 22nd September, Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Environment Climate Change and Land Reform said: "I am pleased to publish a revised muirburn code of conduct, which clearly sets out best practice and guidance for burning and cutting heather and other vegetation as a land management tool".

"The revised code aims to minimise the practice's negative impacts on wildlife, landscapes and ecosystem services, while also enhancing the wider socio-economic and environmental benefits well-managed muirburn practices can have".

"My thanks goes to everyone involved in the review, which will ensure that the code remains up to date and fit for purpose. I would like to encourage practitioners to continue working together to enhance the supplementary information that has been developed in support of the Code".

Simon Thorp, Director of Scotland's Moorland Forum also added that "the review process has engaged effectively with a large range of people and the revised version of the Code has been improved as a result of their input".

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“It has taken time to develop the final version, but the result is a Code that is up to date, and makes greater reference to cutting, both as an independent operation and in support of muirburn, the integration of muirburn with grazing management, and the requirement to consider the sensitivity of peatland”.

“The publication of this revised Code should be seen as the first step in a process to develop guidance that will aim to improve practitioners’ understanding of fire, fire behaviour and the role of cutting, and the techniques and equipment that allow the management of moorland to be carried out safely and effectively.”

A PDF version of the Code will be available to download from the Scottish Natural Heritage website, but a novel feature of this version of the Code will be the dedicated website www.muirburncode.org.uk established to present the Code, and the associated Supplementary Information, in web format with links within the Code and to external sources of information.

The website has been designed with the practitioner in mind, and it is intended that the required information should be viewed or printed easily. Supplementary Information provides additional background information and guidance for practitioners.

All those with an interest in muirburn are asked to promote the Code around their networks. Some presentation material to support this will be made available on request.

For more information contact:

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