



**YORKSHIRE DALES**  
National Park Authority

# News Release

**Signs of the times**

**Grassington, May 9, 2006.**

Signs will be going up on public footpaths and bridleways all over the Yorkshire Dales National Park in the next few weeks informing people that there are no public rights on them for recreational motor vehicles.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, which was given Royal Assent on March 30, gives National Park Authorities (NPAs) new powers to manage the use of recreational vehicles like 4x4s, motorbikes and quadbikes in the National Parks.

Sections of the Act that came into force on Tuesday, May 2, mean that, apart from some very rare exceptions, it is illegal to drive a recreational motor vehicle on any bridleway and footpath.

Mark Allum, the YDNPA's Access Project Officer, said: "More than 240kms of footpath and bridleway in the National Park were used by recreational motor vehicle drivers in the belief that they might have public motor vehicle rights.

"The Act removes the possibility of these rights on these routes, some of which are well-known like Occupation Road above Dentdale, the Craven Way between Dentdale and Ribbleshead and routes over Carlton Moor in Coverdale."

To make users aware of the changes this legislation has brought about, the Authority will be putting up information signs on the routes and has uploaded details on to its website at [www.yorkshiredales.org.uk](http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk).

Jon (correct) Avison, YDNPA Head of Park Management, said: "The YDNPA has always believed that the use of recreational motor vehicles on public rights of way in the National Park has been inappropriate and this Act gives us the tools to manage and protect these routes.

"For that reason alone, we are very pleased that the Bill has become law – it is a very important step forward for the National Park."

The Act also contains provisions that significantly curtail the scope for adding further public rights of way for motor vehicles – known as Byways Open to All Traffic

(BOATs) – to the definitive map and statement (the local highway authority’s legal record of public rights of way) and gives certainty as to where public motor vehicular rights exist.

Only complete applications for BOATs received before 20 January, 2005, will be worked through under the ‘old system’. The YDNPA has five such cases.

Further applications to add new BOATs to the definitive map are likely to result in restricted byways, which do not have rights for recreational motor vehicles.

Another main feature of the Act is that, from October this year, NPAs as well as local highway authorities will be able to impose Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to prohibit recreational motor vehicles from using green lanes – unsurfaced rights of way and county roads.

Over the last two years, the YDNPA has been working with North Yorkshire County Council in applying experimental TROs to four routes in the Dales to stop recreational vehicular traffic and so protect the special qualities of the National Park.

Mr Avison said: “The feedback we have received has clearly shown that the TROs are necessary and effective in managing this use. The authority now looks forward to working with county councils and users to protect the unique environment of the National Park.”

After the Royal Assent was given, the then Minister for Rural Affairs, Landscape and Biodiversity, Jim Knight – now Minister of State for Schools following the Prime Minister’s Cabinet reshuffle on Friday (May 5) – said: “Through this Act, we have delivered our commitment to curtail the inappropriate use of byways by motor vehicles by putting an end to claims for motor vehicle access on the basis of historical use by horse-drawn vehicles. Some of the worst damage is happening in our national parks, which is why we have given National Park Authorities the power to make traffic regulation orders.”

**For more information please call the**

**Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority’s Media Office on 01756 751616.**

**Alternatively, please email [media@yorkshiredales.org.uk](mailto:media@yorkshiredales.org.uk).**

1. All Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority media releases can be viewed on-line by visiting [www.yorkshiredales.org.uk](http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk)
2. The Yorkshire Dales National Park is one of 12 National Parks in England and Wales. It is administered by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, the purposes of which are “to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage” and “to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the park”. In carrying out these purposes, the Authority has a duty “to seek to foster the economic and social well being of local communities”. The National Park is administered by an Authority of 26 members, made up of county and district councillors and members appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to represent parishes or in recognition of their specialist skills or knowledge.