



The New A.F.A.S

DAWSON STELFOX
CHAIRMAN, A.F.A.S.

As you may be aware there have been significant changes to the structure and concept of the Association For Adventure Sports. The former AFAS has now been dissolved and its three main functions redistributed.

TIGLIN

A new Trust – The Irish Adventure Sports Training Trust (IASTT) has been formed and has taken over the running of Tiglin, the National Centre for Mountaineering and White Water Canoeing. This trust is composed of representatives from the Irish Canoe Union, The City of Dublin VEC, The Irish Mountaineering Council and A.F.A.S.

CENTRE STANDARDS BOARD

The CSB is still in operation for this year but it is hoped that the new Government body for Centre Standards will be in place for next year (2001) to take over all aspects of the regulation and inspection of outdoor centres/providers.

A.F.A.S.

A new AFAS has been formed, its constitution focussed on co-ordinating the NGB's on strategic and policy issues such as Access, Occupiers Liability etc. The new AFAS has no staff and no resources and will only be effective if supported by the NGB's. The Irish Sports Council have indicated they would support such a strategic role, if it was supported by the NGB's

The first meeting of the new AFAS is thus called for the early evening of 4th May, immediately after the Consultation Conference on Centre Regulation. The purpose will be to gauge the level of support from the NGB's for a role for AFAS and to agree a way forward.



Ring out the old. Bring in the new

BRENDAN CRYAN
CHAIRMAN, CENTRE STANDARDS BOARD

The millenium parties are now over and the twenty-first century is well under way. So too is the New Year for our outdoor centers and other providers. April sees a marked increase in activity as providers get into full swing. The old Centre Standards Board will also soon be replaced by the statutory Adventure Activities Standards Authority (AASA). Given the excellent record of the industry in Ireland not a lot will change on the ground though with the new scheme based in legislation, a lot more providers will be included.

The consultation process for this new Authority is at a crucial mid point, the initial 'Grey-Print, is in place and this will be presented to the sector for comment at the Conference May 4th at the in Jurys Hotel Dublin. The final Blue-Print from the

Consultation Steering Group will be presented to the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources in the summer. After that AASA will be in place. An exciting time for all. The more usual activities are being joined by 'Jacobs Ladders', 'Gorge-walking' to name just two. The consultation process showed that the diversity of activities seems to be increasing all the time.

Finally as part of its current remit the CSB is undertaking spot checks for the first time and these have started throughout the country. These are not designed as 'gotcha' visits but rather as a reassurance to all that the scheme is working well. Not everyone will be visited so don't feel left out if you are not included!



Work Underway

HUMPHREY MURPHY
CENTRE STANDARDS BOARD MONITOR

As part of the expanding and enhancing of the Centre Standards Board scheme as requested by the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources, a series of developments are underway:

Web site

The Centre Standards Board will take control of the old AFAS site. Initially the site will carry information aimed at both providers and end users of Adventure Sports in Ireland. A regularly updated list of approved providers will also carry full contact details of all approved providers and additional information on the services they offer. A full copy of the CSB booklet will also be available on the site for down loading as will application forms for inspection. It is intended in the second stage of the sites development that additional features such as a staff vacancy slot will be included.

Mail shots

All Primary and secondary Irish schools will receive a brief information sheet outlining the role of the CSB and details of the CSB website as well as a list of approved providers for 2000.

Newsletter

Two more newsletters will be produced in 2000 with information regarding the approvals process for the CSB as well as updates on the consultation process for the impending statutory legislation from the Department of Marine and Natural Resources.

Preliminary Visits

Providers not involved in the present CSB scheme can now avail of a low cost visit by a CSB monitor (£40). The purpose of this visit is to undertake a preliminary meeting and inspection so that any issues regarding future approval can be highlighted,

discussed and an action plan put in place. Providers that subsequently apply for monitoring will have the cost of the preliminary visit removed from the full inspection cost. Preliminary visits will be allocated on a first come basis.

Spot Checks

A series of spot checks have begun and will continue into the summer. These checks will take the form of an unannounced visit to providers in the approval scheme. Access to activities, equipment, staff, documentation and locations will be required as per a regular monitoring visit. It is intended that these checks will facilitate a clearer year round picture of the industry as well as informing future regulatory bodies of the practical issues surrounding such an inspection method.

Through these developments, providers should benefit from increased visibility in the market and end users will benefit from increased and readily accessible information. Input by providers and Governing Bodies regarding these developments underway, are welcome.

Equipment Information

Submissions from the sector regarding equipment issues or specific contributions on equipment are welcome.

Providers with climbing walls, abseil towers, ropes courses and so on will have an interest in the following extracts from the European Standard (CEN) for "Artificial climbing structures – protection points, stability requirements and test methods".

The standard was developed in 1998 and is quite technically detailed and would be best appreciated by those with an engineering background in consultation with a provider. There is too much detail in this 12 page document to include in the following outline, however all owners of such artificial structures would be well advised to source a copy and follow its requirements. Indeed the foreword notes that "According to the CEN/CENELEC Internal Regulations, the national standards organisations of the following countries are bound to implement this European Standard –Ireland-. This document will form part of all future CSB climbing wall and abseil tower inspections.

Content

For the construction and testing of climbing structures, issues such as the recommended distances between protection points (Lead climbing on walls) are outlined with attention to the different requirements of steep and sloping sections of the wall.

Of particular use are details regarding the loads placed on top and bottom belay points for climbing walls. Rather than simply bolting a steel bar to the top of the wall, the document outlines the forces at play in the event of one or two dynamic falls on a belay system.

Structure and belay testing requirements are outlined with regard to the loads required, angles of fall and different load locations.

Details regarding the elements to be included in testing and on site notifications are outlined, for example, the date of the last climbing wall test and the maximum number of climbers on the wall at one stage should be clearly visible for users of the wall.

A copy of the BS EN 12572:1999 (British Standard Version) can be obtained from BSI, Chiswick High Road, London, W4 4AL. Tel 0044 181996 9001 Fax 0044 181 996 7001

Centre Standards Board

Approved Providers 2000

Achill Outdoor Education Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Climbing, Hillwalking, Surfing.

Adventure Activities Ltd

Approved for: Canoeing, Climbing, Hillwalking.

Atlantic Sea Kayaking

Approved for: Canoeing.

Beara Outdoor Pursuits

Approved for: Canoeing.

Birr Outdoor Education Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Climbing, Hillwalking, Archery.

Burren Outdoor Education Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Climbing, Hillwalking, Orienteering, Caving.

Cappanalea Outdoor Education Centre

Approved for: Hillwalking.

Carlingford Adventure Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Climbing, Archery.

Cleire Lasmuigh

Cape Clear Island

Approved for: Canoeing, Snorkeling, Hillwalking, Archery.

Co Dublin Outdoor Education Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Climbing, Hillwalking, Archery.

Donegal Outdoor Adventure Centre

Approved for: Surfing.

Dunmore East Adventure Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Archery, Hillwalking, Orienteering.

Education Resource Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Archery.

Gartan Outdoor Education Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Climbing, Hillwalking, Orienteering.

Kilfinane Outdoor Education Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Climbing, Hillwalking, Orienteering.

Kilrush Creek Adventure Centre

Approved for: Canoeing.

Kinsale Outdoor Education Centre

Approved for: Climbing, Archery, Orienteering.

Lilliput Adventure Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Orienteering, Archery.

Little Killary Adventure Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Climbing, Hillwalking, Archery.

Lough Allen Adventure Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Hillwalking.

Lough Dan Adventure Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Climbing, Hillwalking, Archery.

McDowells Hotel

Approved for: Canoeing, Hillwalking, Surfing.

Neptune Adventure

Approved for: Hillwalking, Surfing.

Nomadic Adventures

Approved for: Canoeing, Hillwalking.

Oceanic Manoeuvres

Approved for: Surfing.

Oysterhaven Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Archery.

Petersburg Outdoor Education Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Climbing, Hillwalking, Caveing, Orienteering.

Russagh Mill Adventure Centre

Approved for: Climbing.

Shielbaggan Outdoor Education Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Climbing, Hillwalking, Archery, Orienteering, Snorkelling.

Tain Holiday Village

Approved for: Canoeing, Archery, Climbing, Hillwalking.

Tanagh Outdoor Education Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Archery.

Tiglin National Outdoor Training Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Climbing, Hillwalking, Orienteering, Snorkelling.

UISCE Adventure Centre

Approved for: Canoeing, Surfing.

University of Limerick Adventure Centre

Approved for: Canoeing.

Wild Geese Kayak Club

Approved for: Canoeing.

INTRODUCTIONS

The following section provides details on the organisations within the Irish Adventure Sports Sector.

IRISH ASSOCIATION OF ACTIVITY CENTRES

Contact Details

Chairman: Jamie Young.
Killary Lodge, Leenane, Co Galway.
Tel 095-42276. Fax 095-42314. Email: Young@killary.com

Mission

To provide a forum for members in the private enterprise sector for mutual advice on related matters such as legislation, insurance, instructors, employment terms, VAT and other common areas of concern.

Comment

IAAC is very keen to encourage further membership. Everybody could benefit from networking and membership – full-Associate – Individual – fees will reflect employment levels.

Future Provider Regulation

IAAC has a strong commitment to the future of the outdoor industry in Ireland and would like more private sector operators to get involved in helping design this future. As Alan Kay of Apple Computers said, "The best way to predict the future is to invent it." The Consultation proposal put forward by IAAC focuses on the need to differentiate between industry sectors. There is a strong belief that Education & Social programs need quite a different approach to Tourism & Recreation and within the forthcoming legislation we feel this distinction must be a priority. Both sectors need development & support to flourish, as they do in so many other countries, providing a growing number of worthwhile employment opportunities. Safety parameters will then become much clearer and more relevant to the specific industry sector.

IRISH DIVE CENTRE ASSOCIATION

Contact Details

Secretary: Sean Feehan,
Ballinskelligs Dive Centre, Dungagen,
Ballinskelligs, Co Kerry.
Tel: (021) 9479182 Fax: (066) 9479303
E-mail seandive@yahoo.com

Mission

Founded to represent Irish Dive Centres, the main aim of the Association is to ensure safe diving procedures and set up a code of practice for Dive Centres. We propose to introduce an in-house inspectorate, which will visit each centre to grade, inspect and discuss the implications of the new regulations as laid down by the IDCA. Once the programme is set up, a number of on-the-spot checks will be carried out regularly during the season.

Comment

Membership to the Irish Dive Centre Association is open to all. There are three categories of membership. The Instructor, The Dive Boat Operator and the Dive Shop / Dive Centre. Copies of the IDCA blueprint are available from the Secretary. (£5.00).

Over the past number of years the growth in Scuba Diving is phenomenal. In (1998) 19,752 divers came to Ireland on a dive holiday. Their average stay was six days doing two dives a day. An extra 7,843 took part in diving activities and courses while on holiday. The domestic market made up another 1,999 who either took courses or experience programs . The 1999 dive centre figures show the domestic market up to 2,812 certifications from 1,999 in 1998. (PADI returns).

All the teaching centres of the IDCA are members of PADI the Professional Association of Diving Instructors. PADI teaches in excess of 90% of all divers trained in the World today.

Future Provider Regulation

It is the opinion of the IDCA that all diving activities must come under the new legislation and that includes both Club and Dive Centres. Furthermore, all dive boats carrying passengers must hold current Dept. of the Marine and Natural Resources licenses.

Presently, the "Comite Europeen De Normalisation" (C.E.N.), or the European equivalent the National Standards Authority of Ireland, are in the process of establishing a series of safety related minimum standards for the training of recreational sports divers of all levels and grades. It is proposed that these Standards will be in place within two years.

IRISH UNDERWATER COUNCIL - COMHAIRLE FÓ THUINN (CFT)

Contact Details

78a Patrick Street, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin
Tel: 01- 2844601
www.scubaireland.com

Mission

The Irish Underwater Council - Comhairle Fó Thuinn (CFT) is the national governing body for the sports of scuba diving and snorkelling in Ireland.

Its purpose is to promote, regulate and represent all underwater sports and related activities.

Comment

Formed in 1963, the Irish Underwater Council has over 80 clubs now affiliated to it, with a membership in excess of 2,500. As well as the clubs the Council recognises 2 Dive Centres, from which Irish Underwater Council courses can be run.

CFT operates under the aegis of CMAS (Confederation Mondiale des Activites Subaquatiques), the world federation for diving, and sets the standards for training and safety for all affiliated clubs and directly organises all advanced training courses and tests. These tests are controlled and ratified by CMAS which accords international recognition to the holders of such certification.

Many clubs affiliated to the Irish Underwater Council have established search and recovery centres, and are on permanent call to assist in search and recovery operations. The diving community has an honourable record and has contributed in no small way nationally and locally following tragic mishaps on the rivers, lakes and inshore waters of Ireland.

Future Provider Regulation

The Irish Underwater Council welcomes and supports the current initiative towards the regulation of adventure activity providers through consultation, and agreement. Safety and risk reduction is paramount to anyone involved in an adventure sport and the approach now being adopted will lead to greater openness and transparency.

WALKING CYCLING IRELAND

Contact Details

Mr Gerry McCluskey
Connemara Safaris, c/o the Abbeyglenn Hotel,
Clifden Co Galway. Tel: 095 21071

Mission

Our organisation is made up of 14 companies who specialise in cycling and walking holidays. Our members details are on our website at www.kerna.ie/wci/

The aims of our organisation is to promote walking and cycling holidays in Ireland. We have been in existence for the last six years and are recognised by Bord Failte as the official product marketing group for Walking and Cycling tourism. New members to Walking Cycling Ireland are welcome.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION IRELAND

Contact Details

Secretary OEI, C/O Burren OEC,
Turlough Bell Harbour, Co Clare
Web site: www.oec.ie

Mission

Outdoor Education Ireland (OEI) consists of the nine managers/directors of the VEC operated outdoor education centers in Ireland. The aim of the group is to promote and develop outdoor education within the education system and with the public at large.

Comment

Outdoor education can be defined as a method of promoting personal and social development, environmental awareness and other learning processes. It includes aspects of adventure sports, ecology and environmental studies. Each of the nine outdoor education centers is unique with its own philosophy and has developed its own programmes accordingly.

Future provider regulation

OEI welcomes the development of a statutory model for the regulation of providers of Adventure Activities in Ireland. OEI believes that a safety-monitoring model for adventure activities must firmly be based on the principle of Duty of Care towards clients, to include a comprehensive risk management strategy, which encompasses a safety statement, operations manual and staff competency matrix of these providers. OEI continues to support the consultation process and will input proposals of a working model to the group for discussion at the forthcoming conference.

The Future Regulation of Adventure Sports in Ireland and the Role of the Consultation Steering Group

STEPHEN HANNON, CHAIR CONSULTATION STEERING GROUP

In autumn 1999 the Department of Marine and Natural Resources tasked the Association for Adventure Sports (AFAS) with organising the Consultation Process on the introduction of the statutory regulation of adventure sports provision. A Consultation Steering Group (CSG) was established which was broadly representative of the adventure sports sector in Ireland. The Group decided that it would focus primarily on ensuring that the Consultation Process was comprehensive and effective. The overall objective of the CSG was to present a working model (or Blueprint) for the statutory regulation of adventure sports provision in this country to the Department of Marine and Natural Resources.

Phase One

During the first phase of the Consultation Process a database of providers and National Governing Bodies was collated. Information regarding the process was sent to those on the database and advertisements were placed in the National Press. The next step was to gather opinion on the statutory regulation of the adventure sports sector. To achieve this goal, four regional consultation meetings were held and written submissions were invited. To ensure that the regional meetings were both effective and impartially recorded a professional facilitator and rapporteur were contracted. The four regional meetings are now complete and their proceedings as well as the written submissions have been collated and summarised.

Phase Two

The second phase of the Consultation Process has now begun. The Consultation Steering Group has been expanded (see table 1) so that more of those effected by the proposed new legislation will have a voice during this decision making phase. The opinions gathered to date, have now been distilled into a first draft (or 'Greyprint' as it has become known) of a regulatory scheme by the expanded Consultation Steering Group..

The Conference

The initial Greyprint will be presented at a Conference hosted by the Consultation Steering Group on May 4th, in Jury's Hotel, Dublin, at 11:30. Mr Frank Fahy TD, Minister for Marine and Natural Resources, will open the Conference. The Conference will give the outdoor sector an indication of the likely shape of the forthcoming Blueprint and most importantly a further opportunity to offer feedback.

Phase Three

Following the Conference, there will be a short period in which further submissions can be made to the Consultation Steering Group. These submissions along with the feedback received at the Conference will then be considered by the CSG in producing a final Blueprint. At this stage the Consultation Steering Group should be in a position to present the Blueprint for statutory regulation of adventure sports provision to the Department of Marine and Natural Resources along with a suggested implementation strategy.

The Main Issues arising in the Compilation of the Greyprint

In producing this 'Greyprint' it is inevitable that decisions and choices will have to be made regarding what is to be included. The group adopted a consensus driven approach in deciding what was to be included in the 'Greyprint'. Consensus was reached on most of the key issues however it was accepted that further focussed debate was necessary on one or two items. This follows a very abridged summary and of the progress made

a. Activities

The activities to be included under the scope of the legislation would be by a list system and through a phased approach.

b. Providers

That categories of solo excursion and 'genuine' clubs would be excluded and commercial providers of adventure activities and equipment be included. Each of the categories were clearly defined. Further discussion was required on the issues of educational establishments.

c. Adventure Activity Standards Authority

The Composition of AASA would be balanced between NGB's and Providers.

d. The Monitoring Process

This process would include announced and unannounced visits and a document inspection.

e. The Inspectorate

To be an independent organisation employing monitors with sufficient technical and outdoor sector knowledge.

f. Phased Implementation

It was agreed that there should be a phased implementation process for the safety regulation legislation that would allow the stakeholders in the adventure activities sector prepare for its implications.

g. The Criteria for Evaluating whether a provider was safe or not

The monitors would evaluate the following elements of a providers operation. Staff, Location & Venues, Equipment, Procedures, and the Nature of the courses. An extensive debate focused on the role of a technical advisor in the application of Benchmark NGB guidelines.

h. Additional Observations

The Consultation Steering Group noted safety regulation could not be examined in isolation and that if the legislation was to be effective there would need to be further exploration of issues such as: Vat and rates, European wide qualifications, cost implications for providers, training subsidies, the lack of a career structure for instructors, instructor conditions, a facility to enable suitability checks for those working with children.

The consultation involving the production of the Greyprint is ongoing however the CSG is hoping to disseminate the Greyprint to those on the database before the Conference. The discussion and debate involved in producing the Greyprint has been very productive in helping to identify those areas of consensus and to highlight those areas requiring further examination. It has been heartening to see those in the outdoor sector working in partnership to promote the safe provision of adventure sport.

Finally don't miss this last opportunity to discuss and influence this important piece of legislation at the Conference on May 4th, Jury's Hotel, Dublin, all are welcome.

Membership of the Consultation Steering Group

Stephen Hannon: **Chairperson**. Presently lecturer in Outdoor Education in the Castlbar Institute of Technology, Stephen's sports background is that of canoeing and hill walking. Previously Stephen has worked as an instructor in adventure centres, as a school teacher, as an instructor trainer and as the Development Officer of the Irish Canoe Union.

Brendan Cryan: Representative of the **Centre Standards Board**.

Patricia Walsh: Representative for **Outdoor Education Ireland (OEI)** which is the representative body for the VEC outdoor education centres in Ireland.

Ciaran O Murchu: Representative of the **Irish Association of Activity Centres (IAAC)** which is the representative body for privately run commercial activity centres in Ireland.

Tony Wright: Representative for the **Irish Sailing Association (ISA)**, which is the National Governing Body for dinghy sailing, windsurfing, sail & motor cruising, powerboating and personal watercraft.

Michael Scanlon: Representative for the **Irish Canoe Union**, the National Governing Body for canoeing and kayaking.

Gearoid Murphy: Representative of the **Comhairle Fo Thuinn – Irish Underwater Council** which is the National Governing Body for diving and snorkelling.

Tom Mc Loughlin: Representative of the **Instructors Association of Ireland** and the **VEC Instructors Association**.

Mary Nash: Representative of the **Mountaineering Council of Ireland (MCI)** the National Governing Body for ramblers, hillwalkers, rockclimbers and alpinists.

Sean Feehan: Representative of the **Dive Centres of Ireland**, the representative body for Dive Centre in Ireland.

Dermot Burke: Representative of **PLC Courses** training young people for careers in the outdoor sector.

Joe Langan: **Chief Executive Officers Association of the Vocation Eduction Committees**, the representative body for Chief Executive Officers in the Vocational Educational Sector representing Youthreach programmes and youth initiative using adventure sports.

Secretary to the Group: Humphrey Murphy