

New regional cycling map launched

The 1 South West Cycling project has been working across the region to develop off road cycling routes, facilities and information thanks to investment by the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE).

See the website: www.1sw.org.uk

The Adventure Cycle Map was launched in October as part of the project. This new interactive map, covering AONBs and National Parks in the south west, shows bridleways and other off road routes where cycling is legal. Whether you fancy a day out cycling with the family or a more challenging cycling experience, the map has useful information for you.

Dave Dixon of South West Protected Landscapes has brought the map project to fruition, working with the 1South West Cycling Project. Dave said, "Cycling is a great way for people to get out and enjoy the south west's breathing spaces and has a broad appeal. This online mapping allows us to provide lots of information such as photos and videos, enabling people to choose routes that will suit their cycling ability. We want to help people have a great day out and keep coming back by providing information that helps them plan their trip with confidence"

The Adventure Cycle Map aims to bring tourism business benefits to the rural south west throughout the year. Bicycle shops, hire outlets and clubs can all be found on the map. Cycle-friendly accommodation will be shown on the map soon. The information shown is of use to people planning horse-riding or walking trips as well as those planning to cycle.

If you have a business in the Mendip Hills AONB that is appropriate for the interactive map please contact the AONB Unit.

To encourage responsible use of bridleways and other routes AONB staff will be monitoring the map to attach information to specific routes to indicate if a route is prone to erosion in wet ground conditions, or routes best avoided at peak visitor times. In cases of extreme erosion or other issues routes will not be promoted on the map to allow the routes to recover.

If you are looking for adventurous off road cycling the 1 South West Cycling Project has developed Trail Hubs across the region. Trail Hubs located at Ashton Court near Bristol, the Forest of Dean and Haldon forest near Exeter offer one or more graded and way-marked off road cycling trails along with useful facilities for the visitor.



Managing access on Black Down



RECENT consultation by the AONB Unit on key issues affecting Black Down found that signage and information were widely perceived as being poor. There was a lack of coherent signing and information to inform people of where they were entitled to go and their responsibilities.

Black Down and Burrington Ham contain 200km of bridleway which provide a good network of routes to explore by bicycle or horse. There are a number of other paths on the commons which are only legal routes for walkers.

Today more people than ever use Black Down and this is having a

damaging impact on this beautiful and remote landscape. Some routes in use are damaging archaeological features and wildlife habitats; this is a concern for those managing the site given that large parts of Black Down are designated as a Scheduled Monument and Site of Special Scientific Interest. The Sustaining Black Down Project aims to address this.

By keeping to bridleways cyclists and horse riders will help to protect the special qualities of the site from damage by erosion. In order to assist this the AONB has installed new signs across Black Down to clearly waymark the status of routes as bridleway or footpath. These signs aim to help all users enjoy visiting Black Down.



Erosion damage at Beacon Batch before repair

The Mendip Hills AONB Unit is the voice of the protected landscape, working with landowners and the local community to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. www.mendiphillsaonb.org.uk
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