



Fix the Fells Annual Report 2025





Photo: Fix the Fells, Emeraldale
© Paul Harris / National Trust Images

Welcome



Isabel Berry

Welcome to the Fix the Fells annual report.

2025 has been a busy year, with our rangers delivering 2,012 days of work to fix erosion and repair paths on 10 busy fells in the Lake District National Park. On top of this, our 147 regular volunteers have maintained 421 kilometres of paths in the fells over the year, gifting us a whopping 3,206 days. Of course, all of this doesn't come without a cost and so it is with heartfelt thanks to all our generous donors that we have invested over £660,000 this year to make this work possible.

The Fix the Fells partnership has been running now for 24 years and while some of the original and highest profile erosion scars on the fells have long since been fixed, pressures on the fells are growing. Climate change is altering the weather here in the Lake District. Increasingly heavy rainfall has greater erosive power, washing exposed soils off the fells and creating growing gullies down which water flows. Conversely, longer, hotter, dry spells strip exposed soil of the moisture which holds it together, leaving it easier to wear away under the tread of walking boots. Add in the continued growth in popularity of the Lake District with visitors and the associated volume of walking boots, mountain bikes and horse riders, and there is further erosion to the plants and soils on the fells.

We are working hard to fix that erosion and to help make the fells better able to withstand the pressures of climate change and visitors. 2025 saw our rangers working on routes across the Lake District fells, from Scafell Pike to Catbells, and from Haweswater to Coniston Old Man. With our rangers focused on the most challenging projects, our volunteers visited every path multiple times, keeping the drains set into the paths clear of debris and completing 'stitch in time' repairs.

This report shares more about what Fix the Fells has done in 2025. I hope you enjoy reading it and if you like what we do, please consider donating to support our work in 2026 and onwards.

Isabel Berry

Manager of the Fix the Fells Partnership

Our vision for the fells

We believe in the value of the fells to all; a fells where nature thrives and where the local community and visitors alike can enjoy the spectacular beauty of the fells. A fells which supports rich nature, landscape and diverse groups of people exploring; and a fells which is resilient in the face of climate change.

Our mission

To protect our spectacular Lake District fells from erosion by repairing and maintaining upland paths and their immediate surroundings, so as to enhance nature and the experience of those in the fells.



Barf, Whinlatter before and after 2023

Why our work is so needed

The Lake District National Park has never been more popular. Residents, along with 18 million visitors a year, enjoy spending time in the fells of this World Heritage Site. The mountainous landscape, with its combination of fragile peaty and thin soils, plus steep gradients, is particularly vulnerable to the volume of people in the fells. In addition, the increased severity and frequency of rainfall events, due to climate change, has further accelerated rates of upland erosion.

Feet, hoofs and mountain bikes wear away vegetation over time, leaving exposed soils which release carbon into the air and with reduced water retention capacity. Heavy rain then washes away the soils, which end up in lakes, where it can be harmful to aquatic life. Habitat alongside paths is damaged, with knock-on impacts on fell plants, insects and animals. Erosion scars cause physical damage to the landscape and routes become unappealing to use. With the twin crises in climate and nature, and the enduring appeal of the fells for recreation, the work of Fix the Fells has never been needed more.

What we do

We cannot manage the Lake District landscape without attention to the impacts of upland erosion on water and carbon. Our rangers are highly skilled, upland path professionals. They use a mix of traditional and innovative techniques to halt and repair upland erosion, manage water, secure carbon, protect habitats around paths and to create a sustainable line for path users. Our team of volunteers walk our routes year-round, keeping them clear and reporting back issues. Our work supports flood mitigation, improved water quality and carbon sequestration, for flourishing fells and enhanced public enjoyment and well-being.

Our objectives

- **Partnership:** We are stronger in partnership. Fix the Fells will continue to work through partnership.
- **Public benefit:** Our work is revered. The public benefit and expertise which Fix the Fells delivers will be widely known and valued, from policy level right down to individuals.
- **Nature:** Nature is at the heart of all we do. Our work will help to build a more resilient and diverse upland ecosystem.
- **Innovation:** Our work is responsive to the needs of the uplands. From ecosystems to visitor trends, we will trial and learn from path work best practice.
- **Investment:** Our work endures. We will invest resource both into looking after the work we've completed, and to addressing the growth in new erosion issues, so that upfront financial investment and environmental benefits are maintained for years to come.
- **Engagement:** People know about Fix the Fells. Fix the Fells will feel relevant to diverse path users and fell explorers. Our work will engage local communities as equally as visitors to the Lakes.
- **Forever:** Fix the Fells is here to stay. We will be working in the fells for as long as we are needed.



Rangers working in mud, Angle Tarn, 2024 (above), and rangers working Boredale Hause bridleway

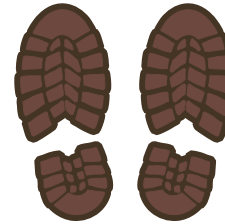
2025 in numbers



Number of full-time staff employed



Number of metres climbed by our rangers going to and from work
(33 Everests)



Number of miles walked by our rangers to and from work
(8x Land's End to John O'Groats)



Funds raised and invested in upland erosion and path repair



Metres of path repaired



Hectares of landscape protected*
*path width plus area 5m on either side



Number of paths receiving routine annual maintenance



Number of days of volunteer time gifted to path maintenance and repairs



Number of dedicated Fix the Fells volunteers



'Stitch in time' repairs completed on 45 paths



Tonnes of rock material moved by hand, per ranger



Number of major path work projects delivered



Number of days of ranger work delivered



Paths worked on in 2025

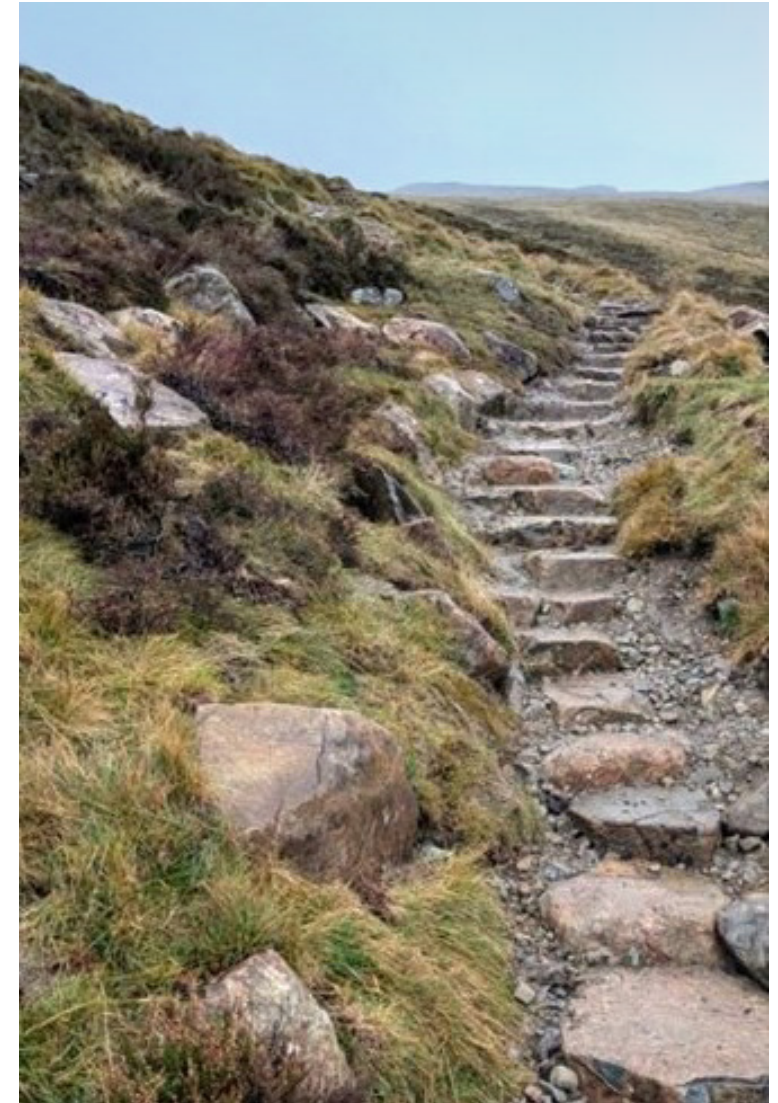
- 1. Catbells 2. Far Easedale 3. Cowbarrow
- 4. Kidsty Pike 5. Loft Beck 6. Scafell Pike
- 7. Stythwaite Steps 8. Swirl Hawse 9. Tongue Gill
- 10. Whiteless Pike

Case study

Loft Beck before and after

**Ranger time to
complete: 379 days**

**Funds invested:
£86,300**



The Loft Beck path at the head of Ennerdale is the first big climb on the Coast to Coast National Trail. Built many years ago, it required repair and improvement in many places. The path runs very close to the beck and significant work has gone into constructing a large stone revetment to ensure the existing path line remains usable and is resilient against future high water and flood events. In addition, rangers improved beck crossing points higher up, as well as putting stone pitching and drainage into an eroded gully. Landscaping work was then completed to revegetate the damaged area. This work will stem future erosion, stabilising material loss and increasing biodiversity alongside the path.

Case study

Kidsty Howes before and after

**Ranger time to
complete: 248 days**

**Funds invested:
£59,600**



After photo: © Annie Duckworth, Lake District National Park Authority

The Coast to Coast National Trail goes through some steep rocky sections as walkers descend into the Haweswater valley, with erosion happening as walkers spread out to try and find a way through. Work was undertaken on the middle section of Kidsty Howes to provide a clearer, more sustainable line through the bedrock and also through some particularly wet sections. Work completed included stone pitching, drains and a section of subsoil inversion path. Healthy vegetation has been restored and walkers have been grateful for the easier passage through the bedrock.

Rhiannon Green

Fix the Fells assistant ranger

Having joined Fix the Fells in January 2025, I greatly enjoyed my first full fell season, developing stonework skills while experiencing the challenges of working in an upland environment. The season brought an extraordinary mix of weather, from blazing early-summer heat to roaring storms, although we had our pop-up weather shelter providing protection on the exposed fells.

Although the work is physically demanding, it is extremely rewarding to see completed paths restored and being used by walkers. My favourite project this year was working on the Coast to Coast footpath at Loft Beck in Ennerdale, where we transformed a severely eroded, gullied trail, into over 90 metres of stone-pitched path which will help protect the surrounding landscape.

Meeting people enjoying the trails throughout the summer was a real highlight, and I valued the opportunity to talk with them about Fix the Fells' work. I am drawn to this role by a strong passion for nature conservation in the Lake District and a commitment to preserving its landscapes for future generations. This season, I have particularly valued the opportunity to work alongside volunteers and to learn from their experience during work parties and path maintenance days.



Photo: Ranger working Loft Beck
@ Isabel Berry, National Trust

Ian Rumsey

Fix the Fells volunteer

Tired. Happy. (Very) privileged. Those are my three words to describe a day out with the Fix the Fells volunteers. Be it a path maintenance day or a work party to build a drain, there's no questioning the sheer hard physical work involved in lugging tools up a mountain path and using them to help keep the path network in good order. But the sense of satisfaction in clearing out a blocked drain or re-routing a badly eroded section of path or crafting some stone risers is quite ridiculously off the chart.

The powerful sense of privilege, I think, comes from three directions. There's the joy of being able to give something back to the Lake District which has given me so many wonderful memories over my lifetime, plus the element of being trusted to care for this precious landscape in a way that respects and protects such a unique part of the world.

The icing on the cake are the wonderful volunteers themselves, this passionate and goodhearted community, who range out onto the fells they love all year round, come storm and tempest and the occasional beautifully sunny day. Without them, Fix the Fells would have no spirit. With them, the seemingly impossible usually becomes do-able.



Photo: Carnside @ David Brooks

Kath Price

Fix the Fells volunteer

I volunteer with Fix the Fells because I love the Lake District. Today Dave and I did path maintenance from Wasdale Head to Styhead stretcher box, one of my favourite walks, but the weather was atrocious all day.

I could have stayed home in front of the fire but instead Dave and I felt really quite chuffed with doing all the drains ourselves, despite them being quite deeply filled and compacted and we had forgotten a mattock or mini-mattock.

We had a good walk, saw some amazing views and felt very lucky to be seeing it when no-one else was there – we saw no-one else on the path all day – or anywhere else we could see either.

I love how you get to know a route differently when you work on it, especially on a work party, and how that makes you feel closer to the landscape. I really enjoy the conversations with the inspiring rangers and other volunteers.



Jonny Skinn, Fix the Fells ranger

The 2025 ranger fell season has been much like every year in my eight-and-a-half years with Fix the Fells: completely unique.

No two paths are ever the same, and each presents its own mix of challenges, puzzles and problem-solving. Add to that the famously unpredictable Lake District weather – changing not just day-to-day but hour-to-hour – and the work becomes both a test of adaptability and patience. This year's projects captured that variety perfectly.

Working on the Coast-to-Coast route at Kidsty Howes meant long walks in and out each day, having to break through bedrock each day to put in the path, but we got great comments from tired Coast-to-Coasters about the improved path. By contrast, our work from Stythwaite Steps to Easedale Tarn the ground was boggy and wet with big boulders in the way. However, it brought us closer to newer hikers, giving us more time to explain what Fix the Fells does and why it matters.

Seven months of fell work in wind, rain and everything in between can be physically draining and mentally tough, but the shared sense of purpose within the team – and the knowledge that our work genuinely protects these landscapes makes each day easier.

I'm proud of every path I've helped repair, yet my favourite remains my first: the path to Hole-in-the-Wall back in 2017. Maybe it's nostalgia, but it's great to look back at the difference and impact I have made from the very beginning.





Support Fix the Fells

Fix the Fells is entirely dependent upon donations to deliver its work. It can cost up to £400 per metre to build or repair paths on the fells. As well as raising the funds to pay our team of full-time, professional upland path rangers, we need money to fly the stone used in the path work up onto the fells by helicopter, and to provide our staff and volunteers with the tools they need.

Whether you can spare a few pounds or want to invest much more to support Fix the Fells, it all makes a difference and above all, means that we can keep the fells healthy, better able to withstand climate change, and help build paths which are fit for walkers, mountain bikers and horse riders to use for years to come.

Scan the QR code to visit our donations page, or contact us at info@fixthefells.org.uk to talk about bigger investments, including corporate volunteering opportunities with Fix the Fells.

Find out more about our work:

www.fixthefells.co.uk

 @fixthefells  @fixthefells1



**Scan here to
support our work
with a donation**

Photo: Ranger working Stythwaite Steps
© Annie Duckworth, Lake District National Park Authority





Fix the Fells is a partnership between:



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Contact us: info@fixthefells.org.uk | www.fixthefells.co.uk

Cover photos: Loft Beck, Ennerdale; Rangers working at Loft Beck, Ennerdale © Paul Harris / National Trust Images