



## Position Statement from the Fix the Fells Partnership Board

Fix the Fells is a partnership of the National Trust, Lake District National Park, Natural England, Friends of the Lake District and the Lake District Foundation.

The spectacular scenery of the Lake District is important to people and the local economy. The upland rights of way network is an integral part of the appeal and is valued by locals and visitors alike. The increasing popularity and use of the fells for an ever-widening range of recreational activities, coupled with the impacts of the Cumbrian weather, is leading to continued erosion of the fell paths. Internationally and nationally important areas are losing rare habitats to erosion, peat bodies are being degraded and sediment is deposited in otherwise clean lakes and rivers. This harms the scenery and wildlife, and can potentially impact local communities and the tourist economy.

As a conservation programme, Fix the Fells works to repair eroded paths to protect the landscape and biodiversity. We do this in traditional and sustainable ways which have the least impact on the natural environment. We take account of all fell users when designing path repairs.

Without this work, the Lake District landscape would return to the badly scarred condition of the 1980's when repairs began.



## **Our mission and purpose**

- Protecting our spectacular Lakeland fells by repairing and maintaining the upland paths and landscape.
- Increasing upland resilience and raising awareness of the work and the need for funding.

## **Why “Fix the Fells”?**

- ✓ Protect the Lake District UNESCO World Heritage Site;
- ✓ Protect the upland, lake and river Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in the Lake District by reducing erosion;
- ✓ Create more resilient paths in the Lake District fells;
- ✓ Reduce erosion and damage to the upland paths;
- ✓ Protect the landscape from scaring;
- ✓ Protect fragile, rare mountain, peatland and water habitats and species;
- ✓ Retain soil, gravel, stone and peat in the uplands;
- ✓ Help to store carbon in upland vegetation and soils;
- ✓ Help to manage water in the fells;
- ✓ Protect heritage interests from erosion and damage;
- ✓ Enable cost savings via a “stitch in time” approach to erosion damage;
- ✓ Increase the resilience of the fells to increasing visitor numbers, ever-widening recreational activities, increasing use of long distant trails, Wainwrights and ridge lines. and extreme weather events;
- ✓ Ensure these precious places are rich in wildlife, their soil and water are the best they can be and they are beautiful for all to enjoy.

## **How do we “Fix the Fells”?**

- ✓ Using traditional techniques to create sustainable and resilient surfaces, whilst evolving appropriate innovative solutions.
- ✓ Developing and retaining the required, traditional skills in the work force.
- ✓ Running an exemplar volunteer scheme which provides great personal enjoyment, satisfaction and camaraderie as well as making a really useful contribution to the repair and maintenance of the upland paths and landscape.
- ✓ Raising awareness and growing support for our cause through publicising the problem and the work we do.
- ✓ Prioritising the work to fit the resources (see how we do this below).
- ✓ Attracting significant funding.

## **Main messages:**

1. Fix the Fells is made up of five partner organisations, working together to protect the Lakeland fells from erosion.
2. The combination of people and rainwater in the fells leads to erosion. If no action is taken this damage develops in to wider and deeper scars which destroys vegetation and moves soil and stone in to rivers and lakes.
3. We understand the importance of minimising our impact on the landscape, so we’ll only work on a fell if there’s damage that needs repairing.
4. We use traditional techniques to create resilient surfaces which are better able to withstand the increasing number of visitors and severe weather events.

5. Fix the Fells is funded by donations and grants from a wide variety of sources including the general public, local businesses and environmental trusts.
6. Fix the Fells repairs damage to the fells in a sustainable and considered way and receives widespread support and appreciation.

If you have questions about why we're fixing the fells or want to find out more, you can find lots of information on our FAQs page:

<https://www.fixthefells.co.uk/who-we-are/faq/>

### Prioritising the work we do

The current Fix the Fells prioritization is based on 5 points:

Criteria:	Score 1-5 (1 low)	Comments (including archaeology if present)
Current visual impact on landscape		
Current impact on heritage, including ecology/archaeology/geology/other heritage interests		Ecological interests including: SACs/SSSIs/Priority Habitats/Arctic Alpines/Peat/ mountain summits/etc. Archaeological interests including: archaeological features/coffin routes/packhorse routes/drovers routes/mining tracks/etc.
Potential visual impact on landscape		
Potential impact on heritage, including ecology/archaeology/geology/other heritage interests		
Ease of use		
<b>TOTAL</b>		

### Other considerations include:

- Speed of change of a path.
- Stone already flown to site.
- 2012 path survey and resulting 10 year plan.
- Monitoring reports compiled by the FtF Lengthsmen and recorded in the Path Tracker for all repaired/maintained/monitored routes.
- Protecting existing investment (stone-pitched and machine paths).
- Availability of funding.
- Storm damage.
- Slope stability.
- Overall resilience and sustainability of the whole length of a path, remembering it is all about the mountain, not the path.
- Visitor numbers and potential increases in visitor pressure (eg 3 Peaks).

- Wainwright fells and routes.
- Long distance routes (C2C, Cumbria Way).
- Ridge routes.
- Recognised horseshoes eg Coledale round.
- Cost effectiveness of the work.
- Practicality of achieving a sustainable path.