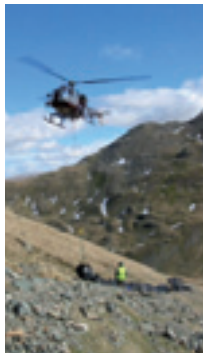




# An evaluation of Fix the Fells 2007–2011





# Executive Summary

**Fix the Fells builds on work begun by the National Trust and Lake District National Park in the 1990s – when it was identified that urgent work was needed to repair paths affected by erosion. Fix the Fells aimed to continue these major repair works to badly eroded paths whilst also having a greater focus on pre-emptive maintenance work, volunteering and community education and engagement. This is an evaluation of that work, conducted by Pathways Consultancy.**





**Overall the evaluation has found that *Fix the Fells* has been highly successful at repairing and maintaining paths in the Lake District. Upland erosion has been considerably reduced through the project's work and this will have had a positive impact on the area's wider landscape and environment. The project has excelled at involving volunteers in its work – showcasing best practice in this area. In addition the project has been exemplar at developing the skills of its staff and volunteers. The project has also done good work in reaching out to new audiences, but this area suffered from an initial lack of clarity as to what it was aiming to achieve and perhaps also from being delivered at too arms length from the main programme.**

**Overall our key recommendation is that this vital work continues. Without constant vigilance the achievements of the project could literally be eroded away. Project partners must find ways to continue the work in the future – with the project's unique combination of a project coordinator supported by a delivery team of staff in partner agencies, volunteers, and community group input. However for the project to be sustainable long term we urge that a dedicated *Fix the Fells* Business Development Officer is created – to work on securing ambitious amounts of funding from the tourism community.**

### **Fix the Fells set out to:**

- 🔍 Continue repairing seriously eroded landscapes and paths
- 🔍 Concentrate on smaller, pre-emptive maintenance works
- 🔍 Engage with new and existing audiences to encourage greater understanding and support
- 🔍 Provide training and development for staff, volunteers and contractors involved in the project

The evaluation of *Fix the Fells* was conducted by Pathways Consultancy between May and September 2011. It involved collecting evidence from all four strands of the project's work: Practical Works, Volunteering, Training and Audience Development. In addition the evaluation looked at the work done to secure ongoing funding for *Fix the Fells*. Here we set out the main findings from the evaluation.

## **Overall thrust of the evaluation...**

### **Practical Works**

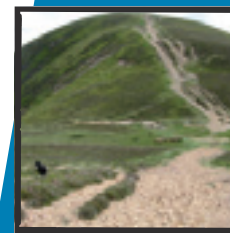
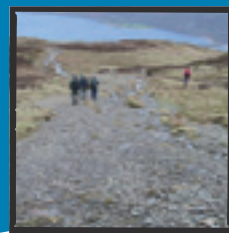
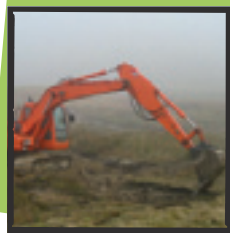
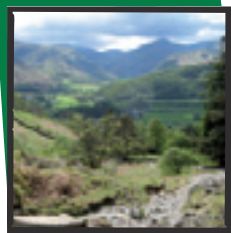
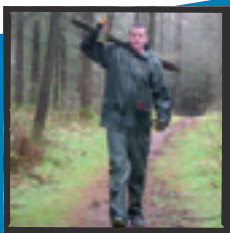
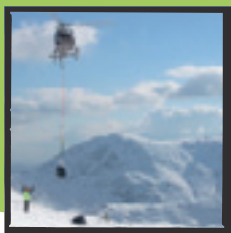
In terms of practical works, 103 paths have been restored to a very high standard by the path repair teams and contractors. The repair teams (staff and volunteers) have developed an extremely high level of expertise through the project – they have used and adapted traditional skills and developed new techniques. It is fair to say that *Fix the Fells* is probably leading the way in upland path restoration in Britain.

Their skills combine engineering and art and have been learned over time spent on the project. These skills need to be retained if the fells are going to continue to be protected in the future. It is also impressive to see how the complexity of the practical works has been coordinated, testimony to a skilful project coordinator. The team have much to share with other projects in this area.

### **Volunteering**

In terms of volunteering, *Fix the Fells* has also excelled. Along with the delivery of practical works, volunteering is one of the project's major achievements. Volunteers have been crucial in delivering the smaller maintenance works on the paths, which prevent serious erosion problems from developing. They work as a very skilled 'hidden army' and have delivered over 1000 volunteer days in each year of the project under the lengthsman scheme and through groups at Basecamp (see below). The work of the lengthsman, clearing drains and literally brushing stones from the path surfaces is essential. Volunteer Coordinators have helped develop the scheme into a creative, exemplar process which could be adopted by other agencies.





It is fair to say that the opportunity to be a volunteer lengthsman works best for people living in or close to the Lake District who can make a regular commitment. However, there are other people who want to be involved and the National Trust's High Wray residential centre, Basecamp, gives them this opportunity. Basecamp has maximised its potential through *Fix the Fells* funding and now stands as a project and an approach in its own right. With the *Fix the Fells* funding, the centre employed an extra member of staff and has developed into a base from which community groups can get out into the countryside and take part in practical conservation work. Basecamp has developed expertise in working with non-traditional countryside user groups – especially those from disadvantaged communities. Volunteers help with the whole range of path creation, maintenance and repair work – everything from pitching stones, installing water bars and clearing drains.

Volunteers have also played an important role in taking the project out to new audiences and volunteer walk leaders have led 50 walks each year, combining

the enjoyment of an upland walk for participants with the opportunity to learn more about the work that is being done to protect the paths they love to walk on. This is one of the main ways that the project has tried to educate visitors and walkers.



### Training

In terms of training, the project has invested in the skills of the people who have worked on the paths – many of whom are local – and an impressive suite of training has been delivered and has benefited National Trust staff, National Park staff and long term and short term volunteers.

### Audience Development

In terms of audience development, the *Fix the Fells* 2005 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund included a clear recognition that previous path restoration schemes had focussed on the practical works but had not attempted to engage with visitors and local communities about the need to care for and repair upland paths. *Fix the Fells* aimed to have a more outreach approach – through both the volunteer programme and Audience Development.

The core elements of the Audience Development work were contracted out to partner organisations and this appears to have created some challenges. The work has been arms length from the core project – it appears to have been operating almost like a satellite project and has perhaps suffered from a lack of clear aims and measurable objectives being set at the beginning by the Steering Group.

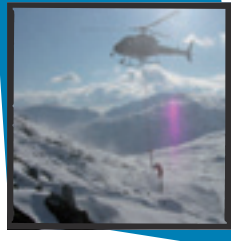
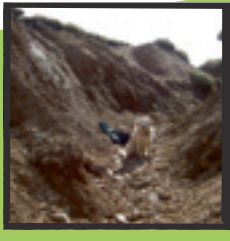
The education work in schools was coordinated by the Field Studies Council and while they have delivered a good education programme to local schools, we would question whether this was the right

priority for the project. As the Steering Group probably acknowledge, three key questions remain: what was the project hoping to achieve through the education work; were these aims realistic; and were schools the best audience through which to achieve these aims?

The marketing and communications work was initially hoped to be delivered through existing staff at the National Trust and the National Park. However, this proved problematic and in 2009 this area of work was contracted to Nurture Lakeland. Whilst the project now has a robust suite of marketing materials, it would obviously be good to have reached this stage sooner. Evaluation work interviewing 218 visitors to the Lakes and 18 local people has shown that awareness of the project, and even the problems of erosion is low. This has clear implications for fundraising for the project.

However, now that this suite of communication materials has been achieved, we would suggest a change of focus for the future. As project partners would agree, a key challenge is the ongoing funding of path repair work.





**BEFORE:** Whiteless Pike



**AFTER:** Whiteless Pike

This evaluation suggests that, instead of pursuing a global marketing approach, a more targeted approach – at businesses who might support *Fix the Fells* – be considered.

Overall, in a future version of the project, the contracting out of the Audience Development components needs to be revisited. If relationships are going to continue on this basis then clearer aims and targets need to be agreed at the beginning and monitoring of achievement built into the process.

### Financial sustainability of the project

Finally, attention must be paid to the future sustainability of the project and *Fix the Fells*' ability to raise money for its work. The estimated amount needed to sustain the path repair work year on year is £478,000 per annum. Nuture Lakeland has been tasked with raising funds for *Fix the Fells* – primarily through local tourism businesses. To date 74 business have donated (via their customers) around £50,000 each year. Significantly, around half of this amount is raised by two businesses alone.

In addition, since 2010, around £5,000 is raised online annually. More recently, other income streams like Just Giving and the sale of badges have brought in around £3000. This year Nuture Lakeland has also secured a grant from European businesses for the project of £25,600.

It is though, through the ongoing support of tourism business, that the majority of the money will be raised for the project. Therefore this evaluation focussed on assessing the experience of 15 businesses who fundraise for *Fix the Fells* and an additional 9 who currently are not raising any funds for conservation work.

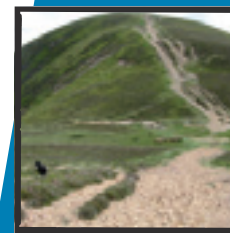
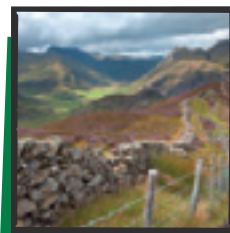
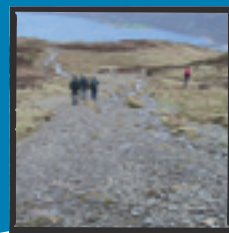
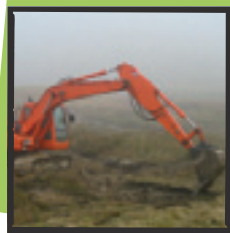
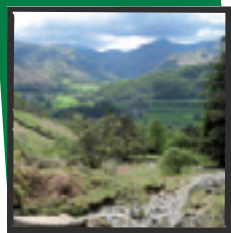
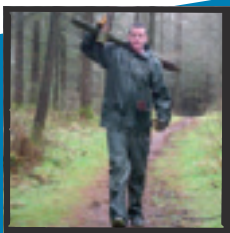
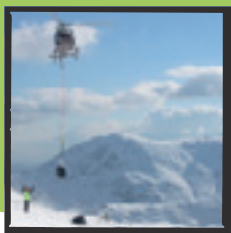
Project partners are likely to agree that raising money from businesses is a key area of work that must be prioritised: targets need to be set for increasing the number of businesses who fundraise for *Fix the Fells* (both as paid up members of Nuture Lakeland and as non-paying Associate Fundraisers). Targets also need to be set for increasing the donations from contributing businesses. Focus needs to be given to identifying larger businesses who, like the current big two funders of the scheme, could make a significant difference to the amounts raised.

From the interviews with businesses, our central conclusion is that the creation of a dedicated business development officer for *Fix the Fells* is a priority, with targeted marketing and lots of face to face contact flowing from this post to the business community. Work needs to be done to develop business owners as ambassadors for the project – who can go on to encourage their customers to donate to the work. This post is so critical that its role and management should be agreed and overseen by all project partners.

Finally we suggest that, building on the project's strong volunteering expertise, *Fix the Fells* could pilot a 'rattle a tin' approach, to raise money directly from fell walkers through perhaps a '*Fix the Fells*' fortnight every summer.

### In conclusion

In conclusion therefore the project has been highly successful – in many cases exceeding its target outputs. It has made a visible difference to the Lake District environment and many thousands of visitors and local people have benefited from its work. It is essential that funding is found to continue the work of the project – and our strongest recommendation is that a post is created to secure more ambitious amounts of funding from the tourism community.



## The need for Fix the Fells

The Lake District is world famous for its spectacular mountain landscape – and this was one of the reasons it was designated as a National Park. Path erosion has an obvious negative impact on this landscape – visually, environmentally and economically. Examples of the multiple problems caused by erosion include:

- ❏ Sediment from path erosion can be washed into rivers and lakes. This can smother fish spawning areas and bring heavy loads of nutrients, leading to algae bloom. Crystal clear freshwaters need good management of sediment in the uplands.
- ❏ Thousands of tonnes of carbon are locked up in the upland peat soils in the Lake District. Path erosion can damage the peat surface vegetation leading to loss of the peat and its carbon content. If the carbon in peat is released to the atmosphere, climate change will get steadily worse.

❏ The uplands have many examples of semi-natural vegetation such as heather moorlands. Path erosion can result in direct loss of these fragile habitats which make walking in the mountains a rich and colourful experience.

❏ The Lake District landscape is full of evidence of human history. From stone age axe factories, roman forts, early farmsteads or the remains of mining and quarrying. Path erosion has damaged some of this archaeological interest and so *Fix the Fells* plays part of protecting our cultural heritage.

❏ It is crucial that visitors and locals alike to enjoy the experience of the Lake District Fells. Eroded paths detract from this experience.

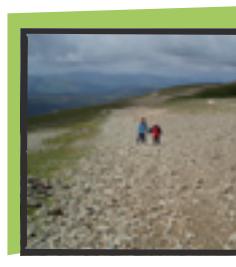
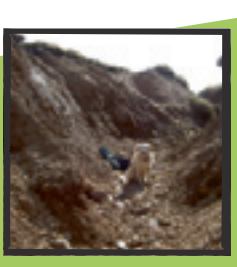
Hence the need for *Fix the Fells*. *Fix the Fells* was set up to repair eroded areas and prevent more erosion taking place – so protecting the fells and the Lake District environment for future generations.

## A strong local partnership

After the award of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant to *Fix the Fells*, a Steering Group was created to oversee the project. This included officers from the National Park, the National Trust and Natural England, the main project partners. Also represented were Friends of the Lake District, who in addition to offering landscape advice, gave money to the project for three years. The Tourism and Conservation Partnership, now Nurture Lakeland, also sat on the Steering Group, as fundraisers and providing communication skills.







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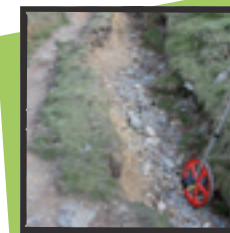
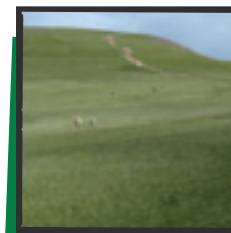
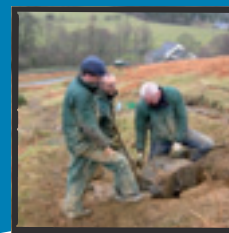
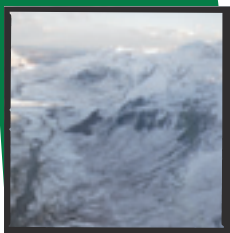
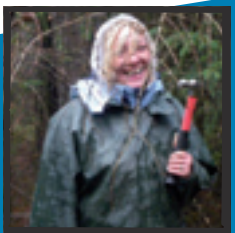
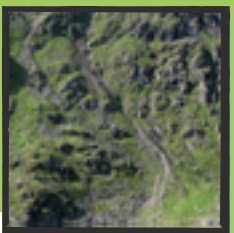
**Friends of the Lake District involvement in upland path repairs has been long. We contributed to the Heritage Lottery Fund Upland Path Landscape Restoration project 2001 – 2006, which we felt was a great success, with 102 stretches of eroded upland paths being repaired. The Friends contributed £160,000 over 4 years to this project and we established the principle of funding pre-emptive repairs. Following the successful HLF bid for Fix the Fells, we were approached to continue with financial support. We gave £40,000 a year for 3 years, until financial pressures meant we could no longer do this. Overall the project has demonstrated best practise in terms of repairing huge and visible landscape scars, in a sustainable way that improved access to the fells for many people.**

”

“

**Throughout the Fix the Fells project, the Ramblers (through their local area committee) have made regular financial contributions towards the practical works of the project – ranging from £3000 to £7,500 a year. These contributions have been made from their Sharpe Legacy fund and demonstrate a huge ‘vote of confidence’ in the project by an important and influential user group. We are very grateful to them for making these contributions.**

”



## Section 1: Background to Fix the Fells

In the early 1990 there was a growing realisation that path erosion in the Lake District was becoming a serious problem. There was no legal requirement on any organisation to carry out repairs, nor were there any formally agreed methods of repair, so that suggestions ranged from doing nothing to using concrete or tarmac to repair upland paths.

In 1993, the three main conservation bodies in the Lake District (the Lake District National Park Authority, the National Trust and English Nature – now Natural England) together set up the Access Management Group. The Group aimed to establish principles and methods of repair work and encourage an exchange of ideas and information between organisations and landowners.

The Access Management Group commissioned a survey of all upland paths in the Lake District National Park that were showing signs of erosion. 145 paths were

identified as causing erosion scars and requiring major repairs. Due to the amount of work involved, the plan to tackle the problem was a project divided into two phases, each lasting five years.

**Stage One:** the first phase of the project ran from 2001 to 2006, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and focussed on repairing the 70 highest priority eroded paths. This target was exceeded with 102 paths being repaired. Stage One was extremely successful – it built firm working relations between the organisations involved and exceeded expectations in tackling the physical repair work. But to prevent the repeated deterioration of the Lake District's path network more work was needed.

**Stage Two:** is *Fix the Fells*. It aimed to continue the major repair works to badly eroded paths but also to have a greater focus on pre-emptive maintenance work, volunteering and community education and engagement. During the funding application process for *Fix the Fells* in 2006, Nurture Lakeland and Friends of the Lake District joined the project partnership and Steering

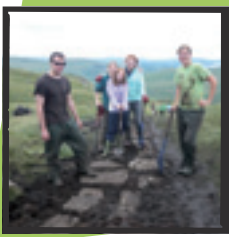
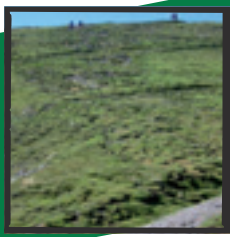
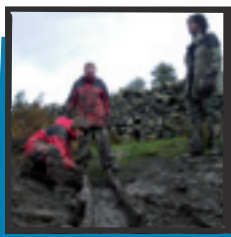
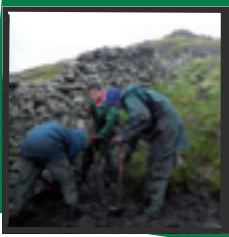
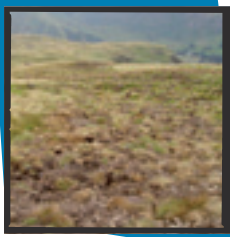
Group. Details of the membership of the Steering Group and associated Sub Groups can be found in *Appendix 1*.

### Fix the Fells set out to:

- 🔧 **Deliver practical works:** Continue repairing seriously eroded landscapes and paths
- 👥 **Through Volunteering to:** Concentrate on smaller, pre-emptive maintenance works
- 🎤 **With Audience Development to:** Engage with new and existing audiences to encourage greater understanding and support
- 🎓 **Through training to:** provide training and development for staff, volunteers and contractors involved in the project

In 2007 *Fix the Fells* was successful at securing £2 million from the Lottery towards funding the work of a £3 million, five year project. This is an evaluation of that work. It has been conducted by Pathways Consultancy Limited.









## The evaluation process

### Choosing an approach to the evaluation

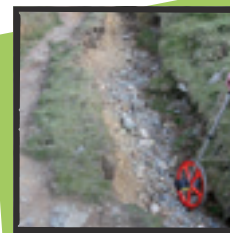
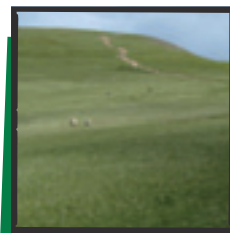
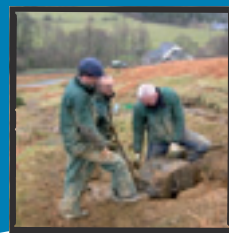
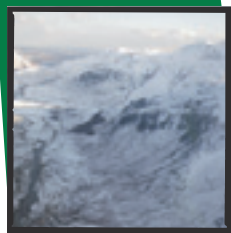
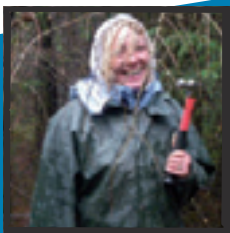
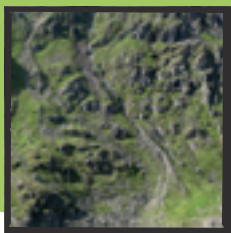
In the first few meetings with the evaluation steering group and the information that they supplied, it became clear that this project has reported well to Heritage Lottery Fund and in great detail. We understood that Heritage Lottery Fund is satisfied by all the monitoring data that they have received – the project has been delivered on budget and on time and in many areas has exceeded the targets it has set out in its original bid.

The staff we met demonstrated a high level of skills and gave us a lot of confidence in their competence. It is fair to say that this set the tone for the evaluation work. For example, in the past we have evaluated projects where there have been warning signs early on that all is not well – there might have been inadequate monitoring, poor record keeping, a failure to meet targets and conflict at a staff or management level. These warning signs would lead us to adopt a 'forensic' approach to an evaluation – concentrating on basic data collection and checking of spend and outputs.









### **To assess practical works, we:**

- ④ Set up a small path evaluation group of eight members including contractors, National Trust staff, National Park staff and volunteer co-ordinators. This group came together for a half day workshop to create an evaluation framework for the paths they had repaired.
- ④ Asked members of the above group to work in pairs to evaluate seven paths
- ④ Interviewed four contractors to get a flavour of their work

### **To assess volunteering, we:**

- ④ Interviewed three lengthsman including the two co-ordinators
- ④ Visited a lengthsman's shed to help understand the project – a small network of sheds across the fells acts as meeting places, recording stations and tool stores
- ④ Interviewed Rob Clarke, Base Camp co-ordinator to gather evidence of the work that takes place there and identified four case studies to illustrate this work. Rob gave us a wealth of evidence in support of the work.

### **To assess audience development work, we:**

- ④ Met and interviewed two members of staff from the Field Studies Council – the co-ordinator of the education programme and the person responsible for delivering workshops in schools
- ④ Met and interviewed three young people – 13 year olds – who attended a *Fix the Fells* workshop at their school
- ④ Interviewed the Director of Nurture Lakeland, the Marketing and Communications Officer and the worker organising the project's participation at local and regional events. Through these interviews we gained an understanding of the marketing work that has been done on behalf of *Fix the Fells*
- ④ Looked at the suite of marketing materials that have been produced and worked with the Marketing and Communications Officer to assess the impact of the marketing materials produced

- ④ Sent two researchers on to the fells for five days to interview 240 walkers to assess their knowledge of *Fix the Fells* and path erosion issues.

### **To assess the training element work, we:**

- ④ Interviewed the staff member leading on training and looked at written evidence for the training delivered.

### **Future funding of Fix the Fells**

***As part of the evaluation brief we were also asked to look at future fundraising for Fix the Fells – including exploring businesses' and visitors' attitudes to donation. To evaluate this area of work we:***

- ④ Interviewed 15 businesses that fundraise for *Fix the Fells* through Nurture Lakeland and 9 businesses who do no fundraising at all
- ④ Interviewed the Director of Nurture Lakeland about their fundraising work and looked at written data about the funds raised so far

- ④ In interviewing walkers on the fell, we explored with them their attitudes to donation generally and their willingness to donate to *Fix the Fells* specifically.

In the next section of the report we summarise what has been delivered in each of these five areas and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of each area.









## Section 2:

# What they did and how well did they do it?



## What they did on practical works

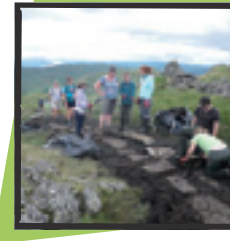
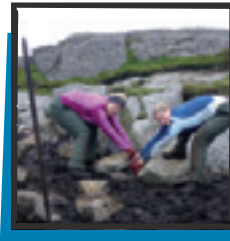
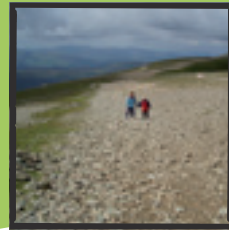
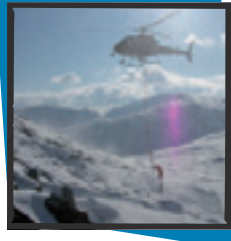
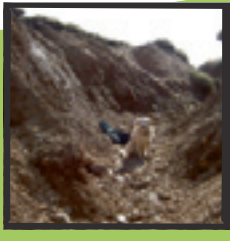
*The practical side of the project is carried out by staff from the Lake District National Park Authority, the National Trust, expert contractors and volunteers.*

*There are four full time path teams who work on the fells from March to November. In winter they move into the valleys to work on fencing, walling, tree planting and hedge laying. Below is an overview of what they have achieved in each year of the project:*

**103 Paths repaired and maintained**







In 2007 21 paths were repaired, 24 days were worked by the new lengthsmen as they completed their training towards the end of the year and 552 Basecamp volunteers did 240 days repair work on upland paths and 840 days voluntary conservation work in total. A key highlight of the year was repairing one of the remotest paths in the Lake District by the Wasdale Team – Great Moss to Broad Stand in Upper Eskdale.

In 2008 22 paths were repaired and 156 days were worked by lengthsmen and 449 Basecamp volunteers did 395 days repair work on upland paths and 1,285 days voluntary conservation work in total. A key highlight was mimicking the old sleds used by miners for shifting ore, contractors Making Trax used a modern day equivalent for moving stone on Castle Rock – an old car bonnet!

In 2009 20 paths were repaired and 542 days were worked by lengthsmen and 620 Basecamp volunteers did 137 days repair work on upland paths and 1,301 days voluntary conservation work in total. A highlight was that despite more than a foot of rain falling in a 24 hour period of November in Borrowdale, leading to the loss of a number of bridges downstream, there was negligible damage to any of the paths repaired by *Fix the Fells*. In the last five weeks of the year, volunteer lengthsmen and some staff checked over 150 upland paths for damage.

In 2010 24 paths were repaired and 602 days were worked by lengthsmen and 567 Basecamp volunteers did 216 days repair work on upland paths and 1,169 days voluntary conservation work in total. A highlight for the project was the work on Gowbarrow. This was an entirely new challenge – eroding peat and heather but

with no stone material. Experimentally the path repair team created a higher, drained path using peat.

In 2011 to date 16 paths have been repaired and 544 days worked by lengthsmen up to the end of August. At this date the target of 1000 for the year looked highly likely. In addition 537 volunteers have worked at Basecamp so far this year and have done 264 days repair work on upland paths and 1,112 days on voluntary conservation work to date. This number is expected to rise significantly by year end. This year's highlight has to be grappling with the worst flying weather in February that the project has had to deal with. This has meant flying stone onto the fells was delayed and left the path repair team playing catch up right from the start of the season.

The project now has a running list of 110 outstanding routes needing stabilisation.

### Path repair – a skilled job

*Fix the Fells* 2007–2011 workers have maintained the standards set by their predecessors – they have upheld the best practice documented in *Repairing Upland Path Erosion* (1996) and have developed a range of approaches to path repair and maintenance which include using old traditional skills but they have also thoughtfully developed new and innovative techniques.

The evaluation team was so impressed with complexity of the work done by the path repairers that we wanted to feature their work in detail. On the following pages we highlight three workers and the approaches they specialise in.

“

**The project has allowed us to be inventive. We can try something and if needed go back and do more.**

”



# A day in the life of...

**Paul Delaney,  
Ranger Supervisor**



## Stone pitching – restoring paths the traditional way...

Carrying everything you need for work is no mean feat for Paul Delaney a Ranger Supervisor at the National Trust – his commute to work is a 1.5 hour hike carrying 18 kilos of equipment, including waterproofs, food, and a first aid kit.

Paul is a part of a skilled team that repair paths on the fells by laying each stone by hand. The stone pitching technique used by the team is very old and has been used for hundreds of years. Put simply, Paul says, they use very large stones to provide a sustainable walking surface.

Although Paul makes the work sound easy – “We dig a big hole and put a stone in it” – these are skilled workers who have learnt the skills they need over many years. Paul started out 17 years ago as a volunteer and says the only way to learn the technique is to get out there and do it.

If getting to the site is not a big enough challenge, the hardest part of the job is creating a path that people will actually walk on and stay on. Path erosion is caused by you and me walking on it, and as the path begins to erode we make new routes that widen the path and create a scar on the landscape.



Paul and the team use very subtle landscaping techniques, such as placing obstructions like large rocks to make the land more uneven where they don't want people to walk. Another challenge is creating a path that sits within the landscape and doesn't look formal.

It takes a great deal of skill to repair a path using this technique without it becoming over engineered. Paul says that each member of the team has their own style and way of laying the path, claiming that he'd be able to tell who had laid a path after being on it for just a few metres.

Paul's most memorable moment on the job was when a team from the Scottish highlands came down to visit them on a path they were working on. Paul and the team were sat having a cup of tea as the Scottish team walked up the fell, passing several sections of the path that had already been completed. No one from the Scottish team realised that this part of the path had been worked on. Whilst most people might be disappointed that their hard work went unnoticed, for Paul this is a sign of how well they had redone the path. To create a path that sits so subtly within the landscape that even your peers can't tell is pretty special.



# A day in the life of...

**Paul Robinson,  
Field Worker**



## New techniques...

When a fell path has been eroded and water has washed everything away, creating a huge 20 metre scar on the landscape, what can be done to restore it? A major scar like this is too large for manual labour to repair, so this is when Paul Robinson a Field Worker for the National Park and trained digger operator is called in to help.

Paul isn't just your average digger driver – it requires a particular skill to keep the landscape unharmed, clean and tidy in the process of repairing a path using such a large piece of machinery. And there is the added pressure of constantly needing a lot of fuel to power the diggers, made more difficult by the locations in which they work.

If they are lucky they are able to use quad bikes to get out to the machines, usually carrying up to 80 litres of fuel for the diggers. If there's no quad bike access, the fuel is flown up in bowsers which hold between 500 and 600 litres.

Once they are set up for the day, their work begins. Their goal is to reduce the 20 metre wide path to about three or four foot wide, and to create a turfed drain to prevent future water damage.

First they strip the turf off and dig down to get to the sub-soil material, which is used to build the path alongside the drain. This sub-soil material is used to create a hard wearing walking surface above ground level. The drain, which is dug in a half-moon shape and covered in turf, acts like a gutter to catch and channel the water.

Every 15–20 metres along the path, the team dig another half-moon shaped drain across the path, which allows the water to run off and down the side of the fell without damaging the path. If they didn't create these drains across the path, there would be a build up of water that would eventually erode the new path.

Paul has been driving diggers all his life and has worked for the National Park for 22 years. He's been doing this job repairing eroded paths for about 6 years and enjoys all of the work that's involved. "When you see these massive scars on the fells and you get to put them back how they should be," Paul says, "it's real job satisfaction."



## A day in the life of...

**Ian Griffiths,  
Ranger Footpath  
Supervisor**

### Restoring paths in a new way... using sheep's wool



Next they take the sheep fleece, which is flown up the fell by helicopter, and work it into balls. These balls of sheep's wool are placed in the bottom of the trench and stacked three deep to create the base layer of the new path.

After the layer of sheep's wool, the workers lay larger pieces of aggregate on top - this is glacial material called 'sub soil' that has been dug up and flown up the fell in skips. The team sift through the aggregate to find the largest pieces to go on first, then carefully building up the layers finishing with fine rubble on top.

The benefit of using sheep fleece for a path like this in a boggy area is that the sheep's wool prevents the gravel and aggregate sinking to the bottom, hence what Ian calls a 'floating path'. This path took the South Lakes Team around three months to complete, along with the help of volunteers from Fix the Fells and a team on a working holiday.

They recently returned to this repaired path to see how it was faring and the team are delighted with the results. Where previously they would have used stepping stones that end up wobbling and sinking into the soft ground, the sheep wool path hasn't sunk and is "working a treat."

Ian has been working on the paths for eight years, and first used the sheep fleece technique two years ago. For Ian, one of the best parts of his job is working alongside the sheep that graze the fells, with their recently clipped coats, knowing that it's the fleeces from these very sheep that he is using to restore the path.



For Ian Griffiths, a National Trust Ranger Footpath Supervisor in the South Lakes, his 10 hour work day begins with an hour's walk to his 'office'. Unlike most of us, Ian's office is a stretch of fell with a path in need of repair.

Ian is part of a team that have been using an innovative technique that uses sheep fleece to create a 'floating path' in boggy, peaty areas. After their morning brew, Ian and the team set about digging a metre deep trench the length of the path - all 200 metres of it!





## How well they have done on practical works

It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to check the work on all the 103 paths repaired through the *Fix the Fells* project. A Path Evaluation Group was therefore convened for the evaluation – comprising of eight members including contractors, National Trust staff, National Park staff and volunteer co-ordinators. For half a day they worked together to devise a survey form that could be used to peer-assess selected paths. The form is shown opposite:



**Fix the Fells: evaluating footpath repair work**

Please take some shots of you evaluating the footpath!

**General Background:**

**Name of the footpath:** Helvellyn Summit 2010

**Can you tell us any background to this path that would be useful to know:**  
Very popular bridleway that runs along the Helvellyn ridge. Having little containment, it had widened to 8m or more in places. The section repaired in 2010 was the steeper section north of Lower Man where the path had become very wide and loose.

**Area of repair (from where to where):** NY 338,159 to NY 338,157

**Who did the repair?** Neil Bassett contractor

**When did the repair take place?** 2010

**Has any remedial work been undertaken:** No

**Names of evaluators:** Steve Jolley and Richard Fox

**Date of evaluation:** 27 July 2011

**Your evaluation of the repair:**

1. Has the erosion stabilised?  
Yes. Prior to work being undertaken, the path was widening. There is now no sign of any such pressure.

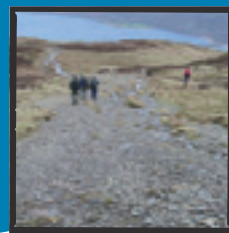
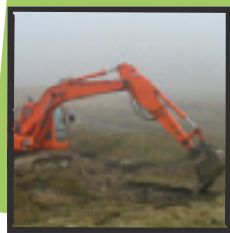
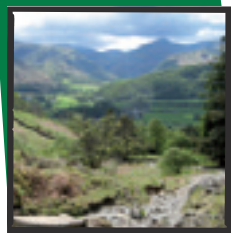
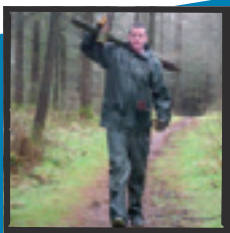
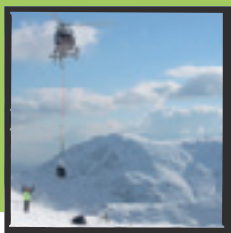
2. Is it suitable for its use and designation? Tell us about this.  
Yes – it's good to walk on, and during the evaluation a cyclist was observed riding down without any problem. It is rarely used by horseriders, but there would be no problem.

Page 1

The Group then selected seven paths to evaluate – chosen to illustrate the different types of paths that need repairing and the range of repair techniques used.

## The seven paths were:

- 🟡 **Helvellyn Summit 2010:** a very popular high path that had widened to 8m or more in places
- 🟡 **Martcrag Moor:** a path crossing a wet bog area with a delicate mix of peat bog and upland flora
- 🟡 **Stake Pass towards Langstrath valley:** a historic route where conditions were too steep for a digger to come in and pitching was not applicable
- 🟡 **Nannycatch:** a bridleway that had worn so much that it was lower than the beck that flowed alongside it
- 🟡 **Force Crag zig-zags:** a quiet path for the area but described as a 'horrible mess' – rivers of loose stones and gullies
- 🟡 **Coledale Hause:** the worst gully caused by erosion in the National Park. Long lengths were deeper than the height of a person
- 🟡 **Scar Crag:** this path used to ascend a gully of friable bedrock. Path was constantly shattering and was a particular challenge to stabilise.



The evaluations of the seven paths demonstrate that the paths have been repaired to a very high standard. In all cases the erosion has been stabilised, ensuring the path is now suitable for its designation. Drainage issues have been resolved, leaving the paths dry when well maintained. From what was observed, path users are in all cases now staying on the repaired paths and they are standing up to their current use. Where applicable, the historic significance of the area has been sensitively considered in the repair work and in all cases the landscape around the paths is intact. The evaluators were particularly pleased with how the paths 'sat' in the landscape and blended in. There were many comments about how pleasing the repaired paths were and how many walkers would not be able to tell the work had taken place. When thinking about what could have been done differently, the main commentary was that the repaired paths highlighted the need for further sections of the path to be attended to.

Sections of the field evaluations for three of the paths are shown on the following pages. The full path evaluations for the seven paths are presented in *Appendix 2*.



## Summary of how well they've done

### An outstanding success story.

- ◊ The project isn't a 'one size fits all' Instead the most appropriate solution has been worked out for each path
- ◊ There has been time within project to adapt techniques and problem solve
- ◊ New techniques have been developed, showcasing environmentally sustainable approaches
- ◊ Very skilled workforce
- ◊ Archaeology protected
- ◊ Upland environment protected and restored
- ◊ Erosion halted successfully – therefore material prevented from washing down into rivers and lakes.





## Helvellyn Summit 2010

*This popular rocky, high altitude route suffered mainly from people's lack of discipline to keep to the worn surface. The path had steadily widened and at this height it was a particular challenge to reduce its width and keep it looking unmanaged. The result is a great success but will need a constant eye to ensure no new routes start – it is graded at red route.*

### 8. Does it sit well in the landscape? Tell us what you notice – including materials used and how it 'feels' on the eye

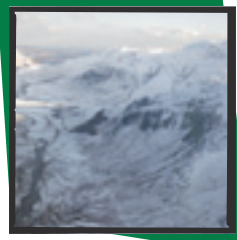
The stone used is very similar to the in-situ stone, blends in very well and the contractor has been very successful in setting it into the ground at the same angle of strike as the naturally occurring stone. General public would not be able to notice where work has been carried out.

### 9. Overall do you like what's been done?

Yes, very much so. Untrained eye can't tell that any work has been done. This is a rare achievement in path repair work – but it's the ultimate goal where practical.







## Martcrag Moor



*Another particularly challenging repair as the erosion here had uncovered sensitive archaeological remains – Neolithic stone chippings. Our normal repair methods were too intrusive for the archaeology but repairs were urgent to prevent further damage. The result was an aggregate path floated on sheep fleeces – highly successful and graded at amber to keep a regular eye, but little remedial work is expected.*

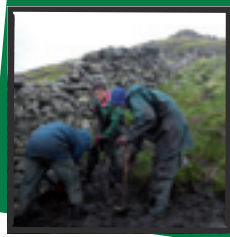
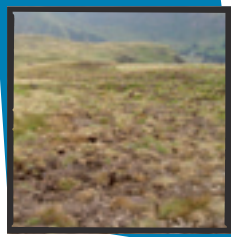
**4. Are people using it? Do they step off it – is it fit for purpose?  
What do you notice about how people are using it?**

Yes. There appears to be 100% usage of the path. Many walkers have been observed on both sections and none have walked off the path. They walk in a relaxed and confident manner – very sure of their route across a previously difficult area. The only exception may be the occasional fell runner, who generally always take their own routes.

**7. Is the landscape around it intact?  
Tell us about this**

Yes. The boggy moorland looks to be thriving with the reduced footfall and there is a perceived increase in amount & variety of upland grasses and flowers. The area around the 'axe factory' is radically improved with the large overhanging peat hangs now seamlessly blended into the surrounding hillside, very much as it would have been many years before the erosion started.





“

**A great repair is when people think it's been there 100 years. But sometimes the erosion is so bad that it's simply not possible.**

”

“

**Bad work hurts the eye – it never settles in.**

”



## Stake Pass towards Langstrath Valley



*This path is an old packhorse route which after decades of minimal use is a popular walking route. The original line of the path had been lost and there was lots of loose material and gullying along the path. This location presents special problems because the site is so steep. We could not use a machine here as this would have damaged the old zig-zags that we wanted to restore. The new path has been forged by hand, reinstating the old line – it zig-zags down the hill at a very steady gradient and is very easy walking now. It is an amber route as there should be little movement*

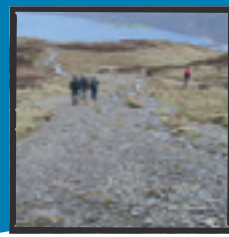
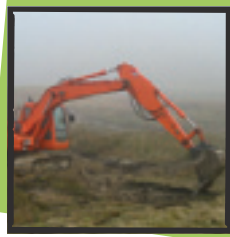
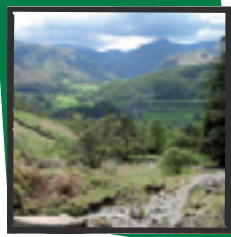
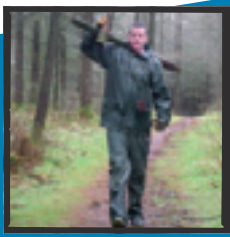
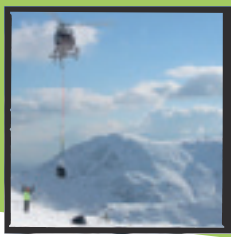
### 1. Has the erosion stabilised

Yes. You can see that the old path scars are healing and getting greener each year. It's getting harder to tell where the old path was situated.

### 3. Is there water on it? Is the drainage working? Tell us what you can see that can evidence this.

The drainage that is in place is working and there is no sign of water on the path surface. The drainage is in the form of ditches and an indicator that they are doing their intended job is that the vegetation has changed and there are now reeds growing in the ditches





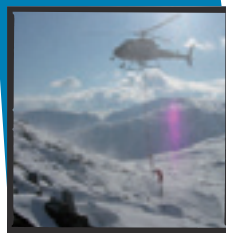
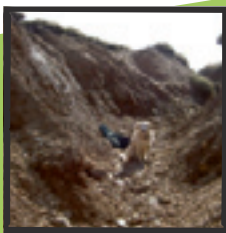
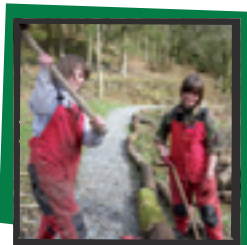
## What they've done on volunteering

*The access related landscape scars on the Lake District landscape can be repaired, but once repaired, it is essential that the paths are maintained. At the very minimum, drains need to be cleaned out and loose stones need to be cleared from the surface. By the nature of the landscape and the fell environment, drains will gradually fill with silt and gravel, and some loose stones will fall onto stone pitching, particularly if the work is fresh and the vegetation hasn't settled or if sheep are driven down the path.*

*There is a huge territory to cover in the fells and relatively few people were carrying out repairs and maintenance so getting volunteers involved in basic path maintenance and repairs was seen as critical to the success and sustainability of the work being carried out by Fix the Fells. The project sought to involve volunteers in two main ways – people could either become a volunteer lengthsman or take part in the activities run from the National Trust's volunteers centre, High Wray Basecamp.*







## Lengthsmen

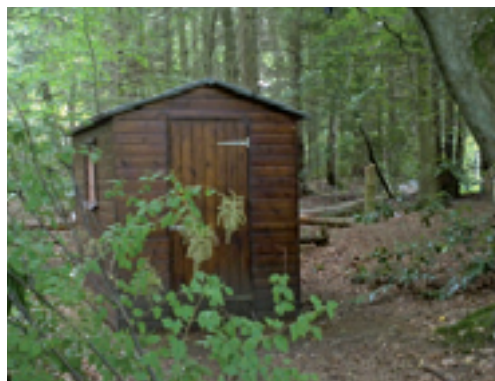
Keeping track of the maintenance needed on the path network and carrying out small but essential tasks on a fairly regular basis presented an enormous logistical task. However, *Fix the Fells* have adapted the traditional role of a lengthsmen – in rural areas lengths of road would be looked after by a person living on or close to that length who would maintain the drainage and surface of the road – and created a skilled network of volunteers. They are now looking after lengths of path and carry out the basic maintenance tasks. It is one of the successes of the project and this is how it works each year:

**Winter:** annual recruitment – typically between 30 and 40 volunteers 'signed' up and conditions of work agreed.

**Spring:** volunteers take part in a robust training programme including five days on first aid, path maintenance, navigation and engaging with the public and issues that might arise. The tasks that they can undertake as lengthsmen are defined.

**Summer:** volunteers begin their work as lengthsmen. Normally the Volunteer Coordinator (volunteers themselves) set out a schedule of work days and a lengthsmen shed to meet at. The lengthsmen then group into pairs, choose a path from the path list and go and clear the drains and sweep the pitching. The lengthsmen sheds are a network of garden sheds dotted around the Lake District in key locations. They hold tools for the work (spades, trowels and brooms), as well as some waterproofs, a list of paths and maps.

In all 146 people have been trained as lengthsmen, maintaining around 160 paths a year. On average each lengthsmen will go out for 20 days a year.



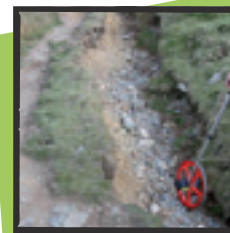
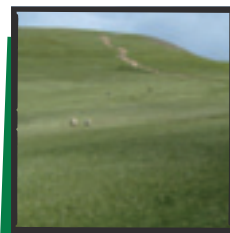
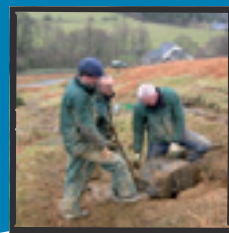
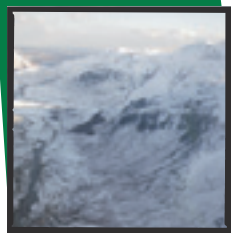
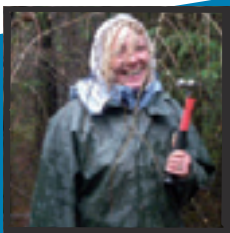
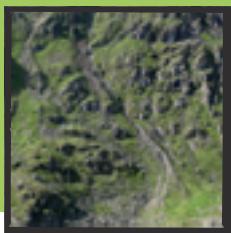
The traffic light system of grading paths was developed through volunteer input. There are 163 routes on the *Fix the Fells* schedule and each one is graded as red, amber or green. This traffic light system indicates which paths need more frequent attention.

- **Red:** needs the most frequent attention – checking at least four times a year. A couple of paths are double red as they are so heavily used there's considerable scope for damage
- **Amber:** less frequent checking required – twice a year perhaps
- **Green:** check once a year – doesn't require much maintenance.

There are **63 red routes** in total, **56 Amber** and **44 green**. The classification is continually being reviewed and updated with paths being adjusted up and down on the system.

An 'extranet' section on the *Fix the Fells* website allows all work on the paths to be recorded and volunteers use this maintenance log to keep abreast of which paths have been checked and cleared recently and to help them decide their priorities for work.





## Basecamp

High Wray Basecamp is a residential volunteer centre, set in the woods above Windermere Lake. With *Fix the Fells* funding, the centre employed an extra member of staff and has developed into a base from which community groups can get out into the countryside and take part in practical conservation work.

Basecamp has developed an expertise at working with non-traditional countryside user groups – especially those from disadvantaged communities. Groups include for instance: Barrow MIND; a young people's group in Rochdale; a local secondary school – the Lakes School and a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre.

Through the life of the project Basecamp has worked with 122 different groups – with many coming several times – giving a total of 1252 days on upland path repair work and 5607 days work in total on conservation tasks. Volunteers help with the whole range of path creation, maintenance and repair work – everything from pitching stones, laying log edges, clearing drains, working the power barrow.

At Basecamp, groups are given all the resources they need: waterproofs, hardwearing boots, tools, maps, training and support – and guided conservation activities.

For groups staying several days there are bunk beds, communal bathrooms and a warm kitchen and common room with a wood burner. Critically, Basecamp staff work with the groups to plan the right level of activity for them – be it a residential weekend or weekly activities.

Basecamp differs from other outdoor centres, in that as well as providing access to the countryside Basecamp offers its volunteers the chance to learn new skills and gain a sense of achievement physical work that supports the delicate fell environment.



## An interview with Rob Clarke, Basecamp Community Warden:



In the past we were mainly doing working holidays – where National Trust members would pay and book to come out with us and do conservation. But they would be the typical countryside users – white, middle class. Or we'd have the Council for Voluntary Service bringing us bus loads of de-motivated kids on probation, who didn't want to be there and it was hard to find work for them to do. So Paul Kear, our new Volunteer Development Manager worked on what we do and why. He had a vision that we could offer more, make a bigger difference, where Basecamp could be the starting point for getting into the countryside and doing conservation for all sorts of so called 'hard to reach' groups. It's a vision which *Fix the Fells* has helped us realise.

At Basecamp we tend not to jump into things. We always seek to build a relationship with the organisation that wants to do some volunteering. We meet them and work out what they're capable of, what they want, what would work best for them. We figure any organisation worth its salt will be happy about that – it helps them plan ahead and make sure things are right for their group.



We are a real 'Base Camp'. We're the starting point for groups to come and do more than simply experience the countryside. At the end of the day they've done something they are proud of. Something they can show and tell others about. They're being active, getting outside and learning something. Best of all they've done something they're proud of; given something back. I think this makes us unique.

Lots of people who come to Basecamp say to us...

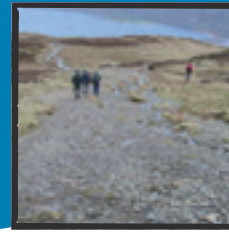
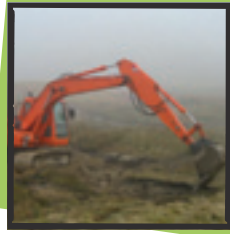
***"I've never done anything like this before  
and now I'd like to come back to the  
Lakes with my family".***

Above all, the *Fix the Fells* funding has given us the right resources to do the job well. So we're not just fire fighting. We've got a decent staffing level which enables us to build relationship with our client groups, reflect on our work and develop and improve the project.





# Basecamp case studies



## Fida Hussain and his group of young adults from Rochdale

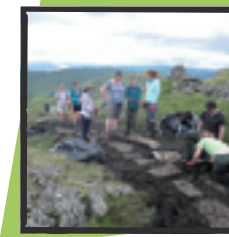
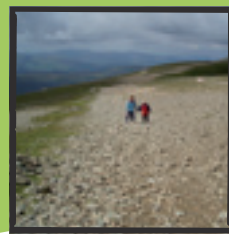
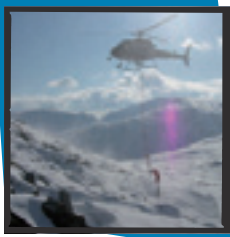
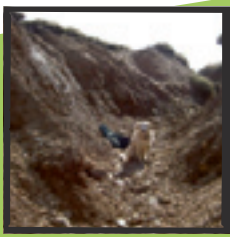
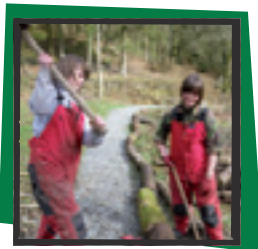
Fida Hussain gives up his time to help young adults aged 18 – 20 years from Rochdale get out and experience the countryside. Fida is a Duke of Edinburgh Award instructor and his group all have the chance to go for the award – they all come from very urban environments in Rochdale and about half the group are from the Asian community.

The residential stay required by the Award brought them to Basecamp where they have worked on the paths with the *Fix the Fells* team. They had a great time and so really impressed the team with the work they did – they are coming back next year.

***“The last time they came up they were all saying they were going to come back in a few years and bring their families to show them what they had done.”***

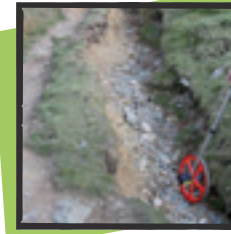
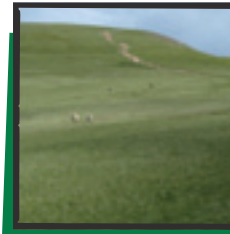
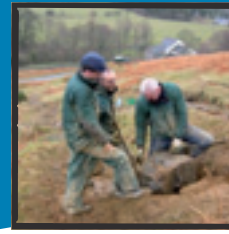
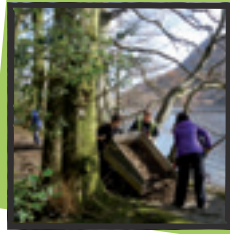








# Basecamp case studies



## Kendal College Outdoor Studies Students

Many students on Kendal College's BTEC National Diploma course in Outdoor Studies. They hope to be Outdoor Leaders in the future with some of them going on to work in the Lake District. When course leader, Steve Randal, spotted a knowledge gap between outdoor activities and the conservation work needed to look after the countryside he got in touch with Basecamp in the hope of changing this.

In 2010, first and second year students went out from Basecamp with one of the path teams to learn basic conservation skills such as dry-stone walling and hedge laying. The students also learned about fell erosion and the challenges faced by *Fix the Fells*. The success of this visit has an on-going relationship with *Fix the Fells*.

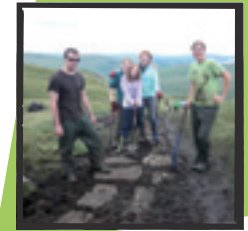
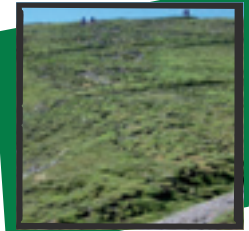
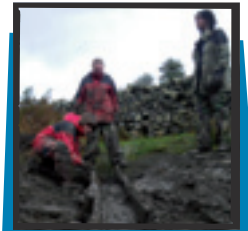
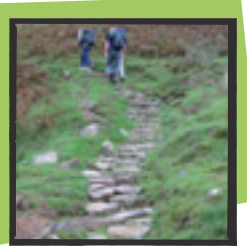
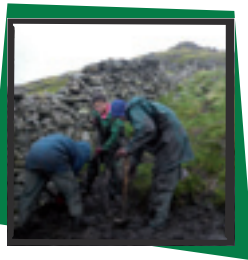
From 2011, first year students are attending Basecamp once a month. Second year students hope to attend weekly during March and April, undertaking a project with the uplands path teams on the fells.



***“These students are at the beginning of a career in Outdoor Studies – it has been good to see how it’s developed. They say they had no idea how much work it takes to put up a dry stone wall and that they think twice now before scrambling over a wall. When they notice shortcuts they think twice, because they know it causes erosion problems”.***



# Basecamp case studies



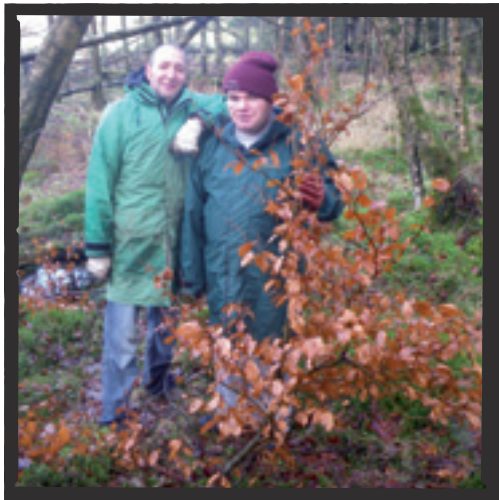
## Barrow MIND

The relationship between MIND and *Fix the Fells* builds on a previous project – ‘Out There’ – which was led by MIND and aimed to help people living with mental health issues get out into the outdoors.

Service users are able to get out of town into the Lake District countryside which is on their doorstep. People can take part in practical conservation work parties but there is no pressure to do this and some just benefit from being in a beautiful, peaceful environment – sometimes people stay over at Basecamp.

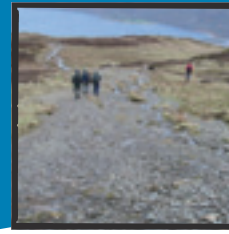
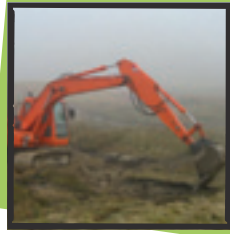
***“When you talk to the leaders and case workers, they say that whenever people stop over they are talking about it and looking forward to it months before. They do something completely different and things they’d never normally consider”.***

The Basecamp team also now have a link with Kendal MIND and hope the two groups might sometimes work together.





# Basecamp case studies



## Uplands Camping Holidays

Upland Camping Holidays are National Trust working holidays with a twist. Volunteers spend their holiday working on the fells for four consecutive days and camp out near the work site for three nights. It's very hard work with no showers or baths or formal toilet facilities but the work is rewarding and people come back time and time again.

Basecamp provides a place to leave from and forgotten supplies can be taken up to the campsite and if anyone is ill they come down to stay.

At least two National Trust workers accompany each group. They are instructors during the day and guides during the evening when they'll take people to different fells to see the views and the sunsets. Each group will have around 12 people in it and might include young adults doing their Duke of Edinburgh Award, professionals taking a break from the city or older people with a zest for life.



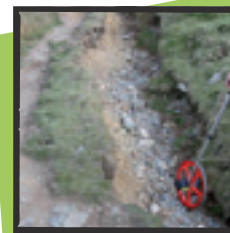
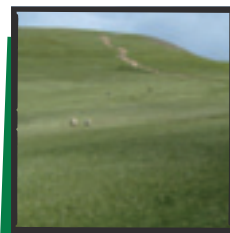
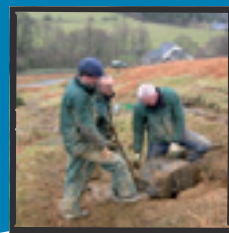
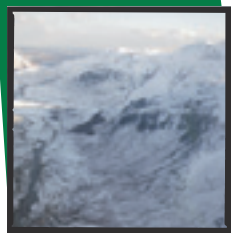
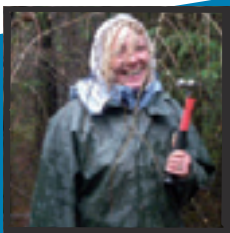
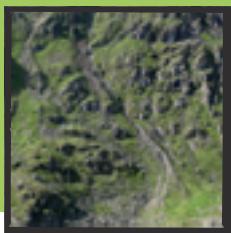




*“Di comes back time and again and she has puts loads of work in. She bakes cakes and is in her 60s but she’s really energetic and keen. She did three working holidays last year – we don’t know how she does it! She’s first up in the morning and last to bed in the evenings – looking after everybody.”*







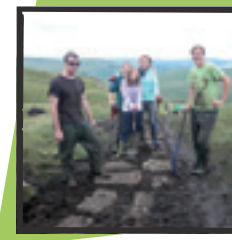
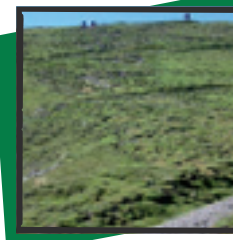
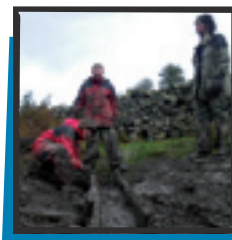
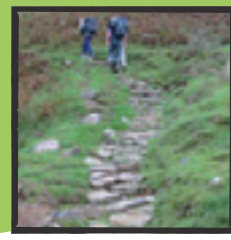
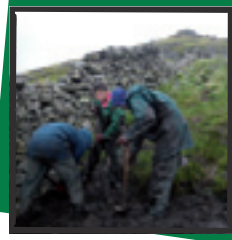
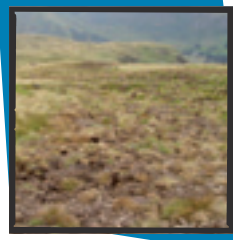
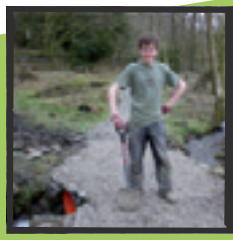
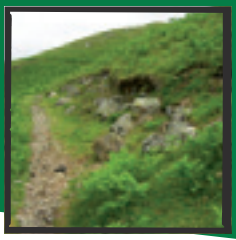
## How well they have done on volunteering

### Lengthsmen

The lengthsmen scheme has created a skilled and confident group of volunteers who are now at the core of the project – they are largely self managed and trusted by the professionals working on the project. They have become the eyes of the project out on the fells. The spread of work that the volunteers have undertaken is hugely impressive and they talk with pride about the work they have done.







## Summary of how well they've done

**Incredibly impressive – with lots for other projects to learn from.**

### Lengthsmen

- ⬢ A simple idea that works extremely well
- ⬢ Created a valuable resource of experienced volunteers that must be nurtured for the future
- ⬢ A decentralised approach
- ⬢ A model for other projects
- ⬢ Securing funding for the continuation of this scheme a priority.

### Basecamp

- ⬢ Innovative and impressive work
- ⬢ Successful engaging with groups that are often seen as 'hard to reach'
- ⬢ Having long term impact on the volunteers involved
- ⬢ Securing funding for the continuation of this scheme a priority.



**I've made some really good friends through this scheme and within the core group there's a great deal of camaraderie.**



The volunteers told us that they have been encouraged to input into the development of the scheme and they appear to have taken the very flexible system that was first introduced and given it some structure which has helped its momentum and increased its impact. They have put monitoring in place and developed the traffic light grading system which enables all the paths to get the required amount of attention. They have also introduced a mentoring scheme which they feel has helped encourage the transition from initial training into people fully engaging with the project.

Critically, while the volunteers know that they are doing good basic path maintenance their enjoyment at being involved and the satisfaction they get from the work shines through. They also demonstrated a high level of understanding of the issues that they are working to tackle – and given that they like interacting with the public they meet while working – they are in a great place to be ambassadors for the project.

They also describe a sense of putting something back into the environment they love and, as for most volunteers, the social side of the project is valued too.



**It's like going out with your mates in the end. We always start and finish in a café, we're out in all weathers – the best time to be on the fells is actually when it's wet so you can see where the water is running.**







The original aim of the lengthsman scheme was to make the opportunity as accessible as possible and enable people from around the country to take part. However and perhaps inevitably, most volunteers come from Cumbria and Lancashire. We suggest that this shouldn't be seen as a weakness of the project, rather that the project could celebrate this local commitment. In addition there are other ways to be involved in the project in more concentrated bursts which could work better for distant volunteers.

Interviews with two volunteer lengthsman are presented in *Appendix 3*.

## Basecamp

The staff at Basecamp have worked to involve audiences new to *Fix the Fells* and have focussed on those groups who are less likely to use the countryside or get involved in practical conservation. This kind of work is generally seen as desirable in funded projects like this. However, it can be hard to deliver and the manner in which it has been delivered in *Fix the Fells* should be praised.

It is our experience that the workers who work with these non-traditional user groups know that having time to build relationships and get to know the needs of the groups will pay dividends and contribute to the success of a project. Often the people who they are working with are vulnerable and dealing with difficult issues – they need might need lots of support, a 'no pressure' relationship and an understanding that things will have to go slowly while they build up their confidence and try things out.

Basecamp staff have worked in just this way and with funding from *Fix the Fells* they have had the resources to do the job well. The pride of the staff in the work

that they are doing is very evident and the feedback from the groups is testimony to how well the relationships work.

We would suggest that the success of this part of the project should be celebrated – it is challenging work and the team are doing really well both getting people involved in *Fix the Fells* and also showing them the general benefits of being active in the environment. It is a model of good involvement and we would strongly recommend that a future version of the project retains this volunteering element.







## What they did on training

### Training – what they set out to do

A core set of skills were identified as being necessary for all the staff and volunteers involved in this project to be able to deliver it confidently and to a high standard.

A schedule of training was set up for each year of the project and delivered by in house staff and external providers. 2800 people received a total of around 10,500 days of training. The full schedule of training delivered is in *Appendix 6*.

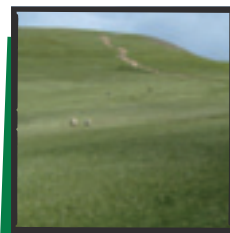
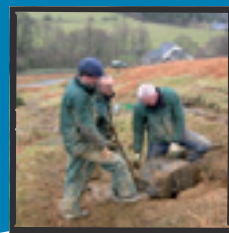
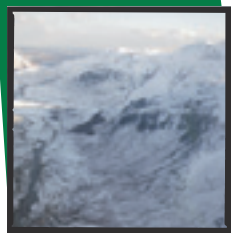
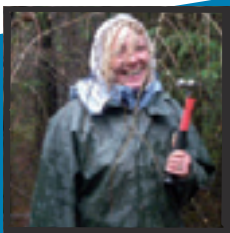
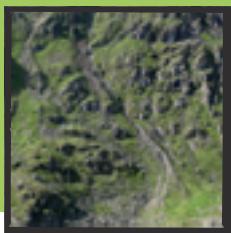
“

**Everyone who steps on the fells makes an impact**

”







Workers and volunteers have been given skills to do the work safely – such as manual handling, risk assessment, navigation and mountain first aid and training in how to engage with the public and be able to promote the project and handle feedback or criticism. They have also learned more about the environment they are working in and have attended training on heritage conservation, upland ecology and upland archaeology as well as training in the traditional skills of the fell path builders.

### How well they did at Training

Workers and volunteers have had the opportunity to benefit from an impressive training programme delivered by *Fix the Fells*.

It was beyond the scope of this project to interview participants of the training but we asked the Co-ordinator to tell us his top three highlights of the training provided:

- 🕒 The success of using National Trust path repair staff to deliver some of the training for the volunteer lengthsman: this was a new experience for the staff and put them in a new role. Some of them have moved into different jobs in the organisation as a result of enjoying and succeeding at the work with volunteers
- 🕒 Three members of the path repair teams are taking a two year Diploma in Countryside Management at Reese Heath College, Cheshire: this is a one off opportunity that the co-ordinator had to push hard for but it gives the individuals additional knowledge to bring back to the teams and a real boost to their CVs

- 🕒 Up-skilling of the teams on the ground has contributed to a change in perceptions about their 'status': the co-ordinator told us that by getting members of the teams on the ground to lead on some of the training they are now recognised as 'advisors' rather than manual workers.

As a result of the training programme *Fix the Fells* now has a highly skilled pool of staff and volunteers to continue the work. However, it should be noted that these skills have been gained over a long period and if people move on it will take a long time to build up this level of expertise again.



## Summary of how well they've done

**A very solid programme of training and development delivered.**

- 🕒 A real investment in the staff and volunteers on the project
- 🕒 Skill levels across the board raised to a very high level
- 🕒 Training led to improved morale, and confidence.
- 🕒 Skills gained will give long term benefits to both the project and to the individuals trained.







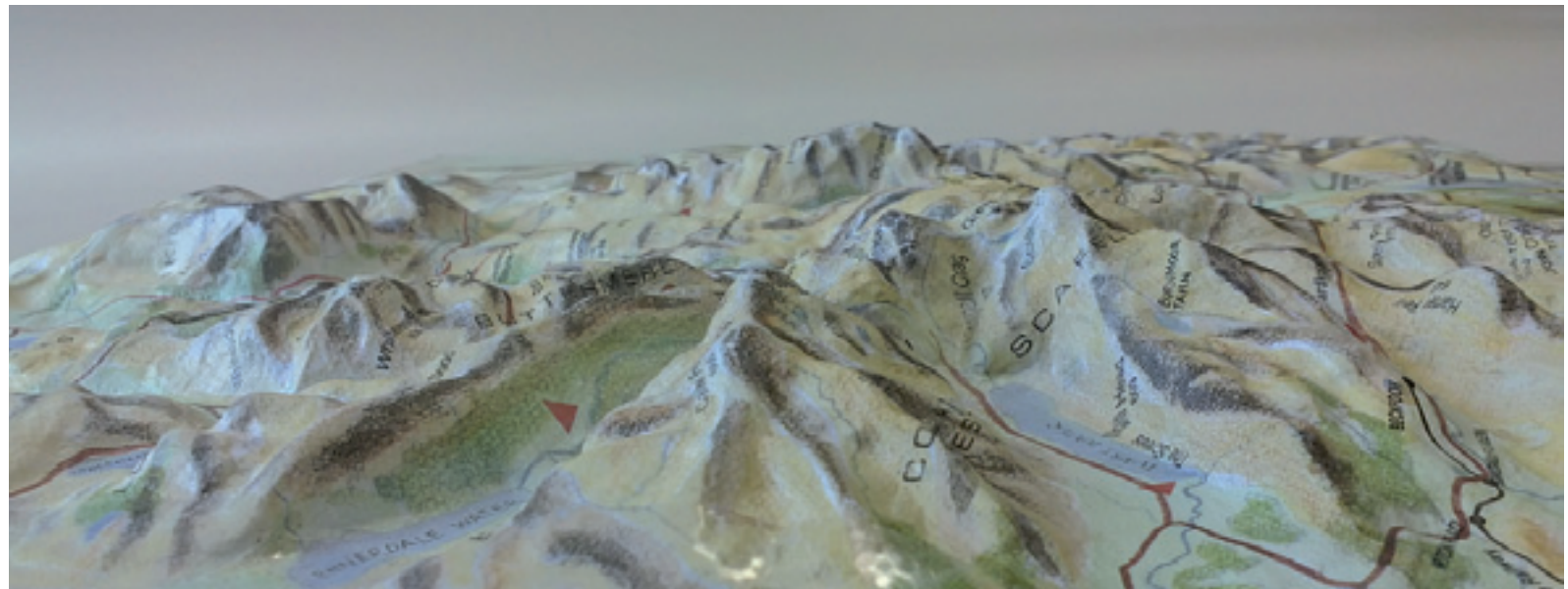
## What they did on audience development

*The Fix the Fells 2005 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund included a clear recognition that previous path restoration schemes had focussed on the practical works but had not attempted to engage with visitors and local communities about the need to care for and repair upland paths. Fix the Fells aimed to have a more outreach approach. This was to be undertaken through the 'Volunteering' arm of the programme but also through the 'Audience Development' strand – which set out its aims as:*

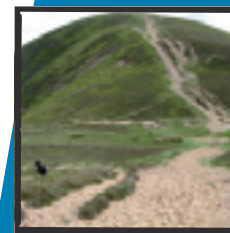
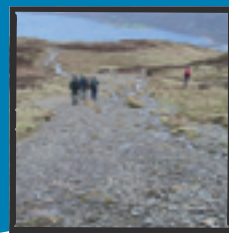
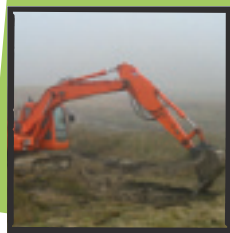
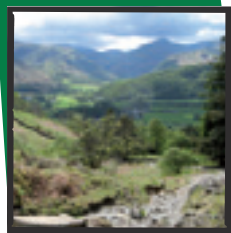
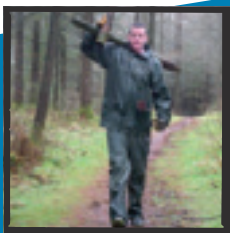
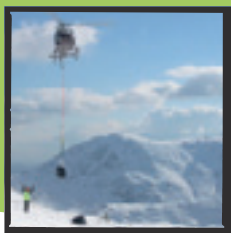
**'To engage with new and existing audiences to encourage greater understanding and support' of the need to repair and maintain upland paths.**

In the original bid, this work was envisaged to include work such as events, guided walks, an improved website, marketing to local businesses, education work in schools, and providing information and interpretation to visitors. In parallel with other strands of the project, a Working Group for Audience Development was set up and work began.

Due to a range of factors, the core elements of Audience Development work were contracted out to partner organisations: guided walks were delivered through the National Parks' walks programme; the education work in schools was coordinated by the Field Studies Council and the marketing and communications work was delivered by Nurture Lakeland. The last two comprise the biggest element of Audience Development work and will both be looked at in more detail overleaf.







## What has been done in the Marketing and Communications part of Audience Development

The marketing and communications work was initially hoped to be delivered through existing staff at the National Trust and the National Park. However, this proved problematic and in 2009 this area of work was contracted to Nurture Lakeland.

Consequently from 2009 *Fix the Fells* part funded a Communications Officer post at Nurture Lakeland. Their £15,000 a year 'bought' about 2 days of this worker's time a week, ½ a day a week of a worker on events and paid for the production of marketing materials for the project. Additionally there were staff changes at Nurture Lakeland – with four Marketing and Communication officers since 2009. Work on marketing and communications therefore really began in earnest during 2010.



*In the absence of written aims for this area of work from the core team, Nurture Lakeland created two aims for their work for Fix the Fells:*

1. To maintain the current public and media interest in Fix the Fells
2. To collect additional email subscribers to Fix the Fells and increase the subscriber list from 1,100 to 2,000 by the end of 2011.

*In the words of the current Marketing and Communications officer at Nurture Lakeland:*

***'Coming into post in early 2011, I just wanted to get everything in place for the project really – I worked to get the infrastructure set up to promote Fix the Fells through every free channel available to us.'***





'Getting the infrastructure in place' has meant moving the project from a mainly press release plus website based approach, to one with a full suite of marketing and communications materials. These centre around six key areas: marketing and communications materials; updated website; a social media presence; participation at real and virtual events; an e-newsletter and associated database; ongoing presence in local and regional media. We will look at what has been done for each of these six below:

## 1: Communications materials produced

The following communications materials were written, designed and produced: 4800 copies of a detailed brochure bringing the project alive; 29,000 copies of a shorter introductory leaflet; 4900 badges produced to raise awareness of the project and graphics have been created for use at events and exhibitions.

The leaflets have gone out to all Nurture Lakeland's 220 members, supporting shops and been taken to events; the brochures to those 74 businesses currently fundraising for *Fix the Fells*, partner organisations and to events; the badges are being sold at events and through participating shops. In addition 'Room Information' about the project was tailor made for those accommodation businesses that encourage their guests to donate to *Fix the Fells*.



## 2: The website updated

Key features were added to the website: links to Facebook, Twitter and Flickr; a donation button; video content linked to YouTube channel and links to the channel provided; promotion of supporting businesses; facility to make commission free text donations; links to the 'Just Giving' fundraising pages; links to associated blogs – such as Basecamp and lengthsman blogs; link to Extranet site for lengthsman volunteers.



## 3: Social media presence

Social media is now a key part of any marketing strategy. *Fix the Fells* now has a Facebook account (with 120 new friends in 2011); a Twitter account (followed by 300 people); a You Tube account with seven films on it (watched by 835 people to date); a Flickr account to share photos on and a Just Giving site. The Just Giving site has hosted three fundraising drives for *Fix the Fells*, currently raising £3066.71 to date.







#### 4: Events – both virtual and real

Work has been undertaken to raise the profile of *Fix the Fells* through both real and virtual events: Nuture Lakeland has ensured a *Fix the Fells* presence with staff at five countryside events in 2011 and had volunteer manned stalls at another six events. Through these events around 300 people have been added to the email database for the project. *Fix the Fells* had a free stand at the London based Outdoor Show – through which they talked to around 400 people and added 250 people to their email database. Virtual events have included a photographic competition called Click the Fells. *Fix the Fells*, via Nuture Lakeland, also participated in two online voting competitions: the European Outdoor Conservation Association in which *Fix the Fells* came fourth, winning 30,000 euros and the Peoples Lottery in which *Fix the Fells* reached the semi final. These online events and competitions depend on people voting for them – so this work links closely to the social media work and email database.

## 5: Quarterly E-Newsletter

A quarterly newsletter is produced to go to the database of *Fix the Fells* supporters. At the start of 2010 this numbered just over 1000 and one of Nurture Lakeland's targets was to increase this to 2000. Work at events is partly focused at getting people to join this database – 250 were added after the Outdoor Show, 120 from the website and over 260 from attending at regional summer events.



## 6: Continued profile in local and regional media

Work using conventional media was continued. During 2011: four press releases were issued; two feature articles were written for the new magazine 'Love Lakes'; two radio interviews for BBC Cumbria and 2 interviews for ITV Border have taken place.





## What has been done in the Education Work part of Audience Development?

The Lake District National Park has contracted its education work to the Field Studies Council for the last 15 years and based on this established relationship, the education element of *Fix the Fells* has also been delivered by the Field Studies Council.

The team at Field Studies Council has produced a great range of high quality resources for schools linking *Fix the Fells* to geography, IT, biology and citizenship in the national curriculum. These resources feature real life case studies for students to study and can be used to support classroom based learning or used on a field trip. The team has told all local schools about the worker support they can give to schools and the resources available.

Through the life of the project 50 schools / outdoor education centres and 1500 students have had the opportunity to learn about *Fix the Fells* directly through a workshop, site visit or an assembly (500 in 2009; 700 in 2010; 300 in 2011). Between 2007 and 2009 the project worked by training teachers and staff about the project and providing them with educational resources – through INSET days and conferences.

Extensive work was undertaken through the project to provide a range of resources that could be used during workshops with students or by the schools themselves.

**The range of resources is described below:**

### Case Studies

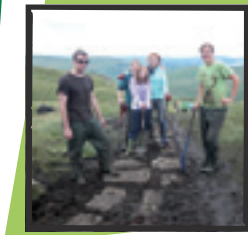
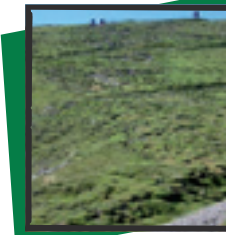
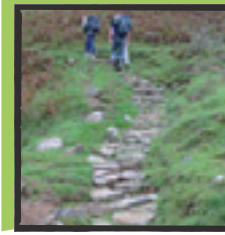
This has been a major strand of the education work and features case studies of six popular paths in the Lake District that have recently undergone repair. These are a free web resource. Two of the case studies are supported by worksheets and activities for local secondary students and teachers and again are free from the web.

### Workshops & assemblies

These have been delivered free to primary and secondary schools and include an introduction to the project and practical

demonstrations of how erosion occurs in the classroom. Schools can take up the offer of a field trip with a member of the education team – free to the school except for transport costs. **Feedback from Shap Endowed CofE Primary School:**

**“Ben kept the children totally engaged as well as informed. The teacher was full of praise for the way Ben talked to the pupils and developed their responses. Please come back next term!”**



### Activity Sheets

All site visits were tailor made for the participating schools and a crucial part of the visit are the bespoke activity sheets. These include work to: gain map reading skills; understand how erosion works; measure and assess the problems on a given path and understand different management approaches. They also include work to stimulate debate and discussion around the issue of erosion. Example of these activity sheets can be found in *Appendix 5*.

### DVD

A highly watchable introductory DVD has been created to explain *Fix the Fells* – and 100 copies of this have been sent to local schools.

### An education pack

As a result of interest from outdoor education centres an education pack is currently being produced for this audience. Five centre heads have inputted and the idea is for centres to be able to offer a ‘*Fix the Fells day*’ where students learn the issues and do some path maintenance.

It is intended that this is work unsupervised by *Fix the Fells* core staff but the mechanisms of this are still being worked out. The pack will have a high profile launch at the Institute for Outdoor Learning’s conference in January 2012.

### Spreading the word

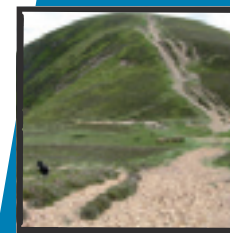
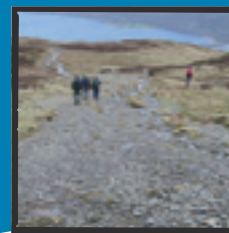
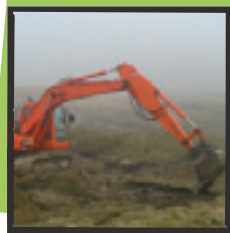
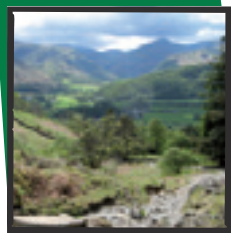
To raise awareness of their work in the wider education community, the Field Studies Council team produced a lesson plan case study featuring *Fix the Fells* which was produced in the Geography Review the FSC Magazine. In addition *Fix the Fells* presented example resources at the Field Studies Council National Conference in December 2011, where there are representatives from 17 centres across Britain and Ireland.





## A Fix the Fells workshop at schools includes:

- ⌚ A slide show bringing to life the problems of erosion
- ⌚ A bumpy map of the Lake District so the children can literally 'get their hands' on the fells and explore the path network in miniature
- ⌚ A card game – where children match descriptions of the path surface (like 'short grass with little signs of trampling') to pictures – and so start to understand the different stages of erosion
- ⌚ Learning why grass is so crucial to preventing erosion by doing experiments: having a tray of turf and a tray of soil with no grass – and comparing what happens when you water them both
- ⌚ Debating whether projects like Fix the Fells are a priority to fund compared to other services like ambulances and schools.



## Workshops are often followed up with a trip to the fells. These trips include:

- ⌚ A walk up to the top of a fell – with a picnic lunch on the way
- ⌚ Stopping to notice where the path is eroded and discussing what state it's in and why this happens
- ⌚ Labelling maps to show where the erosion is taking place
- ⌚ Activity sheets to take measurements of the eroded path: how wide, how deep and its gradient
- ⌚ Agreeing the stage of erosion against a nationally recognised scale
- ⌚ Moving on to look at a repaired section of path and discussing what has been done, why and whether it's been successful
- ⌚ Looking at pictures of paths in different stages of erosion and debating what should be done to fix them.



**Stick to the paths,  
don't cut corners**



## How well have they have done on Audience Development

### How well has it worked

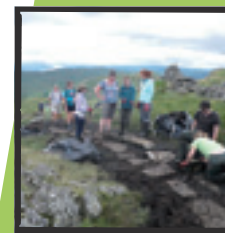
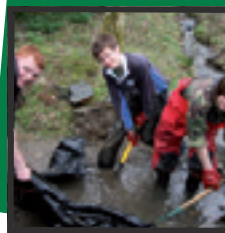
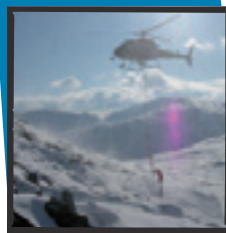
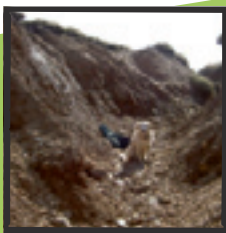
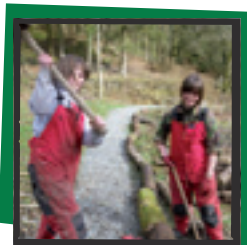
Getting to grips with Audience Development was a challenge for the core team. It would be fair to say that this area of the programme was less well understood by the core project team and delivered at arm's length to the practical works. This type of work differs from the practical work of repairing a path in that it is far less tangible: with a path the need for the work is clear and the final output – a repaired path – very obvious. With audience development work, it's harder to see what needs to be done and harder to evaluate its success.

The Steering Group acknowledge that collectively they had less direct expertise in audience development work than in the practical works. This perhaps led to a lack of clarity around to what extent this area of work was important, what it needed to achieve and how best to do it. Sub Group meetings were characterised by lots of debate and discussion, and different approaches – especially around marketing – were tried out over the years. Below we look in turn at what each area has achieved.

### Marketing and Communications

Given the challenges of frequent staff changes, the Marketing and Communications work created a robust set of communication tools for the project. Key highlights have been the production of a high quality leaflet and brochure, expanding the supporters database and using this to win an online funding competition.





This suite of marketing tools has been a key achievement, though of course it would have been beneficial to come earlier. On reflecting on his work, the Marketing and Communications officer focuses on how to build on this base that has been achieved. For instance on getting brochures into the bedrooms of the accommodation businesses that support *Fix the Fells*; thinking how the sale of badges might work better than collection tins; wanting to further enliven the website; wanting to make the e-newsletter monthly and pushing to increase the supporters database; continuing work with the local media. More reflections on the marketing and communications work can be found in *Appendix 6*.

**“With a monthly newsletter more impact and enthusiasm could be generated – especially by encouraging more content from *Fix the Fells* people and volunteers.”**

The evaluation brief was interested in looking at the cost effectiveness of the individual marketing materials. However it is extremely difficult to separate out the impact of particular marketing tools – for instance assessing if a press release or presence at a local event has led to a rise in donations. Instead what we felt was important to note is that a *suite* of tools had been successfully developed through the life of the project. Now, acting together, they are the basis for effective communications work – especially if targeted at local tourism businesses.

What we did seek to assess however was the overall impact of the marketing work on fell users. Therefore during June 2011 Pathways researchers spoke to 28 residents and 218 fell-walkers. The full report on this work is in *Appendix 7*, but key findings show that awareness of *Fix the Fells* and the problems of erosion are very low.

**Critically we asked if they had heard of *Fix the Fells*. Of the 238 people who answered this question, 78% (186 people) had not heard of the project – and of the visitors who answered this question, 82% had not heard of *Fix the Fells*. Interestingly 20% of visitors said they knew nothing about the problems of soil erosion at all.**

These findings are obviously very significant for the project. For if visitors to the Lakes have not heard of *Fix the Fells*, with some knowing nothing about the problems of soil erosion, the project faces an uphill battle to get people to donate to fund the work.

Whilst this is a serious finding for the project, it is to be expected. There are between 8 and 15 million visitors to the Lake District every year from all over the world. With a marketing budget of £15,000, *Fix the Fells* cannot expect to reach this vast and transient audience.

This perhaps suggests that now a robust tool box of marketing materials has been created, the focus should turn to communicating with audiences who can

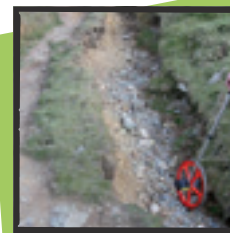
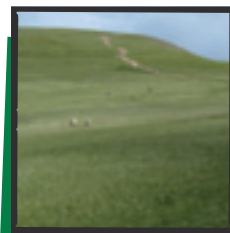
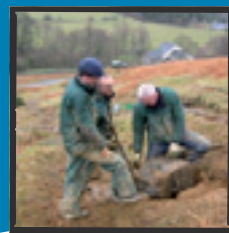
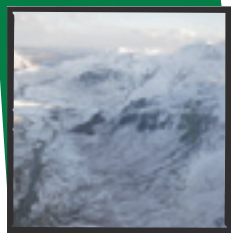
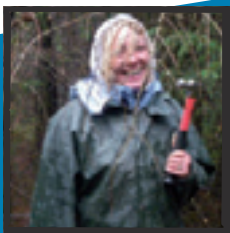
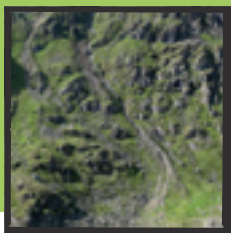
be reached directly – through the project’s links with local tourism businesses. We would suggest work should focus on growing good relationships with the owners and managers of local businesses; supporting them to be ambassadors for the project; targeting regular communications to those businesses’ customers.

## **How well have they have done on Education work**

### **High quality resources**

The education resources have proved a popular resource – receiving between 100–200 pages views a month. The resources for schools have been tailor made for each visit or trip – and always involve a range of practical activities so the children learn by doing. It is striking to see the level to which the education team understand the practical work and their resource sheets reflect this. For example children are asked to assess the level of erosion using the same scale and terminology as the path teams on the ground use.





## Other key findings from our research, which could inform future communications about the project.

### Leaflets and signs

When asked how they had heard about Fix the Fells, 30 people felt able to answer this question. Of these the majority (47%) had seen a leaflet or signs – people said that they had seen signs or information at Sty Head Tarn, near the Glaramara, Stickle Gill and at Crinkle Craggs – all at sites where work was taking place on paths. 23% had heard of Fix the Fells through word of mouth – for example friends, the National Trust or volunteering for other groups.

### Awareness of soil erosion is mixed

237 people in our research answered this question and most people (39%) said that they knew 'a fair bit' about path erosion. Critically 20% of visitors said they knew nothing about the problems of soil erosion – whilst all the local people interviewed had heard of the problem.

### Active visitors know more about Fix the Fells

It is clear that those visitors engaged in more active pursuits are the best informed about the work of Fix the Fells – 72% of those people who undertake very active pursuits in the Lake District said that they knew either 'a fair bit' or 'a lot' about the work being done to combat path erosion. In contrast, 80% of those people who undertake only light activity said they knew 'nothing' or only 'a little' about path erosion.

## Young people enjoyed the workshops

To help us evaluate this area of work we talked to three teenagers who had taken part in a *Fix the Fells* workshop and field trip the previous year. Whilst a small sample, their feedback is useful. They remembered the trip much more clearly than other lessons at around the same time and recalled lots of what they have learnt. Overall they gave the workshop a mark of 8 out of 10. They were also able to debate with us the merits of funding a programme like *Fix the Fells* in a tough economic climate.

## Could incorporate more adventurous work

Ideally though they would have preferred to go out in smaller groups – they went out in a whole class group of around 30 people. And they told us that they wanted to be doing more adventurous things around the work and suggested trying out stone pitching and repairing drains; being able to watch a skilled path repairer at work or a drama workshop on the fells that highlighted the heritage of the

paths and the work going on now – they definitely didn't want tests and quizzes. If the education work is continued in schools, thought could be given to how the programme might incorporate more creative, adventurous, real life work.

## Of real benefit to participating schools

From written feedback to the Field Studies Council from teachers, our sense of the education work that has been done is that it has been great for the schools. It can be stimulating and informative for teachers and students to bring external people into the classroom environment and the work that has been done here is a great example of what wider education should be about. It raises questions about caring for the wider environment and social responsibility and has raised the issues of protecting the environment that they live in with hundreds of children.

## Could have been more integrated to the wider project

One issue we became aware of was how little contact the education team has had





with the wider project. Their work has operated almost in parallel to the other arms of the project. We are not sure why this has been the case, but we feel that the education staff would have welcomed closer links.

### Overall questions about the education work

However, it is fair to say that we suggest a review of whether a schools based education programme of this nature should remain a priority for any future *Fix the Fells* project. Raising awareness and understanding of the path repair work being done is very important but we question whether the schools programme is having the reach and impact that they would expect; and whether the programme should solely focus on schools – there are other audiences that could or should be being addressed by an education programme.

These questions highlight that this is an area of the programme that might have suffered from not having clear aims being set by the Steering Group at the beginning. Like any area of work it is crucial

to understand what you want to achieve from it. As evaluators we were keen to understand why going into schools is seen as important to the project. In talking to the Evaluation Working Group, we got the impression the desire to go into schools was to help generate better 'walking habits' by the walkers of the future, in order to minimise future erosion problems.

We wonder if this aim is unrealistic. With 8 – 15 million visitors from around the world using the path networks in the Lakes, it is questionable whether talking to local school children is going to have the desired effect of minimising erosion. This is not to argue that schools work has no intrinsic value in its own right, simply that the project needs to be clear in the future why it doing the work and what it wants from it.



## Summary of how well they've done

**Good foundations laid, but a change of focus now needed.**

### In Marketing and Communications

- ◊ Skilled marketing officer
- ◊ Robust suite of marketing materials created
- ◊ Social media presence established
- ◊ Supporter database increasing
- ◊ Could move now to a more targeted marketing strategy

### In Education

- ◊ High quality, free resources for schools
- ◊ Committed and experienced education staff
- ◊ Innovative workshops in schools
- ◊ Of real benefit to participating schools
- ◊ Need to check the aims and desired outcomes for this area

## Guided walks

**An additional way of developing audiences for Fix the Fells.**

For many years, the Lake District National Park Authority has run a programme of guided walks for the public to increase their awareness and understanding of the National Park. These walks are free to join, are volunteer led and take place all over the Lake District mostly between April and the end of October. There is a programme of around 300 walks each year that attract between 4 – 5000 people. Around 50 of these walks have been branded as Fix the Fells walks, as they pass over or close to paths that have been repaired during the Fix the Fells project and its preceding upland path repair project. Those walk leaders leading the Fix the Fells walks have been trained separately so they can tell their customers all about path erosion, its causes and remedies.



# Section 3:

## Evaluating the fundraising work for Fix the Fells

### The challenge for future fundraising

Due to ongoing extensive use of the path network, erosion problems continue. At the end of 2011, there will be another 100 paths that need repair work. £478,000 per annum would cover proactive work to address all major erosion issues on the path network, continue maintenance work and fund further volunteer and community engagement work.

This is a big challenge, in challenging times. As such the evaluation brief asked us to make 'an assessment of the barriers to encouraging more people to contribute to path repairs, and a clear means of engaging more businesses to actively fundraise for the project given that there are 8 million visitors a year to the National Park.' It is important to note that it has not been within the scope of this evaluation to investigate or assess other possible approaches to fundraising – such as those used by the National Trust for Scotland in their path repair work.

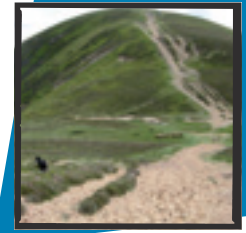
Instead here we look at the work done on fundraising to date for *Fix the Fells* and evaluate its effectiveness.

### What work has been done so far on fundraising for Fix the Fells

Nurture Lakeland (formerly the Tourism and Conservation Partnership) was set up in 1993 to raise money for conservation work through the tourism business in the Lake District. It also has a secondary aim of helping businesses in the Lake District become more sustainable.

Nurture Lakeland has moved from being a small partnership project to, in 2007, an independent charity with seven paid staff. It is now an award winning organisation – advising other national parks on how to raise money from the tourism industry.

They have a unique model for raising money from businesses, developed in partnership with the tourism industry itself – it is called Visitor Payback. In the scheme businesses become either members of Nurture Lakeland (on payment of a sliding fee of between £50 and £1000 annually) or opt to be Associate Fundraisers (no fee paid).



**Elder Grove B&B** – supporter of *Fix the Fells* – and now selling Plum and Rum Jam to raise additional funds for the project!

Both Members and Associates commit to raising money for conservation projects through their customers. They nominate one of 27 conservation projects to raise funds for.

Currently there are around 298 Business Members. *Fix the Fells* is supported by 74 of the business members and 24 Associate Fundraisers and annually receives around £50,000 a year through the Nurture Lakeland scheme.

**Businesses collect donations from their customers for conservation work in one of the following ways:**

- through leaving an envelope in the room of a B&B / hotel guest (14 do this)
- through having a collecting box out on display (25 do this)

**The 'Opt-Out' scheme is by far the most profitable – as the table below shows:**

Year	Opt out raised	Opt in raised	Other fundraising methods
2008 / 2009	£38,000	£10,000	£8,700
2009 / 2010	£41,000	£11,000	£8,800
2010 / 2011	£38,000	£8,400	£9,000





- through an 'Opt-In' scheme where customers are invited to add £1 to their bill (5 do this)
- through an 'Opt-Out' scheme where £1 is added routinely to bills, and the customer has to ask to have this removed if they want to opt out (22 do this).

In addition, two businesses (the Heart of the Lakes Holiday Cottages and Langdale Estates) raise almost half of the total amount each year as shown by the table below. These businesses have been with the scheme from the start – when the fundraising was called Our Man at The Top (i.e.: fundraising for a person on the fells to repair the paths). Both businesses have a close and positive relationship with Nurture Lakeland – both now on the project's Board.

Year	73 businesses	2 'big hitters'	TOTAL
08/09	£23,392	£23,465	£52,875
09/10	£31,178	£24,626	£55,804
10/11	£30,451	£18,458	£48,999

***The number of Business Members funding for Fix the Fells has risen over the life of the Fix the Fells project – at a rate of about 10 a year:***

- In 2007 there were 27 Business members
- In 2011 there were 74 Business members

***Nurture Lakeland are looking to increase their revenue from Visitor Payback by:*** encouraging their fundraising businesses to switch to the Opt-Out method; using two new volunteers to recruit new business supporters; and get at least 4 challenge event organisers committed promoting Nurture Lakeland businesses – ensuring those taking part in charity events stay in contributing hotels and guest houses.

In addition, since 2010, around £5,000 is raised online annually. More recently, other income streams like Just Giving and the sale of badges have brought in around £3000. This year Nurture Lakeland has also secured a one off award from European businesses for the project of £25,600.

The 24 Associated Fundraisers bring in only a couple of hundred pounds a year, as they use donation boxes – one of the least effective fundraising approaches.

### Gathering evaluation evidence

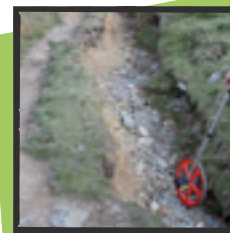
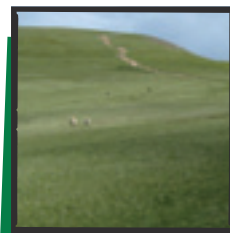
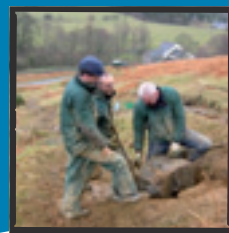
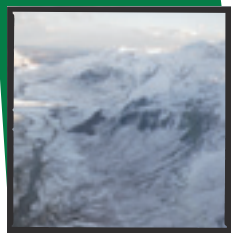
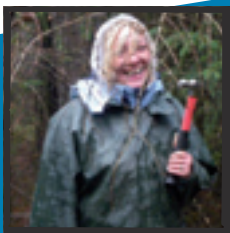
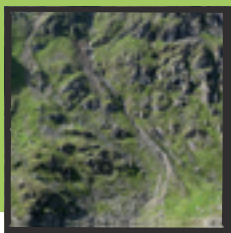
During *Fix the Fells* there has been the opportunity to evaluate the relationship between the project, Nurture Lakeland and local businesses and get a sense of what has worked well and what hasn't worked so well.

Through the evaluation we have interviewed 24 businesses – 15 who have an existing relationship with *Fix the Fells* and 9 that don't. The businesses interviewed who currently donate represent 20% of businesses signed up with Nurture Lakeland to donate to *Fix the Fells*. There was no strategy or priority for approaching the businesses – simply who was available to speak to us.



***Heart of the Lakes*** – one of the first businesses to fund path repair work over 17 years ago – now a core fundraiser for *Fix the Fells*.





We would very much have liked to bring businesses together in a focus group but it is time consuming to arrange – small businesses are busy and we were working during the holiday season – and we were advised that this approach had not been successful in the past. We have treated the results of the interviews the same as the results from a focus group – they are not statistically accurate but some clear strengths and weaknesses have been identified along with issues that will need to be addressed as the future direction of the fundraising strategy is considered.

The sample of businesses interviewed reflects the makeup of businesses in the Lake District – from small B&B businesses to larger timeshare companies; self employed guides to a farmer running a self catering cottage and two car parks; an author and an estate run by a charity. Some have a very good relationship with Nuture Lakeland – others don't and feel their efforts have been unrecognised. Some feel that local businesses are already targeted too much to support charitable causes or that the work of *Fix the Fells* should be done by someone else or paid for by the people who walk on the fells.

In this next section we summarise the findings from the interviews. Full transcripts of the interviews, made anonymous, can be found in *Appendix 8*.



**Langdale Estate** – core fundraisers for *Fix the Fells*.

### ***Strengths and weaknesses evidenced by what businesses told us:***

## **Strengths**

**1.**

There are compelling reasons for businesses being involved. Many are in businesses promoting or benefiting from the special landscape or have customers that walk the fells and consequently the businesses feel strongly either that they want to put something back to protect the landscape or that it makes business sense to be involved.

Some business owners told us they had a personal relationship with the Lake District landscape which influenced their decision to become involved and others know people who work with *Fix the Fells* so know of the direct benefits of the work.

**2.**

Businesses show a good level of awareness of the difference that their contribution could make to the project – both financial

contributions and raising awareness of the problems of erosion.

Businesses that were well informed about the project and how much they had raised expressed a level of pride in the contribution they had made. Businesses making smaller financial contributions were still aware of the difference that smaller contributions could collectively make.

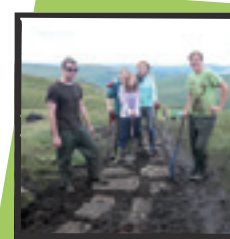
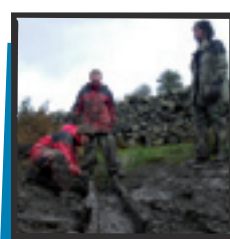
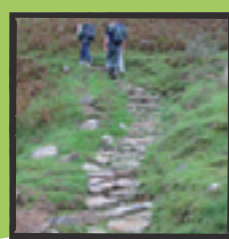
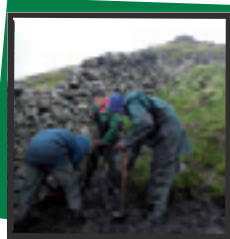
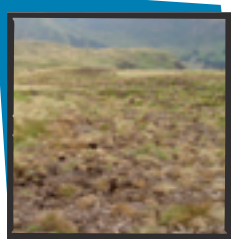
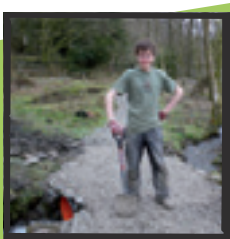
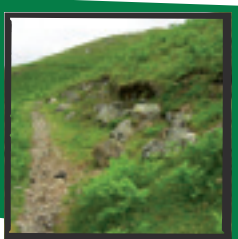
**3.**

Nuture Lakeland was generally positively received by the businesses involved and they are in a good position to build on what's already been achieved. Businesses commented on the excellent relationship they had with Nuture Lakeland and told us that the staff are helpful and friendly.

**4.**

It appears that personal relationships are critical to the successful involvement of businesses – where there is a good relationship the businesses are most enthusiastic and well informed.





Conversely those business we interviewed who are disenchanted or have lost touch with why they would want to be involved don't have a close relationship with Nurture Lakeland.

**5.** Businesses gave us mixed feedback on opt out as a fundraising tool but those businesses using it talk enthusiastically about it as an effective way of raising money, easy to administrate and acceptable to their customers. The success of the opt out scheme appears to be connected with having well informed staff to explain the donation supported by lots of visible information for their customers about *Fix the Fells*.

**6.** Two businesses mentioned that the Heritage Lottery match funding influenced their decision in directing money towards *Fix the Fells* – it provided an easy way to maximise their fund raising capacity.

## Weaknesses

**1.** It isn't clear to some donating and non donating businesses why funding for path restoration is needed. Some people feel that the fells should be maintained by others or that the National Park is already being funded to do this work. A clear message is needed – this is essential work & it isn't funded by the government or the National Park.

**2.** Not all businesses know the difference that the funds they raise are making. There is no easy way for them to describe to people what impact their donations could have – e.g. £100 raised allows *Fix the Fells* to do this or £1,000 raised allows *Fix the Fells* to do that. The Our Man at the Top scheme is a good example of something more tangible that people can support. In addition, if businesses don't understand the issues or feel able to easily tell their customers about the difference

their donation will make then it is difficult for them to be ambassadors for *Fix the Fells*.

There is a particular need to communicate the difference that a small amount of money can make if the project is going to continue to have lots of small businesses raising relatively small amounts of money.

**3.** Some organisations felt they had no idea how much money they had contributed and were not given feedback on the amount they'd raised – this was the case for those using only donation boxes or donation envelopes.

**4.** Some business owners told us that they would not be comfortable using the opt out approach but also some that think it is complicated or time consuming to set up and that they could end up paying more if people donate on a credit card payment. Support needs to be given to businesses to make this scheme easy for them and cost free.

**5.** Some businesses expressed worries about the administration costs of fundraising and maintaining a good balance between having paid staff dedicated to fundraising and being able to give a good percentage to the cause you are raising money for. It is also fair to say there were some people we met during the evaluation who questioned the 20% admin fee taken by Nurture Lakeland and who felt that *Fix the Fells* should fundraise directly through the National Trust where no admin fee is taken.



## Findings from our research with walkers that impact on fundraising:

*From the research we did with visitors and people living in the Lake District, we found that:*

- 🟡 83% of the people we talked to already donate to charity
- 🟡 61% of the visitors interviewed, when they understood what *Fix the Fells* does, said that they would donate 50p to *Fix the Fells*. Only 21% of residents said they would donate to the project
- 🟡 When asked what would encourage them to donate to *Fix the Fells*, the two most popular choices was a donation tin (at 24%) and a voluntary amount added to food or hospitality bills (23%). This latter option however was only selected by visitors. Residents preferred a sponsored event (26% of residents chose this option).

Visitors also suggested a mandatory car park charge and 'Honesty boxes' for donations on fell paths, on gateposts or in car parks.







### In conclusion: overcoming the barriers to successful fundraising

Visitor Payback is clearly an innovative and successful approach that is certain to be copied by other projects across the UK. Its current contribution to the costs of path repair work is important – though it is not yet able to fund the real costs of the repair work needed – £478,000 a year.

Nurture Lakeland has good relationships with many of its businesses and the feedback in the main was that businesses are happy with the level of contact they receive. Staff contact is very much appreciated. However, there isn't an overall sense that the businesses are all valuable ambassadors fundraising for the project. A full time business development manager could develop this.

Critically there has been no sustained rise in the numbers of Business Members or Associate Fundraisers and we would see focussing on this a priority for the future. We would suggest that annual targets be set for each of these categories. We also suggest that the focus be on substantially increasing the numbers of Associate

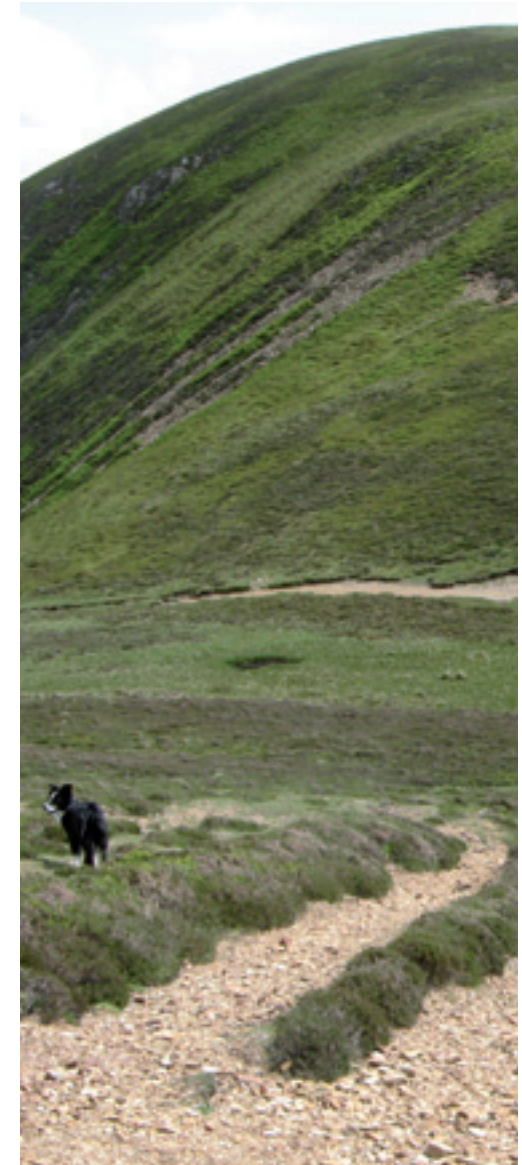
Members – as we worry the membership fee might put off businesses joining the scheme in such tough economic times. A second focus could be on identifying the possible 'big hitter' business fundraisers of the future – as they make such a significant contribution to the scheme.

In addition, the admin fee taken by Nurture Lakeland from all business donations rose from 15% to 20% during the life of the project. Whilst this was the first such rise in 17 years, it could be argued that increased revenue for Nurture Lakeland might equally have been raised by most aggressively expanding the number of Business Members who donate to the project.

Project partners would also likely welcome the production of a five year fundraising strategy for raising money for *Fix the Fells* from tourism businesses – with targets, agreed priorities and dedicated worker time. We would suggest that any Business Development Officer should also have to report (perhaps via a Steering Group) to the National Park and National Trust – as this post would be of such high importance for the future of the scheme.

Overall *Fix the Fells* is a compelling cause – helping protect the fells could become close to the heart of many businesses, walkers and visitors. However, as we are sure the Steering Group recognises, fundraising is taking place in a very competitive environment. This means the project needs to invest heavily in their relationships with business donors and make sure they have the right story to sell to potential donors. The level of success at increasing Business Members and Associate Fundraisers to date would suggest that you haven't got this quite right yet.

Finally, as we are confident Nurture Lakeland knows well, it is important to make it easy for people to donate. Business feedback suggests that opt out works well but some businesses are not comfortable about using it. Perhaps it would be useful to find small businesses who use the Opt-Out scheme well and share their story. It might also need to be considered that offering as many different ways to collect money might not be useful in the long term.





## Section 4: Conclusion



### *The objectives for Practical Works were to:*

- 🟢 continue repairing seriously eroded landscapes and associated paths resulting from access and the effects of the Lake District climate
- 🟢 increasingly concentrate on transferring the practical work away from the larger projects, towards smaller, pre-emptive type works.

The practical works element of the project has delivered the two key objectives extremely well. Major repairs have taken place on 103 paths and they have each been put into a maintenance schedule and assessed as a red, amber or green path. The maintenance schedule and traffic light system has enabled volunteer lengthsmen to work to shift the emphasis from major repairs to smaller ongoing maintenance works.

The steering group also wanted the evaluation to assess what impact the programme has had on reducing soil loss and ensuring vegetation recovery as measured against a path works summary document and available photographs. The work to assess 103 individual paths was beyond the scope of this project and it was agreed that the best people to evaluate the work were the people who had delivered it – it is hard for the untrained eye to spot good and bad path work. It was therefore decided to form an evaluation team to assess a representative sample of 7 paths. These all 'scored' highly in a reflective evaluation. We trust the team's integrity and are confident that the other paths will have been repaired to the appropriate high standard.

We are not aware of figures that show the amount of soil loss caused by erosion on these paths before the project began but we can be confident that with all the work done to halt erosion, the soil loss reduction will be significant and vegetation will have begun to recover.





*The objectives for*  
**Volunteering** were to:

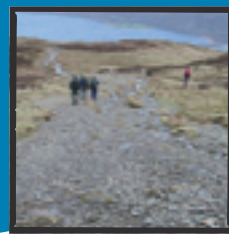
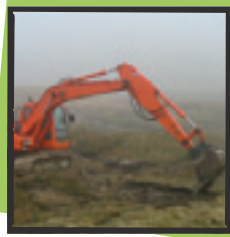
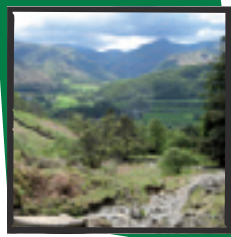
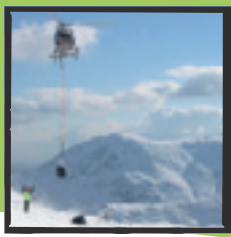
- 🟢 involve volunteers to benefit both the environment as a whole and the personal development of those people who volunteer
- 🟢 involve groups from new audiences and under-represented communities.

Volunteering has been a real strength of this project. The National Trust's High Wray Basecamp has been the main focus of work to engage under represented audiences in the fells and staff there have worked carefully and sensitively to establish relationships with people who might not easily get into the countryside otherwise, let alone carry out practical conservation tasks. The team really understands the needs of the groups they work with and consequently users return time and again and Basecamp activities are extremely popular – this work should continue in any future version of the project.

Volunteer walk leaders have worked to deliver 50 'Fix the Fells walks' each year – branded walks that are part of the National Park's annual walks programme. These walks give regular users of the fells a chance to gain a greater understanding of upland erosion and appreciate the work that is being done to repair the damage.







### *The objectives for Training and Development were:*

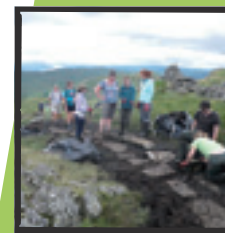
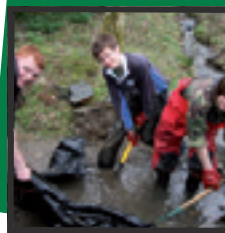
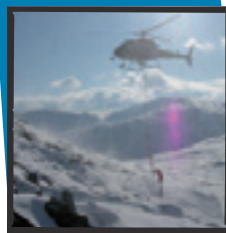
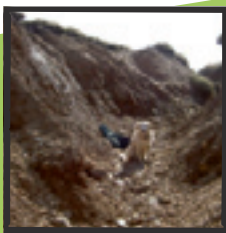
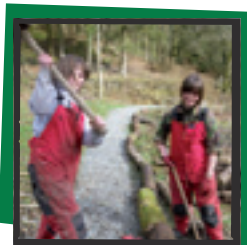
- 🕒 ensure that project partner staff, volunteers and contractors have the necessary skills to effectively implement their contribution to the project;
- 🕒 develop a pool of trained staff and volunteers capable of both completing the project and maintaining the path network in the future.

A core set of skills were identified as being necessary for the staff and volunteers delivering this project and they have been equipped with these skills through an impressive training programme. They have been given skills to do the work safely – such as manual handling, risk assessment, navigation and mountain first aid and training in how to engage with the public and be able to promote the project and handle feedback or criticism. They have also learned more about the environment they are working in and have attended training on heritage conservation, upland ecology and upland archaeology as well as training in the traditional skills of the fell path builders.

*Fix the Fells* now has a highly skilled pool of workers and volunteers – confident enough to adapt and improve the way they work – and extremely well placed to maintain the path network in future if they can be retained.







### **The objectives for Audience Development were:**

- to enhance the enjoyment of existing users through improved understanding and appreciation;
- to work with other partners to enhance the engagement and enjoyment of underrepresented audiences in the fells.

Getting to grips with Audience Development was a challenge for the core team and it would be fair to say that this area of the programme was less well understood and delivered at arm's length to the practical works. The Steering Group acknowledge that collectively they had less direct expertise in audience development work than in the practical works. This perhaps led to a lack of clarity around to what extent this work was important, what it needed to achieve and how best to do it.

The work with schools seems to be of a high standard and had real merit in its own right as a vehicle for learning. However, it is unlikely to influence large scale changes in path use and the public's willingness to fund repair work.

The marketing and communications work was initially hoped to be delivered through existing staff at the National Trust and the National Park. However, this proved problematic and in 2009 this area of work was contracted to Nurture Lakeland. Consequently work on marketing and communications therefore really began in earnest during 2010.

The project now has a robust suite of marketing tools; however widespread awareness of the project amongst visitors remains low. The evaluation concludes that instead of pursuing a global communications strategy, a more concentrated approach – at local tourism businesses - might be more successful at raising funds for the project. A dedicated post to develop relationships with local businesses seems essential.



## **Overall conclusion**

*Fix the Fells has made a very significant difference to the upland environment. The practical repair and maintenance work and volunteer input are well set up to continue. However, more work needs to be done to get an essentially compelling message across to fell walkers, visitors and locals and persuade them to make donations which will allow the work to continue.*





## Notes...



## Notes...

**Paths repaired:** Esk Hause from Angle Tarn Phase 1; Loughrigg from Intake Wood; Loughrigg BW from Ambleside; Raise Beck; Browney Gill; Kirkstone Inn to Ravens Edge; Blea Tarn; Black Sail Pass; Lingmell Gill; Great Moss to Broad Stand; Seatoller to Honister BW; Loft Beck; Greenhead Gill to Stone Arthur; Nan Bield to Mardale III Bell; Rosthwaite to Watendlath; Ladderbrow; Puddingstone area; Scarth Gap lower to lake path; Helvellyn Summit; Hassness to Dale Head; Holerake path; Piers Gill; Three Shires to Wet Side Edge; Corridor Route & Greta Ghyll; Stake Pass (south); Castle Rock; Wetherlam to Hole Rake; Wansfell NT side; Lythe Park to Gowbarrow; Castle Crag from Rosthwaite; Black Sail to Scarth Gap; Mickleden to Rossett; Angle tarn to Esk Hause Phase 2; Buttermere lake shore; Aira Force to Gowbarrow; Wansfell upper; Fairfield Summit; Stonethwaite to Dock Tarn; High Street to Nan Bield (Upper); Helvellyn Summit; Dollywaggon; Place Fell; Red Screes phase 2; Stake Pass North Phase 1; Manesty to Cat Bells; Stonethwaite to Dock Tarn phase 2; Sail to Scar Crag; Red Tarn to Great Knott; Three Tarns to Bow Fell; Harrison Combe; Stickle Ghyll (left side); Kirkstone Inn Ravens Edge 2; Rannerdale Knott; Martcrag Moor; Top of Greenside to Sticks; Helvellyn Summit; Dollywaggon Lower; Coniston Old Man quarries path; Scales Beck; Thornhow; Striding Edge; Small Water; Kidsty Pike; Gowbarrow Upper; Stake Pass North Phase 2; Pike-a-Blisco Summit; Hell Ghyll; Scar Crag; Grains to Esk Hause Shelter; Force Crag to Sail; Sail; Mickeldore Phase 1; Brown Tongue; Stickle Tarn to Harrison; Mickleden to Rossett; Kirkstone Inn Ravens Edge 2; Nannycatch Lane; Scale Force; Seldom Seen; Walna to Goats; Old Man (upper); Red Screes; Striding Edge; Helvellyn Summit; Great Calva; Gowbarrow; Kentmere bridleways; Gummars How; Stake Pass lower; Greenburn to Bracken Hause; Crinkle Crag; Stickle Gill RHS upper; Mickleden; Mickeldore upper; Throstlegarth; Wasdale coffin route; Striding Edge; Helvellyn (summit); Coniston Old Man; Goats Water washout; High Sweden Bridge; Ashness Fell; Nan Bield; Mardale III Bell.



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