



## **SUMMARY**

As Britain's highest mountain, Ben Nevis attracts 10's of thousands of walkers to its summit each year. The project aims to protect the summit area of and maintain the wild land experience for all those who reach it and to be valued by all sectors of society. People of all ages and backgrounds can experience, connect and enjoy this wild place and learn the importance of caring for it.

The Trust recognises that there are many interests in the summit of Ben Nevis and works in partnership with others, in particular the Nevis Partnership. It considers the implications for the wild land qualities of the mountain and the safety and experience of both visitors and those who make their living from working on Ben Nevis.

The project will include repair of the upper section of the Ben Path and structures that are of a historical, cultural and safety interest.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Ben Nevis is the highest peak both in the area and the UK. The summit area lies within the Ben Nevis Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest. It is important for its saxicolous lichens and bryophytes living on the broken rocky ground of the summit plateau. It is also the Ben Nevis and Glencoe National Scenic Area and is located at GR 216685,771275.

## **STRUCTURES**

There are several structures of both safety, cultural and historical interest on the summit plateau of Ben Nevis. As such the John Muir Trust is committed to protecting them whilst recognising the designations and wildness of the summit area. These include:

- Triangulation Point – this stands on a large flat topped cairn with a concrete platform. Some of the stone work has fallen away leaving part of the pad unsupported. The Triangulation Point is a favourite landmark for many of those who reach the summit.
- Summit Shelter – Similar problem to the Triangulation Point, subsidence of the supporting cairn. Stone work has fallen away. The shelter provides an escape from the weather and is an important safety feature relied on by many. Some subtle signage inside to raise awareness of 'Leaving no trace'.
- Navigation Cairns – There are 24 of these cairns in total. Part of their care involves the removal of other cairns that appear from time to time whose existence can cause confusion. The cold, wet environment causes the cairns to lose stones and reduce in height. These are a safety featured chosen to be kept maintained after lengthy consultation with the wider community.
- Hotel Ruins - Removal of broken wooden remains of supporting timbers & artefacts, possibly stabilising of remaining walls and stone floor.

All of the above require specialist stone workers able to work at high altitude.

Over and above the safety, historic and cultural importance the deterioration of the above features would detract from the visitor experience.

## **PATH WORK**

The upper section of the Ben Nevis path is very rocky and rugged but to ensure long term

sustainable access and reduce erosion along the path line some works are required to stop the path widening and deteriorating. These works include improvements to the path surface and drainage and definition of the path line in places to discourage short-cutting and 'braiding'.

Work will involve specialist upland path contractors carrying out small scale improvements to the path by hand. Without this work the path is likely to deteriorate and this will detract from the visitor experience.

The upper path section starts at NN14707151 and ends at the summit of Ben Nevis, NN16667126.

### **DELIVERABLE OUTPUTS**

- The project will deliver restoration management of necessary man made features on the summit to ensure their conservation and that their existence does not detract from the wildness and visitor experience.
- Maintain the popular route to the summit used by 10's of thousands of people each year.

### **OUTPUT INDICATORS AND TARGETS**

- All manmade structures are stable.
- 3km of the upper Ben Nevis path in a fit and appropriate standard for Britain's highest mountain.

### **OUTCOMES**

- Conservation of nationally important landscape character and built heritage.
- An improved and enhanced access visitor experience on the summit of Ben Nevis.
- Sustainable visitor access.

Work will not affect visitor access and will also provide visitors with a point of interest on the route that demonstrates the sort of important works that are required to keep the route maintained.

### **ACTIVITIES AND TIMETABLE**

Within the first year of the project a consultant will need to be engaged to look at the condition of the structures to determine extent of work and distribution of costs. The work will then take place within the NLP project timescale during summer months when the summit is clear of snow. It is not possible to predict how much will be done each year as it is weather dependant.

|  | Days   | Unit Cost | Total   |
|--|--------|-----------|---------|
| Initial Surveys by consultant  | 3 days | £150      | £450    |
| Path works   |        |           | £2,500  |
| Repair to structures (materials, construction & helicopter lift if required) |        |           | £12,000 |
| Volunteer time (in kind)   | 10     | £50       | £500    |
| Staff time (in kind)   | 12     | £150      | £1,500  |
| Total  |        |           | £16,950 |

|           |         |
|-----------|---------|
| Cash cost | £14,950 |
| VAT       | £2,990  |
| Volunteer | £500    |
| In-kind   | £1,500  |

## **EVIDENCE, REVIEW AND REPORTING**

A photographic record of the structures path condition before and after works will be kept and further monitoring carried out in subsequent years to assess the effectiveness of the improvement works.

## **HERITAGE CONSERVATION**

The summit of Ben Nevis has been and used for many things; observatory, hotel, recreation. Maintaining these features will ensure they endure the rigours of time as a lasting memory to the pioneers who first erected them.

## **BENEFICIARIES AND COMMUNICATION**

Over 100,000 people endeavour to reach the summit of Ben Nevis annually. These visitors, and also those people who make their living on the mountain, will all benefit from this project as it will enhance the visitor experience and help maintain the living history of this iconic mountain.

## **WIDER CONTEXT**

Ben Nevis is a high profile landscape feature both nationally and internationally. The project has direct links with the Sustainable Futures projects, the Ben Nevis Film+ projects and with the Nevis Training Programme.

## **PROJECT BUY-IN**

The John Muir Trust have consulted with the NLP, SNH, Friends of Nevis, Highland Council, Northern Constabulary, MCofS, Lochaber Mountain Rescue and Lochaber Mountaineering Group with regards to the Navigation Cairns. In relation to the other structures NLP, Lochaber Mountaineering Group, Ordnance Survey.

## **PROJECT LEAD**

The John Muir Trust – Fran Lockhart [franlockhart@jmt.org](mailto:franlockhart@jmt.org) Property Manager for Ben Nevis. Her post covers all activities on Ben Nevis and line management of the two Conservation Officers for Ben Nevis Estate, Sarah Lewis [sarahlewis@jmt.org](mailto:sarahlewis@jmt.org) and Alison Austin [alisonaustin@jmt.org](mailto:alisonaustin@jmt.org). They are involved in the day to day work involved with the estate. Chris Goodman [chrisgoodman@jmt.org](mailto:chrisgoodman@jmt.org) is Footpath Project Officer and will specifically oversee the footpath work.

## **PARTNERS / CONTRACTORS ETC.**

Consultants to assess and allocate costs.

Specialist stone/path workers to carry out the work.

Potential to work with Ordnance Survey on the Triangulation Point.

## **BUDGETS**

Project costs will include consultant, specialist contractors, materials and delivery as well as staff time. These costs will be dependent on findings of the consultant. A ball park figure will be available later to be refined on commencement of the project.

## **PERMISSIONS AND COMPLIANCE**

- Scottish Natural Heritage will be consulted with regard to any impact on the features of the designated site.
- Mountaineering Council of Scotland will be consulted on any Health & Safety issues.
- Historic Scotland will be contacted in relation to any work to be carried out on the hotel.

## **LEGACY AND MAINTENANCE**

This project will help to contribute to the areas reputation for high quality outdoor recreation and maintain the important safety, cultural and historical features within the designated site and enhance the visitor experience.

All structures will need annual inspection and maintenance to increase its longevity. It is anticipated that this maintenance will be undertaken by Muir Trust staff or volunteers.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

<http://www.jmt.org/home.asp>



Forestry Commission Scotland  
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba



FOR  
wild LAND &  
wild PLACES



The Nevis Partnership, An Drochaid, Claggan Road, Fort William, PH33 6PH  
The Nevis Partnership is a Charity registered in Scotland, No SCO33418