



SUMMARY

This project aims to engage the local community, the wider visiting tourist community and some special interest communities, such as hill-walkers, & wildlife enthusiasts, in the safeguarding, restoring and enhancing of the Nevis landscape. This engagement aims to be sustainable and to contribute to the awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of the natural and cultural landscape of the Nevis area whilst also contributing to the well-being of the communities.

Each year we aim with this project to enable the various communities to engage with landscape in a variety of ways for a total of 140 days

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Friends of Nevis has an existing vision to engage communities in safeguarding, restoring and enhancing the Nevis landscape working with the Nevis Landscape Partnership is a welcome, additional extension of this work.

By engaging the community in the wider work of the Nevis Landscape Partnership both the Partnership and communities involved benefit. We will do this in the following ways: litter picks, talks, walks, projects that encourage wildlife in accessible spaces, reducing/minimising the impact of alien species, path maintenance, and web/social media promotional work.

We will work over the whole of the project area seeking landowner permissions as and when necessary. We have a successful history of working like this already. We currently work on Rio Tinto land, Glen Nevis Estate land, John Muir Trust land, and Lochaber Curling Club land maintaining footpaths or open spaces to ensure safe public access. We have sought advice from specialist bodies when appropriate i.e. SNH when clearing scrub to ensure that we did not disturb wildlife at critical times.

PROJECT OUTLINE

THE SECRET LIFE OF A PATH

Objective: to communicate why our upland paths need help and TLC from those that use them! Give people a sense of achievement and ownership.

Primary Audience: Fitness Friends (see further down document for explanation of audiences),

Secondary Audience: Gentle Actives

It is proposed that a presentation is put together '*The Secret Life of a Path*' that incorporates short videos and diagrams etc and explains, briefly, essential path skills and the do's and don'ts of path maintenance in visual form so that users understand the dynamics of paths in extreme, wet/cold upland environments. These can be put onto FB/YouTube etc. The tone should be informative, light, not lecturing but should let those who use paths know that there is a cost to using mountains but that it is easy and often fun when you 'put something back'. A brief talk/presentation would be given at various clubs etc and take questions about path management and either sign people up for path maintenance, or take donations for FoN. The idea would be to build relationships with clubs who send work parties. A programme to improve and add to the talk showing work done by volunteers would enable the same club to be visited a couple of times so they could see improvements.

WILDLIFE HEROES

Objective: to involve the general public and Gentle Actives in helping wildlife in Glen Nevis, to broaden the knowledge and enjoyment of the landscape and area through increased knowledge, to impart a sense of well-being, sense of achievement and ownership.

Primary Audience: Lochaber Community and FoN's Gentle Actives – several of these events should be family friendly.

Much activity would centre on the old Curling Pond area, a site which has been landscaped and reclaimed for the local community and which the landowner (Lochaber Curling Club who no longer regularly use the area) has agreed the community can use. FoN maintain this site currently. The benefit is that it is accessible and unlike much of the land in the Nevis area is relatively close to amenities (a café, toilet etc). Events currently run on this site attract good numbers.

This project would use a mix of ingredients to attract and engage the non-specialist in the Nevis areas wildlife.

- Curling Ponds – using resource from SNH/Greenspace etc. to use the site as a peri-urban space much like a park. Bird boxes/bug hotels etc could be built by volunteers that would encourage wildlife. A specialist ecologist would be recruited initially to map the area, train volunteers and work out a plan for a 'mosiac' approach so that the widest variety of wildlife could be encouraged into this area. If left to itself the space just becomes overgrown (this had happened previously). Managing the land to provide an accessible space for people to see flora and fauna can help develop interest and confidence to encourage people to venture further into what can often be intimidating terrain in the Nevis area. It would be anticipated that the specialist would taper their involvement reducing down from year 1 to coming in annually to monitor and offer feedback and advice, and that management of the site would then be done by volunteers.
- We have learnt during the development year that using the format of 'turn up and go' walks with a fun theme gets the widest possible audience. Advertising a walk around one species can often be an introduction to learn about different aspects of biodiversity.
- Litter picks – an obvious and easy way to get people into the landscape. Local pride and wanting to show the best face of a local asset is a tried and trusted way to introduce people to Friends of Nevis and keeps on working. Anyone who is reasonably mobile can help, and kids love litter pickers! We work with the Highland Council and local landowners and businesses too.
- *Red squirrel feeding and monitoring – to be developed after discussion with the expert and the FC. Possibly volunteers recruited to man squirrel feeders/download pics from cameras etc./blog about what they have found, year 2-4. This part of the project is budget dependent and owing to our lack of contingency would go if necessary.*
- *All day specialist events – during the development phase we attracted a more specialist group the 'Nature Lovers'.*

ALIEN INVADERS

Objective: To involve and train volunteers to recognize and remove alien species from the Nevis area.

Primary Audience: mix of top end Gentle Actives and Fitness Friends

FoN has limited experience of this type of work and would need to recruit a specialist with knowledge of alien species to map the Nevis area and then devise a simple work and training plan suitable for volunteers. Depending on how accessible the plants are may depend on how many volunteers we get. It would be best to start with the most accessible areas to build up confidence amongst the volunteers. It would be anticipated that once trained key volunteers would be able to lead work parties on their own because training materials would be developed as part of the project. Again specialist input would taper and would reduce to annual monitoring and advice/feedback.

TALKS/EVENTS

Objective: To inform the audiences about the various different aspects of the Nevis area – archaeology, natural history, geology, social history etc.

Primary Audience: Gentle Actives

FoN already has experience of putting on well-received talks and this project formalises this work.

The Gentle Active audience is 'curious', and enjoys learning new things especially about an area they have a fondness for. Talks, slide shows, short films if done with a light touch and combined with a social event provide a good way to build appreciation for the area and its uniqueness.

We will review this format after year 2 to see if we need to change or tweak it. We may need to increase the budget (having run out of free, local expertise) or refresh the way we present information.

AWARENESS RAISING

Objective: To inform audiences via face to face and new media of the uniqueness of the Nevis area. To use new media to reach beyond Lochaber and the local community.

Primary Audience: Gentle Actives, Fitness Friends especially non-local.

Due to budget and staff constraints the development phase of this project will take place from year 2 onwards.

FoN is building and will continue to build a facebook and web audience in year 1. From year 2 onwards we will train volunteers (several of whom have expressed an interest) to more actively develop both our website and facebook pages. We intend to do this with peer-to-peer training – visiting other slightly larger charities to find out how they use facebook and learning what we might do more effectively. We will develop new pages on our website to better promote the different roles volunteers play within FoN with the aim of encouraging more people to volunteer.

DELIVERABLE OUTPUTS

Quality, standards and expectations

The projects will be run by people with either experience or qualifications in the field. The path building project uses a much respected path supervisor, Martin McCrorie, with unrivalled local knowledge of Ben Nevis and the Nevis area. FoN has SNH staff member as an advisor to its Board and will recruit specialists to undertake the Wildlife and Alien Invaders Work following the SNH advisor's guidance.

OUTPUT INDICATORS AND TARGETS

Year 1 Outputs

£10,000 worth of volunteer time or approximately 140 volunteer engagement days per year for 4 years. This will be through a variety of ways.

Approx. 25 days of volunteer time on litter picks.

Approx 17 days through talks and informative events

Approx. 20 days through work on habitat/maintenance at the Curling Pond site

Approx. 25 days on the Secret Life of a Path project

Approx 15 days on informative wildlife walks as part of the Wildlife Heroes Project

Approx 12 day as part of the Alien Invaders

Approx 2 days through stand-alone face to face awareness raising.

Approx. 2 days of management (trustees meetings etc) time

Approx. 22 days on awareness raising/web/social media work

Year 2 Outputs will be broadly similar

OUTCOMES

- An increased awareness amongst the target audiences of the unique nature of the Nevis area
- An increased awareness amongst the target audiences of the wide variety of the Nevis areas habitats, and ecological, social, geological, cultural and historical importance of the area beyond the obvious 'honeypot' attractions.
- A sense of ownership and understanding of what goes into maintaining facilities/ landscape that are subject to a high number of visitors.

ACTIVITIES AND TIMETABLE

See attached sheet

EVIDENCE, REVIEW AND REPORTING

- Participants numbers for all activities will be recorded, as will outputs achieved.
- Where possible demographic data will be recorded to better understand which audiences are participating and which audiences need more targeted engagement strategies
- FoN will ask its volunteers and participants at the end of every year to feedback as well as more informally reviewing on an event by event basis. As the budget is limited we will do this electronically.
- We will do this in a timely way so participants can impact on the next year's activities.
- Quarterly reports will be provided to the NLP scheme manager and Executive Committee. These will be reviewed, with actions points emerging.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION

The project will engage the local and visiting community in conservation of built and natural heritage.

BENEFICIARIES AND COMMUNICATION

Key messages

FoN's key message is to help all the communities who use the Ben and the Glen appreciate and understand it in its wider context. To appreciate that it is a very special environment, with unique geology, history, flora, fauna and culture and not just the UK's highest mountain to be 'rushed' up and down (although it has a place in the history of fell running too!). We exist to enable communities to 'put something' back in whatever way they can. For some, who are fit this can be path works at high elevation and for others who live far away it can be working on facebook publicising the work of FoN/other organisations involved in protecting and enhancing the Nevis area.

We will use both traditional media such as talks, flyers, posters and new media – our website and facebook.

FRIENDS OF NEVIS AUDIENCES

Gentle Actives: FoN has success with people who like being outdoors but who are not super fit, these folk are often, but not always retired. They do include active families. They are not Fitness Friends but enjoy being active in a moderate way. As in many things there is cross-over with some of this group being fitter and more active than others (some are retired mountain guides and ex-members of the Mountain Rescue Team). These people enjoy our litter picks, they enjoy the wildlife events on a generalist level, they like working on the curling ponds. They are interested in a wide range of subjects about the Ben and the Glen and are often involved in other organisations and groups. They have active enquiring minds, even if they are not academic. They are not put off by having to walk back to a toilet at lunch time, or wear full waterproofs but a high percentage would not volunteer for a high level path maintenance day where you had to carry tools, personal kit and yourself up 800m or so and then work for 6 or so hours. A good number are in their 60's and 70's. They are the backbone

of FoN. They do not use facebook but do use email. (includes local businesses, B&B owners, active older folk, schools)

This group does include visitors and FoN has had occasional success with engaging with them.

This group can also be included in the Carpe Diem scheme run with the Fort William Mountain Festival.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPANSION:

With locals, there will always be a turnover unless you can provide a progression or change. By providing changing events or talks you can keep peoples interest. Time needs to annually spent going out to local business, groups etc and publicising the good work of FoN. This has worked in the past but has not continued as time has become tight. By providing varied events under the NLP project and adding in some easy/general interest talks and walks through the year we should be able to maximise local support.

Low Level '*Secret Life of a Path*' would appeal to this group.

'*Wildlife Heroes*' – working on the Curling Ponds using resources from SNH to provide habitats that encourage wildlife appeals to this group, along with the drop in/no book Wildlife Walks. Other wildlife habitat improvement that is low level could be interesting for them and they can mesh in with other NLP projects as opportunities arise.

'*Alien Invaders*' – low level work on this project (will appeal to this group, as long as the work is varied and not too physically demanding.

With visitors, local accommodation marketing groups do exist that could be targeted more systematically and a plan will be drawn up to visit these groups during the quieter months and to distribute advertising literature before the visitor season starts.

Nature Lovers: FoN had a few of these folk on its contact lists before but more came along to our a NLP enabled wildlife events during this years planning phase of the NLP project NLPs include professional general conservationists i.e. from the JMT, HC Rangers and other people who are very keen on wildlife. They need a specialist level of event to maintain their interest. FoN could put on one or two events a year aimed specifically at this specialist audience. These events should be bookable, perhaps have a classroom element to start as per the Butterfly Conservation workshops run in the development phase and run over a whole day. The aim should be for NLPs to be targeted to be trained by the specialists, and by the end of the project to be able to run events etc on their own, in their chosen special interest area. This audience is wide and encompasses older, retired folk, local professionals, and younger people who have graduated with relevant degrees (i.e biology, ecology etc) and have moved home looking for a job. There may well be a cross-over here with the audience to whom the Volunteer Rangers Project appeals to.

Opportunities for expansion: This is initially not a top priority (as the numbers engaged are lower) and will start in year 2 or 3. It is anticipated that some people will progress from the Wildlife Hero walks to these events and then after training to leading events or monitoring species and linking into other conservation work going on as part of the wider NLP project.

Fitness Friends: FoN has had a limited success in engaging with the serious mountain user professional and non-professional, local and non-local. Some walkers come along through the Edinburgh Young Walkers but this relationship is fragile and needs more work and attention. FoN has very little experience of engaging with the professional guiding community although there are plans for a 'Leave no Trace' project as part of wider NLP project. FoN does pick up John Muir Trust members who can be fit (although not always) and who are hill walkers. FoN has not had the resources to work with local fell running clubs etc. This group can also be included in the Carpe Diem scheme run with the Fort William Mountain Festival.

Opportunities for expansion:

There are a variety of walking and running clubs in Lochaber and the Highlands that could be targeted either through traditional talks at AGMs or monthly socials and also through new media. Having learnt lessons more locally then things can taken further afield. The Secret Life of a Path project and Alien Invader should appeal to this audience. It should be remembered that to deliver a talk in Inverness would take the best part of a day from Fort William with approx 1 hr 45min travel time each way. More locally, the Adventure Tourism Students at the West Highland College, UHI are an as of yet 'untapped' audience. So too are the wider outdoor activity providers.

WIDER CONTEXT

We will link in the with Volunteer Rangers, and the Fort William Mountain Festival Carpe Diem Project, we have links already with the HC Rangers and have started working with them providing volunteers to help with their popular events. We will publicise the volunteer opportunities available at the Archaeology project (and have already recommended people for steering groups). We have a close working relationship with the NLP and will utilise all the publicity opportunities they can offer to maximise volunteer uptake. We anticipate this being done by regular meetings/email updates between key staff.

PROJECT BUY IN

We have spoken to FoN members, volunteers and FoN trustees and the wildlife experts who led the wildlife part of the development phase of this project. The Community Engagement project is seen as a critical element in the scheme. Additional support and expertise will come from key staff within the wider Partnership, particularly from JMT, FCS, SNH and THC.

PROJECT LEAD

Friends of Nevis

Chair – Joy Biggin 01397 772459

Part time Co-ordinator Anna Trafford 07770 648330

PARTNERS/CONTRACTORS ETC.

- Martin McCrorie –Path Supervisor – already known to NLP & FoN.
- Freelance Ecologist for the Wildlife Hero project at the Curling Pond area to be recruited taking the advice of SNH.
- Walk leaders – likely to use the species experts recruited by the NLP and used during the development phase of the project
- Freelance Ecologist for the Alien Invaders project to be recruited taking the advice of SNH

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

See FoN report (appendices).

BUDGETS

See attached spreadsheet

PERMISSIONS AND COMPLIANCE

Prior to any conservation work being carried out, full plans will be sent to SNH and the relevant landowner. Conservation activity will be developed in consultation with SNH to ensure maximum benefits and compliance with landscape designations.

All volunteer activity will be fully covered by FoN's insurance, risk assessments and standard operating procedures.

LEGACY AND MAINTENANCE

Maintenance – see maintenance section of LCAP

Legacy – FoN is a fairly new organisation but existed before this project and intends to exist after this project, but 4 years of funded work will put FoN in a much stronger position. All the pieces of work in this project aim to grow the volunteer base of FoN. Several such as the Alien Invaders and Wildlife Heroes contain volunteer training. This aims to give volunteers the skill to carry on the work once the project has ended.

RISKS AND RISK MITIGATION

Risk: not enough volunteers/community members come forward

Mitigation: monitoring of numbers and early reporting so changes can be made to the programme, and if necessary outputs can be renegotiated.

Risk: delay in payment of funding leads to cash-flow problems at FoN

Mitigation: clear reporting and payment dates to be agreed by all parties before



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