

Evaluation Report of the Nevis Landscape Partnership Programme 2014-2019



The evaluation of the programme was undertaken by Walking-the-Talk between 2015 and 2019 using formative and summative evaluation processes. The evaluation framework was based on guidance published by the Heritage Lottery Fund.



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FOREWORD

The delivery of the five-year Nevis Landscape Partnership programme was a ground-breaking achievement for the partnership. It succeeded in bringing together a diverse range of organisations and individuals to work on an ambitious raft of projects in the Nevis area. The level of success was not just down the hard work of everyone involved but also to the key concepts of co-operation and communication. Many of the individual projects were too large or complex for any one group to tackle, but by bringing together people from different backgrounds and skill bases, successful and lasting partnerships have been forged.

Perhaps a prime example of this co-operation was the North Face Survey project where mountaineers, botanists, geologists, volunteer rangers and mapping experts worked together, to share and learn skills and develop new techniques, to provide perhaps the most detailed survey ever of a British mountain.

Communication, worked at over a long period of time, was able to establish common ground with the Ben Nevis Race Association, to reach agreement on rerouting part of the annual Ben Nevis Hill Race away from an environmentally sensitive area. The organisers, having seen the work of the partnership, have since moved to a position of solid support, and we are grateful for this.

Indeed, the support and participation of local people has been one of the most noticeable and rewarding aspects of the Programme. Perhaps unusually, this support has not only come from the already committed outdoor groups but has drawn in people from all backgrounds and interests.

The rewards also have gone out into the wider community. On the first Easter Sunday after the opening of the new bridge and all abilities foot path, I met four generations of one family taking a walk down the riverbank for the first time. The bringing together of generations in this way has continued as thousands of people, young and old, have fallen in love with this beautiful space.

However, we see our work as only having just started. Our Nevis Strategy 2020-40 proposes a 100-year vision for this unique and important landscape where the people, place and community are intrinsically linked to the health and wellbeing of all. If we are to achieve this ambition to deliver this vision of a healthy, resilient ecosystem of which we are all part, then we must address our organisation's over-reliance on grant funding.

We need to be able to move forward initiatives, started as part of this programme, and in landscape terms that means thinking in terms far longer than 3 or 5 years. We need to retain our knowledgeable staff and nurture the partnerships and connections we have made. We need to continue to engage and inspire people and communities to connect with and care for the wild land and heritage around them.

The knowledge we have gained, the friendships we have forged and the partnerships we have created over the last five years give us confidence that we can achieve even more and better as we go in to the future, and we look to everyone to help us in this.

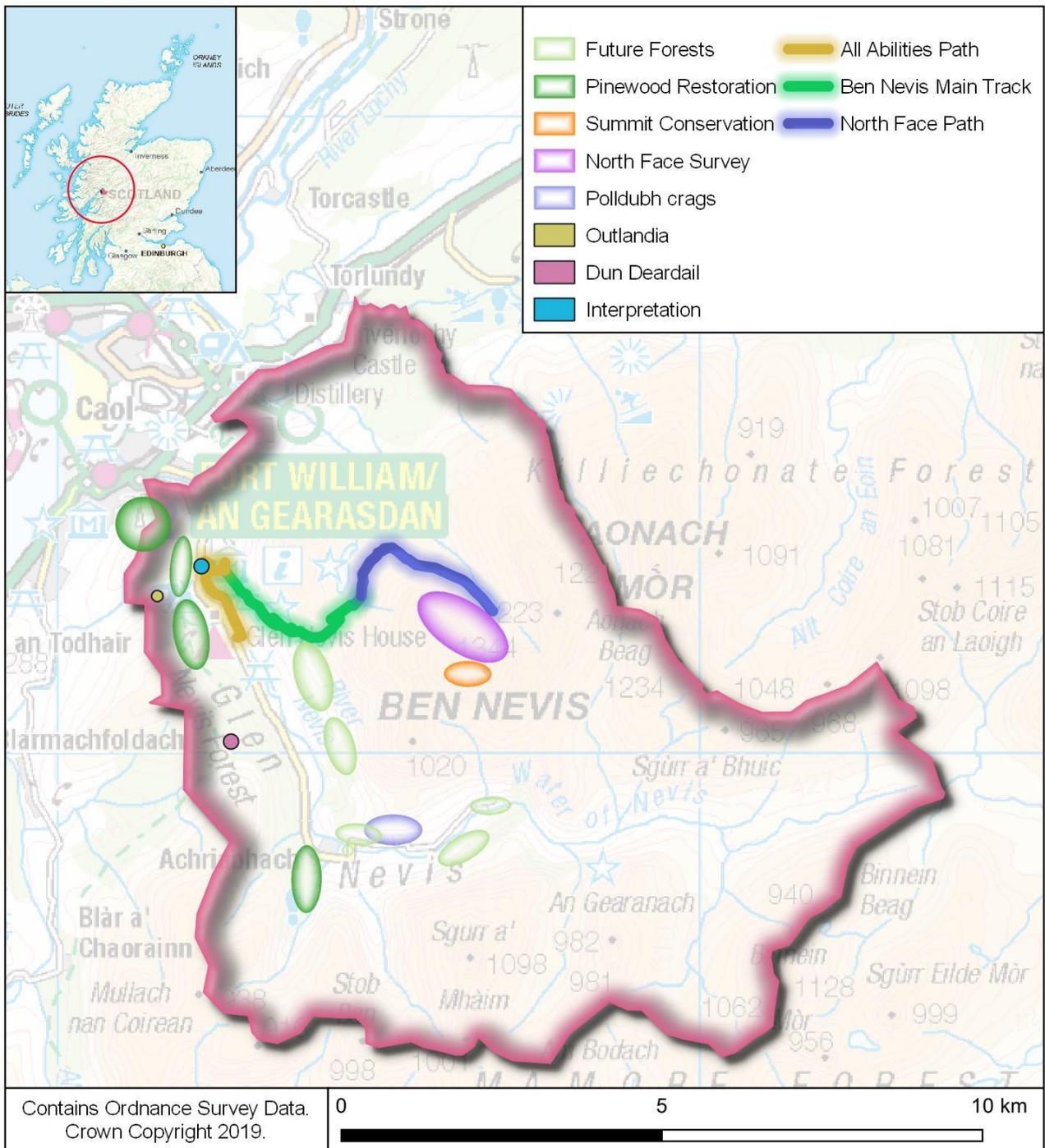
Alex Farquhar,

Chair

Nevis Landscape Partnership

INTRODUCTION

The Nevis Landscape Partnership Programme was delivered between 2015 and 2019 and comprised 19 projects across a range of heritage management activities and engagement with people. The programme was managed and administered by the Nevis Landscape Partnership using a small Delivery Team that came into post during the first year of the Programme. The Programme was developed as a series of projects, some of which intersected, but during the implementation phase the links and synergies between the projects and partners were developed and enhanced to deliver a coherent programme of activities. This funding opportunity helped the organisation’s transition from being mainly a discussion forum which had implemented small-scale projects to a fully capable delivery body, working successfully as a partnership to protect, enhance and promote the natural and cultural heritage of Ben Nevis and Glen Nevis.





KEY OUTPUTS

The programme delivered and exceeded its targets across the 19 different projects.

🏡 3,800 days of volunteer work

From litter picks to wildlife surveys, running events and repairing paths with over 100 new volunteers recruited during the programme

🏡 3.5km of Ben Nevis Path repaired

£800,000 was invested in repairs including 1 100 helicopter lifts of stone and 3500 volunteer hours to complement the professional contractors

🏡 22 hectares of trees planted

Over 12,000 native trees, including work by 384 children from 15 schools and youth organisations

🏡 Iron-age Fort excavated and explained

240 days of volunteer excavations, 42 school workshops, 1,000 people at open days and archaeology festivals

🏡 A bridge and new path suited to all abilities

A new easy access route along the riverside linked to Glen Nevis Visitor Centre which is now used by thousands each year

🏡 Ben Nevis 'grew' by 1m

State-of-the-art work done by Ordnance Survey as a result of the Summit Conservation Project revealed that Ben Nevis is 1m higher than previously recorded

🏡 35 TVRs trained

An inspired and active new generation of people with key skills in countryside management and public engagement with natural and cultural heritage

🏡 32 artist residencies

Eclectic mix of artists using different media to engage with the landscape

🏡 131 engagement events

4468 people participated across 5 years

🏡 3000 Facebook followers

1190 posts with 1.5million views and 54,000 engagements with users from 70 countries

🏡 Over 20 publications

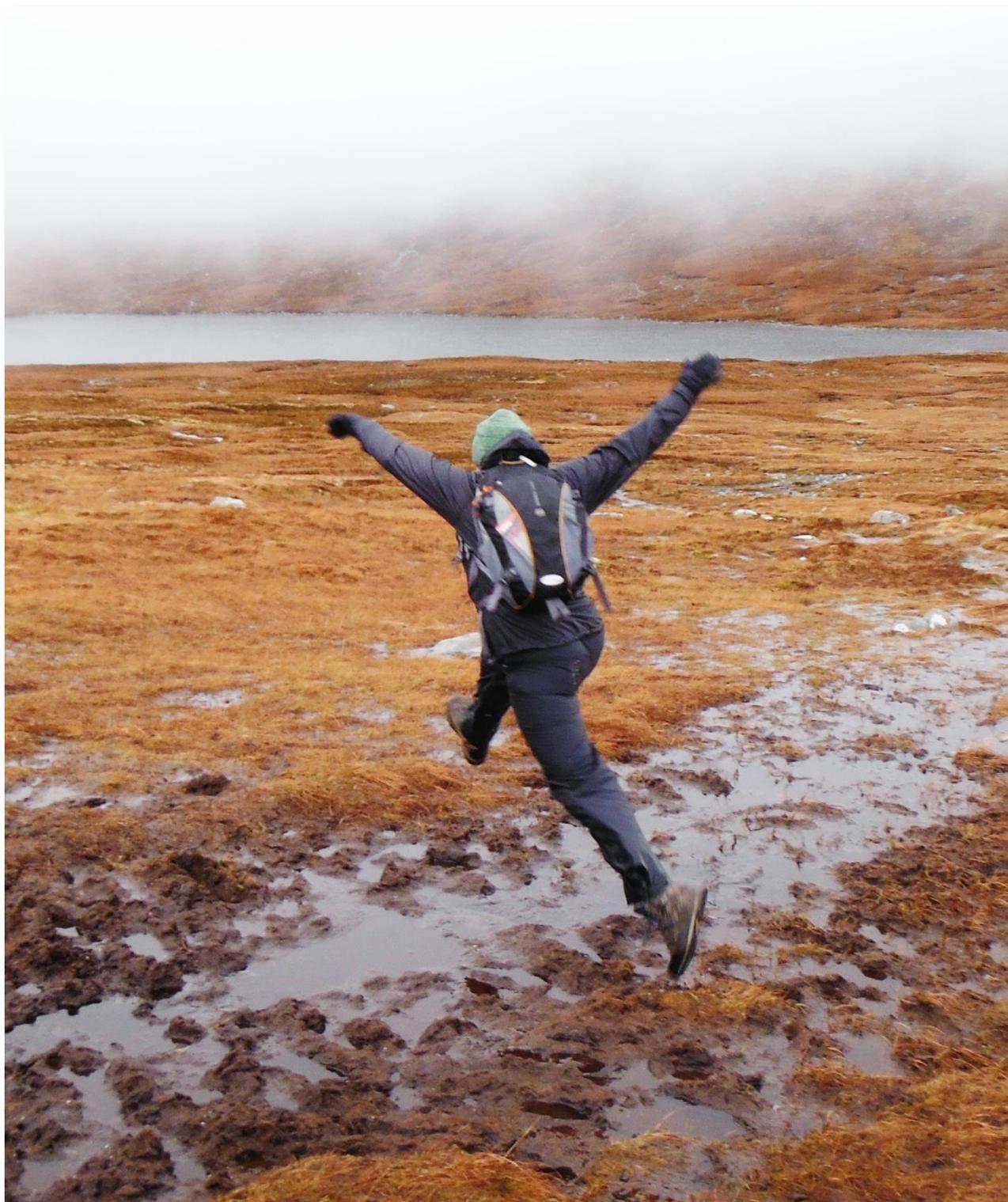
Journals and reports as well as articles in local and national news media

🏡 24 films watched over 156,000 times

Dedicated channels on YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook and Twitter, as well as participation at the Fort William Mountain Festival

🏡 £3.4 million spent over five years

Funds were contributed from 18 different organisations with 47% from Heritage Lottery Fund



KEY OUTCOMES

As well delivering an impressive set of outputs during the during the Programme, the Nevis Landscape Partnership resulted in a wide range of positive outcomes in terms of improved relationships, recorded improvements to protected site status, engagement with heritage management, increased opportunities for less mobile visitors to enjoy Glen Nevis and life-changing opportunities for volunteers.

Improved partnership working between organisations

The opportunity for Nevis Landscape Partnership to deliver this programme has tangibly improved the partnership working practices of the organisations involved at the local level. The management of the programme has involved representatives from these partner organisations working together to solve common issues, leading to communicating more frequently and sharing ideas. They have continued to work together on issues that are not directly related to the Programme and have developed better mutual understanding.

The programme has taken the Nevis Landscape Partnership beyond the boom and bust of individual projects, which in turn gives it credibility locally and has enhanced its reputation with existing and potential partners. This has been done through successfully delivering a complex funding package, attracting sustained volunteer commitment, bringing diverse interests together and contributing positively to the cultural and natural heritage of the Nevis Landscape Partnership working area.

Case Study: Forest and Land Scotland – mutual benefits of partnership working
 Forest and Land Scotland (FLS) is a public sector body and an important local land manager. Ruari Watt (the Community Recreation and Tourism Ranger) was a main point of contact with the Programme and reported that involvement in the Programme brought a wide range of benefits for FLS in delivering community engagement activities in the local area. The Programme brought additional capacity, inspiration and support that were unavailable within FLS. The main benefits for Ruari were in delivering better quality events and activities and ensuring that participants got the most out of their activities.

Over the course of the Programme a high degree of trust and mutual support developed, which brought dividends for both the Programme and FLS. Some of the benefits are difficult to quantify and some are intangible, but it is clear that the involvement of FLS in the Programme was overwhelmingly positive. It has been described as “transformational”.

Ruari worked closely with the Programme staff and provided input to the Trainee Volunteer Ranger Scheme recruitment, as well as ongoing involvement with tasks and mentoring the participants. This has in turn provided additional capacity from the participants to help prepare and deliver FLS activities within the local community and for visitors. These were larger (such as a Dun Deardail Archaeology event that exceeded all expectations, attracting around 500 people) and with better engagement of participants (through having additional leaders to work with groups). By engaging with the Programme FLS has also benefitted from better local promotion of events and activities than is available through FLS’ own national team. This helped to increase the impact and presence of FLS within the local community.

Favourable conditions on Ben Nevis

The North Face Survey brought together climbers, geologists and botanists to enhance the understanding of this part of Ben Nevis – as well as the benefits of shared skills and knowledge, the survey led directly to the Ben Nevis Site of Special Scientific Interest being confirmed as in Favourable, Maintained condition. This survey also recorded the first specimens of Highland Saxifrage on Ben Nevis.



Volunteer engagement with practical tasks

Volunteers have been a central thread of delivery and have made valuable contributions across almost every aspect of the programme. It is clear that the outputs could not have been delivered without the input of almost 3800 days of volunteer time that was given to the Programme – this is the equivalent of employing more than three full-time-equivalent members of staff for the entire length of the programme (over 17 person-work-years assuming 220 work-days per annum). Over 100 new volunteers were recruited during the Programme with more than 400 taking part as repeat / regular volunteers.

The skills and capacity within the local area and beyond have been greatly enhanced through these volunteer activities, with a potential pool of experienced volunteers available for future engagement.



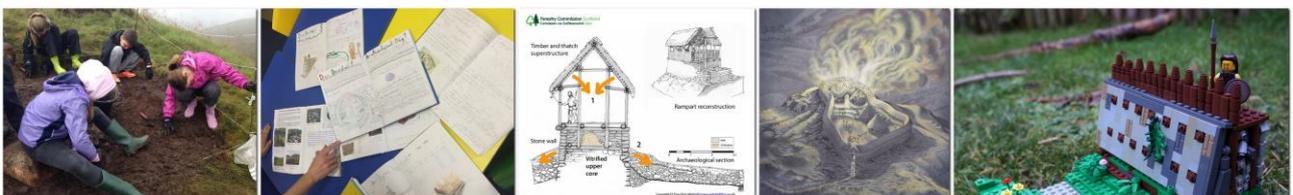
On the Ben Nevis main path project almost 3,500 hours were contributed by volunteers from the National Trust for Scotland for the repair of lower sections of the route – this work could not have been done (due to financial constraints) without the volunteers, and the objective of repairing and managing 3.5km of the main path would not have been achieved.

Public engagement with archaeology



The Dun Deardail Fort proved to be an enormous hit with both volunteers and the public more widely. The excavations were oversubscribed each year and caught the imagination of visitors during the Archaeology Festivals in 2016 and 2017.

A comprehensive schools workshop programme exceeded its target, engaging with over 800 pupils in the classroom and around 250 on site. A separate evaluation was undertaken by the consultants who led the research highlighting the outcomes and impacts, and the project gave rise to additional outputs including a LEGO reconstruction of the fort, which now forms part of the interpretive display at Glen Nevis Visitor Centre.



Improved engagement with local landowners

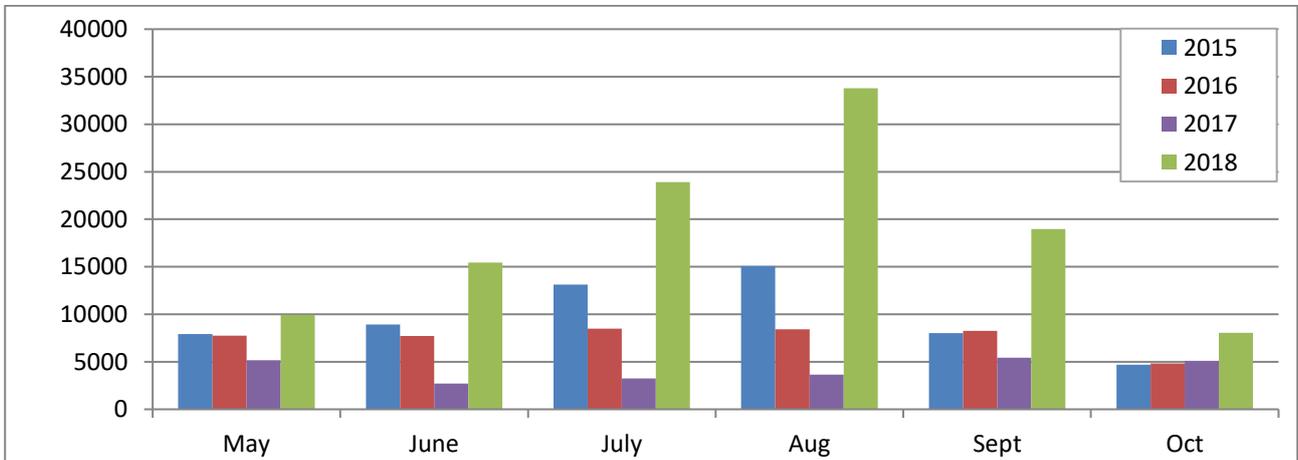
The Nevis Landscape Partnership has sought to work with land owners and land managers since it was formed. The delivery of the Programme provided many opportunities to engage with all the local land managers and establish or improve working relationships.

As a result of improved engagement, Glen Nevis Estates provided access to land for the airlifts, including helicopter landing space and materials storage. This had a positive impact on the project finances by significantly shortening the flight distances.

One of the local estates was sold during the lifetime of the project and the Delivery Team found opportunities to engage with the new owners, Jahama Highland Estates. This improved cooperation and engagement at a community level by the estate led to enhance outputs for a number of projects. For example, by working with Jahama Highland Estates and coordinating between the Main Path project and the Future Forests project, new woodland enclosures were established at strategic locations along the path. These are useful for preventing off-path erosion, but also have the long term benefit of enhancing the landscape value and biodiversity.

Increased footfall in the Glen Nevis Visitor Centre

Although constraints on the interpretation project meant that the new interpretation was not as radical or innovative as had been hoped, there has been a significant increase in footfall within the Glen Nevis Visitor Centre. This change coincided with the opening of the new bridge and all abilities path which indicates the level of impact of the new facilities and the opportunity to reach more visitors with the interpretation related to Nevis Landscape. More than double the number of visitors per month was recorded during the summer season in 2018 compared with previous years.



Trainee Volunteer Rangers delivered project outputs & outcomes



The TVR scheme was able to train volunteers in a wide range of ‘countryside skills’ and visitor engagement. A variety of dedicated training sessions were combined with task orientated learning to give the TVRs hands-on experience of working in the landscape. Participants in the scheme reported positive and in some cases life-changing experiences. The growing confidence of TVRs was channelled into delivery of events, notably the schools programme developed by Forestry and Land Scotland (formerly Forestry Commission Scotland) adding significantly to the capacity to engage with young people.

Case Study: Life-changing volunteer opportunities

The Trainee Volunteer Ranger Scheme gave 35 people opportunities to learn new skills and gain experience of countryside management and visitor engagement. The recruitment process was targeted to bring a range of people with different backgrounds together and highlighted the benefits of drawing people into the Programme as valued team members rather than using trainees to complete menial or repetitive tasks. Participants reported how being part of the scheme gave them confidence as well as inspiration.

Ruth used her time as a TVR in 2016 to reassess her career direction, and was inspired to study at the Scottish School of Forestry. The skills and techniques she learnt as a volunteer helped her find employment in the forestry sector and she was able to complete her course on a part-time basis. She still uses some of the same survey methods at work and “Without my time as a volunteer at Nevis Landscape Partnership, I’m not sure how I would have made the career change – it set me in a direction that I have followed through higher education and now employment.”

Sarah took part in 2017 and was impressed by the mix of formal learning and opportunities to consolidate and develop skills. She was inspired by the moth trapping programme to use this as the topic for her subsequent dissertation in a MSc in Conservation and Land Management.

Isla was a TVR during her summer recess from study at Scottish School of Forestry in 2017 and, following her time with Nevis Landscape Partnership, gained employment with Invergarry Community Woodlands as a sessional worker. She sums up her experience by highlighting that “Participating in the programme has given my CV a huge boost and has given me the skills, experience and confidence to go for jobs and other opportunities.” She recently won the CARAS Award in Lantra’s Land-based and Aquaculture Learner of the Year Awards 2019 and has now become an Industry Champion, giving her chance to use the TVR inspired people-engagement skills to interact with young people to promote opportunities of working in the outdoors and natural environment.

Rory used a career break from Outward Bound Loch Eil as an opportunity to refocus his career by joining the TVR scheme – learning new skills and drawing on his experiences in outdoor education. When the role of Volunteer Coordinator at Nevis Landscape Partnership became available he was ideally placed to apply, using his experiences with the scheme to best effect and keep up the momentum of the Programme at a crucial time.



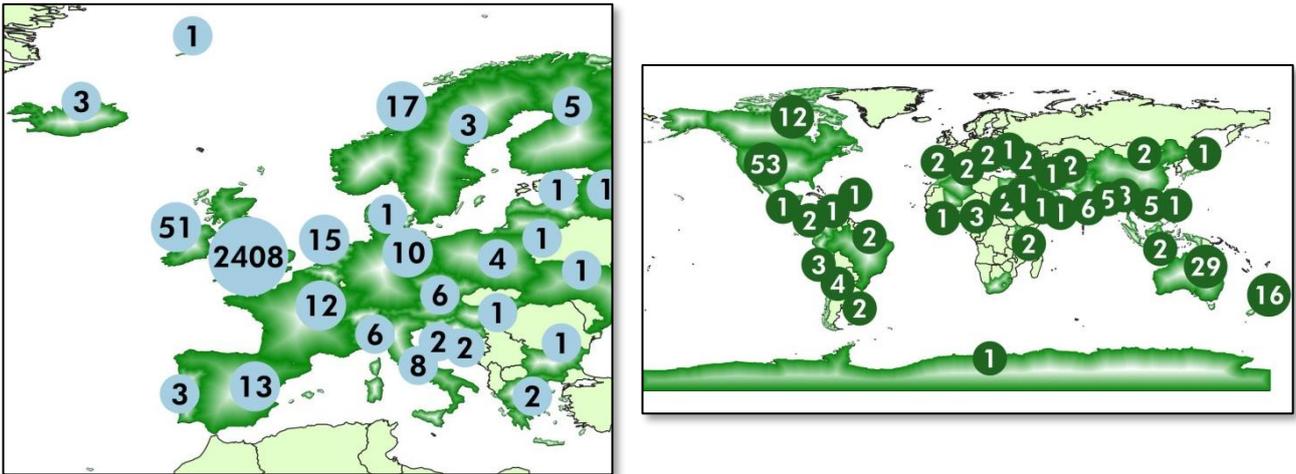
IMPACTS

The work done in each project is having a positive impact on cultural and natural heritage within the Landscape Area and the effects of some actions will become more apparent over time.

Volunteering and community engagement

Friends of Nevis have taken a central role in volunteering throughout the Programme showing dedication and enthusiasm with a range of tasks from litter picks to surveys and maintenance tasks.

Community engagement was a powerful tool in delivery as well as education and awareness. The use of social media, and in particular Facebook, has added a level of engagement with new parts of the local community who may not previously have been interested or involved with cultural and natural heritage. This ‘presence’ helped to recruit volunteers and promote events and was used to showcase the work being undertaken. Analysis of ‘Facebook insights’ data reveals that over 2400 people from the UK have followed the Facebook page, but the influence spread to every continent, engaging across 70 countries and an additional 400 people.



Over the course of the Programme there were over 1.5 million ‘post impressions’ (where people viewed information posted by Nevis Landscape Partnership) of the 1190 posts, and over 54,000 ‘engaged users’ (where people responded to information or viewed the media incorporated on the post).

Promotion works

The ongoing focus of promoting the work of the Programme in ‘traditional’ news media, as well as through social media channels, has raised its profile with the biggest impact story being the resurvey of Ben Nevis summit. Promotional stories for a wide range of the projects have appeared in local and national newspapers as well as TV and the Programme has featured in a number of more in-depth reports of the work being done.

To complement the digital presence of the Programme a quarterly journal was published in 2017 and 2018, highlighting the work in progress and completed. This provided an additional communication channel, particularly aimed at those who are not ‘digitally connected’ and therefore increasing the impact of the Programme.

The programme was bigger than a series of projects

The Programme was delivered by a team both at the Partnership and delivery levels. The collaborative approach across projects drew complementary skills and shared ideas to enhance the delivery. This teamwork approach has potential for long-lasting benefits through stronger relationships between organisations and a positive and supportive work place environment.

Connections between projects were seen as opportunities to expand outputs and outcomes benefitting from the concept of a Programme rather than a series of projects in one area. The involvement of TVRs across the different programmes became a thread helping to stitch together the Programme.

Landscape scale impacts

Pinewood Restoration and Future Forests

The felling of the non-native coups, in partnership with Forestry and Land Scotland, and changes to forest management have had a positive landscape impact within Glen Nevis. This work was enabled by the Programme as it had been forecast as uneconomical to undertake the work. Benefits of higher than expected income from the extracted timber were ‘recycled’ within the project.

Habitat works, including the installation of nesting boxes for different species, have helped to enhance the biodiversity of Glen Nevis. The monitoring of species has developed greater understanding and raised awareness of their conservation.

The collection of seed from native Scot’s Pines within Glen Nevis has revealed that they are a disease-free source, and sufficient seed has been collected and processed to grow around 70,000 trees. Local schools have helped throughout the process and have set up tree nurseries within their school grounds, engendering ownership and potentially stewardship of the future forests. Within the life of the project over 12,000 trees were also planted out covering 22 hectares of land making it a truly landscape-scale intervention that will increase in scale and impact, representing a long-term legacy of this programme.



Ben Nevis paths

The repairs on the main path of Ben Nevis have reduced the visual scar and protected the surrounding habitats from damage by visitor pressure. Changing user patterns on the mountain have been incorporated into the management of the North Face Path, allowing a more sensitive intervention than was previously envisaged, which is a more sympathetic landscape outcome. The summit conservation works have secured the features of cultural importance on the mountain and drew support from the Ordnance Survey.



Ben Nevis Race - grassy bank

One of the objectives of the sustainable futures project was to end the use of the ‘grassy bank’ for the Ben Nevis Hill Race. This was seen as a controversial proposal but careful and persistent dialogue has allowed this to be achieved. The organisers of the race have been supportive of the work of The Nevis Landscape Partnership and have also made contributions to the programme. This is a positive outcome highlighting the opportunities for change through dialogue and cooperation – the Delivery Team staff have taken a positive approach to engagement and volunteered as marshals for the race.

In 2018 one of the new enclosures next to the main path was damaged around the time of the race and some runners used it as a short-cut. The race organisers were quick to take action and made a donation to Nevis Landscape Partnership towards the cost of repairs. They posted information on their website condemning the behaviour of the unknown individual and raising awareness of the work of Partnership. This highlights the positive relationships that have developed through the Programme.

Sharing knowledge and skills

During the life of the programme Nevis Landscape Partnership has been approached by a range of organisations across the UK seeking advice or guidance on their own work. This has included prospective Landscape Partnerships, industry bodies, community based organisations and other conservation orientated bodies.

- The Upland Path Advisory Group visited the Ben Nevis Main Path in 2016 and included path managers and contractors from Scotland, England and the Republic of Ireland.
- The Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust and Arkaig Community Forest have sought advice on Future Forests.
- Callander Landscape Partnership undertook a learning visit for the preparation of their Landscape Partnership scheme.
- Trees for Life visited to gain insights for a proposed application the Heritage Lottery Fund
- Training has been provided to The Outward Bound at their site at Loch Eil on the 'Lever and Mulch' method of Rhododendron removal.
- Litter pickers and other equipment have been loaned to other groups helping to remove barriers to action.

This has extended the reach and influence of the Nevis Landscape Partnership as well as increasing the impact of the funding through the Landscape Partnership Programme.

Other partners within the Programme have also found opportunities to work collaboratively and share experiences. For example the John Muir Trust was able to enhance its relationship with the Ordnance Survey through the Ben Nevis Summit Conservation work, and used this connection to bring young people from inner London to experience Ben Nevis with the JMT Ranger.

Case Study: Outward Bound Loch Eil – making connections

Outward Bound Loch Eil provides adventure opportunities mainly for young people and uses Glen Nevis almost every week for a range of activities. The Delivery Team engaged with the centre throughout the Programme to foster links between users of the Glen and its management in a variety of ways. Direct interactions between the Delivery Team and Outward Bound clients, some of whom are participating in the John Muir award and other environmental education activities, have enhanced the reach of the Programme to a wider audience. The Centre takes groups from across the UK and from other countries including young people from disadvantaged backgrounds – the Nevis Landscape Partnership did not have specific resources allocated to engaging with these audiences, so the opportunities were mutually beneficial.

Interaction with the Centre's adventure instructors through CPD events and activities has helped to embed the ethos of sustainable management of the Glen's 'resource' within the everyday running of the Centre. The Loch Eil Centre already had a long term relationship with Glen Nevis but the Programme provided more focussed opportunities for the Centre staff to contribute to sustainable management through practical activities. The Centre is being refurbished and expanding its capacity so the ongoing positive relationship through the Nevis Landscape Partnership will help to ensure that the Centre's continued use of the Glen has minimum impact on the environment and other people's enjoyment of Glen Nevis.



KEY LEARNING POINTS

The delivery of a complex programme of projects, initiatives and activities presented a number of institutional and administrative challenges that needed to be addressed. The Partnership emerges as a stronger and potentially more resilient organisation as a result of learning from this delivery phase.

Governance

The directors of the partnership had to ensure that they had sufficient grasp on the finances, risks to the organisation and progress with delivery. The competence and confidence of the directors grew throughout the Programme, supported by the Programme Manager and the Administrator. The evaluation session held in November 2018 demonstrated the working relationships between directors and the cohesion that had developed through delivering the programme. They were able to openly and robustly discuss issues, explore how they had responded to challenges and acknowledge where learning could be incorporated into future practices and procedures. This experience also sets the Nevis Landscape Partnership on a positive course for future delivery having established greater credibility with overseeing a complex and diverse programme of activities.

The quality and consistency of information provided to the directors throughout the Programme allowed informed decisions to be made. This is a vital part of good governance and ongoing positive relationships between delivery staff and the directors have had significant benefits for the Partnership and the projects being delivered.

Management and administration

A key factor in the successful delivery of the Programme was the teamwork approach engendered by the Programme Manager. The atmosphere of support, collaboration and cooperation within the Delivery Team played an important role in developing innovative solutions to challenges that were encountered. This allowed staff to contribute to projects beyond their core responsibilities, bringing benefits in terms of additional skills and capacity. This also provided opportunities for personal and professional development without the need to engage solely with external training providers. The Delivery Team were also able to draw in staff from some partner organisations further enhancing the value of the Programme in terms of skills and capacity. Strict adherence to delivery roles would have missed many opportunities to enhance the Programme outputs and outcomes that have been reported. It is very likely that this positive approach was a key contributor to exceeding of targets across many aspects of the Programme.

The administration of Programmes and projects is commonly separated from delivery especially where they are delivered by large organisations or the public sector. The small team at The Nevis Landscape Partnership transferred to larger premises with shared space, embedding the administrator within the Delivery Team. This gave all staff opportunities to influence the administration of the Programme and gave the administrator insight into the practical challenges of record keeping and project management.

This also led to the development of systems that were focussed on helping staff to deliver their projects rather than feeding a bureaucratic process from which relevant information would be extracted. The administrator was able to support staff and reciprocally was able to ensure that records were kept up to date by their close proximity to the team.

There were no 'off-the-shelf' monitoring and reporting systems available from HLF or other partners, and although there is guidance available, availability of a core set of project management tools would have been beneficial to the Delivery Team and the administration of the overall Programme. It is acknowledged that fixed systems can introduce constraints or add levels of bureaucracy but additional support through good practice examples would be seen in a positive light.

The Programme Manager and Administrator communicated with and hosted visits from a number of organisations intending to apply for Landscape Partnership funds and these prospective applicants appreciated the insights given by Delivery Team. A number of the 'tracker' spreadsheet templates were shared with other organisations to assist their systems development.

Volunteer management

The volunteer coordination role is multi-faceted and needs to have dedicated resources, rather than being a part of another / unrelated post. Supporting existing and recruitment of new volunteers through Friends of Nevis required careful adaptation of processes and procedures to ensure that the Programme was able to meet its duty of care to volunteers, the burden of which can easily be overlooked. Most volunteers want to make a difference through action and systems were developed to facilitate that, rather than put administrative hurdles in their way. One of the key challenges was ensuring emergency procedures could be effective, without needing to share unreasonable amounts of sensitive personal data. The introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations added to the complexity of data management. A simple card system was developed, where volunteers brought a laminated card with contact and medical details to each event and handed it to the leader during the session.

One area where The Nevis Landscape Partnership could potentially benefit from volunteers is in 'core activities' of administration, if the right volunteers could be found. The focus on practical tasks and public engagement is positive, but there could be opportunities to draw in volunteers who would support the organisation using skills or experience from their professional lives. The objective would not be to replace staff as a strategy of dependency on volunteers would have tangible risks, but it may relieve some of the pressures if some tasks could be assisted by voluntary efforts. This could open opportunities for new volunteers that are supportive of the Partnership's objectives but unable to take part in practical activities.



CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

The ongoing formative evaluation of the project identified a range of issues at the Programme and Project levels. This process was taken positively by the team as ‘continual improvement’ rather than criticism of their work, which both increased the effectiveness of evaluation, and demonstrates the team approach of The Nevis Landscape Partnership.

The issues identified highlight the challenges faced by small organisations that develop and deliver large and/or complex funding packages, some of which could have been partially foreseen, but others came to light ‘organically’ as a result of changing socio-political circumstances. In the majority of cases it was possible to mitigate the impacts of these issues and they have been highlighted as shared learning, both for The Nevis Landscape Partnership and other small organisations running large projects.

Staffing

The Programme drew together a collection of projects developed by different organisations, with the Nevis Landscape Partnership as the host, enabling it to be the employer for Programme staff. During the Programme development and delivery phases the public sector effectively had a no-recruitment policy, making it difficult for those partners to take on additional capacity for delivery.

Each of the Project Brief documents includes staffing estimates and these were collated to provide the overall requirement for delivery. Understandably, there is a great deal of pressure to minimise the number of Full Time Equivalent staff to deliver externally funded programmes – the reasons are numerous, but are mainly focussed around efficiency and value for money. Organisations providing match funding also have an influence on the levels of staffing as it impacts their contributions. The staffing budgets were fixed on the basis of these projections

The programme development led to a wide range of skills being required within the Delivery Team, but without enough resources to offer full time posts. There is a strong argument for specialisation of roles to make sure that staff are appropriately experienced and this is an important consideration for future programmes. This approach also provides opportunities for people who are not looking for full time employment (for a variety of personal or professional reasons), but can also have negative impacts on the programme and staff involved. Some of the posts were envisaged to be seasonal, but would have been best delivered by the same person year-on-year to avoid wheel reinvention – this could have suited someone specifically looking for seasonal work, but there is a wider problem in the Scottish Highlands for people finding year-round employment so this would have contributed to this situation.

Significant efforts were made to realign the staffing of the Delivery Team to provide meaningful roles and adequate capacity. There were some issues that could not be resolved due to budget constraints.

Reasonable workloads

It is clear that the project proposals within the Programme were optimistic and, although applicants need to aspire to achieve value for money, this led to very high workloads for the Delivery Team. The situation was exacerbated by budget pressures and staff cuts in public sector organisations: despite the best intentions of locally based staff, these organisations were not able to provide the levels of support that would have helped ease the pressure on the Delivery Team. These sustained funding cuts, over an extended period, could not have been reasonably foreseen during the development of the Programme and the Delivery Team deserve credit for their dedication, resilience and innovations to ensure that the impact of the Programme was maximised.

Part time staff working 'over hours'

The Nevis Landscape Partnership introduced flexible working and put systems in place to monitor staff time. This provided mutual benefits especially where evening and weekend working was assumed to be a necessary part of the job. However, records show that part time staff have consistently gone over contracted hours, by at least 10%, and in some cases have had to write-off accrued hours. It is important to note that this indicates their willingness to deliver their projects rather than poor management or coercion of staff.

Part of the issue may lie in the estimates of time used in the development phase being significantly underestimated, or over-optimistic. One other possible reason for this overworking is that for a part-time worker to take 'time off in lieu' this has a disproportionate impact on the working week compared with a full time person making it harder to claim back that time. This has a knock-on effect in other aspects of their lives beyond this part-time employment.

Too many part time staff makes teamwork harder

The management of a large team of part-time workers becomes more challenging where different work patterns and contracted hours make it difficult to find 'common hours' where everyone can be together in the same place. It also makes coordination between different projects or activities more challenging.

Staff continuity (long term 'corporate memory' and capacity)

Many projects suffer from the loss of staff towards the end of the project, raising issues with delivery and capacity, and can be particularly challenging for the rest of the team and the replacement members of staff. This is an entirely understandable situation especially for people who are early-career or require continuity of employment and the Programme was 'fortunate' that staff moved when there was still time for new staff to have a chance to get to grips with their roles and deliver the remaining actions. The downside of losing staff towards the end of projects is also the loss of 'corporate memory' and continuity for the organisation. Although this is a common conundrum, the prevailing project-orientated funding environment makes it difficult to overcome – funders may be reluctant to contribute to existing staff roles, and conversely using existing staff for different roles could have a negative impact on the quality of delivery if they are not well suited to the adaptation.

Transport

Minibus

The Programme proposal included a budget for hiring minibuses, which at the time was seen as the preferred option – avoiding purchase / lease and the costs of running a vehicle. When the Delivery Team came into post a business case was successfully made to purchase a used minibus to provide greater flexibility and capacity for the duration of the programme. The vehicle was vinyl-wrapped with a simple branded message (One bus, five years, nineteen projects – VOLUNTEER) which became a highly visible marketing and promotional tool for the rest of the Programme.



The minibus features in a large number of project images, including those shared on social media and the vehicle was used around Fort William and Glen Nevis, frequently being parked at the start of the main path on Ben Nevis.

One issue that arose with the minibus was the D1 licence requirement – anyone who gained their driving licence after January 1997 needs to pass a minibus test, making it more difficult for younger staff to lead volunteer work parties unless an older driver, with minibus driving experience could be found. When the minibus comes to be renewed, restricting capacity to 8 seats would avoid this additional challenge.

Trailers and materials transport

There was no consideration given to transport of materials despite the practical nature of many outputs of the programme. There were many occasions where a trailer was required and fortunately a member of

staff was prepared to use their own trailer for this purpose. Eventually funds were made available for The Nevis Landscape Partnership to purchase a trailer. In common with minibuses, there is a car and trailer qualification required for people who passed their test after 1 January 1997, so this would have training implications for future projects.

There was also an expectation that staff would have their own cars and claim expenses. However, many of the projects needed tools or materials to be transported and it is not reasonable to expect staff to have an appropriate vehicle at their disposal or be prepared to load their car with work equipment. A small (second hand) van was purchased part-way through the project to address this issue, which relieved the pressure on staff vehicles for carrying tools and materials.

Coordination during the application phase

During the development phase each project produced activity plans and targets for engagement. However, it appears that there was insufficient coordination between the projects to ensure that the proposals could be delivered as a coherent programme. For example suggested events across the programme could not have been delivered within the timeframe, using the resources available. This would have placed unreasonable demands on staff and would have been likely to reduce the impact of some of the events.

When the Delivery Team came into post a review of the public engagement aspect of the programme was undertaken, which led to the development of an events programme that was coordinated between different projects. The TVRs have played an invaluable role with events, providing additional capacity for preparation and delivery.

Match funding

One of the challenges with a Landscape Partnership is securing match funding across the whole programme to deliver the original targets and outputs from the application. The realities of delivery often compromise the ability to achieve targets in the ways that were envisaged. HLF's ongoing engagement with the delivery phase was essential, along with their determination to ensure success rather than dogmatic reliance on measuring targets and inputs. It is fair to record that some of the outcomes were significantly different from those envisaged, and the means of delivery changed according to prevailing conditions. However, all of this was achieved through engagement and negotiation, which highlights the importance of dynamic administration and competent project management – monitoring issues as they arose and seeking solutions through innovation.

Pressure on partners' budgets

The Programme was assembled assuming that delivery partners would have stable budgets and staff availability for the duration of the delivery phase. However, there has been sustained pressure on public sector finances meaning that expected contributions were harder to secure and capacity of partner organisations was severely compromised. None of this could have been reasonably foreseen and it is testament to the tenacity and dedication of the Delivery Team and remaining staff in partner organisations that enabled the Programme's targets to be met and exceeded.

There was considerably more effort required than anticipated to pull together funding applications, which diverted resources and attention from the delivery of the programme. A specific role of Fund Raiser was created towards the end of the Programme to ensure that this activity could be taken forward.

Alignment of claims and reporting

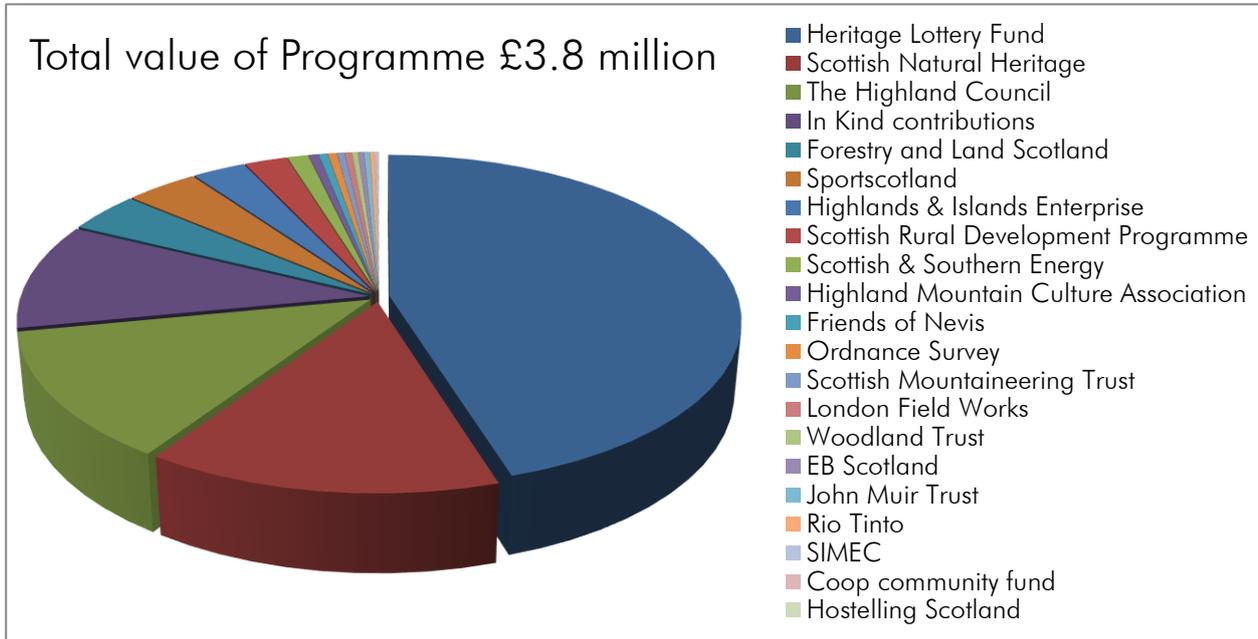
The 'overhead' associated with working with multiple funders is considerable as each funder has their own claiming and reporting requirements. The need for financial transparency is important but could be confirmed through the audit process annually rather than for every claim, and alignment of ongoing procedures between different funding bodies would help small organisations to work more efficiently.

The chart below illustrates the complexity of funding across the programme with multiple organisations contributing to different projects – some have fixed contributions, others have fixed intervention rates. Administration of the finances is complex, without taking account the multiple reporting and claims processes for each funder.

Project Name	Heritage Lottery Fund	Scottish Natural Heritage	Highlands & Islands Enterprise	Forestry Commission Scotland	The Highland Council	John Muir Trust	Friends of Nevis	SportsScotland	Highland Mountain Culture Association	London Field Works	Scottish Mountaineering Trust	Scottish Rural Development Programme	Scottish & Southern Energy	Ordnance Survey
Ben Nevis Mountain Path														
Pinewood Restoration														
FutureForests														
NorthFaceSurvey														
Dun Deardail Excavation														
Summit Conservation														
Sustainable Futures Erosion														
Community Engagement														
Dun Deardail Vitrification														
Poll Dubh Paths														
Riverside All Ability Path & Bridge														
North Face Path														
Nevis Geology														
Outlandia														
SF Interpretation														
Celebrating the Wild														
Ben Nevis Film														
Nevis Heritage Website														
Nevis Training Programme														
Evaluation														

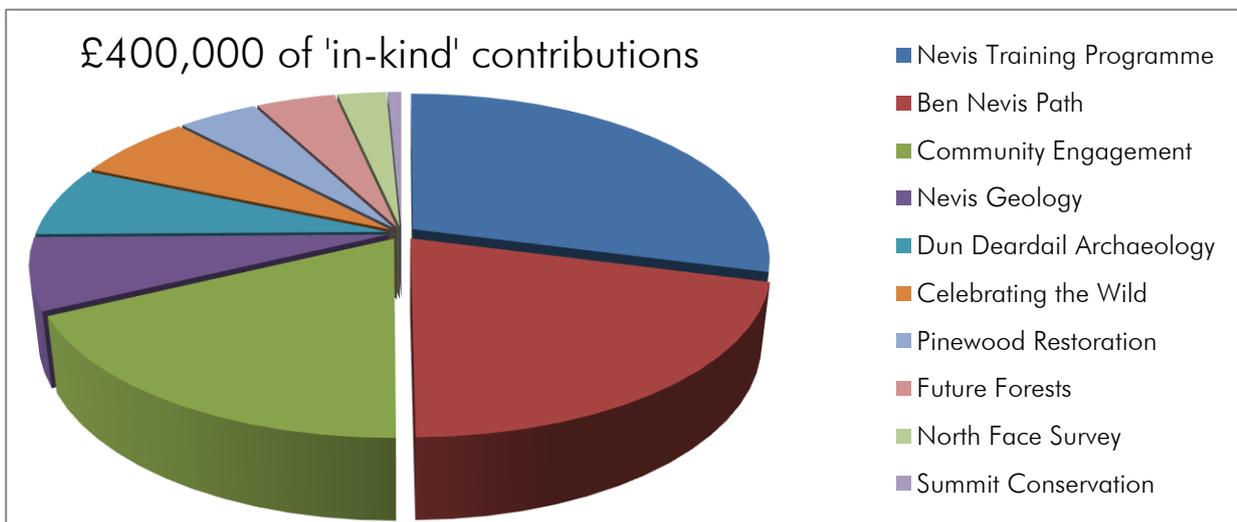
FINANCES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Funding totalling £3.4 million was assembled from 16 separate organisations, including partners' own contributions. Some of the money was project-specific and tied to named outputs, whereas other funds were used across the programme. The total value of the Programme was £3.7 million including the 'In kind contributions (the fourth largest part of the overall Programme).



Volunteers contributed almost 27,000 hours to the Programme, which amounts to the equivalent of 18 years of an employee's time. The Trainee Volunteer Rangers contributed the equivalent of 8 employee-years of labour adding significant capacity to the small Delivery Team. The labour available from the Delivery Team amounted to just 22 employee-years of labour across the whole programme, indicating the significance of volunteer input to the programme, although it would be unfair to suggest a direct equivalence between volunteer labour and the Delivery Team.

The value of volunteer contributions was calculated using Heritage Lottery Fund's guidance for different types of activity and was split across different activities, amounting to £310,000. When combined with in-kind professional services provided to the Programme by external organisations, the value of these contributions amounted to over £400,000. A total of £390,000 was used as match funding against the Heritage Lottery Fund's contribution to the overall programme.





REFLECTING ON SUCCESS

Delivering outputs by achieving and exceeding targets is one important part of implementing projects, but the Nevis Landscape Partnership Programme has demonstrated the benefits of paying attention to aspects that are harder to measure objectively. The outcomes and impacts highlighted in this report demonstrate how collaborative action at a landscape scale can have short-, medium- and long-term benefits.

The ethos of teamwork within the Delivery Team meant that they were able to collaborate and solve issues across different projects, combining skills and providing opportunities for personal development. The emphasis on drawing in volunteers has engaged a wide range of people from the local area and from across the UK and beyond. In particular, the Trainee Volunteer Programme has provided opportunities for a range of people to develop their skills and has led to employment opportunities as a result of their experiences.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The strong relationships that have been developed or enhanced through the Programme need to be nurtured by ongoing partnership working and coordination. It is vital that the capacity, skills and experience of staff and volunteers can be supported and sustained through continuity of resources being available.

The Nevis Landscape Partnership Programme has initiated a number of activities that need to be sustained in the long term in order to continue to generate benefits for the heritage and people. These activities provide 'public good' but generate little or no income so they will need to be delivered with the assistance of ongoing funding augmented by activities that can generate income. The Nevis Landscape Partnership is already taking steps to develop income generating activities that can provide a surplus for sustainable management of the Ben & Glen, and is working to coordinate donation schemes so that funds raised can be used effectively and efficiently for the benefit of the whole Landscape Area.

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FIELDWORKS



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Outlandia– Remote Performances and Artists in Residence

Alex Mackay	Ali Berardelli	Andrea Gregson	Bethan Maddocks
Bram Thomas Arnold	Calverts	Christ Otley	Clair Chinnery
Claire Carter	Claire MacLeod	Clare Reynolds	Emma Conder
Frank Conway	Gareth Lee Patterson	Garry Mackenzie	Gay Anderson
Hanna Tuulikki	Harry Giles	Helen Lucas	Helen Michie Ceramics
Holly Muir	Ian Maslen	Inga Tillere	Jayne Stephen
Jen Deschenes	Jen Randall	Jess Rotherham	Justin Carter
Katherine MacLean	Katie Blair Matthews	Katie Goodwin	Kelly de Wet
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Louise Kernaghan	LSma Poisa	Lucy Tedham	Marielle MacLeman
Mark Vernon	Michael Pederson	Mike Dodd	Nadia Dermatopoulou
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Ruth Barker	Ruth Le Gear	Ruth Simons	Sarah Kendington Burnside
Studio Alec Finlay Ltd	Su Grierson	Tam Dean Burns	The Band of Holy Joy
Thom Scullion	Thomas Hylander	Tony White	Tracey Warr
Wild Song Studio	Yulia Kovanova	Zhao Xie	Zoe Benbow

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