

Stepping up for
Scotland's National Parks

The Mountains and the People 2015-2020

Final Evaluation Report



LOTTERY FUNDED

Project partners



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Executive Summary

This final evaluation report of The Mountains and the People (TMTP) £5.6 project reviews all aspects of the project and highlights outputs, outcomes and impact.

The project was led, inspired, initiated, planned and built by the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (OATS), in partnership with Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA), Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA), Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) and NatureScot (NS), together with the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) who provided 58% project funding.

TMTP represents the largest and most complex upland path partnership project ever to be undertaken in the UK. The project delivered a wide range of both physical improvements as well as opportunities for people to get involved with conserving and learning about the mountains within Scotland's national parks.

The TMTP project built and rebuilt more than 120km of paths at a cost of £5.6M. Walkers, landowners and conservation interests have seen remarkable upgrades to high pressure 'front-line' upland paths in both national parks, protecting the mountain environment with unobtrusive yet durable builds.

Commencing with Section 1 and 2 each Activity Programme and Mountain Path Programme element is evaluated, reporting outputs, outcomes and impacts. Section 3 evaluates the management of the programme and its impact on outcomes. Section 4 addresses the key learnings and legacy of TMTP.

The main TMTP Activity Plan outputs were;

- 36 students completed the SVQ2 in Environmental Conservation and five students will complete the SVQ3.
- Over 1500 volunteer work days via 203 work parties.
- 45 mountain paths adopted through the 'Adopt a path' scheme.
- A digital learning pack designed for the secondary schools curriculum.
- Extensive and multiplier engagement actions: training promotion, open public events, higher level health walks, promotional leaflets, films, articles and presentations.
- Repair of over 120km of upland paths in Scotland's national parks.

Outcomes and Impact

The TMTP has doubled the amount of upland path restoration work undertaken in Scotland. There has been a very high success rate amongst SVQ students securing post qualifying employment in path building and related land management and conservation sector industries.

TMTP has been an effective profile-raising mechanism engaging land manager stakeholders, recreationalists and public interests to prioritise mountain paths. The TMTP partners have positively and pro-actively enabled a large reach of communications with public audiences through their sites and communication outlets.

OATS have developed the path skills and contracting industry through TMTP both in terms of professionalism but also through stimulating industry demand. OATS have grown confidences and recognition of the economic value of mountain paths with solutions to their upkeep.

OATS have demonstrated an inclusive approach to volunteering and hundreds of people have felt utterly inspired by their experiences volunteering in the mountains. Now a dedicated group of individuals are operating as stewards of their chosen mountain through the 'Adopt a Path' scheme, another tangible sign of more people supporting the mountains they value. The TMTP education pack enables future generations to understand the significance of Scotland's mountain environments and encourages their exploration.



Introduction

This report records and evaluates the overall impact of The Mountains and the People project (TMTP).

The **vision** of the project was:

“To involve the people of Scotland, and beyond, in the enhancement and protection of the wild and special qualities of the mountains within Scotland’s National Parks”.

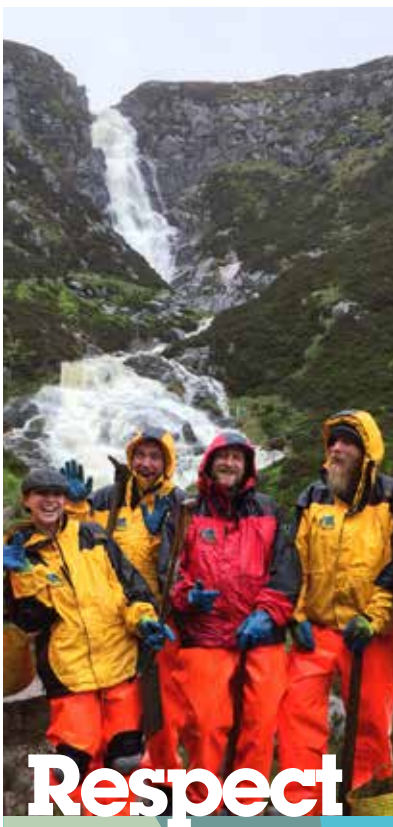
The **integrated project objectives** leading this vision were to deliver a wide range of both physical improvements on the ground, as well as opportunities for people to get involved with conserving and learning about the mountains within Scotland’s national parks.

The project led by OATS was supported by the National

Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) in partnership with Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA), Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA), Forestry and Land Scotland and NatureScot. All those organisations provided financial support, with the lion’s share from NLHF together with OATS income from fundraising, consultancy and car parks providing seed-corn funding.

TMTP was the biggest mountain footpath project ever undertaken in the UK and has been inspired, initiated, planned and built by OATS. Walkers, workers, landowners and conservation interests have all benefited from the flagship project’s £5.6M worth of work.

Delivering the project objectives has fallen under the three main pillars of:



To respect the natural heritage of our mountain landscapes



To reskill the conservation workforce of tomorrow



To repair damage to our nations fragile upland landscapes

The **TMTP objectives** have been delivered through a range of interconnected Activity Programme elements

The Visitor Information Programme

The Mountain Path Programme

The Training Programme

The Conservation Volunteer Programme

The Adopt a Path Programme

The Education Programme

Evaluation Methods

The key measurements within the agreed TMTP Evaluation Framework were:

- 1. The programmes impact on people**
- 2. Impact on the natural heritage through mountain path building.**

Formative evaluation was applied during the programme with these findings fed into the programme delivery to optimise outcomes. The TMTP Half Way Report addressed issues identified at the half way stage.

All recent and previous evaluation evidence is fed into this evaluation. Recent evaluation includes 60+ interviews covering TMTP participants, partners, OATS trustees and staff, land managers and related stakeholders. Full reference is made to previous TMTP evaluation content and products including participant surveys, interviews, written feedback, blogs, communications, videos and social media evidence. The structure and logic model for this reporting is:

Section 1 and 2

The evaluation of each activity element of TMTP reporting outputs, outcomes and impact.

Section 3

The evaluation of the management of the programme and the impact on outcomes.

Section 4

The key learnings, opportunity and legacy impact of the programme conclude the evaluation.



Section 1

The Activity Programme

Measuring the difference made for people

The following reporting evaluates the summative outputs and impact of each of the **activity programme** elements over the full period of the TMTP programme.

1. The Training Programme		
Description and result		
Training Programme Outputs	Number	Target % achieved
SVQ2 Completion	36	100%
SVQ3 Completion	5	83%

The SVQ level 2 (SVQ2) Environmental Conservation ran five times, each for six month periods. Three courses were run in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park and two were run in the Cairngorms National Park area. The programmes benefitted 36 people. The SVQ level 3 (SVQ3) Environmental Conservation was completed by five path conservation practitioners via TMTP. OATS is a certified SQA centre. Each of the TMTP Training Officers and the Activity Project Manager were trained to assessor and verifier level at the project start. OATS will continue to operate training when the programme finishes.

At the outset the SVQ2 course sought to attract all types of candidates with a focus on people who'd spent less time in education but who wanted the practical experience to make a career change. To this end the majority of the TMTP trainees were not graduates and were between 17 to 30 years (mainly mature students)

coming predominantly from urban Scotland.

The marketing of the SVQ course opportunity was emphasised around the LLTNP and CNP areas and boundaries and attracted some local trainees. For example, in 2018 four SVQ2 candidates were identified through TMTP work with the Alexandria Job Centre. Within the recruitment process educational attainment was not assessed in the interests of not influencing the perception of ability and potential. The TMTP SVQ2 has delivered a strongly vocational qualification focused on practical upland conservation management skills with a balance of practical and academic work. 25% of the students were female with 75% male.

IMPACT EVALUATION

Our analysis shows that the qualification has proved exemplar in providing students with the skills and confidence necessary to both take up and create employment opportunities in the sector.

For the final evaluation it was felt most valuable to ascertain what the students are doing now and their reflections on the benefits and quality of the SVQ2. Below summarises the shared views of 67% of students (who responded) about the key strengths of the TMTP programme. No weaknesses were identified.

1. Extremely high employment success rate in upland conservation growth sector and related roles including business start-up. Every single SVQ student interviewed has either been offered employment in or has taken up working in the path conservation sector. The SVQ has maximum credibility status in the industry. Several industry contractors have confirmed this. Ross McGowan of MD McGowan Ltd contractors said:

"The quality of training OATS has delivered to its trainees in

upland path construction techniques, mountain awareness, habitat management and environmental good practices is second to none. Each of the former trainees are now valued members of the McGowan's team".

The remaining minority of the SVQ graduates have used their SVQ as a 'spring board' to gain jobs in closely related conservation and visitor management positions. Students said that the SVQ training course was instrumental in being able to secure employment in the upland path industry. In some cases ex-SVQ students have set up their own businesses then employed other SVQ graduates.

2. Significant exposure to the paths and conservation management industries. Professional path contractors and land managers were instrumental in enhancing learning and experiences on the SVQ course throughout. They would run learning sessions drawing on the physical environment around path project sites. They would helpfully introduce the operating context and be responsive to questions and the interests of students.

For example, in just one week three external specialists taught health and safety elements, the environmental impacts of path works and technical path design perspectives, all voluntarily, see <https://themountainsandme.wordpress.com/2016/05/08/path-pioneering/> The TMTP staff team did their upmost to lever the existing knowledge resource in the conservation management industry to compliment the students learning.

The liaison with external land managers and contractors was felt by students to be enormously beneficial for many reasons:

- 1 It enabled them to make personal contacts in the workplace
- 2 They could better understand the application of conservation management practice via the real life settings
- 3 They could identify their own interests and leanings in terms of both career choices and direction.

3. A great choice of placements dove-tailed to the student's interests. TMTP staff went above and beyond to provide for the interests of each individual student. As expressed by one student:

"We were empowered to take our learning and experiences where we wanted it to go within the confines of the basic requirements".

The external land manager sector, including NGO's, the TMTP partners and private estates were very kind to provide high quality one or two week placements for students. Students made the point very strongly that this form of opportunity was fantastic. It was often the case that students could shadow conservation manager roles, undertake practical conservation work and learn about visitor management and communications across placement experiences. Past students who ran their own contracting businesses also provided student placements.

4. A vast mix of learning content and learning experiences well beyond expectation. The course structure was based around theory, practice, recording portfolio work and daily diaries. A major student feedback trait was the extent to which the course built student confidence through moving from learning to practitioner on a daily basis – what was learnt in theory was implemented in real life. One student marked the significance of being able to be reflective through the education process with '**daily log-books**' being very worthy. He said he *"realised the experience was more than just black and white"*.

Students felt strongly that they were learning so very much more than the minimum requirement for the SVQ2, many said *"a lot of activities were offered out with path building skills"* with frequent extras being conservation work, surveys, pond clearing, vegetation clearance, mountain plant ID, stone dyking, fencing etc. The students said these additional options *"were an added bonus as well as being helpful evidence for the qualification"*. Clearly TMTP staff created a course that was full of variety yet strongly focused on conservation education. All trainees completed their Discovery level John Muir Award.

5. Additional professional skills development opportunities. On numerous occasions there was the choice to develop and apply other skills like conservation volunteer management, supporting events, public information and communications.

Students were encouraged to write blogs and manage social media uploads about the course and their journey through it. They made videos about the SVQ course which are uploaded on the TMTP website. As quoted by one student:

"We were often encouraged to participate in team building, work on extra-curricular activities and events and pursue elements of particular interest, such as social media promotion or volunteering. It empowered us to take it where we wanted to within the confines of the basic requirements". These extra skills equated to individual

student capacity building and a readiness for the future workplace.

6. Personal belief and confidence building. The students all expressed that the SVQ had driven their confidence and self-belief (in their strength and abilities) way beyond any other experience in their life time.

They all found working in physically challenging circumstances (in a team) to be very rewarding and that these challenging experiences re-assured them of their ability to go on to achieve anything they wanted in life, without psychological constraints. One SVQ student put it that *"It made me feel stronger and feel that I can deal mentally with challenges"*. Another student said *"It offered something you could put your heart into and get rewarded for, where you are inspired into motivating yourself"*. Many said the atmosphere of walking in the mountains was touching and beyond words. One student

said it was *"A very humbling experience, with a team on a remote location so very reliant on one another"*. Perhaps this high level of confidence development is partly why so many SVQ graduates have gone on to set up their own businesses (or are planning to) and many are path building in different parts of the world.

7. A fabulous team of support staff and trainers all with a passion and pulling in a shared direction.

Every student felt that the course was really well structured and that every member of staff was very motivated and went out of their way to support student interests. For example, TMTP staff would negotiate placements based on a student's interests and always let students know about any linked weekend learning opportunities and events to get involved in.

Here's more about three of the SVQ2 students and where they are now:



Craig Paterson

Craig used to be an apprentice blacksmith and metal fabrication worker for 7-8 years in Glasgow, it included some factory work. Craig didn't really settle in the job, he wanted to move on but wasn't sure where to. However, Craig always knew he enjoyed the outdoors.

A few weeks after completing the SVQ2 Craig began working for McGowan Ltd contractors. He was immediately doing upland path construction and landscaping – the skills he'd only just learnt on the SVQ course. Craig was thankful of the close links made with land management industries via the SVQ projects and applications – including placements.

He said of the SVQ course that it was highly rewarding and opened many doors and ideas. Craig said the benefits are hard to explain but that every day on the course was varied and *"with new experiences, many which were shared experiences and opened a whole new world to all of us. The course was a big confidence booster. Through the course I found my niche and I'm definitely in a place I always wanted to be and never thought I would be"*.

One can only be in awe of Craig when he expressed that *"I had found something that I could enjoy for the rest of my life"*. Craig is completing the SVQ level 3 work based qualification.



Gill Walker

Since March 2018 Gill has been employed by FLS. She's currently a Visitor Services Supervisor in the Queen Elizabeth Forest park. Very soon after SVQ completion Gill undertook a seasonal ranger post with the LLTNPA (in 2017), after which she was successful in

filling two concurrent job shares with what was at the time Forestry Commission Scotland. They were both based in the Community and Visitor Recreation team, one focussing on visitor engagement and the other on recreation maintenance (including path management). She gained a vast amount of varied work experience over a short period.

Gill is currently finishing a distance learning HNC in Countryside and Environmental Management. She feels that the exposure to the conservation industry and organisations during the SVQ training, including *"work placements with the National Trust for Scotland, RSPB and LLTNPA"* really benefitted *"her progress and confidence in conservation and recreation management"*.

During her SVQ Gill wrote an inspirational blog about her SVQ course experiences which was read and enjoyed by many. She gained the runner up award as Lantras learner of the year in the Fisheries Management and Environmental Conservation field in 2016 and more recently has been asked to be a part of an event run by the TCV to encourage more young women to consider a career in the land based industries.



Ryan Hamilton

Ryan had been working in a call centre in Glasgow which had only tiny and very far away windows! Ryan's career has taken a 360 degree change and for the better. Straight after SVQ completion Ryan worked for two different path contractors for a year, then set up

his own path contracting business.

He sub-contracted three others and they delivered contracts for The Mountains and the People project, the Nevis Partnership, Forestry and Land Scotland, RSPB and Scottish Wildlife Trust. Ryan moved from sole trader to a limited company. He then won a large scale one year contract to build the Ben Vane Path. Ryan's company now employs six people and his business is in demand.

Ryan is delighted to take on as many of the SVQ trainees as possible to give something back and to develop the paths industry. He strongly values the SVQ course and its contribution to the upland paths industry skills set as well as its high effectiveness in raising awareness of the importance of upland path management to all land managers.

Ryan expressed how inspiring it was to work with TMTP volunteers, *"a people with a love of their local area and who value mountains"*. He feels the SVQ provided so many opportunities and loads of student choice to hone personal interests. Ryan cites the impact of a highly motivated TMTP team having a massive impact on the quality of all SVQ student experience.

The SVQ3 in Environmental Conservation is a follow on from the SVQ2 and is based around professional processes; full site supervision, planning and management of path works. All six students feel it was an excellent course that they've been able to complete as part of their daily job.

The SVQ3 has shown to be applicable to a range of conservation management roles including recreation/conservation rangers, whilst fulfilling the highest industry standards. Those with previous path management experience are now able to get full credit for their skills and knowledge through the SVQ3. The course is managed through a number of OATS tutor contact sessions and the submission of reporting by the student. The qualification enables a very flexible way to hone skills and achieve a credible qualification via the workplace.

TMTP have tailored the SVQ3 course for individual

candidates allowing them to select units around the core requirements. Path contractors have praised the quality of the SVQ3 stating that *"it is their vision to put their own employees through it"*. One SVQ candidate praised the regularity of tutor contact and the vocational relevance of the award feeling the qualification would be useful in furthering his career. The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) described their February 2020 SVQ2 and SVQ3 verification visit as *"a successful verification visit to a centre that continues to deliver a quality learning experience to all trainees"*.

2. Mountain Maintenance Volunteers

Description and result



Volunteer Programme Outputs	Number	Target % achieved
10 work parties (per year)	203	100%+
20 more paths adopted in each National Park (45 in total)	45	100%+
1200 volunteers days over the period of TMTP	1502	100%+

The two main outcomes planned from the volunteering were to increase volunteering in Scotland's national parks and increase public awareness of the value of volunteering.

The TMTP recruited, trained, guided and supported volunteers from various locations throughout Scotland including major centres of population. Volunteers carried out practical conservation tasks across 62 sites in support of the mountain path programme. Tasks included basic construction work, maintenance and habitat management (erosion control), drystone walling and path damage reduction.

Often recruitment was through engagement events hosted in partnership with TMTP partners and rural land managers. The marketing reach for volunteers was an ongoing concerted effort. The volunteering page on the TMTP website was viewed 8,439 times.

TMTP had and has retained 315 active volunteers many of whom attended more than five times. The demographic data shows a high level of success in attracting people of all age groups and from all walks of life. 54% of TMTP volunteers were aged between 25 and 44, 41% female and with 32 different ethnicities recorded, of which 73% recorded their ethnicity as white and 86% from the British Isles.

Without doubt TMTP applied a successful strategy to volunteer recruitment. One example is where it marketed volunteering to Glasgow University through a 'We build' campaign whereby the marketing message emphasis was on building friendships, skills, experiences, confidence and muscle.

Applying effective reach models is why TMTP has excelled at delivering well attended mountain maintenance days, technical multiday tasks, conservation work parties and tailored activities for school groups and corporates – achieving well beyond target.

The volunteers told us what they thought of their volunteering days. This survey data was gathered once per volunteer from 242 volunteers operating across both national parks.

- 100% of volunteers enjoyed their volunteering day
- 80% felt more knowledgeable about the conservation management skill
- 87% enjoyed meeting some new people
- 81% learned new skills and/or improved their existing skills
- 96% said the events were well organised
- 76% enjoyed exploring the National Park location
- 100% said they'd recommend TMTP volunteering to others.

IMPACT EVALUATION

The volunteering activity element over-achieved the set target. In 2020, 25 volunteers were interviewed (one to one) in relation to their summative TMTP experiences. The shared trait across all volunteer feedback was that the TMTP had been:

- A **great way to give something back** to the mountains
- **Very rewarding physical** work
- The **results of our hard work can be seen**
- A **great variation in tasks**
- **Excellent staff and training experiences** throughout
- Working in the mountains has given a **better**

understanding of what's involved in managing paths

- A brilliant way to **meet new, interesting and like-minded people**
- In many cases it has **helped career development** and opened new doors
- Great to have **such a mix of age groups** including the SVQ students involved
- Relaxed and enjoyable – **no big targets** like the workplace
- A **great feeling of contentment and optimism** at the end of the day.

A regular volunteer Euan Ramage said that *"Working on the mountains means you are engaging at a different level quite literally 'feeling' the stone"*. He said of the volunteering that *"It changed my life"*. It certainly did when Euan went on to work as a professional path worker from the experience he gained from TMTP volunteering. Euan's been working in Ireland for a Scottish path contracting firm. He feels privileged to be working in their specialist hand-build mountain path team. He said that *"TMTP is a great project it opened a door for me to fulfil a dream, to finish my working days out on the mountains"*.

TMTP volunteer Pat Brechin from Edinburgh expressed that amongst many other benefits of the volunteering, she felt the *"real mix of ages, young and old reflected very positive intergenerational workings"*.

Brian McWilliams expressed the strong mental health benefits of TMTP volunteering saying that *"the TMTP gave me head space and a bit more purpose"* and that *"in the mountains you just focus on the present – gets our heads into where we are"*.

As was emphasised by many volunteers TMTP volunteer Wallis Riddell expressed that *"having left my own footprints it's good to put something back in"*.

Colin Gray who co-ordinated the TMTP corporate volunteering from Hymans said he found that *"being out with TMTP you get to know colleagues much better"* saying also that the *"staff loved it"*.

The TMTP volunteering programme was strongly promoted across the national community with project partners providing valuable assistance. The project was very effective in including volunteering messaging across all communication tools disseminated, including; leaflets, podcasts, temporary site signage, films, open days, events, 3rd party promoters, exhibition boards, TMTP partner websites and TMTP web pages.



"Real mix of ages, young and old reflected very positive intergenerational workings"
Pat Brechin, Volunteer



"The TMTP gave me head space and a bit more purpose" and that "in the mountains you just focus on the present – gets our heads into where we are".
Brian McWilliams, Volunteer

3. Adopt a Path (AAP) Volunteers

Description and result



Number of additional paths adopted

Target % achieved

45

100%+

The revised adopt a path volunteer scheme was developed by TMTP to achieve longevity of path conservation actions. The scheme enables volunteers to become custodians of a TMTP worked mountain path by reporting on erosion damage or potential issues allowing early intervention maintenance to be targeted to best effect. Interviews were undertaken with 14 Adopt a Path volunteers who have been active on the scheme for between one to four years.

Some of the adopters had become adopters via their mountain maintenance volunteering with TMTP. The Adopt a path initiative has involved recruiting, training, guiding and supporting volunteers in monitoring paths across both national parks. TMTP has strongly encouraged AAP volunteers placing high value on their role supporting ease of use of the; survey, recording and path works response loop. OATS simplified the digital reporting processes for volunteers.

The AAP volunteers undertake observation path surveys whilst walking their adopted path route. They then feed-back information on any emerging damage locations – before it becomes a major problem. This walkover auditing task is undertaken twice per year. The land

manager, for example, the local ranger, will then respond to the AAP report and deliver the necessary path works.

The volunteers report that the recording and uploading system for path maintenance reporting is 'really easy to use'. They also believe that without such an efficient and effective reporting system the path quality would reduce at a far higher rate and at far greater expense.

AAP volunteers commented that:

- They really enjoyed giving something back to the mountains they'd enjoyed over the years.
- They wanted to prioritise conservation management and reduce the scarring caused by recreational pressures.
- They appreciated the training element and understanding the dynamics of paths in varied terrain. A minority from an experienced background felt the training to be unnecessary.
- They felt that auditing the paths was a conversation starter with other path walkers and enabled raising awareness to the Scottish public about the financial resources that need to go into managing paths.

A volunteer information pack explaining the on-line system usage was supplied by TMTP alongside a one day training course. The one day training course covered AAP volunteer path maintenance learning, usage of the Adopt a Path website, mountain risk assessments and navigation skills in mountain environments.

Adopt a path website and recruitment drive



PRESS CUTTING



Launch today of 'Adopt a Path' campaign by Scotland's National Parks

by [Name] | 10:00 AM | 10/05/2017

Scotland's National Parks | Cairn...

In a move to help conserve our precious upland paths, the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland has launched a new initiative...

Should? Recession? Is your pension safe?

If you have a £100,000 portfolio, consider the value of your...

Click here to download your report...

PRESS CUTTING

Hillwalkers encouraged to adopt their favourite path



Hillwalkers demonstrate their new path-finding skills on Cairn...

11:00 AM | 10/05/2017 | 10/05/2017

Share | Facebook | Twitter | YouTube | LinkedIn

HILLWALKERS are being encouraged to become path inspectors when they venture out to Scotland's wild places.

A new campaign has been launched asking volunteers to 'adopt a path' when they go walking in Scotland's national parks - Loch Lomond & The Trossachs and Cairngorms - and report back on its condition when they are finished.

It is hoped the scheme will create an army to help spot damage on paths in the national parks early, so that repairs are made and effort can be targeted and effective.

IMPACT EVALUATION

TMTP has exceeded its AAP adopter target, set up an excellent recording process and run AAP training courses. Some AAP volunteers said they would like to focus on getting a higher number of local level AAP volunteers on board to build community stewardship effort. To this end regional AAP networks were suggested. This form of decentralised approach would require the buy-in of those responsible for mountain path management.

TMTP partners agreed that AAP provides an efficient system to record faults and prioritise maintenance works, with some feeling the scheme is worthy of expansion throughout Scotland.

The TMTP put a lot of effort into simplifying the AAP reporting scheme to attract AAP volunteers from non-technical backgrounds. The AAP website, its usage and application, has been a massive step forward for protecting mountain footpaths.

4. Links to formal education

Description and result



Product Requirement	Target % achieved
Digital resource pack produced	100%
2 x teacher training events to raise awareness of the new resources	100% (see below)
5 schools using the resource pack	100%

The aim of this activity was to co-ordinate education opportunities to involve schools, colleges and universities in the care, monitoring and management of upland paths in both national parks.

TMTP recognised benefits of young people understanding upland erosion, the interaction between habitat, people and climate, changing patterns of recreation and the challenges in managing these in Scotland's national parks.

The digital education pack produced covers the competing pressures of recreation and land management in the Scottish countryside. Segmented into eight subject PDF's the digital pack is downloadable for classroom application. The eight topics cover: An introduction for teachers, Mountain environments, Weather and climate,



Recreation and management, Path management, then additional sections encompassing reference web links, case studies and raw data.

The TMTP staff consulted Geography teachers at two annual Scottish Association of Geography teachers (SAGT) conferences. Teachers provided feedback on the education concepts and their fit to the curriculum of excellence (CfE). The LLTNPA Junior Rangers also product tested the draft concepts – this helped identify best fit within CfE curriculum threads and standards. Nat5 and higher were identified as well fitting.

Much editing was undertaken with teachers identifying the need to include more technical auditing and analysis tasks within the topics. Outdoor learning and Education Officers at both National Parks were involved in content development. Training teachers on the usage of the pack was undertaken with two High Schools from The Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park area – Balforn and MacLaren High Schools.

Both national parks are promoting the pack through their websites. It's also been promoted to all Outdoor learning local authority learning officers within national park regions. An element still underway is the verification of the learning resource by Education Scotland.

IMPACT EVALUATION

The product is an excellent resource for Scotland's schools' it is complete and ready for national promotion. It provides learning material about mountain habitats and their conservation challenges in Scotland's national parks and incorporates many of the technical skills required by the target CfE streams.

An ambition was to carry out CPD sessions about the resource via SAGT but this was never achieved. The effective promotion of the education pack is required, with a more targeted marketing strategy directed at gatekeepers. For example, editorials and links on teacher resource resources sharing sites such as GLOW Connect would be worthy, as well as the national promotion of the resource to John Muir Award and Duke of Edinburgh Award schools contacts. Engaging demonstration videos showing the packs usage and transferability within the curriculum would be helpful. Also, the TMTP website needs to include an endorsement of the resource and give it more prominent positioning, for example, a feature box on the home page.

If the above actions are undertaken then the planned outcome of increasing knowledge and awareness

amongst school children of mountain conservation in Scotland's national parks may be practically realised.

5. Visitor participation events and activities

Description and result

Number of activities	Target % achieved
Mountain path events attended (activity festivals)	100%+
Personal giving (via mass participation events)	100%
Higher level health walks	70%
Ranger Led events	57%

DESCRIPTION AND RESULT

Mountain path events: The TMTP had an active presence at more than 20 of these events over the period of the project. This varied from mountain festivals (eg. Aviemore Adventure Festival, Dundee Mountain Festival), relevant conferences, and upland interest events through to manning a stand at the Royal Highland Show which has 195,400 visitors. Beyond these categories there were many uncredited events including special interest group events, youth group presentations, TMTP partner project demonstration days – to name but a few.

Within Project Fundraising: OATS agreed the underwriting of 8.6% of TMTP costs through charitable/corporate donations as well as personal donations. The target set was £460,000, £458,912 was achieved.



The table below summarises the source of these funds:

Source of funds	Amount	% of total
Charitable trusts and donations	£430,567	94%
Corporate sponsorship	£28,345	6%

The combination of fundraising from Charitable Trusts and donations far outweighed the fundraising success with corporates. Originally rooted in the concept of participants of large scale mountain challenge events in the national parks giving a small donation towards TMTP, a plea for personal donations was made through the participant event booking systems. It was not a successful approach.

Instead OATS found that personal giving was most successful where the fundraising campaign was focused on a specific mountain location, enjoyed by the prospective donor. The very successful fundraising for the Beinn a'Ghlo path restoration reflected this.

The types of communications strategy used to encourage personal donations towards the TMTP programme were:

- Targeted events with an invited local audience focussed on specific popular and valued mountain locations, eg. Ben Ledi 'Spring in the Mountains' event launching the Mend our Mountains Make One Million (MMMOM) appeal. The Highland Fling fundraiser event also celebrated popular mountain locations.
- Valuable MMMOM appeal promotional assistance from Mountaineering Scotland and The British Mountaineering Council.
- Targeted press editorials and radio interviews.
- Marketing of TMTP videos and blogs via social media.
- Donations appeal marketing through leaflets distributed across both national parks and via mobile exhibition events.
- Promotion of OATS website with up to date campaign information.
- OATS restoration works information posters at main access points to mountain walks (where TMTP capital works were being undergone).

Higher level health walks: Early stage evaluation informed that it would be better to develop higher level walks through established health walk leaders who knew their participants, and their aspirations.



By 2017 TMTP introduced and supported a higher level health walks routes initiative with The Walk in the Park team in the LLTNPA area. TMTP co-branded higher level walk route options alongside those with an established participant following including the Ramblers Scotland and localised CNPA area groups.

TMTP's health walk model moved from direct supplier to supporting existing walking facilitators to increase the number of higher level walks through providing and encouraging attractive next step options.

Ranger events: This activity programme element benefited from ongoing formative monitoring which prompted an effective change of strategy. Ranger led events were compromised early on by the LLTNPA ranger service having to pursue higher priorities, mainly byelaw enforcement. The 13 ranger services in the CNPA area already had a running programme of events with some themes being re-run annually.

Addressing this situation TMTP implemented alternative strategy to engage visitors and locals utilising the 14 Ranger Service capacities successfully across both national parks. This alternative approach (as bulleted below) had a bigger reach impact than the 43% ranger 'specific' events that were not achieved. Delivery included:

- TMTP staff attending ranger meetings and presenting the shared objectives across their work, amounting to raising TMTP awareness amongst rangers.
- TMTP designed a 'Project in your Pocket' leaflet specifically at the request of rangers for ranger teams to circulate to the public'. The leaflet informed the public of the TMTP key messages and invited their participation in the project.

- The 14 ranger services distributed these TMTP leaflets in all their visitor centres and carried them in their vehicles.
- TMTP banners and leaflets were carried around in the mobile visitor centre which popped up at a wide range of events year round, at 40 days of events in 2018.
- Ranger services across both the National Parks showed some of the six films created by TMTP in their visitor centres. Examples of film hosting centres included; Balmaha, Mar Lodge Estate, Blair Atholl, Glen Doll and Glen Tanar.
- All 14 ranger services assured throughout that they talked about the work of TMTP when in upland areas or working on conservation or recreation projects.

A Senior Ranger from Balmoral estate commented that *"We distributed the leaflets from our visitor centre and the TMTP film plays continuously on our big screen at our visitor centre at Loch Muick. It's a very good film!"*

IMPACT EVALUATION

The mountain path events engaged a large reach of people, particularly via the annual Highland Show. The other events were focused on special interest festivals where participants were already engaged with mountains in some way. TMTP met message dissemination objectives well.

With limited ranger time available and challenges around running health walks independently the TMTP team used their initiative to optimise alternative delivery models. The TMTP cast wide geographically and across people profiles. Most visitor centres are located in very accessible places and therefore attract people with lower mobility and those who choose only to walk a few hundred metres from their cars. The use of the mobile unit meant that TMTP messages were being promoted to a cross-section general public as with the TMTP films that were run at park visitor centres.

In contrast the Ranger led events originally planned for may have been likely to attract attendees already interested in the natural environment. It is noted that the number of people impacted through the alternative strategy was far higher than if the 125 exclusively TMTP themed events had gone ahead.

The health walks were progressed in partnership proving the best way to increase the number of higher level walks. The impact has been high because the TMTP provided route guidance and branding to numerous high level walks across settlements and rural areas, that can be run in future.

OATS achieved the 8.6% underwriting of TMTP funds. However, it was found that the campaign to generate income from participants at large scale mountain events was unsuccessful. Several land manager practitioners interviewed expressed their concern that frequent users of mountain paths were not contributing financially to their upkeep.

The learning through TMTP is that there's a need to build awareness about mountain path pressures across frequent mountain path users. OATS could use typical communication receptors (mountain sites, specialist press, interest groups, leisure/accommodation outlets, social media) to promote this message. Getting on board a corporate sponsor who chimes with regular hill users would also be advantageous.

6. Communications, marketing, information and interpretation

Description and result

The TMTP Interpretation plan summarises four points of strategic influence to make a desired behavioural effect on the wider public. They are:

- **INSPIRATION** (giving people new experiences and skills and helping them to use those skills to enhance their lives and look after mountain paths)
- **ENJOYMENT** (helping people to understand and experience these special mountain environments)
- **RESPONSIBILITY** (encouraging people to use mountains sensitively and take a sense of ownership of their heritage)
- **CONTRIBUTION** (helping people to care for the mountains through practical actions and donations).

This activity crosses over with visitor participation events but mainly relates to the focussed production of communication, information and interpretation outputs. In the main it encompasses mainstream marketing, engagement and PR efforts through TMTP.



Works were supported by a Communications Sub Group made up of TMTP staff and partners. This group was invaluable in providing support for press releases and marketing. More detail is provided in the Project management and Governance Section 3.

This dynamic list confirms these TMTP outputs:

Communications, marketing, information and interpretation	Target % achieved
TMTP branding and implementation	100%
Temporary worksite signage (also used to promote TMTP messages)	100% +
4 Hard copy and digital TMTP leaflets produced	100%
*4 professionally produced short videos (1 scheduled for end of TMTP evaluation)	75%
4 TMTP staff plus 4 volunteers trained in video techniques	100%
* 10 self-made video clips produced highlighting training, volunteering and contract works	40%
Films (professional and amateur) shown in range of outdoor visitor facilities throughout the National Parks and country	100%+
Effective use of social media platforms with strong connections within key sectors	100%
Production of geocache trail	100%
Production of geocache coins	100%

*500 participants collecting points in each National Park	4%
Production of TMTP and Adopt a Path websites	100%
1000 website hits per year	100%
2 people counters installed, working downloaded and analysed in each National Park	100%
15 media releases issued	100%
5 articles (1 per annum) to climbing/walking press/ outdoor magazines	100%
5 articles published via online media (TV and radio achieved also)	100%
10 articles published in specialist journals and newsletters	100%
At least 1 National press release and major photo opportunity per annum	100%
5 public events attended	100%
5 events organised for identified target audiences	100%
10 illustrated talks give to outdoor recreation clubs/organisations	100%
Annual joint working event to share best practice between partners	100%



The only table elements not achieved to the full 100% are marked with an asterix*. There has been some difficulty sourcing all the self-made video clips, with one professional clip not complete. It was found that geocache participants often don't bother logging their points.

IN SUMMARY

The **Online work** involved:

- Use of project website to showcase every aspect of the programme outputs. Particular emphasis on videos from volunteering and training – encouraging others to join in.
- List of paths to be upgraded during the project.
- A news feed which included media releases and regular contributions from trainees about their experiences in the mountains.
- An up and coming events schedule on volunteering and next step walks.

The **PR coverage** involved:

- Regional, national and UK coverage achieved on both TV and radio including STV 6pm News, Julian Bradbury's 'Walks through the Landscape' UK prime time TV series, interview on BBC Radio Scotland's Out for the weekend and Out of Doors programmes.
- National and local newspaper articles about TMTP.
- Specialist interest press articles and OATS member's newsletter.

Over the five years there were 74,313 page views and 20,593 users. There's been a fair bit of international interest in the website with 23% of traffic from North America and other nations. The page with the most views was volunteering at 8,439 followed by jobs at 6,752 and events at 3,805. Total followers on twitter is 2288, facebook 2183 and Instagram 270. Instagram is a far more recent account. Twitter has generated 1271 of web traffic with facebook 3851.

The Vimeo content has achieved 472 views for 'The project Overview' clip, 40 for the training clips, 78 views for Rachel's experience and 122 views for Craig's experience.

IMPACT EVALUATION

Taking account of the exceptions (as reported above) every other element was fulfilled to 100% or well above. No audience surveys of awareness levels of TMTP have been undertaken but there are other indicators of positive impact like:

- **Donations have increased to OATS** during

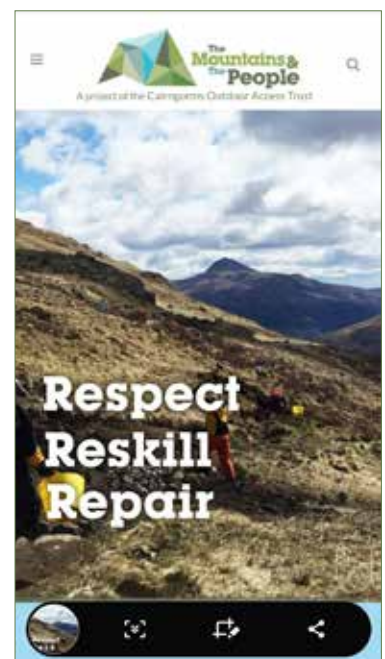
the period of TMTP suggesting raised audience awareness of the need to invest in upland footpaths and reduce negative habitat impact.

- **Increased visits to well-known national park mountain locations** as recorded through TMTP visitor counts.
- **There was a high level of growth in volunteering interest and conversions** following PR and marketing work early on.
- **Land managers have responded positively and got pro-actively involved** in TMTP because the PR work made them aware that the project presented opportunities for reducing their angst around upland path condition on their land.

Analysing social media results it is clear that an emphasis was not put on 'marketing' project podcasts and films but instead on TMTP products completion. This is understandable given the amount of other project work that TMTP had to deliver.

As planned the TMTP has fulfilled a very wide and varied communications methodology. The strategy has been all encompassing influencing a very wide stakeholder base including visitors and day trippers, non-visitors (who could be motivated to participate), schools, colleges, recreation professionals and land-managers.

A way to sustain audience impact would be for OATS to carry on disseminating TMTP messaging products (above). The more the products are disseminated through all available channels then the higher the impact. The TMTP should be credited for creating a varied suite of very stimulating and thought provoking visual communication products that are attractive for 3rd party promoters and wide audiences.





Section 2

The Mountain Path Programme

Mountain Path Programme Description and Results

The project has delivered:

120,978
metres
of
PATH IMPROVEMENTS,
100% of the refined
mountain path
programme meterage.

**Paths across the
2 National Parks**

85%
HAND BUILD
15%
MACHINE BUILD.

DISTANCE
proportion in the
Cairngorms National Park
43%
ACROSS 23 SITES.

DISTANCE
proportion in the
Loch Lomond and the
Trossachs National Park
57%
ACROSS 20 SITES.

Appendix A

TMTP Programme Path improvements June 2015 to December 2020 shows the meterage of path upgrades achieved.

Variation

As the project developed some paths were 'swapped out' for various reasons relating to land management issues and/or changing priorities, with either others swapped in to replace them or funds needed for more work than budgeted on certain paths. The paths swapped out were invariably low cost high meterage paths and the work swapped in was generally low in metres but high in value. Paths swapped out include Geal Charn from Balsporran (3,681 metres long), Glen Finglas (4,839m), Balquhiddier Glen (5,577m) and Conic Hill (1,930m) which tended to have small amounts of work spread over a long distance.

Paths swapped in included Glas Allt Path and Bridge (which had been very badly damaged in Storm Frank (2015) after the project had started), Ben A'an bridge where it became obvious it needed to be replaced due to increased wear and tear, Craig Mhor which became a bigger priority with more use, and Coire na Ciste which has become much more damaged within the project as it is much more heavily used. Certain areas required significantly more resources than initially budgeted, with the Arrochar Alps in particular needing far more money than budgeted due to materials shortages on the hill for most of the paths there.

Visitor Survey Data

The TMTP visitor count data for two popular mountains in the LLTNP shows a large increase in visitor numbers after TMTP path upgrade works. It's acknowledged that the data collection calendar months are not directly comparable for Ben A'an.

Site	Baseline Figure	Post Upgrade Figure	Increase
Ben A' an	19,275 (Nov 2016 -Jun 2017) misses Jul/Aug	54,716 (Jul-Jan 2018/19)	35,441 = 184%
Cobbler	46,327 (2016)	73,088 (2017)	26,761 = 58%

Combined visitor survey data showed that 87% of respondents felt the condition of paths and tracks to be good or very good across both national parks. Whilst not directly attributable to specific TMTP upgrade routes, it is likely that path quality improvement on popular frontline hills has contributed to this view.

The popularity of high level walk activities continues across both national parks with 18% of visitors to the CNP participating in high level walks with hill-walking being a reason for their visit, 3% undertaking multi-day walks. Similarly 14% of visitors to the LLTNP undertake high level walking activities with 5% undertaking multi-day walks. 60% of respondents said that mountains and hill landscapes were the reason for their visit to the LLTNP area

UPAG Amber Survey auditing process

The UPAG Amber Survey auditing process is used to inform priority site works assessing and marking the path condition from 1 (highest priority 1) to 5 (lowest priority). The condition surveys measure the condition of the paths and path systems using a series of more than 30 measurements. The measures collected cover slope, width and other real figures, along with indices of path condition and assessment of factors such as drainage and dynamism. The condition surveys provide:

- An assessment of the current path condition
- An assessment of the future management needs of the path survey
 - An indicative estimate of the cost of repair works
 - A baseline for monitoring long-term path condition and change.

Work Urgency

- 1 = high priority: work should be undertaken within 1-3 years
- 3 = medium priority: work should be undertaken in the next 3-5 years
- 5 = lowest priority: work may be required in the next 5-10 years, often depending on the results of monitoring information.

Reference: Upland Path Management www.nature.scot/upland-path-management-standards-delivering-path-projects-scotlands-mountains

Path condition surveys were undertaken across both national parks to inform the selection of TMTP work sites. Project partners helped inform this selection by giving priority to their high pressure destinations that

are providing access to a wide and inclusive breadth of the public. Another factor for selection was day to day accessibility for SVQ students.

The relative success of the upland path programme is best measured through real life examples. Here are three case studies that reflect the holistic qualities and learning through the TMTP mountain path programme:

Case Study

Beinn a'Ghlo

Beinn a'Ghlo to the north east of Blair Atholl – was identified as being in Priority 1 state – the highest possible in path survey methodology. The location was chosen because of its extreme damage, rate of change and impact. Viewable from the A9 carriageway, the eroded path was a highly visible scar on one of the most popular entrances into the CNP, potentially giving a negative first impression to a majority of visitors.

The site posed significant challenges but good partnership working with land owners and government advisers was achieved from day one. In all, 342 metres of raised path surface was constructed with 407 metres of side drains and 943 metres of stone pitching. It cost £226,000 to repair and upgrade the path with £60,000 coming from the 'Mend our Mountains: Make One Million' campaign.

Cairngorm Wilderness Contracts who worked on the site for 4-5 months per year over three years stated that *"they were not a construction company but a conservation company"* a requirement for upland practice. Falling within a SAC and SSSI designated area the approach was to reduce environmental impact through all works.

With agreement from the landowner and policy advice from NS, TMTP were allowed to utilise weathered materials from a dyke (further round the mountain), restoring the original visual character and reducing significant white quartzite scarring. Some of the white quartzite was taken back to the dyke and integrated into the site with turfs restoration to encourage re-growth of habitat. Some material was used to lift and secure the upgraded path base.

Walkers now follow a single route on the path instead of

dispersing (as was originally the case). Also loose stone material was brought down from further up the mountain to support construction. For the SVQ2 students the learning was significant and they were able to apply many skills in relation to conservation management planning in a situation where sustainability was being practically optimised in real life.

The main 3 key benefits of the scheme were:

Significant
HILL PATH SCAR
REDUCTION
at landscape scale

Improved
VISITOR
EXPERIENCE

ENCOURAGING
WILDLIFE
through restoration
of habitats

A CNPA board member stated *"Hill walking is one of the top reasons why people come to the Cairngorms attracting over a quarter of a million people each year to explore the mountains so we want it to be a safe, enjoyable and sustainable experience"*.

NS Operations Officer Karen Mitchell said that *"they couldn't have achieved the project without TMTP's expertise to manage contractors, use the right contractors and keep on top of it"*.

Case Study

Loch Muick

The SVQ students upgraded 300m of path around Loch Muick on Balmoral Estate. Senior Ranger Glyn Jones helpfully worked with TMTP staff to identify priority works required which would suit SVQ2 trainees.

Two groups of trainees spent two months each working at Loch Muick in 2016 and 17. It was an excellent training site that they regularly returned to, applying higher level skills each time. The site offered the application of a variety of techniques and was reasonably accessible. The training site was not restricted by any site designations which made it ideal for trainees.

Lots of materials could be gathered on site for the upland path building, including aggregate from borrow pits, this saved having to transport materials, and the overall effect was in keeping with the natural surroundings. Stone pitching was applied on steeper sections.

The factor for Balmoral estate said, *"I have been delighted with the work completed across the estate"*.



Case Study

Ben A'an

Ben A'an is a well visited destination in the LLTNP. OATS re-built 1.6km of its mountain path route to improve the experience for users and help protect the SSSI. The path had major erosion damage exacerbated by a burn running all the way through the site. FLS (a TMTP partner) prioritised the route upgrade on the basis of its proven appeal to a cross-section of visitors and being within one hours travel for over half Scotland's population.

FLS gathered stakeholder perspectives on the upgrading of the route. TMTP project staff assisted this good practice – sharing industry knowledge in upland recreation environments and bespoke approaches to the sites design upgrade. SVQ students were involved with applying their learning in terms of CDM, legal and health and safety practice.

The upper path was hand build with extensive stone pitching. As much stone as possible was used from the site, but a lot had to be collected and imported – flown into position by a helicopter. The lower section was machine built and involved the felling of sitka spruce around path operations. A different contractor completed each of the higher and lower sections.

During construction a site decision was made to take a more direct line on the last 50m stretch of machine work, where it connected to the handbuild route onto the bridge. This pushed the technique for path building to the point where it was too steep to be sustainable. OATS reviewed the work and changed the line back towards the route it had been intended to take, a more sinuous hand built path near the line. This work had attracted some negative comment and OATS fully recognised that it needed put right.

On reflection OATS identified a need for greater

verification of site management of the works from both the client and contractor for this type of work. The learning by OATS was that it is difficult to achieve the ongoing verification management of mountain path works without continuous verification at key stages of the job. In practice often mountain path locations require dynamic reactive approaches in response to the natural processes (eg. weather, drainage, soil, vegetation) within the bedrock and gradient of the site sections. The mountain path industry is not formalised to the extent that more established disciplines are and so decisions on changes to site works are often made by one person. Looking forward a second line of sign off within the contract process could well be beneficial, though this would have a resource implication.

People counters have been incorporated on Ben A'an since the upgrade and show a very large annual increase in the number of walkers. Also two local high schools have since used the site for multi-disciplinary school lessons facilitated by the TMTP partners with some application of the TMTP education resource pack.



Evaluation of Programme issues and challenges

The common issues and challenges for achieving positive results were as below:

Liabilities

A common challenge was getting landowners to overcome their concerns about exposure to public liabilities in terms of their path routes. Sometimes a landowner's perception is that if they choose to upgrade the route to a publically acceptable standard then they become liable for path quality for the long-term. Ultimately landowners are always liable for their land, but can be indemnified for path construction work with suitable insurances in place with the development agency and the contractors.

OATS has worked hard to re-assure this concern and

perceptual hurdle, developing landowner confidences and operating in a spirit of partnership and goodwill. When site works are commissioned there are insurances in place for the work itself, with professional indemnity required from all designers, and public liability in place from both the contractor and the development agency. This offsets the liabilities with regard to the construction of paths, though in the end the Owner Occupiers Liability always lies with the owner. It is not easy as access work is nearly always for public benefit, and whilst most landowners do see the real need for the works they need to be reassured that the development organisation has provided for public and professional liabilities.

TMTP partners and OATS trustees have shown a high level of confidence in the TMTP mountain path building by agreeing to the 10 year maintenance obligations.

One landowner believes 'a license to occupy' would be a reasonable mechanism to ensure the liability of the works

undertaken by OATS would rest with OATS. He pointed to an existing example where mountain bikers had been using the upgraded OATS site and had already eroded the main path making it vulnerable to fast decline. He stated “these paths are going to need significant maintenance”. The landowner believed there are issues about the landowner not being shown enough respect with time bound project investments that need to be completed by a certain date feeling that more time should be spent agreeing who the path should be built for and who is responsible for its upkeep.

Quality Assurance

A point of learning for OATS has been the importance of ensuring an ongoing quality assurance management system from both the client and the contractor. Contractors quote for OATS specified capital work contracts on the basis of their teams’ work-time and resources costs with reference to their site based audit (UPAG Amber Survey) and the minimum requirements set by OATS. Path building works are practically affected by the opportunities and constraints of mountain environments including; weather impact, geology, erosion, drainage, existing path surfacing (where relevant), gradient and camber. Whilst the UPAG Red specification survey is indicative of the site opportunities and constraints often challenges are faced and decisions are to be made during practical construction – these decisions affect the outcome of the final path product. Snagging works were required at a small range of sites including Skellies, lower Ben Lomond and Ben A’an after works had been initially completed. At 2.5% of the project this was well within a reasonable margin by any standards. Mountain path works are very much in the public eye however, and often at iconic sites, and the path industry is very aware of this. It may be beneficial to have a second line of management oversight in future projects at 100%, rather than the current system of sampling by senior management. Sampling has been used due to resource issues of covering so many sites and over such large distances, with lengthy walk-ins meaning that site supervision can often be a long day or overnight trip.

Looking forward it may be an improvement for the path industry to consider a second line of oversight on all project works through greater management input or provision of a clerk of works, though this will of course

mean a significant uplift in management costs.

Conservation Designations and inconsistent planning requirements

The capital programme was managed by an accomplished team, all of whom had extensive experience in the delivery of complex upland path contracts from design to completion. It is this level of competence that has enabled the delivery of mountain building achievements despite some unanticipated significant challenges around statutory consents in the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park.

With all Planning Authorities confirming at the development phase of the project, that subject to Natural Assessment, planning permission would not be required, a subsequent capital programme time frame for delivery was applied. Subsequently the LLTNPA then reviewed their decision due to some paths being on prominent landscape features and sensitive environments with a range of natural heritage considerations including designated sites. Also, as this was the first time many of these paths had been properly constructed and designed the improvements presented some unique considerations in ensuring appropriate and proportionate planning control with the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park. Whilst this resulted in a more formalised and lengthier approach than was originally expected, it has ensured a methodical and publicly transparent process in relation to the more sensitive path improvements.

It may have been the first time a Planning Authority had requested planning permission for upland path work repair in Scotland. The process was a valuable learning experience for both OATS and LLTNPA and will help towards future projects of this type within the LLTNPA.

During the planning permissions phase OATS re-scheduled other site works to keep on track, bringing several contracts in the CNP forward for completion (earlier than planned). The challenges around the need for planning consent were resolved with minimum impact on the project delivery due mainly to the OATS project delivery team’s dedication and adaptive management.

Section 3

Project Management and Governance

Working Structure TMTP

The OATS Chief Executive Officer had overall project management responsibility for TMTP. The TMTP Steering Group had a delegated governance responsibility from OATS Board for the project, and was chaired by one of the OATS Directors. The CEO of OATS was responsible for reporting the project to the TMTP Steering Group. The Activity Project Manager was responsible for the activity plan also running and managing all Activity Programme elements (section 1 items). The Mountain path programme elements (section 2 items) were managed by the OATS Access Projects Manager, who line managed the Technical Projects Officer. Both the TMTP Activity Project Manager and the OATS Access Project Manager attended TMTP Steering Group meetings to report on the parts of the project they had responsibility for.

The Activity Programme Manager managed two SVQ Training Officers and an Activity Projects Officer. The Access Project Manager managed the TMTP Technical Projects Officer. OATS' Business and Communications Officer offered administrative support to the project. Getting TMTP projects staffing in place took around nine months. The Technical Projects Officer was recruited right

at the start of the project to assist with getting the path contracts up and running. The Activity Team were recruited once the Activity Project Manager was in place to help with recruiting the Training Officers and Activity Projects Officer. OATS core staff supported the recruitment process throughout.

THE OATS BOARD

OATS CEO

TMTP Steering Group

TMTP Activity Project Manager

OATS Senior Access Projects Manager

TMTP Technical Projects Officer

TMTP Activity Project Officer

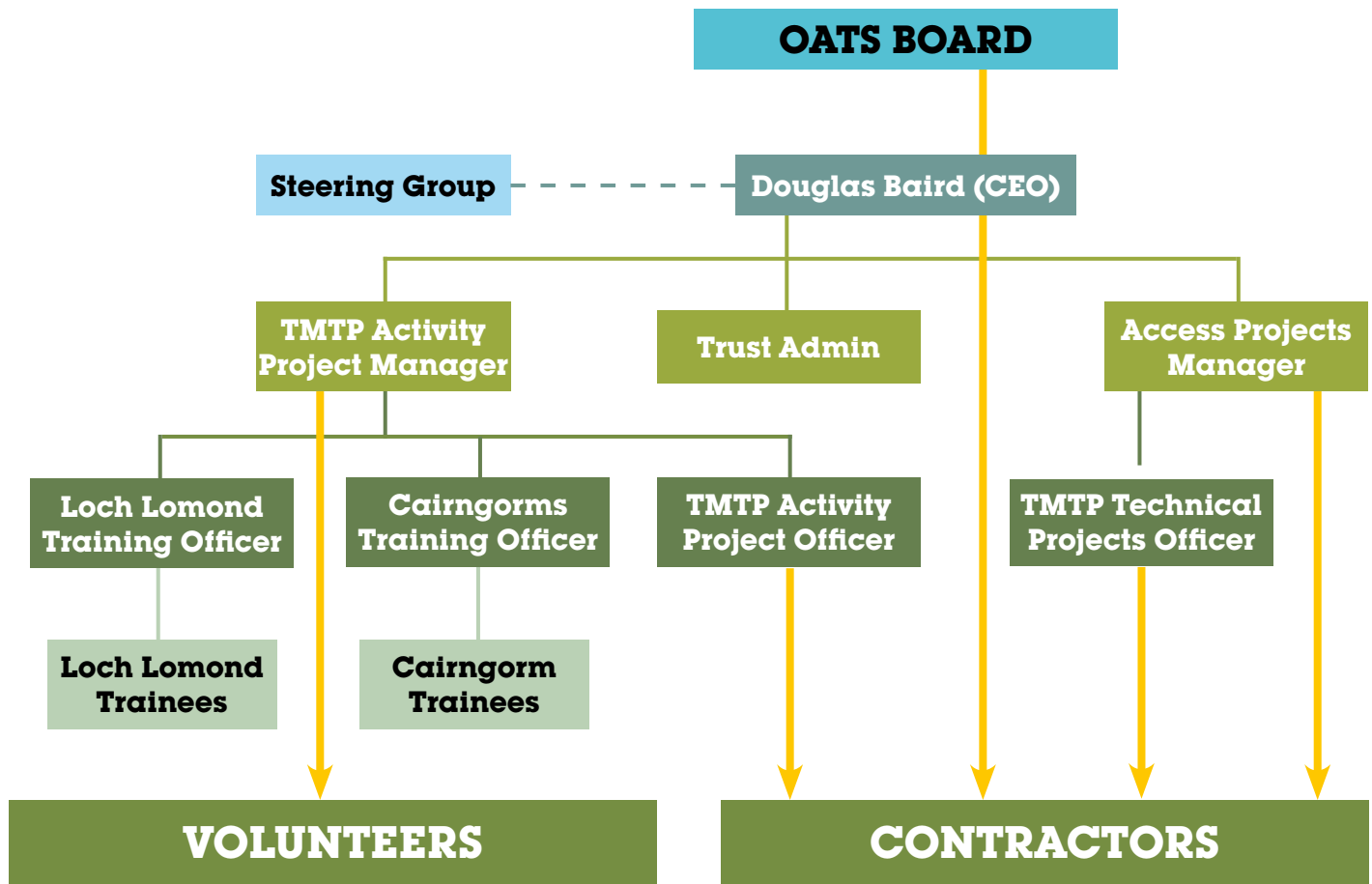
TMTP Loch Lomond Training Officer

TMTP Cairngorms Training officer

OATS Business and Communications Officer (Administrative support)

TMTP Trainees, volunteers and contractors





Partnership Working

All TMTP partners contributed financially but also provided significant in-kind support with regular communication and extensive interaction being evident.

More time than anticipated was required from all partners, with the highest burden being on the OATS project staff. OATS spent more time than anticipated on supporting the TMTP partnership itself. OATS initially predicted 70 days on the partnership meetings but in fact ended up spending 200+ days over the five years. It had been hoped that TMTP Steering Group would have provided the main platform for interagency project processes. However, once up and running it became apparent that the public bodies (with the exception of NS) required further structures to support their own internal and external project processes. Whilst this time spent was effective and increased programme benefits it took officer work days (sometimes two officers) away from everything else. A forecast budget amount of £20k on partnership management by TMTP in fact amounted to £60K. It's acknowledged throughout that all partners gave an enormous amount of 'in kind' support

an amount they have struggled to calculate because it was cross-departmental time spent.

Early on partners were required by their leadership to agree governance arrangements that suited them best and in the interests of the best management of public funds. Sub groups were set up to represent and satisfy the various governance requirements. Whilst these groups were not anticipated at the development stage of TMTP, they have proven very useful. For example, NS responded timeously to progressing unforeseen planning permission requirements on some upland designated sites.

All OATS trustees interviewed believed the management of the TMTP project had been extremely effective with competent governance arrangements throughout. One ex-trustee said *"The scale of the project demonstrates OATS ability to pull off large programmes over large areas with partners"*. He also said that *"TMTP has injected professionalism into upland path workers and allowed them to demonstrate to future employers that they are skilled to a high level"*.

Effectiveness of TMTP Steering Group and Sub Groups

The TMTP Steering Group provided an interagency management structure for the project, meeting quarterly and providing partners (as a group) with the opportunity to review progress and influence the implementation of the business plan. At the beginning monthly meetings were held to bed down governance arrangements. The group reviewed financial data and project reporting and addressed potential issues and risk management.

In addition four partner sub groups met every month with the exception of the Communications Sub Group which conducted most business more sporadically, often by video calls. Also, the Cairngorms Sub Group met just bi-monthly. These sub group created their own terms of reference to suit both their own organisations and TMTP. The four sub groups were:

TMTP Communications Sub Group

This group included communications officers from all core project partner organisations as well as the OATS Activity Project Manager and the OATS Business & Communications Manager who (after review), took the lead role. The group had its own terms of reference and ensured consistency and clarity in all communications messages, reducing the risk of confusion or missed opportunity. All partners optimised the promotion of key TMTP events and news stories effectively and engaged wide ranging audiences. Most of their meetings were operated over the phone or by video call.

Forestry and Land Scotland Upland Paths Sub Group

This group was formed at the outset of project delivery due to a high proportion of project path works within the LLTNPA being on land owned and managed by FLS. With formal terms of reference and chairing by a FLS project manager the group clearly demonstrated the commitment shown to work collaboratively towards a common goal. Around halfway through the project the group determined that it would be beneficial for the OATS Activity Project Manager to attend and feed into the meeting particularly on area's relating to communications, events and training. The group proved to be highly beneficial for all involved enabling full value to be gained in identifying priority path

programmes for maximum visitor benefit, high quality technical delivery, community consultation and public information. The FLS group member described it as “a *critical juncture for flagging up issues*”.

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority TMTP Sub Group

Formed by LLTNPA and chaired by the Director of Conservation & Visitor Experience at the park authority, these monthly meetings provided an update on works undertaken and identified any risks and areas of support required. Having Director level representation on the group proved to be highly beneficial when requesting support in areas such as complex access arrangements.

Cairngorms National Park Authority TMTP Sub Group

This group was more informal than the LLTNPA subgroup and had representation from across the access and recreation team in the park authority, meeting every two months on average. It helped facilitate close working relationships with the 13 ranger services across the national park as well as supporting in areas such as volunteer development and education.

Both national parks sub groups addressed practical programme co-ordination with a strong emphasis on optimising opportunities, reporting on their areas TMTP outputs and re-forecasting tasks (where required). The groupings involved staff from a wide variety of specialities including; access, education, planning, rangers, events, volunteering, graphics design, health walks. The breadth of input from national park staff was advantageous in building specialist knowledge across all TMTP programme angles.

TMTP Steering Group

Here is a summary of what TMTP Steering Group members thought of the steering groups project management function:

- The frequency of meetings was just right.
- The steering group had an important role to play because financial investment was high across all partners.
- The TMTP group were very effective in responding to Steering Group recommendations.

- The associated TMTP Sub Groups were very beneficial because they optimised opportunities.
- Has enabled legacy building, testing delivery outputs and systems that are workable for the future.
- Could happily delegate the steering group role to another manager as the works were being well managed and in hand.
- All the good steering group work has helped set up a sustainable legacy from TMTP outputs.
- Given the size and value of the project the input of the steering group and related committees has been reasonably low maintenance.
- Staff time spent by all partners was considerable but worth it given it was investment in building a legacy.
- Maintained programme impetus and responded to bottlenecks addressing ways around challenges.
- Sometimes would like to have had a bit more detail on finances and the minutes a bit quicker.
- All the good steering group work has helped set up a sustainable legacy from TMTP outputs.
- Great for shared learning and an impetus for achieving corporate goals.

What partners said about their experiences as TMTP partners:

The partners said of TMTP

"Great building blocks to moving forward"

"TMTP completely fulfilled expectations"

"Really pleased and proud of it"

"The upland path work has worked really well; improving access, raising awareness of habitat impacts and the need for route maintenance"

"It brought competence within our organisation about upland path management"

"Great – have been able to invest in infrastructure and doubled the investment in path maintenance and upgrading through the TMTP project. It's been really valuable"

"There were a whole range of outputs delivered and throughout including doubling the investment in path maintenance and upgrading, provision of technical

supervision, volunteer work sites – excellent value"

"Never got isolated with activities could keep at things when other things were on hold, really good project management"

Finance

The project funding package of £5.6m was segmented as follows:

NLHF 58%; OATS 14.9% (including 8.6% raised and underwritten within project by OATS from Charitable Trusts & Donations/Corporates) LLTNPA 9.3%; FLS 9.3%; CNPA 4.9%; NS 3.6%.

Funds were competently managed with NLHF financial reporting undertaken as required.

Risk Management

A detailed Risk Register was written for the project, it was reviewed by the TMTP Steering Group on an ongoing basis covering Financial, Economic, Technical and Management risks.

The largest risk was the underwriting by OATS of the Charitable Trusts & Donations/Corporates 8.6% contribution. Extra staff time was put into this throughout the programme. All OATS trustees interviewed for this evaluation said they were confident that the project had been well managed.

Section 4

Lessons Learned and Legacy

TMTTP has been a very large, wide and varied programme with multi-layered participants and audiences, beneficiaries and stakeholders. It's been extremely ambitious in aiming to have significant impact on both the natural heritage and people. Overall the project has been highly successful.

Lessons Learned

What lessons have been learned through the delivery of the TMTTP?

- **The partnership approach has been extremely successful.** The evaluation identified that partners were clear about the multi-objectives of TMTTP and had fully bought into the Respect, Reskill, Repair vision and the activity programme elements. The partners contributed enormously through providing a great range of assistance from across their departments.
- **The TMTTP has raised the profile of upland access priorities** within partner organisations and to landowners/managers and the public– it has done this through delivering tangible physical impact, industry development, volunteering experiences and key message marketing (through events and communications).
- **The evaluation showed that some elements of the programme delivery were prioritised over others** this was to do with staffing capacity and with gaps in knowledge (to a lesser extent). Temporary employment contracts for key TMTTP staff impacted on staff leaving before the end of the project (as expected).
- **The issue of increased TMTTP staff time being utilised to support partnership** governance requirements brought outcomes advantages (as reported) but did reduce the time TMTTP staff had to spend on lower scale activity programme tasks like education links and health walks. However, it's important to note that partner governance arrangements could not have been confirmed at pre-application stage.
- **TMTTP has influenced professionalism within the industry.** The evaluation showed that the path contracting industry employers attach strong value and status to the OATS run SVQ2 & SVQ3 Environmental Conservation. OATS constructed a course that balanced practical works with academic learning and industry placements, this has proven successful.
- **The TMTTP programme identified the challenges around Quality Assurance in the paths industry.** OATS identified the challenges particular to upland path building and the importance of ongoing quality assessment and verification during path works on both the client and contractor side.
- **TMTTP benefited from a key messages multiplier strategy** affected by the sheer size and passion of its partners and breadth of beneficiaries. For example, both national parks promoted the TMTTP programme widely through communication outlets, trainees have gone on to become industry representatives and developers, many volunteers are opting for long-term AAP roles – all these people have and continue to raise the profile around valuing mountain paths for people and the natural heritage.

Legacy


Has TMTP built a legacy?

- **OATS have constructed a very successful delivery model for SVQ's in Environmental Conservation.** These qualifications are now sought after by sector employers. OATS have built confident practitioners with transferable technical, conservation management, project management and team work skills. OATS can deliver the workplace based SVQ3 in Environmental Conservation more widely to incorporate a wider breadth of land management practitioners.
- **OATS have produced a secondary schools education pack with the development potential for national dissemination** and usage within the curriculum for excellence. In the long-term this resource may influence the extent to which young people value our mountains.
- **Via the project OATS have raised awareness of the economic benefits of upland path management** and achieved the buy-in of private landowners to work in partnerships to upgrade mountain routes. The TMTP visitor counter programme showed visitor growth at TMTP path upgrade sites.
- **TMTP has strengthened the brand association of OATS as a competent upland paths advisor and contractor.**
- **The joint procurement of an Adopt a Path Officer shared across TMTP partners will ensure the scheme will carry on successfully.** In the long-term the AAP scheme may grow to cover the whole of Scotland. Also the AAP structure may be strengthened further through increased localised path adoption networks. OATS will carry on a 'responsive' volunteering programme with all TMTP volunteers.
- **Having proven the economic, health and well-being significance of upland paths,** OATS have shown a strong justification to include mountain paths within the imminent National Planning Framework 4 reflecting mountain paths as strategic public land assets.
- **OATS is better informed about the challenge of enticing mountain path users to contribute to their upkeep.** OATS can apply successful TMTP tested strategy to influence personal donating and funding streams.
- **OATS found out that there is no national consistency for upland path planning permission requirements either nationally or for national parks.** OATS highlighted this inconsistency through the TMTP and will continue to help standardise guidance.

Appendix A

TMTP Programme Path improvements June 2015 to December 2020

Cairngorms National Park

Deeside 		
Path	Name	Length
UL-13	Mount Keen	2005
UL-14	Lochnagar Main Path	2494
UL-15	Lochnagar Plateau Path	2306
UL-16	Meikle Pap	286
UL-17	Glas Allt path	1410
UL-17	Glas Allt Bridge	6
UL-18	Dubh Loch	2853
UL-33	Mount Keen (Mounth path)	1560
UL-19	Corrie Chash and Broad Cairn	1443
–	Coire na Ciste	2270
		16633

Highland/Perthshire 		
Path	Name	Length
UL-37	A' Mharconaich from Balsporran Cottages	2710
UL-39	A' Mharconaich to Geal-charn	3872
UL-40	Cairn Liath (Beinn a'Ghlo)	5942
UL-41	Airgoid Bheinn (Beinn a'Ghlo)	5460
UL-42	Beinn a'Ghlo return	3796
UL-44	Allt Gargh Buidhe (Upper Glen Tilt)	1063
		22843

Angus Glen

Path	Name	Length
UL-20	Glittering Skellies	1078
UL-21	Jock's Road	598
UL-22	The Snub – Loch Brandy	2904
UL-30	Mayar	3184
UL-31	Dreish	2497
UL-32	Mayar-Dreish summit	2080
–	Roy Tait Memorial Bridge	6
		12347

Total Cairngorms**51823****Crianlarich/Tyndrum**

Path	Name	Included Length
LL10	Ben Lui (Dalrigh)	8996
LL12	Ben Dubhchraig (incl New Brig)	6309
LL16	Ben More	3061
LL17	Stob Binnien	5295
LL18	Stob Binnien to Ben More	1875
LL20	Vorlich (Earn) – North	2458
		27994

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park**Arrochar Alps**

Path	Name	Included Length
LL01	The Cobbler (Main)	5292
LL02	The Cobbler return	1825
LL03	Ben Ime	2360
LL04	Ben Narnain	3576
LL05	Narnain from Bealach a Mhaim	1183
LL06	Ben Vane	2767
LL09	Ben Vorlich – Loch Sloy	2740
		19743

Trossachs/Ben Lomond

Path	Name	Included Length
LL27	Ben Ledi (main)	4342
LL28	Ben Ledi (Stank)	4022
LL29	Ben A'an + Bridge	1907
–	Craigmore	572
LL30	Ben Venue – Loch Achray	4571
LL31	Ben Venue – Loch Ard	4370
LL32	Ben Lomond + Bridge	1634
		21418

Total LLTNPA**69155***All lengths are in meters*

Many thanks to all our partners



and to our supporters

Brown Forbes Memorial Fund
Scottish Mountaineering Trust
BMC Access and Conservation Trust
The Gannochy Trust
Brew Dog
TAQA
Nineveh Trust
Hugh Fraser Foundation
European Outdoor Conservation Association
Highland Fling Race
KEELA
Ramblers HRC
Scotways
North East Mountain Trust
Friends of Loch Lomond
Enchanted Forest
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