

2. Putting people at the heart of biodiversity policy

Community awareness and involvement

Introduction



Conservation organisations, local authorities and other bodies play a key role in conserving biodiversity but it is public awareness and appreciation of the natural environment that ultimately dictates the degree of success.

Active public or community involvement in conservation at the local level is critical. A range of projects and organisations exist at a range of scales to promote and engage local communities in wildlife conservation:

- Pocket parks, local nature reserves and ‘friends of’ groups provide opportunities for local people to manage and influence their local green space
- Measures to implement Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) provide the means of ensuring more people are able to experience nature
- Education and interpretation promote public interest and increase understanding of biodiversity conservation. Schoolteachers have a large role to play in this respect.
- Development of wildlife areas in school grounds and making links with local nature reserves can supplement these efforts usefully.

Main issues

- Conserving biodiversity is as much about people as it is about wildlife. All sectors of the community should have the opportunity to be involved in both project design and implementation.
- A lack of awareness can lead to an unintentional disregard for wildlife and conservation.
- Recreation and visitor pressure can have a negative effect on wildlife.

Strategy and guidelines

- Develop ‘flagship’ sites to increase public awareness and appreciation of local biodiversity
- Destination Nene Valley is a partnership project which aims to better position and promote the Nene Valley. The project will promote the Nene Valley as a competitive, sustainable destination, offering world class wildlife to a mixture of local, national and international audiences.
- Environmental education: local school groups, Wildlife Watch, RSBP Phoenix and

natural history sessions for adults

- Local community events and guided walks

Targets

1. Ensure an active Local Nature Partnership and annual LNP conference
2. Improved ANGSt across the county
3. Increase in local community environmental events/walks delivered
4. Increase in volunteer hours delivering conservation action
5. Ensure that all Local Nature Reserves have management plans for improving biodiversity and that they are implemented

Actions

A.	Support all pocket park and other community groups in managing, enjoying and utilising green space of conservation value	Local authorities Wildlife Trust NCC
B.	Support or manage existing Local Nature Reserves and review management plans every 5 years or write plans for those that currently do not have them	Local authorities Wildlife Trust NCC
C.	Set up 'friends of' groups, a 'Green Gym' or similar initiatives at suitable sites	Groundwork
D.	Improve ANGSt standards across Northamptonshire	JPU's NCC
E.	Embed wildlife conservation in health and wellbeing strategies	LNP
F.	Work with local communities across the NIA to raise awareness of wildlife and conservation	Wildlife Trust RNRP Natural England
G.	Identify visitor access and issues in the Nene Valley and work with local communities to address issues	Wildlife Trust RNRP RSPB Natural England
H.	Engage with health and wellbeing agenda to promote benefits of biodiversity	LNP
I.	Maintain an active Local Nature Partnership (LNP) and run an annual LNP conference	LNP

Further information and management advice

- ▶ [Destination Nene Valley](#)
- ▶ [Northamptonshire Local Nature Partnership](#)
- ▶ [Wildlife Watch](#) and [Phoenix groups](#)
- ▶ [Wildlife Trust local groups](#)
- ▶ [Pocket Parks](#)
- ▶ [Community projects in the Nene Valley NIA](#)