

JOHN
MUIR
TRUST

Interim Management Plan for Glenridding Common

Prepared in 2023



Area: 1,100 hectares

National Grid Reference: NY 34243 15107 (summit)

For further information on our work at Glenridding Common:

<https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/about-us/where-we-work/glenridding-common>

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1 Introduction

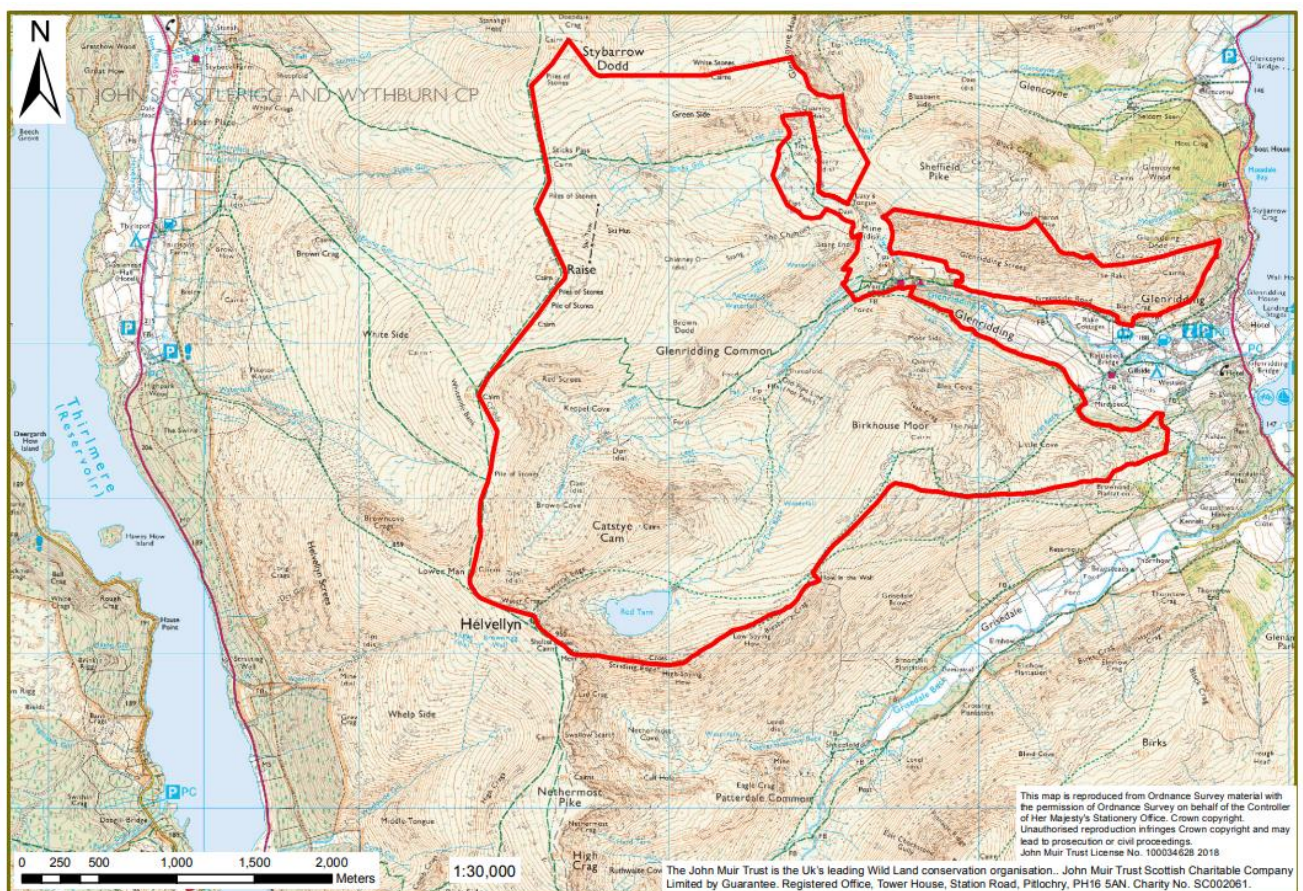
This is a living document that outlines our management aspirations for Glenridding Common. We manage the estate on behalf of the Lake District National Park and National Trust on an annual rolling lease, therefore this document outlines the interim activities we will carry out. We review this plan on a regular basis and update it as required, in consultation with stakeholders and the local community as necessary.

The appendices associated with this plan are currently in development and will be added during 2023.

2 Glenridding Common

Glenridding Common is an area of exceptional beauty and a popular destination for walkers, comprising around 1,100 hectares of common land, including the summit of Helvellyn, along with Striding Edge and Swirral Edge. It sits within the Lake District High Fells Special Area of Conservation.

The Trust took on management of Glenridding Common in 2017 via a lease agreement with the Lake District National Park Authority and National Trust, following a positive consultation with local and national stakeholders. We work with our neighbours to protect and enhance the ecosystem while respecting the area’s cultural traditions - recognising this is a key aspect of the Lake District World Heritage Site status.



3 Our Ambitions

3.1 Our Vision

The purpose of the John Muir Trust is to conserve, protect and restore wild places for the benefit of all. Our vision is a world where wild places are valued for present and future generations. One of the ways we work towards this is by taking on stewardship of wild places, and working with the community to protect and repair them.

The John Muir Trust took on stewardship of Glenridding Common in 2017. During our five years on the site we have:

- Completed 71 habitat and species surveys: 45 breeding bird, 4 juniper, 1 health plot, 10 mountain ringlet butterfly, 1 bryophyte, 1 lichen, 1 Alpine mouse-ear, 1 Alpine saxifrage, 1 endemic *Hieracium* sp and 6 Moorland Indicators of Climate Change Initiatives surveys and surveys
- Invested over £80,000 in upland path maintenance and created local employment for two skilled path workers
- Worked in partnership with Fix the Fells on 10 joint volunteer work parties to deliver path maintenance
- In 2022 we removed 164 kg of litter, including 562 banana skins and 1,801 piles of tissues and wet wipes from Helvellyn
- Planted over 1,000 native broadleaf trees in 21 ha of fenced exclosures
- Planted over 1,500 downy willow at high altitude
- Cuttings were taken from 6 rare montane willow species and various native flowers that are nurtured on throughout the year
- Nine volunteer growers have worked alongside Trust staff and Natural England to produce approximately 200 plants annually to be planted out onto high altitude ledges to increase remnant existing populations
- Led educational visits for Cumbria University, Patterdale Primary School, LDNP Young Rangers, The Lakes School, Outward Bound Trust, Cumbria Wildlife Trust Apprentice Conservation Officers, Outdoor Providers and members of the public

Looking ahead, John Muir Trust's vision for protecting, repairing and enhancing the wild places at Glenridding Common is focussed on helping nature, people and communities. To achieve our vision, our exemplary management approach is based on the priorities outlined in the sections below.

At Glenridding Common we are maintaining an access network for people to access Helvellyn safely and re-establishing rare Arctic-alpine plants and mountain woodland species including downy willow, aspen, rowan and silver birch. This work is carried out with the invaluable support of local, green fingered volunteers and partners.

3.2 Freedom for nature to repair itself

Our objective is to restore a mosaic of habitats which supports a diverse range of species, working alongside our neighbours and the local community to create a sustainable and functional ecosystem.

Helvellyn's high altitude crags and coves provide refuge for rare arctic-alpine flora such as alpine saxifrage and alpine mouse-ear, which grow nowhere else in England. The Trust are also working to

restore a viable population of Mountain avens. The area also holds significant stands of juniper scrub woodland, plus a variety of montane and upland heath, grassland and flush communities.

Red Tarn holds a population of shelly, one of the UK's rarest species of fish, plus England's highest population of stickleback. Bird life is also rich, with snow bunting found on the high tops in winter, while upland species such as raven, wheatear and the red-listed ring ouzel all breed here in the summer. Butterflies spotted at Glenridding Common include the green hairstreak and the mountain ringlet.

3.2.1 Arctic-alpine and woodland

Objective WH: To allow the Arctic-alpine and woodland species to expand in a natural way

As part of the Higher Level Scheme agreement for Glenridding Common we maintain c. 20 ha of stock exclusion fencing, to protect remnant woodland from grazing pressure. We monitor the fence monthly and ensure stock have not entered on a regular basis.

The Lake District Arctic-alpine work brings together national experts at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and Natural England, local volunteers and staff of the John Muir Trust to safeguard nationally important but extremely vulnerable populations of Arctic-alpine flora. Many of these species are growing at the southern edge of their range on Helvellyn. We hope to see the successful re-introduction of species lost or under threat due to people and erosion pressure. Alpine mouse ear, Alpine cinquefoil and purple saxifrage are amongst the species that will benefit from a gradual increase in their population size. Seeds and cuttings are being collected from plants at Glenridding Common, and are then grown on by volunteers in the local community, and planted out on the crags by Trust staff (see also section 3.4.2 Volunteering).

Activity	Timeline
Monitor and maintain stock exclusion fencing	2023
Plant out arctic alpine species to reinforce small populations	2023

3.2.2 Monitoring nature's recovery

Objective MH: Our sites show habitat regeneration as a result of our management approach

Annual monitoring of key species is undertaken. Most of the monitoring is done in a standardised format.

Impact	How we monitor them	Timeline
To assess changes in the level of grazing, including browsing damage	Heath plots	Annual
To assess changes in the habitat, particularly the impact of woodland expansion	Breeding birds are surveyed across 4 km squares using the BTO standard and repeatable methodology for Breeding Bird Surveys (BBS).	Annual
To assess the impacts of climate change	Mountain Ringlet, our only true montane butterfly has a stronghold on site and is surveyed across transect lines	Annual
To monitor the progress of arctic-alpine species restoration	Numbers of key Arctic-alpine species are monitored every 3 years, including species specific surveys eg. for <i>Cerastium alpinum</i> .	2023

	Recently found <i>Hieracium</i> sp. previously deemed extinct in UK were found at Glenridding Common	
To monitor presence of national biodiversity strategy priority species	Ring ouzel breeding population size	Annual
To assess for presence of rare species	Bryophytes and lichens have been surveyed in key locations by national experts with reports.	Ad hoc

The Glenridding Common monitoring plan details the existing monitoring plan along with analysis, results and recommendations (see appendix A).

Activity	Timeline
To produce robust site monitoring plans	2023

3.3 An individual's freedom to enjoy the benefit of wild places

We believe people should have access to wild places and the knowledge and awareness of how to best connect with the natural environment and the actions they can take to protect it. This connection builds value and those who value wild places are more likely to care for and take action to protect them.

The John Muir Trust wants to inspire people and communities to experience and feel empowered to advocate for the benefits of wild places, to be able to influence government and land managers to protect wild places. To do this, we maintain an access network across Glenridding Common, and keep the sites safe, tidy, and free from pollution. We also write and install interpretation and make information available via our website to allow people self-service access to Helvellyn.

3.3.1 Access

Objective AH: To support public access by monitoring and maintaining the wider path network as required.

Helvellyn is one of the most popular mountains in the UK for walking. During the early years of the global Covid-19 pandemic there was increased visitor pressure, which has remained high. A combination of desire from the public to be outdoors during the pandemic and the use of social media to share locations is likely to have contributed. To address this increased pressure and public behaviour that can negatively impact the site (dropping litter, toileting, setting campfires), the Trust appointed a Seasonal Ranger over the summers of 2021 and 2022. This aided with education, managing visitor impacts and identifying trends and issues such as additional footpath erosion.

Footpath maintenance is a key part of our work. An annual maintenance contract is in place with local, skilled path contractors. This schedule of regular maintenance reduces the frequency of large-scale path repairs that would otherwise be required.

There are 22 km of paths on Glenridding. A footpath survey was undertaken in 2021 to understand likely future costs associated with larger scale works beyond the scope of our maintenance contract, which require significant maintenance.

Activity	Timeline
Manage impacts of visitors	2023
Regular footpath maintenance	2023

3.3.2 Visitor infrastructure

Objective IH: To provide facilities and information to help people enjoy and explore wild places responsibly.

The John Muir Trust currently leases an office at Helvellyn Base Camp where staff are based and visitors can call in to find out more information about the site.

Activity	Timeline
Continue to open Helvellyn Base Camp to the public	2023

3.4 The community's freedom to thrive in wild places

Thriving communities are core to the Trust's ethos and we work in partnership to enable communities to protect the wild places important to them. We understand that people and communities are not something distinct from nature but that they are interdependent, and we aim to enable communities to get the best from their wild places and thrive alongside the nature that lives there. We can only realise this with the help of communities who can care for wild places.

3.4.1 Partnerships

Objective PH: To work with other groups and organisations towards common aims and align our management plans to create better connectivity of habitats.

At Thirlmere, the Trust work in partnership with United Utilities, Cumbria Wildlife Trust and Natural England to deliver landscape-scale ecological restoration to improve the resilience of the whole Thirlmere catchment and improve raw water supply. Our work benefits people and wildlife by implementing natural solutions to the climate and biodiversity crises. We signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2021. This project allows the Trust to work across a greater area of the Helvellyn massif and increase our impact.

The Trust also engages with the Cumbria Nature Recovery Group, who are aiming to undertake landscape-scale nature restoration in the National Park.

Activity	Timeline
Deliver the Thirlmere Resilience Project, including creating a plan for delivery of natural solutions to flooding and improvements to the environment at Helvellyn, working with volunteers.	2023-2025
Attend meetings of the Cumbria Nature Recovery Group	2023 onwards

3.4.2 Volunteering

Objective VH: To help us co-deliver our Property Management Plan and support people to feel connected to the site.

Volunteering is a key part of the Trusts work at Glenridding Common. We offer regular work parties both at Glenridding Common and as part of the Thirlmere Resilience Partnership.

We have a very successful community group growing Arctic-alpines and montane shrubs to reinforce populations at Glenridding Common and on adjacent land. The group is supported by volunteer qualified climbers, who aid with planting on steep slopes. This activity has attracted new volunteers, supported directly with staff time from Natural England. This activity raises the profile of the Trust, supports the local community, grows the plants we need to help with site restoration, and importantly, connects local people with wild places on their doorstep. The volunteers also gain a greater understanding of the work at Helvellyn, and can be advocates in their neighbourhood.

Activity	Timeline
Continue to arrange work parties for volunteers that link with the aims of the Property Management Plan	2023
Support the Community Grower's Group	2023
Provide volunteering opportunities in Thirlmere on behalf of the Thirlmere Resilience Project	2023

3.4.3 Outdoor learning

Objective LH: To provide inspiring outdoor learning opportunities for people to connect with wild places and learn about our work to conserve, protect and repair wild places

The Trust seeks to engage with a range of groups in and around the Lake District, including Cumbria and North Lancashire. Although the Covid-19 pandemic reduced opportunities for face-to-face delivery, we have continued to work on the following:

- Talks to interested local groups across Cumbria
- Our Moorland Indicator for Climate Change (MICCI) site has been well used by local school groups, supporting awareness of carbon storage and climate change
- A Landscape Leader Training course was run at Glenridding Common for those working in the uplands
- Outward Bound are an active deliverer of the John Muir Award in the area and regularly use Glenridding Common for activities such as wild camping.
- Induction for new Outward Bound instructors on working in the hills
- University of Cumbria M.Sc. students visited Glenridding Common for a field trip
- Joint guided walks for the public with the National Park Authority volunteers
- Open days at Glenridding Basecamp

Activity	Timeline
Tree planting with various groups	2023
Landscape Leader Training	2023
Provide talks to local groups	2023

3.4.4 Public events

Objective EH: To allow people to access wild places and share our work with the wider community

There are a large number of events across Helvellyn every year. These include charity events, fell races, sky races, trail running events, triathlons, torch lit processions over The Edges, organised recreational activity and there is a steady request for filming consents. The Trust works with event

organisers to ensure there is no damage to the site as a result of their activities and issues licences for a small fee.

The Trust also attends local events such as Kendal and Keswick Mountain Festivals.

Activity	Timeline
Respond to and manage impacts of requests for access for events and filming.	2023
Attend Kendal and Keswick Mountain Festivals	2023

3.4.5 Consultation

Objective CH: To work with communities of interested individuals and groups and incorporate their thoughts and ideas into our management plan.

Consultation is a key part of land management and the decision-making process. This management plan lays out the vision and broadly details our objectives for the estate. The Trust will engage with and undertake consultation with both the local community and stakeholders on specific aspects of land management as they develop.

Activity	Timeline
To consult on our activities as we develop our plans	2023

4 Appendices

A: Habitat Monitoring Plan

B: Engagement and Evaluation Plan