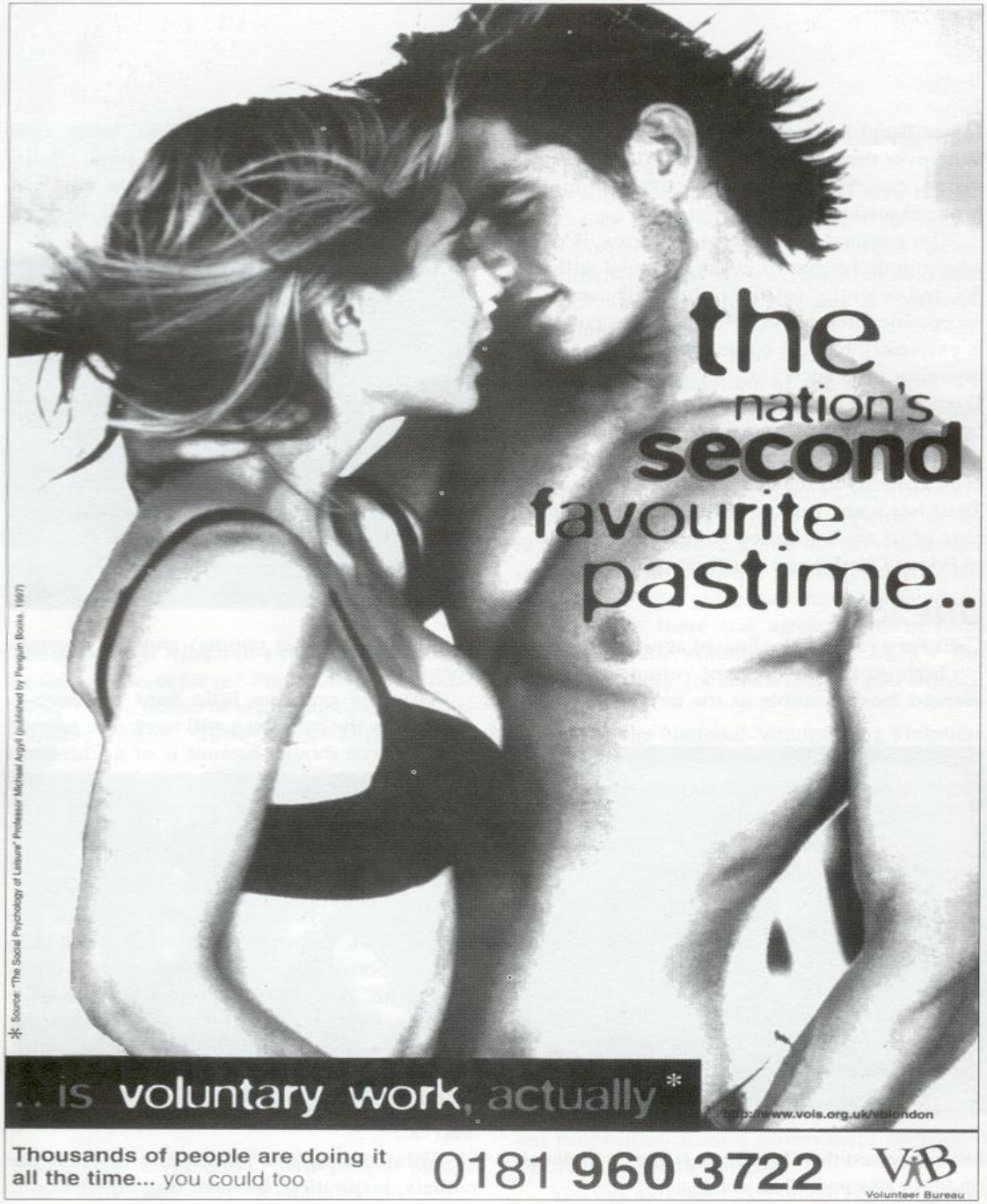
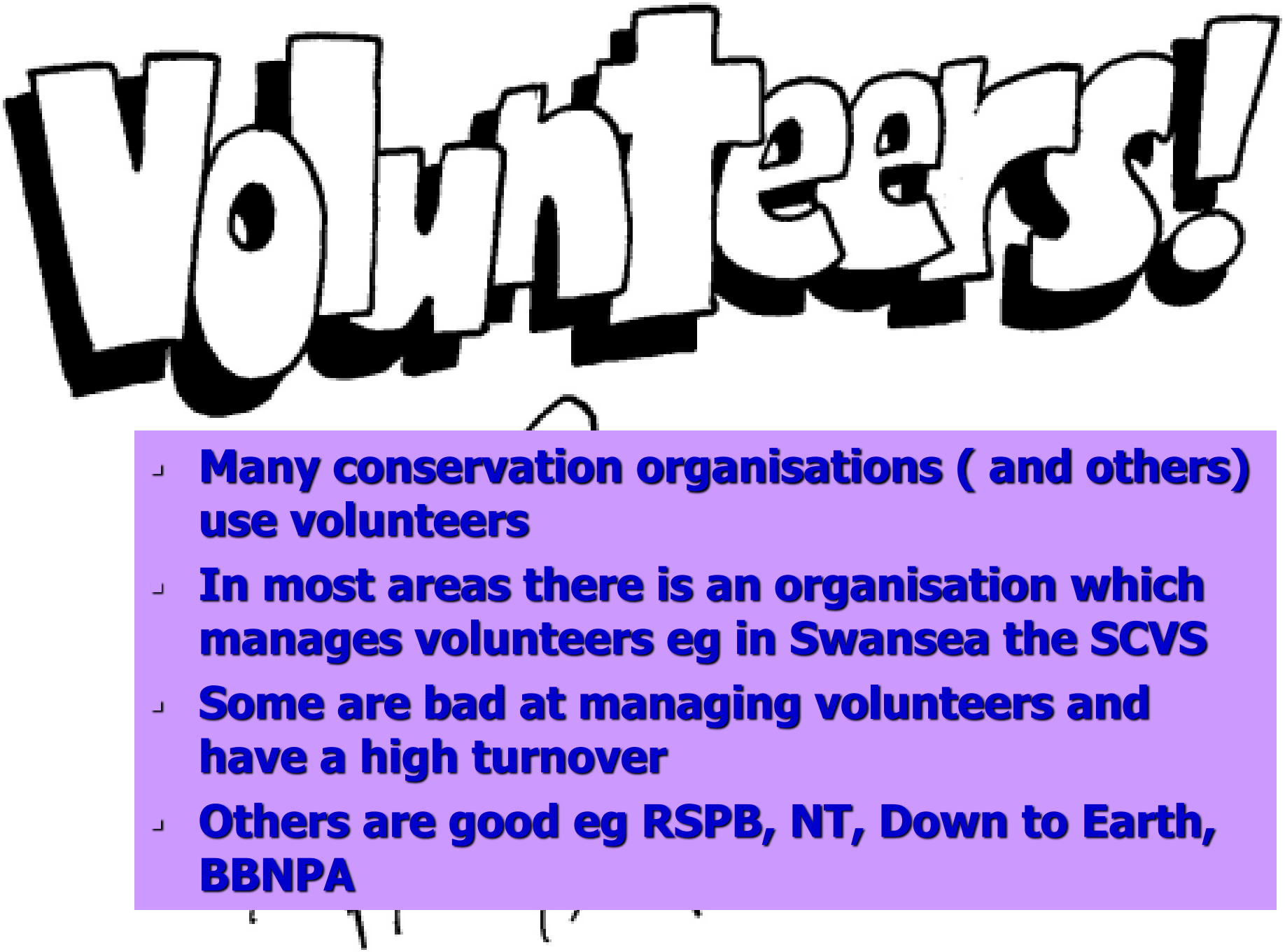
Habitat management

Volunteers, Access & Vandalism


the
nation's
second
favourite
pastime..
* Source: "The Social Psychology of Leisure" Professor Michael Argyll (published by Penguin Books, 1997)
.. is voluntary work, actually *
http://www.vols.org.uk/vblondon
Thousands of people are doing it
all the time... you could too
0181 960 3722
VB
Volunteer Bureau



- Many conservation organisations (and others) use volunteers
- In most areas there is an organisation which manages volunteers eg in Swansea the SCVS
- Some are bad at managing volunteers and have a high turnover
- Others are good eg RSPB, NT, Down to Earth, BBNPA

Volunteering in BBNPA: Car Park Watch Scheme

- 2003 – crime wave in Talybont & within the Park
- Powys Police, Forestry Commission, BBNPA
- Heavily used tourist areas in central Park
- Car crime ↓85%



BBNPA, 2010

Public Rights of Way Surveys



- 1980km of public rights of way
- Obligation to survey 5% each year
- Farmland, higher common land
- Volunteers check
  - Paths open
  - Ease of use
  - Stile, bridge and gate condition

BBNPA, 2010

Guided Walks

- Themed walks staffed by volunteers (60%)
- Knowledge from residents
- Wardens & BBNPA also



BBNPA, 2010

Practical Work Parties

- Weekly opportunities throughout the year
- Supervised
- Woodland thinning and coppicing
- Maintenance bridleways
- Grassland improvement
- Health & Safety & training



BBNPA, 2010

Introduction: Access

- Growth in outdoor recreation; wildlife conservation
- ↑ visitors to reserves and countryside
- Access issues important
- Disturbance levels
- Careful planning

Overview

- Access:
  Zoning
  Car parks/footpaths
  Facilities
  Signage

- Vandalism:
  Prevention
  Examples



Access: a closer look

- To allow or not
- Extent
- Physical damage
- Disturbance
- Complete restriction – unusual
- Careful planning and site layout

Extent of Access

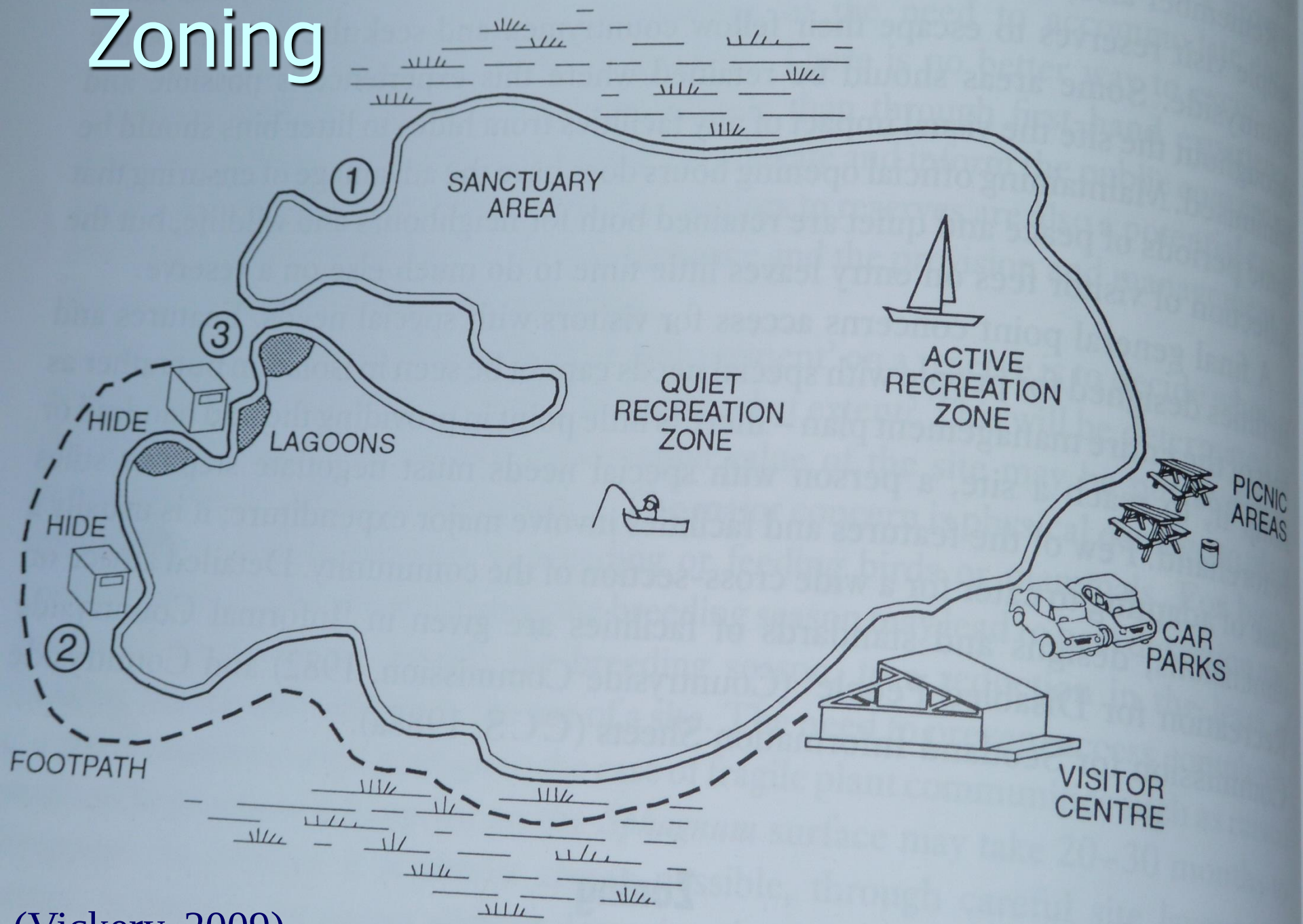


- Resources available
- Nature of the site
- Development of facilities
- Insurance policy/public liability cover
- Maintenance of quiet times/places
- Major expenditure in some cases
- Cross-section of needs

Zoning

- Concentration of recreational activity in certain areas
- Economical
- Mapping sensitive areas – first step
- Graded use – noise and activity levels.
- Positioning paths or hides dependent on zoning

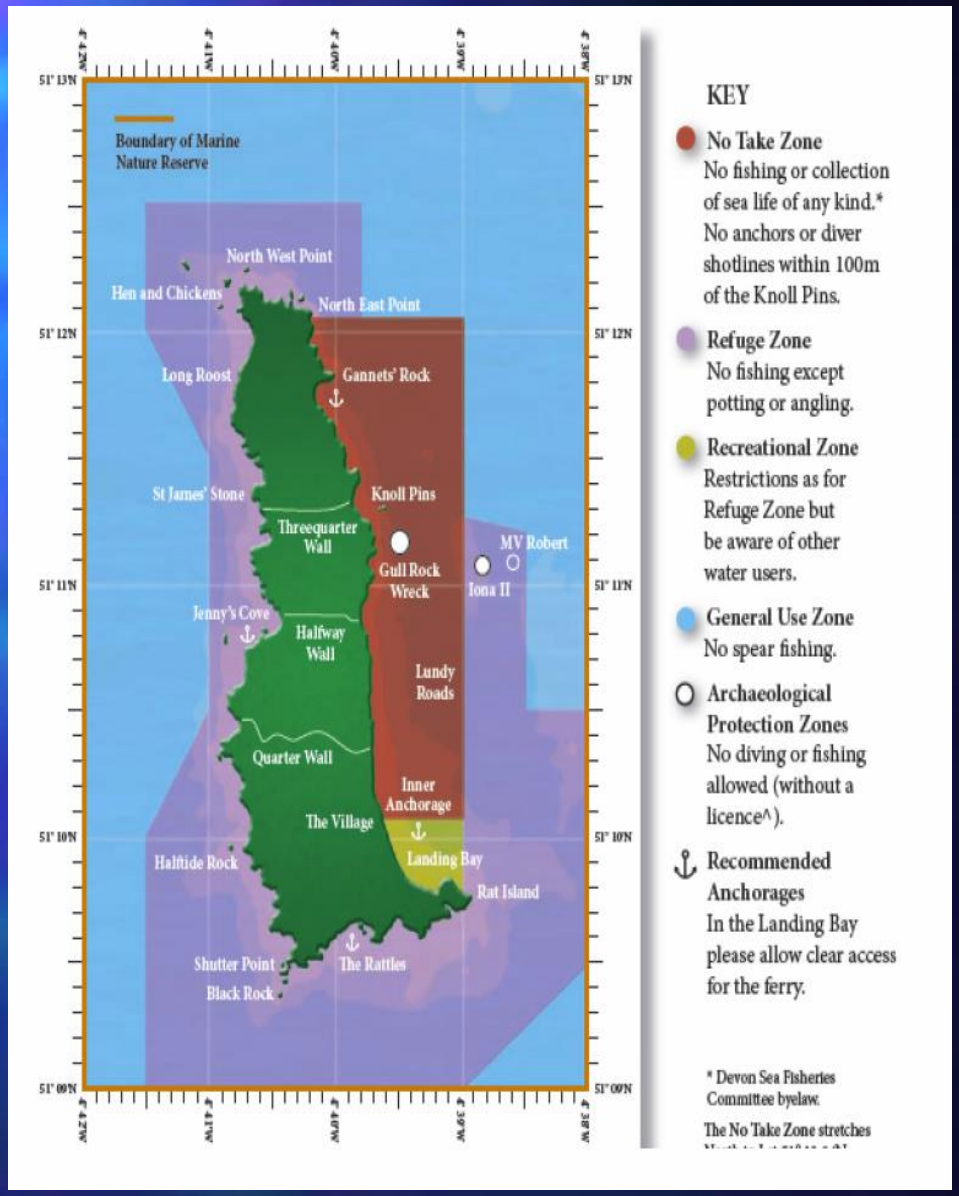
Zoning



(Vickery, 2009)

Zoning

- Seasonal/permanent
- Useful on waterbodies and offshore areas
- Effective at dune sites
- Waymarked trails



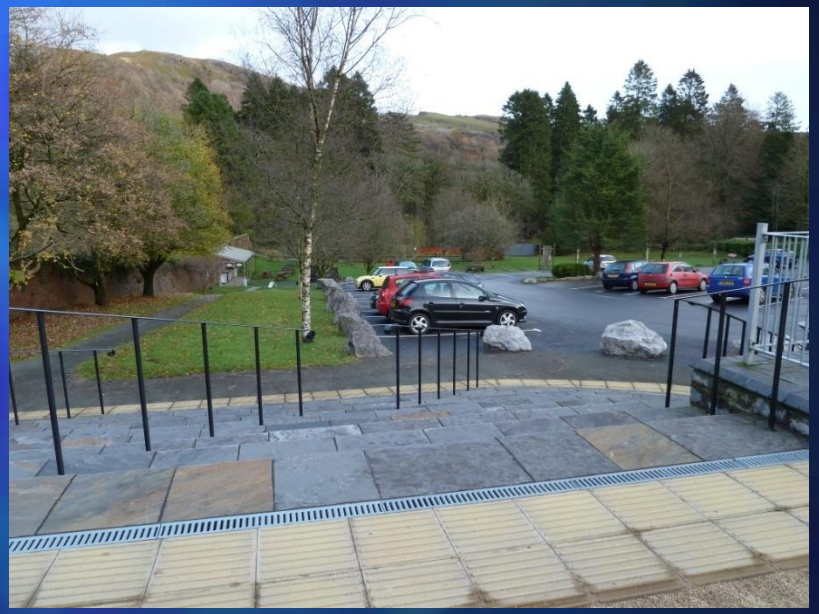
Seasonal zoning

- Peatlands – restrict access in summer and/or winter
- Coastal areas – breeding seabirds/seals/wintering waders
- Gannets *Sula bassana* on Grassholm



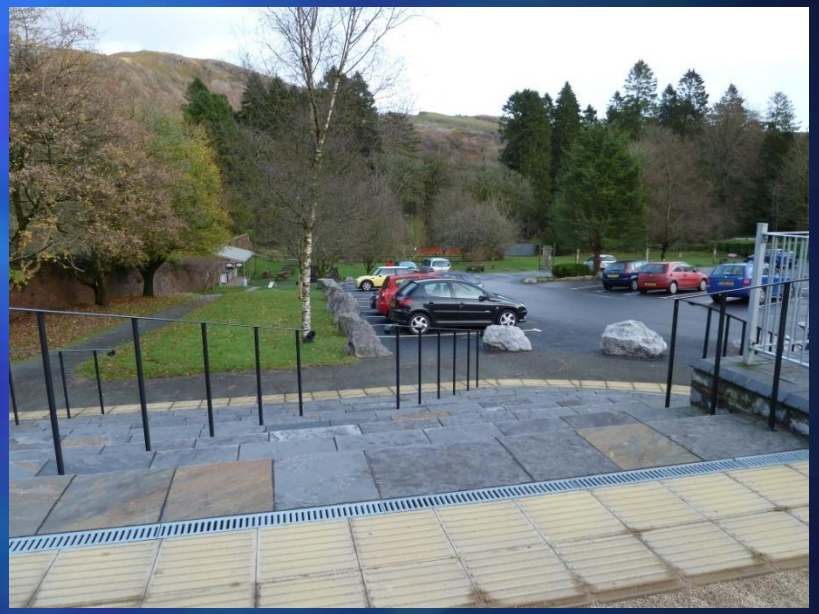
Car Park Provision

- Control of access
- Sets maximum numbers
- Free draining soils
- Minimal visual impact
- Screening
- Orderly layout



Car Park Provision

- Appearance – in keeping with surroundings
- Small enclosed bays – vulnerable to theft or vandalism
- 5% special needs
- Wide spaces & level access



Footpaths

- Encouraging walkers to keep to paths:
  - Fences/barriers
  - Screens of shrubs and hedges
  - Boulders
  - Well-positioned logs
  - Woodchip paths
  - Mown central strips



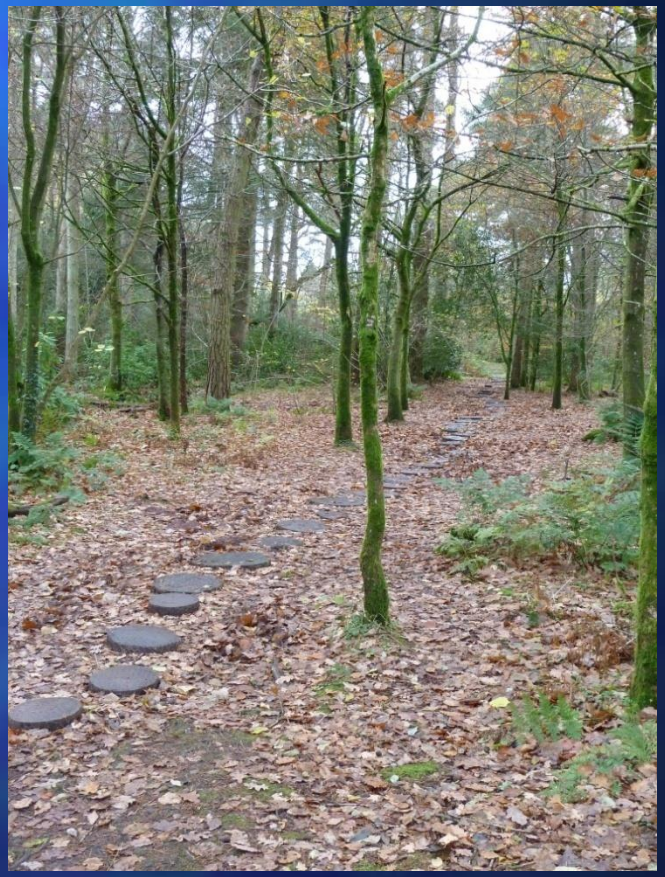
Footpaths

- Siting:
  - Topography & slope - drainage
  - Soil type & vegetation
  - 7° gradient optimal
  - Ditches for run-off
  - Zig zags
- Ascent steep slopes & descent gentle ones
- Steps



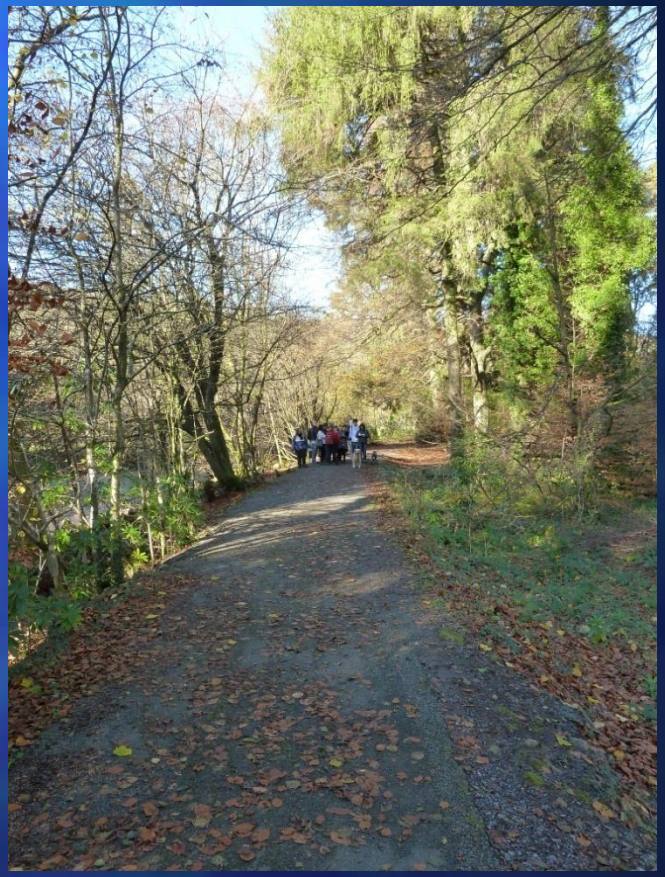
Trails

- Distances relatively short
- Figure of eight
- Mapping or information



Footpaths

- Unobtrusive
- Easily maintained
- Minimum liability to erosion
- Follow natural boundaries
- Topographic shelter
- Avoid direct ascents & straight line paths



Footpaths

- Resistance to wear and tear-soil type
- Drainage
- Waterlogging – soil appearance
- Boardwalks – width and line
- 1.0m; 1.2m; 1.7m
- Viewing platforms
- Passing places



Footpaths

- Peat areas – type of timber
- Beech *Fagus sylvatica*
- Sweet Chestnut *Castanea sativa*
- Fixed dunes
- Natural materials





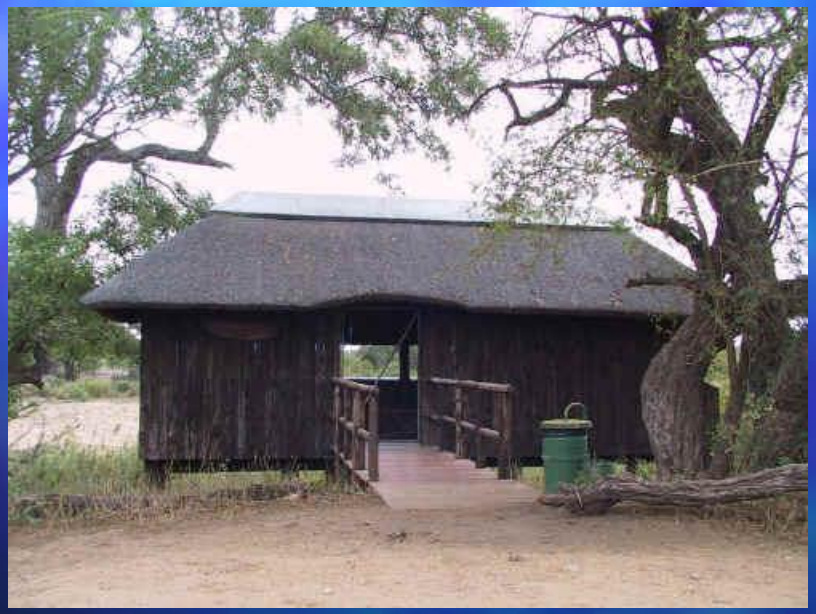
Hides



(Patterson, 2007)

- Not essential
- Natural viewpoints
- Screens
- Location – bird oases, feeding area
- Unobtrusive
- Into banks or against background vegetation

Hides



- North facing
- Or east facing at roost sites
- Natural materials
- Mimic barns
- Vandalism
- Bolt-ons

(Patterson, 2007)

Other facilities
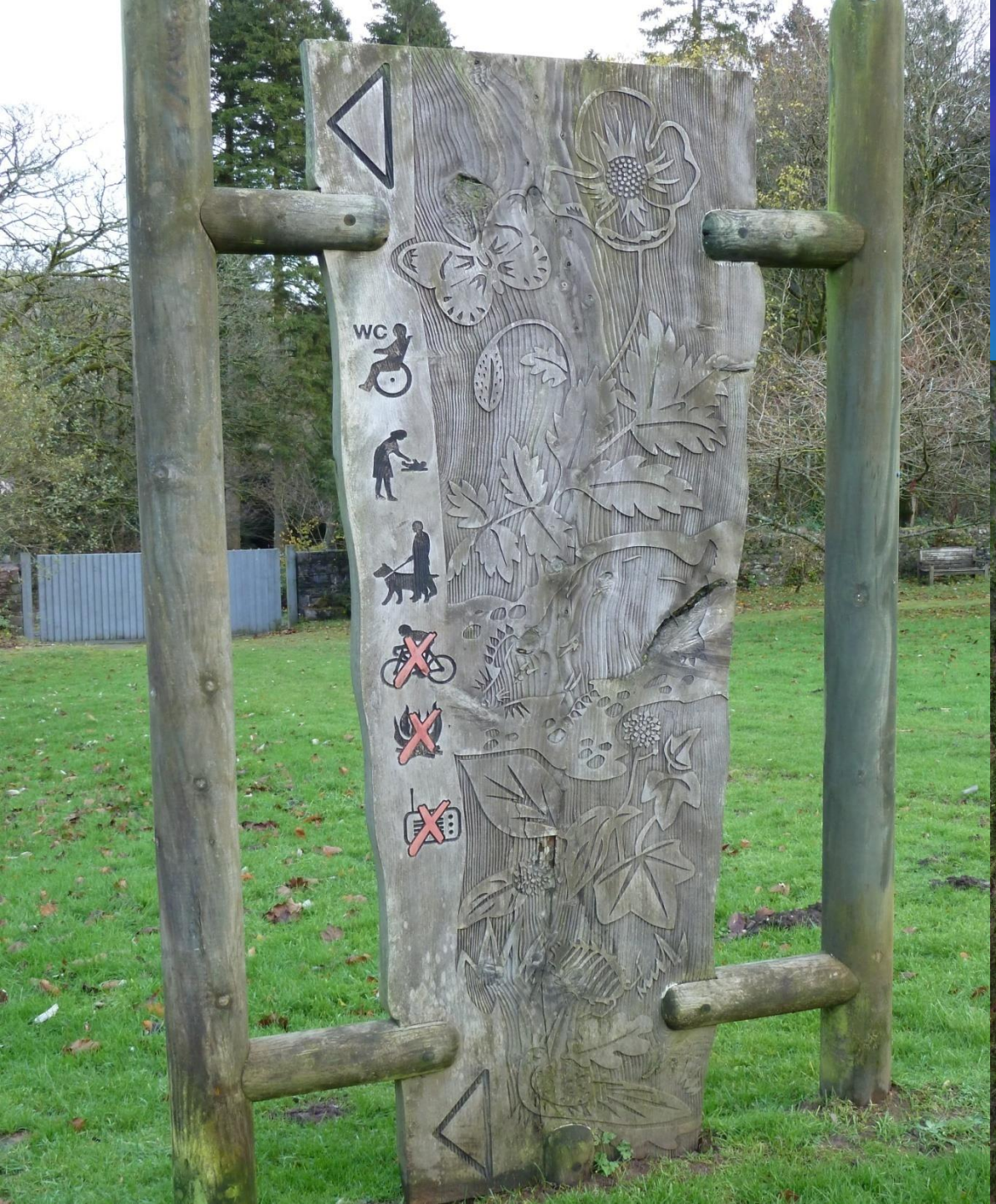


- Bins, toilets, benches, picnic tables
- Minimum visual impact
- A ‘necessary evil’
- Invest in good quality products

Signage



- Welcoming and unobtrusive
- Visitor centre
- Convey uniqueness
- Species information
- Warnings – adders
- Positioning
- Fingerpost signs

Signs





Signs



- Natural materials
- Fibreglass – maps – durability
- Steel – if vandalism is an issue

What does term **VANDALISM** mean?

- Vandalism *n. the deliberate destruction caused by vandal or an instance of such destruction.*

  (Collins Concise Dictionary, 1989)

- So ***deliberate*** damage



Vandalism

- How can deliberate damage to habitat occur?
  - Pollution
  - Noise
  - Disturbance
- Frequent proximal to urban areas
- Man-made artefacts to a minimum
- Swift action
- Locals – 'make no enemies' (Vickery, 2008:42)





Habitat management and vandalism

- How can deliberate damage to habitat occur?
  - Setting fires (arsonists)
  - Stealing animals or plants for sale or trophies eg stealing bird eggs or rustling animals for sale or cruelty
  - Stealing items protecting habitat eg fencing, gates
  - Stealing items explaining habitat eg maps, notices, interpretation panels



Habitat management and vandalism

- How can *deliberate* damage to habitat occur?
  - Damaging environment so no longer supports species that make it special eg farmers ploughing up land, stopping badger setts
  - Spreading disease eg myxamatosis rabbits
  - Ignoring rules
  - Driving vehicles over sensitive habitats eg scooters, motor bikes, bikes, 4 wheel drives
  - Litter





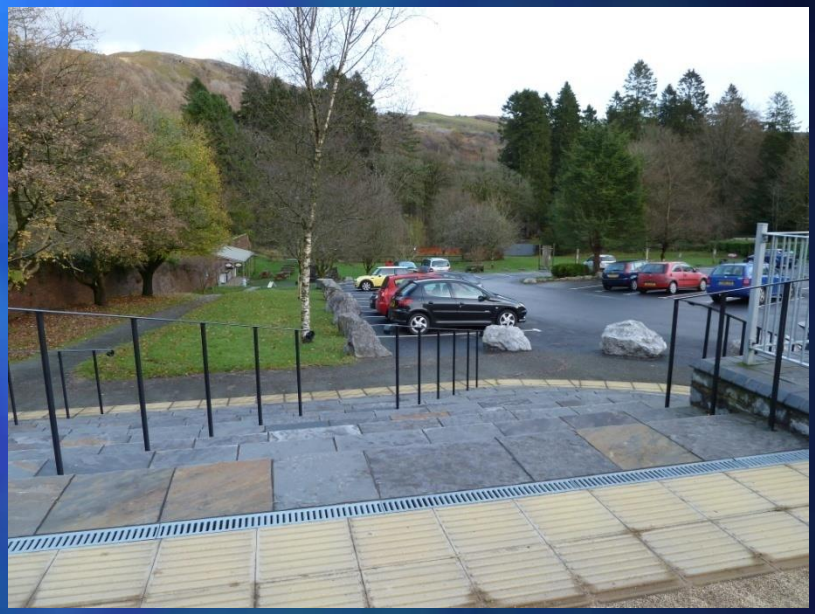
Habitat management and vandalism

- How can deliberate damage be prevented?
- Deterrents:
  - Law eg CROW Act
  - Introduction non-natives
  - Damage to SSSIs
  - Crime Prevention
    - Wild Life officers in police, reserve wardens, reserve watch systems, CCTV over rare nests
  - Public education/awareness



Habitat management and vandalism

- Design of reserves; reduction of access to sensitive areas, keeping parking away from important areas
- Secrecy; not revealing where rare animals, plants located so can't be stolen /collected



Habitat management and vandalism examples of practise



- Blocking and locking of entrances to Rheola forest
- Use of drainage channels around sensitive heathland areas in NPT - stop access of non-authorised vehicles

In preparation for next week's talk on Rewilding

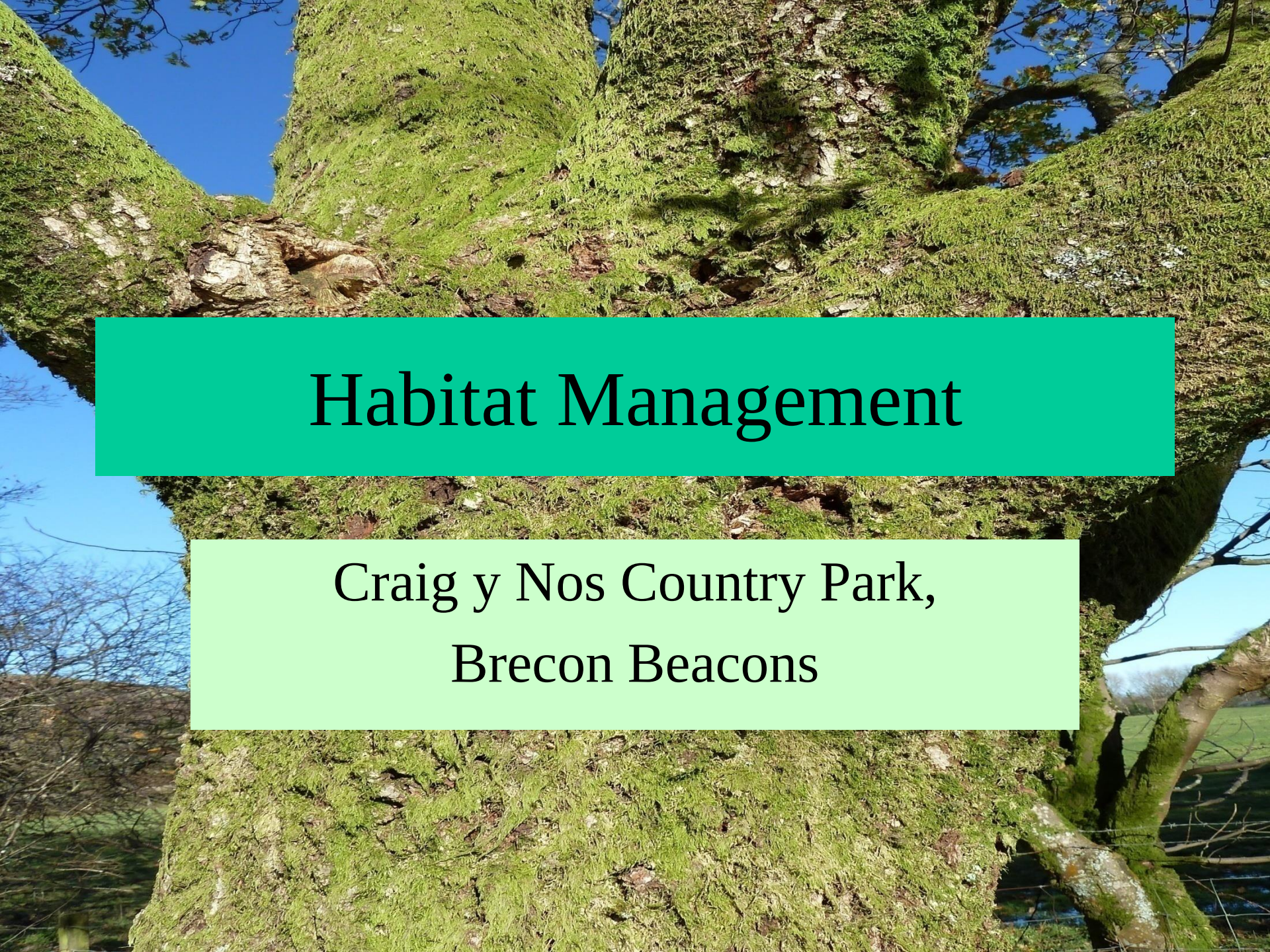


- What is rewilding?
- Is it possible in UK?
- Research the plans for Summit to Sea- O'r Mynydd i'r Môr
- What challenges has it encountered recently?
- How do you avoid such challenges moving forward?

Next week's classes



- Monday 28th October (12-2pm) IQ105 – visiting speaker Dr Rob Stonehouse: Rewilding - Lessons from across Europe
- Tuesday 29th October (11-1pm) – Introduction to grassland management



Habitat Management

Craig y Nos Country Park,

Brecon Beacons

Questions

- How is the site being managed?
- What is the site managed for and what evidence is there of potential anthropogenic threats
- Put forward management ideas which would improve the site in terms of:
  - Access
  - Wildlife

Historical Significance



Following recent vegetation clearance.



Historical context

- Built 1840s
- Adelina Patti – purchased 1878
- Castle – Grade II listed building
- Theatre – Grade I listed opera house
- Winter garden – Patti Pavilion
- Tuberculosis hospital – geriatric unit



TB treatment at CYN in the 1940s



Managed for Resources & Public Access









Habitats: Natural Resource

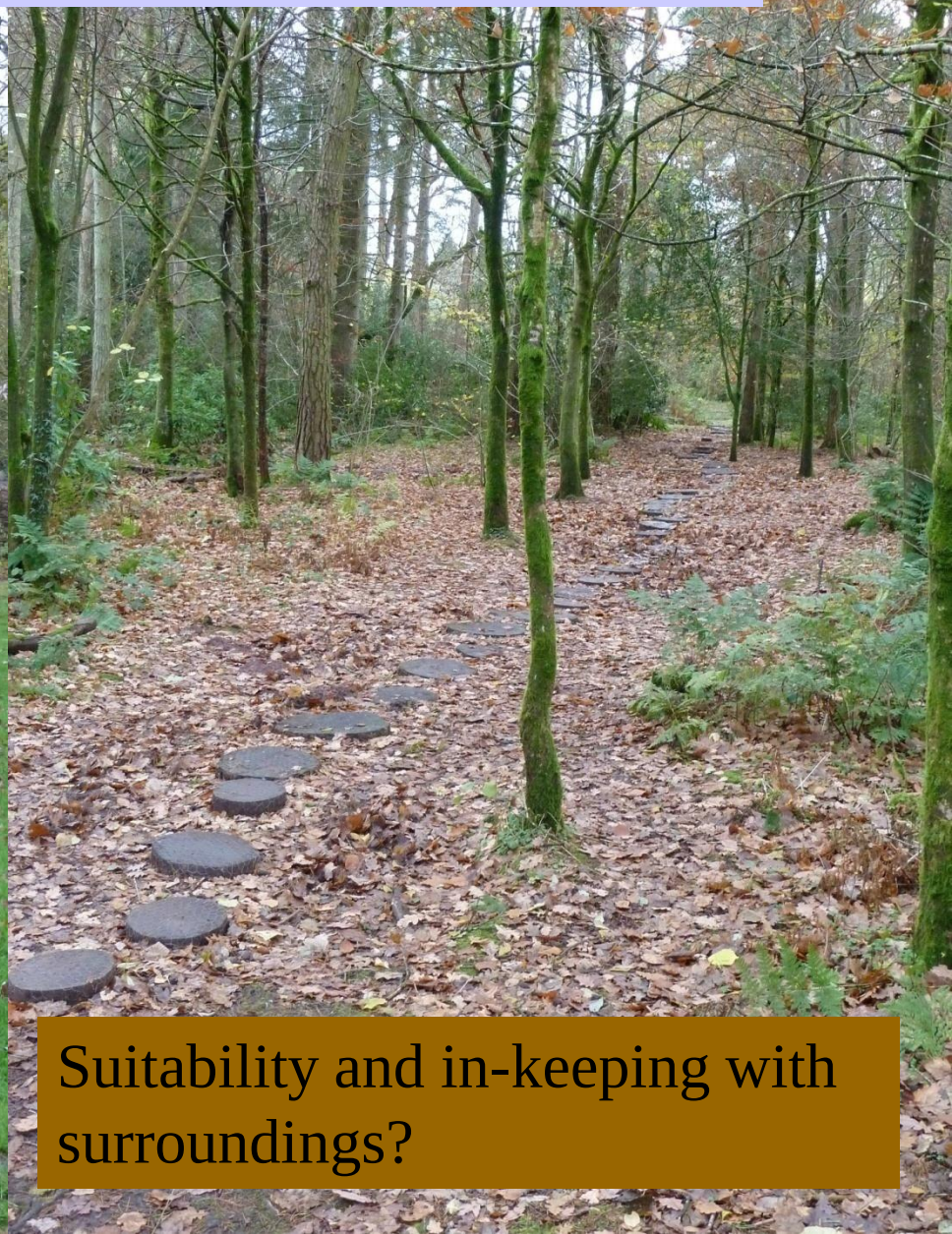
- **40 acres:**
  - **SSSI: ash wood on limestone scree**
  - **Wildflower/hay meadow**
  - **Beech wood**
  - **Rhododendron tunnel**
  - **Freshwater lakes/ponds**
  - **Pavilion lawn**

Access to Public



Managed for people: Access





Suitability and in-keeping with surroundings?









Paths

Bridges

Seating

Access Points: Beacons Way









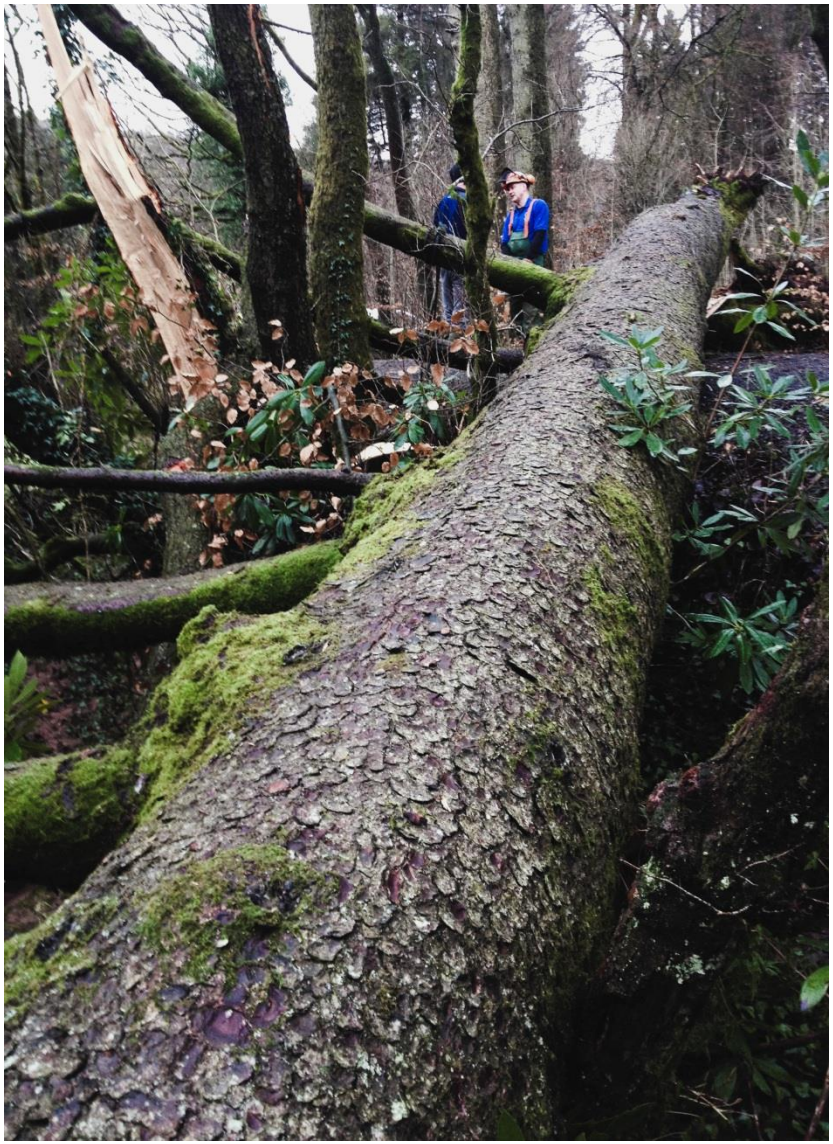




Not quite zoning but restriction of access necessary, together with information provision

Winter storm damage 2014 (Penn, 2014)








STIHL

Managed for people…and dogs!



Managed for people- Information boards



Managed for education











Managed for Wildlife





Managed for wildlife









Visitor Centre/ Entrance



- Classroom
- Geo Park - education
- Weather forecasting
- Toilets
- Parking
- Disabled facilities
- Café
- Seating
- Compost collection point

Wildlife Garden



Duckpond














Beech Wood








B20





Pond restoration – or not



Drying out of the alder woodland



So what could we do differently?



Beech wood – waterlogging from pond



Drainage channel



Channel clearing



Clearing leats of leaves & debris

Hay Meadow/ Wildflower Meadow











Invasive Species









Invasive species requiring active management







Coppicing and Pollarding







What do we do about moles?



Leaving deadwood

Managing for education – courses and conservation funding









Evidence of Anthropogenic Threats







Litter and dog waste ‘hidden’ underneath fallen tree on the path





Vandalism?







Vandalism?

- Next Week:
  - Craig y Nos Fieldtrip – have a look at the management plan on Moodle prior to site visit

