The 2019 intake of Provisional Voluntary Rangers (PVRs) meet up after their practical training day at the Hole of Horcum.

This session was organised by the Senior Rangers, assisted by the Voluntary Rangers' Liaison Group and included dealing with a series of scenarios that Rangers might encounter when on solo patrol. Each situation was discussed on site and the best way of dealing with it was suggested. Experience of using a radio in a remote location was also practised. All PVRs were successful in their training and can now undertake individual duties.
Cleveland Way National Trail - here's to another 50 years!
Andrew Carter, Cleveland Way Maintenance Ranger

As some of you may be aware, Friday 24 May 2019 marked the 50th anniversary of the Cleveland Way coming into existence as a long distance trail. It was the second National Trail to be created after the Pennine Way four years before. To mark the milestone many different events are being held over the year, but the main celebration took place on the anniversary itself when over a hundred invited guests made up of associated groups and people of the Cleveland Way’s past and present walked from Helmsley Youth Hostel to Rievaulx Abbey to follow in the footsteps of the early walkers. As you can imagine there have been many people who have contributed to the trail in many ways throughout its life so unfortunately not everyone could be invited, but those that were retraced what is appropriately known as the ‘Pilgrims Walk’.

This significant anniversary got me thinking about the changes the trail has seen in my time working for the National Park Authority and how things have developed since I was appointed as the first dedicated Maintenance Ranger on the route in 2006. Previous to me starting this new role all the maintenance had been carried out by the Field Staff teams (of which I was part) and the Area Rangers with assistance from the Voluntary Rangers and contractors and they fitted in trail maintenance between other rights of way work. In September 2006 I started work on the trail with a van, a few tools and plenty to do and initially either worked on my own or with the assistance of the field staff for the bigger jobs. During the first few years we worked on bringing the trail up to a better standard as the previous management of the trail didn’t have the time to achieve this and also improving the worst stretches with some significant surfacing works especially on the inland section. Back in those days we only had two volunteer groups (Hobs and Coasties) and they were still a relatively new thing for the authority and, as I was working on my own, I soon saw they would be a major asset towards improving and looking after the trail.

Many of the early jobs on the coastal section in particular involved cutting back scrub such as blackthorn which was really narrowing the path and thus funneling everyone on one line and eroding the path into a muddy bog. These jobs were ideal for a large groups like the Hobs and Coasties who could tackle it with as many as 18 people coming out, a number seen as too many for most jobs today. Although you could get a lot of work done with these large groups, and they are still very important to the trail, it was becoming increasingly obvious to me there was a need for some smaller volunteer groups. So after visiting some other National Trails to see how they used volunteers, the Cleveland Way Volunteer group was created in 2008 to go out and do jobs as and when required with as many...
people as needed and thus opening up many more tasks that could be done by volunteers.

Today this approach has grown and there are many more volunteer groups involved in most areas of the Authority’s work. The CW has seen more developments with the Cleveland Way Adoption Scheme (CWAS) launched a few years ago. Other groups involved in the trail are the Explorer Club and our most recent group Esk Valley Camphill Community Trust from Botton who come out once a month on a work task. We also work with a number of corporate groups.

From that start in 2006 we now have a new pickup truck which was supported by Hardmoors to carry more volunteers to site as well as a much larger collection of tools and machinery to aid in the upkeep of the trail. The most important asset we have is you, the volunteers, with your many skills and willingness to give your time to the trail, long may this continue. Finally I want to say many thanks to those of you have worked on the trail and I look forward to the next 50 years!

Photo walks
Jim Hall, Voluntary Ranger, Breath of Fresh Air Walk Leader

I have been a Voluntary Ranger for 20 years, however in the last year I have had more satisfaction and sense of achievement in a volunteer role than ever before through doing photo walks. What are photo walks? In a nutshell, they are virtual walks presented in residential and nursing homes, to people who may find it difficult to access the National Park.

The concept was developed a couple of years ago by Tony Auckland and Peter Turton. When I picked up the baton, I used their existing contacts and started to develop my own. After my first few shows the photo walks started to evolve in line with the things that evoked the best responses. I started the walks at a large village or small town providing an opportunity to show shops, pubs, churches and local landmarks, then off for a gentle stroll with flowers, trees, animals and landscapes, before ending up at our final destination. Photo walks took in routes such as Thornton le Dale to Ellerburn, or Helmsley to Kirkdale or Rievaulx.

I bought a sound bar for my computer which allowed me to add the sounds of birds, running water, the wind in the trees or the whistle of a steam train, and I also use short video clips.

I have been delighted to visit one home seven times, allowing me to get to know a lot of the residents by name. Here, the residents now tell me the locations and walks they would like me to show them. The presentations can sometimes be challenging but, with the help of the staff nothing is insurmountable, and the rewards immense.

I cover the southern side of the National Park to minimise travel. If anybody else is interested in getting involved in this, I would be happy to chat to them or to invite them along to a photo walk.
The power of collaboration!

Joan Childs, Head of Volunteering Team

Our Associate Group programme is truly up and running; we have now developed partnerships with 11 voluntary organisations. In addition, we have started working on collaborative tasks between these Associate Groups and National Park volunteers. Two of these tasks were held in March and April at Autism Plus, Park House Barns in Gilling East involving four of our newly formed Associate Groups - Park House Barns, Esk Valley Camphill Community, Easi Works and Camphill Village Trust - all groups that support people with autism, physical and mental disabilities and learning difficulties. Volunteers from these groups, joined by our own volunteers and led by our task day leaders, planted berry-bush saplings to improve the habitat for wildlife. A contingent of volunteers from the AONB, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and Moorswork also joined in the fun. These tasks show what can be accomplished when we all work together towards a common goal.

Video stars

Joan Childs, Head of Volunteering Team

Every one of our volunteers has a different story to tell about what their role in the National Park means to them, and now we have started a series of videos to share those stories.

All volunteers are able to enter any skills that they have to offer the National Park in the ‘Skills/General Interests’ section of MyVolunteering, and it was by searching this for film-making skills that we found David Finnegan. When approached, David was delighted to be involved in the project, and set about making the first video about task day leader and voluntary ranger David Bream.

David has recently completed his second volunteer video and both are available to view on the National Park website www.northyorkmoors.org.uk on the front page of MyVolunteering and on the Volunteer Facebook Page. It’s also on our Intranet for all staff to see.

We hope that these videos will inspire others to come forward and volunteer for the National Park and to let others know of all the fantastic work that our volunteers do. A big thank you to David and our budding film stars for their help!
Woodland creation
Alasdair Fagan, Woodland Creation Officer

Woodland creation here at the National Park is often in the harder to access parts of the landscape such as bracken slopes and steep bank sides, which means that contractors are brought in to undertake these difficult tasks. So, it was great when the opportunity came along to undertake a planting project in the National Park that had good access, only a couple of miles from the Moors National Park Centre. This made it a great project for volunteers to get involved in.

Throughout February and March this year I’ve been leading groups planting trees in snow, sleet, rain, sun and high winds. Together we have planted more than 3,000 trees including oak, birch, hazel, elder, wych elm, crab apple, aspen, wild cherry and rowan.

As well as planting trees, volunteers have worked tirelessly on a range of associated tasks including hammering in tree stakes, cutting lengths of mesh to form tree guards and fixing tree shelters and shrub guards. More than 700 volunteer hours have been given over a period of 10 days—very impressive!

Other groups that have helped with the planting include school children from Danby Primary, corporate volunteers, the National Park’s Young Rangers and Explorer Club, Northern Apprentices and National Park staff.

On 1 March I ran a Supertask which saw 10 members of staff join forces with some regular National Park volunteers to plant hazel through the woodland area and protect them from deer, rabbits, voles and hares. More than 200 hazels were planted and it was a great opportunity for mostly office based staff to get out into the National Park and meet some of our hardy volunteers!

Now that the planting has mostly drawn to end for this season it is great to reflect on the hours of hard work dedicated by everyone to help create 2.8 hectares of new broadleaved woodland.

A huge thank you to everyone who gave up their time and energy to spend a day or more out tree planting in all conditions. In years to come you’ll be able see the growing trees and be reminded of the good work you did.
Photo gallery

Belted Galloways encountered on the Breath of Fresh Air walk around Cringle Plantation and Raisdale led by volunteer Mike Nicholson.

Our latest batch of Task Day Leaders trained up by volunteer David Bream and Ryan Chenery. Staff and volunteers from the National Park teamed up with folks from our Associate Groups Helmsley Walled Garden and Scarborough Borough Council to receive this training.

Task Day Leader David Perry giving dry stone walling training to staff and trainees from one of our Associate Groups, Beyond Boundaries.

Phil Wallis looking understandably pleased with the new stile he helped to install.

Got a snapshot for our gallery? Send it to the Volunteering Team or pop it on our Facebook page. Search for ‘North York Moors Volunteers’.
We’re doing so, so much more!

At the end of March 2018, volunteers had clocked 13,190 days of volunteering which was a fantastic achievement. Hours are still being submitted for 2018/19 but as the Summer *Involved* goes to print we are already on an astonishing 22,989 days, and increase of 74% over the previous year! Thank you so much for everything that you all do in the National Park. We could not do everything we are able without the support of our amazing volunteers! If you still have any outstanding hours, please do log them on MyVolunteering and remember that you can include your travel and preparation time, and any time you spend on training in those hours.

But, it’s not just about numbers – here are some of the comments that you made on the Volunteer Satisfaction Survey which warmed the cockles of our hearts.

"I love North Yorkshire and wanted to be part of something that conserved and cared for a special part of it. Volunteering with the NYMNPA is one of the best things I’ve done."

"Thank you for making better use of our skills and experience and helping us to develop new skills."

"I’m 76 and still enjoy tasks, even in the rain."

"The variety of volunteer opportunities has increased so much over the last year."

"You make volunteers feel part of the team."

"We love to see young people involved in volunteering and apprenticeships."

"It’s like family."

"I can’t keep up with others – when walking off site someone walked with me so I didn’t feel as if I was being left behind."

More on the Volunteer Satisfaction Survey

We had some great scores and feedback from the survey, but it’s the things that you tell us that we could do better that are the most helpful to us. Here are a couple of the things that you said, and what we are doing about them.

"We want to be kept more informed about what’s going on in the National Park generally.”

We are including more information about our general work in *Involved* and mailing you our staff newsletter. We are working to get volunteers access to our electronic training, currently only available to staff, which includes a useful and interesting induction to National Parks. We are also working on an induction which will be for both staff and volunteers.

"We would like more contact and communication with senior managers.”

We are running Supertasks for volunteers and staff to work on tasks together, which will include Directors. We have already held two Supertasks and have a third planned for July. It gives staff and volunteers a chance to talk to each other while working side by side, as well as achieving more on the ground through increased numbers.
My Volunteer Page, a few small changes

Some of you may have noticed that myvolunteerpage.com has changed to myimpactpage.com. This is just a name change, and you can still use the old web address, nothing else has changed.

There is now an app available for Apple and Android devices which you can download to manage your volunteer account including signing up for tasks and recording hours.

You can now also view volunteering opportunities in a calendar view, rather than just a list. In the opportunities menu, select ‘Opportunities Calendar’ then select the organisation you want to volunteer in.

If you would like more info about these changes or have any other problems using myvolunteerpage.com, please contact the Volunteering Team on volunteers@northyorkmoors.org.uk

Changes in the Volunteering Team!

Joan Childs, Head of Volunteering Team

I’m very pleased to let you know that Rachael Poole is our new Volunteer Officer. Rachael has been working for the National Park as Admin Assistant in Corporate Services and volunteers with her son in the Explorer Club. She will be working four days a week – each weekday except Wednesday, but with some flexibility to enable her to see the full range of volunteering in the Park.

Rachael will be working with staff and volunteers in the National Park to ensure that volunteering runs smoothly. Ryan Chenery has taken on a new role – Partnership and Development Officer. He will be concentrating on Task Day Leaders and Associate Groups.

Jo Dowson and our volunteer Paul Hepworth continue to undertake the team’s admin and lead on MyVolunteering.
Volunteer Satisfaction Survey – a Ranger perspective
Debbie Trafford, Head of Recreation and Ranger Services

I’m grateful to all of our Ranger Service volunteers who responded to the Volunteer Team’s survey. The responses help us to understand and improve your volunteer experience. Please feel free to raise anything with your line manager or task leader for a more in depth discussion, but I’ll try now to respond to some of the main comments raised in the survey.

We always try to post information on tasks in good time, but there are often real time constraints such as needing to know how many volunteers we might have before knowing the task we can do, or waiting for a more detailed weather forecast. These factors will also affect the type of task that we can undertake on the day. It’s often sensible to check with your task leader before you set off if severe weather is forecast. We will always try to run the task wherever possible, but sometimes we have to cancel at short notice for safety reasons.

As the range and amount of volunteering increases in the National Park, we are seeing more demands on our tool stocks. We are working with the Volunteer Team on this, and the tool store has been relocated to be more accessible to task leaders at weekends, more tools are being purchased, and we are trialling a simple tool booking system - more details to follow from the Volunteer Team soon. We are also lucky to have some volunteers in quartermaster roles at the depots who help to maintain our tools and equipment. However, it’s still really important that our tools and equipment are looked after and returned in a clean and serviceable condition. Report any faults or damage immediately to your task leader.

Several people told us that they felt many of the ranger volunteer tasks focus too much on footpath maintenance and routine tasks. We know that many of you have built up skills and experience after years of volunteering with us. We have to go where our priorities take us, and often these tasks are repetitive and hard work. Please believe us though – this work is really important and we couldn’t do as much as we do without your contribution. The rewards are hopefully there in the company, the scenery and the sense of achievement. However, do register any skills on MyVolunteering – this allows us to match volunteers with specific tasks that come up, and also keep an eye on Activities Open to All Volunteers where you have the opportunity to try your hand at something different.
My First Year as an NYM volunteer
Paul Bennett, Volunteer

How I got here
I have always loved North Yorkshire and enjoyed many a day out there with my family and friends. At one time in the 70’s I used to regularly commute across the moors to Scarborough in the summer, and I loved it.

After I retired from an Engineering career in heavy industry in 2016, I began to realise I needed a new focus. Then one day at Danby Moors Centre in the summer of 2017 I watched a video in the display area showcasing the landscape and it reminded me of happy days taking landscape photos, and taking holidays and outings.

Those images stayed in my mind and so after some months mulling it over, I decided to apply to be volunteer. And since I had been a STEM ambassador and worked with schools for many years it was suggested I join the Youth Engagement team.

What did I find?
This is a lovely organisation to work in and is set in beautiful countryside.

It’s refreshing to come to NYMPA and enjoy both the day, and the work. And if like me, you once worked in a large or government organisation you’ll be familiar with how things are done.

As a volunteer I am very well supported by the staff whose knowledge about the natural environment, its history and management are impressive; and on which I depend on my new learning curve. (It’s a shock when you realise just how little you actually know outside your normal sphere, when trying to answer children’s questions about whelks during rock-pooling at Robin Hood’s Bay).

What have I done?
I have been able to branch out a little too. In 12 months I have qualified as a minibus driver, become a scheduled monuments surveyor, supported the Young Rangers programme, visited an archaeological dig, assisted with teaching fly fishing on the Esk, helped deliver environment based events at Danby, supported educational field trips, designed a mobile stile and even looked after a yurt on the odd occasion.

Volunteering for the Parks Authority I’ve been to places I didn’t know existed and learned there many dimensions to the moors landscape. The modern NYM environment belies its past history from Neolithic times, through the industrial revolution and world wars to the present day. Each era has left its physical mark in many places on the land. Discovering that history and visiting archaeological sites with park staff has been a real treat.

Over the last year I’ve met some really interesting and nice people seen and learned many new things (thanks to The Moors National Park Centre staff), and I still am – long may it continue.
Games & picnic

6pm to 9pm
Friday 21st June
The Moors National Park Centre, Danby
Staff and Volunteers welcome
Turn up, bring a picnic and join in some games if you want to

There will be a chance to buy some cakes at the event with proceeds going towards 2 of our Young Rangers’ travel costs to Estonia where they are attending the Europarc International Camp.

Please sign up on MyVolunteering in ‘Activities open to all volunteers’ if you would like to come along!
Volunteers Week 2019

This is a national event which runs for a week each June, celebrating volunteers and volunteering.

The National Park Volunteering Team celebrated with daily Facebook posts, sharing the fantastic contribution that National Park volunteers make throughout the Park and beyond. Posts included volunteers and staff receiving training on working with people with disabilities and/or autism and our last Supertask with volunteers and staff planting trees at Howe End, Danby. We mentioned our growing team of Sutton Bank Visitor Centre volunteers and the release of our second volunteering film. We simply couldn’t mention all the fantastic volunteers we have in five posts, but we hope that we managed to show what a wide range of activities that you all give your time to support.

So, a huge thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers. The enthusiasm, energy and hard work that volunteers bring is fantastic and we couldn’t do it without you!

Find us on Facebook

All volunteers are invited to join the National Park Volunteers Facebook page which is open to view by all. If you have taken part in an interesting volunteering activity, why not share your photos and experience with other volunteers and likeminded people?

Jo Dowson
Volunteering Team Assistant
j.dowson@northyorkmoors.org.uk