

Scottish Wildlife Trust

Engagement



Scottish
Wildlife
Trust



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Engagement Strategy 2030

Engagement Strategy 2030

Introduction

Engaging with nature is good for people. It makes people happier and healthier. It helps people to recover faster from physical and mental illnesses and it helps to reduce anger, fear, stress and depression.

Engaging with nature is also good for nature. People who have a connection to nature are more likely to behave positively towards it. They are more likely to care for and want to restore the nature on their doorsteps.

Engaging with people and inspiring and enabling them to engage with nature can therefore contribute towards the delivery of the Trust's vision:

Our Vision

A network of healthy, resilient ecosystems on land and sea, supporting Scotland's wildlife and people

Because of this, engaging with people and enabling their engagement with nature has been a fundamental part of the Trust's work for decades. What's different as we look to 2030 is that we now want to reach even more people, with an emphasis on communities, and ensure that an even more diverse range of people can become involved. The disconnect between people and nature is one of the key drivers that has helped shape our Strategy 2030 and, to address this, our public engagement work going forwards will focus on delivering Goal 2 within the strategy:

Goal 2

Communities across Scotland are taking action for nature in an increasingly diverse, collective effort in which everyone can play their part.

Given that public engagement work is delivered by staff in multiple teams across the Trust, a challenge we face is strategically aligning all our engagement activities towards this common goal. This strategy and the engagement programme that it informs provides that alignment and should be applied across the Trust so that we can achieve maximum impact for people and wildlife.

This strategy is therefore for all staff who deliver or manage public engagement work in their roles, whether through our volunteer and young people's networks, on our reserves, in our visitor centres, through our major projects, at our events or in the many other ways in which we engage with the public.

Engagement principles

All our engagement activities should align with the following principles:

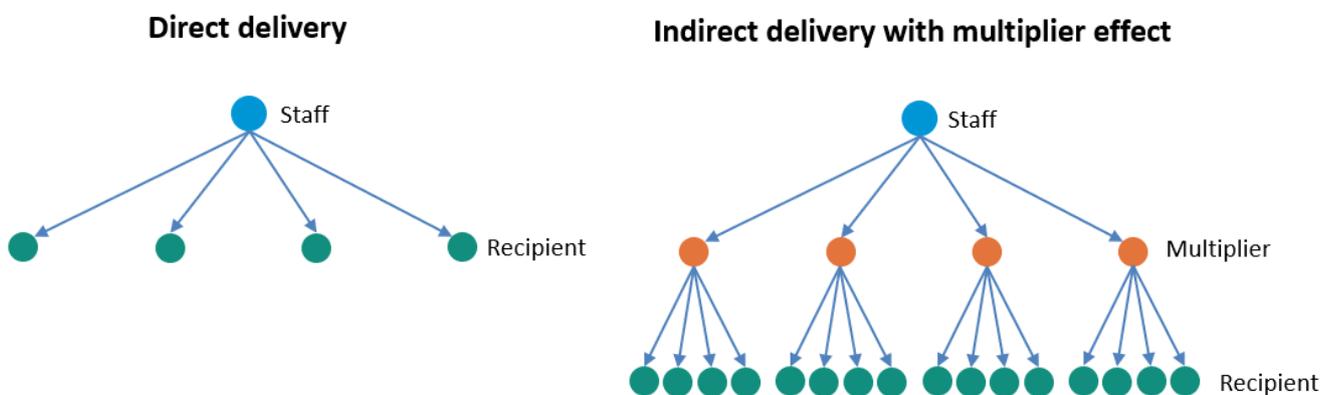
- **We are inclusive** – we will ensure there are ways for everyone to engage with and take action for nature.
- **We enable** – we will upskill and resource others to increase our impact.
- **We are journey-focused** – we will ensure that there is always a next step and/or opportunity on a supporter's journey.
- **We are data-driven** – we will use data to inform and improve our engagement work.
- **We are open** – we will take an open and participative approach to our work.

Target audiences

The potential list of audiences that we might focus our engagement activities towards is long and varied, including:

- School children
- Families
- Teachers
- Volunteers
- Young career developers
- Wildlife enthusiasts
- Environmentally conscious people
- People in areas of multiple deprivation
- Minority ethnic groups
- People suffering from poor mental health
- Gardeners
- Religious groups
- Recent retirees

Whilst it is unrealistic to think that the Trust can deliver *direct* engagement work to all these target audiences at the ambitious scale of “across Scotland”, achieving *indirect* delivery at this scale is possible. By enabling others to lead on engagement activities, our impact benefits from the *multiplier effect*.



Therefore, whilst written resources may need to be targeted at specific ‘recipient’ audiences, our direct engagement work should focus primarily on ‘multiplier’ audiences, such as:

- Teachers
- Place-based community leaders
- Ambassadors/influencers
- Leaders of our local groups
- Policy makers
- Reserve convenors
- Wildlife Watch leaders
- Young Leaders

Prioritising engagement activity

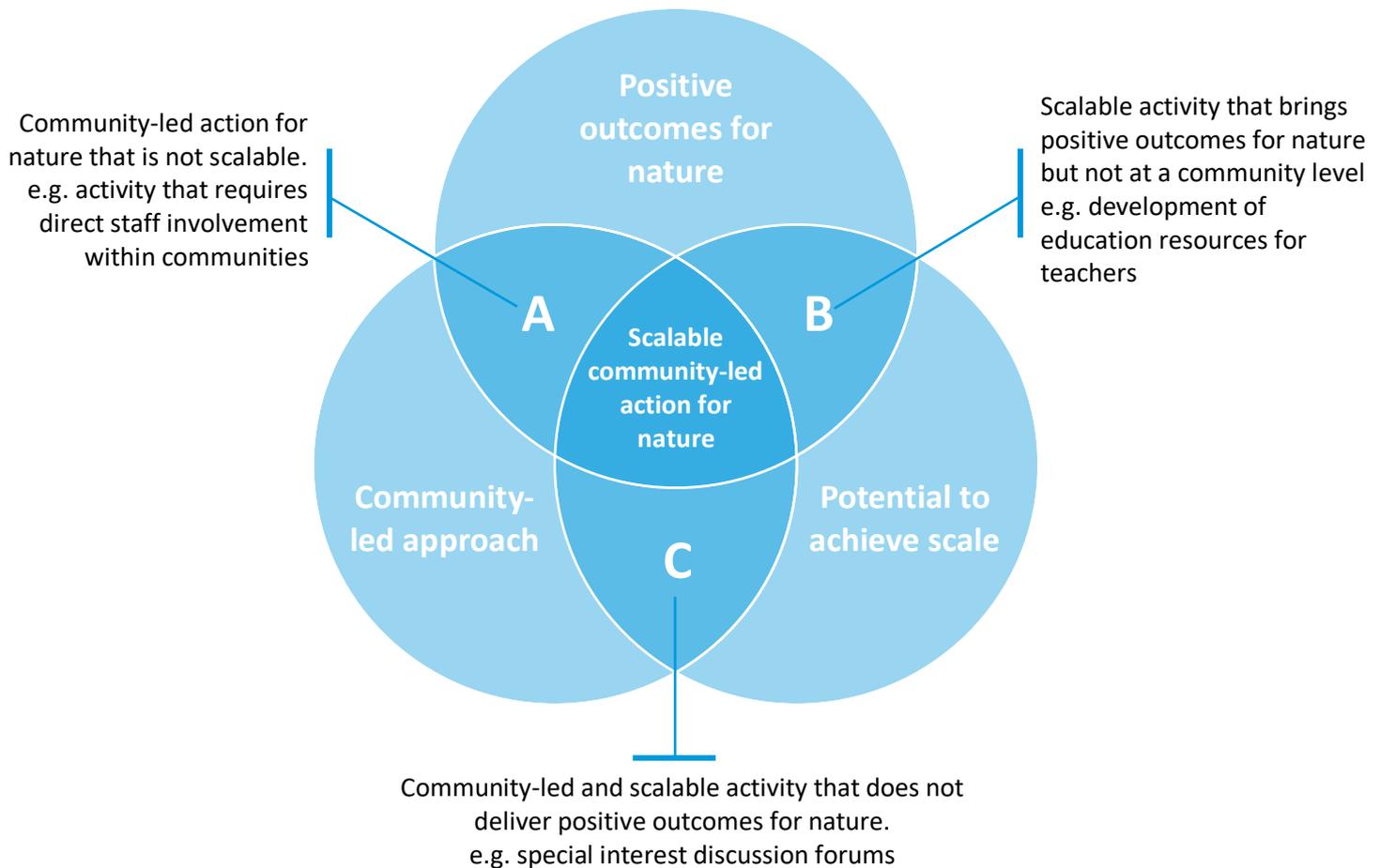
Our engagement efforts should focus on three priority areas:

1. Engagement that directly or indirectly results in positive outcomes for nature
2. Engagement that enables a community-led approach
3. Engagement that has the potential to achieve scale

These are by no means mutually exclusive and in fact overlap in such a way that priority can be given based on the number of priority areas an activity meets. To assist with prioritisation, a simple tool has been developed – our engagement propeller.

The diagram below should be used as a practical tool when considering an engagement activity. While not all activities need to sit in the centre in order to make a valuable contribution to Goal 2, if an activity falls within areas A, B or C, it should be considered if/how it might be brought into the centre to maximise its impact.

Engagement propeller



Engagement programme

An overarching engagement programme will help to ensure strategic alignment between engagement activities across the Trust. This engagement programme has three complimentary strands of focus:

1. A public-facing engagement campaign to inspire people to take action for nature
2. A leadership programme for those that want to lead action for nature in their communities
3. A nature recovery showcase that demonstrates what can be achieved at a community level

1. Public engagement campaign

Aim: A national engagement campaign will focus on inspiring and enabling people to become involved in community-led activities that benefit nature.

Primary delivery mechanism: digital (website, eMarketing, social media)

A national campaign will be developed that encourages people to take action individually and as part of their communities to benefit nature on their doorsteps. The campaign should be developed in partnership with one or more strategically selected partner organisations that already have established connections within communities to help the campaign to reach new audiences and, by doing so, increase the diversity of people engaged and increase the impact they have collectively.

An important element of the campaign will be a central online resource hub (built as part of our existing digital portal) that provides:

- The ability for a person to create their own Wildlife Action Plan
- A means for people to connect with others taking action for nature in their community

- A means of recording the actions taken by individuals and communities
- A map that displays basic information on actions being taken across the country
- Access to a directory of groups that people can get involved with (inc. reserve groups, local groups, Wildlife Watch groups, SSRS groups, Living Landscape groups)

Themed years will help to keep the campaign active and interesting for those involved, and recruiting a number of campaign ambassadors will help to further increase reach and the diversity of our audience.

2. Community leadership programme

Aim: A skills-building programme to help existing and aspiring community leaders who want to coordinate and conduct action for nature in their community.

Primary delivery mechanism: face-to-face (Engagement team, visitor centres, reserve staff, project engagement staff, teacher naturalists) and digital (webinars, forums)

A community leadership programme will be developed to give people the knowledge and skills required to lead action for nature within their community (or teach them how to harness existing skills to achieve this). The programme should provide:

- Training on how to coordinate action for nature
- A guiding framework that can be used by leaders to identify relevant community-led actions for nature
- A baseline understanding across multiple disciplines but with the opportunity to 'specialise' in a particular area by taking further 'modules' (e.g. fundraising, planning, advocacy)
- Information toolkits that community leaders can use to facilitate and inform actions and community organising (e.g. how to carry out a specific action for nature or how to seek funding)
- One-off online events and discussions that offer the chance to learn from experts in a wide range of fields
- A wildlife advisor/mentor service (wildlife advisors would be volunteers themselves)
- The opportunity to visit areas where the Trust delivers direct engagement activity (e.g. reserves and Living Landscapes)
- An alumni programme that enables graduates to continue to give each other peer support through the sharing of learning and experiences

3. Nature recovery showcase

Aim: To showcase best practice and celebrate examples of nature recovery in order to inspire others to take action for nature.

Primary delivery mechanism: digital (website, story maps)

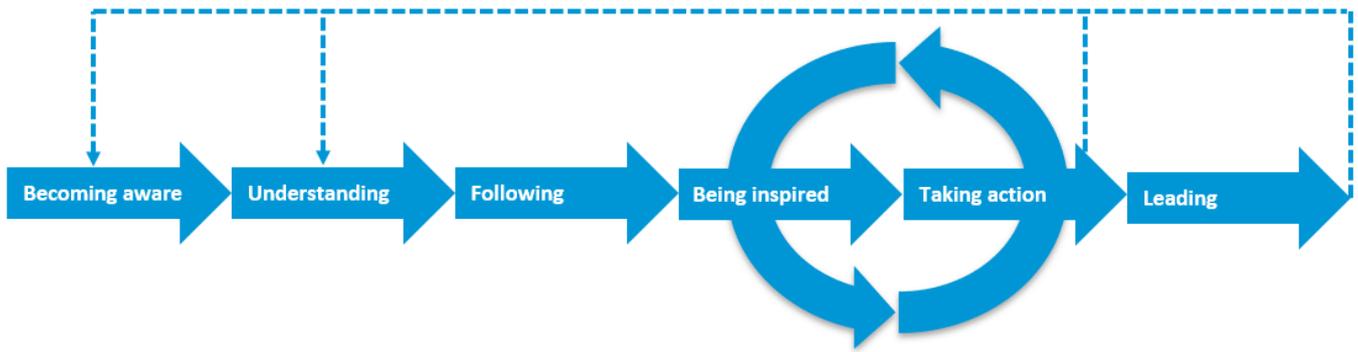
The digital showcase will highlight best practice examples of nature recovery at a community level, including practical, fundraising and advocacy outcomes. When first launched, the showcase will feature examples that the Trust has helped to directly deliver. Over time, the number of case studies can expand to include examples from communities that have benefitted from our engagement campaign and leadership programme, providing recognition to the volunteers involved.

If communities are able to submit an application to showcase their work, this also provides an opportunity for an annual competition element to the engagement programme.

If launched in 2022, this could be linked to Scotland's Year of Stories.

Journey of engagement

While every individual's journey will be unique and not necessarily linear, the below is a generalised journey of engagement that we should look to move people along.



The ambition is not to move every supporter along the entirety of this journey, but to always provide a next step or opportunity should the individual want to take it. Our aim should be to get as many people as possible into the inspiring action loop, as this is the point at which they will be helping to deliver Goal 2.

It should be noted that 'Taking action' includes practical action, action to influence others (such as being an online champion) and financial action (e.g. joining/donating).

Measuring impact

To establish progress towards delivering Goal 2 and the impact that our engagement programme is having, we must assess how well we are helping to build skills, knowledge and connections in communities across Scotland. Whilst the specific KPIs of each strand will be decided as part of the engagement programme development process, key considerations should be:

1. How to best track progress along the journey of engagement
2. How to best capture stories as well as statistics
3. How to best measure how a person's skills and knowledge have improved and/or have been put to good use

Engagement resources

The following are resources that we can call upon for the engagement programme:

- Experienced engagement staff (Engagement team, VCs, Teacher Naturalists, project and reserve engagement staff)
- Case studies of engaging with communities to take action for nature (Living Landscapes, Living Seas, Ayrshire, SSRS)
- Digital resources (website, digital portal, Learning Zone)
- Physical engagement spaces (visitor centres and reserves)
- A well-respected brand and a good reputation with funders and partners
- Financial resources

Pete Haskell
Head of Communications & Engagement
February 2022

Engagement programme

