

BIG ADVENTURE DAYS

Exmoor National Park Authority



Interview with: Adam Vasey, ENPA Ranger
Name of project: Big Adventure Days
Location: Various locations in Exmoor National Park
By who: ENPA rangers

How: funded through ENPA (Exmoor National Park Authority) core budget for outreach; staff time; Heart of Exmoor Scheme staff time and budget for community groups (eg. travel bursaries).

Aims:

- The need to get more families involved/ family events
- Started general: engage with families in the National Park and for them to explore different or remote areas
- Broad and simple aim: recreation in the National Park
- Now: aims are more site-specific/ focus on the site, ie. Lynmouth = coast; Nutcombe = woodlands

How long has it been running for and has it changed over time?

4 years (2012-2015 and continuing); principles are the same but the events and themes have developed and grown.



Main considerations:

- SAFETY
- Good sites needed
- Some already have toilets
- Safe sites, ie. away from traffic (main priority)
- Publicity



Those involved:

- Adam: part of his job description
- Patrick Watts-Mabbot (ENPA Volunteer and Outreach Officer): through getting the volunteer hours and involvement
- David Rolls: moorland activities and publicity
- Volunteers: ENPA volunteer scheme and Heart of Exmoor outreach and volunteer projects
- The events could not run at the same scale without volunteers as there are no limit on numbers, as would be with staff time; involvement is fun; training (eg, first aid)



Partnerships and sources of advice:

Differs with each event location:

- South West Lakes Trust at Haddon's Hill: do a walk around Wimbleball
- Crown Estate at Nutcombe
- National Trust (Somerset) rangers at Webber's Post
- National Trust (Devon) rangers at Heddon's Mouth

Advice:

- ENPA Education Officer, David Gurnett
- And then... figured it out: started small/ experience



How was it undertaken:

- Gradual process and advanced planning
- Project plan – month/ week/ day to go planner and checklist

Constraints and limitations:

- Staff time and budget
- Geographical constraints of the site, eg. carpark not big enough; too many people (although never needed to turn people away)

Outcomes and recommendations:

- Successful Project!
- Would like to have more people attend
- Reduce staff time and costs – due to have 20% staff budget cuts
- Quantify visitor satisfaction?
- Publicity can always be better
- Now have better site briefings; more organised
- Some families now regularly attend the events
- Positive side effect: the events are nice vehicles for small community groups to “piggy back” on/ have a stall and publicise their projects

Key considerations when managing volunteers:

- Health & Safety
- Use strength of the volunteers
- Well-managed event; fun!

Example of something you're pleased with:

2014 Webber's Post:

- 450 people attended; travelled specifically to go to event (more people at the BAD in Lynmouth, but mostly passers-by)
- An average amount of effort was inputted into the organisation of the event: input for output = great
- Last event of the year, well rehearsed and organised – very rewarding

When something didn't go to plan:

The carparking at Nutcombe Bottom used to be an issue: some of the parking was along a forestry track which to get out of you had to drive further up and turn around, which some drivers has concerns over. Solution: shuffled site around and changed location design.

The first BAD, Haddon Hill 2012: bit adventurous/ ambitious as to how far people would walk to get to activities (eg. those with buggies) as some people turned around.

Advice for anyone looking to set up a project:

- Ensure it is well organised
- Health and Safety procedures are all in place; thorough risk assessments. Accidents are worse than no one turning up (if you did all the publicity you could then fair enough/ couldn't be helped)

Other comments:

You can go over-board on activities; it's best to keep it simple. Over time have learnt the ones and style of activity which work best.

