

Big Adventure Days

A Volunteer's Perspective

Interview with: Ken Mills, volunteer
Name of project: Big Adventure Days
Location: Various sites around Exmoor
By who: Exmoor National Park Authority

Aims:

- Provide a low cost family day out on Exmoor
- Educate participants in various aspects of local flora and fauna
- Educate participants, especially children, in aspects of country life, e.g. den building, fire lighting, foraging etc.

How and why did you get involved in the project?

How – I contacted (with difficulty in 2010) the relevant people in ENPA – ENPA is, I think, much more volunteer oriented these days.

Why – I wanted, upon moving into the area, to become involved in Exmoor, especially conservation, promotion and education - I wanted to assist ENPA in times of falling budgets

How long have you been involved and how much time do you spend on the project?

5 years. 5 whole days / year with occasional pre meetings.

Benefits to you?

- I feel that I am contributing to the work of ENPA
- I learn about Exmoor and its surroundings
- I meet interesting people and groups

Downsides?

Exmoor is often wet and cold!

A typical day in action:

As I am not expert in nature or wildlife, I help in less technical ways – e.g. car parking, tent erection, local knowledge dissemination – try to be a “friendly face of the Park”.

As a volunteer, what are the most important things for organisers to be aware of?

- Good, efficient communication
- Clear idea as to how individual volunteers are to be employed.

Any advice for others looking to become involved in a project?

- Be flexible
- Be prepared to do things outside your previous experience for which you may feel untrained, inexperienced or unsuited
- Be prepared to “tough it out”
- Try to be sympathetic to problems that may arise due to overworked staff.

