

Our Impact

Field Studies Council

Inspiring everyone to be curious,
knowledgeable, passionate and caring
about our environment

FSC



Introduction

This report shows the positive impact of our charity on both people and planet.

The Field Studies Council (FSC) provides outstanding experiences for people to connect with the environment, learn about it and make choices that help protect it. This was the vision of FSC's pioneers when they first met during World War Two.

“Ultimately, the environment is protected by people who value and understand nature.”

First-hand experiences in nature spark curiosity and passion, but when combined with knowledge, empower people to live more sustainably. They become environmental advocates themselves by impacting those around them. FSC's impact is in helping learners take those steps.

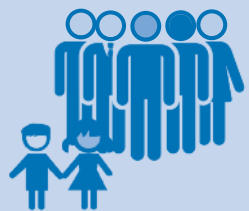
We need everyone to care about the danger that our planet faces and have the knowledge and ability to do something about it. This need has only increased as the need to protect our environment has become urgent.

FSC's impact report highlights our work in delivering environmental education to people of all ages and abilities, but also new areas of work where our impact is growing.

Mark Castle

Chief Executive

Mark Castle OBE
Field Studies Council Chief Executive



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150,113 visitors
187,210 overnight stays
98,489 day visits
11,358 courses in 2019

“ The students who attended the trip said how much easier the exam was because they could remember the different parts of the river... because they saw it first-hand. **Humanities leader**

“ The boys began to appreciate that knowledge, skills and learning can be accessed in the immediate environment... this raised their confidence. They saw that learning is for everyone. **Teacher**

Outdoor learning

There is no substitute for first-hand experiences in nature. FSC gives our learners chances to see and explore landscapes for themselves. Hands-on practical activities in the outdoors bring a subject to life, and create vivid memories which last.

The real world includes urban areas. FSC leads courses in fast changing urban conurbations where learners are helped to explore and interpret London and its parks or Birmingham's regeneration areas.



“ You don't get to measure beach profiles in Hackney!
A level geography student

Benefits of residentials

FSC residential experiences provide time to study in greater depth. This has a positive impact on study skills, critical thinking, and reflection. Away from the usual classroom environment, FSC residentials offer time and space to develop better peer relationships.

Being away from home, sharing new experiences, and overcoming challenges all build personal and social skills. Teachers and parents report improvements in independence, self-confidence and self-esteem. Levels of team-working and maturity improve.

Residentials provide significant contact time so that teachers get to know their students better too, with the impact seen in learners being less worried about making mistakes or asking for help.

“ A girl who wouldn't answer tutor's questions on the first day spoke in front of everyone in the last day's presentation. The value of that is just not measurable. **Teacher**



Bursaries

Lack of opportunity shows itself in lack of experiences that widen horizons and increase aspirations.

People most likely to benefit from an FSC experience are most likely to miss out. This is where FSC's charitable activities make an impact.

FSC bursaries provide financial support for disadvantaged young people to attend an FSC course. In fact, support for individuals is often a deciding factor on whether the whole class can experience fieldwork. Without FSC bursaries, whole peer groups miss out on outdoor classroom learning.



“ The students live in inner-city areas and for the vast majority this was the first time they had set foot in the countryside. One asked me what 'wellies' were! **Teacher**



BioLinks

Biological recording provides vital information about Britain's wildlife and how it is coping or not with habitat loss and climate change. The UK needs more biological recorders to fill the knowledge gaps so that campaign organisations and governments can take action.

FSC BioLinks is a £1.4m training and skills project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

We are filling the skills gaps in invertebrate identification with programmes in the West Midlands and South East England.

FSC BioLinks has accessible entry to engage the curiosity of individuals wanting to connect with nature as well as boosting the knowledge and skills of those who are interested in biological recording as a career.

This project has already expanded the UK's database of 'unloved' invertebrate species with thousands of new records.

“ I think that Tomorrow's Invertebrate Recorders has reminded me all over again why I wanted to work in the countryside sector, and the direction of my career that I want to go.

“ It's been great to re-spark my passion and kick-fire my knowledge and interest, and Tomorrow's Invertebrate Recorders has opened me up to a whole world of invert recording – I now want my own moth trap and want to join a local interest group.

“ For all the information in books and on the internet, there is no substitute for hands-on time in the field or at the microscope with an expert guiding your progress... without the BioLinks courses I would not have been able to progress my knowledge.



886 learners
in 2019

Holidays

Parents who have had little childhood or school experiences of exploring nature can lack confidence when it comes to taking their own children out of doors.

FSC holidays offer a chance to get outdoors, take in nature's sights, sounds and smells and above all else, have fun.

Activities to inspire curiosity about nature are included in the holiday. The family can all learn together. For some parents, it's a fun way to boost their own knowledge, but it also has a deeper impact.

“ We had a fantastic time, thanks to your team. Staff were brilliant with the kids, they learnt a lot and so did I! I can now take my girls out bug hunting, etc., and have an idea of what we should be doing!



560 families
in 2019



700 young people with visual impairments have taken part since 2005

“ I will definitely say that I will be giving everything a go because I pushed myself... and I persevered.



Everyone

FSC includes those who have less easy access to nature, but where doing so has a big personal impact.

Visual impairment projects

Since 2005, FSC has worked with other charities to support young people with sight loss and visual impairment.

Using the environment as a vehicle for learning, participants report improvements in their independent living skills levels, especially self-confidence.

FSC created a tactile model for young people to locate where they were in relation to panic, stretch and comfort zones before and then after taking on an outdoor activity. They then celebrated their increased confidence.

City of Sanctuary hosting weekend

FSC Malham Tarn hosts families from the Maternity Stream, an outreach project for asylum seeking and refugee women in Leeds.

The weekend away is now in its fifth year and provides community, friendship, support, and relaxation.



175 people involved since 2015, 30 in 2019

“ When I come to Malham I forget all the bad things... this is my first holiday since I have lived in the UK, and I have been here five years.

“ The women and children had a fantastic time and many of them said it is the only holiday they get in a year and their children look forward to it all year.



Publications

“What’s that?” FSC foldout biodiversity guides spark curiosity.

FSC Publications are part of that first step for people to take an interest in nature in their own local area, school field or on holiday.

The lack of good guides often hampers biodiversity work and biological recording, so FSC also produces specialist guides for professionals doing research and surveys.

FSC Publications have a big following of experienced naturalists, including famous wildlife presenters. We often work with partners to develop specialist guides for overlooked species that provide really important clues to the health of our environment.

We also produce FSC guides for under-recorded species, such as earthworms, where we have radically increased earthworm records in the UK in partnership with the FSC BioLinks project.

“ I recently purchased the chart for my elderly mother who has become interested in watching garden birds from her home; she was highly delighted.

“ A fantastic way for adults and children to learn about our environment. This is just what I wanted to help me identify local ferns.



“ Great products at affordable prices, perfect for our training workshops.



Worked with 30 partners in 2019



127,000 ID guides sold;
122,000 general interest;
5,000 to enthusiasts
and professionals
in 2019

Health and wellbeing

Spending time in nature and connecting to the environment is great for our health and wellbeing. This has become a cross-cutting theme for FSC.

FSC is working closely with a PhD researcher to deepen the evidence base that underpins our approach. Many FSC experiences offer the widely adopted **Five Ways to Wellbeing**.

1 Keep learning

Something new about the world and ourselves

2 Connect

Be part of a shared experience

3 Being active

Exploring and working in the fresh air

4 Take notice

Time and opportunity for awe and wonder from the small creatures to large landscapes

5 Give

By working together in groups and adding to our store of knowledge



Nature Friendly Schools

FSC is one of the delivery partners in this £6.4 million, four-year Department for Education funded project, designed to understand how high-quality activities in natural environments in disadvantaged schools contribute to improved mental health and wellbeing and also a learners' engagement with school.

Responding to the climate emergency

FSC needs to practise what it teaches. We have a lot of buildings used by a lot of visitors, each creating a carbon footprint. Sustainability is being reflected and demonstrated in the way in which our centres and their grounds are run, and in the way in which our courses are taught.

In 2011, FSC set ambitious carbon reduction targets to reduce CO2 emissions per learner hour by 40% by the end of 2020. By 2019, we were on track with a reduction of 34%.

Our carbon management programme and investment in green technologies such as solar, water and biomass has saved an estimated £568k on energy bills. Our estate has many older off-grid buildings in remote areas that encouraged us to explore alternative green technologies.

Now, FSC shares our experience with other organisations facing similar challenges as a member of the Fit for the Future network. FSC education staff have also been trained in a United Nations course in sustainability.

We need people to understand and then feel empowered to take action. Our courses offer opportunities for our visitors to see for themselves the impact of single use plastic litter, or link their daily food choices with their own carbon footprint. This makes the connection between theory, practice and our individual actions.

FSC can make a greater impact by encouraging all of our visitors to adopt more sustainable, pro environmental behaviours whilst they stay with us, but also when they go home. This area of work is a focus of our new strategy.

Climate Change Ambassador course

FSC Millport and partners developed and delivered a new Duke of Edinburgh Gold residential. The aim was for the young people to feel inspired and then empowered to make positive changes in their local communities. Throughout the week, their understanding of the subject and their motivation to contribute to positive change grew significantly.

At the end, each pledged for the planet. Some to share what they had learned with others by speaking at school assemblies and others to take action on reducing plastic in their school and local sports clubs.

“ When I signed up for it, I had loads of questions about climate change and I came here to get them answered. Through all the group discussions and stuff we’ve done, my questions have been answered. It’s been just a great week!



In 2011, 98% of our energy use came from fossil fuels. By 2018, it was less than 50%

Partnership projects

FSC extends our reach and impact by being an active partner in both national and local projects.

These projects increase access to learning opportunities and engage under-represented communities. They also assist young people seeking to start a career in nature or give them a platform to speak on environmental issues. This work contributes to the growing evidence base for the multiple benefits of nature connection.



> FSC's close partnership with **The Royal Parks** in London extends our ability to offer a range of courses in exciting built up and natural habitats, but in easy reach of tube and train stations.

> FSC is a partner in **Our Bright Future**, a programme funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. FSC works in partnership with two projects. The **Growing Confidence** project in Shropshire builds skills and confidence in young people through exploring wild places and the wildlife in them. The **Green Futures** project in Yorkshire develops wellbeing and life skills in young people, particularly the annual Youth Environment Summit which is organised and delivered by young people at FSC Malham Tarn.



9,166 learners
in **Bushy Park,**
Greenwich Park
and **The Regent's**
Park in 2019



Over 50 Members of the UK, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments and the Northern Ireland Assembly have an FSC Centre in their constituency or region



Advocacy

High quality outdoor learning is not guaranteed for every school child. FSC campaigns to change that.

Our UK wide advocacy campaigns work to ensure that people of all ages and abilities have access to enjoy and study nature, not just those who can afford it. FSC also works through representative bodies and networks of like-minded organisations to make this happen.

FSC continues to highlight the need for appropriate school funding, for teacher training to develop confidence in outdoor learning, and for school inspectorates to look at the quality and inclusivity of the provision of outdoor learning in schools.

FSC's recent advocacy work has highlighted with policy makers where outdoor learning has a positive role to play across so many pressing social concerns. Everyone needs to access high quality green space to connect to nature and the positive impacts this has for health and wellbeing, and in building character and resilience in young people.

The UK needs learners with STEM skills, and understanding of the natural world, biodiversity and climate change. These are the people who will help the government make good on the promise to leave the environment in a better condition than it was found.



In 2019 FSC responded to consultations and provided evidence on issues as varied as Scottish STEM for 5-7 year olds, the draft Curriculum for Wales, Biodiversity Net Gain, London's Green Spaces, Ofsted's Inspection Framework, Character and Resilience and the Advancing Our Health green paper

Please donate £30

It costs £30 for a young person to learn fieldwork skills with FSC. Another £30 to share inspiring nature guides.

Every £ donated to FSC helps a young person protect the environment, improve their wellbeing, and live sustainably.

We need your help

Every year, demand for FSC experiences far exceeds the charitable funds we receive from grants and fees.

We find that disadvantaged young people need the most support to access outdoor learning. We expect even more people to need support following the pandemic, including schools and families.

By donating today, you will help us inspire young people to be curious, knowledgeable, passionate and caring about our environment. Thank you for your support.

Please donate today at field-studies-council.org/donate

Want to find out more about wildlife?

FSC provides a wide range of wildlife guides to help you get to grips with identification.

Find out more at field-studies-council.org/shop



“ Thank you
to our Patron, partners,
supporters and
members.



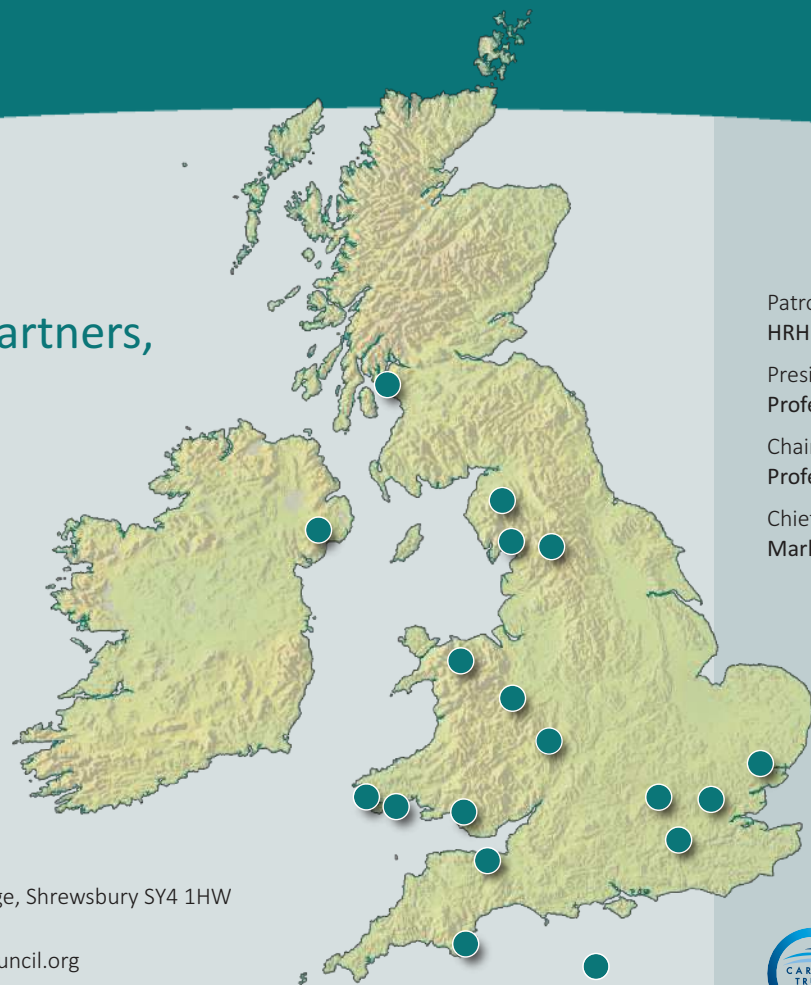
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