



SOUTH WEST PEAK
LANDSCAPE AT A CROSSROADS



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SOUTH WEST PEAK LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

| | |
|---|------------------------------|
| Name of Project | Wildchild |
| Delivery Partner | Staffordshire Wildlife Trust |
| Name of Person Completing Report | Natalie Hollamby |
| Start Date of Project | January 2017 |
| End Date of Project | February 2022 |
| Date of Report | May 2022 |



Aims and Objectives of the Project

The Wild Child Project aimed to reconnect children and their families to the world around them, to inspire a lifelong appreciation for their natural heritage and to build up the confidence to incorporate outdoor play and learning into their daily lives.

The aim was to work with families & children (up to 14 years old) through informal education activities to encourage them to enjoy, understand, visit and want to take care of the landscape and habitats of the South West Peak. This was to be achieved through a range of activities including Wildlings (aimed at pre-school children), Wildplay and Family events. We used art, play and exploration to give all participants the chance to get stuck in!

Project Delivery

The Wildchild Officer planned and delivered a range of drop-in and bookable outdoor play sessions including Wildlings which was aimed at 6 months to 5 year olds, and Get Wild and Wildplay which was aimed at 6 to 13 year olds, plus Wildfamilies for all to enjoy. These were held at 30 different sites across the South West Peak. Sessions included activities such as den building, bug hunting, natural crafts, mud painting, campfire cooking and whittling, and were held on weekdays, after school, weekends and school holidays. During the covid-19 pandemic sessions were delivered virtually on GetWild TV which could be accessed via Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's family activities facebook page.

Staff resource

1 Wildchild Officer (WCO) was employed on a part-time basis for 3 days a week (plus 2 maternity covers over the 5 years). Sessional workers (a resource bank of 28 employees across Staffordshire Wildlife Trust) were also involved in providing on-site support.

Budget resource

The initial planned project budget for Wild Child was £85,500 (figures excluding VAT) and was subdivided as follows, showing planned and actual costs incurred against each budget heading:

| NLHF budget heading | Example items | Intended cost | Actual cost |
|------------------------------------|--|----------------------|--------------------|
| New staff costs | Staff salary for 0.5FTE for 5 years | £60,900 | £60,939 |
| Training for staff | First aid, yoga | £350 | £1,346 |
| Travel for staff | | £2,500 | £1,948 |
| Travel and expenses for volunteers | | £1,500 | £375 |
| Equipment and materials (activity) | Consumables and equipment for running sessions, art craft, games etc | £4,000 | £2,862 |
| Other costs (activity) | Sessional staff time required to support project delivery | £10,000 | £14,031 |
| Recruitment | | £500 | £0 |
| Publicity and promotion | Leaflets, mailouts, programmes and banner flags | £2,500 | £1,333 |
| Evaluation | Additional time required for evaluation - consultant or sessional | £3,250 | £2,666 |
| TOTAL | | £85,500 | £85,500 |

In addition, the project received non-cash contributions of £31,402 and volunteer time valued at £550. The project was funded by grants from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Staffordshire Police Commissioners Fund, SPACE, and Sorbus partners with additional public fundraising. The budget was adjusted in agreement with our National Lottery Investment manager to accommodate for the increased use of trained sessional staff as we struggled to get the anticipated volunteer involvement (especially during the pandemic) and the opportunity for further staff training to enhance our offering to include mindfulness and yoga.

Partnership working – team involvement, steering group etc

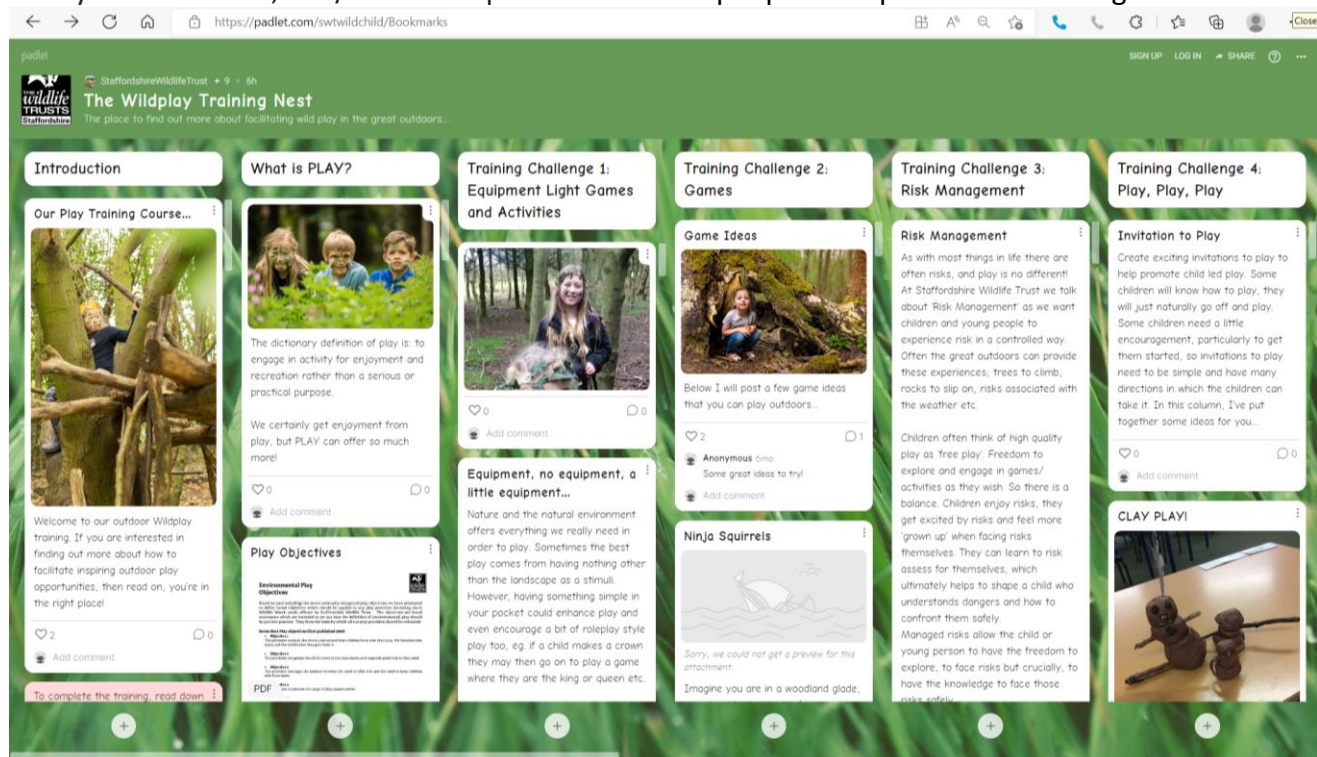
The WCO attended many added value events as part of the partnership over the past 5 years including the Manifold Show and Buxton Rotary Bazaar, and worked closely alongside Jackie Wragg through the successful delivery of Buxton Wild Weeks, and in the early days of the project with Ruth Wilson and Sally Bentley at Support Staffordshire who shared their contacts of schools and uniforms groups, which resulted in the building of relationships that lasted throughout the entire project.

The Wildchild project worked alongside various organisations including the PDNP in delivering Wildfamilies activities at Macclesfield Forest; the National Trust in delivering Wildlings at Lyme Park; the Bumblebee Conservation Group which contributed to the delivery of activities raising awareness and understanding of bumblebees, in particular the Bilberry bumblebee; and the Back Dane Trust where the WCO has delivered Wildplay for other charitable groups staying at their venue. We also worked with many schools across the South West Peak and formed very strong partnerships with them. Furthermore, the WCO provided videos to Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service which were then shared with school children during the covid-19 (CV-19) lockdowns.

The WCO worked closely with the wider Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) People Engagement Team to deliver the Wildchild Festival in 2019 and the Mini Wildchild Festival in 2021.

Volunteers

Although we did not have any volunteers assisting with the delivery of the project, the WCO produced an online Wildplay training course which was made accessible using a programme called Padlet (screenshot below). The training course was made available to adults living in and around the SWP with the aim of giving them the knowledge and the confidence to incorporate outdoor play into family time at home, and/or at their place of work. 25 people took part in this training.



A face to face training course had been planned for the end of March 2020 with 13 attendees booked on. This, unfortunately, had to be cancelled due to covid-19.

What Has (and has not) Been Achieved

Outputs

| | Intended Output | Delivered Output |
|----------|--|--|
| 1 | 168 Wildlings sessions (~15 children aged 0-5yrs per session) which will benefit 500 unique families | 162 sessions delivered the covid pandemic reduced the number of face to face activities. 3099 children attended. |
| 2 | 208 Wildplay sessions (~15 children aged 6-13yrs old per session) which will benefit 500 unique families | 219 to date, we missed out on afterschool clubs during the pandemic and a short project extension was agreed to meet demand from schools in half term February 2022. 3197 children attended. |
| 3 | 24 Family events (~12 families per event) which will benefit 300 unique families | 23 family events delivered, we couldn't deliver drop in Wildfamilies events due to the pandemic. 601 families attended. |
| 4 | 4 volunteer training sessions (~20 volunteers per session) | 5 have been run virtually (25 attendees in total). |
| 5 | 8 added value events to promote the project (eg local shows, events or days with high participation of target audiences) | 7 added value events were attended |

The covid-19 pandemic affected face to face delivery in 2020 and to an extent in 2021; however, the project had been delivering popular activities prior to this which increased confidence in families to continue attending outdoor activities when covid-safe measures were put in place.

Key Outputs

By running 162 Wildlings sessions and 219 Wildplay sessions we reached 3099 6 month to 5 year olds and 3197 6 to 13 year olds. They connected with nature and their local landscapes through play and being able to #Getwild, and hopefully we have inspired a lifelong love of the environment, nature and wild spaces. We hope that these children will become future ambassadors for wildlife and their local greenspaces.

Attendees learned safe ways to play outdoors which they can take away and incorporate into their daily lives. We signposted them to their local nature reserves and greenspaces where they can now go and enjoy, explore and appreciate.

Running 23 extended family events enabled us to engage with 601 families, all of whom took away with them new ways to play outdoors in nature, and now have the confidence to do just that.

The vast number of sessions that we ran meant that we were able cover a huge proportion of the South West Peak and introduce people to sites that they never knew existed.

Outcomes

| Intended Outcome | Delivered Outcome |
|--|---|
| 1 Children and families will develop a sense of place and understanding and as a result will use their local greenspaces more regularly | Between January 2019 (unfortunately we don't have data saved from 2017 and 2018) and the end of the project in February 2022 we had 125 repeat attendees to our booked events (Wildlings and GetWild) and 163 repeat attendees to after school and lunch time clubs, as well as people then returning to sites to enjoy them as a family when events weren't running. |
| 2 Children and families will grow to value and understand their local landscape and the nature on their doorstep | This outcome was met, as evidenced by the feedback received – see below. |
| 3 Adults will build confidence to incorporate outdoor play and learning into their daily lives | We have equipped children and adults with the knowledge they need to play safely outdoors and appreciate their local landscape. |
| 4 Children and families will have the enhanced ability to play, enjoy and spend time outdoors through their own motivation | We have equipped children and adults with the knowledge they need to play safely outdoors and appreciate their local landscape. |
| 5 At the end of the training, volunteers will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a better understanding of the benefits of outdoor play • Have developed skills in the delivery of play, and how to increase the quality of playtime at home • Have developed a sense of place and ownership over the site where they intend to 'play' • Be more likely to volunteer with the project in the future | Users of the Padlet participated by providing their thoughts and comments on their experiences of the activities, making their own suggestions. |

Key Outcomes

Working in partnership with the Back Dane Trust who hire out their cottage and grounds to other charitable organisations - we have been running Wildplay for a charity called Blast who support children with autism.

Feedback included this - *"I was involved as a Back Dane volunteer on both occasions when your colleagues attended the Blast visits. Can I say how much everyone involved enjoyed the activities, and how impressed I was by the way both your teams worked with what could be a quite challenging group of young people. I look forward to what I hope will continue to be a very valuable partnership"*.

See link to Back Dane's quarterly newsletter:

https://backdane.co.uk/uploads/1/2/0/3/120347127/quarterly_back_dane_trust_newsletter_september_2021.pdf

Feedback from some of our events:

- January 2018 (Wildlings at The Roaches)
My little boy would love this but he's in nursery on a Monday. We came to the free session in Brough Park last year and he had a great time! Do you ever do anything on a Tuesday or Wednesday, even if it means travelling further from Leek?
- August 2018 (Wildfamilies at Buxton Pavilion Gardens)
Thank you for yet another lovely outdoor event. Great activities that kept my children engaged for the whole two hours. I'm sure they would have stayed longer. Thanks again for providing free activities like this.
- February 2018 (Wildfamilies at Longnor's Breathing Space)
I was dragged away to the play area before I got chance to say thank you for yesterday's session at Longnor. Eliza and Alex absolutely loved it. It's a really fantastic thing that you do :D Look forward to attending more events in the future.
- July 2018 (Wildlings at Teggs Nose)
We have enjoyed these sessions so much and would love to hear about more in the future! Thank you and the team for organising the sessions over the last two months and we look forward to hopefully seeing you all again in the future
- June 2018 (Wildfamilies at The Roaches)
We went to the Wild Families session today at the Roaches and I just want to say well done to the 2 ladies running it!!! We were the first ones there this morning and it was lovely to have a chat. The session was great for us, we have a 16 month old and a 3 year old and there was enough to keep them occupied!!! My oldest son was totally taken with the mud painting, so we'll be trying it in our garden soon. You should be very proud of the girls running the session. Like I said, we had so much fun. Please keep up the good work and I hope you run something similar at the weekend again soon (my husband works all week so misses out on activities like this in the week!)
- July 2018 (GetWild at The Roaches)
I just wanted to let you know how great the session was today. Thank you so much for running it. It's brilliant that the trust can run free events, it means a lot to a low income family. Thanks again, and maybe see you soon!

- July 2019 (After school Wildplay at Puss Bank, Macclesfield)
The impact of the project on the children was very positive as it supported them in working as a team and helped to develop their confidence in independent thinking. The teaching assistant that supported the group has shared with staff how Natalie used the school's outdoor grounds as a learning resource to engage and enthuse all children in the group. She is using some of the ideas she took away from the project to work with some children within school who specifically benefit from an outdoor learning approach.

- September 2020 (St Gregory's School, Bollington)
We were very fortunate to have you come and visit our school last year (September 2019) and run some lunchtime forest school activities... I just wondered if Wild Child is running at the moment and whether a re-visit is possible, either now or in future?
We returned to run wildplay lunch time clubs in November 2021

- September 2021 (After school Wildplay at Rushton Primary)
We loved having you at Sugar street after school club at Rushton school back in 2019. Please can we arrange to do some wild child sessions in October or November if possible?

- October 2021 (parent)
*Myself and my daughter have been attending the wildings and wildfamilies events from a very young age.
The events have given us both ideas to explore and enjoy nature together in a safe environment, connecting with other families, and also allowing us to enjoy the events as a family. She particularly loved the hammock and mud painting at the roaches.
At the wild family events held at Gradbach Mill She enjoyed having her dad there and playing with the water and mud, exploring the activities and the bug house and playing with the equipment.
It has given her confidence regarding safe use of a camp fire which is important to us as we enjoy camping, and she loves the marshmallow treats as an extra special addition to the session.
It has been a shame that we have been unable to attend as regularly since she started school but she loved the wild families at Brown edge quarry this week and we are both very sad to hear it may be the last we can attend.
I sincerely hope this is not the case as I would love to bring my expected baby to the events and allow him to also connect with nature in a safe environment.
At the recent quarry she engaged with all the activities and loved every one.
Credit to the organisers of the event for engaging the children and making us all feel welcome. I hope to see them in the future if at all possible. It would be such a shame for so many families if they were not continued
Many thanks for taking the time to listen*

- December 2021 (Lunch time Wildplay at Burbage Primary School, Buxton)

The children really enjoyed the club. They especially enjoyed the equipment they don't normally have at Forest school. Talking to the children they loved the hammocks and slack line the best. They also enjoyed making potions.

Lindsay and I really enjoyed the fact that it was a mixture of ages and it was open to all. We also enjoyed supervising and learning about how to set up different activities we wouldn't normally do in school.

The children were extremely engaged in the sessions and loved it.

Thank you so much. Any future opportunities we would love to be involved in so just keep us posted.

- February 2022 (Lunch time Wildplay at Buxton Juniors)

Marie, my deputy and teacher in Y4 has talked to the children today about Wildplay club. They have REALLY enjoyed it and we thought the quotes gathered below might be helpful for you. Blaise also said how much she enjoyed working with you and said your approach with the children was really inspiring.

So, thank you for getting in touch and then offering these sessions. The children have got a huge amount out of them.

Quotes below.

Children's quotes:

We recommend it.

I want to do it again.

I liked playing in the mud and getting dirty.

I liked it on the last session when we toasted marshmallows and in the session before we had hot chocolate.

I loved the mud kitchen where we dug old things up. We found dead animals.

I liked the activities – we made a tent and did den building.

I liked the hammocks.

I enjoyed the free play time that we had.

One of the trees had a huge piece of bark that came off.

I liked playing in the wooden den that we made in year 3 and it's still there.

I liked the hammocks and the mud. We sat in the hammocks and they swayed from side to side.

I liked looking at the old memories from year 3 when we went into Forest School.

I loved that I got to play with my friends and be fascinated by what's around me.

We made our own fire from cotton wool and flint and steel.

My favourite part was finding my stick friend who I called Jeffrey.

What Made The Difference

Delivering regular sessions at the same site provided consistency, which meant that attendees could get into a routine.

Promotion via Facebook was a very powerful tool for reaching out to local communities.

Partnership work with PDNPA, National Trust and Back Dane Trust enabled us to work at sites that were not owned by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust which increased the reach of the project.

Challenges

The weather: We state that we play in all weathers so come dressed appropriately. We had some hardly toddlers that would join us for Wildlings in the snow and rain, but others would cancel and just not show up which meant sometimes you could set up for a session (which takes time and a sessional worker) and have no one appear despite having booked a place.

Accessibility: Many sites in the South West Peak are remote and not particularly close to towns and not accessible by public transport. This played a big part in some low #Getwild and Wild Skills bookings when children need to be dropped off for 2 hours then collected at the end of the session. It is highly likely that we missed out on a lot of low income families whose children would have got a lot out of these sessions, they just couldn't get there due to the location. Wildplay in schools helped us to reach out to those children; however, they didn't necessarily get the opportunity to experience the wild sites of the South West Peak.

Remoteness: This ties in with the accessibility issues. Furthermore, in relation to a Wildlings session, many parents may not have the confidence to bring their baby/toddler to a remote, and likely new location, especially when there are very minimal or sometimes no amenities close by. Where possible we used sites with toilet facilities, and pre covid-19 we would provide snacks, drinks and hand washing facilities.

Getting wildplay training up and running has been a challenge. The project officer wasn't trained in delivering training sessions until early 2020 which wasn't a problem because this left 2 years to facilitate 4 volunteer training sessions, which in theory was very achievable. The first one was planned and advertised, there was plenty of interest and bookings were looking good, and then covid-19 struck, putting a stop to all face to face delivery. We created an online training sessions using the Padlet tool, following this being set up by the Youth Engagement Officer for the Beyond the Classroom project, which proved successful. However, we then hit the problem of adults not actually having time to do such training sessions through either working from home and spending more time on screens for work purposes and therefore not wanting to do so in their spare time; home schooling their children; or through facing other challenges that covid-19 presented.

Covid-19 meant that on the ground delivery could not happen; we moved to virtual delivery via 'Getwild TV' on the SWT Family Activities facebook page. We lost out on working with a lot of children which left a bit of catching up to do in late 2021 and early 2022, in particular working with 6-13 year olds.

Case Studies/Photographs



Learning how to use Kelly Kettles at the Manifold Academy, Warslow



Balancing on a slackline at Longnor's Breathing Space



Mud kitchen creations at Macclesfield Forest



Natural crafts and bird feeder making at The Roaches and Gradbach Mill



Nature crowns at Wincle Fete



Den building at The Roaches



Bug hunting at the Pavilion Gardens, Buxton




Campfire cooking at Brown End Quarry

Family activities - Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
21 December 2020 · 🌐

GetWild TV: Wildfamilies - Pinecone Series Part 4 - Mini Pinecone Wreaths!
Have you been missing our Wildfamilies sessions in the South West Peak? Then this might be perfect for you! Tune in tomorrow to our Family activities page at 10.30am, for part 4 of our pinecone series, when we will be making a festive, mini pinecone wreath.

For this activity you will need pinecones (or conkers), a glue gun (and an adult to help), some Christmas decorations and or a bit of Christmas tre...
[See more](#)



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Alison Georgette and Suzanne O'Brien 11 shares

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3,235 People Reached

27 Likes, Comments & Shares

| | | |
|------------|------------|--------------|
| 14 Likes | 2 On Post | 12 On Shares |
| 0 Comments | 0 On Post | 0 On Shares |
| 13 Shares | 11 On Post | 2 On Shares |

27 Post Clicks

| | | |
|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 3 Photo views | 0 Link clicks | 24 Other Clicks |
|---------------|---------------|-----------------|

NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 0 Hide post | 0 Hide all posts |
| 0 Report as spam | 0 Unlike Page |

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts

Mini pinecone wreath making on GetWild TV



Fire lighting at Gradbach Mill



Yoga Squirrels at Brown End Quarry

Legacy

Skills/knowledge/experience

Wildplay training using the online PADLET resources. Online training has already taken place giving participants the knowledge and confidence to facilitate wildplay.

We have delivered wildplay at 13 different schools across the South West Peak giving the staff the skills and knowledge to continue these sessions at their place of work once our funding ends. This has also given children the experience of playing outdoors in safe ways, enabling them to continue doing so in the future in their local greenspaces. The schools included are: Blackshaw Moor First School, Burbage Primary, Buxton Infant School, Buxton Junior School, Fairfield C of E Junior School, Harpur Hill Primary, Manifold Academy, Puss Bank, Rushton Primary, St Bartholomew's CE Primary School, Bollington St John's CE Primary School, St Gregory's Primary School and Wincle Primary.

Wildlings/Wildfamilies/#Getwild/Wild Skills have been run regularly at well-established sites meaning that there are hundreds of children and families who have had the experience of playing outdoors and connecting with South West Peak landscapes. They now have the skills and knowledge to continue doing this in their daily lives. There is also a bank of sessional workers within Staffordshire Wildlife Trust who are equipped and experienced to deliver all of these sessions should funding continue.

As the project has progressed over the 5 years, local people have set up their own independent companies facilitating outdoor play groups and forest schools, having been inspired by what we do. These include:

Greenwood Growth <https://www.greenwoodgrowth.org> run by Lorna, a regular to our Wildlings at the Roaches sessions;

Flying High Outdoor Nursery <https://flyinghighoutdoornursery.co.uk> run by Kirsty, a childminder who used to bring her groups of children to Wildlings at The Roaches; and

Inside Out Forest School <https://www.insideoutforestschool.com>

The project officer has been trained to deliver yoga, meaning that Yoga Squirrels and Wild Yoga can continue to be delivered in the area, offering new experiences to local communities should further funding become available.

We have shown families how to use their natural surroundings more for play - not only have they learnt how important play is to their children, but they have picked up practical ideas of activities to do whilst out and about and learnt that you do not need to spend lots of money to keep children 'amused'.

To summarise, we will leave behind a legacy of families empowered to explore and enjoy nature on their own, to attend events run by partner organisations and to have built up a dialogue with, and understanding of, those organisations tasked with conserving and protecting our heritage for all to enjoy.

Data

The number of sessions delivered and a log of all attendees over the last 3 years (started using upshot in 2019) is stored in an online programme called UPSHOT. This is a fantastic resource for monitoring and reporting.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) has an internal file storage system which is accessible to SWT employees and securely stores a bank of documents, data and resources from over the past 5 years. This means that anyone could pick this project up in the future and have all the information they need such as risk assessments, policies, permission to use sites, contacts within the SWP and activity resources.

Equipment

A host of equipment such as hammocks, slackline, den building tarps, ropes, Kelly kettles, fire pit, bug pots, binoculars, craft materials and yoga mats have been purchased and is stored at Marsh Farm, Meerbrook for future use in the SWP area.

Connections/collaboration

Strong connections and collaborations have been formed with PDNPA, Gradbach Mill, the National Trust, Back Dane Trust and many schools across the SWP by delivering some form of wildplay at their sites; and with the thousands of children and hundreds of families attending.

Lessons Learned

It was difficult to get a group of adults all together at one specific time to attend training – in hindsight virtual training is a good idea so participants can complete this in their own time.

Because events are free, we would often get 'no shows'. To combat this, a small charge could be applied (for example £1) to encourage people to attend. This could then be classed as match funding for the project.

Do plenty of research into who else is providing similar activities in the area, and on what days. As the project has progressed, new offerings have appeared in the towns around the South West Peak which have possibly captured some of our target audience. Local parks and greenspaces are far more accessible than many sites in the South West Peak.

Use sites with more facilities, toilets, café – people are looking for these things, and somewhere to have lunch once the sessions have finished. Picnicking is not for everyone, particularly when the weather isn't fantastic.

The Big Headline

A huge **6,296** children have been able to enjoy and explore the South West Peak landscape across 30 different sites through engaging with the Wildchild project.

What's the Worst That Happened

The fire on The Roaches in August 2018 had a vast impact on the project. Sessions had to be cancelled and/or relocated to different sites. In fact, the impact is ongoing as we are still to this day unable to do campfires at The Roaches, which is a standard part of Wildlings delivery.

Covid-19 scuppered a whole lot of delivery and resulted in the loss of some regular attendees, and the use of Lyme Park and Macclesfield Forest which were both incredibly popular sites. School children also hugely lost out, things had to be put on pause just as we were mid-project and forming some brilliant relationships with South West Peak schools.

Pushing kit up to the Roaches! We would regularly have the trolley tip over; however, year 5 and we've finally got the knack of it now!

