

ASCENT – Apply Skills and Conserve our Nature with New Tools

Goal: To find good solutions for vulnerable areas in our mountains and uplands suffering from erosion due to hikers

Partners: Donegal County Council (Ireland), The Soil Conservation Service of Iceland, Newry Mourne and Down District Council (Ireland), Parks and Wildlife Finland and Hordaland County Council. 5 partners – 7 sites.



The 3 P's: Planet, planning, people

ASCENT's starting point

Planet:

- **Natural resources – our most exclusive asset. Increased interest does not equal increased skill and competence. In order to protect the environment, it is therefore necessary to intervene. It is possible to combine preservation with sustainable use.**

Planning:

- **Regulation for nature management very often has a focus on preserving and NOT intervening – until it's a little too late.**
- **Public planning tools are geared towards the number of inhabitants in a local area and does not necessarily include visitor number**
- **Visitor management becomes the responsibility of the tourism organisations – but needs to be part of the public sector planning tools and regulations**

People:

- **Social sustainability – a good place to live, is a good place to visit. Local stakeholders MUST be on board.**



So what did the NPA do for the ASCENT partners?

- **Bringing structure to the chaos:** Planning, surveys, GIS based tools for mapping, local stakeholder engagement. Visitor management, habitat assessment, strategic path reviews
- **Enabling cross-border skills transfer** for practitioners and managers through living labs
- **Visiting the sites** brought extremely valuable understanding of the challenges of the 5 partners and how these were being met
- Demonstrating the need for **continued focus over time**
- Establishing **local connections**
- **Walking and working together** – building real and lasting networks
- **Continued interest in the project!** 😊





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