

## The National Three Peaks

The National 3 Peaks challenge is a popular fundraising challenge where participants climb the three highest peaks in Scotland (Ben Nevis), England (Scafell Pike) and Wales (Snowdon). It is estimated that around 30,000 people take on this challenge every year raising significant sums of money for various charities.

Unfortunately, and largely as a result of the popularity of the event and some of the formats followed to undertake it, there is also a negative impact upon the environment and local communities as a result of the popularity of this challenge. This is largely due to a **lack of understanding and respect for the mountain environment and the communities that live and work in it** by some participants and operators. This is a particular problem with some events with literally hundreds of ill-informed participants and/or events which 'up the ante' of this already significant challenge to a time limit of 24 hours for all three peaks.

This time restriction of 24 hours and the lack of education and understanding of participants in large scale events results in the following adverse impacts:

- There is around 11 hours (450 miles) of driving involved with the challenge. Adding a time limit on to the challenge only encourages dangerous (or even illegal) driving along large distances during all hours of the day and night. This not only increases the risk of an accident but also results in increased levels of carbon emissions and pollution from inefficient driving speeds.
- By the way the 24-hour challenge is usually operated this means that a lot of the driving and arriving occurring in rural locations near the key trailheads (and in particular in the remote valley of Wasdale at the foot of Scafell Pike) occurs at very antisocial hours resulting in disturbance of local communities and ecosystems. These antisocial hours also exacerbate other adverse impacts such as sanitation and litter (see below).
- As a result of poor education and a lack of respect many groups will drop litter, leave food waste and defecate inappropriately in some of the UK's most beautiful landscapes. This lack of awareness is further exacerbated by the additional fatigue brought on by having a time limited event.
- Challenge groups are often inappropriately informed and equipped to venture in to the mountainous environment and the conditions which they might face at any point in the year. This increases significantly the chance of an accident and the likelihood of a call-out to the local Mountain Rescue Team's (all of whom are volunteers).
- Participants are often left none the wiser as to the negative impact they are having upon the environment and gain little in terms of enjoyment, respect and skills which would benefit them if they were to choose to venture into the countryside in the future.
- Many events involve very large numbers of participants (often into the hundreds). By their very nature these large groups put even more pressure on to the environment, the local facilities (and in particular sanitation facilities) and amplify disturbance to local communities.

## Our Approach to the National Three Peaks

As an outdoor provider supporting many charities in undertaking important fundraising challenges we recognise that the National Three Peaks is a well-recognised and popular challenge. Whilst we have a number of our own challenges which we consider to have an equal or greater degree of physical and mental difficulty in less affected locations we recognise that this event should be part of our offering. However, in line with our Environmental Impact Policy we have a strict set of guidelines which we follow when planning and delivering a National Three Peak Challenge. These guidelines are regularly reviewed and have been developed to comply with the following:

- British Mountaineering Council – Green Guide to the Uplands
- Institute of Fundraising – Code of Practice (Section 15)
- The Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team Advice on the National Three Peaks
- **We will never deliver a National Three Peaks Challenge in 24 hours Challenge.** We prefer to run the challenge over a 48 hour period. This reduces the anti-social impacts of the challenge (particularly in Wasdale); takes out the temptation to drive dangerously or illegally; reduces fatigue (although we believe it maintains its mental challenge as it is held over a longer period) and allows participants to appreciate and understand the mountain environment they are walking in and their impact upon it.
- **We will never take more than 12 people in a group on a National Three Peaks Challenge.** This allows us to effectively manage the group and its impact upon the environment. We also believe this improves the quality of the experience for the participants.
- **All groups will be led by one or more of our experienced mountain leaders.** All of our skilled and experienced leaders have the utmost respect for the environment and communities we operate our business in are suitably qualified to deal with situations as they may occur on the mountain.
- **All groups will be fully briefed prior to their participation on the event.** We pride ourselves on our environmental ethos as a business. An important part of this is educating and informing all participants as to their responsibilities as good mountain users including the countryside code.
- **We will leave no trace on the mountain and will minimise disturbance to local communities.** This includes through dropping no litter, requesting that all participants take their litter home with them rather than leaving it at trailheads and ensuring our groups use sanitation facilities in a responsible fashion. In fact **we go one step further** and our leaders will carry bin liners with them on all challenges and will, where spotted, remove rubbish left by other groups and encourage participants to do the same.
- **We support charities and organisations that operate in this area.** We support financially and personally where possible a number of environmental and charity groups who do invaluable work in this area as well as Mountain Rescue. See our Environmental Impact Policy for more detail.