



# NAEE Primary Case Study



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## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS THROUGH ADVENTURE



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Children looking out over Coniston Water

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### A unique forum

How many adventurers are aware of the delicate ecological balance and beauty of the environment through which they journey? Does the climber know or care about the mountain plants clinging to the steep rock faces? Do canoeists relate to the world of water birds and otters as they travel down rivers? Do the field study groups sampling vegetation and measuring river channels develop any feelings for the natural world? How many of us accept responsibility for the environment and are prepared to take steps towards its conservation?

### The Adventure and Environmental Awareness Group

was established in 1984 following a landmark conference at Brockhole, the Lake District National Park Centre. It is made up of a wide range of outdoor enthusiasts and representatives of national and regional environmental and recreation interests (including NAEE). The Group's aim is: "to encourage awareness, understanding and concern for the natural

environment amongst those involved with adventure, education and recreation." There is a belief that direct experience in the outdoors encourages an interest in conservation; at the same time, greater awareness of the richness and interrelatedness of the environment enhances the outdoor experience.

### Achievements

The AEA Group has acted as a catalyst in bringing diverse interests together and raising awareness. It has organised a series of successful conferences and workshops on climbing, canoeing, wild camping and large scale events in the environment. A conference on mountain biking brought together bikers and those involved in land management and conservation. It produced the first report in Britain on "Mountain Biking and the Environment" proposing guidelines for users and encouraging management agreements.

### Environmental Charter for Outdoor Users

Other reports have led to codes of good practice. An example is the "Environmental Charter for Outdoor Users in the Lake District" endorsed by the Lake District National Park Authority, the National Trust and the Field Studies Council. It suggests how leaders can take an active role in caring for the environment.

### Current issues for the Group

Over the last few years the Group has campaigned for the importance of adventure to be recognised in our risk-averse culture. It has tried to broaden horizons amongst outdoor leaders by promoting global awareness and more sustainable practices both for individuals and organisations. The most recent conference explored

the values we impart through outdoor education and questioned whether these challenge or reinforce the dominant commercial values of society.

More information —

See the group's website: [www.aea-uk.org](http://www.aea-uk.org)

### Environmental Charter for Outdoor Users

- Promoting an awareness and respect for the natural environment and a responsible attitude to all outdoor activities in the Lake District.
- Introducing groups to the concept of National Parks and issues facing them.
- Giving groups an understanding of how the landscape, plants, animals and humans are interrelated.
- Recognising the importance and fragility of habitats.
- Treading lightly to cause as little disturbance as possible.
- Recognising that all land is special and respecting rights of way, local byelaws and access agreements.
- Placing any temporary equipment so as to minimise disturbance.
- Working with small groups, encouraging them to travel quietly and respect the interests of people who live and work in the countryside.
- Minimising the use of transport to sites.
- Co-operating with the National Park Authority and other conservation bodies and consulting with them on the use and management of sites.
- Promoting good environmental practice in their organisation and encouraging groups to take an active role in caring for the environment and adopting more sustainable practices.