

NFU Countryside Online

Soldiers enlisted for campaign against illegal off-roading and fly-tipping

Army engineers have mobilised to help restore around one-and-a-half miles of footpaths and bridlepaths devastated by illegal off-roading within Bredhurst Hurst's ancient woodland in Kent.

The Chatham-based Royal School of Military Engineers has been assisting in Bredhurst Woodland Action Group's ongoing activities (see NFU Countryside Magazine, November 2006) to protect more than 600 acres of woodland, part of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, from impacts of off-roading and fly-tipping. The army engineers are due to spend a month on-site supplying their manpower and machinery free of charge and contributing more than £2,000 towards cost of materials. An overnight incident of vandalism saw two huge tyres on an army dumper track slashed, but the restoration work continued and machinery is now being kept in a more secure location.

To cover remaining materials costs involved with the project, BWAG secured £18,000 of funding from sources including local county councillor and Kent County Council leader Paul Carter. Maidstone-based Gallaghers and agricultural suppliers McVeigh Parker of Headcorn, Kent, provided aggregate and fencing respectively at highly discounted prices.

Following the path repair work, BWAG volunteers will erect fencing to protect Bredhurst Hurst from off-road vehicles with full access remaining for walkers and horse riders. The production of walking guides of the area is planned to encourage more visitors.

Meanwhile, Kent County Council has introduced an initial 18-month experimental traffic regulation order from December 3 allowing only landowners and permit holders to use vehicles on the lane giving vehicular access to Bredhurst Hurst's woodland.

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Monday 03 December 2007 - 12:03:02