FREE-RANGE TEENAGERS:
THE ROLE OF WILD ADVENTURE SPACE IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES

FINAL REPORT

November 2006

Prepared for Natural England

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

> *"People have stereotyped teenagers – there are no play areas for teenagers".*
> Teenager, Burton Green focus group.

This study was carried out on behalf of Natural England (formerly English Nature and parts of the Countryside Agency and the Rural Development Service) to investigate the proposition that 'wild adventure space' can play an important role in meeting the developmental needs of young people across England. Its purpose is to inform Natural England's policy development. The role of wild adventure space for young people is explored in the light of current headline debates on risk-taking and on the use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders for teenagers, as well as concerns about poor mental health, obesity and lack of physical activity in the population. Government policies on the nature of sustainable communities, social and environmental equity and healthy lifestyles provide a context for investigating teenagers' engagement with wild adventure space.

The study sets out evidence of the potential benefits for the individual and the community arising from young people's engagement with wild adventure space, barriers to obtaining these benefits, gaps in understanding, issues for further study, and opportunities for provision of relevant and necessary resources. It recommends the action needed to take this work forward and identifies a range of potential partners.

Young People - the focus has been on young people from the age of 12 to 18. Earlier childhood experience in relation to teenagers' use of wild adventure space is important, but the older group's needs have been less well studied and provided for to date, hence the emphasis on them in this study.

Wild adventure space is taken to be outdoor space where young people have some level of freedom in terms of activity and experience; it has been interpreted as broadly as possible to reflect the variety of young people's contexts and experience. In practice, the majority of such space is predominantly natural or semi-natural in character or contains significant natural elements within it. We have explored all kinds of wild adventure space, whether places accessed and supervised through structured activities offered by organisations or informal, unsupervised places which young people find for themselves, so long as the use was not part of mainstream, formal education.

Methodology
The study comprised: a scoping workshop, a systematic literature review; five focus groups with young people, chosen to represent a range of experiences; a mapping and overview of a range of existing projects; a forum with stakeholders to discuss initial findings and potential ways forward; and a final analysis of the findings and presentation of recommendations.

Why is Wild Adventure Space for Young People important?
The evidence gathered demonstrates that experience of the outdoors and wild adventure space has the potential to confer a multitude of benefits on young people's physical development, emotional and mental health and well-being, and

social and educational development, which may have long-lasting effects into adulthood. The benefits of engagement with wild adventure space, including those that arise through activities organized within such environments, include the following.

a) Physical health
- increased levels of physical activity and fitness
- positive views towards undertaking physical activity
- contribution to tackling obesity in young people
- activation of higher cognitive processes and healthy brain development

b) Mental health
- promotion of mental health and emotional well-being, both short- and long-term
- long-term appreciation of wilderness and its therapeutic potential
- widening of horizons, exposure to different and striking environments that can stimulate emotional and even spiritual responses in young people's lives

c) Development of positive self-image
- improved internalisation of locus of control and enhancement of self-control
- improved self-esteem and ability for goal setting
- enhancement of self-efficacy
- confidence about facing uncertainty

d) Social development
- promotion of language development and socialisation
- learning of social skills (e.g. interpersonal, negotiation and listening skills) and formation of peer groups
- development of flexibility and adaptability to changing surroundings
- encouragement of constructive use of leisure
- encouragement of responsibility
- changes in behaviour and dependencies such as drink or drugs

e) Educational development
- better understanding of young person's developmental stage, interests and needs
- practical educational experiences and development of practical skills
- ability to realistically appraise risks
- acquisition of problem solving skills
- development of presentation skills
- development of ecological consciousness, including environmental awareness and engagement with nature

f) Community development
- reduction in anti-social behaviour that affects others
- environmental and community improvements
- improved community relations
- economic benefits from tourism and residential trips to the countryside
- promotion of environmental awareness in young people's homes and in the

wider, culturally diverse community.

What do young people say they value from wild adventure space?
The focus groups with teenagers identified the following key benefits:
- something to keep you out of trouble
- a breathing space, away from family or peer pressures
- a place that offers risk and challenge
- a place that inspires you to do things
- a place where you can do what you want, where you can relax and feel free
- a comfortable place, without adults, where won't be told to go away
- a place to have a good time with your friends

What are the barriers to young people accessing and enjoying wild adventure space?
A range of barriers were identified that restrict or prevent young people from accessing wild adventure space and benefiting from it. Young people from different groups and backgrounds do not have equal access to outdoor space. In addition, public attitudes that cast young people as a problem and threat have contributed to their marginalisation and social exclusion, particularly in the case of urban outdoor environments. This is reinforced by one of the Home Office indicators for assessing neighbourhood safety, which classifies young people hanging around on the streets as anti-social behaviour. The need to provide attractive and accessible places for young people's outdoor recreation is a challenge for local authorities and land managers, as is provision of resources to support wild adventure activities, including skilled and experienced staff.

The key barriers identified were the following.

a) Social exclusion
- under-representation of young people from lower income households, disabled people, ethnic minority young people and teenage girls in outdoor experiences
- public attitudes towards young people as a problem and 'threat'

b) Concerns about risk
- educators' and managers' fear of litigation
- fears and concerns of parents and adults in positions of responsibility
- young people's fears about safety, especially fears about other people/groups
- the need to impose rules and regulations on young people undertaking risky activities.

c) Lack of adequate resources
- lack of staff resources, in terms of numbers and expertise, in managing risk assessment and in working with young people
- poor quality of available spaces for young people
- lack of appropriate management and maintenance skills for wild adventure space on the part of local authorities
- a lack of attractive wild adventure spaces accessible by foot
- difficulties in transportation provision and costs to access adventure space further afield

d) Societal pressures
- negative perceptions of woodland and wilderness fed by a range of media
- the attractions to young people of staying inside for amusement and comfort
- commercialisation of youth spaces
- the changing nature of childhood
- distrust and aggression from local residents about activities with young people
- the need to work swiftly to deliver projects before young people mature
- fears and scepticism from young people themselves

What do young people see as barriers?
- the threat of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs)
- fear of other teenage groups and gangs
- access to transport and costs of getting to distant sites,
- parents' concerns,
- lack of planning, wayfinding and organisational skills on the part of the young people themselves
- bad weather, rain and cold in particular.

Conclusions

Our findings support the notion that free and easy access for adventurous and enjoyable engagement with outdoor environments has the potential to confer a multitude of benefits on young people's development and therefore to benefit society as a whole. There is therefore a need to recognise and promote the concept that all young people should have access to such wild adventure space. The costs of not doing so, to individuals and to society, are potentially enormous. The Adventure Licensing Authority suggests that, by constraining young people's access to adventure, "we have already condemned an entire generation to a life of awful quality and shocking brevity" (Bailie, 2005).

It is important to develop better access for young people to the full spectrum of opportunities for wild adventure in natural spaces, to help support their developmental needs in a socially inclusive way. Young people need access to local places for outdoor adventure that are attractive and within easy walking distance of their homes. They also need access to structured adventure activity and more distant wild and countryside places. The role of youth workers and outdoor adventure leaders is of key importance here and is highly valued by young people themselves.

Society also needs to be engaged in a dialogue that builds a more positive relationship about use of public and outdoor spaces across the generations and age groups, so that young people are accepted and valued as users of community spaces and the public realm.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

The research has identified that the following actions would increase the opportunities for young people to experience wild adventure space and to gain the benefits which it offers. Where possible, such actions should build on current initiatives and good practice highlighted in this study.

Safety, risk and liability

a) Develop advice on risk management for wild adventure space, including help on how to overcome barriers, how to outreach and negotiate with young people and with their parents and those with a duty of care, and make it available in a user-friendly format. **Priority***

b) Develop a programme of training courses on risk management for site managers, project managers, educators and others engaged in managing use of wild adventure space by young people. **Priority***

Social Inclusion

c) Undertake research to improve the primary information base on how young people from minority ethnic groups, young people with disabilities, young people from lower socio-economic classes, and girls perceive and use wild adventure space.

d) Explore what works to attract young people from areas and contexts of deprivation to experience wild adventure through innovative approaches. **Priority***

e) Explore the effectiveness of attracting teenage girls to use wild adventure space through, for example, sustainability/ecological themes, engagement with animals such as ponies, and campaigning and ethical issues.

f) Develop demonstration projects that are effective in engaging young people from minority ethnic groups, young people with disabilities, young people from lower socio-economic classes, and girls, with wild adventure space.

g) Make provision for greater diversity of wild adventure space experiences in rural contexts, drawing on different cultural experiences (e.g. entertainment, food, music).

h) Campaign for recognition of the concept that all young people have a right and need to experience adventure outdoors. **Priority***

Understanding unstructured use of local wild adventure space

i) Develop the primary information base on young people's unstructured use of wild space close to their homes; explore innovative techniques such as weblog sites. **Priority***

j) Undertake research on landowners', managers' and providers' attitudes and experience in relation to provision, use of and management of wild adventure space.

Involving young people and training them as leaders and mentors

k) Develop guidance or training for youth workers to assist them in developing teenagers' abilities and confidence to undertake organisation and use of wild adventure space independently.

l) Develop training materials and tools for young people (ensuring girls are included) to act as leaders or mentors for wild adventure space activities.

Managing and maintaining wild adventure space

m) Develop user-friendly recommendations for different approaches to successful land management in relation to providing for young people's needs.

n) Explore the potential of developing activities which use re-cycled materials to raise awareness of sustainability issues and which attract young people to take part.

o) Undertake research on the skills needed for managing and maintaining wild adventure space, including temporary sites, by local authorities and private landowners and managers. Investigate the availability of these skills within current local authority staffing profiles.

p) Develop a forum to bring together managers of green and wild adventure places and those trained or experienced in working with young people, including educators, police and social workers. Use this forum to develop partnership working and identify examples of good practice. **Priority***

q) Develop demonstration projects in a few, targeted areas, where different approaches to providing a welcome for teenagers to wild adventure space are tested. **Priority***

Adequacy of access to and supply of wild adventure space
r) Undertake research to identify the issues affecting supply and demand for wild adventure space by young people and the relevance and adequacy of Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGST) and Woodland Trust standards in relation to this.

s) Develop demonstration projects for involving young people in audits of wild spaces and adventure opportunities relevant to them, both local and more distant. **Priority***

t) Develop GIS database systems to combine information on existing natural and wild space accessible to teenagers with information from young people's audits of such space, so that it can be compared with open space standards.

Improved evidence of physical, social and environmental benefits
u) Develop a common framework for evaluating diverse projects involving young people and wild adventure and develop and maintain a database of evaluation.

v) Establish at least one, well-founded, longitudinal study to research the frequency of access to wild adventure space for young people and the long-term benefits of such experience for different sub-groups. **Priority***

w) Support research to develop the theoretical basis for understanding the mechanisms behind engagement with natural and wild adventure spaces, including how younger children's experience feeds into later (teenage and adult) life.

This report is supported by a wealth of information gathered for the study and available in a set of companion documents, freely available to download from the OPENspace website at URL:
http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/researchprojects_wildadventurespaces.htm.

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1. Introduction to study

1.1 Aim of the study
This study set out to investigate the proposition that 'wild adventure space' can play an important role in meeting the developmental needs of young people across England. It has used a range of methods, including:
- a review of existing research on the role of wild adventure space in the lives of young people
- an overview of projects which support access to such space.

It has recommended actions which would improve opportunities for young people to enjoy wild adventure space.

The context for this work is policy development by Natural England, the new body formed from English Nature and parts of the Countryside Agency and Rural Development Service.

1.2 Broader policy context
This study also sits in a broader policy context as set out in Appendix C. Current headline debates on young people and the outdoors highlight the social and environmental relevance of the research described here. Concerns about safety and fears of litigation in an apparently risk-averse society are set against arguments for the value of experiential learning and education outside the classroom. Discussions on how to deal with teenage anti-social behaviour and the stigma (or, as some teenagers claim to see it, the 'badge of honour') of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) sit alongside initiatives to promote healthy and challenging recreational activities to engage young people in constructive ways of spending their time out of school. Concerns over the obesity epidemic in society as a whole are particularly focused on young people's (girls' in particular) lack of engagement in physical activity, yet it is unclear what kind of environment, physical or social, structured or unstructured, is likely to be most effective in encouraging healthy and active teenage lifestyles. The focus on sustainable communities in our society also underlines the need for equity of access to goods and benefits, and these are increasingly seen as including access to green spaces, wildlife and nature, whether close to home or in more distant countryside. Yet many young people in disadvantaged contexts are effectively excluded from such opportunities, and pressures for urban densification as part of the government vision for sustainable urban living may further reduce available green space. Debates about the value of free play and play policy development to enhance the quality of unstructured free time experiences for younger children are important. However, the particular desires and needs of different segments in the teenage population also need attention, and may differ widely. If the above challenges are to be effectively addressed, a better understanding of how young people engage with outdoor space, wild space and adventure is both appropriate and necessary.

1.3 The Brief
The brief asked for research to:
a) gather evidence of the potential benefits to young people of wild adventure space;

b) identify the issues concerned with providing wild adventure space for young people, including benefits to society, future planning and possible barriers;

c) recommend future action, including recommendations for management of natural spaces and associated schemes and identification of potential future partners.

1.4 Methodology

The methods used in this research involved the following:

a) a scoping workshop with representatives of stakeholder organisations;

b) a systematic literature review of research findings relevant to the role of wild adventure space in meeting young people's developmental needs;

c) a mapping and overview of existing local, regional and national projects that relate to this theme, initiated through the scoping meeting with key stakeholders and a project questionnaire;

d) a series of focus groups with young people, chosen to represent a range of experiences;

e) analysis of the findings and issues;

f) a forum with a wide range of stakeholders to discuss initial findings, potential partner organisations and suggestions for ways forward;

g) a final analysis of the findings and presentation of recommendations.

Although the focus for information gathering has been the English context, the literature review included an international overview of evidence relating to wild adventure space and young people. The recommendations of the research include steps that Natural England or others might consider taking and identification of potential demonstration projects to respond to the needs for access to wild adventure space by young people.

This report is supported by a wealth of information gathered for the study and available in a set of companion documents. They provide evidence, inspiration, and examples of good practice. The companion documents are freely available to download from the OPENspace website as listed in Appendix A.

In the time between completion of information gathering exercises and the production of this final report there have been further developments in the research area and new publications have emerged. Where these are relevant to this report, they have been included in the text but may not be contained in the literature review companion documents published separately.

1.5 Working definitions and limits

For the purposes of this project, a number of working definitions and limits of scope were established, in order to maintain a clear focus.

Young People were taken to be children over the age of 11, i.e. at an age when a certain amount of independence is usually allowed, and up to the age of 18. One challenge in this study has been the finding that much of the material on children, young people and access to the outdoors relates to children aged 11 years or younger. Although there is clearly a continuum of experience from early childhood to adolescence and teenage years, we have tried to maintain a focus on the older age group, as defined. We recognise the importance of earlier childhood experience in relation to teenagers' use of wild adventure space, but the older group's needs

appear to have been less well served to date and our emphasis remains on this group.

Wild adventure space is taken to be outdoor space where young people have some level of freedom in terms of activity and experience. It has been interpreted as broadly as possible to reflect the variety of young people's contexts and local conditions. In practice, the majority of such space is predominantly natural or semi-natural in character or contains significant natural elements within it. It falls broadly into two categories: one is where adventurous activities offered by organisations take place, and the other is space that young people find for themselves and use in an informal manner. Such space is likely to be beyond formal sports pitches and other high-maintenance open space provision whose use is prescribed. Its characterisation has been based, wherever possible, on what young people considered it to be or, in the absence of a view from young people, what those working with young people identified as relevant. Thus, there may be opportunities for wild adventure in apparently mundane or hard, urban spaces as well as in wild and natural habitats. The kinds of places identified in the study have ranged from small areas of urban waste ground and derelict or abandoned sites to extensive forests and remote, mountainous rural areas.

Benefits to young people arising from activities that constitute part of mainstream, formal education have been excluded from this study. The focus of the research has been wild adventure activities and places outside mainstream education, recognising that, in practice, there may be a continuum between the two for certain organised activities. The literature and project reviews included a search for information on all kinds of uses of wild adventure space, structured and unstructured, whether formally supervised or not, so long as they were not part of mainstream, formal education. The initial expectation was that findings of particular interest would be identified from work on young people's unstructured and unsupervised use of wild adventure space. However, information on projects that relate to unsupervised access to and use of wild adventure space is not readily available. Projects, by their very nature, are usually about structured activities and management of outdoor space. The findings in this report, particularly related to the project review, inevitably reflect this bias. It is balanced, to some extent, by the findings from the literature review and from the focus groups which give an insight into the broader realm of unconstrained and unsupervised use of wild adventure space.

2. Issues from the Scoping Workshop

> *"It is important to distinguish between evidence and anecdote – hard evidence is not easy to identify".* Scoping Workshop participant.

At the start of the project, a scoping workshop was held with 15 invited representatives of stakeholder organisations (see companion document WASYP 6, *Report of Scoping Workshop and Stakeholder Forum* at http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/researchprojects_wildadventurespaces.htm and Appendix B for details), to identify key issues for this group and to elicit information on existing projects that offer access to wild adventure space for young people, to inform the mapping and overview of such projects.

The most important benefits and challenges associated with wild adventure space for young people were identified as follows.

- **Safety and risk** are central issues in this project. There is a balance to strike between the benefits of adventure and the risk of adverse consequences. There are also benefits from being exposed to risk and learning to manage it.
- **Well-being and emotional health** are crucial benefits as well as physical health. Young people may gain self-esteem and confidence by being exposed to wild adventure space.
- **Integration and social inclusion** - involvement of minority ethnic groups, socially disadvantaged and low income groups - may be a challenge. Lack of involvement may be due to the lack of information on the diverse ways wild adventure space may be experienced and used.
- **Managing and maintaining wild adventure space** – local authorities may have lost appropriate management skills for this.

These themes recurred, along with others, in the subsequent data gathering. There is variation in the weight of information and evidence on each and they are returned to in the conclusion of the report. A number of projects and programmes for engaging young people with wild adventure space were identified for the project survey and review (see companion documents WASYP 3: *Project Review – Survey of Findings* and WASYP 4: *Matrix of Projects Surveyed*, available to download from URL http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/researchprojects_wildadventurespaces.htm).

3. Summary findings from literature review

"*Wilderness therapy is an emerging intervention […] to help adolescents overcome emotional, adjustment, addiction, and psychological problems*" (Russell et al. 2000, p. 207).

3.1. The review method
We reviewed over 150 research papers, project reports, monographs, position papers and systematic literature reviews on topics relevant to this project, and produced structured summary notes for the most important of these (see companion documents WASYP 1 and WASYP 2, available at URL http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/researchprojects_wildadventurespaces.htm for the full survey of literature and over 100 individual reviews).

The review built on a similar review undertaken by Barrett and Greenaway in 1995 on the role and value of outdoor adventure in young people's social and personal development, updating and developing themes identified there as well as filling gaps and drawing on newly emerging approaches and findings. Although we focused on publications since 1995 we also included a number of significant publications of the period 1990-1995 and comprehensive reviews of the pre-1995 literature that provide the backdrop to the present review.

An initial challenge was to develop appropriate criteria for what was relevant in the literature, since 'wild adventure space' is not a commonly used term. We explored what kind of spaces are considered wild and are associated with adventure in the literature, and what other terms are commonly used in researching this field.

### 3.2 Ways of conceptualising wild adventure space.

In the literature, wild adventure space is seen as an outdoor place that is 'unregulated' (at least in some sense) and offers opportunities for adventure. Ideally such spaces are free in every sense of the world: free to all ages, free of charge and where people are free to do what they want. In practice, an important distinction is apparent in terms of young people's engagement with wild adventure space: space where the activities are structured and/or supervised as opposed to spaces that young people access or find for themselves and use in an unstructured and unsupervised way. Unstructured and unsupervised wild adventure space tends to be local and readily accessible on foot. Structured or supervised adventure activities often take place at a distance from young people's homes or schools and are often more targeted or restricted in the freedoms they offer.

Although the initial concept that the review set out to analyse was wild space, adventure and the kind of space that allows for wild adventure, exploring 'wildness' has inevitably resulted in a focus on 'wilderness' as well. In the search for relevant literature, the word that appeared most often in relation to wild adventure space was 'wilderness'; thus any review of literature on wild adventure and wild space results also in a review of literature on wilderness. In Britain, a country inhabited and modified by humans for millennia, there is no pristine wilderness devoid of human influences and impacts. Wilderness thus refers to the wildest parts of a wilderness continuum, extending from pristine natural areas on the one end of the spectrum, to urban landscapes on the other.

3.3 Main themes emerging from the literature

Barrett and Greenaway's 1995 review emphasised the value of group experiences and staff-led adventure activities, and included evidence on the value of sport and physical education dimensions as well as the value of engagement with the environment and adventure itself; it particularly identified benefits for young people at risk. Our review attempted to find evidence for the value of less organised use of wild adventure space as well as structured and managed activities, and looked for benefits to a range of participants as well as to the wider community.

Key items in the international literature review were classified according to their major focus. Figure 1 (below) gives an overview of the weight of literature falling under different themes although, inevitably, there is some overlap between them. The therapeutic benefits of wild space and wilderness was a predominant emerging theme, linking with the issue of wellbeing and mental health identified in the scoping workshop. This is an important area that could be developed further in the English context. The scoping workshop theme of safety and risk also emerged as important in the literature, an aspect on which there continues to be much debate. Issues of social inclusion and of managing and maintaining wild adventure space highlighted in the scoping workshop were less well covered in the literature.
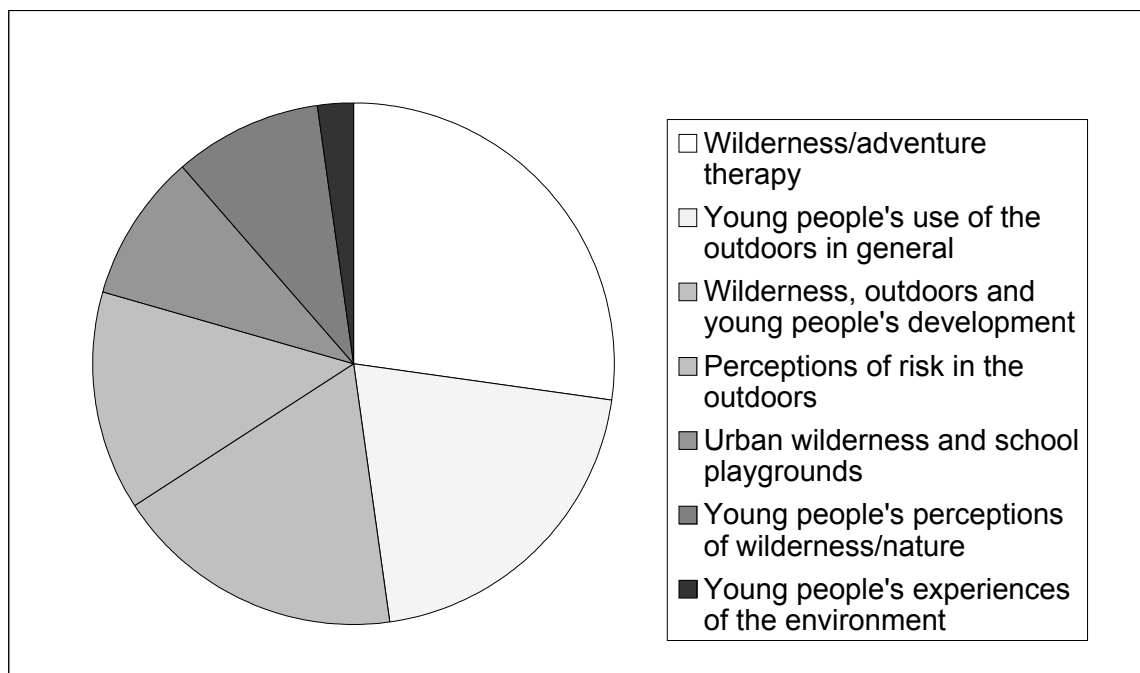
Figure 1: Main themes emerging from the reviewed literature

Although there was considerable coverage of research on young people's use of the outdoors in general, and on accessing wilderness and other outdoor environments in relation to young people's development, this was often from an expert perspective on young people's behaviour and needs. There was much less research that directly explored the perceptions and experiences of young people themselves. This highlights a gap in knowledge and understanding and a focus for directing further research.

3.4 Wilderness adventure therapy
Wilderness adventure is becoming an increasingly popular therapeutic intervention for young people at risk, reflected in the large number of publications dedicated to various forms of adventure or wilderness therapy for youth. The theoretical foundations of wilderness therapy programmes are based on traditional wilderness programmes such as Outward Bound, integrated with "an eclectic therapeutic model" (Russell et al. 2000, p. 211). Rites of passage, practised by traditional cultures, also play an important role in such programmes (Russell et al. 2000; Start 2005).

Most evaluation studies of wilderness adventure therapy projects report very positive results, including:
• Development of self concept
• Enhanced participant-staff relationships
• Increased self-efficacy and knowledge and skills that can lead to positive employment orientation and increased employment opportunities; these include communication, problem solving, interpersonal, negotiation and listening skills, self-esteem and goal setting, motivation and personal career development, organisational effectiveness and leadership skills
• Better understanding of personal behaviour
• Strengthened family relations

- Enthusiasm for new individual and group recreation options and constructive use of leisure
- Reduced rates of reoffending or relapse in substance addiction

Barrett and Greenaway reported very similar findings in their 1995 study of the role of outdoor adventure for young people at risk. A cost/benefit analysis of an American wilderness programme aiming at increased employability of its participants (Federal Job Corps) suggested that the benefits generated by the programme are twice as great as the operational cost (Russell, Hendee and Cooke 1998). However, Rickinson et al (2004) demonstrate that the evidence base for cognitive and physical/behavioural benefits is less strong than for affective and interpersonal/social outcomes. There is a need for further and more robust evaluative work, as bias and poor research design often reduce the credibility of evaluation studies.

3.5 Young people's use of the outdoors

Answers to the question 'what do young people do outdoors?' are approached through a range of perspectives, from theoretical works on the construction of nature and self through outdoor play (many focused on younger children than our target group), to empirical studies conducted through participant observation, questionnaires or hermeneutic phenomenology – attempts to describe lived experience and its meaning. Apart from work on wilderness and adventure therapy, most of the reviewed literature on this theme focuses on children's informal outdoor space and teenagers' "hanging out" places, with far fewer works on the use of wilderness or wild adventure space by young adults.

Matthews, Limb and Taylor (1999) used a questionnaire survey of over 1,000 9- to 16- year-olds to reveal that more than a third of the sample (of whom 45% were girls) used local streets on a daily basis to "hang around with friends" during summer. The vast majority of the respondents (82%) claimed that they preferred being out and about than staying in. The street corners, indoor shopping centres and vacant lots of local areas were seen by Matthews et al as places where teenagers can meet and create their own identities; they could also be viewed as diverse forms of adventure space where young people explore and attribute meaning to their environment.

Such unplanned spaces, appropriated by young people, allow for a proliferation of activities that may be more culturally inclusive than designed spaces (Ward Thompson 2002). These 'found' spaces can offer a place for the marginalised – in this case young people – whose presence in conventional well-designed and managed spaces in the urban environment is often challenged. For younger age groups, the opportunity to make dens and 'secret places' is enhanced by wild and natural environments, while for older teenagers such environments may simply offer a place that can be temporarily considered their own. Ross (2004) has argues that "part of the attraction of woods and trees lies in their marginal status": parts of the local environment and at the same time outwith the adult gaze. Bell et al's (2003) studies of suburban use of woodland in central Scotland also stress the significance of wilderness as a place outside adult control.

Research that explores children's access to wilderness and more remote or natural wild adventure demonstrates that such access is unequal: children from ethnic minorities, children with disabilities and girls are the least represented among young

user groups. Research by ETHNOS for the Countryside Agency (2005) has contributed to a better understanding of perceptions and usage of the countryside amongst ethnic minority groups and has highlighted young people's largely negative view of what the countryside might offer for them.

One way to understand children's and young people's use of different places is to look at a theory that focuses on the reciprocal relationship of environment and people – 'affordances' (Gibson, 1979). For an environment to become favoured, it must 'afford' or offer the individual opportunities for active engagement that other environments do not support. Heft (1988) has created a taxonomy of affordances in children's environments (i.e. environmental features that support an activity) and Kyttä (2006) has extended this notion to emotional and cultural affordances. Referring to young people's place preferences, Clark and Uzzell (2002) argue that the town centre, for example, is one of the most preferred and highly frequented places for teens due to the presence of others and the social opportunities it affords.

3.6 Wilderness, outdoors and young people's development – benefits from wild adventure space

There is widespread recognition in the literature that experience of the outdoors and wilderness or wild spaces has the potential to confer a multitude of benefits on young people's physical development, emotional and mental health and wellbeing and societal development (Barrett and Greenaway 1995; Valentine and McKendrick 1997; Cole-Hamilton et al. 2001; Bingley and Milligan 2004; Everard et al. 2004; Ward Thompson et al. 2004; Thomas and Thompson 2004; Thompson 2005; Gill 2006; Crace 2006). Unstructured, and often unsupervised, play appears to be the principal way through which children and young people engage with nature and enjoy multiple benefits from their outdoor experience.

Physical and mental benefits identified in the literature include:
- Increased levels of physical activity and fitness
- Positive views towards undertaking physical activity
- Activation of higher cognitive processes and healthy brain development
- Promotion of mental health and emotional well-being, both short- and long-term

In their latest review of literature on children and nature, Faber Taylor and Kuo (2006) found strong evidence of a causal link between contact with nature and children's healthy development in several domains such as cognitive, social and emotional development. Mental health and well-being benefits from play in natural settings appear to be long-term and experience of natural settings during childhood is thought to promote emotional stability in young adulthood: "woodland and forests can provide certain therapeutic qualities that a young adult may use to alleviate stress and mental health problems" (Bingley and Milligan, 2004, p. 74).

Emotional, educational and social benefits identified include:
- Learning of social skills (e.g. interpersonal, negotiation and listening skills) and formation of peer groups
- Promotion of language development and socialisation
- Acquisition of problem solving skills
- Improved internalisation of locus of control
- Improved self-esteem and ability for goal setting

- Enhancement of self-control
- Enhancement of self-efficacy
- Encouragement of responsibility
- Better understanding of young person's developmental stage, interests and needs
- Importance for children's learning, including practical experience
- Ability to realistically appraise risks
- Development of flexibility and adaptability to changing surroundings
- Development of ecological consciousness
- Encouragement of constructive use of leisure
- Long-term appreciation of wilderness and its therapeutic potential

A growing body of recent literature suggests that childhood experiences of nature play a crucial role in an individual's sense of connectedness with nature in later life (e.g Bixler et al., 2002). In a study in central Scotland, Ward Thompson et al. (2004) found that "the frequency of childhood visits to woodlands is the single most important predictor of how often people visit woodlands as adults"(p. iv), a conclusion also reached by Bingley and Milligan (2004) after a study of woodland visitation in Lancaster.

A number of researchers suggest that models of young people's needs offer a useful framework for evaluating the impact of outdoor activities and adventure. Greenaway (2004) brings together the work of a number of researchers in compiling a list of developmental needs to consider, incorporating Glasser's five key needs of *fun, freedom, power, belonging* and *survival* (Glasser, 1985, cited in Greenaway, 2004). Glasser suggests we always choose to do what is most *satisfying* to us at any particular moment in time, and what is most satisfying to us are the things which meet one of these five basic needs. Greenaway (1995) suggests that the developmental value (or need) of the natural environment for each individual depends in part on what is missing from their daily life, quoting Harrison et al (1987, p. 68): "*the symbolic value of wild areas and open spaces [act] as gateways to a better world*".

3.7 Perceptions of risk in the outdoors and approaches to risk management
There are a number of dimensions to perceptions of risk in the outdoors, ranging from the attractions of risk in undertaking challenging activities as part of wild adventure to fears of risk and its negative consequences. Many of the latter fears arise from perceptions of danger that may be inflicted by others. The media play a very important role here, often contributing to inflated notions of danger and risk and shaping perceptions via sensationalist interpretations of events. Such received notions, coming from others, are found to be more influential than personal experience of threat or danger in shaping people's perceptions.

Notions of risk figure prominently among the factors that reduce young people's access to the outdoors. These notions are shared by parents and carers, teachers and other figures of influence alike - and often by young people themselves - in an increasingly restrictive social climate that constitutes 'a culture of fear' (Cooper, 2005).

Types of risk reported by parents and children in British, American and Australian studies include:

- Fear of traffic
- Fear of accidents, e.g. falling
- Fear of racist assault or racially motivated bullying; especially reported by members of ethnic minorities
- Fear of physical assault
- Fear of moral injury of children through contact with others
- Fear of strangers ('stranger danger')
- Fear of other children and teenagers; very frequently reported by young respondents
- Fear of accidents due to lack of suitable infrastructure (especially for very young children or children and teenagers with physical disabilities).

Thomas and Thompson (2004) have shown that children and young people are increasingly frightened by what goes on out of doors, not only of 'stranger danger' concerns but also of busy traffic. The Child Accident Prevention Trust (2002), examined how young people, aged 11 to 14 are exposed to the risk of unintentional injury during their leisure time; most of the participants talked about the risk of being run over by cars or buses. Although the rate of child road traffic accidents in Britain is one of the lowest in Europe, the child pedestrian and cycle road accident rate is poor compared with Western European countries. In 2003, 12,544 children (under 16 years) in Britain were killed or injured as pedestrians and 4769 as cyclists on roads (Department for Transport, 2002; Child Accident Prevention Trust, 2004; Department for Transport et al, 2006). According to the Child Accident Prevention Trust (2004), children from lower income households are five times more likely to be killed than those from middle and upper-middle social classes. This is because families with fewer resources tend to live in areas close to more dangerous road environments and their children have fewer provisions for safe outdoor places to play.

In general, young people's independent mobility and spatial autonomy appears to be decreasing, especially for younger teenagers. Greenfield *et al*. (2000) found uneven patterns of access to public space in relation to locality, gender and ethnicity, where girls and teenagers from minority ethnic groups appeared to be more restricted in their use of public urban space.

Fear of other groups is a major concern for young people's independent enjoyment of open space. Besides being unwelcomed by adults in many public spaces, young people are increasingly worried about their personal safety where other teenage groups are present (Travlou 2004). Young people regularly experience incidences of verbal and physical harassment by other teenagers and local spaces can become 'tyrannical spaces', defined in terms of 'no-go areas', danger and threat (Percy-Smith and Matthews 2001). In the Child Accident Prevention Trust survey (2002), young people from deprived areas described how places where drug taking was occurring had a major impact in creating no-go areas in their local neighbourhood. A major safety strategy was to go around in groups, but often adults saw that as a problem.

The Child Accident Prevention Trust study (2000) also reveals the attraction of elements of risk and danger for young people and illustrates the kind of wild adventure space that is accessed by many, especially urban youth. It showed that a

large number of young people (40%) spent their leisure time in what they considered to be dangerous places, while 50% of them said that they were taking risks and dares when out with their friends. In particular, wasteland, building sites and subways, or underpasses were most popular along with rivers, abandoned buildings and quarries. The participants said that they visited those places because they wanted to:

- be away from adult supervision;
- enjoy the challenge of getting in to such places and the excitement of being chased by security guards;
- explore abandoned buildings, discover what is inside and what can be smashed up; and
- have a place of their own.

While some of these attractions evoke very socially unacceptable behaviour, certain kinds of wild and natural areas can absorb such activities with comparatively little negative consequence for others (Bell et al, 2003). A number of structured wild adventure activities, including wilderness therapy described earlier, attempt to offer the pleasures of such risks in ways that are socially acceptable.

As the above findings suggest, acceptance of some level of risk is necessary for the developmental benefits from the experience of wild adventure spaces to be gained. Yet concerns about liability and fears of litigation on the part of site owners and managers constrains much of what is encouraged or accepted in terms of adventurous use. Spiegel et al. have argued that a different approach is needed for play provision, relevant to younger teenagers as well as earlier age groups. They say "it is not sufficient to create visually pleasing, *potentially* stimulating and challenging places for play. Critically, places for play must allow children to use the sites in ways which for the most part they determine. This requires adults, who create and control play spaces, to be explicit and public about the need to allow children to take acceptable levels of risk in their play" (Speigel et al, 2005).

With regard to older teenagers and other kinds of wild adventure, Bailie, speaking on behalf of the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority, has suggested that "tolerating a low level of risk (in terms of lives lost) could be considered acceptable given that the safety benefits (in terms of lives saved elsewhere) are overwhelming" (Bailie, 2005). The figures cited demonstrate the dominance of road traffic accidents as the cause of sudden death in young people and the extremely low likelihood of fatalities from adventure activities (especially those as part of organised trips). Bailie argues that an involvement in adventure activities, especially amongst the young, would save lives in most of the 'big five killers', namely heart attacks, cancers, smoking, "obesity-and-unfitness", and alcohol. He also suggests that an involvement in adventure activities, particularly for people in their mid-teens, could save a significant number of lives currently lost through suicide, by giving young people a sense of confidence and self-worth. He suggests that by constraining young people's access to adventure "we have already condemned an entire generation to a life of awful quality and shocking brevity".

A risk-management approach that weighs potential risks against benefits conferred by 'risky' activity is therefore the recommended approach for dealing with growing concerns about risks (Adams and Thompson, 2002; Harrop, 2006). The Play Safety

Forum (2002) has also published a position statement on risk management in play provision (e.g. play areas, playgrounds, adventure playgrounds, play centres, holiday play-schemes).

3.8 Urban wilderness and school playgrounds

There is a growing appreciation of the significance of urban spaces and urban wilderness as the main type of wilderness experienced by young people growing up in cities. Participatory approaches, involving young users in the design - and even construction - of urban playspace projects is the recommended approach for making urban outdoor space relevant to young people. Such approaches are also recommended as a way to offer richer opportunities for young people to engage with their natural surroundings, create imaginary worlds, alter their play environments, and take acceptable levels of risk (Spiegel et al, 2005). The Freiburg-Stühlinger project involved students and schoolteachers in the reconstruction of the biggest playground in Freiburg. Children were involved not only in the design phase but also in the actual construction and planting work. The report of the Tollplatz project in Freiburg (Rehbein 2003) is of particular interest, as it contains practical advice on all aspects of children's involvement in playground planning and construction.

3.9 Young people's perceptions of wilderness and nature

The concept of nature is constructed from our interactions with the physical, social and cultural world. Young people's perceptions and experiences of their environment differ across age, class, and ethnic and cultural groups.

A report by ETHNOS (Countryside Agency, 2005) on perceptions of the countryside showed that young people from ethnic minority groups have a largely negative view, believing it has nothing to offer them and is boring. Their reports associated countryside with a backward, stifling, inward-looking and conservative way of life. By contrast the city was seen as vibrant, multi-cultural and exciting. Teenagers from minority ethnic groups are less likely to have experience of the countryside than the teenage population as a whole, and this is a factor influencing such opinions; young people from ethnic minority groups who had little or no prior experience of the countryside had more negative opinions. However, where ethnic minority young people were able to experience the countryside or more wild and natural environments, the benefits which they recognised included engaging in sport and activities, improved psychological health in the form of breathing space (from home, school, work, and peers), improved social opportunities with friends, improved personal identity, and development of new skills.

Young people's perceptions will be influenced by prior experience, and earlier childhood engagement with nature plays an important role. Young children's understanding of nature is only partially complete and under construction. It appears that children's understandings of themselves and other humans as parts of the natural world can be fostered by educational experiences. For many British children and teenagers, nature and wildlife, especially plants, animals and natural habitats/woods, are the most valued category of landscape (Robertson et al. 2003). The main positive attribute of woods and countryside, according to a Leicestershire Survey of children and young people from 7 to 20 years old, are the opportunities for relaxation they offer; the main negative attribute is that they can be boring (Community Heritage Initiative 2004).

Many young people appear to be well informed about wildlife around them. The main sources of information are electronic media, including television or radio, as well as books or magazines, followed by local information points, guided walks, friends and family. The internet is the most favoured source of information. However, there is increasing concern that such sources of information encourage a mediated and second-hand engagement with the natural world and the environment, rather than a direct one. In other words, because of the ease with which information can be accessed electronically, young people are content to find out about nature indirectly, rather than through direct experience and contact with natural phenomena.

3.10 Young people's experience of the environment – how is it changing?
The nature of enjoyment of the outdoors is expected to change in the 21st century. While there is expected to be a heightened interest in quality of life, encompassing health, physical activity levels and connection with nature for the population in general, a growing culture of convenience is expected to move demand in the direction of faster, structured, sanitised and mediated experience of commodified nature. A study of the demand for outdoor recreation in the next 20 years (HenleyCentreHeadlightVision 2005) identified the increasingly urban, sedentary and technology-led lives of young people as one of four factors likely to create most uncertainty about future developments in outdoor recreation. Such trends suggest that it will be difficult to predict what young people will want in future in relation to a range of activities and environmental preferences.

The spectre of a younger generation growing up with no, or only limited, contact with nature is evoked in much literature that campaigns for greater awareness of the importance of the outdoor environment for young people's healthy development. Louv (2005) advocates promotion of children's and young people's experience of wilderness as the only means to prevent and cure what he calls 'nature-deficit disorder': deprivation that can result in a 'cultural autism', manifest with symptoms of tunnelled senses and feelings of isolation and containment. It is claimed that nature-deficit disorder results from the replacement of primary experience of nature by the secondary, vicarious, often distorted, dual sensory (vision and sound only), one-way experience of television and other electronic media (Cooper 2005).

However alarming such images of technology-based experience appear, others have suggested that a mediated experience of nature is likely to be increasingly popular and thus the most likely way that young people will be attracted to real wilderness and outdoor places (Roggenbuck, 2000). Roggenbuck suggests that the 'new nature' which will attract the next generations will be "packaged and convenient, divorced from time and place, clean, comfortable, safe and sanitised, and yet increasingly vivid and exciting. It [will have] the proper level of stimulation and arousal, [and be] entertaining and commodified" (Roggenbuck 2000, p. 1).

3.11 Barriers and restrictions to young people's use of wild adventure space
At the same time that the value of outdoor access and wild adventure space for young people is being highlighted, as outlined above, there is widespread recognition that young people's use of the outdoors and wilderness is becoming increasingly constrained. Teenagers suffer from a societal attitude that employs crude stereotypes of children as either victims or incipient miscreants (Worpole,

2003). Access to outdoor spaces is restricted for young people in urban areas, where they may not be welcome in public open space, and young people growing up in rural settings are reported to be as restricted as their urban peers (Matthews et al. 2000). Home Office Anti-Social Behaviour Indicators listed in crime statistics bulletins include "teenagers hanging around on the streets" as one of the indicators (Home Office, 2006), reinforcing the view that groups of young people are not considered socially acceptable in many outdoor and public contexts, regardless of the details of their behaviour.

The following factors are reported to hinder young people's opportunities to experience the outdoors, including natural and wild places:
- Conceptualisation of young people as 'problem' and 'threat' and their resulting marginalisation and social exclusion.
- Parental fears about safety: this is deemed to be the main factor restricting children's access to the outdoors, especially in inner-city neighbourhoods.
- Young people's fears about safety.
- Educators' and managers' fear of litigation.
- Social class and ethnic background: young people from lower social classes and ethic minority backgrounds are the least exposed to outdoor experiences.
- Poor environmental quality.
- Negative images and feelings about woodland and wilderness from media reports, films, myths and stories.
- The attractions of staying inside for amusement and comfort.
- Commercialisation of youth spaces.
- The changing nature of childhood.

While approaches to some of the challenges posed by these factors have been described in the literature review, there remain many barriers to young people's access to wild adventure space.

3.12 Gaps in existing knowledge and understanding – opportunities for further research
As mentioned earlier, access to wilderness and natural or wild places is unequal: children from ethnic minorities, children with disabilities and girls are the least represented among young user groups. Cole-Hamilton et al (2001) point out that there is a lack of knowledge of wilderness uses and perceptions among members of these excluded groups and suggest that filling this gap, as a first step towards addressing their exclusion, should be a priority for future research. The report by ETHNOS (Countryside Agency, 2005) contributes to an understanding of ethnic minority young people's views but further work is needed if social exclusion is to be addressed effectively.

There is a gap in knowledge on the unstructured use of wild adventure space (e.g. derelict streets or gap sites and fringe woodland) local to where young people live. Reference to usage of this type of space is anecdotal in the main. Further research is needed to explore how these spaces are appropriated by young people and the benefits derived, and also what providers of such wild adventure spaces think of the latter.

The Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGST) for towns and cities (Handley et al. 2003) and the Woodland Access Standard (Woodland Trust, 2004) are attempts to guide local authorities in ensuring that all urban populations have readily accessible, informal green space and woodland nearby. The Woodland Trust have also mapped where communities lack accessible woodland, according to their standard, across the UK. However, there is little evidence in the literature to relate these standards to young people's needs for wild adventure space.

Utilisation of natural settings for physical exercise, recreation, other structured or unstructured leisure activities and volunteering can make a significant contribution towards the realisation of the national standards proposed in Youth Matters (Department of Education and Skills 2005). However, apart from Harrop's (2006) guidance for managers of woodland settings, and a review of the use of teenage shelters as part of the Countryside Agency's 'Doorstep Greens' (Bird, 2005), there is little that analyses or recommends different approaches to land management in relation to providing for young people's needs.

4. Focus Groups with young people

"Teenagers don't really want to be on the streets, they want to be somewhere with their friends where there is no one to tell them to get off"
Teenager, South Ockendon.

4.1 Focus groups undertaken
In order to ensure that young people themselves could contribute directly to this study, and offer their views and experience, a series of five focus groups were held in different parts of England. Focus groups were organised by drawing on the contacts identified by scoping workshop members and the steering group for this study. An attempt was made to include young people from a range of groups and locations but particularly from disadvantaged areas or contexts. Inevitably the results give only a partial view of young people's experience but they do offer an insight into the experience from the participants' perspective.

Focus group discussions were carried out with the following groups of young people:

Location	Organisation	No. girls	No. boys	Age range
North Cheltenham, Gloucestershire	North Cheltenham Detached Project		7	16-18
Burton Green, Warwickshire	Farming and Countryside Education group	4	4	11-17
Coulby Newnham, Cleveland	Coulby Newham Youth & Community Centre	3	2	14-16
South Ockendon, Essex	South Ockendon Secondary School	5	9	11-17
Pennywell, Northumbria	Pennywell Youth Group	11	1	11-16

Details of the focus group discussions are available in companion document WASYP 5; access to this is via URL:
http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/researchprojects_wildadventurespaces.htm

4.2 Summary of young people's perceptions
The language that young people themselves use to describe wild adventure space includes both constructed and natural elements in the environment and underlines the importance to them of the social dimension of wild adventure activities.

4.2.1 Physical attributes that young people talk about for wild adventure space include: being outside; big, open, grassy places to play in; the beach; adventure courses with zipwires, climbing frames, etc; wildlife and nature, trees, bushes and woods; natural habitats with wild animals in them; places such as disused railway lines. Comfort is an important factor. Young people want a place that is warm and offers shelter (weather is a big factor), light, sunny, clean and well-maintained, with no litter or pollution, away from houses, and within 20 minutes' walking distance.

4.2.2 Social attributes of wild adventure space that young people talk about include: anywhere you can have fun together; enjoying working together; "something that gives you a buzz"; lots of other young people/groups; "an exciting place you go with friends"; "a place for kids with no adults around"; "a place that is safe, no gangs".

4.2.3 Activities mentioned by young people include bungee jumping; rock climbing; tree climbing; getting dirty/mucky; quad biking; learning new skills; lots of activities for young people; something to keep you out of trouble; special activities; making dens; having barbeques and picnics; where you can sit and read or play games by yourself.

4.2.4 Qualities of experience mentioned by young people include: "where you can relax and feel free"; "where you can see different things each day"; "a place that inspires you to do things"; "a place where you can do what you want".

4.2.5 Young people's ideal wild adventure space is different for different ages and cultural groups. Some mentioned their ideal as more natural places and less buildings, such as nature reserves or "forests all around" and "wild animals". Others talked about a big, open space, lit "so that it wouldn't be scary", and more structured environments such as parks, farms, running tracks and play structures, e.g. "a big, long slide".

4.2.6 What young people dislike about outdoor places
Dislikes in relation to outdoor and adventure places relate largely to weather and lack of comfort: rain; cold; flies and other insects; litter; vandalism; cars and pollution. The threat of ASBOs is another kind of deterrent. The cost and/or lack of availability of transport appears to be a common concern. One group described the tedium of hanging around to see if enough people turn up to make it worthwhile for the youth workers to take them to an activity. Lack of confidence in wayfinding, fear of strangers and dislike of other groups causing problems were also mentioned.

4.3 The importance of youth projects and outdoor opportunities
Many of the young people who contributed to focus group discussions expressed the need for somewhere to be away from home in the evenings and at weekends. Boredom and lack of opportunity without someone to assist (particularly with organisation and cost of transport) seems to be a common experience. The contribution that youth workers make, in giving opportunities and inspiration for positive outdoor activities, appears to be highly valued. Even young people who have access to a car may not feel confident about organising adventurous outdoor activities for themselves: "Without the youth workers we hang around, drive around or go shopping" (North Cheltenham group).

4.4 Emerging themes
Younger teenagers clearly enjoyed being outdoors and wanted to still be able to 'play' but in an age-appropriate context: "Some adventure playgrounds are too young; [we want] something aimed for older kids" (Burton Green group). Many participants talked with enthusiasm about making dens when they were younger, clearly an important and formative activity, but this seemed less popular now that they were older.

For many young people, the fun of taking risks and challenging activity is appealing: "I like a bit of risk – makes it more interesting – don't know what is going to happen" (Burton Green group). However, fears of other people, particularly other teenage groups and gangs of young adults, are considered a negative risk – "[other] groups can be intimidating (smoking, drinking, etc.)". Some kind of adult overview to ensure safety was often desired but the opportunity to be away from adults was also wanted by many.

For young people in disadvantaged circumstances, wild adventure space offers a real "breather" or escape from frequently noisy and stressful family life; this was the main reason for many to engage in organised activities or youth centres. Without somewhere to go, or youth workers to legitimise activities, there is little alternative for many young people but to hang out in the street. The dangers of traffic, the unwelcoming attitudes of society and the threat of ASBOs are recognised but, for many teenagers, there is no alternative readily available to them and no comfortable place to be away from home. One focus group said local authorities should recognise that what all teenagers really want is a warm and quiet place to hang out, so "if open green spaces could provide this warm place without adults, they would become so popular". "Teenagers don't really want to be on the streets, they want to be somewhere with their friends where is no one to tell them to get off" (South Ockendon group)

Activities organised by youth workers and structured use of wild adventure space were also welcomed "to keep you out of trouble", as many participants stated. The barriers to undertaking wild adventure activities independently are, for many young people, transport and costs, parents' concerns, and lack of planning and organisational skills. The value of 'packaged' activities was underlined by many groups who appeared to enjoy the sense that, despite the organised nature of the activity, they were free to do what they wanted; they enjoyed the sense of challenge and achievement as well as "having a good time with your mates".

Finally, it is worth underlining that teenagers are not a homogenous group and young people from different age groups, backgrounds and contexts will seek and enjoy different kinds of engagement with wild adventure space and different levels of support to help them do this. A range of choice and freedom to choose what to do are important elements of the ideal experience.

5. Summary findings from project review

"Where I live I don't have the chance to go very often to natural places as there is nothing like that around my neighbourhood" teenager, South Ockendon.

5.1 Scope of the project review
The main purpose of the project review was to source examples of innovative practice among organisations providing young people with opportunities to interact with wild adventure space (widely defined to include any outdoor green space, urban or rural, providing opportunities for 'adventure' - an activity containing risk, uncertainty or an element of danger to a young person). The overview was also designed to map the range of types of projects and interventions being undertaken, to highlight good practice and to identify potential partners for future demonstration projects by Natural England.

Over 70 case studies were reviewed and 28 were examined in some detail. Companion document WASYP 3 sets out the full project review, with many examples of good practice, and WASYP 4 shows the matrix of all projects on which information was received after a wide search and survey was undertaken (see URL: http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/researchprojects_wildadventurespaces.htm).

The range of projects reviewed offer opportunities for adventure in a wide range of contexts, including:

- Urban nature (allotments, playgrounds, scrubland and derelict sites)
- Agricultural and rural areas
- Forests
- Water bodies (rivers, lakes, ponds)
- Wild nature (moors, mountains, national parks)

The review underlined how perceptions of adventure and levels of risk vary between ages, abilities, and cultures. Contact with a farm animal may be perceived as 'scary' by a young person with special education needs or 'risky' for young people of non-European ethnic origin, but wouldn't be perceived as such by many young people in England. When reviewing the case studies, it was therefore important to flag up these types of activities, as well as those more typically associated with outdoor adventure (e.g. aerial circuits and rope courses). The projects included therefore range in 'extremes' from a Nicaraguan rainforest to an urban city farm.

5.2 Project types and limitations
The focus of the review was projects that are non-curriculum led and offer freedom of choice for young people. However, owing to the volume of outdoor education

projects received, several exemplar, curriculum-based projects were included in the overview. Overall, the projects, as submitted by key providers, are predominantly of an organised, structured nature. Opportunities for free-form adventure were touched upon but little was revealed about the benefits to young people of this type of wild adventure experience, since so few projects are able to engage with young people in this way. Indeed, by their very nature, projects are structured and organised at some level.

Although response levels varied in gathering information for the case studies, an extensive and diverse range of past and ongoing projects was uncovered, representing a variety of outdoor adventure projects currently undertaken in England, the geographical focus of this study. A few examples from elsewhere in the UK or overseas were included to illustrate other good practice.
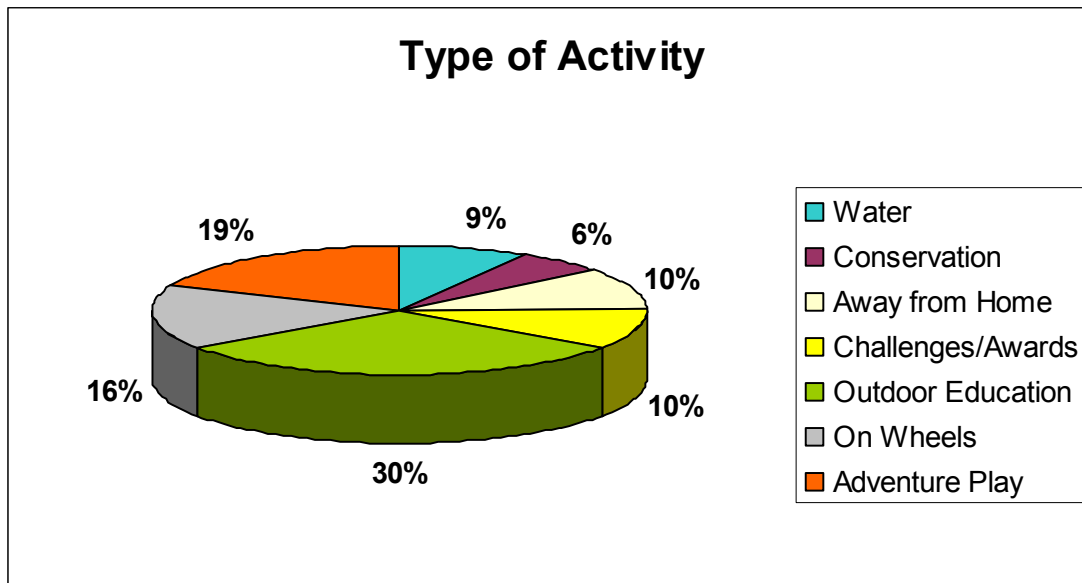
5.3 Project mapping

In mapping the projects, certain trends appeared, suggesting that the projects could be categorised in a number of ways. We offer below some brief summaries of different classifications to give an idea of the range of wild adventure places involved, the range of activities on offer, and the age group of young people involved. These categorisations have not been analysed further since it is analysis of the benefits to young people that is most pertinent to the aims of this study. Owing to the lack of in-house evaluation of projects, many of which rely upon volunteers, much of the information made available on benefits of projects is anecdotal. However, all project managers were able to clearly identify benefits and barriers.

The following diagrams summarise the projects reviewed by type of open space (Figure 2), type of activity (Figure 3), and age group (Figure 4). Figure 5 provides a matrix of the distribution of young people and developmental needs targeted by the projects surveyed. In all cases, projects are classified according to the main focus of open space used, type of activity offered, age group targeted or benefits claimed, accepting there is a degree of overlap between categories and that many projects targeted more than one category of place, activity, age or benefit.
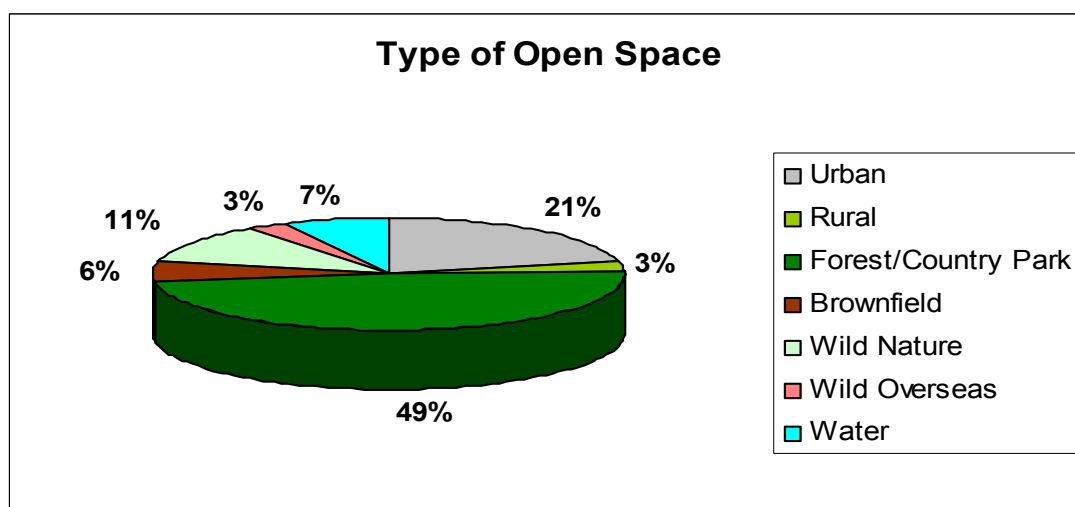
Figure 2: Type of open space in projects reviewed
Notes: Wild Nature generally defined as National Parks (moors, mountains, fells etc)
Wild Overseas included tropical rain forest and polar regions
Brownfield defined as derelict, vacant land/regeneration sites

Type of Activity

Legend:
- Water
- Conservation
- Away from Home
- Challenges/Awards
- Outdoor Education
- On Wheels
- Adventure Play

Values: 9%, 6%, 10%, 10%, 30%, 16%, 19%

Figure 3: Type of activity in projects reviewed

Target Age Group

Legend:
- Under 11
- 11 - 13
- 14 - 16
- 16 - 19
- Over 19
- Non Specific

Values: 17%, 23%, 17%, 16%, 4%, 23%
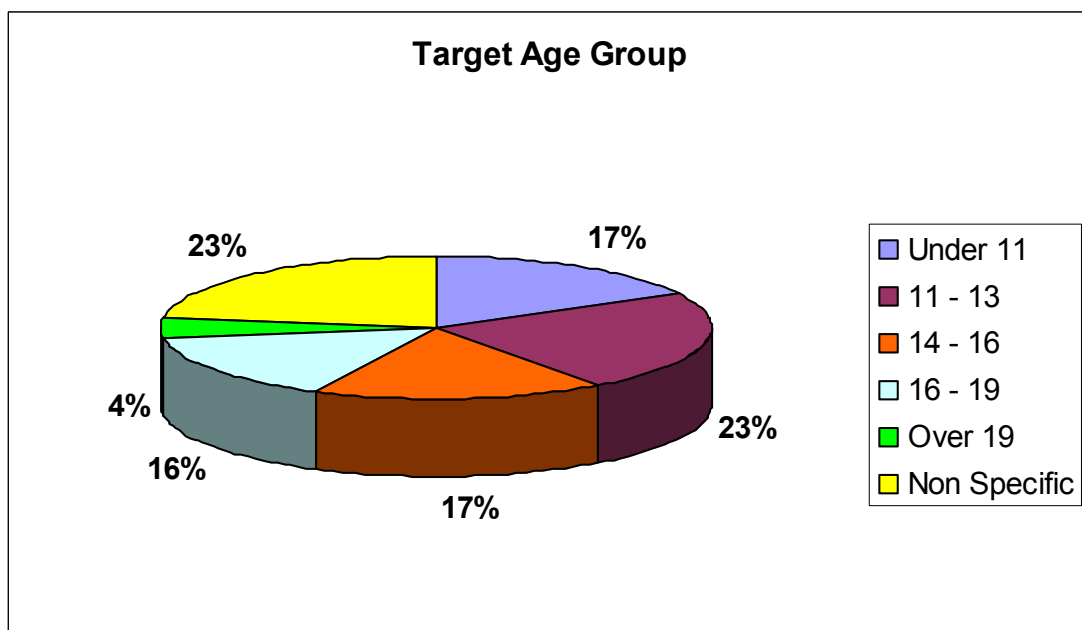
Figure 4: Target age group for projects reviewed
Notes: where a target age range was specified, say from 13-19, the different age groups have been included within each age category. Some of the projects received ranged from 5-13 or 8-13, hence an under 11 category is included.

Target group	Personal development*	Managing risk/discovery	Environmental awareness	Health	Social/community networks	Behavioural change	Accredited outcome	Team building	*confidence, self-esteem, self-management **includes young people in low income families, those unable to access outdoor activities or at risk from drugs/alcohol/exclusion from school.
Disadvantaged young people **	6	1	1		5	4	1		
Young Offenders	4								
Minority ethnic young people			3						
Teenage Girls			1				1		
young people with disabilities/special needs			2		3		1	1	
young people in general	3	15	6	1	8		3	4	

Key: Number of projects

10 and above	5 - 9	1 - 4	0

Figure 5: Matrix showing young people targeted and key benefits claimed for them in projects reviewed
Notes
- Most of the projects reviewed are targeting young people via activities designed to increase practical skills e.g. canoeing, forest school activities, mountain biking. This category is therefore not included above.
- Most of the projects reviewed target more than one particular 'need'. For example, personal development is cited as a benefit in most of the projects reviewed. In compiling the matrix, it is only possible to identify one key targeted 'need'. This does not mean other 'needs' are not being addressed.

5.4 Benefits to young people from wild adventure space projects and programmes.
A number of benefits were identified by project managers, although the amount, type and robustness of evaluations undertaken was variable.

a) Personal development in terms of raised self-confidence, independence, self-esteem and sense of achievement is a benefit claimed for most outdoor adventure projects. Many disadvantaged young people are leaving home at 16 and need this confidence. The Fairbridge Trust is an example of an organisation

that tailors programmes to individual needs and is exceptional in offering long term support to young people at risk.

Fairbridge Trust
www.fairbridge.org.uk
Based in fifteen of the most disadvantaged urban areas in the country, Fairbridge supports 13-25 year olds who are not in education, employment or training or who have been identified as being at risk of dropping out. Young people are referred via 1,400 different organisations. A range of challenging outdoor activities are offered, including sailing on the Trust's tall ship, and mountain biking.

Fairbridge is exemplary in fostering joint partnerships with other national organisations such as the Princes' Trust, The Award, Westonspirit, Outward Bound, the Forestry Commission, and Raleigh (individual case studies can be found on: www.raleighinternational.org/case_studies/overseas.html). The Trust is one of only a handful of providers undertaking full evaluation of its programmes (Astbury et al 2005).

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b) Development of practical skills, such as construction, woodworking, or conservation techniques can be a valuable benefit. Forest Schools (a Forestry Commission education initiative) are a good example, offering young people the opportunity to experience risk in a safe environment. The range and breadth of the programme is extensive, one example of which is provided below.

Forest Schools   www.foresteducation.org/forestschools.php
Seven Sisters Country Park (2003-2006)
This is a typical case study targeting secondary school students (aged 11-16) including those with special educational needs. 6 -10 sessions are offered over a period of several months, each of 3 hours duration, taking place in school time. Each week students develop skills in fire lighting, shelter building, coppicing, cooking and green wood working. A structured activity might include making a mallet and then using it to construct a new line of fencing; an unstructured activity might include sitting around the fire chatting and making tea. Observed benefits to the students include: raised self-esteem and confidence; raised sense of adventure/continued participation in outdoor activities, practical conservation skills and greater respect for natural environments; awareness of outdoor employment and recreation opportunities.

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c) Development of social skills, such as getting along with others, negotiation skills and team working, can also be an important benefit; the *Night Owls* project in West Nottinghamshire is a good example of how an overnight adventure helped improve communication skills in young people.

Night Owls, Greenwood Community Forest, West Nottinghamshire
www.greenwoodforest.org.uk

An overnight adventure in a formal park (Berry Hill Park, Mansfield) targeted at young people from the neglected Lady Brook Estate in Mansfield. The adventure included a '*night quest team challenge*' designed to build confidence in the dark by searching for small sticks of wood. Older children helped younger ones traverse the woodland in the dark and together devise a unique method of communication. A special numbered communication system ensured no young person was lost. Observed benefits included improving confidence, team building skills, orientation skills and team dynamics.

Similar 'night' adventures have been pioneered for young people by *Wild Night Out* events organised by Devon Wildlife Trust, using tepees in the New Forest, and incorporating night walks.

d) Development of presentation skills is a benefit of projects that involve an element of reporting back, making of videos, etc., for example, a component of the John Muir and Duke of Edinburgh Awards schemes.

e) Development of physical skills is almost always an element of outdoor adventure projects, from rock climbing or water sports such as kayaking to those that involve speed and skill in wheeled vehicles. Perdiswell Young People's club (www.pyplc.co.uk) in Worcester, a Sports England funded initiative, is a good example providing opportunities for wheeled adventure activities to diverse groups of young people, including disabled young people, in a parkland setting. The park was designed in consultation with youth groups, the city council, the police and local residents. A free bus transportation scheme is planned to improve access for young people.

f) Widening of horizons, developing aspirations and improving employment prospects can be a significant benefit; the VALVE (Valuing Volunteers and Enterprise) is a good example where the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) used Community Fund support to provide volunteering opportunities at YHA sites for under-represented individuals and groups at risk in the UK, working with partner organisations including BCTV.

g) Giving breathing space to young people can be a benefit, allowing them to have fun away from everyday pressures of family, peer groups, and school, especially if they are on limited incomes and have few opportunities for outdoor adventure activities. This was a major benefit cited from residential programmes, including *Do it 4 Real*, YHA residential holiday camps, targeted at young people aged 11-17.

h) Environmental awareness is a benefit cited by a number of key providers, including RSPB Sandwell Valley Wildspace, offering conservation based activities to young offenders, mostly male, aged 16+, and BEN (Black Environment Network) (see below).

i) Wild adventure space activities offer opportunities for increasing awareness and understanding of diversity between cultures. A good example of these social benefits is BEN's Riverside Mersey project, where an ethnically mixed group of young males was chosen to encourage inter-cultural appreciation.

> **Riverside Mersey Project, BEN, Summer 2005**
> **www.ben-network.org.uk**
>
> BEN promotes environmental participation amongst deprived ethnic groups. This project aimed to introduce young males from mixed ethnic groups to a riverside environment in Liverpool over a one day period, in the summer of 2005. All participants were male, aged 14-16, with equal numbers from the Bangladeshi, Pakistani and white communities, many of whom had never been out of the city environment or experienced being on water before   In order to encourage knowledge of riverside environments, canoeing was chosen as a 'fun' means of engaging the young people in the project and promoting environmental awareness. A major benefit cited was improved inter-cultural awareness promoted by asking the young people to bring dishes from their respective culture for a shared picnic-lunch, and by placing participants in mixed cultural teams.
>
> Other cited benefits include the development of self-help skills, self-representation and self-improvement, the effects of which spread into other areas of life beyond the environment, for example in raising awareness of riverside environments in the young person's family and friends.

j) Social inclusion for disadvantaged individuals is exemplified by the *Peak District Achievement Award* in Barnsley, offering opportunities for children excluded from mainstream education to experience wild moorland over a residential visit and to achieve a Headstart Certificate in orienteering, conservation work, and first aid.

k) Benefits may include engendering a sense of belonging via setting up of clubs, such as the Delamere bike club, www.delamarebikeclub.co.uk. 'Club' management of activities can provide a new focus and interest for many young people, helping positive behaviour change. The Riverside Centre, Oxfordshire, is a good example, offering challenges, support, coaching, and accredited outcomes to outreach to young homeless people, minority ethnic groups, disabled people and young offenders.

Riverside Centre, Oxfordshire
www.harwell.plus.com/riverside/

A country-based outdoor education centre situated on the banks of the River Thames, a mile south of Oxford town centre, offering kayaking and canoeing to young people, aged 13-19. The Centre works particularly hard to involve minority groups including young offenders, black and minority ethnic groups, disabled people and young homeless people. Taster sessions are provided to initially engage the young people. Key benefits to young people at risk include changing perspectives (getting out of a 'rut' and "doing things differently"), caring for each other and developing camaraderie. A purely practical problem mentioned is the need to provide dry, clean clothes for the homeless – kayakers get wet! Observed benefits to the community include a reduction in anti-social behaviour and increased environmental awareness.

Under 'barriers', the organisation highlighted the sheer hard work and determination required to reach and involve young people in vulnerable situations. This is achieved through focused outreach work and relationship building.

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l) Improved general physical and mental well-being can result from a range of projects, for example, *Ground Green Zero*, a BCTV led exercise programme adapted from the adult Green Gym model, and offering a 'whole' family approach to improving health and well-being in young people.

m) Effecting changes in behaviour is an observed benefit cited in many programmes: including reduced truancy via participation in the Akenshaw Youth Project; and reduction in probation periods through participation in Forest Schools and the Venture Trust's Personal Development Programme.

5.5 Potential benefits to the community

Many of the benefits to individuals or groups of young people also offer benefits to the community and wider society. A number were also identified by project managers.

a) Reduction in anti-social behaviour can benefit all, e.g. in the Cornerstone Angling Skills Project (CAST), where improved behaviour and practical conservation of green space by young people benefited the community at large.

Cornerstone Angling Skills Project (CAST)– Nottingham City Council
www.ruralaffairs.org.uk/newletter/cast.htm

This is one of a number of CAST nationwide angling initiatives designed to engage young people in riverside environments and improve behaviour in disaffected young people from disadvantaged areas. This particular project was devised by the Rural Community Council in Nottingham and based on the River Leen, at Newstead Abbey. It helped eradicate bad behaviour by building positive, mixed ability peer groups based around respect, team working and an interest in fishing. Some 80 young people are involved in the project, 21 whom have 'graduated'.

> Training takes the form of practical session, research and worksheet completion, followed by the opportunity to self-select fishing spots and receive angling coaching. Owing to its success in breaking a cycle of misuse and vandalism in the park, the project was awarded exclusive rights to fish in the upper lake of Newstead Abbey. In return the group provide conservation activities. Benefits cited included improvements in the social and education skills of participants, in their employment prospects and behaviour, and practical conservation of green space, which also benefited the community at large.

b) Environmental improvements, including the creation of new community environments (e.g. orchards) or improvements to existing ones (e.g. litter removal, tree planting) are typical of projects such as those run by BTCV.

c) Community benefits can include regeneration of deprived areas through specific park development, which in the case of Oakfield Active Recreation for Children (ARC) resulted in changing resident perspectives of their local neighbourhood.

> **Oakfield Active Recreation for Children (ARC), Ryde, Isle of Wight**
> **August 04 ongoing**
> **play@rydedevelopmenttrust.org**
> *"[We're] now staying in Oakfield because of the Park"*
> Young parent resident
>
> The ARC park offers a range of activities (ball court, youth zone, skate park, play area, and connecting footpaths to local schools and the countryside) and has acted as a catalyst in a deprived area of the Isle of Wight, inspiring young people living there and bringing about regeneration of the neighbourhood as a whole. The Park has significantly increased activity in the young people's lives, provided a 'safe' outdoor activity environment, and opened up access to the countryside.
>
> This project is a good example of engaging young people in the process of developing the site. Over 500 young people were involved, aged 8-18 years old, via questionnaires and trips to 15 'best practice' play hang-out environments in the South of England. From these evaluations, 150 young people defined their 'wish list' for the site (a process outlined in a film made by the young people, *'Children's voices'*). Through these processes the project has fostered a sense of power, sense of control, and sense of ownership.
>
> The benefits to the community have been in raised perceptions about the quality of environment, the fostering of a sense of community, and a desire to stay in the neighbourhood.   Parents have trained as play inspectors and helped in the daily responsibilities of running the Park. The most difficult barrier quoted was in effecting development quickly enough (raising funds, council negotiations etc) before changes occur in aspirations of the young people who participated.

d) Improved community relations and removal of tensions can be achieved by relocating a noisy activity to a less sensitive and fragile environment, for example in East Anglia Forest District, where potential nuisance from a motorcycling was

minimised by location in a low-density visitor area and formation of a 'club' supporting "official" use at certain times of the day only.

e) Economic benefits to tourism from residential trips can be significant, as the YHA *Do it 4 Real* residential projects have demonstrated, increasing the numbers of young people visiting local shops and using facilities in countryside locations and national parks.

f) Projects can assist the promotion of environmental awareness at home and in the wider community, particularly amongst different ethnic groups, e.g. through BEN projects such as Riverside Mersey (see above).

However, it must be recognised that communities may often perceive the introduction of activities by a large group of young people as an unwelcome intrusion, and some communities will experience disbenefits, e.g. litter, noise, damage to the environment on occasions, as well as benefits.

5.6 Barriers in provision of structured access to wild adventure and how they can be overcome

The barriers identified by project managers confirm many of the findings from the literature review and issues identified at the scoping workshop. The major barriers are identified below, along with examples from projects that have successfully overcome them, at least in part.

a) Staff resources, both in terms of numbers and skills, are a crucial issue in terms of managing risk and risk assessment procedures, the need to address multiple individual needs and the need to reassure/motivate young people who are fearful, sceptical or ambivalent about the nature of an activity.
   Lack of staff numbers and skills can be overcome by training, drawing on expert assistance for risk assessment procedures and by funding provision to support extra staff and training, e.g. Bridging the Border, Northumberland National Park, where a number of barriers were overcome by providing transport and training for teachers and youth leaders

b) Transportation issues, such as costs of buses or mini-buses and training of staff to drive them can be a major barrier.
   Such issues can be overcome by negotiating with local transport companies, community transport enterprises and by funding provision, e.g. the free bus scheme being organised for access to Perdiswell Wheeled Sports Park.

c) Perceived fear from parents and school teachers can be a significant barrier to allowing young people to undertake adventurous outdoor activities.
   There is potential to overcome this via evaluation, improving communications between parties e.g. in showing parents presentations of videos made by young people.

d) Distrust and hostility from local residents about provision of new activities is often a barrier.
   This can be overcome by negotiations with police, local council and community, e.g. East Anglia District Forest, where community police officers and local

residents were involved in negotiations to site motorcycling tracks in less sensitive areas of the forest.

e) There is a need to work swiftly to deliver facilities designed in consultation with young people before they outgrow the need.
Funding bodies/local councils and planning authorities need to respond quickly to development proposals involving young people, e.g. as in the Oakfield ARC project. Using re-cycled materials may keep costs down.

f) Perceived fears and scepticism of young people can be a major barrier.
This can be overcome by using peer group support, e.g. in the Do it 4 Real project or in the Pennywell Youth Group (site of a focus group) where youth workers are all young people who have grown up on the estate themselves.

g) The need to impose rules and regulations on young people when undertaking risky activities involving fire, water etc. can be a barrier.
This can be overcome by involving young people in negotiating and drawing up good behaviour contracts, which may lead to peer enforcement of breaches, e.g. in the Riverside Centre, Oxfordshire.

5.7 Gaps and recommendations

The project review confirmed the literature review's findings that there is a shortage of projects engaging minority ethnic groups and teenage girls in wild adventure space

There is a gap in knowledge on the unstructured use of wild adventure space (e.g. derelict sites, fringe woodland) local to where young people live. Reference to usage of this type of space is anecdotal in the main. Further research is needed on how teenagers appropriate 'wild' open space within urban and suburban environments and how these types of spaces are meeting young people's developmental needs.

There is also a lack of 'Inter-generational' projects – projects that build bridges between young people, their families and older generations. Ideas for promoting 'inter-generational' play can be found in the USA and research in Finland has shown the benefits to older people of having fun too when supporting young people in playgrounds.

There is a shortage of projects where young people are in control of the design, setting up and organisation of a 'wild adventure' activity. There is also a shortage of projects with a sustainability focus e.g. use of recycled materials for games and activities. Promotion of junkyard sports (sports that are played with recycled materials) is one angle that might be developed in this area.

This review has focused on the current situation in England. A wider mapping of projects outside of England, to include Europe and the USA, could offer additional pointers on how to successfully engage young people in wild adventure space. For example, scavenger hunts, environmental treasure hunts, are popular in New York and other parts of America.

Overall, there is a gap in robust evaluation according to a consistent framework and the variety of projects, contexts and target groups makes this difficult to achieve. Many of the projects use ethnographic methods for evaluation and feedback but there is as yet no cumulative database for gathering the evidence and combining it to create a stronger evidence base.

6. Stakeholders' views

> *"Facing doubt and uncertainty about the outcome are the most valuable learning experiences of young people's adventure's outdoors."* Ian McMorrin, (Adventure Activities Licensing Authority), stakeholder's forum.

6.1 Format of stakeholders forum
A stakeholders forum was held toward the end of this project. Key players in the field of wild adventure space and young people were invited to:
- Respond to the findings of OPENspace research available in draft reports
- Identify barriers to further development of access to wild adventure space
- Debate the future direction of provision of wild adventure space for young people

The 27 attendees, from a range of agencies and organisations (see Appendix B) debated the draft research findings and contributed to the final recommendations of the report. Companion document WASYP 6 gives details of the Forum (see http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/researchprojects_wildadventurespaces.htm).

6.2 Priorities and targets recommended
Following a presentation of findings, breakout sessions were used to discuss the project recommendations, make suggestions and identify priorities. Some time was spent discussing the 'spectrum of opportunity' that exists across two axes, from close-by to distant wild adventure places and from free, unstructured and unsupervised activity to organised and structured adventure. This informed the diagram developed in the section 7, below.

Discussion also ranged around issues of 'commodification' (i.e. the transformation of engagement with wild adventure space into a commercial relationship), with some participants arguing against structured and packaged delivery of wild adventure opportunities. However, others argued that the current lack of engagement of most young people with outdoor adventure suggests that commodification may be the only way in which to reach out and attract them.

After a plenary session where participants could vote for the most important issues, identified from the discussions, the following were highlighted as key priorities for the long-term and for more immediate consideration:

6.2.1 Long-term priorities
- Broadening the spectrum of opportunity – get young people to be physically active (locally and in a wider context) both through free access and organised access/projects

- Making spaces available and accessible by foot
- Every young person under 14 (or 10) to experience a one night camp in the 'wild' at least once in their youth
- Developing social acceptance of groups of young people in open spaces.

6.2.2 More immediate priorities
- Making local greenspaces more child friendly and local children's spaces more nature friendly
- Developing the evidence base for how younger children's experience feeds into later (teenage and adult) life
- Linking with the DfES Education Outside the Classroom Manifesto
- Provide for greater diversity of experiences in the natural environment, especially in countryside contexts, drawing on what attracts young people and works in urban environments (e.g. entertainment/culture/food/music).

7. Conclusions

"Where I live I don't have the chance to go very often to natural places as there is nothing like that around my neighbourhood. This is unfair for kids like me who are interested in nature and wildlife" teenager, South Ockendon

This study has gathered a significant weight of evidence to demonstrate the value of wild adventure space for young people. There are a number of important ways in which ready access to attractive wild adventure space, both close to home and further afield, can contribute to young people's developmental needs. There is also substantial evidence that, where young people have appropriate access to such space, the local community and wider society also benefit. However, many barriers exist that prevent equitable access to wild adventure space. In addition, attempts to improve the quality and appropriateness of existing local space are compounded by poor understanding of the experience of such places from a teenager's perspective.

7.1 Benefits for the individual and the community from young people's engagement with wild adventure space
Experience of the outdoors and wild adventure space has the potential to confer a wide range of benefits on young people. Benefits may arise directly, through engagement with the elements of wild adventure space and natural outdoor environments, and indirectly, through the experience of activities and structured programmes organized within such environments. Benefits such as increased physical fitness and positive attitudes to outdoor activity can make an important contribution to tackling obesity and supporting healthy lifestyles in young people. Such activity also contributes to cognitive development and promotes mental health and emotional well-being which may have long-lasting effects into adulthood.

Development of a positive self-image, confidence in one's abilities and experience of dealing with uncertainty can be important in helping young people face the wider world and develop enhanced social skills. Experience of challenging situations in wild adventure space can encourage peer group support, adaptability and the adoption of responsibility, which may also lead to positive behaviour change with

regard to dependencies such as drink or drugs. In addition, a range of educational benefits can result from engagement with wild adventure space, from development of practical and problem-solving skills to raising of environmental awareness and better understanding of the natural world.

Most of the benefits to the wider community identified throughout the research findings relate to the long term benefits to society of a generation that will have benefited in some or all of the ways identified above, as individual young people. In other words, they will grow into adults likely to be healthier, both mentally and physically, more physically active and engaged with their environment, more confident of themselves and their abilities and less likely to be at risk of offending. In addition, we have identified particular and immediate benefits to the wider community from young people's wild adventure activities through organized projects. Projects with harder-to-reach young people, such as those from minority ethnic groups, may bring significant additional benefits to the whole family in terms of engagement with the natural environment, in a context where the countryside and natural environments have not been considered welcoming in the past.

A brief insight into the experience from young people's perspectives underlines the importance of wild adventure space as a place that offers freedom, inspiration, a breathing space and an opportunity to be away from family and social pressures, as well as providing opportunities for activities to "keep you out of trouble".

7.2 Barriers to provision of wild adventure space and activities
A range of barriers exist that exclude or deter young people from accessing or enjoying wild adventure space. Young people from lower income households, disabled people, ethnic minority young people and teenage girls are under-represented as users of the countryside and wild adventure space. This reflects a shortage of projects to engage some of these groups as well as wider issues of social exclusion.

Popular stereotypes that cast young people as a problem and a threat have contributed to their marginalisation and social exclusion, particularly in the case of urban outdoor environments – the places to which most young people have easiest access in our urbanised society. It is clear that there is a need to address access need for those marginalised at present, and to find ways of overcoming perceptual barriers for certain groups of young people.

Concerns about risk and safety are a major issue for educators, youth workers, parents and land managers as well as for young people themselves, although the focus of these concerns may be different. Fear of litigation in relation to accidents and physical hazards may be an overriding issue for managers and those in positions of responsibility for young people, while young people themselves are often more fearful of other groups of youth.

The need to provide attractive and accessible places for outdoor adventure within easy walking distance of their homes is a challenge for local authorities and land managers, as is provision of transport and funds to support wild adventure activities in more distant and countryside places. Staffing issues can also be problematic; there is a need for skilled and experienced staff who can engage and inspire young

people, as well as staff with appropriate expertise in risk assessment and risk management.

Finally, in a society where woodlands and wild spaces may be cast as unsafe places and where the attractions of digital media and indoor entertainments are increasing, many young people may see little attraction in accessing wild adventure space, especially if they have had little experience of it in earlier childhood. Even where projects are initiated to engage teenagers and encourage adventurous outdoor activities, there is often a scepticism on the part of the young people, who may be cynical about the likelihood of any immediate attractions or benefits for themselves.

7.3 Gaps in understanding and opportunities for action
Gaps and opportunities are identified under themes that have been highlighted through the information gathering exercise. They provide the basis for the recommendations outlined in the next section.

7.3.1 Safety, risk and liability
Concerns around this theme have been a consistent feature of the study, from its inception. There is an urgent need to develop and disseminate guidance on how to manage risk and how to weigh the many potential benefits of access to wild adventure space against the potential for risk. Such guidance should offer help on how to overcome barriers, including how to outreach and negotiate with young people and with their parents and those with a duty of care.

The Play Safety Forum (2002) has produced a statement underlining the fact that "risk-taking is an essential feature of play provision, and of all environments in which children legitimately spend time at play". It provides guidance, supported by the Health and Safety Executive, on appropriate risk assessment (Play Safety Forum, 2002). The guidance developed by the Forestry Commission (Harrop, 2006) for managing den-building and other activities in woodlands provides a useful example of a risk matrix and decision tree. The Compensation Act (July 2006) may assist in improving attitudes to risk and accepting uncertainty. Its provisions cover what standard of care is reasonable in a claim for negligence or breach of statutory duty, and allow for taking into account whether requiring particular steps to be taken to meet the standard of care would prevent or impede a desirable activity from taking place. This is aimed at helping to ensure that normal and healthy activities are not prevented because of a fear of litigation and excessively risk-averse behaviour. A risk-management approach that weighs potential risks against benefits conferred by 'risky' activity is therefore the recommended approach.

There is also a need to develop training courses in appropriate risk management for site managers, project managers, youth workers, educators and others engaged with wild adventure space and activities for young people.

7.3.2 Social inclusion
Access to wilderness and wild adventure remains unequal: young people from minority ethnic groups, young people with disabilities and girls are under-represented among young user groups. It is important to develop better access for young people to the full spectrum of opportunities for wild adventure and outdoor space, to serve their developmental needs in a socially inclusive way.

There is a lack of knowledge of wilderness uses and perceptions among members of excluded groups of young people, as identified above. Research priorities should be aimed at improving the evidence base in relation to under-represented groups (Countryside Agency, 2005).

There is a need for projects to focus particularly on teenage girls, to understand their desires and needs in relation to wild adventure space. Current concern by health professionals' over the drop in physical activity in girls as they enter secondary school reinforces the need to understand their motivations better. It appears likely that they can be engaged through campaigning and ethical issues with which they may have a sympathy, e.g. sustainability, wildlife conservation, animals such as ponies, etc..

There is evidence that what counts as 'wild' and 'adventurous', and what is attractive in terms of opportunity varies greatly between age groups, cultures and sub-cultures. There is a need to recognise and promote 'adventure' in many different guises dependent upon age, ability, and culture - what may be attractively challenging for one individual may be too off-putting for another and boring or lacking excitement for a third. Thus, there is a need for a *variety* of adventure spaces to suit a *diversity* of different sub-cultures, ages and groups. The stakeholders' forum suggested that there may be benefits in drawing on what works in urban environments and different cultural contexts (e.g. entertainment, food, music), to attract excluded groups to rural and wilderness areas.

There is a need to recognise and promote the concept that all young people have a right and need to experience adventure outdoors. It is likely that many young people from disadvantaged backgrounds miss out on access to wild adventure outdoors, particularly if they do not get into trouble and attract the attention of youth and social services; such young people may be outside much of the time in their local environment but the experience available may be very poor.

Commodification (i.e. commercial and 'packaged' approaches to engagement with wild adventure space), may be harnessed as a potentially useful process that is likely to attract young people to engagement with nature and wild adventure. Although there is some resistance to commodification among professionals working with natural outdoor spaces, it may be the only way to attract young people who have had no previous experience of the natural environment.

Clubs could be used more widely as an effective means of organising perceived anti-social activities such as motorcycling and to promote a sense of belonging for young people.

There is a shortage of projects with a sustainability focus e.g. use of recycled materials for games and activities; involving young people in the transformation of spaces for their own use. The possibility of attracting teenage girls to wild adventure space via sustainability/ecological themes and via campaigning emerged as a suggestion from the stakeholder Forum. Promotion of junkyard sports (sports that are played with recycled materials) is one angle that might be developed in this area (see www.junkyardsports.com).

7.3.3 Understanding unstructured use of local wild adventure space

One of the challenges encountered in this research was finding evidence of young people's unstructured or unprogrammed engagement with wild adventure space and the benefits they derive from this. There is a gap in knowledge on the unstructured use of wild space (e.g. derelict sites, fringe woodland) local to where young people live, and reference to usage of this type of space is anecdotal in the main. Focus group discussions with young people identified the importance of these types of spaces for social activities.   Further research is needed to explore how these spaces are appropriated by young people and the benefits derived.

Development of a weblog ('blog') site, in collaboration with an artist or designer, might be an effective way to encourage young people to share experiences of wild adventure space and positive aspects of spaces in their local area. This seems one of the few ways that is likely to succeed, to explore how young people find out about adventure outdoors and benefit from unsupervised use of wild adventure space close to home. It will need to be carefully designed and managed, but might appeal to young people in a way that conventional surveys do not. Examples of websites include:
http://postsecret.blogspot.com/
http://www.knowhere.co.uk/85.html#about

7.3.4 Involving young people and training them as leaders and mentors

Where young people are involved in participatory processes, there is a need to deliver projects within short time frames so that the young people can participate in an activity before they outgrow it, in part requiring the support of local planning authorities.

There is a shortage of projects where young people are in control of the design, setting up and organisation of a 'wild adventure' activity. Oakfield ARC is one of the few projects to foster a sense of control and power in young people through an exemplary participation process. This may also assist in the sustainability of the project over time if more that one age group is engaged. A theme to emerge from focus group discussion with young people is their current dependency on youth leaders/groups for organising activities and access, and this is reflected in the project review.

Peer support needs to be developed e.g. by training young people – especially girls - as leaders or mentors for wild adventure space activities. This could have multiple benefits, especially in increasing the confidence of young people to seek out and organise wild adventure activities for themselves – encouraging them to "wrap their own package", as it were. It will also provide important role models for other young people.

There is a great opportunity to support young people in communicating the benefits of adventure by promotion of their stories as told in film, written narrative, web design and weblogs. This can be beneficial in developing communication skills for young people as well as encouraging others to engage with wild adventure opportunities.

7.3.5 Managing and maintaining wild adventure space
Few recommendations emerged from the study on how to manage wild adventure space. There is a gap in knowledge about landowners', managers' and providers' attitudes to wild adventure space – both those who plan for and encourage teenage use and those whose land has been appropriated by teenagers independently. A survey of different landowners' perceptions and approaches to wild adventure space would be a useful basis on which to address increasing provision.

Utilisation of wilderness and natural settings for a range of young people's activities can make a significant contribution towards the realisation of the national standards proposed in Youth Matters (Department of Education and Skills 2005). However, apart from Harrop's (2006) guidance for managers of woodland settings, and a review of the use of teenage shelters as part of the Countryside Agency's 'Doorstep Greens' (Bird, 2005), there is little that analyses or recommends different approaches to land management in relation to providing for young people's needs. The scoping workshop identified the problem that local authorities may have lost appropriate management skills for managing and maintaining wild adventure space. There is a need to investigate this further.

Management of temporary locations and patterns of use is also challenging. Just as teenage groups and fashions are ephemeral, so are the places they favour. There is value in exploring concepts of a mosaic of shifting, ephemeral, found spaces or 'loose-fit' landscapes that might offer temporary wild space for teenagers, to be appropriated by a group or abandoned as they wish. How would such spaces be 'managed'? What would be the limits of acceptability or intervention by land managers and others in authority? These are topics for further investigation.

Not all managers of green and wilderness places are trained or experienced in working with young people and not all youth workers are trained in undertaking or supporting wild adventure. There is a need to value and develop the experience of those skilled in working with young people, and to bring together the different communities of interest and expertise. The project review showed how the impact of potentially environmentally damaging activities (e.g. mountain biking, motor cycling) can be reduced through negotiation with local users and removal of the activity to less sensitive locations within a country park or forest. Trade-off was another measure used by young anglers – the right to fish traded with the benefit of environmental improvements.

Partnerships formed in this way can help address the general challenge that groups of young people are unwelcome in many outdoor places. There is an urgent need to develop demonstration projects in a few, targeted areas, where different approaches to provide a welcome for teenagers to wild adventure space can be tested and promoted. This will need to engage young people at all levels, as well as the rest of the community.

7.3.6 Adequacy of access to and supply of wild adventure space
It is unclear what are necessary and sufficient conditions for different groups of young people to access wild adventure space. What deters young people is probably not the opposite of what attracts them – there are likely to be different values and

priorities involved. It would be useful to undertake further research to identify the issues affecting supply and demand for wild adventure space.

There is little evidence in the literature to relate Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGST) for towns and cities (Handley et al. 2003) and the Woodland Access Standard (Woodland Trust, 2004) to young people's needs for wild adventure space. This provides an opportunity for research to map needs against green space recommendations and standards at a range of scales, from minimum local distances for green space, e.g. ANGST's recommended 2ha of green space within 300m and Woodland Trust's recommended 2ha of woodland within 500m, to more distant and extensive wild adventure space.

In this context, the concept of a "spectrum of outdoor activity", as discussed at the stakeholder's forum and building on the work of HenleyCentreHeadlightVision (2005), might be useful (see figure 6). It shows the gradation from local to distant places across one axis and from unsupervised and unsupervised adventure space use by young people, to structured and supervised adventure activities across the other axis. Evidence from the literature review, the focus groups, the project review and the forum support the suggestion that all parts of the spectrum are important to young people and there should be provision for access to each quarter of the spectrum.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Figure 6: Spectrum of opportunity for wild adventure outdoors
(adapted from HenleyCentreHeadlightVision, 2005)

One effective way to investigate the availability of wild adventure space is to involve young people in continuing audits of wild spaces and adventure opportunities, both local and more distant (e.g. as is done with some National Parks and the John Muir Award). This might be managed through a structured use of the internet, or in a more unstructured way similar to the Knowhere website (see http://www.knowhere.co.uk/85.html#about). Mapping of local open spaces as perceived by young people can be compared (through GIS), for example, with maps of green infrastructure prepared by English Nature, as part of local authorities' open space strategies, to understand better how young people value different kinds of wild space.

7.3.7 Improved evidence of physical, social and environmental benefits

Further evaluative research is required to support claims made for the physical, social and environmental benefits of engaging young people in outdoor activities, particularly in relation to long term benefits and the frequency of exposure to wild adventure space. However, the sheer range of projects and scope of experiences offered is so diverse, with many projects targeting comparatively small numbers of young people, that it is very difficult to get robust data on which to base generalised statements. The ideal would be to obtain longitudinal data from comparable projects over a number of years. In the absence of this, the agreement of a common evaluation format for individual projects would allow key providers such as Natural England to develop a nationwide evidence base of benefits related to types of experience. The database could take into account the diversity of project types and approaches and be used to accumulate a weight of evidence, translating the ethnographic approach of case study evaluations into a more systematic evidence base from which to derive analysis for policy makers.

In addition to evaluation research, it will be important to develop the theoretical basis for understanding the mechanisms behind engagement with natural and wild adventure spaces. This will provide additional support for demonstrating how and why different interventions with young people may work and the likely benefits of projects. The concept of affordances (Gibson, 1979; Heft, 1988; Kyttä, 2006) to explore how young people engage with their environment is a promising approach that allows an understanding of the reciprocal relationship between person and place. It examines the environment in terms of what it offers to people, and thus both the abilities and needs of the individual and the qualities of place are bound up in the concept.

In addition, since the project review in this study has focused on identifying current projects within England, a mapping of projects outside of the UK could generate further ideas for development.

7.3.8 Potential partners

There are a number of potential partners which could be involved in taking forward the recommendations of this study. Some are at government department or agency level, such as the Department of Education and Skills (DfES), through their Youth Matters policy and their Manifesto for Learning Outside the Classroom, the Forestry Commission and Sport England.

There are also a number of regional and local departments who could be key partners - the police and social services in particular. Local authorities, as landowners and managers, could be involved through their planning departments, along with other public agency and private landowners. The Country Land and Business Association (who were not able to attend the workshop or forum) could be potentially an important partner representing private landowners.

The attendees at the workshop and forum (see Appendix B and companion document WASYP 6 at http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/researchprojects_wildadventurespaces.htm) provide good contact points for a range of organizations who are already committed to some aspect of the study themes, for example the National Council for Youth Voluntary Services, the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, the Children's Play Council, the Black Environment Network and the Youth Hostel Association. The good practice examples highlighted in earlier sections of this report also provide opportunities for partnering, particularly where there are innovative approaches that could be transferred elsewhere (see also companion documents WASYP 4 and WASYP 5 on the project survey and review, at http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/researchprojects_wildadventurespaces.htm).

Appendix C identifies the government policy context for this study and potential partner sectors for demonstration projects.

8. Recommendations for future action

> *"Having a good time with your mates"*
> *"A place where you could do what you want"*
> *"A place that inspires you to do things"*
> What teenagers like about outdoor adventure space

Recommendations are organised by theme in accordance with those identified in the previous section. Where possible, such actions should build on current initiatives and best practice highlighted in this study. Those recommendations that are considered immediate priorities are highlighted.

8.1 Safety, risk and liability

Outcomes
8.1.1 Outdoor activity risk assessments weigh opportunity costs against risk - the benefits as well as risks of activities.

8.1.2 Wild adventure activities for young people are not prevented solely because of a fear of litigation and excessively risk-averse behaviour.

Recommendations for action
8.1.3 **Priority*** Develop advice on risk management for wild adventure space, including help on how to overcome barriers, how to outreach and negotiate with young people and with their parents and those with a duty of care, and make it available in a user-friendly format.

8.1.4 **Priority*** Develop a programme of training courses on risk management for site managers, project managers, educators and others engaged in managing use of wild adventure space by young people.

8.2 Social Inclusion

Outcomes
8.2.1 Young people with disabilities, young people from minority ethnic groups, young people from lower socio-economic classes, and girls are engaged in using and enjoying outdoor adventure space in numbers representative of their populations as a whole.

8.2.2 A broader spectrum of opportunity for access to wild adventure space is available to all young people, across the spectrum of opportunity identified in figure 6, including both free, local access and organised access/projects.

8.2.3 Every young person has access to local 'wild' space, attractive and appropriate to their needs, readily accessible by foot.

8.2.4 Every young person under 14 has had the opportunity to experience a minimum of one night's camp in the 'wild' as part of their life experience.

Recommendations for action
8.2.5 Undertake research to improve the primary information base on how young people from minority ethnic groups, young people with disabilities, young people from lower socio-economic classes, and girls perceive and use wild adventure space.

8.2.6 **Priority*** Explore what works to attract young people from areas and contexts of deprivation to experience wild adventure through innovative approaches.

8.2.7 Explore the effectiveness of attracting teenage girls to use wild adventure space through, for example, sustainability/ecological themes, engagement with animals such as ponies, and campaigning and ethical issues.

8.2.8 Develop demonstration projects that are effective in engaging young people from minority ethnic groups, young people with disabilities, young people from lower socio-economic classes, and girls with wild adventure space.

8.2.9 Make provision for greater diversity of wild adventure space experiences in rural contexts, drawing on what works in urban environments and different cultural contexts (e.g. entertainment, food, music).

8.2.10 **Priority*** Campaign for recognition of the concept that all young people have a right and need to experience adventure outdoors. As the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (Bailie, 2005) has put it, without this "We have already condemned an entire generation to a life of awful quality and shocking brevity".

8.3 Understanding unstructured use of local wild adventure space

Outcome
8.3.1 There is a sound evidence base for understanding the value of local wild adventure space for young people, their use of such space, and the management requirements associated with this.

Recommendations for action
8.3.2 **Priority*** Develop the primary information base on young people's unstructured use of wild space close to their homes, through new research and exploration of innovative techniques such as weblog sites.

8.3.3 Undertake research on landowners', managers' and providers' attitudes and experience in relation to provision, use of and management of wild adventure space for young people.

8.4 Involving young people and training them as leaders and mentors

Outcome
8.4.1 More young people (girls and boys) make independent use of wild adventure space.

Recommendations for action
8.4.2   Develop guidance or training for youth workers to assist them in developing teenagers' abilities and confidence to undertake organisation and use of wild adventure space and engagement in wild adventure activities independently.

8.4.3 Develop training materials and tools for young people (ensuring girls are included) to act as leaders or mentors for wild adventure space activities; this should include presentation and communication skills for inspiring others.

8.5 Managing and maintaining wild adventure space

Outcomes

8.5.1 Existing projects and sites are enhanced and become more attractive to young people, who make better use of them.

8.5.2 Local authority and other landowners have a confident and positive attitude to teenagers' use of land for wild adventure.

8.5.3 Young people are socially accepted in local open spaces by landowners, managers and the wider community.

Recommendations for action
8.5.4 Develop user-friendly recommendations for different approaches to successful land management in relation to providing for young people's needs for wild adventure space.

8.5.5 Explore the potential of developing activities which use re-cycled materials (e.g. in 'junkyard sports' or in environmental restoration) to raise awareness of sustainability issues and which attract young people to take part.

8.5.6 Undertake research on the skills needed for managing and maintaining wild adventure space, including temporary sites, by local authorities and private landowners and managers. Investigate the availability of these skills within current local authority staffing profiles.

8.5.7 **Priority*** Develop a forum to bring together managers of green and wild adventure places and those trained or experienced in working with young people, including educators, police and social workers. Use this forum to develop partnership working and identify examples of good practice.

8.5.8 **Priority*** Develop demonstration projects in a few, targeted areas, where different approaches to providing a welcome for teenagers to wild adventure space are tested and promoted.

8.6 Adequacy of access to and supply of wild adventure space

Outcomes
8.6.1 All local authorities know what wild adventure space provision is available for young people

8.6.2 All local authorities know how access to wild adventure space for young people relates to the desired spectrum of opportunity identified in figure 6, and where action is needed to fill gaps and meet young people's needs.

Recommendations for action
8.6.3 Undertake research to identify the issues affecting supply and demand for wild adventure space by young people and the relevance and adequacy of Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGST) and Woodland Trust standards in relation to this.

8.6.4 **Priority*** Develop demonstration projects for involving young people in audits of wild spaces and adventure opportunities relevant to them, both local and more distant. This might be managed through the use of the internet or other IT methods.

8.6.5 Develop GIS database systems to combine information on existing natural and wild space accessible to teenagers with information from young people's audits of such space, so that it can be compared with open space standards.

8.7 Improved evidence of physical, social and environmental benefits

Outcomes
8.7.1 There is a more robust empirical evidence base for the costs and benefits of access to wild adventure space and, in particular, "Adventure Therapy".

8.7.2 There is a sound theoretical basis for understanding young people's engagement with wild adventure space.

Recommendations for action

8.7.3 Develop a common framework for evaluating diverse projects involving young people and wild adventure and develop and maintain a database of evaluation.

8.7.4 **Priority*** Establish at least one, well-founded, longitudinal study to research the frequency of access to wild adventure space for young people and the long-term benefits of such experience for different sub-groups.

8.7.5 Support research to develop the theoretical basis for understanding the mechanisms behind engagement with natural and wild adventure spaces, including how younger children's experience feeds into later (teenage and adult) life.

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This report is supported by a wealth of information gathered for the study and available in a set of companion documents, freely available to download from the OPENspace website at URL:
http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/researchprojects_wildadventurespaces.htm

Acknowledgements

APPENDIX A: LIST OF COMPANION DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE ONLINE

The following companion documents provide a rich resource in terms of information gathered and analysed to inform this report. Readers are encouraged to access this resource. They are available to download freely from the following website URL:
http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/researchprojects_wildadventurespaces.htm

WASYP 1: Literature Review – Survey of Findings
WASYP 2: Individual Literature Reviews
WASYP 3: Project Review – Survey of Findings
WASYP 4: Matrix of Projects Surveyed
WASYP 5: Focus Group Summaries
WASYP 6: Report of Scoping Workshop and Stakeholder Forum

APPENDIX B: CONSULTEES AND CONTRIBUTORS TO THE PROJECT

1.   Attendees at the Scoping Workshop, 8th January 2005, Birmingham

Iain McMorrin	Adventure Activities Licensing Authority
Niall Crawford	Birmingham City Council, Health Education Unit
James Friel	Black Environment Network
Michele Donague	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
Steve Robertshaw	Christian Camping International
Chris Marsh	Environment Agency
Bill Graham	Farming and Countryside Education
Roger Worthington	Forestry Commission
Lily Horseman	Hereford Nature Trust
Susanne Rauprich	National Council for Youth Voluntary Services
Don Eardley	National Playing Field's Association
Mike Elliott	National Trust
Tim Gill	Rethinking Childhood
Maggie Taylor	Sport England
Helen Freeston	Wildlife Trust
Lucy Howell	Woodcraft Folk

2. Attendees at the Stakeholders' Forum, 11th May 2006, York

Ian McMorrin	Adventure Activities Licensing Authority
Adrian Voce	Children's Play Council
Issy Cole Hamilton	Children's Play Council
Penny Jones	Countryside Agency
Joe Roberts	Countryside Council for Wales
Nick Jones	CrazyCat Consulting (representing Countryside Agency)
Alan Pearsons	English Nature
Judith Hanna	English Nature
Dr Steve Tilling	Field Studies Council
Lindsey Houston	Forestry Commission
Paddy Harrop	Forestry Commission
Susannah Podmore	Forestry Commission
Rob Wheway	Independent Researcher
Steve Lenartowicz	Institute for Outdoor Learning/ Derwent Hill Outdoor Education and Training Centre
Vusi Edeki-Ayuko	National Council for Youth Services
Don Earley	National Playing Fields
Ryland Robertshaw	Pioneer Centre
Tim Gill	Rethinking Childhood
Phil Burfield	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Kate Doughty	Rural Development Service
Heather Kennedy	Sports England, Yorkshire region
Paula Appleton	Sutcliffe Play
Viv Jebson	Sutcliffe Play
Lynn Crowe	Sheffield Hallam University
Jo Roberts	Wilderness Foundation UK
Helen Freeston	Wildlife Trusts
Sarah Fussey	Youth Hostel Association

APPENDIX C: POLICY CONTEXT AND POTENTIAL PARTNER SECTORS FOR DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

A number of policy initiatives relevant to wild adventure space for young people were identified in the course of this research and many agencies and organisations are potential partners for future demonstration projects. Appendix B lists many stakeholders who are potential partners and companion document WASYP 6 (see http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/researchprojects_wildadventurespaces.htm) gives details of suggestions made in the scoping workshop and stakeholder forum.

What is listed below is a summary of the different sectors that are relevant to Natural England's future work in this area, both in terms of policy context and potential partners.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING

Department of Education and Skills (DfES): Youth Matters
The intended policies of the government in relation to children and young people are described in the consultation paper Youth Matters (Department of Education and Skills 2005) and the subsequent governmental response to the results of the consultation exercise (Department of Education and Skills 2006). Of particular relevance to the issue of young people's exposure to wilderness experiences are the new national standards proposed for adoption (Department of Education and Skills). These comprise:

- Access to 2 hours per week of sporting activity, including formal and informal team and individual sports; outdoor and adventurous sports, other physical activities such as aerobics and dance.
- Access to 2 hours per week of other constructive activities in clubs, youth groups and classes, including pursuing interests and hobbies, activities that contribute to personal, social and spiritual development, encouragement of creativity, innovation and enterprise, study support, informal learning, residential opportunities.
- Opportunities for volunteering, including the full range of ways young people can make a contribution to their local communities, such as leading action, campaigning and fundraising.
- A wide range of other recreational, cultural, sporting and enriching experiences, including less structured activity that nonetheless contributes to a rich and varied life outside school or work, such as somewhere safe to hang out with friends, travel, visits to music, arts, heritage and sporting events.
- A range of safe and enjoyable places in which to spend time.

Many of these activities can be undertaken outdoors in natural settings and/or they can involve participation in nature/wilderness-oriented activities, groups and organisations.

Department of Education and Skills (DfES): Every Child Matters
Every Child Matters (DfES 2005) provides a context for much of this. It identifies key outcomes for children and young people's service provision as;
Being healthy
Staying safe

Enjoying and achieving
Making a positive contribution
Economic well-being.

Appropriate access to wild adventure space for young people can contribute to many if not all of these outcomes, but especially being healthy, staying safe and enjoying and achieving.

Manifesto for Learning Outside the Classroom
The Manifesto for Learning Outside the Classroom (DfES) has been developed to recognise and raise the profile of learning outside the classroom, from geography fieldwork, to museum visits, biology visits to local ponds, to educational visits to national parks.

CHILDREN'S PLAY PROVISION

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Play policy and research programme
The DCMS Play Policy and Research 2004-2007 programme is directly relevant.

The Children's Play Council (CPC) has been awarded the play Policy Development and Research contract for the DCMS for 2004 to 2007. This work, relates to play opportunities for children and young people of statutory school age in England

There is public policy interest in children's play and unstructured free time. Opinion polls and surveys show a strong demand for 'places to go and things to do' for children and young people, from adults and children alike. There is a growing view that good play experiences are not only an essential part of every childhood, but also a key public responsibility and an expression of our shared social obligations towards children and young people.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Department of Health (DoH) and DfES: Wired for Health
Wired for Health is an initiative to promote the idea that all young people should participate in one hour per day of moderate physical activity. Girls on average show a lower level of sport and physical activity than boys, particularly in secondary school, and the level of childhood obesity is rising.

Sport England and other agencies have been promoting physical activity for young people and in partnership with schools.

BIODIVERSITY, ACCESS TO NATURE AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Natural England and many of the stakeholders who have participated in this research are well-placed to promote access to nature for young people as part of wider policies to integrate biodiversity policy and action plans with widening access

to nature and green spaces. The Forestry Commission is a key partner in the development of policy and practice.

The Urban and Rural White Papers (2000) and the delivery of their promises, e.g. through DEFRA and the Countryside Agency's Diversity Review, involve many aspects of relevance to wild adventure space and accessibility.

Relevant legislation includes the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act, the Disability Discrimination Acts (DDA) and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (RRA). Obligations under the CROW Act include a requirement for local authorities to prepare Access Land Maps and develop access strategies for the land in their area. The DDA requires owners and managers of outdoor facilities to remove barriers to access for disabled people. The RRA requires all public authorities to produce a Race Equalities Scheme and they have a duty to promote good race relations and to demonstrate their strategy for achieving this.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG): Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future

DCLG's Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future has a focus on ensuring the majority of additional housing is on previously developed land, i.e. brownfield land. This has a potential impact on wild adventure space in communities. English Partnerships has a strategic role to find and assemble land, especially brownfield and publicly owned land, for sustainable development.

DCLG's 'Cleaner, Safer, Greener' policy to promote a high quality public realm includes good quality design of parks, public open space and residential areas. CABE and CABE Space have a commitment to improving the quality of public open space. Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 17 (England) requires planning authorities to undertake green space audits. CABE space urges authorities to develop green space strategies and to enter for Green Flag awards.

CRIME AND SAFETY

Home Office

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) and Acceptable Behaviour contracts are part of a context where young people may be seen as undesirable in public places. This is a policy challenge in the context of promoting wild adventure space for young people. The British Crime Survey uses "young people hanging around" as part of the definition of anti-social behaviour; there needs to be a new dialogue to address the role of young people in society and use of public spaces.

Groups and organisations relating to police and social work with young people should be engaged in this.

AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and associated national and local agencies including Forestry Commission, EnjoyEngland and VisitBritain

Public landowners and managers at national and local level have an interest in this. Private landowners' associations (e.g. Country Landowners' Business Association) and businesses affected by young people's use of wild outdoor space need to be engaged.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

In addition to the departments and agencies identified above, many charitable trusts and non-public organisations are engaged in some aspect of wild adventure space for young people and provide important partnership opportunities for Natural England in taking its work forward in this area. They include the organisations represented at the scoping workshop and stakeholders forum (see Appendix B and companion document WASYP 6) and those identified through the project overview, especially those highlighted for their good practice (see section 5 of this report and companion documents WASYP 4 and WASYP 5 at http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/researchprojects_wildadventurespaces.htm).