



## Site Survey

Understanding the causes of erosion in our mountains is an important first step in identifying how these can be tackled. To do this we undertake surveys;

**‘Surveys, and the information gathered from them, are used in various areas of our life: property surveys help us make decisions about the purchase of property; land-based surveys may be used to produce maps; visitor surveys may be used to identify visitors requirements and help planning decisions and so on.**

**They are generally undertaken in order to allow people to make informed choices and/or to proceed in a logical and planned way.’**

*Extract from:*

*Upland Path Advisory Group - Upland Path Management*

*Standards for delivering path projects in Scotland’s mountains*



## The range of Upland Path Surveys

The method of surveying mountain paths in Scotland has been designed by the Upland Path Advisory Group, with input from those who have been involved in path management and repair over many years.

Surveys bring together all the information on the path; it's area (Green Survey), it's condition (Amber Survey) and any plans for work on site (Red Survey):

### Green Survey: Initial Path Assessment

This survey provides a general level of information about the site; who uses it, who owns it, the nature of the landscape and the location of the path or recreational features within it. Completing this Green Survey gives you the background information needed to decide what to do next.

Much, if not all, of this survey can be desk based rather than on site. However, at this stage a site walk over and on-site Visitor Survey can also be used to gather more information about the nature of the landscape it sits in, people's experience of the path, what activities they do on the site and what could be improved.

### Amber Survey: Condition Assessment

Building on the information in the Green Survey the Amber Survey assesses the condition of the path and its surrounding vegetation.

The outcome of this survey is to capture a snapshot of the path at one moment in time. It is used as a benchmark when monitoring a path's condition over time and, alongside early indications of likely repair costs, allows you to start prioritising the work and considering how best to make any required improvements.

### Red Survey: Specification Production

This is a technical survey which identifies the path construction and drainage features required to repair a damaged path. Red surveys are generally undertaken by experienced path designers.



Further information on each of these survey techniques can be found in the Upland Path Management document on our resources pages





## What Happens Next?

Once all relevant surveys have been undertaken those caring for the path can assess what to do next. Repair and maintenance works can be carried out by landowners, contractors and even volunteers. Who does the work is often guided by the scale and complexity of the work and the experience of those managing the project.

For routine maintenance, which might include cleaning out drains, cutting back vegetation and clearing debris from the paths, this is often done by volunteers and Countryside Rangers. More technical work, such as building steps, rebuilding a broken path or installing new drainage, may often be undertaken by skilled contractors.

A well maintained path will keep water off and encourage users to stick to it, reducing the likelihood of erosion of the habitats which surround it.

No matter who is looking after the path, knowing the condition it is in and the condition you would like it to achieve is essential.

### Questions

**Describe the level of survey a contractor would require for them to provide a quote to undertake path repair works and explain why.**

**List the users you might expect to meet when completing an on-site visitor survey on a mountain path.**

**Gives reasons that might affect the delivery of a path survey.**



## Green (Area) Survey

Now is your chance to have a go at completing an Initial Path Assessment or Green Survey. The table below highlights all of the information you should aim to collect to produce a background report on your chosen path. Wherever possible try and answer each of the questions and be creative about where you might gather relevant information from.

### 1. Location

- (a) Produce a map, showing the route clearly
- (b) Record the path name and a 6-figure grid reference at the start and end of the path
- (c) Provide a brief description of the path, and reasons for its existence

### 2. Physical setting

- (a) Record details of any Geology, Habitat and vegetation found on the site. Record details of the paths altitude at start and finish
- (b) Gather information on weather trends for the site

### 3. Path use

- (a) Record details about the type of users (climbers, casual users etc.)
- (b) Where possible record the number of users (information may be available from people counters or estimates provided by the owner or estate staff, etc.)
- (c) Record details of any specific events or activities which take place on site.
- (d) Undertake an on-site visitor survey to gather specific information about users experiences and needs.

### 4. Land use

- (a) Record information about designations (SSSI, SAC, SPA, NSA etc.)
- (b) How the land is managed – sheep grazing, deer stalking, forestry etc
- (c) Record details of who owns or manages the land

### 5. Path condition

- (a) What type of a path is it?
- (b) Has the path been previously constructed or maintained?
- (c) Include any survey results that may be available. If no survey information is available include opinions gathered from estate owners/workers, path users, etc.
- (d) Detail what the likely impact will be of no action on site.

### 6. Health & Safety considerations

- (a) Record the main risks working on this site might face. This may include altitude, remoteness and exposure of the site, steepness of surrounding slopes, popularity of the site, etc.

For this exercise we have provided case study information on two mountain paths we manage as part of our project, Ben A'an and Dubh Loch. Our case studies contain much of the information required to complete the green survey however further desk-based research will also be necessary.

Alternatively, you may wish to undertake this survey on a path close to your school. This would allow you to visit the site and meet with people using or managing the path.

### Useful sources of information

- ▶ Weather forecast websites
- ▶ Walk highlands website
- ▶ Landowner maps
- ▶ Geology maps

## Green (Area) Survey Template

This template is designed to support the completion of your Green Survey. Additional information can be added or linked to from this form to produce your complete background assessment of the path.

Location	
Site Name	Start Grid Reference
Location map attached <input type="checkbox"/> (Tick Box)	End Grid Reference
General description of the Path	
Physical setting	
Record details of any geology, habitat and vegetation found on the site.	
Record details of the paths altitude at start and finish.	
Record information on weather trends for the site.	
Path use	
What type of path users visit this site?	
How have you identified this?	
Provide details of the number of path users on a weekly, monthly or annual basis.	
Where has this data been gathered?	

Path use (continued)	
What events or activities take place on this site and how might they impact the path?	
Undertake an on-site visitor survey to gather specific information about users experiences and needs.	
Land use & Designations	
Record information about designations (SSSI, SAC, SPA, NSA etc.)	
How the land is managed – sheep grazing, deer stalking, forestry etc.	
Record details of who owns or manages the land.	
Who owns the land within which the path is found?	
Path Condition	
What type of a path is it?	
Has the path been previously constructed or maintained?  Include any survey results that may be available. If no survey information is available include opinions gathered from estate owners/workers, path users, etc.	
What is the likely impact of no action on site.	

## Amber (Condition) Survey Template

Using the guidance provided in section 2.4 (pages 40-54) of the **Upland Path Management document**, undertake an amber survey of your chosen path. This will aim to capture a snapshot of that path at that specific date and time.

Examples of completed Amber (Condition) Surveys can be found in the Ben A'an and Dubh Loch case studies.

This template is designed to support the completion of your Amber Survey. Additional information can be added or linked to from this form to produce your complete background assessment of the path.

Overview	
Weather conditions	Date
Path Name	Surveyor
Start Grid Reference	End Grid Reference
General description of the Path	
Specification	Condition
Section	Roughness
Length	Drainage
Grid Ref	Erosion
Surface Type	Dynamism
Features	Condition
Paths/Braids	Urgency
Bare Width	
Tramp Width	
Gully Depth	
LG/XF	