

ROOTS TO

(RE)CONNECTION

Sophie Lawson – Nature Connection and Wellbeing Specialist



Vision:



To (re)connect people with nature
through the simple yet meaningful act of
removing single-use pollution

Impact Highlights

Together
we have

Removed
and surveyed
572,830
items of single-use
pollution

With the help of
7,671
volunteers

Who have donated
12,113
hours of their time

And cleaned
15,408
km
of trails

81%
of items surveyed were
classified as single-use

78%

of volunteers felt more
connected to their wild
places after trail cleaning

Worked with
2600
young people

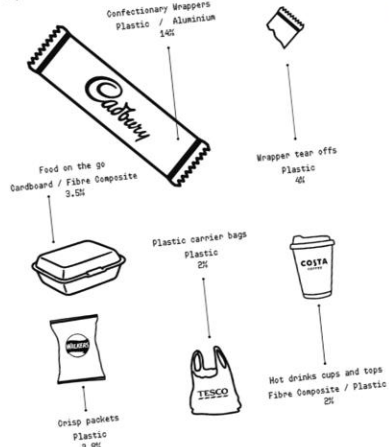


State of Our Trails Report

Lifetime Impact Report

Packaging Pollution: Analysis

Top 6 pEPR Items Found on our Trails as a Proportion of all Items



Based on our data, there are potentially up to 4.7 million pEPR eligible items of single-use pollution on UK Public Rights of Way (PRoW), right now.

This excludes drinks containers eligible for the forthcoming UK Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) which we focused on in our [2024 Report](#).

For this Report we have analysed our single-use pollution data through the lens of pEPR material types.

While some of the designated pEPR materials are less common in our trail cleans, others are persistent, showing up in almost every Survey our volunteers report.

[Learn More Here](#)



What impact does trail cleaning have on us?

"I feel fulfilled, purposeful and respectful. Felt like I'd given back to the local community and made a small difference" - survey participant

100% of people say they would take part again



Can we capture this?



WHEN WE'RE
CONNECTED,

Could trail cleaning be a social
prescription for wellbeing?

WE
CARE

WHY?



Disconnection is the Root

The UK ranks one of the lowest in the world for:



Reconnection is the Route

Evidence?

Can Beach Cleans Do More Than Clean-Up Litter? Comparing Beach Cleans to Other Coastal Activities

Kayleigh J. Wyles^{1,2}, Sabine Pahl¹,
Matthew Holland¹, and Richard C. Thompson³

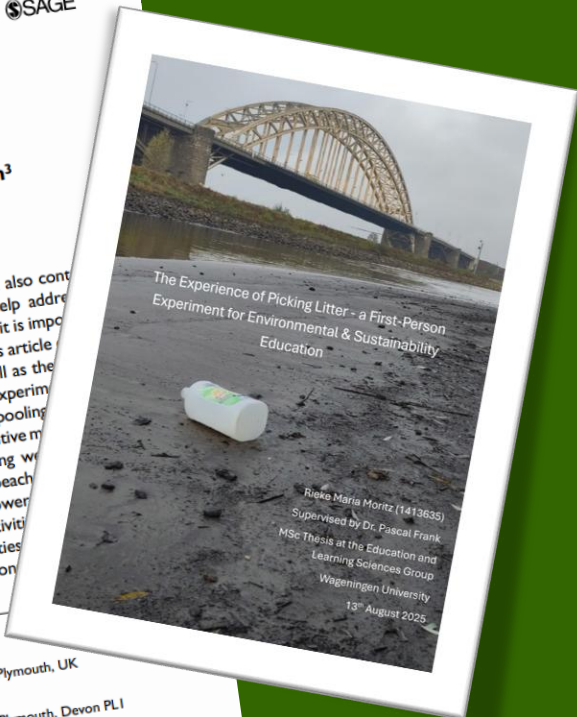
Abstract
Coastal visits not only provide psychological benefits but can also contribute to the accumulation of rubbish. Volunteer beach cleans help address this issue, but may only have limited, local impact. Consequently, it is important to study any broader benefits associated with beach cleans, as well as the well-being and educational value of beach cleans, as well as the study on individuals' behavioral intentions. We conducted an experiment that allocated students ($n = 90$) to a beach cleaning, rock pooling or that allocated students were associated with positive marine environmental intentions. All three coastal activities were associated with positive environmental intentions. Beach cleaning and rock pooling were associated with higher marine awareness. The unique impacts of beach cleaning that they were rated as most meaningful but linked to lower ratings of the environment compared with the other activities highlights the interplay between environment and activities for future research on the complexities of person-environment.

¹School of Psychology, Plymouth University, Plymouth, UK
²Plymouth Marine Laboratory, Plymouth, UK
³School of Marine Science and Engineering, Plymouth University, Plymouth, UK

Corresponding Author:

Kayleigh J. Wyles, Plymouth Marine Laboratory, Prospect Place, Plymouth, Devon PL1 3DH, UK.
Email: k.wyles@hotmail.com; kaw@pml.ac.uk

Environment and Behavior
2017, Vol. 49(5) 509–535
© 2016 The Author(s)
Reprints and permissions:
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/0013916516649412
journals.sagepub.com/home/eab



Mixed feelings



Reduced restoration



Increased meaning



Nature Connection?

RESEARCH DESIGN



Interviews



Survey



Observation



June – Nov
2026

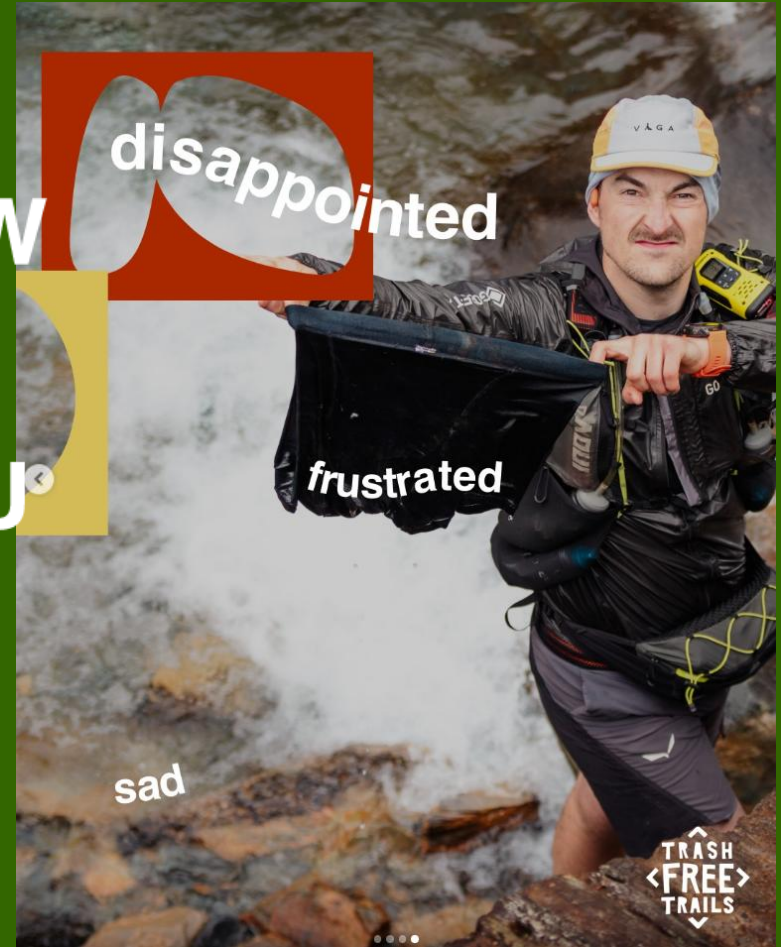
March
2027



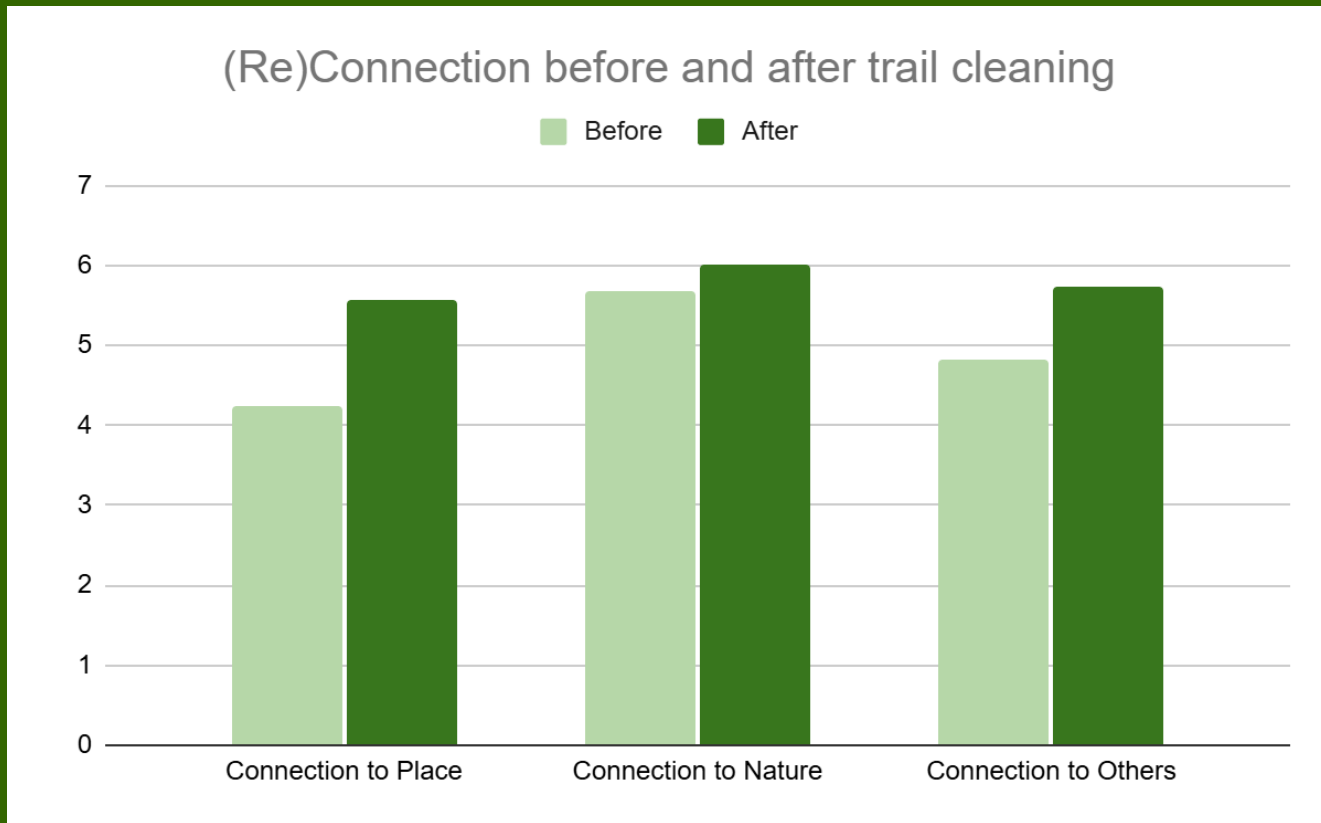


HOW
DO
YOU

FEEL



FINDINGS SO FAR...



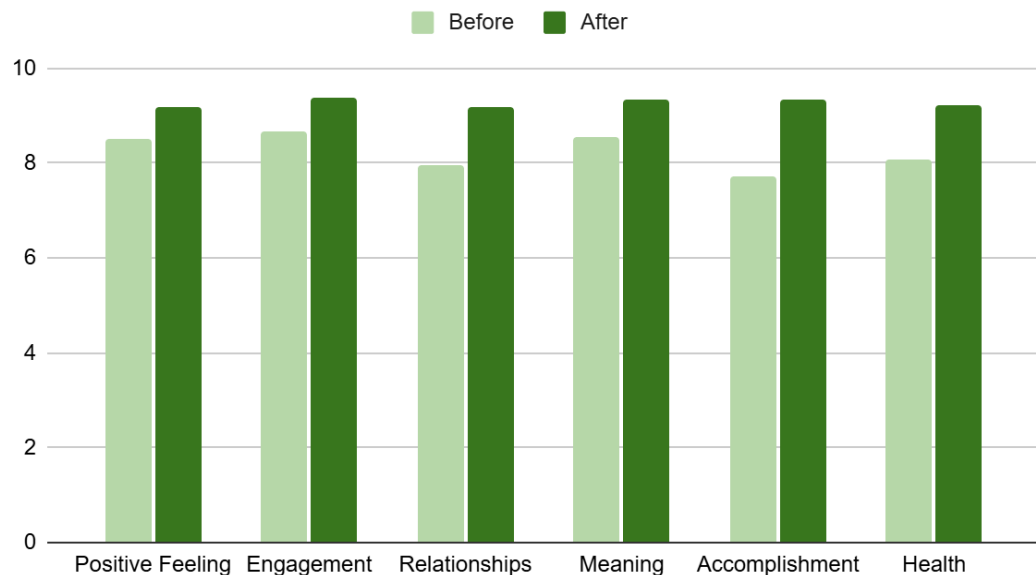
Survey of 64
participants
@ 6 events
June 2026

All results
statistically
significant
 $p < 0.05$

FINDINGS SO FAR...



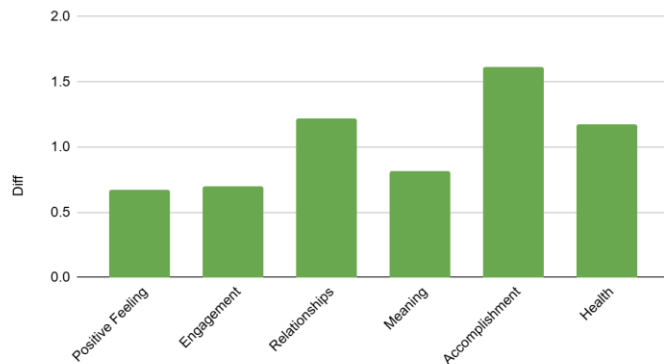
Aspects of wellbeing before and after trail cleaning



76%

participants reported
an increase in
wellbeing after trail
cleaning

Difference in aspects of wellbeing score



Survey of 64 participants
@ 6 events June 2026

All results statistically
significant $p < 0.05$

NEXT STEPS



Data



Jul - Nov 26

Ingredients



Winter 26/7

Pilot



Spring 27

Toolkits



Autumn 27

SO WHAT?

HOW COULD
YOU



GIVE BACK

TO IT?



REPORT YOUR DATA

GET INVOLVED

DISCOVER

MEET THE COMMUNITY

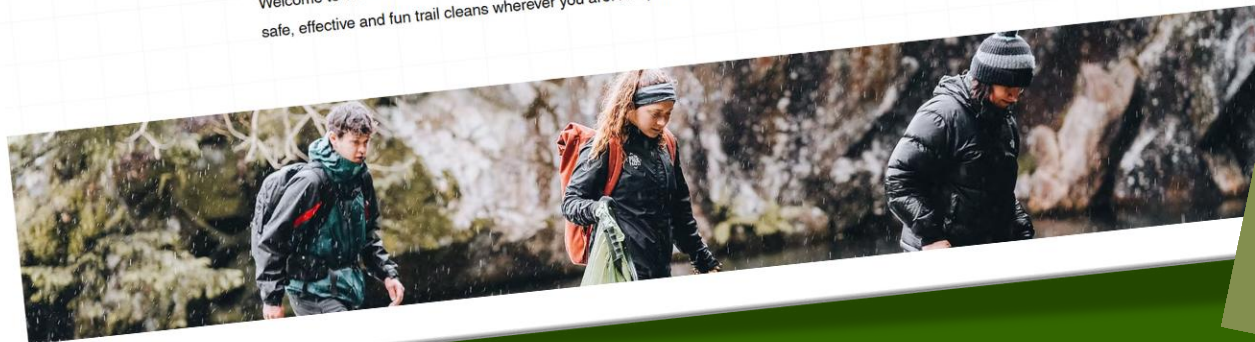
SHOP

DONATE



DIO TOOLKIT

Welcome to Trash Free Trails DIO Toolkit! A simple series of steps we've developed to enable you to deliver safe, effective and fun trail cleans wherever you are! Adapt it to suit your needs, and see you out there!



Been on a trail clean? Tell us
about **your experience!**



REFERENCES:



1. Sapien Labs. (2024). *The mental state of the world in 2023*. Global Mind Project. <https://sapienlabs.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/4th-Annual-Mental-State-of-the-World-Report.pdf>
2. Richardson, M., Lengieza, M., White, M.P. *et al.* Macro-level determinants of nature connectedness: An exploratory analysis of 61 countries. *Ambio* **55**, 80–100 (2026). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-025-02275-w>
3. Scholes, R., Biggs, R. A biodiversity intactness index. *Nature* **434**, 45–49 (2005). <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature03289>
4. Wyles, K. J., Pahl, S., Holland, M., & Thompson, R. C. (2017). Can Beach Cleans Do More Than Clean-Up Litter? Comparing Beach Cleans to Other Coastal Activities. *Environment and Behavior*, 49(5), 509–535. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916516649412>
5. Maria Moritz, R. (2025). *The Experience of Picking Litter-a First-Person Experiment for Environmental & Sustainability Education*. <https://edepot.wur.nl/700858>

Questions?

Contact: Sophie@trashfreetrails

Socials: @trashfreetrails

Website: <https://www.trashfreetrails.org/research/reconnection>