Mourne AONB
Health through Participation
Mourne AONB:
1965 - Mourne designated as AONB
1986 - Re-designated and boundary extended (57,000 ha)

Designations:
• 1 Special Protection Area
• 3 Special Areas of Conservation
• 1 RAMSAR site
• 5 Areas of Special Scientific Interest
• 2 National Nature Reserves
• 5 Areas of Scientific Interest
The Landscape:
• 20,000 ha of moorland & mountain
• 29,000 ha of farmland
• 1500 farm units (average 20ha)
• 5,000 ha of woodland & forest
• 72 km of coastline
• Rivers, lakes and reservoirs

The Heritage:
• Distinctive farmed landscape
• Quarrying and Granite
• Fishing
• Water Supply

Distinctive human heritage related to special landscape
Mission Statement

“to sustain and enhance the environment, rural regeneration, cultural heritage and visitor opportunities of the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and contribute to the well-being of Mourne’s communities”.
Funding: Some Comparisons

New Forest
- 57,000 Hectares  (Mourne 57,000)
- 34,000 people    (Mourne 51,000)
- £3.6 million per annum

Pembrokeshire Coast
- 62,000 Hectares
- 23,000 people
- £4.4 million per annum

Budget from government to Mourne significantly less than comparable landscape areas in GB
Mourne National Park Working Party

Recommendation 2: ‘The area covered by the existing Mourne AONB and by the Consultation Boundary is, overall, of outstanding environmental quality and should be subject to strengthened special measures for protection, enhancement and support.’

(Extract from page 15)
Active Lifestyles Programme

In its fourth year

Enables individuals to become involved in healthy outdoor activities which also benefit the environment.
Funding

- Big Lottery first three years. Match funding Environment Agency.

- This year - Lloyds TSB Foundation
Aim

‘engage people of all abilities and ages in physical activities which would increase levels of fitness and increase understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the environment’
Components

1. Programme of environmental activities for vulnerable adults and young people.

2. Youth Ranger Programme engaging young people in outdoor recreation and environmental activities.


4. Training programmes for key staff and volunteers.
2200 participant days
488 individuals
Partnerships with 4 Health bodies who help customise activities
– South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
– Mourne Stimulus
– CEDAR Foundation
– Autism Initiatives
For Vulnerable Adults our nursery venue gives them a stable routine and a regular program of activities.  
- growing trees from seed  
- growing fruit & vegetables which they harvest
Opportunity

to bring individuals on repeat visits rather than a one off experience.
• to engage in occupational therapy in a natural environment as opposed to care centres
• for participants to see fruits of their labours over time
Impacts – In the words of carers

‘The activities provided have a positive impact on the health and well being of our clients. Parents and carers remark on how the clients have grown in self esteem and confidence with increased independence.’

‘This is by no means token volunteering but gives our group the opportunity to be environmentally responsible adults regardless of their disability, giving them a sense of pride. The programme also has physical benefits, by means of the moderate activity involved in the work and promotes an active lifestyle’

‘There is also a positive ‘ripple’ through effect as parents/carers/families/community benefit from …..the volunteer having an improved attitude/outlook due to positive volunteering experiences.'
Youth Rangers - surveying for Rhododendron
Youth Ranger programme designed primarily for environmental benefits and opportunity for young people to gain experience and be inspired towards a career in environment.

...but it has also seen to have been beneficial in relation to life skills to an extent that impacts positively on health.
Benefits of Youth Ranger programme – Parents’ views

😊 ‘The opportunity you availed to my son was exceptional. The development and learning he achieved has been immeasurable and has given him a clear direction in his proposed career path. The pride and enthusiasm was clear to see at the ‘award’ ceremony. What a sense of achievement and camaraderie that I believe few other summer schemes could offer.’

😊 ‘My son has a great interest in trees. The Trust’s tree nursery has inspired him to plant oaks, ash, holly and beech and he’s had a terrific success with them so far’

😊 ‘My son found the Youth Ranger Scheme extremely enjoyable and as a result of attending it he has decided to pursue a career in conservation and ecology. He has taken more care with the environment and encouraged others in the family to do the same’.
Youth Ranger programme – the unexpected impacts

☀ ‘I want to thank all of you for giving my daughter such wonderful experiences. Behavioural difficulties mean she has spent a lot of time isolated from her peers. I do not know if it is the activities, the leadership or the group, but it works!! It has helped my daughter develop her communication skills and enabled her to work as part of a team’.

☀ ‘One of the main things my son learned was team building and working with others. He learned he had to work with others to achieve the tasks the rangers were set’.

☀ ‘My son got the chance to make friends which is not easy for him as he has ADHD and also he got to explore and learn about the outdoors’.
Thank you for your attention – I hope this has been useful.