

**Alison Kohler**

**Managing the erosion on the Down.**

*Standing here at the bottom of the tor looking out over this view, you can also see the paths that are coming up from the car parks, can you tell me anything about managing people on the moor and how we deal with the problems of such a large number of people coming here?*

Yes, it's amazing when you look here how well the paths actually stand up to the pressure, because millions of people come up to Haytor. Basically our management approach has been to just keep a very careful eye on how those paths are wearing; if we start see signs of erosion then we will ask people to use one of the other paths, or we have, in the past, be known to create a completely new path through the bracken to give the existing paths a rest, so it's actually about just keeping an eye on what's happening, keeping an eye on the ground conditions, because when the ground is particularly wet that's when most of the damage can be caused. So the rangers play a real role here, just encouraging people to take a little bit more care when they're out and about and thinking about what their impact might be, but of course we do want people to be able to enjoy the area.

*So people really have a responsibility themselves to help look after Haytor Down don't they?*

Yes, and we try and encourage that through the Moor Care programme, and that's really about trying to encourage everybody to understand what the impact of their activity is going to be, for example people come out onto the downs to go horse riding and we do ask them to look at the ground conditions and if the ground is wet not to gallop, we also ask people to use the hardened parking areas when the ground is wet, so again they don't start cutting up the moorland, if you're having a barbeque rather than just a picnic, we ask people to place their barbeques on flat stones rather than directly onto the grass so that it doesn't burn holes in the grass which eventually become eroded pits, so there are actually lots of ways that visitors can help us keep this a very special place to come to, and more information on that can be gained from the Information Centre.