



Case Study 2

Documentation for Integrated Hazard Assessment and Sustainable Management

Keywords

Erosion, sea-level rise, landscape, historic environment, species, habitats

Location: Giant's Causeway

Collaborating Organisations: Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site Steering Group, Queen's University Belfast and the National Trust

Date: 2010–2015

Project funder: National Trust and Department of Employment and Learning

Reported by: Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust

Aim: Document the Giant's Causeway to produce a high-resolution digital elevation model to assess the potential impacts of climate change on the natural heritage of the site.

Giant's Causeway World Heritage Site

Introduction

The Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site is a globally significant geological site, internationally important ecological reserve and NI's leading tourism attraction (EHS et al., 2005). Impacts on the geological, habitat and landscape values of the site result from the footfall of visitors and changes in climate leading to issues such as sea-level rise and changes in biodiversity.

Key Actions Taken

- Assessed and identified the potential climate risks and changes to the landscape and geology of the site.
- Assessed risks to natural species, namely the protected Narrow Mouth Whorl Snail (SAC feature).
- Assessed and identified the impact of slope failures and rock falls on visitation and visitor patterns within the site.

Outcome

Results of this study were used to develop strategic guidelines to guide practical conservation and management of dynamic natural sites in NI and the UNESCO World Heritage network. This included advice on seeking, documenting and integrating historic, contemporary and future data regarding natural processes and how best to use technology to support physical access to, and conservation of important natural heritage sites.