

**Everybody Welcome: Extinction Rebellion carry out mass trespass for greater public access to nature**

24th April 2021

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**Email:** [*email address of main contact*]

**Contact:** [*name and phone number of main contact*]

Today Extinction Rebellion activists, alongside people from [*insert other groups here*], took part in a mass trespass on [*name location(s)*] to mark the 89th Anniversary of the Kinder Scout trespass and highlight the injustice of exclusive land ownership, which they state is at the very heart of the climate and ecological crisis.

Activists chose [\_\_\_\_] because [If possible, include some information on the land that your action took place on- who owns it? why is it symbolic/relevant?]. We have freedom to roam over just 8% of England, and only 3% of rivers in England and Wales. During the walk on ‘forbidden land’ the activists collected litter, carried out a bird species survey and stopped at points to read poetry.

The action was organised in support of the Right to Roam1 campaign to push for the open spaces of England and Wales to be opened up for public access. ‘No Trespassing’ and ‘Private Property’ signs were replaced with ‘Everybody Welcome’ placards along with a letter2 for the landowner. The letter points out that the public are excluded from 92% of the land in England unlike Scotland and many countries across Europe.

The letter continues ‘To see a registrable effect on our nation’s health, to alleviate the pressure on the NHS, we need to access nature regularly, which means we need it near to our homes’. This past 12 months of lockdown have been a clear indicator that our physical and mental health relies heavily on regular access to the outdoors. The letter continues with ‘Wherever we live, whatever our income, whoever we are, the right to access nature should belong to us all’.

In 2016, the State of Nature Report3 found the UK was one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. But, without a connection to nature, it is no surprise that many people find it hard to comprehend the scale of our climate crisis and habitat loss.

[*name and town of local person 1 taking part in the action*] said “I have to drive several miles to a place where I’m allowed to walk on a short, narrow footpath that’s so busy at weekends. How can we be banned from the very nature we’re a part of?”

On 24 April 1932, 400 young men and women trespassed on Kinder Scout in Derbyshire, a peaceful protest against the way the general public were denied access to the UK countryside. 89 years later, this local action is also a protest in the wake of recent proposals by the government to make intentional trespass a criminal offence, threatening ramblers, campers, and the marginalised travelling community.

[*name and town of local person 2 taking part in the action*] added “today has been a huge reminder of what we’re desperately missing in our lives- that connection with wildlife and the freedom to wander in nature”

An Extinction Rebellion spokesperson from the [LG name] local group commented “this action stands against vandalism in the countryside or disruption of ecosystems and farming. Instead we’re trying to start a conversation with landowners about how the public might have a closer connection to the nature we so badly need and how this could reignite a nationwide care for the protection of our environment As stated previously, we understand for many, the countryside is a place of work and must be respected as such and we hope that with more access and appreciation, as seen in other countries, that respect can grow.

*\*\*\*\* please add personal quotes relevant to your trespass \*\*\*\**

*\*\*\*\* include photographs of your trespass location, repurposed signs etc \*\*\*\**

Notes for Editors:

1- The Right to Roam campaign <https://www.righttoroam.org.uk/>

2- Letter to land owners from Extinction Rebellion and Right to Roam <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nHdnJiTvEAlBapI0nq9bjIcdcnUbt41Q/view>

3- State of Nature Report 2016 <https://www.rspb.org.uk/globalassets/downloads/documents/conservation-projects/state-of-nature/state-of-nature-uk-report-2016.pdf>