

project profile

Specialist environmental services in the Brecon Beacons

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project profile

Mitigating the environmental impact of the UK's largest high-pressure gas pipeline in a National Park

The South Wales Gas Pipeline (also known as the Milford Haven pipeline) is the UK's largest high-pressure gas pipeline and the biggest single construction project of its kind undertaken in Europe. The 197 mile pipeline passing through Wales is being built for National Grid UK and will link liquid natural gas terminals at Milford Haven in Pembrokeshire with the national gas network at Tirley in Gloucestershire.

The environmental impact of the pipeline construction was one of the prime concerns of main contractor NACAP Land and Marine, since the route passed close to many villages, through beautiful countryside and through a number of sites identified as being 'valuable' as a result of the plant communities they supported. Working with ecologists and environmental scientists with a special understanding of these unique habitats and of how they function, and in liaison with the Countryside Council for Wales, the local authorities and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, Inscapes Environmental lifted, catalogued, maintained and replaced over 60,000 square

metres of turf. Through this process disturbance and impacts to the habitats and their soils were reduced.

"The programme involved working closely with ecologists, environmental scientists and archaeologists," says Garry Lewis, Managing Director of Inscapes. "Using specialist equipment we were able to lift the existing turf and topsoil – which contains the natural seed bank for the indigenous grasses and flowers – to a depth of around 300mm, relocate them to temporary 'nursery' beds adjacent to the route of the pipeline, then replace the turfs in the locations from which they had been lifted – with the seed bank intact to ensure continuity of growth.

Replication of the hydrological conditions in

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a number of locations was also of critical importance."

Inscapes Environmental is now undertaking a programme of seed harvesting in the Beacons to ensure an adequate seed bank from this truly unique eco-system.

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In addition to providing services for large scale civil engineering projects of this kind, Inscapes works with environmental consultants, civil engineers, local authorities, construction companies and house builders to offer:

- Natural Turf Translocation and Relocation
- Seed Harvesting
- Hedge and Tree Translocation
- Ground Stabilisation

