

14. Vision

“to allow the evolution of Ennerdale as a wild valley for the benefit of people, relying more on natural processes to shape its landscape and ecology ”

As natural processes are given greater freedom to operate, how and to what extent they influence the landscape is difficult to predict. We can say however that the vision is likely to enable a more varied and natural transition zone to develop between the forest and fell, where wind and water erosion, vegetation succession and the impact of native flora and fauna become increasingly important components in the valley.

The result we aspire to will be a more diverse and robust ecosystem functioning as a near-natural area with minimum human intervention. Wild Ennerdale does not set out to replicate past landscapes as change is a continuous process influenced by environmental conditions and human activity. Natural processes will allow the evolution of new habitats and landscapes rather than being manipulated to create something from the past.

The valley will continue to sustain the livelihoods of local people in ways which are not only in keeping with, but also enhance the valley's special qualities, and a broader cross section of local people will have a greater sense of involvement in its future. Visitors will have a heightened sense of the valley's wildness and a greater understanding of the processes at work. In this way, anthropogenic processes become part of the range of natural processes that operate and, it could be argued, actually become part of a natural system. Whilst this argument would be easy to challenge academically, there is a feeling amongst the partners that Wild Ennerdale has an important message to tell in the wilding debate; that it is not always necessary to see natural and human processes as separate entities. If we can establish new principles in the valley by which people operate, then we can work as part of a natural system and not separate from it.

Having the systems in place to monitor change, inform future generations and influence future land management policy in Britain are key factors within the vision for Wild Ennerdale.