

## 5. The Partnership

'Wild Ennerdale' is a partnership between the three main landowners in the valley: The Forestry Commission, National Trust and United Utilities. The partnership vision is:

*"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"*

The post Foot & Mouth rural recovery agenda, ongoing agricultural reform, changing trends in UK forestry and a growing interest generally regarding the concept of 'wild land' in Britain prompted discussions between the three organisations. From these discussions came a recognition that a more holistic approach to future management could significantly increase the landscape, nature conservation, economic and social benefits of Ennerdale as a 'wild' valley over the long term.

In 2002, a partnership was formed under the banner of 'Wild Ennerdale' and a 'Memorandum of Understanding' signed which set out a framework for co-operation. This summarised the common theme of discussions, recognising the assets of the valley in terms of its remoteness, large scale, diverse landscape, natural processes and spiritual qualities - all relative within an England context. In 2005 a Project Officer was appointed to work full time on developing the initiative.

The partnership now operates within the 'Wild Ennerdale' boundary, comprising land owned by the three organisations (10,625 acres or 4300 hectares in total). This utilises resources to benefit the valley as a single unit of land, rather than a 'piecemeal approach' determined by individual ownership boundaries and varying policy agendas. To date, funding has been provided by the three partner organisations. A close working partner is English Nature, which provides additional advisory and funding support. As project work develops, so costs will increase and the need for external support will be likely. However, with emphasis on low input land management, costs will continue to be met by the partners as much as possible, to avoid the risk of becoming too funding driven and influenced by external policies and agendas.

The partners meet approximately once every six weeks to discuss future management and the implementation of plans on the ground. Additional guidance is provided by an 'advisory group' which was established in 2004. The group comprises individuals from partner organisations and key academics with a range of specialist backgrounds including hydrology, ecology, forest management, grazing and recreation. A wider 'liaison network' also exists, which includes key organisations (e.g. Lake District National Park Authority, Environment Agency) along with representatives from the local community, (e.g. farmers, accommodation providers, parish council) and user groups (e.g. ramblers, cyclists, anglers, scouts).

There is no set agenda for consultation with the advisory group and wider liaison network. The two-way process of giving and receiving information/advice is based on the requirements of the partners and progress on the ground. Any particular area of work (such as the introduction of cattle) will require certain members of the advisory group to be involved, but not necessarily all. Other occasions will require involvement of the whole group (consultation on the stewardship plan for example). A similar approach is taken with the liaison group, though methods of communication tend to be more general; through newsletters, the website or community organised events for example.

[Linked Map = C](#)

**Structure**

