

Wild Ennerdale



Stewardship Plan Text 2006

Wild Ennerdale is very grateful for the funding and support of English Nature



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1. Introduction

Ennerdale is the most westerly valley within the Lake District National Park. The mountains give way to a flat coastal plain then the Irish Sea beyond, within a distance of just a few miles. The physical environment of Ennerdale has stunning attributes: high mountains, rocky outcrops and scree, large, diverse woodlands, dynamic rivers, a majestic lake and some of the most highly valued flora & fauna in the country. Human presence is an essential part of 'nature' and has shaped the look and feel of Ennerdale over a long period, through early woodland clearances, farming and latterly commercial forestry.

The scale and style of human activity in Ennerdale is now changing with a shift away from economic productivity as the primary output. There is a move towards lower input, more sensitive management whereby natural processes are given a greater hand in determining how the valley will evolve in the future. The Wild Ennerdale partnership has been established to drive this initiative forward and enhance the wild qualities of the valley.

The natural attributes of Ennerdale, its large scale and remoteness from habitation lends itself to evolving as a wilder place. Those involved as 'managers' of Ennerdale are passionate about it's future and recognise the high landscape value and as a resource to many for recreation and livelihoods. There will no doubt be challenges ahead; the level of interest however, support and enthusiasm from local people and wider audiences (nationally and internationally) have already demonstrated that we are working towards a new and exciting phase in Ennerdale's evolution.

So what will Ennerdale look like in 50,100 or 200 years time? The reality is we don't really know. Based on our hopes and aspirations, we can however make broad assumptions; that we will have a series of naturally evolving and inter-acting eco-systems across the valley that are far more robust in the face of stresses such as climate change (for example). Farming and forestry will continue to have a role in the valley, but with the aim of maximising ecology and landscape value. We cannot predict exactly how the boundary between fell and forest will change over time, nor how bio-diversity may develop as natural processes take greater hold. Being able to observe these processes at work, over generations, will be one of the marvels of change in Ennerdale, and ensure that the lessons learnt will have a resonance far beyond the boundaries of the valley.

The Wild Ennerdale Partnership 2006

2. The Stewardship Plan

This stewardship plan is a culmination of five years of discussions, illustrating (through maps, text and photographs) how the partners propose to allow Ennerdale to evolve as a 'wild' valley. This is not a typical 'management plan' with prescriptive targets and deadlines. As emphasis is on moving away from 'management' in the traditional, 'controlling' sense, this plan demonstrates the broader concepts for change in Ennerdale. Any boundaries on maps are indicative of what *could* happen, not what *will*, as nature is unpredictable. The plan will be regularly reviewed and updated as the development process unfolds.

The plan describes the process by which the Partnership developed Wild Ennerdale to where we find ourselves today. This process is characterised by three main stages:

- 1) Understanding Ennerdale
- 2) Developing a vision
- 3) Implementing the vision

The photo survey principally reflects the first two stages in the process whilst the maps and text describe the full process. The table below illustrates the way that the various maps, photos and text fit into the stages in the process and helps guide the reader through the stewardship plan. Each section is viewed as a 'stand alone' document. The text sections, maps and photographs are however each given a reference number / letter to make the plan easier to use and for cross-referencing text with photos and/or maps as appropriate.

Understanding Ennerdale	<p>Text</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction 2. The Stewardship Plan 3. Ennerdale: The Place 4. History 5. The Partnership 6. Statement of Significance
	<p>Maps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Location Cumbria B. Location West Cumbria C. Ownership D. Drift Geology E. Solid Geology F. Wind hazard class G. Hydrology H. Landform I. Current vegetation J. Social and Economic Context K. Recreation & Access L. Conservation & Natural heritage M. Current Grazing N. Current Woodland O. Historic landscape P. FC Review of Achievements
	<p>All Photos (Plates 1 → 63)</p>

Developing the Vision	<p>Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Concept of 'Wild' 8. Support for 'Wild Land' 9. Links to Partners Management Plans 10. Links to External Organisations Policy 11. Public Engagement 12. Processes 13. Sustainability
	<p>Maps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q. Current Examples of Natural Processes R. Current Detracting Features S. Current Wild Features T. Wild Zones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. western valleys & lakeshore ii. central valley & northern lakeshore iii. central valley & southern lakeshore iv. eastern valley & high mountains
	<p>All Photos (Plates 1 → 63)</p>
Implementing the Vision	<p>Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Vision 15. Guiding Principles 16. Statements Summary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Conservation Management ii. Farming iii. Forestry iv. Natural Processes v. Recreation vi. Tourism Provision & Infrastructure vii. Transport viii. Water Extraction 17. Partners Contacts
	<p>Maps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> U. Enhancing Wildness V. Enhancing Natural Processes W. Future Felling X. Future Woodland Development Y. Future Grazing Z. Monitoring

3. Ennerdale – The Place

Location

Ennerdale is a remote valley on the western fringe of the Lake District National Park in Cumbria. Neighbouring Ennerdale are the popular Lakeland valleys of Buttermere and Wasdale. Further west, along the lower lying coastal strip, are urban communities built on a tradition of manufacturing industries (coal mining & ship building) which include the towns of Cleator Moor, Egremont and Whitehaven. Transport links are relatively poor, with the principle main road and rail networks located further north and east towards Carlisle and Penrith.

Facts & Figures

The Ennerdale valley is 9 miles long, 3.5 miles wide (14.5 by 5.6km) at it's widest, ridge to ridge, and extends to an area of 11,640 acres (4711 ha). The valley narrows from west to east and is surrounded by dramatic ridges which include some of Lakeland's highest summits: Green Gable, Great Gable, Pillar, Kirk Fell & Steeple. This stewardship plan covers an area of 10,625 acres (4300 ha) – this being the land owned by the three Wild Ennerdale partners.

The historically unpopulated, upper part of the valley is remote from any public roads or habitation. Public vehicle access is permitted as far as Bowness Knott on the north shore of the lake. Beyond this point vehicle access is restricted (with no metalled road), leaving the remaining seven miles of the valley accessible on foot, bike or horseback. The high fells are grazed by sheep, while the lower slopes and valley bottom are predominantly forest and pastoral farmland. Further west, the mountains give way to a more open vista out towards the coast. Ennerdale Water (fed by the River Liza and numerous mountain becks) is prominent in the landscape and provides a drinking water supply to communities on the West Coast of Cumbria. The Lake is 2.5 miles long by 1 mile wide (4.0 by 1.6km) and 147 feet (44m) at its deepest point. Surrounding the lake is pastoral farmland and buildings, together with a mix of conifer and broadleaf woodland. The nearest settlement is Ennerdale Bridge (population 270¹), located one mile west of Ennerdale Water.

Ennerdale boasts a wide variety of vegetation types which reflect the range in altitude, from 328 feet (100m) beside the lake to nearly 3000 feet (900m) on the mountain summits. Habitats range from the agricultural land and riparian zones of the valley bottom, through the coniferous and broadleaf woodland of the lower and middle slopes, to the heather moorland and rock of the upper slopes. The highest ridges and summits are characterised by a low growing montane heath. A number of designated sites exist in the valley, representing areas of value for nature conservation, geology and archaeology. These sites are designated for their regional, national or international importance.

People have lived and worked in Ennerdale for centuries and the valley continues to support livelihoods today, mostly through farming, forestry, conservation management and tourism. Visitor numbers are fewer when compared to neighbouring Lakeland valleys, primarily due to the remote location, restricted vehicle access and low key tourism provisions (marketing and facilities). Those who do visit the valley, whether from nearby local communities or from further afield, do so to enjoy the spectacular scenery, peace and tranquillity the valley has to offer².

Linked Maps: A, B & L

¹ Ennerdale & Kinniside Parish Plan, 1997 Local Profile

² Visitor Survey Results 2005, Wild Ennerdale

4. History

Ennerdale has provided for people's needs for many centuries. The range of monuments and features within the valley demonstrates how the landscape has been influenced and altered by man for over 3500 years. Over five hundred individual archaeological sites have been recorded³ through recent survey work, many of which are of regional and national importance.

Looking as far back as the Mesolithic and early Neolithic periods, the landscape in the region was almost entirely tree covered. In Ennerdale this woodland was predominantly oak, alder and birch. Evidence suggests an episode of forest clearance between 3200BC and 2700BC with more extensive clearance episodes continuing during the Bronze Age (2000BC-800BC). At the same time, low intensity pastoral farming was introduced to the fells. This restricted the re-growth of trees and resulted in slow (but more long lasting) woodland clearance.

By the Iron Age (800BC – AD43) there was an enclosed settlement in the valley implying widespread clearance and drainage on the valley floor. There is uncertainty as to whether there was a break in the settlement of the valley during the later Roman/Early Medieval period but if this had been the case, there is a likelihood of some recovery of the natural forest.

During the early medieval period (AD410-AD1066), a settlement developed from a clearing within the forest at Gillerthwaite⁴. At this same time, there is evidence of a second site of activity at the head of Ennerdale Water. Both settlements were slow to develop and it was not until the later medieval or post medieval period that the valley floor was enclosed and improved. The higher ground was subject to transhumance (seasonal) farming and much of the land on the southern side of the valley was enclosed for deer farming.

During the medieval period the mineral potential of the valley was realised and resulted in the increasingly intensive extraction (iron ore) and localised despoiling of the fell sides. The Smithy Beck settlement remains remarkably intact, complete with evidence of medieval iron production.

The post-medieval period saw (in common with other upland areas) the increasingly intensive pastoral exploitation of the valley sides. The numbers of stock shelters and bields are testament to rising numbers of sheep on the fell which inevitably had an impact on vegetation. This system of exploitation was rationalised in the later nineteenth century with the parliamentary enclosure of much of the fellside. The impacts of post-war intensive agriculture were restricted by the acquisition of a large proportion of the valley for forestry.

Historical evidence shows us how the landscape and ecology of Ennerdale has been shaped by the cultural and economic values of the day. Archaeology and features in the landscape provide us with an understanding of those changes. In the context of present day changes in public policy, social and economic needs, we have the opportunity to influence the next phase of Ennerdale's evolution with the needs of present and future generations in mind.

[Linked Map: O](#)

³ Historic Landscape Survey, Oxford Archaeology North, November 2003

⁴ Gillerthwaite suggests Norse derivation: *Gil* being a 'raving or narrow valley' and *Thveit* meaning 'a piece cut out of' hence 'parcel of land' or 'clearing'

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.

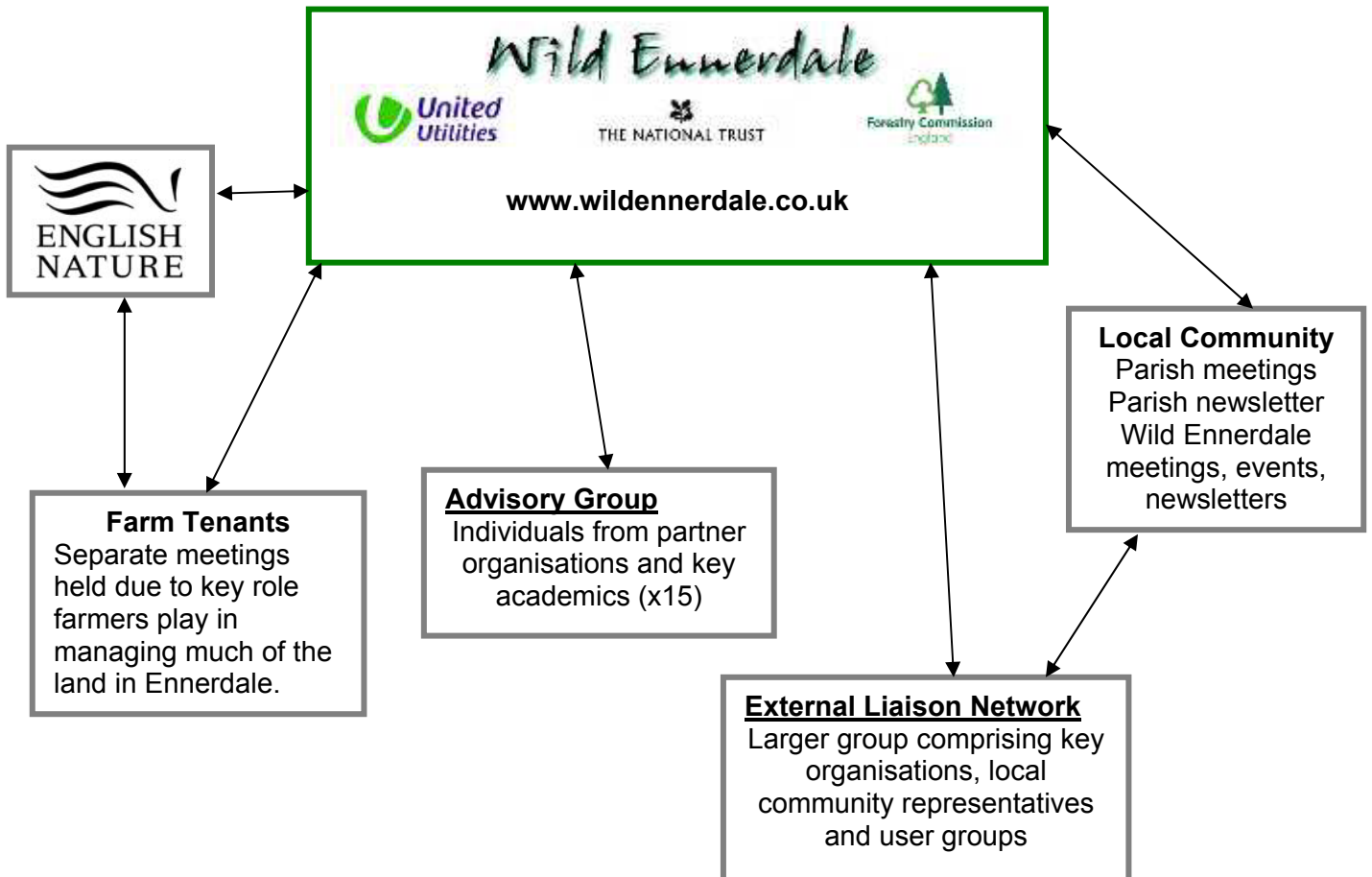
The partnership now operates within the 'Wild Ennerdale' boundary, comprising land owned by the three organisations (10,625 acres or 4300 hectares in total). This utilises resources to benefit the valley as a single unit of land, rather than a 'piecemeal approach' determined by individual ownership boundaries 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



6. Statement of Significance

Ennerdale presents a dramatic picture in a remote position on the western fringe of the Lake District. The large scale and diversity of its landscapes, incorporating farming, mixed forest, rivers, lake, open fell and mountains, combined with the relative lack of roads, traffic, buildings and people all contribute to enhance the sense of Ennerdale as a wild, tranquil and spiritually refreshing place.

Over a thousand years of human activity, stretching from the Bronze Age to present day, are etched into the landscape. The whole area is highly significant for its rich legacy of archaeological remains and diverse habitats for flora and fauna, all with features which range from regional to international importance. Over 40% of the area is designated as 'Site of Special Scientific Interest' (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). These designations reflect the outstanding importance of the vegetation and geological features of Ennerdale. The continuous transition of vegetation types, from lakeshore through woodlands and open heathland, to the specialised vegetation of the mountain tops, is spectacular.

The River Liza is a major asset, falling wild and unchecked down the valley and is one of few rivers in England to show such uncontrolled dynamism.

The network of footpaths, tracks and open access both in the forest and on the open fells provides a wealth of opportunity for people to explore the valley with a sense of freedom, adventure and challenge.

Ennerdale is a place, perhaps one of only a few in England, where people can feel humbled by their surroundings, where signs of human influence are less and where nature remains, to varying degrees, the dominating force.

7. Concept of 'Wild'

The appreciation of wildness is a matter of an individual's experience, and their perceptions of and preferences for landscapes of this kind. Wildness cannot be captured and measured in the way bio-diversity can for example, but it can be experienced and interpreted by people in many different ways.

The term 'wild land' is arguably best reserved for those, now limited, core areas of mountain, moorland and remote coast, which mostly lie beyond contemporary human artefacts such as roads or other development. However, the quality of wildness can also be found much more widely in the open countryside, sometimes within what is overall a cultivated landscape, or close to settlements. Whilst not large areas of 'core wild land', such places can have great value locally in terms of landscape and wildlife, and in value to the community as accessible areas where a sense of wildness can be experienced⁵.

The terms 'wild', 're-wilding' and 'wilderness' continue to prompt debate amongst academics, land managers, conservationists and others. Illustrated below are some differing views on defining 'wild land' (Quotes from: "Wilderness: Nice Idea" by Robert Macfarlane, TRAIL magazine, July 2004).

"With some 60 million people sardined into some 250,000 square kilometers, humans have besmirched every corner of these islands. The wild is something we go abroad to seek. Britain is wilderness-bankrupt"

"Wilderness must be an entirely non-human environment, we must return it to nature and regard the presence of people, or the traces of people past, as compromising of wildness"

"Wildness is everywhere in Britain, if only we will stop in our tracks and look"

"Wilderness is a noun which acts like an adjective" by which wilderness is not a condition of a place, but a condition of mind

"One mans wilderness is another's roadside picnic ground"

"It is any natural place where we can temporarily lose our bearings, or happily abscond from the familiar. And there are innumerable places in Britain outside Scotland where that can happen – if we are prepared to let it"

In a regional context, we recognise that the Lake District landscape is dynamic and has been for 12,000 years, since the retreat of the last glaciers. Human activity influences nature and we live with the knowledge that thousands of years of management have shaped the landscape we see today. Lakeland prior to settlement by pastoral and agricultural people some 5,500 years ago would have been much richer in wildlife, with extensive areas of natural habitats. What we now have is a 'cultural landscape', created by the interplay of terrain, wildlife and human use over the centuries⁶. Historical evidence shows us that even the remote places we consider to be 'natural' have at one time or another been altered by human activity, be it through grazing, deforestation, mining or quarrying.

In the context of Wild Ennerdale, the words 'natural' and 'natural system' are not used in an ecologically pure way and the term 'wild' is used to describe a philosophical approach to managing the valley, encompassing two key areas:

⁵ Wildness in Scotland's Countryside, SNH Policy Statement no. 02/03

⁶ An End To Woolly Thinking, Sir Martin Holdgate, Natural World

- The degree to which natural processes influence the environment (physical attributes)
- The sense of wildness which people experience/perceive (emotive reactions)

Although Ennerdale has been shaped by centuries of human influence, for many people it retains a sense of wildness which is highly valued and stems primarily from:

- Large scale and diversity of the landscape
- The apparent lack of human influence and control on the environment
- Remoteness from public roads and habitation
- Sense of solitude
- River Liza and becks falling freely down the valley
- A stunning lake with areas of natural lakeshore margins
- Plants & animals of special ecological value
- Rugged terrain and impressive geological features
- Large areas of fellside with semi-natural woodland and heath
- Opportunity for unrestricted challenge and adventure

However, there are also features which spoil these characteristics:

- Close cropped and suppressed vegetation on the fells
- Stark boundaries between forest and fell
- Fences and signs which restrict the sense of openness
- Large blocks of closely planted spruce
- Areas of recently harvested forest
- Presence of intrusive man-made features/activities such as forest tracks, vehicle movements, concrete bridges, revetments.

The fundamental objectives of the partnership are therefore to enhance the 'wild' qualities of Ennerdale by:

- Allowing natural processes a greater hand in shaping the landscape and ecology of the valley over the long term
- Reducing detracting features and creating more opportunities for people to experience the sense of wildness of the valley

The partnership has been clear from the outset on how we define 'wild'. This is crucial to gain support as any reference to change, on however small or large a scale, can be perceived by some as negative, and that 'wild' will result in the 'abandonment of land' and 'loss of livelihoods'. Wild Ennerdale is not about abandoning land, excluding people or trying to recreate a past landscape. On the contrary, human activity is a crucial part of the process, along with the need to provide quantifiable economic, social and environmental benefits which are sustainable over the long term.

References:

'Wild by Design', Council for National Parks, 1991

'Wilderness: Nice Idea' Robert Macfarlane, TRAIL magazine, July 2004

'An End to Woolly Thinking', Martin Holdgate, Natural World

[Linked Maps: Q, R, T, U, V](#)

8. Support for 'Wild Land'

Support and ongoing debate about the concept of establishing 'wild land' in the UK is raising the profile of its potential in Britain. Scotland already leads the way with the designation and protection of tracts of wild land such as the Cairngorms, and benefits from 'wild land' policy advocated by organisations such as Scottish Natural Heritage, National Trust for Scotland and the John Muir Trust. South of the border, interest is growing in the wild land concept, demonstrated by the recent forming of the Wildland Network in 2005 and wild land being incorporated into policy planning and growing media interest generally.

Detailed below are a number of events and documents/papers from recent years which provide support for Wild Ennerdale and the wild land concept generally.

- Council for National Parks 1997 report "Wild by Design"
In the introduction to this report it was recommended that *"A number of experimental schemes on a limited scale should be set up in the national parks, where farming is withdrawn entirely and the natural succession of vegetation is allowed to take its course"* Edwards 1991.

In Chapter 5, a list of Current and Future Opportunities for creating wild areas is identified against each National Park. In the Lake District National Park Ennerdale is identified as one such place and its potential is described as:- *"Ennerdale - Naturally regenerated broadleaved woodland and dwarf scrub heath communities (>400ha). Possible future-natural conifer woodland."*

- Wilderness Britain Conference 1999-2000
During 1999 and 2000 a number of research funded seminars were run on the topic of "Wilderness Britain Social and Environmental Perspectives on Recreation and Conservation". Whilst Ennerdale was not mentioned in these seminars the fact that they were held and attended by a wide range of organisations is evidence of a growing support for the creation of wild areas.
- Friends of the Lake District , Kirby Lecture by Sir Martin Holdgate 2002
Sir Martin Holdgate is a highly respected conservationist and was invited by the Friends of the Lake District to be the speaker at the annual Kirkby Lecture. In his lecture, Sir Martin spoke about his hope for the future of the Lake District landscape and he mentioned Ennerdale saying:

"Ennerdale is a wild valley"

"That dale head could be allowed to revert to true wilderness"

" The main question is what to do with the Sitka spruce, which is seeding freely on the grand crags under Pillar. I confess to mixed feelings here, for Sitka spruce on Vancouver Island, its native home, is a magnificent tree growing up to 300 feet high – left to survive as best it may under Pillar it could add a diversity to the Lakeland landscape."

- Land Use Planning Group – New Wildwoods project 2000-2003
The Land Use Policy Group (LUPG) of the GB statutory conservation, countryside and environment agencies comprises the Countryside Agency, Countryside Council for Wales, English Nature, Environment Agency, Joint Nature Conservation Committee and Scottish Natural Heritage. The LUPG aims to advise on policy matters of common concern related to agriculture, woodlands and other rural land uses. It seeks to improve understanding of the pros and cons of policy mechanisms

related to land use, particularly farming and forestry; to develop a common view of desirable reforms to existing policies; and to promote these views.

In 2000 a report entitled "New Wildwoods in Britain: The potential for developing new landscape-scale native woodlands" was commissioned by the LUPG. The report was commissioned to explore the potential for creating extensive areas of native woodland which might in some respects eventually form a modern equivalent of the original 'wildwood'. The report identified the developing partnership in Ennerdale as a case study. In late 2002 consultants held discussions with the Partnership about the development of Wild Ennerdale which was then published in a report in 2003.

The commissioning of a report by the main statutory conservation, countryside and environment agencies shows continuing interest in developing ideas for creating wild places in the UK. The reports' inclusion of 'Wild Ennerdale as a case study further adds support to the partnerships idea.'

- Lake District National Park Management Plan – 2004
Special Qualities

Opportunities for quiet enjoyment – the tranquility of the fells, valleys & lakes provide a sense of space and freedom, an opportunity for spiritual refreshment, and a release from the pressures of modern day life. These are vital components of the concept of quiet enjoyment.

Open nature of the fells – The relatively open character of the uplands, and their lack of modern development, is especially important. To walk freely across the fells, or climb their crags, is liberating and gives a sense of discovery. There is a feeling of wildness, offering personal challenges for some and impressive open views for everyone.

Government advises, in its Circular 12/96 that National Park Authorities are best placed to identify the nature of the special qualities of their National Parks. It states that '*particular emphasis should be placed on identifying those qualities associated with their wide open spaces, and the wildness and tranquility which are to be found within them*'

- Local Community Support

The process of community involvement is an essential part of the 'Wild Ennerdale' partnership, both to guide and inform it, and to ensure that the benefits of Wild Ennerdale reach throughout the community in West Cumbria. How 'the community' is defined and how far it extends will emerge as the project develops. Stakeholder meetings, farm tenants meetings, parish meeting and organised events in the valley are some examples of networking implemented at local level. Establishing the right structures to develop community liaison in order to sustain interest and support is an important part of future planning.

- Wildland Network (www.wildland-network.org.uk)

The Wildland Network is a group of people from a range of backgrounds brought together to give a voice to wild land values in Britain and to promote and explore the environmental and human potential of wild land. The network encompasses a broad spectrum of approaches within an ethos of wilder land management that takes in natural forest regeneration, the creation of large core areas and inter-connecting corridors in both upland and lowland areas, the return of exterminated species, and the rewilding of rivers and coastal areas.

9. Links to Partners Management Plans



THE NATIONAL TRUST

Looking after special places forever, for everyone is the core purpose of the National Trust⁷. For over 100 years, the National Trust has been conserving coastline, open countryside, historic houses and gardens for the benefit of the nation. The NT is a charity with over 3 million members nationally (325,000 in the North West).

Since its first countryside purchase in the Lake District of Brandlehow, Derwent Water, the NT has gone on to acquire approximately 25% of the Lake District National Park through purchase or donation. This huge upland estate now covers 51,000 hectares and includes around 90 farms (& 21,000 Herdwick sheep which form the Landlords flock) and (with leased land) 22,500 hectares of common land.

The National Trust has a series of management documents which 'map' how the organisation will move forward over both the short term (3 years) and longer term (20 years +) to deliver its aims and objectives at local, regional and national level. In the North West, a key aim is to be recognised as a successful, forward thinking and outwardly focussed region which is well placed to continue to develop 'pioneering projects'.⁸

Wild Ennerdale is viewed as one such pioneering project and features in the Regional Business Plan⁹ and the Lake District Vision 2025¹⁰. One (of four) key objective(s) for the next 3 years is to be "A source of Inspiration" by:

- Raising the profile & influence of the NT in the region through the implementation of the NW Advocacy Strategy & external partnerships
- Making the most of the NT's existing property portfolio by bringing statements of significance to life & optimising learning & access opportunities
- Focusing on customers and the visitor experience at properties

It is also a key project identified in the Lake District Vision 2025 (NT 2005), which seeks to ensure a 'high quality natural and cultural environment', promotes places to find 'inspiration, adventure and tranquillity' and argues for the understanding, celebration and augmentation of dynamic, varied landscapes.

Implementation of the NT Strategic Plan, the 2025 Vision and its framework is through the Property Management Plans which deliver 'on the ground' through property staff, tenant farmers and volunteers. For Ennerdale, this is entirely focused on the partnership working of the main landowners under the vision and objectives of 'Wild Ennerdale'. Property Management Plans are reviewed annually and will be updated as Wild Ennerdale develops.

⁷ National Trust Strategic Plan 2004-2007 & Delivery Plan 2004/5

⁸ North West Regional Business Plan 2004-7

⁹ North West Regional Business Plan 2004-7

¹⁰ Lake District Vision 2025 – report yet to be published



United Utilities supplies water to customers in West Cumbria, many of whom are supplied from Ennerdale. It also has wider obligations of preservation and management of property under the Water Industry Act 1991. The Act places an obligation on the Company to provide for recreational activities on its land and water resources.

The Regional Policy Document states amongst other things:

- The primary purpose of catchment management is to maintain raw water quality to meet our statutory obligations and operational requirements. Wherever possible, management shall have a positive impact on raw water quality.
- Where catchment land is not owned by United Utilities, efforts shall be made to encourage the adoption of our catchment management policies by third parties.

The Water Industry Act 1991 places obligations on the Company to:

- Further the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and the conservation of flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest.
- Have regard to the desirability of protecting and conserving buildings, sites and objects of archaeological, architectural or historic interest.
- Take into account any effect which proposals would have on the beauty or amenity of any rural or urban area or on any flora, fauna, features, buildings, sites or objects.
- Have regard to preserving any freedom of public access to our land; maintaining access for visitors to historical sites and take into account the effects of any proposals upon these interests.

The Wild Ennerdale partnership gives us the opportunity of participation in the development of the policies which affect a major non-owned catchment supplying a significant number of customers, and the fulfilment of the principles of the Water Industry Act on non-owned catchment.



Woodlands managed by the Forestry Commission (FC) make a major contribution to the North West of England with many pioneering projects. Examples include:

- The Whinlatter Forest Park near Keswick, which attracts over 100,000 people each year who come to marvel at the Ospreys, injecting over £2 million into the local economy;
- The 52 km of new footpaths constructed in new community woodlands in the Mersey belt (long enough to connect Liverpool and Manchester!);
- The Forestry Commission is the single largest manager of limestone pavement in England.

The Forestry Commission has responded to the changing needs and wishes of society and nowhere more so than in the North West. The FC was established in 1919 to create a strategic supply of timber for the next war. Today timber is still an important product of woodland management, helping support the local economy, however it has now become a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Provision of outdoor recreation opportunities, nature conservation and regeneration of urban areas are increasingly important. The FC are now working more in partnership with other government bodies, voluntary groups, local communities and private businesses.

Wild Ennerdale is seen as an important pioneering partnership which is at the forefront of land management. Our involvement as a key partner links very well with the Forestry Commissions objectives at National and Regional levels, as detailed in the England Forestry Strategy, North West Regional Forestry Framework and North West England Forest District Strategic Plan. See extracts below:

North West England Forest District Strategic Plan

Mission

To sustainably manage the North West England Forest District estate to maximise public benefit and achieve a balance between social, environmental, and economic objectives.

Objectives

Overall the aim is to achieve a balance between the following objectives, working in partnership where appropriate.

- Biodiversity – Biodiversity and Habitat Action Plans, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Schedule Ancient Monument and general conservation value of estate.
- Landscape – design forests in ways which respond to the individual character of each woodland and its setting.
- Recreation – high quality visitor experience, wide ranging opportunities for the public to enjoy healthy outdoor pursuits in an attractive, sustainable and safe environment.
- Education – high quality environmental education programme for all ages.
- Local economy and jobs – through tourism, timber and other forest operations and other uses of the land.
- Community – involve local communities, businesses and farmers.
- Heritage – safeguard archaeological and heritage interest.

The Wild Ennerdale Stewardship plan will replace the Forest Design Plans for Ennerdale, Broadmoor, Heckbarley and Crag as the primary management document.

10. Links to Key External Organisations Policies

The Wild Ennerdale area sits within the Lake District National Park and the Borough of Copeland. As such, it is important that the vision of Wild Ennerdale is not seen to exist in isolation, but incorporates the statutory responsibilities of other relevant organisations. Examples of key organisations and their policies are listed below.

Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA)

Management Plan¹¹ – published April 2004 (5 year plan)

The Environment Act of 1995 requires National Park Authorities to prepare and publish National Park Management Plans and to review them every 5 years. The Management Plan sets out the guiding principles, vision, long-term aims and policies for managing the National Park, based on its special qualities. A number of policies within the plan compliment 'Wild Ennerdale', those most closely linked are highlighted below:

- Landscape (L)
L6 – Protect and enhance the qualities of tranquillity, wildness and remoteness
L7 - Encourage gradual landscape change when appropriate but promote changes that strengthen landscape character of particular areas.
- Nature Conservation (NC)
NC3 – Promote sustainable and holistic management of semi-natural habitats by applying management principles on a large scale, across catchments and whole fells
NC12 – Support and promote the development of areas of the National Park where natural processes are allowed to predominate.
NC15 – Carry out research and monitoring of habitats and species to inform land management and make decisions which are based on up-to-date and sound information
- Farming (F)
F1 – Support the evolution of sustainable farming practices, which encompass profitability, environmental objectives and social benefits.
- Historic Environment (HE)
HE1 – Maintain up-to-date information on the Lake District's historic environment. Investigate and record archaeology, historic landscapes, buildings, features and settlements.
- Access & Recreation (AR)
AR6 - Protect and, where possible, enhance opportunities Park-wide for quiet enjoyment, and retain the character of the quieter areas of the Park.
- Tourism (T)
T9 – Manage and market tourism facilities and activities in ways which relate to the special qualities of the National Park, and take into account the character of the local environment.
- Sustainable Communities (SC)
SC6 - Encourage local people to contribute to community strategies so that they reflect local opinion and help generate integrated public services.

In addition to the Management Plan, the LDNPA also carried out (in partnership with the NT, FC, UU & EN) consultation with local communities on the future management of Ennerdale Water and its immediate surroundings. Specific topics included vehicle access & parking, recreational provision and the lakeshore landscape¹². Consultation

¹¹ *Management Plan*. Lake District National Park Authority, 2004

¹² *Ennerdale Water Consultation Report*. LDNPA, October 2001

was initially done in 2001 and has been under review for the last few years. More recently, the same partners revised the implementation programme to ensure that any planned activity complimented the broader plans for Wild Ennerdale.

Friends of the Lake District (FOLD)

Formed in 1934, the Friends of the Lake District (FOLD) works to protect and enhance the special qualities of the distinctive and inspirational landscapes of the Lake District and Cumbria.

FOLD is a membership organisation representing the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) throughout Cumbria. It has supporters both in Britain and abroad and works alongside other organisations and local groups to achieve a stronger recognition of the contribution of landscapes to the well-being of the nation and of the need to protect them from the effects of damaging developments. FOLD promotes solutions for the long-term future of the countryside in Cumbria and aims to ensure that any change recognises the value of its natural and built environment. In doing so the organisation seeks to:

- ***Widen the recognition, protection and enhancement of the special qualities of the landscapes of Lake District and Cumbria***
- ***Promote better access for all who wish to enjoy quiet recreation in the countryside***
- ***Widen the recognition of the role landscape plays in sustaining local communities***
- ***Promote greater understanding of the role of landscape in enriching people's live***

Following the outbreak of Foot & Mouth, FOLD produced a 'position paper' on 'Agricultural and Rural Development'.¹³ The paper suggests that a more holistic approach is necessary for the future of farming, considering agriculture alongside the landscape/environment and character of the area, and the local economy and community benefits. More specifically, the paper suggests a number of practical landscape measures be pursued which include:

- The possibility of rewilding, e.g. through the retreat of farming from some more marginal areas;
- More heather, juniper and enrichment of upland pastures

Over the medium term (2-10 years), FLD also highlights that "there may be opportunities for FOLD to acquire more land, either for rewilding or to show how a large area or valley could be managed for conservation". This would be achieved through partners working towards an agreed management plan and vision for a future landscape, and could bring huge gains in terms of increased knowledge and future policy campaigning.

Natural England (incorporating the Countryside Agency, Rural Development Service & English Nature)

The Countryside Agency (sponsored by DEFRA) is the statutory body working to make the quality of life better for people in the countryside and the quality of the countryside better for everyone.

¹³ *Agriculture and Rural Development Position Paper*, FoLD 2002

The Rural Development Service (RDS), also part of DEFRA, is “the largest deliverer of the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP) schemes and a range of other rural services”. RDS works with rural partners and local people to:

- enhance the environment (including the new Environmental Stewardship Scheme)
- improve the conservation of wildlife and biodiversity
- strengthen rural economies and communities.
-

English Nature is a Government funded body whose purpose is to promote the conservation of England’s wildlife and natural features and has responsibility for over 4,000 Sites of Special Scientific Interest in England.

The Rural Strategy 2004 announced the Government's plans to set up a single, independent public body – “Natural England”. This 'integrated agency' will cover the agri-environment part of the Rural Development Service, all of English Nature and the access, recreation and landscape remit of the Countryside Agency.

“Natural England” will unite in a single organisation, the responsibility for enhancing biodiversity and our landscapes and nature conservation in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas; promoting access, recreation and public wellbeing and contributing to the way natural resources are managed so they can be enjoyed now and for future generations. Natural England will work in partnership with the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission, who will continue to lead on environmental protection and improvement of soil, air and water, and sustainable forest management respectively.

Natural England will be launched formally by the beginning of 2007. However, from 1st April 2005 the organisations will work together to deliver joint outcomes. This will apply nationally, regionally and locally.

Landscape, Access & Recreation (LAR) is a new division of the agency and incorporates sustainable land management policy and research work carried out by the Land Management Initiative (LMI) scheme.

How the policies of the new integrated agency will compliment Wild Ennerdale has yet to be seen. Current policies however very much support the concept of increasing areas as ‘managed wilderness’¹⁴, investigating innovative practical solutions to maintaining viable farm businesses while providing economic, environmental & social benefits, and looking at opportunities for new wild land in England through the LMI experiences¹⁵.

Copeland Borough Council

Situated on the west coast of Cumbria, the Borough of Copeland neighbours the districts of Allerdale, Barrow-in-Furness and South Lakeland, and covers an area of 284 square miles, two thirds of which lies within the Lake District National Park.

With a population of approx. 70,000, the Borough stretches along the coast from just north of Whitehaven to Millom in the south. The majority of the population live within the narrow coastal strip of which Whitehaven is the main settlement. Inland are the remote and sparsely populated valleys of Ennerdale, Wasdale, Eskdale and Dunnerdale.

¹⁴ *Strategy for Sustainable Land Management in England*. Countryside Agency, June 2001

¹⁵ *Experiences from the Land Management Initiatives*. Countryside Agency, 2004

A 'Local Plan'¹⁶ prepared by Copeland Borough Council relates to all of the Borough outside the Lake District National Park, covering the period 2001 – 2016. The Plan sets out the Council's policies and proposals for the future development and use of land, improvements of the physical environment and management of traffic.

The Local Plan refers to Copeland as being "one of the most attractive places to live, work or visit in the North West, with it's outstanding landscapes & wildlife habitats, distinctive character of it's towns & villages and strong sense of community identity". Also recognised however are the long-term economic problems resulting from a declining (& over dependent) manufacturing sector and poor transport infrastructure, with knock on effects such as low incomes/benefit dependency, health problems, poor housing, social stress & struggling communities. Seven out of the fourteen wards in Copeland feature in the top 20% nationally in terms of deprivation indicators. The Local Plan demonstrates how the Council (and partners) plan to tackle economic and social issues and to seek a 'wholesome regeneration of the Borough'.

Although there are no specific links to Ennerdale in the Local Plan (as the remit is for areas of the Borough outside of the Lake District National Park) future management within the valley will affect not just immediate communities, but potentially create a much wider sphere of influence in terms of environmental, social and economic benefits. Copeland Borough Council is a consultee for any planning activities within the National Park which fall within their boundary. Protecting, conserving & enhancing the Boroughs landscape, built environment, heritage, ecological and recreational importance and improving the quality of life for its residents are key aims of the plan which compliment the Wild Ennerdale process.

Ennerdale & Kinniside Parish Plan

The Ennerdale & Kinniside Parish Plan¹⁷ was produced in 2004, incorporating feedback from a parish questionnaire and appraisal during 2002 & 2003. Funding for the plan was provided by the Countryside Agency and acknowledges that any plans for the parish must take into account what is required of central government and other organisations. These include: Cumbria County Council, Copeland Borough Council and the Lake District National Park Authority.

The Ennerdale & Kinniside Parish (population approx. 270) comprises 9,066 hectares of rural land entirely within the Lake District National Park. The plan is obviously specific to issues which directly affect the parish such as affordable housing, tourism, services, traffic & transport, policing, environment (recycling facilities, dog fouling, litter etc) and provisions for young people. Looking beyond the village, the plan makes reference to the special qualities of the land covered by the parish boundary:

"Ennerdale & Kinniside is very small in the great scheme of things, but we are the custodians of an unspoilt wilderness and are entitled to be consulted, also listened to, as well as being represented in the larger arena"

"The land comprises of high mountains and fells to lowland meadows which is classed as marginal land, but this decries its wild beauty. With the boundary for the eastern half of the parish being the ridge of mountains known as the Ennerdale horseshoe, its isolation gives it a just claim to be known as the 'Last Wilderness' and

¹⁶ *Copeland Local Plan 2001-2016*. Copeland Borough Council. Feb 2004

¹⁷ *Ennerdale & Kinniside Parish Plan*. Ennerdale & Kinniside Parish Council 2004

with the caring involvement of the LDNPA, National Trust, Forest Enterprise and United Utilities this is close on being a reality” (*Vic Chilton, Deputy Chairman*)

Rural Regeneration Cumbria

Rural Regeneration Cumbria (RRC) is the first rural regeneration company in the UK, working to rebuild and develop a dynamic rural economy in Cumbria. The North West Regional Development Agency (NWRDA) and Cumbria County Council created RRC in response to structural weaknesses in the rural economy highlighted by the foot and mouth crisis in 2001.

RRC’s objectives include attracting and developing new industries as well as supporting agriculture and tourism, where Cumbria has traditionally been strong. RRC’s ‘Next Steps’ strategy was published in June 2002 and set out the vision to:

“... enable the rebuilding and development of a dynamic rural economy for Cumbria, which is financially, socially and environmentally sustainable.”

A number of aims link to Wild Ennerdale in terms of developing sustainable local economies, improving environmental quality of land and water quality, greater access and enhanced visitor experience for those who visit the countryside and recognising the visual and spiritual qualities of the cultural landscape. As the social and economic opportunities are explored and the ‘cultural landscape’ of Wild Ennerdale changes over time, it will be interesting to see how the strategies of organisations such RRC will incorporate opportunities created through low input land management.

The "Next Steps" strategy was reviewed recently and concluded with revised publication of "New Landscapes" in June 2005.

Land Use Policy Group (LUPG)

The LUPG of the GB statutory conservation, countryside and environment agencies comprises the Countryside Agency, Countryside Council for Wales, English Nature, Environment Agency, Joint Nature Conservation Committee and Scottish Natural Heritage.

The LUPG aims to advise on policy matters of common concern related to agriculture, woodlands and other rural land uses. It seeks to improve understanding of the pros and cons of policy mechanisms related to land use, particularly farming and forestry; to develop a common view of desirable reforms to existing policies; and to promote these views.

In June 2002, a report was produced exploring the potential for developing new landscape scale ‘wildwoods’ in Britain¹⁸. Emphasis was on the potential to create extensive areas of native woodland which might go some way to form a modern equivalent of the original ‘wildwood’. In addition, the report sought to explore socio-economic and biodiversity benefits, and to stimulate debate on the ‘wildwood’ theme.

Ennerdale was one of three locations chosen as a case study but with the point stressed that ‘Wild Ennerdale’ was not specifically a native woodland restoration project as complete removal of conifer was not an aim, but rather to create

¹⁸ *New Wildwoods in Britain :The Potential for Developing New Landscape-Scale Native Woodlands.* Land Use Policy Group, June 2002

opportunity for native woodland species to expand and add diversity to the landscape.

In April 2003, a second report was produced by LUPG titled 'New Wildwoods : Removing Barriers to Development and Implementation'.¹⁹ Wild Ennerdale was again one of the case studies used, this time with focus on what the perceived/actual barriers are to develop wildwoods (e.g. policy constraints) and the need to establish an information network for Wildwoods and Wild Land initiatives generally.

Council for National Parks

The Council for National Parks (CNP) is the charity that works to protect and enhance the National Parks of England and Wales and areas that merit National Park status, and promote understanding and quiet enjoyment of them for the benefit of all. CNP works in partnership with National Park Authorities and the Association of National Park Authorities – the Government's statutory advisers in England and Wales.

In 1997, CNP produced a report 'Wild by Design': to explore the potential for the creation of wilder areas in the National Parks of England and Wales²⁰. A highly regarded panel appointed by the Countryside Commission reviewed the National Parks of England and Wales. One of the proposals was that:

"A number of experimental schemes on a limited scale should be set up in the National Parks, where farming is withdrawn entirely and the natural succession of vegetation is allowed to take its course" (Edwards 1991)

Ennerdale was one area identified in the Lake District which would 'particularly benefit from a change to a wilder area'. Key recommendations included creating areas on as large a scale possible, which would be capable of functioning with less intervention. In addition was the need to have a comprehensive long-term monitoring programme in place to assess the outcome of management regimes and adapt them as necessary.

[Linked Maps: A & B](#)

¹⁹ *New Wildwoods :Removing Barriers to Development and Implementation*. Land Use Policy Group, April 2003

²⁰ *Wild by Design in the National Parks of England & Wales*. Council for National Parks 1997

11. Public Engagement

The involvement of people in the Wild Ennerdale process is an important part of the vision. A key aim is to bring greater social benefit to people, particularly the local community²¹ and wider communities in West Cumbria, through opportunities for recreation and learning. Within this overarching aim are a number of factors which contribute to bringing 'greater social benefit' by:

- Encouraging a 'sense of ownership' with the valley, both now and in the long term by involving people in the development process and incorporating views and opinions.
- Supporting people's livelihoods by developing ideas for low impact, sustainable business activities which maximise the wild land value of the valley.
- Providing opportunity for exploration, adventure and being close to nature. With this comes recognition that these qualities are more than just physical, but can bring emotional and spiritual benefits too.
- Facilitating learning outside the classroom to develop an interest in nature and wild places.

Since 2000, a dedicated National Trust Community Learning Officer has improved and developed community links and this, along with a (more recent) Wild Ennerdale Project Officer ensures that public engagement remains an important part of the Wild Ennerdale process.

Examples of Project & Consultation Work:

- Junior Wardens

A programme of monthly events with local children and parents to foster a greater interest and sense of ownership of the valley. Increasingly activities are centred on Wild Ennerdale.

- Local Events Programme

A programme of monthly events planned throughout the year to encourage local people from nearby parishes and communities in West Cumbria to develop a greater understanding of the work of the National Trust, with some events specific to the Wild Ennerdale partnership.

- Education work with schools

Visits into schools and site visits by groups to undertake environmental projects and activities. Example includes 'Hands on Heritage' – a project looking at the archaeological assets in Ennerdale.

- Informal learning with youth/community groups

Using different mediums such as art and theatre to enable people to engage with the Ennerdale valley in new and innovative ways. Examples include:

- Arts in Trust event (2002) – 300 children worked with artists to encourage thought, expressions and feelings about Ennerdale. Culminated in a three-day event at Low Gillerthwaite Field Study Centre.
 - The Untold Story (2004) – using creative arts to explore the significance of landscape – theatre production of 'The Spirit of Ennerdale' based on historical evidence and local folklore.
- General public meetings, displays at agricultural shows, parish meetings etc.
 - Wild Ennerdale website provides access to partnership information and reports, photo gallery and webcam (www.wildennerdale.co.uk).

²¹ Residents in the Ennerdale valley and the nearest village of Ennerdale Bridge

12. Processes

'Wilding' is a process of change that involves reducing the intensity and type of human intervention and allowing natural processes greater freedom to operate. It is therefore important to understand what natural processes are operating in Ennerdale, and how human activity influences the natural system.

None of the processes listed below are independent from each other – all are linked as factors which shape the landscape. It is the scale and intensity of the process which is key to determining how each will influence Ennerdale as a wild place in the future. The processes operating are summarised as follows:

- **Hydrological Cycle**

- **Process**

Rainfall, snow and mist

Evaporation (inc. evapo-transpiration – evaporation direct from vegetation + the water that plants lose from the pores in their leaves)

Surface runoff

Streams and Rivers

Erosion of soil, rock, till & sediment

Production, transportation and deposition of sediment (in rivers, lake & flood events)

- **Human modifications**

Man-made structures: bridges, roads, culverts, lake revetment

Activities: water extraction, plantation forestry, animal grazing, climate change

- **Resulting impacts**

Accelerated run off

More sedimentation

Lower vegetation cover

Increased brash in river system

More soil erosion

Change in rainfall or more extreme events

- **Weathering of rock and soils**

- **Process**

Chemical weathering (e.g. oxidation of chemicals holding rocks together)

Mechanical weathering (inc. freeze thaw, stream erosion)

Biological weathering (e.g. roots of trees)

Transport of material (water, wind & gravity)

Wind ablation (direct action of wind on rocks)

Soil creep (gravity driven)

Leaching and soil acidification

Wave action in lake (wind driven)

- **Human modifications**

Plantation forestry

Grazing

Roads and any other man made structures

Acidification

- **Atmospheric Cycles**

- **Process**

Nitrogen cycle

Carbon cycle & sequestering

Role of lake in both of these cycles and in holding Carbon, Nitrogen and Phosphorous

➤ **Human modifications**

Fertiliser (and other artificial) use

Stock grazing

Acid Rain

Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Sulphur emissions leading to acid deposition

Sequestering of nutrients in trees and vegetation

Carbon emissions

• **Ecological processes (including vegetation succession)**

➤ **Process**

Progression of vegetation to climax category

Lake will be progressing through succession towards dry land (very long term)

Lake ecosystem with phytoplankton, zooplankton, invertebrates, fish etc

Terrestrial ecosystems (e.g. larger animals eating smaller prey)

➤ **Human modifications**

Stock grazing

Removal of natural grazers and predators

Water abstraction

Introductions (e.g. grey squirrel)

Non-native conifer plantation & forestry management

Woodland management

Seed source isolation

Atmospheric pollution

Nitrogen & sulphur deposition

• **Human Activity**

➤ employment, business & leisure;

➤ farming, forestry operations, water extraction, land management, tourism, recreation, learning & education.

➤ Ennerdale will continue to be a place where people live, work & play, but the 'wilding' process will encourage anthropogenic processes to become part of the range of natural processes, thus being complementary rather than in competition or conflict.

Note: Actions listed above such as wind, solar radiation and gravity are more forces than natural processes although they are the power driving some of these.

Linked maps: [G](#), [M](#), [Q](#), [V](#), [Y](#)

Linked photos: [Plates 17 - 20](#)

13. Sustainability

The success of Wild Ennerdale, as a model that might be more broadly applied, will depend on whether the Partnership can demonstrate that it is an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable approach to management in the current climate.

For the last thousand years, Ennerdale's landscape and ecology has been shaped by human activity which in turn has been determined by the economic and cultural values of the day, and of course the availability of resources. There have been periods of sudden change – most obviously the afforestation of the valley bottom from the 1920s onwards in response to the demand for home produced timber. Although the concept of 'wildness' as a new product for Ennerdale has arisen quickly in the last 5 years, it is likely that the environmental changes it produces may be more gradual and subtle as natural processes are allowed to play a greater role in shaping the landscape and ecology of the valley.

The Economy

Today most homes and livelihoods in the area are supported by jobs outside the valley but of those that depend on the valley and its land, farming, forestry, water extraction, tourism, recreation and conservation focused land management all provide a living. Significant change has however taken place (and continues to) in the farming and timber sectors.

Over the past 10 to 15 years, environmental support payments to farmers have had a significant impact on the way farmland and open fell is managed in the Lake District. De-coupling, the introduction of the Single Farm Payment and questions over the future of the Hill Farm Allowance mean that the financial viability of many hill farms is in question. Farm products from the area cannot easily compete in a global market and farmers are coming under increasing pressure to diversify.

Similarly, timber production is no longer economical as a result of increasing competition from cheaper foreign imports and the high costs of re-planting. In the late 1990s this prompted a shift in the national strategy for forest management from timber production towards rural development, economic regeneration, conservation, tourism and access.

A clear case has been made that reducing the intensity of inputs into Ennerdale, whether through farming, forestry or conservation management, makes short term economic sense. This process was in fact already under way (both for economic and conservation reasons); Wild Ennerdale has simply given the process extra impetus and an added focus. The Wild Ennerdale approach however asks farmers to move even further away from the productive concept of farming purely for agricultural production and ever closer to conservation-led livestock management. This raises questions concerning the cultural acceptability of farming in this way and the economic sustainability of managing livestock. Without a clearer picture of what the economic prospects are likely to be, it will remain difficult to persuade farmers of the value of going down this route (to a considerable degree this issue is clouded by the endemic uncertainty that seems to exist over the future of farming in Europe).

As farming and forestry move further away from goals focused on producing conservation, landscape and public access benefits, the rationale for separating farming and forestry policy and grant aid becomes less clear. Between the support directly given to farmers and the inputs of government agencies (such as the Forestry Commission and English Nature), alongside the inputs of the National Trust

(derived from its members and others), there is a considerable amount of 'public' money directed at the management of Ennerdale. The Wild Ennerdale partnership has, to some degree, been able to overcome these divisions but current structures do not encourage this sort of integrated approach to management.

A detailed economic assessment is planned to gain a greater understanding of the aggregate of public money coming into the valley. This will help to identify how, given the political and cultural will, this money could be re-deployed to deliver greater public benefit in terms of wild land value (social, economic, landscape, ecological). We need policy and funding streams which provide greater encouragement to the development of flexible local solutions to sustainable land management, and the support for local land managers to deliver these.

Social & Cultural Factors

Resistance is not unique to the Lake District but does have a stronger embrace in such areas of wider, 'national' ownership. There is some cultural resistance towards a move to low intensity land management which partly results from wild land not being recognised as a legitimate form of land use, and a lack of understanding of how people can be part of a wild system. As a result, a move towards low intensity management can be perceived as the 'destruction' of the cultural landscape rather than an evolution towards another form of cultural landscape. Again, this partly results from our lack of knowledge about the likely outcomes and the benefits of those outcomes.

Consultation with visitors and local people carried out in the early stages of developing Wild Ennerdale has been almost exclusively positive. However, there is currently little hard information to justify the claim that a 'wilder' Ennerdale will be more valuable to those who visit, simply because there are no comparisons which can be made to other areas. Extensive research has been carried out into the physical, mental and social benefits of recreation in the countryside but as yet there is little evidence for the 'value added' that Wild Ennerdale might bring.

The Environment

The sustainability of Wild Ennerdale in environmental terms is more easily argued. Reducing the intensity of our inputs in terms of forestry and farming activity will have direct impacts on nature conservation, the protection of soils and water quality and the reduction of energy use. The monitoring programme that the partners are implementing will help to measure these gains in sustainability. The hope, also, is that by taking a landscape scale approach to management and reducing the impact of physical and management boundaries, this will enable a more robust series of ecosystems to develop which will be more adaptable in the face of external pressures such as climate change.

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.

15. Guiding Principles

These principles act as points of reference to guide the partners approach on decision making in Ennerdale. The overarching principle is that any action should fit within and refer back to the vision at all times, which 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”

Supporting this vision are eleven key principles:

1. The sense of wildness experienced by people will be protected and enhanced;
2. The valleys landscape and habitats will be given greater freedom to develop under natural processes, allowing robust and functioning ecosystems to develop on a landscape scale;
3. Public support and engagement will remain central to the Wild Ennerdale process;
4. Intervention will only occur if complementary to the vision, or where a threat to the vision is posed;
5. Opportunities will be sought to develop greater public enjoyment and social benefit;
6. The historical and cultural assets of the valley will be considered and respected;
7. Management and decision making will be focused more at the holistic landscape scale;
8. Wild Ennerdale will be offered as a demonstration to others by sharing results and information;
9. Opportunities will be sought for businesses that are sustainable within the vision;
10. Monitoring and assessment of change will be carried out on a large scale and over a long period of time;
11. An element of set-up and higher level intervention may be required to facilitate natural processes, recognising our starting point is influenced by past activity;

16. Summary of Statements

These statements provide a summary of the main processes operating in Ennerdale, all of which influence the landscape we have today and the sense of wildness people experience. The processes are identified as follows:

- Conservation Management
- Farming
- Forestry
- Natural Processes
- Recreation & Access
- Tourism Provision & Infrastructure
- Transport
- Water Extraction

None of these processes operate in isolation. They have each been listed for having an *identifiable influence or impact* on the valley which can be *monitored*. The methodologies used and scale of monitoring will depend on the process. It is important that a sustainable monitoring regime is established to capture change over the long-term to inform future generations, those who live, work or visit the valley, of the starting point from which Wild Ennerdale began, and how it evolves over time. Fixed point photography, aerial photography, sample plots, questionnaires and vehicle counters are just some of the monitoring methods that are already in place or planned for the future.

Each statement is structured to provide a summary of background information on the process in Ennerdale, and specific actions which will determine the level and type of future management over the next 10 year period. In working towards a wilder valley, any actions will first and foremost be influenced by our vision and guiding principles.

16.i Conservation Management

Summary

Ennerdale has an outstanding range of natural and cultural assets. The concept of 'wild land' in Ennerdale encompasses both the ecological and cultural history of the valley. The landscape we see today is a result of society's relationship with the land, influencing the various attributes of flora, fauna and heritage features. There are also a number of important geological features. The best examples of these vegetation types and geology are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Almost half the Wild Ennerdale area is designated as SSSI and SAC (Special Area of Conservation - the highest tier of designation in the UK) which provides a good indication of the national and international importance of the valley. Similarly, as Ennerdale has been subject to low intensity farming on a limited scale (since potentially the Bronze Age) the preservation of earlier landscapes offer cultural links with the past and some exceptional archaeological remains.

The conservation objectives for the SSSI and SAC's describe what the designations are there to achieve. They list the features of interest and describe what their good ecological health looks like. The vision and guiding principles will be used to deliver healthy ecological communities within both the designated sites and the broader valley. There is acknowledgement that the distribution and extent of some vegetation communities may change but the balance is likely to be in favour of restoring and supporting natural ecosystems and vegetation.

Conservation management is a component of several of the other processes operating in the valley, particularly forestry, farming and water extraction. When and how we choose to intervene for 'conservation' reasons will be a matter of ongoing debate and an integral part of the evolution of the Wild Ennerdale approach. Some forms of management will remain relatively straight-forward, such as the limited removal of vegetation to protect archaeological sites. However others, such as the extent to which spruce regeneration should be controlled, will be harder matters to decide. As such, 'trigger levels' for intervention will be determined primarily by the extent to which any action will enhance or detract from the wild character of the valley. At present, the Partnership's conservation management work is limited to those interventions needed to restore some balance to the range of 'natural' processes which operate. Examples include the removal of mature seed bearing spruce and the introduction of broadleaf seed sources to the eastern end of the valley, along with the introduction of large herbivores. An exception to this is where work is required for safety or legal compliance reasons.

Actions (within next 10 years)

- Develop a better understanding of changes to vegetation habitats and species in Ennerdale.
- Introduce extensive year round naturalistic grazing by large herbivores (cattle) to create and maintain structural diversity and open areas within the valley.
- Allow Red Deer to establish as a herd. Maintain culling as there are no natural predators.
- Deliver the SSSI conservation objectives for the designated areas Remove rhododendron from the valley.
- Monitor the heritage features within the valley and consider management recommendations from the Historic Landscape Report

[Linked maps: I & L](#)

[Linked photos: Plates 1 - 63](#)

16.ii Farming

Summary

Archaeological evidence suggests that the Ennerdale valley has been subject to low intensity farming since the Bronze Age²². In comparison to other Lakeland valleys, more recent farming has been (for the most part) on a limited scale and thus evidence of historic activity remains extremely well preserved.

Today farming remains one of the major influences upon the landscape in Ennerdale; sheep grazing predominates on the fells (very few intakes), with sheep and (occasional) cattle grazing on the inbye land. All the farmland within the Wild Ennerdale boundary is owned by the three partners and is tenanted by a number of farmers, some of whom farm from over the Ennerdale watershed. In addition there are some privately owned parcels of land which fall outside the Wild Ennerdale boundary but lie within the Ennerdale valley. The partners are committed to working with neighbouring land owners and to take opportunities to manage all the land within the watershed in a holistic manner. Historic grazing levels have reduced species composition on the fells and suppressed upland heath communities. More recently there has been a move towards a reduction in sheep numbers from some areas, and a total exclusion of sheep from others (e.g. Red Beck Close on the south-west side of the valley). Large areas of land designated as SSSI remain in 'unfavourable condition'.

Actions (within next 10 years)

- Develop a better understanding of farming, its significance and impacts, in Ennerdale.
- Remove redundant boundary fencing to move towards extensive grazing regimes within the existing forest boundary.
- Work with farmers to review boundary fencing.
- Address the issue of stock encroachment on the Pillar & Ennerdale SSSI
- Introduce cattle for extensive naturalistic grazing.
- Ensure opportunities are maximised to benefit from farm support.
- Support the development of new business opportunities for farmers that build on and respect the special qualities of the valley.
- Identify a long-term sustainable grazing regime for the whole valley.
- Explore impacts of changing grazing regimes on current management practices, such as lower stocking numbers of hefted flocks on unfenced fell.

Linked maps: M, R, Y

Linked Photos: Plates 33 - 36

²² Ennerdale Historic Landscape Report, Oxford Archaeology North, November 2003

16.iii Forestry

Summary

Looking far back in history to Mesolithic and early Neolithic times (8300 to 3200 BC), evidence tells us that the landscape was almost entirely covered in trees. Woodland in Ennerdale would have been predominantly oak, alder and birch. Subsequent episodes of forest clearance occurred and by the post Medieval period (late 15th C) the landscape was dominated by pastoral sheep grazing, with only a few remnant woodlands left on The Side and Latterbarrow. The 1860 first edition Ordnance Survey map shows some small conifer woodland was established around Gillerthwaite and Lingmell before the end of the 19th Century.

The bedrock of forestry policy in the 1920s was the need to rebuild and maintain a strategic timber reserve. Stocks were so depleted by the demands of the First World War that the new Forestry Commission was given a good deal of freedom to acquire and plant land. Planting began in Ennerdale in March 1925²³ and continued through the 20th Century with the final acquisition of land around Clews Gill in 1978. Once again (as with the original woodland clearances), the valley was being shaped by the needs of society - this time a need for timber in case of war.

Towards the end of the 20th Century the Forestry Commission started to widen its remit culminating in 1998 with the publication of the England Forestry Strategy. This saw the focus of forest management shift from timber production (linked to falling market prices and competition from Europe) towards rural development, economic regeneration, recreation, access and tourism, conservation and the environment.

Ennerdale has long had negative press associated with conifer plantations. Times are changing however and great effort has gone into creating more mixed woodland habitats through native broadleaf planting and thinning/clear felling of monoculture conifer forest. The forest provides a haven for wildlife and is an asset for public enjoyment. Visually detracting pockets of plantation forest do still exist and will be addressed as Wild Ennerdale evolves in the future.

Actions (within next 10 years)

- Control Sitka spruce to ensure that this species does not dominate the future forest.
- Reduce the impact of mechanised forestry operations in the valley.
- Prioritise the felling of areas viewed to be visually detracting within the landscape.
- Do not restock recent clearfells.
- Plant native broadleaves and Juniper as seed trees in the eastern valley to give natural processes the opportunity to develop woodland away from becoming dominated by spruce.
- Allow natural woodland encroachment beyond present forest boundary to soften stark contrast between forest and open fell.
- Continue to control sheep grazing on The Side to encourage natural regeneration east and west of the current woodland.
- Introduce cattle into the forest to restore a natural disturbance process.
- As timber operations reduce, identify where sections of the forest track network could be allowed to revert to vegetated tracks under natural processes.
- Look to thin areas of maturing forest to provide more open habitats for future herbivore grazing.

²³ Dale Head was bought from Lord Lonsdale

- Allow small scale timber operations to provide for local need e.g. woodfuel for the YHA's and Field Centre.

[Linked maps: N, R, W, & X](#)

[Linked Photos: Plates 29 – 32, 41 – 44, 57 & 58](#)

16.iv Natural Processes

Summary

Vegetation succession, river dynamics, weathering of rocks, soil erosion and woodland regeneration are some examples of natural processes which shape the character and quality of Ennerdale, and which are influenced to varying degrees by human activity. Ennerdale has gone through a series of changes which have been influenced by man to meet the economic needs of the day, such as the planting of spruce forests and raising the level of the lake for water extraction. It is often the scale and nature of human processes (particularly when involving machinery) which results in our management dominating natural processes. By lessening the impact of human activity to become more in tune with natural processes, there comes a point whereby perceptions can change and human activity becomes more accepted as a natural process, to a point where it becomes complementary and part of the natural environment of the valley.

Actions (within next 10 years)

- All actions listed in the other statements are identified to complement and facilitate natural processes.

Specific examples for reference include:

- Introduction of cattle for extensive naturalistic grazing (conservation management)
- Reduce mechanised forestry operations (forestry)
- Forest tracks allowed to revert to vegetated tracks (forestry)
- Removal of lakeshore revetment to facilitate natural hydrological processes (water extraction)
- Maintenance and repair of access routes must be sensitive to natural processes (recreation & access)

[Linked maps: Q, X & Y](#)

[Linked photos: Plates 17 - 20](#)

16.v Recreation & Access

Summary

Open access across most of Ennerdale ensures that people are free to experience the valley in an unrestricted way. A combination of mountains, crags, lake and forest offers a wealth of opportunity for 'quiet recreation'. Along with farming and forestry, recreation is one of main human processes operating in the valley though the landscape impacts of recreation have been more modest in scale when compared to the effects of major land use changes such as farming and forestry.

Active pursuits such as walking, rock climbing, mountain biking, orienteering, canoeing and fishing all take place within the valley, though some are restricted through a permit system (e.g. canoeing & fishing), or determined by the level of access to a site (e.g. long walk in for climbers to crags).

The network of forest tracks and public rights of way provide freedom of access to many areas of the valley. With few way-marked routes or signage, emphasis is very much on self exploration and personal discovery. Under the Countryside Rights of Way Act (CROW), much of Ennerdale is designated 'open access'. In addition, the Forestry Commission is dedicating all its woodland as open access land.

With no public road beyond the 'mouth' of the valley itself, the visitor experience of Ennerdale offers closeness to nature, solitude and tranquillity.

Actions (within next 10 years)

- Develop a better understanding of recreation in Ennerdale.
- Review all countryside furniture and signage. Remove or minimise where appropriate.
- Maintain all rights of way open and accessible, accepting that some natural processes may affect routes (e.g. river erosion) and that any maintenance/repair work must be sensitive to the remote and wild character of the valley.
- Create a Wild Ennerdale 'Access Code' in partnership with local access groups.
- Increase access & recreation opportunities for communities on the West Coast of Cumbria.

[Linked maps: K & R](#)

[Linked photos: Plates 13 – 16](#)

16.vi Tourism Provision & Infrastructure

Summary

The geographical location of Ennerdale is a key factor influencing the nature and scale of tourism provision. As one of the most remote and least visited of all the major Lakeland valleys, the tourist infrastructure is modest when compared to more popular neighbouring valleys (with easier access & more facilities) such as Borrowdale, Buttermere and Wasdale.

Ennerdale is designated a 'Quiet Area'²⁴ within the Lake District National Park and as such has stricter development control policies in terms of tourist attractions, marketing and visitor facilities. Tourism does however play an important part in supporting the local economy and livelihoods in Ennerdale, with an infrastructure which includes B&B's, Inns, holiday homes, self-catering cottages, camping/caravan sites, a Field Studies Centre, YHA's and a bunk barn.

The long distance Coast-to-Coast²⁵ walk attracts a large proportion of visitors supporting accommodation outlets in the Ennerdale & Kinniside Parish, along with two YHAs in the heart of the valley. Additional support comes from 'business tourism' with approx. 10% of B&B overnights²⁶ associated with Sellafield Nuclear Processing Plant. A field study centre at Gillerthwaite draws on a different market, with outdoor activities and education the main attraction for groups. Tourist related facilities are minimal; a village shop and information board in Ennerdale Bridge and two car parks at the west end of the lake.

Actions (within next 10 years)

- Develop a better understanding of the economic significance of tourism provision and infrastructure in Ennerdale.
- Work with local tourist providers to identify tourism opportunities from Wild Ennerdale.
- Work with partners in the tourism industry to ensure the appropriate marketing of Ennerdale.
- Work with other 'wild land' managers (e.g. JMT, SNH, NTS) to share best practice in balancing the sensitivities of tourism in wild places.

[Linked maps: K, R & S](#)

[Linked photos: Plates 45 - 48](#)

²⁴ Lake District National Park Management Plan, 2004

²⁵ Coast-to-Coast = official long distance walking route stretching 190 miles between St. Bees Head (Cumbria) and Robin Hoods Bay (East Yorkshire)

²⁶ Shepherds Arms Hotel, Ennerdale Bridge

16.vii Transport

Summary

One of the attributes of 'wild land' is how distant a place is from any road or track usable by vehicles. People having the ability to appreciate wild land is another and therefore a balance is needed between the two. Historical evidence shows that Ennerdale Water used to serve as a transport route for raw materials (wood, stone, minerals) during the 1850s but was deemed uneconomic soon after²⁷. Four main activities now bring vehicles into the valley; forestry, farming, recreation and tourism. Public transport is poor with no service beyond Ennerdale Bridge and public vehicle access is restricted to the west end of the valley, via minor roads leading to two car parks. A limited amount of public vehicle access is permitted along the forest track to the YHA's and Low Gillerthwaite Field Centre (LGFC). Service vehicles create additional transport movements (e.g. post, refuse, food, fuel and laundry deliveries/collections).

Seven miles of the valley head remain without tarmac roads and relatively free from traffic. The network of forest tracks within the valley bottom provides the freedom to explore on foot, bicycle or horseback. Vehicle movements (though limited) within the valley are highlighted as a major factor which detracts from people's enjoyment of Ennerdale²⁸. Vehicle movements also cause disturbance to wildlife and conflict with recreational users (create dust, noise, are a safety hazard and visual intrusion).

Actions (within next 10 years)

- Develop a better understanding of vehicle movements in Ennerdale.
- Establish a long term monitoring programme of vehicle movements to capture changing trends.
- Work with YHA & LGFC to encourage fewer vehicle movements within valley (customers, service providers, staff)
- Alter current layout and signage at Bowness Knott to encourage access into car park and deter vehicles from continuing along forest track.
- Minimise use of road signage beyond Bowness Knott.
- Maximise car share & alternative transport opportunities (foot/bike) for partnership staff & site visits in valley.
- Support opportunities to improve public transport and cycle hire. Provide local service information on website.
- Allow natural processes to reduce the visible impact of the forest track network over the long term.

[Linked maps: R & K](#)

[Linked photos : Plates 28 & 30](#)

²⁷ Wild Ennerdale, Cultural & Historical File, Cath Lawler notes

²⁸ Visitor Survey Results, Summer 2005, Wild Ennerdale

16.viii Water Extraction

Summary

Ennerdale Water is a stunning natural asset in the valley. At two and a half miles long and just under one mile wide, it is a prominent feature in the landscape. The lake is designated a SSSI for its high biological value and characteristic flora & fauna typical of an oligotrophic (nutrient poor) lake. This includes a rare fish, the Arctic Charr, with a fragile population currently in decline²⁹. The lake is reputed to have some of the cleanest water in the country, fed by the River Liza which flows the length of the valley. Records of human activity on the lake (extraction of water, raising water levels, fishing, transporting of raw materials) date back to the mid 1800s. Water extraction dates back to 1848³⁰ and the level of the lake has been raised on a number of occasions since, to meet increasing demands for water from West Cumbria. Recent declines in industry have significantly reduced demand.

United Utilities (formerly North West Water) now owns the lake and a new treatment works was built at Bleach Green in 1999³¹. Water levels fluctuate as a result of water extraction and there are several associated structures which detract from the landscape. Most notably is the several hundred metres of stone and concrete revetment along the lakeshore, along with structures around the outfall site and the fish pass. Ennerdale falls within the 'Quiet Lakes' area of Lake District National Park. Recreation on lake is limited to rowing, canoeing & angling (no sail craft or motor powered craft), managed through a permit system by United Utilities. Lakeshore walks are also popular with visitors. Water extraction is by far the most economically significant activity in the valley.

Actions (within the next 10 years)

- Develop a greater understanding of the economic significance of maintaining the current high level of water quality
- Incorporate UU's AMP4 programme: compensation flow for the River Ehen & possible knock-on impacts on the lake, new fish pass to improve the area for migratory fish.
- Develop a short term plan (1 – 3 years) for lakeshore revetment repair or removal in high priority areas.
- Develop a long-term plan (3 – 10 years) for the lakeshore revetment with a view to creating a more natural lakeshore.
- Work with English Nature, Environment Agency and farmers to protect and improve habitat of becks and fish spawning grounds, particularly in relation to Arctic Charr.
- Remove or improve any other features which detract from the natural beauty of the lake and adjacent landscape as appropriate.

Linked maps: [G](#), [L](#) & [Q](#)

Linked photos: [Plates 21 - 24](#)

²⁹ Review & Assessment of Brown Trout and Arctic Charr stocks, Environment Agency, March 2005

³⁰ Lake then owned by the Dickinson family of Red How, Lamplugh

³¹ Formerly the site of a bleach works, built 1866

18. Partnership Contacts

Website www.wildennerdale.co.uk

Project Officer

Rachel Yanik, Project Officer
The National Trust, Unit 16, Leconfield Industrial Estate, Cleator Moor,
Cumbria CA25 5QB
Tel: 01946 816942 E-mail: rachel.yanik@nationaltrust.org.uk



Gareth Browning, Beat Forester
Forestry Commission, Peil Wyke, Bassenthwaite, Cockermouth, Cumbria CA13 9YG
Tel: 017687 76816 E-mail: gareth.browning@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Dave Lowe, Environment & Recreation Manager
Lakes Forest District, Grizedale, Hawkshead, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 0QJ
Tel: 01229 860373 E-mail: david.lowe@forestry.gsi.gov.uk



Jeremy Barlow, Property Manager
The National Trust, Unit 16, Leconfield Industrial Estate, Cleator Moor,
Cumbria CA25 5QB
Tel: 01946 816940 E-mail: jeremy.barlow@nationaltrust.org.uk



Edward Holt, Land Agent
Northern Estates Office, The Old Sawmill, St. Johns in the Vale, Thirlmere, Keswick,
Cumbria CA12 4TQ
Tel: 017687 72334 E-mail: edward.holt@uuplc.co.uk

Paul Phillips, Northern Catchment Manager
Northern Estates Office, The Old Sawmill, St. Johns in the Vale, Thirlmere, Keswick,
Cumbria CA12 4TQ
Tel: 017687 72334 E-mail: paul.phillips@uuplc.co.uk