

# Ennerdale

# Phytophthora Ramorum

# 2022

Public Engagement Responses



# Ennerdale Phytophthora Ramorum 2022

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## Responses Received

We received 11 responses to our public engagement regarding the upcoming Phytophthora Ramorum plan heath felling in Ennerdale. Not all these responses raised questions, and some questions were duplicates of others.

Responses requiring a reply are summarised and anonymised in this document, with our reply attached.

## Timber Haulage Concerns

Concerns were raised about time slots for timber haulage out of the valley, the direction of travel of number movements, signage at certain areas, and clarification of the exact routes of timber transport movements. In addition, there was a request to avoid schools during drop off and pick up times.

### Our response

Forestry England has met with the Parish Council and Cumbria County Council Highways and listening to the concerns expressed we have undertaken to:

- Explore with our contractor the use of Central Tyre Inflation on public roads and whether this would reduce noise.
- See if we can implement a no timber despatch policy between 1pm Friday and midnight Sunday.
- Discuss setting a lower speed limit through Croasdale, Kirkland and Ennerdale to reduce early morning noise.
- Explore with the County Council the provision of temporary highways specification metal signs warning road users that timber lorries are using the road.
- Continue our normal practice of avoiding school opening and closing times and will check these with Ennerdale school.
- Set a maximum speed limit between Bowness Knott and the A5086 of 25mph

In addition to the above we will look to agree with hauliers' locations for hauliers to wait during school opening and closing which do not obstruct traffic along the haulage route.

Timber haulage from Ennerdale will follow the Agreed Route from to and from Bowness Knott via Croasdale, Ennerdale Bridge, Kirkland and A5086 south of Lamplugh Cross. This is highlighted red on the Timber Transport forum map:

<https://timbertf.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=4a23d4910e604b71872956441113c83c>

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## Future Timber Production

Comments were received that our future management proposals did not reference timber production.

### Our response

Where ground conditions allow and where it is likely to be economic for future harvesting the felled areas are expected to be able to produce timber production into the future.

## Local consultation

It was raised that the parish council and parishioners were not notified of the consultation. It was requested that the consultation was extended.

### Our response

The consultation was widely advertised. In response to this comment from the Parish Council the consultation period was extended by a further 6 weeks.

## Communications for visitors

It was requested that a wide-ranging public relations campaign is carried out in advance to manage visitor expectations and ensure visitors are prepared for changes before they travel. It was noted that tree felling can be an emotive issue and future visitors to the valley will not be aware of the current consultation, it is therefore important to conduct public relations to ensure that information is clear and concise as to why felling is taking place and what future plans are.

### Our response

Visitor information will be provided at main site entrances, public road access junctions, on the Wild Ennerdale and Forestry England websites and through social media. The car park closure will be kept to a minimum and we expect it will not need a full two-month closure period. Visitor information will be provided onsite and online about why the trees are being felled and what the future plans are for the felled areas. Visitor information will be kept up to date and updated as required.

## Spruce regeneration

While supportive of plans to remove infected larch and replant with native species, some questioned our tolerance of spruce regeneration, with calls for more proactive removal of spruce from the felled areas.

### Our response

The Wild Ennerdale Partnership does not take a purest approach to Sitka spruce in the valley. It has committed to reducing the dominance of Sitka spruce and has not planted any non-native species for two decades. Forestry England targets the removal of Sitka spruce by clear felling and thinning areas at an age when they are economic to do so or when external funding becomes available. In 2020 we combined external funding from the Environment Agency and a timber sale to remove 14 hectares of Sitka spruce east of middle bridge and has started replanting these areas with open scattered native species.

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## Public access and visitor information

Questions were raised around public access during the works, specifically if road closures covered pedestrians as well as vehicles, if the footpath on the south side of the lake and valley would remain open, if there were diversions planned for pedestrians on both sides of the upper valley, and if works would be limited to weekdays.

It was also noted that providing information for visitors at Bowness Car Park may be too late, as those travelling may still decide to stay and park on verges and stressing that any signage needs to be maintained.

## Our response

Forestry England has a duty of care to visitors, staff, and contractors to ensure all are kept safe. In response to this we must close areas to public access when harvesting work poses a risk to the safety of people visiting Ennerdale. We only keep routes closed for the minimum time required to complete the works safely.

- The rights of way along the south side of the valley and lakeshore will remain open and unaffected.
- Access for all users along the forest road between Bowness and the Irish Bridge will be managed by dedicated bank persons when operations pose a risk to forest road users.
- Access for vehicles between The Irish Bridge and Gillerthwaite will be managed by dedicated bank persons when operations pose a risk to forest road users. Other users including walkers, bikers and riders will need to follow diversions around the south side of the valley as mapped. This is due to more difficult nature of the terrain and different machinery used between the Irish Bridge and Gillerthwaite.
- There will always be at least one route open for access up and down the valley.
- Harvesting work may continue at weekends as we have a tight target to meet the legal plant health notice deadline of the end of September 2022.
- It is not always practical or safe to reopen sites every weekend as the amount of signage change is impractical to manage and changes can be confusing to visitors.

Visitor information will be provided and updated as work progresses. Information will be provided at main forest entrances, public road access points, online, in The Gather, Bowness Knott and Bleach Green car parks. Information will be provided in map and simple text format listing what routes/trails are closed/open. As it takes time to update all the signs around the valley there will be days when signs may not be in sync whilst staff are updating them. However, harvesting will not start in new areas until all the signage reflects the change.

## Impact of Bowness Knott closure

The closure of Bowness Knott car park was cited as likely to cause additional traffic bound for the lake through Ennerdale Bridge and into Bleach Green car park. It was requested that extra signage to caution drivers about children, cyclists and pedestrians would be beneficial. The timing of this closure was also questioned, asking if the works would take place in autumn.

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## **Our response**

Unfortunately, we have a tight deadline for meeting the plant health deadline. This is to avoid the Phytophthora Ramorum disease producing high levels of sporulation during the Autumn season and further spreading. To ensure everyone had time to respond to the consultation we extend the consultation to the end of March 2022. Given the number of people and wildlife constraints in this area we have decided to delay work around the car park until after the Summer holidays. We will work with our harvesting contractor to minimise the length of time that the car park is closed for. We have been in discussion with Cumbria County Council about this work and will be erecting advance warning signage to advise people of the closure of the car park.