wild water forest mountains ennerdale

National Nature Reserve **Autumn Newsletter 2026**



Mosses in Latterbarrow Temperate Rainforest

Temperate Rainforest

An extremely rare habitat is present in Ennerdale and offers an amazing insight into the world of temperate rainforests.

Temperate rainforests in the UK—also called Atlantic or Celtic rainforests—survive mainly along the western coasts, including Scotland, Wales, Devon, Cornwall, Cumbria, and parts of Northern Ireland, with less than 1% of their original extent remaining. Temperate rainforests are oceanic woodlands defined by:*

- High rainfall (often over 1,500 mm/year)
- High humidity
- Mild, stable temperatures
- Ancient oak, birch, ash, pine, and hazel woodlands
- Rich communities of mosses, liverworts, lichens, and ferns

Side Wood and Latterbarrow are classed as temperate rainforest and as more understanding develops of this specialist, delicate and rare habitat, the more we can work to help expand and protect it.

Source*: Woodland Trust



Global temperate rainforests. Source: Maphobbyist / Wikimedia

River Liza delta

Recent work along the lower River Liza is proving highly effective at rewetting this important habitat. Over the past 18 months, the National Trust has installed three new "chutes" to reconnect the river with the delta at the head of the lake. This helps reduce the river's energy during high flows, creates valuable wildlife habitat, and improves spawning areas for Arctic char and other fish species.

Monitoring is underway to establish a baseline for breeding birds, with results expected early next year. Recent sightings of otter tracks and signs of water voles are also encouraging. We are delighted with the early results and look forward to seeing this important delta habitat continue to develop.



New river channel in the River Liza Delta

A good day out...

It was a pleasure to spend time in the valley with local parishioners and provide an update on our work. This year's visit could not have been more different from last year, when the group left Ennerdale Bridge in torrential rain. Instead, we enjoyed a sunny September day and the valley looked at its best. We stopped at several locations to discuss topics including water management, forestry, species introductions and tourism. There was a wealth of local knowledge within the group, shared by both long-term residents and those who have moved to the area more recently. Thank you to everyone who joined us, especially Muir for organising the day and Rene for her delicious biscuits. We look forward to repeating the trip next year.


Local Parishoners valley visit

Forestry Update

Work to remove Phytophthora-infected trees on Latterbarrow is nearing completion. All affected trees have been felled and extracted to the forest road, and the remaining brash has been cleared from the site. Jenkinsons hope to chip the roadside brash before Christmas. While Latterbarrow currently looks stark, other areas affected by larch disease show how quickly nature can recover. Over time, these sites can develop into diverse habitats rich in wildlife.


Latterbarrow felling

The lower photograph shows a previously felled area on the north-facing slope of Lingmell, where natural regeneration is thriving. Rowan is particularly abundant, alongside birch and oak. Similarly, the area around Bowness Knott car park is now developing into a young native woodland. These examples highlight the important role natural regeneration plays in restoring woodland habitats.


Lingmell natural regeneration

Juniper on the increase

A huge thank you to our volunteers, who have cared for around 1,000 juniper seedlings over the past few years. Donated by the Wild Haweswater project in 2024, the young plants have been carefully grown on and repotted in Ennerdale. This year, 400 were strong enough to be planted out, with the first planting taking place above Crag Fell on National Trust land.

Juniper is one of Britain's three native conifers, alongside Yew and Scots pine, and is a species of conservation concern in England. Increasing juniper numbers will help strengthen local populations and enhance this important species across the Pillar & Ennerdale Site of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserve.


Juniper ready to plant

Wild Ennerdale is a partnership of people and organisations led by Forestry England, National Trust, United Utilities and Natural England. For more information please visit wildennerdale.co.uk

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