

**Patterdale Water Meeting, Barn End Bar Sykeside Campsite
21st April 2010**

Present

Jeremy Barlow – National Trust
Eric Wear – Howe Green Farm
Andrew Herbert – Lake District
National Park Authority
Mike Fell – Environment Agency
Suzy Grindley – Lake District
National Park Authority
John Malley – National Trust
Steve Sykes – Glenridding Sailing
Centre
Maggie Robinson – Natural
England
Rob Lawley – Cumbria Highways
Ian Metcalfe – Sykeside Campsite
Ruth Williams – National Trust
Mike Harrison – Environment
Agency
Veronica McGloin – Patterdale
Parish Council

Mel Kilner – Hartsop Society
Jimmy Hodgson – Hartsop Hall
Farm
Mike Taylforth – Side Farm
Christian Grammer – Ullswater
Steamers

For part of meeting
Heather Jackson – Noran Bank
Farm
Alan Metcalfe – Sykeside Campsite
Colin Jongman – Sykeside
Campsite

Apologies

Carl Scrivens – Glenridding
resident
Paul Phillips – United Utilities
John Pring – National Trust

Jeremy welcomed everyone to the meeting and began with a recap of actions since the last meeting.

Horseman to Cow bridges breach

Jeremy confirmed that he has decided that fixing the breach here is the best way forward, as detailed in his letter on 16th March to all involved. This will enable the group to move forward with long term planning for the valley. John Malley confirmed that he had met with Eric Wear and Stan Crosier (a contractor for the Trust). Eric raised concerns that the cost of this repair is significantly lower than first expected and asked if there is enough budget available to do the job properly. John confirmed that Stan has worked on behalf of the Trust in Borrowdale and is able to complete the work at a lower cost as he is proposing to use a different method utilising timber to provide the means of keying the toe of the bank into the beck. Several examples exist where this proves a long lasting solution eg Newlands Beck flowing into Bassenthwaite.

The Trust are waiting for a method statement from Stan, and then approvals for the work will be applied for. Mike Harrison said that the Environment Agency are very busy at the moment but will try and get the approvals sorted as soon as possible to be able to carry out the work this summer.

John confirmed that the work will involve repairing the main breach, reinforcing the north and south banks and fixing the breach by the bridge.

Gravel plan

John Malley updated the group saying that a tender brief has been prepared for the gravel plan, and the Trust are waiting to add in some data from Natural England's Jacobs report to make sure the gravel plan doesn't duplicate work already done. Once this information is in, the Trust will put it out to tender. The gravel plan will tell us how much gravel can be removed from specific locations all along the rivers to the lake.

Maggie Robinson provided some background information about the Jacobs report. Natural England are required (by DEFRA) to bring all SSSIs up to favourable condition. To help do this, Natural England have been drawing up a vision for every SSSI river and they are looking to develop demonstration projects in each catchment. Jacobs carried out the research for this area, and their report is due back to Natural England soon.

Mike Fell reminded the group that the Environment Agency and the National Trust had produced a report 7 years ago which would be relevant to this work. Mel Kilner asked if it is possible to get access to this report. A summary of the report can be circulated and put on to the Patterdale Today website.

What are we trying to achieve?

Jeremy suggested that it was important for us to get off to a sound start by understanding why we are all here and what we want to achieve.

Mike Taylforth said he wanted to get back to fixing and managing the river in the way his father always had.

Eric Wear said that he wanted the river to be a living breathing thing, with fish in it, and the land around it to be looked after and to produce grass to service the fells, but that there's no money now to fix the rivers. Eric felt that half the people round the table wanted the river to flood, and half wanted it back how it was.

Jeremy asked the group if anyone wanted the valley to be taken over by the spread of mire and reeds. No one round the table wanted this.

Mike Fell said that to manage the river as it is would take continuous work and investment, and that it would be more effective to make space for the flood water. He said that the Environment Agency no longer does work in agricultural areas as it has to focus on protecting people and industry.

Maggie said that there was a need for an agreed management plan for the river, and that the proposal isn't to let the river go and flood everywhere, but to manage it in a different way to meet the challenges of designations like SSSI status.

Jeremy said that we can all agree that we'd like the river to be healthier and to have fish in it.

Mel Kilner's proposal

The group moved on to consider the proposal from Mel as to how the group can move forward. There was widespread support for Mel's proposal and for using it as a guide to the work carried out by the group.

Jeremy said he would like to add to the work Mel had already identified. In section B the group could identify the characteristics which they value in the catchment, which may not be officially designated as a SSSI for example, and

to identify the key infrastructure like roads and bridges. In section F, before starting to set out an annual work plan, the group would need to discuss and agree on a shared vision for the valley so sites/work can be prioritised.

Veronica McGloin asked how we might go about doing the tasks in Mel's proposal, who will co-ordinate it, and start to gather the background information needed?

John Malley suggested we set up a small group to move on with gathering data, and John volunteered to get involved with this along with the National Park (Suzy or Andrew) and Mel Kilner.

Andrew Herbert expressed his support for Mel's proposal and committed the National Park to getting involved in the smaller group. He said how important it would be to look at all the options for water management to see what the valley could look like in the future and how it could be used and whether there are sources of funding to help achieve this. Andrew also highlighted that this groups is leading the way in the Lake District in bringing everyone together to try and find a way forward together, and that the lessons we learn here will help us right across the Lake District.

Veronica raised concerns about the problems at Beckstones and gravels still being on the fields following the floods. Jeremy stated that he is happy for gravels to be removed from the fields, but that he made it clear his letter that no further decisions on breaches would be made until we have a clearer long term plan for the catchment.

Next steps

The group moved on to discuss what needed to happen next, which included:

- progressing the gravel plan so it is ready by June (National Trust to lead)
- arrange the work for the Horseman to Cow Bridges breach (National Trust to lead)
- the smaller group (John, Suzy/Andrew, Mel, plus Maggie as and when needed) to meet to decide how to move Mel's proposal forward and to begin to gather information
- the whole group to begin to consider the landscape values of the catchment by looking at photographs and getting out on site together, to include discussion on what is important to the tourism value of the valley. The group also need to consider if it is important to get wider input from the rest of the community in to these discussions.
- once the Jacobs report is ready it needs presenting to the group in a suitable format for discussion.

The group then went out to look at a section of river just below Hartsop Hall opposite the campsite where the November flood has pulled apart a significant section of large blockstone protected bank which requires a solution rather than just allowing the bank to further collapse which will have implications for the land and campsite.

Mike Fell explained that weather events are likely to become more extreme and frequent in the future and went on to outline a range of options and costs to this situation. A 'like for like' repair was estimated at £250,000 with no guarantee that it won't fail during the next large flood. A different solution suggested was to use the blockstone to create a protective bunded bank around the campsite and modify the river channel to allow only floodwater and not gravel to inundate the field during flood events. This solution would involve less cost and may provide a more sustainable long term flood solution. However this has significant implications for the farm tenant, both in terms of loss of valley bottom land and income. The new environmental stewardship scheme was mentioned as a possible way of offsetting costs. Eric Wear maintained the viewpoint that with maintenance carried out little and often large capital works could be avoided. All agree that this may be the case, however large flood events such as that in November may be impossible to defend against and the scale of damage as seen could be devastating with no landowner being able to afford repairs.

Agreed actions

- NT/EA circulate the summary of the report mentioned by Mike Fell and post on Patterdale Today website.
- NT to progress gravel plan (to be ready by June).
- NT to arrange repair to Horseman to Cow bridges breach.
- Smaller group to meet to progress Mel's proposal.
- Whole group to supply any interesting photographs of the landscape and water in the valley to ??? which can then be placed on the Patterdale Today website.
- Next meeting to be arranged for early June when the Jacobs report should be ready for discussion (Maggie and Ruth to arrange).