



**Bowles Green Limited**

**Bassenthwaite Lake Restoration  
Project Landscape Partnership  
Scheme: Access Plan**



**January 2005**

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **Access Planning for the Project**

- 1.1 To achieve the objectives of the Bassenthwaite Lake Restoration Project the partners are engaging in catchment management – integrated management of the land and water courses within the watershed. The Bassenthwaite catchment is large (34,654 hectares) and complex, with a great diversity of habitats (*See paragraph 1.5, Landscape Character Assessment and section 2, Heritage Report*). There is currently access for millions of visitors, thousands of residents and hundreds of farmers. Consequently, the development of an access plan for the project has been a complicated business.

### **The Catchment**



***Looking North to Skiddaw from Cat Bells (Photo: Bowles Green Ltd)***

- 1.2 The high fells are deeply dissected by four main glacial valleys, which converge at Keswick. Three of the Lake District's large lakes are found in these valleys – Derwent Water, Thirlmere and Bassenthwaite Lake. The landscape supports a rich and diverse flora and fauna. The natural succession has been altered by cultural practices – land-uses including farming, mineral extraction, forestry, water supply and tourism. The resulting landscape has inspired artists and poets from the Lake Poets of the Romantic Movement to the present day. The same landscape, and access to it, also inspired the birth of the English conservation movement and therefore has a special place in the conservation story.

## **Our Definition of Access**

1.3 In the context of this Access Plan, access is understood to mean:

*Physical Access* - The ways in which people experience the landscape – on roads, rights of way, open access, etc.

*Intellectual Access* - Ways in which people become aware of and understand the landscape heritage, both within the catchment and from outside:

1.4 People access this landscape in a variety of ways and their needs differ greatly, from the walker and mountain biker who seek out challenging routes on the high fells into those who are content to enjoy the scenery from the comfort of their cars, as well as those with special needs. There are others who choose to enjoy it or learn about it without visiting.



***Osprey Viewpoint at Dodd Wood (Photo: Forestry Commission)***

## **Introduction to Access in the Catchment**

1.5 Access to the landscape is important to people, who appreciate the opportunities to enjoy the landscape they so cherish at first hand (See paragraphs 4.1-4.7, Audience Development Plan).

1.6 Physical access to the landscape heritage is good in the main, through the road network, the off-road access network and the launch service on Derwent Water

- The road network
- The off-road access network
- The launches on Derwent Water
- Public transport

1.7 There are, however gaps, especially in public transport and in the nature of the off-road access network and these present barriers to use by specific groups, including the young, disadvantaged residents and those with mobility difficulties.

1.8 Intellectual access to the heritage is limited. There is low awareness of many aspects of the heritage and there are widely-held mis-conceptions in relation to the health of the environment, sustainability of the landscape and threats to it.

- 1.9 Providing access to the landscape heritage is the key to achieving the objectives of the Bassenthwaite Lake Regeneration Project increasing awareness and understanding of the landscape heritage and the threats to it is essential to engage the project's target audiences in protecting the lake and its catchment.

## **2 ACCESS AUDIT**

### **Organisational Policies**

#### *BLRP Access Policy*

- 2.1 BLRP seeks to encourage the maximum physical and intellectual access to the landscape heritage within the context of the partners existing access policies

### **Guiding Principles**

- 2.2 The framework for access within the catchment is provided by the 'guiding principles' for public enjoyment, as well as policies for education, information & interpretation, tourism and traffic & transport contained within the Lake District National Park Plan.
- 2.3 The guiding principles for public enjoyment are as follows:
- Enjoyment of the National Park must be taken in ways which ensure that the qualities of its landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage are maintained, and which do not spoil the enjoyment of others or disrupt the activities of the local community
  - Opportunities for the quiet enjoyment of the Lake District must be safeguarded and enhanced
  - An important aspect of the opportunity for quiet enjoyment must be the freedom for people to explore, to discover things for themselves and to test their limits in a challenging environment
  - Particular emphasis must be placed on the preservation and enhancement of the quieter and wilder areas where, arguably the greatest opportunities for spiritual refreshment and escape from the pressures of modern life can be found
- 2.4 The guiding principles for information, education and interpretation are as follows:
- 2.5 Information and interpretation should promote enjoyment and understanding (of the National Park) and communicate its special qualities to visitors and to local people by:
- Educating people in an informal and enjoyable way about the values and purposes of the National Park
  - Increasing people's understanding of the Lake District's flora and fauna, geography and geology, cultural and industrial heritage
  - Instilling an awareness of the need for conservation, both in the National Park and in people's everyday lives
  - Encouraging people to explore and enjoy the Lake District in ways which do not spoil it for others and which conserve it for future generations
  - Informing people how they can enjoy the Lake District safely



- Informing people about the Lake District's attractions and facilities
- Being responsive to the character of different areas of the National park, and in keeping with its surroundings, and by not over-promoting sensitive areas

2.6 The guiding principles for Traffic and Transport are as follows:

- The adverse effects of the car on the environment must be reduced
- The use of sustainable means of transport must increase, and all forms of transport must be used more efficiently
- There must be better integration of different modes of transport, and less dependence on the private car

### **Partners' Access Policies**

#### *English Nature*

2.7 Key aspects of English Nature's position on access are as follows:

- Nature is able to improve the quality of our lives and everyone is entitled to experience it
- Everyone should have easy access to nature, in ways which suit their situation and abilities

2.8 English Nature recognises that access to nature is an essential aspect of conservation, but that it needs to be provided in such a way that the conservation and enhancement of nature is not compromised.

#### *Forestry Commission*

2.9 The Forestry Commission has an open access policy on all of its freehold land; access policy on leasehold land depends on the views of the landowner and can be actively encouraged, permitted, tolerated or actively discouraged.

2.10 The Forestry Commission manages 1450 hectares of land within the catchment, in 5 forest blocks and specific access policy is described in paragraph 2.18 below.

#### *National Trust*

2.11 Three principles for access govern the management of access in the countryside by the Trust, as follows:

- 1 The duty and primary purpose of the National Trust in the wider countryside is to promote permanent preservation for the benefit of the nation. It will regard access as a fundamental way of providing this benefit and as a principal purpose
- 2 The National Trust Acts establish its responsibilities for conservation. If serious conflict arises, conservation will take precedence over access
- 3 The National Trust will ensure that the countryside retains characteristics which afford the widest range of experiences and will enable people to enjoy access to its properties

2.12 The Trust owns much of Borrowdale and the upper Newlands Valley, as well as most of the surrounding high fell land.

*Rural Development Service*

- 2.13 Although it has no direct access remit, the RDS seeks to increase access provision through the Lake District Environmentally Sensitive Area Scheme (ESA). The ESA has a tier under which landowners can receive payments for providing new access across land included in an ESA agreement, though this does not apply to existing rights of way, existing 'de facto' access or land which will become open access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

*United Utilities*

- 2.14 United Utilities has a policy of open access in woodland at Thirlmere and much of the surrounding farm land and unenclosed land, which reaches up to the summit of Helvellyn.

*Other Landowners*

- 2.15 Other major landowners in the catchment include Lord Inglewood, Lord Rochdale, the Mirehouse Estate (Spedding Family) and the Storms Estate. There is also a number of smaller private landowners, most of whom are known to the BLRP partners. These private owners tend to allow access only on the public rights of way network, though in some places, low levels of use, mostly by local people, are tolerated.

**Existing Physical Access**

- 2.16 The extent of physical access encompasses the following:
- By private vehicles and public transport on the road network
  - By launch, rowing boat, sailing boats and canoes to Derwent Water
  - By rowing boat, sailing boats and canoes (including disabled access) to Bassenthwaite Lake
  - On foot on the whole of the public rights of way network, which is extensive in the catchment and on the open access areas of high fell and Forest Enterprise land
  - By mountain bike and horse on bridleways (though some are not passable on horse back) and on permissive routes on Forest Enterprise land
- 2.17 Much of the land in the catchment is within the is managed and cared for by four of the BLRP partners - the Forestry Commission, the Lake District National Park Authority, the National Trust and United Utilities. Collectively they have significant influence over access. Access provision by the partners is described below.

*The Forestry Commission*

- 2.18 The Commission provides access to its five woodland blocks in accordance with its access policy as follows:
- *Whinlatter Forest* is freehold. There is open access with formal provision for recreation including car parks, toilets, a café, play area and waymarked walking and mountain bike routes. A number of rallies take place during the year and these attract spectators and media interest.

- *Dodd Wood* is a mix of freehold and leasehold land, the latter owned by John Spedding of Mirehouse. There is jointly-agreed open access with formal provision for recreation including car parking, toilets, a café, waymarked walking and mountain biking routes and an Osprey viewing area
- *Wythop Wood* is leased by the Commission from Lord Inglewood. Public access is not encouraged by the landowner, however, the C2C cycle route passes through it and there is low level use of other routes by local people
- *Parkwood Bassenthwaite* is freehold and there is open access. The wood currently has a low level of use, mostly by local people
- *Matterdale* is also freehold with open access, but because of its relatively isolated location, it is little-used, mostly by local people



***Mountain Bikers following a trail at Whinlatter Forest (Photo: Forestry Commission)***

*Lake District National Park Authority*

- 2.19 Bassenthwaite Lake is owned by the Lake District National Park Authority. It is the only large lake in the Lake District which is managed expressly for natural history, however, access is provided for. Access by powered craft is restricted by Byelaws of 1973. Access is permitted on a zoned basis, with no-boating areas, to protect wintering wildfowl and sensitive lake shores, and with sailing and angling managed by clubs and a permit system respectively. Disabled access is provided by the Calvert Trust.
- 2.20 Access to the lake shore is limited. The National Park Authority owns Bassenthwaite Lake, land between the lake and the A66 at Hursthole Point (which is open access and where there is provision for recreation in the form of lay-by parking and an interpretation panel). The Authority also leases part of Rough and Green Mires, at the head of Bassenthwaite Lake. There is currently no public access to that area because conditions make access physically difficult.
- 2.21 The National Park Authority maintains the public rights of way network in the area and has worked with landowners to provide permissive access where appropriate.



*National Trust*

2.22 The Trust's land consists of enclosed (farmed) land, woodland and unenclosed fell. Access provision varies to take account of other management requirements, as follows:

- Enclosed land (tenanted farms) – access on public rights of way network and permissive routes only
- Woodland – some open access (Great Wood, Brandlehow), otherwise access on public rights of way network and permissive routes only
- Unenclosed fell – open access for walkers

2.23 In addition there is 'access for all' provision to the shore of Derwent Water at Brandlehow.

*United Utilities*

2.24 There is provision for access in forestry and open fell owned by United Utilities adjacent to Thirlmere. There are car parks at Swirl How, Wythburn and Armboth, and trails at Swirls, Launchy Gill and Harrop. There is provision for recreation including toilets and a disabled access trail.



**Wheelchair users at Whinlatter Forest (Photo: Forestry Commission)**

*Privately-owned Land*

2.25 Access on rights of way network and permissive routes only at present. Open access legislation will bring some land into new open access for walkers only.

*Derwent Water*

2.26 Derwent Water is owned by Allerdale Borough Council, Lodore Ltd, the National Trust and Mr D Walker. A 10 mph speed limit (Byelaws of 1983) restricts access to the lake by powered craft, however, there is a regular launch service which links Keswick to Nichol End, Hawes End, Old Brandlehow, Brandlehow Bay, Lodore and Barrow Bay. There is also access for non-powered craft as follows:

- Keswick – where there is rowing boat hire and a canoe centre
- Derwentwater Boat Club – private sailing club
- Portinscale marina – commercial slipway and moorings
- Nichol End marina – commercial slipway, moorings and rowing boat hire
- Hawse End Outdoor Centre – for instruction in canoeing and sailing

- Other access points are used by organised groups and individuals including Kettlethwaite and Lodore

2.27 The Derwent Water Management Plan includes a voluntary no-boating area to reduce disturbance to wintering wildfowl. There is access to much of the lake shore, though there is no public access between Keswick and Portinscale, Portinscale to Hawes End and Great Bay to Strutta Wood.

#### *Thirlmere*

2.28 Thirlmere is owned by United Utilities. Although it is used to supply drinking water, since improvements to the Water Treatment Works at Keswick in 1983, canoeing, sail boarding and dingy sailing and angling have been permitted. There is permissive access on foot to much of the western shore.

#### *Other*

2.29 There is also access by boat for angling at Watendlath Tarn. Canoeists use the River Derwent between Derwent Water and Bassenthwaite Lake, but there are seasonal restrictions when canoeists must avoid the no-boating zone.

#### *Assessment of the Existing Physical Access*

### **The Access Network**

- 2.30 Most movement around the catchment is by private vehicle on the road network. The A66, which links Keswick to Penrith and the M6 to the east with Workington and Whitehaven to the west, is the most-used access to and from Keswick by visitors and residents alike. The A591 links Keswick to Carlisle in the north and to the South Lakes towns. The valley bottoms have a network of minor roads and there are road links from the catchment to Buttermere via Honister Pass and Newlands Raise and the Lorton Valley by way of Whinlatter Pass. Thirlmere and Derwent Water can be accessed by road at several points; the shore of Bassenthwaite is less accessible.
- 2.31 The footpath network is extensive and there is good access for walkers to the lakes, rivers & streams, woodlands, upland tarns, high fells and summits. Erosion is a problem on popular routes, which is being addressed by the National Park Authority and National Trust through the Upland Footpath Landscape Restoration Project (which is part funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund).
- 2.32 Access for mountain bikes and horses is restricted to the bridleway network. In common with other parts of the country, this is disjointed with many missing links, several of which have been identified by local riders and mountain bikers. In addition the A66 is a major barrier and the B5289 Borrowdale road is so busy on weekend afternoons in the summer that it is considered unsafe by local horse riders and cyclists. The C2C cycle route passes through the catchment, as does National Cycle Network route 71, the Cumbria Way and the Allerdale Ramble.
- 2.33 Demand for off-road cycling is growing and the Forestry Commission is proposing to develop a new network of trails and other facilities at Whinlatter to meet this need and to help manage mountain biking in the catchment.

- 2.34 There is also negotiated access to climbing crags, some of which are not in open access areas or on rights of way, including an arrangement for climbers to park in the Lodore Hotel car park when using the popular Shepherd's Crag.

### **Public Transport**

- 2.35 Public transport is limited. There are regular express bus services to the north, south, east and west along the A66 and A591 trunk roads, including service 555 which runs hourly to south lakes and Lancaster. The Borrowdale Rambler (service 79) operates between Keswick and Seatoller at the head of Borrowdale and service 73/73a links Keswick to Caldbeck (to the north of Skiddaw) and the Honister Rambler links Keswick with Buttermere.
- 2.36 Guided tours by minibus are operated by Mountain Goat (three tours start in Keswick during the summer including parts of the catchment) and others starting in South Lakes visit Keswick; Lakes Super Tours operate from South lakes but some tours visit the catchment.
- 2.37 Some groups (especially young people and the less well off) perceive public transport as being inconvenient (infrequent service, stopping too much), expensive and unpleasant (*See Appendix 7, Audience Development Plan*)

### **Access on Water**

- 2.38 Derwent Water is served by launches which run a regular service which linking seven landing stages around the lake. There are also rowing boats for hire from Keswick and Portinscale and a private marina and outdoor activity centres (Hawes End Centre, Isthmus Cottage, and Derwent Hill Centre) and Young Cumbria provides access to Derwent Water by canoe and sailing boats. Angling and sailing clubs have access to parts of Bassenthwaite Lake. There is access to Thirlmere for canoeists, sailboarders and anglers who hold United Utilities Rod Licences.

### **Access for People with Mobility and Sensory Difficulties**

- 2.39 There is limited access for people with disabilities (Swirl Howe and Brandlehow disabled access trails); some of the bus services have lowering entrance platforms, but there is no widely available access onto the lakes at present. People with mobility difficulties would like more access provision, access to high level routes and better continuity of access (i.e. parking, toilets and access routes all properly designed (*See Appendix 7, Audience Development Plan*)). The Calvert Trust operates from its centre close to Bassenthwaite Lake and provides a variety of activities for people with disabilities including horse riding, land yachting, sailing, abseiling, etc, for people staying at its centre.

### **Viewpoints**

- 2.40 There are some key locations where visitors can gain especially good views of the landscape, including the following; however, presently, interpretation is limited or absent:
- Dodd Wood Osprey Viewing Point (Warden)

- Viewpoint car park overlooking Bassenthwaite Lake on the B5292 between Braithwaite and Whinlatter
  - Hursthole point LDNPA access area (interpretation panel)
  - Various locations around Derwent Water, in particular Crow Park, Friars Crag, Great Wood, Kettlewell, Brandlehow, Hawse End, Nichol End
  - Swirl Howe, Wythburn and Armboth car parks on the shores of Thirlmere
  - Watendlath Tarn
  - The popular viewpoints at Ashness Bridge and Surprise View
  - The river banks at Grange (in Borrowdale)
- 2.41 In addition, most of the summits in the area and many of the high fell routes give spectacular views of the lakes and landscape. The footpath on Catbells gives particularly good views of Derwent Water and Bassenthwaite Lake to reasonable fit walkers.

### **Intellectual Access Policy and Existing Provision**

#### *Interpretation*

- 2.42 All of the partners have public relations and interpretation policies which aim to increase public awareness and understanding of their work. In the case of the Forestry Commission, the National Park Authority and the National Trust, this has resulted in some interpretation of the landscape heritage through leaflets, panels, guided walks and visitor centres within the catchment.
- Dodd Wood provides a viewing point from which to watch for Osprey. It is also possible to watch other birds and red squirrels and a warden is on hand during the season to help visitors
  - Displays at Whinlatter Forest Visitor Centre explain the natural history of Bassenthwaite Lake and surrounding area
  - The Moot Hall has some interpretation about Keswick and a series of self-guided trails, developed by the LDNPA working with the local community interpret the history, past industries and growth of Keswick
  - The Blencathra Centre (LDNPA and Field Studies Council) provides a programme of learning and training courses, for professionals, the education sector and leisure learners
  - The National Trust produces and distributes a series of leaflets describing aspects of its ownership in the catchment
  - There are interpretation panels at a number of locations, including Swirl Howe, Hursthole Point and various National Trust owned sites in Borrowdale
  - Guided walks and events provided by the LDNPA and National Trust
  - Infrequent open days at National Trust properties including Force Crag Mine
- 2.43 There is currently no interpretation on the Derwent Water launch service and many of the locations associated with the birth of the conservation movement (Crosthwaite Vicarage, Greta Hall) and with the artistic heritage which stimulated it (Lingholm, Fawe Park, Brackenburn) are in private ownership and so access is limited; there are memorials to Ruskin and Rawnsley at Friars Crag and a memorial plaque with four oaks planted commemorating the National Trust first property at Brandlehow.

*Published and Electronic Resources*

- 2.44 There is a large number of commercially published books and booklets describing walks and cycle rides in the catchment. The book 'A History of Keswick' by George Bott is available at good bookshops in Keswick, but it is a relatively academic publication and not widely read. A number of websites have information about aspects of the water heritage and the artistic and conservation heritage, but the viewer has to search to find them; they include:

[www.lake-district.gov.uk](http://www.lake-district.gov.uk)  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)  
[www.golakes.co.uk](http://www.golakes.co.uk)  
[www.keswick.org](http://www.keswick.org)  
[www.english-nature.org.uk](http://www.english-nature.org.uk)  
[www.fixthefells.co.uk](http://www.fixthefells.co.uk)  
[www.lakespartnership.co.uk](http://www.lakespartnership.co.uk)

*Lake District Osprey Project*

- 2.45 The Forestry Commission and National Park Authority are partners in the Lake District Osprey Project with the RSPB. This project provides interpretation of the Bassenthwaite ospreys through a viewing area and warden at Dodd Wood and an exhibition at Whinlatter Forest Visitor Centre. There is also a website [www.ospreywatch.co.uk](http://www.ospreywatch.co.uk)

*Community Involvement*

- 2.26 In addition, the partners seek to increase intellectual access through a number of 'outreach' projects with a range of community and other organisations (see below).
- 2.27 The partners are already involved in a significant level of communication and joint action with the community, this includes:
- The Bassenthwaite Lake Forum – a forum of organisations, parish councils and interest groups which meets to discuss management issues
  - Bassenthwaite Lake wardens – a group of volunteers who regularly monitor the lake, inspect fishing permits, pick litter and carry out practical works.
  - The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) and local volunteers regularly collect litter, pull Himalayan balsam, patrol Rights of Way, etc.
  - The National Park supports Keswick National History Society with survey work
  - The Bassenthwaite Osprey Project has over 60 volunteers
  - Partners attend Parish Council Meetings and the National Park Authority is already working with a number on sustainable development projects
  - Regular contact with farmers and landowners in the area.
  - Partners' staff give illustrated talks to affinity groups including natural history groups in the catchment and further a field
  - Local schools make educational visits to Whinlatter and other sites in the catchment and some local youngsters take year 9 (check year) work experience with the partners
  - Work with young people taking part in the John Muir Trust Award.

- Whinlatter Mountain Bike public forum - created to allow local people to comment/have input into the proposals for creating a network of mountain bike trails at Whinlatter
- Frequent contact with local user groups, for example fell runners, to advise on routes for races and other events, and to discuss access issues

2.28 In addition, staff from the BLRP partners regularly visit landowners in the catchment to deal with a wide range of management issues.

### **Raising Awareness of the BLRP**

2.29 The BLRP partners are working together to deliver a public relations strategy for the Still Waters Partnership and the BLRP. The aims of the strategy are:

- To increase the profile of Still Waters – Bassenthwaite Restoration Programme
- To inform people about the work of the Still Waters Bassenthwaite Restoration Programme, which has been set up to help improve the current poor water quality and protect one of the Lake District's most valuable assets for the future

2.30 Wider communication goals of the strategy are:

- To gain support for the programme by local people and visitors
- To foster a feeling of ownership and responsibility for the lake
- To exploit external funding opportunities that may be available to help fund the work
- To develop effective partnership working through the regular communication process – especially that which meets environmental targets within partner organisations
- To influence other organisations that could become involved in BLRP work
- To make research available to those with an interest in the lake
- To promote environmentally sustainable practices

2.31 Target audiences have been identified and an action agreed. Still Waters – Bassenthwaite Restoration Programme was launched in 2004 and the partners are delivering the first phase of their action plan.

### **Legislative and Statutory Requirements**

2.32 Responsibility for the maintenance of the public rights of way network is delegated to the National Park Authority by Cumbria County Council.

2.33 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 is an opportunity to improve physical access through the new right of open access to un-enclosed land over 600 metres, reclaiming of lost ways and rights of way improvement planning.

2.34 Much of the fell is open access already, but under the new legislation, landowners will be able to close the access or limited periods under certain conditions. The Lake District Local Access Forum is steering the work on rights of way improvement planning which is being undertaken by the National Park Authority Access Team.



- 2.35 The Disability Discrimination Act brings an obligation to provide access to people of all abilities. In the countryside, this presents land managers with particular challenges and it is recognised that physical access to some places will not be possible for all people.
- 2.36 The relevant policies of the 'land-managing' partners in relation to 'access for all' are outlined in the following paragraphs:

*Forestry Commission*

- 2.37 The Commission has an open access policy to its land but social and cultural barriers mean that most of the users in the catchment are from relatively prosperous social groups. In many places, the steep terrain is a physical barrier to increased disabled access. There is a disabled trail at Revelin Moss at Whinlatter which is not widely known about, promoted or heavily used. The Forestry Commission charges for car parking and the income generated goes towards the cost of maintaining the facilities (waymarked trails, etc). There could be some opportunities for involving blind and partially sighted groups in a project increase access to parts of the catchment (forest, waterfalls) in a non threatening environment.

### 3 RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

3.1 Consultation with residents, visitors, tourism businesses and farmers identified a number of access issues and opportunities, (See *Summary of Audience Research, paragraphs 2.20-2.104, Audience Development Plan*) as follows:

- Access is greatly valued by visitors and residents and without it (as witnessed under the restrictions imposed during foot and mouth disease) people would be less inclined to visit the area
- The most common activities in the catchment are sightseeing and walking
- Spending by walkers and cyclists is important to tourism businesses
- There is conflict between different users, in particular between walkers and cyclists, horse riders and cyclists and between horse riders and motorised users (on and off-road)
- People recognise that use of the fells causes erosion, but each user group blames another (walkers and horse riders blame mountain bikers, mountain bikers blame walkers)
- The most popular activities for residents and visitors are:

Table 1: Most popular Activities Undertaken in the Catchment by Residents and Visitors

Residents' Most Popular Activities	Visitors' Most Popular Activities
Short walk	Eating and drinking out
Eating and drinking out	Sightseeing by car
Long walk	Short walk
Walking the dog	Long walk
Sightseeing by car	Sightseeing on foot

- Young people greatly value access to the landscape, but are constrained from accessing and enjoying it by lack of transport and lack of opportunities to learn countryside activities
- People with mobility difficulties have few opportunities to access the landscape off-road and there is no provision for people with sensory difficulties
- Mountain bikers and horse riders identified a number of specific access issues and opportunities to improve the access network (see Appendix)
- Most visitors and residents have misconceptions about the health of the landscape and the threats to it
- A high proportion of visitors, residents and businesses would like to contribute to conservation of the environment but do not know how to
- Tourism businesses recognise the importance of the landscape to business success, yet in the main they are unaware of the threats to the landscape and unwilling to take responsibility for it
- Farmers are generally unaware of the threats to the landscape and the link between their actions and the health of Bassenthwaite Lake
- Most farmers recognise the importance of tourism and a high proportion depends on some form of income from tourism
- Most organisations have limited awareness of the landscape heritage and threats to it, but many see the opportunity to work with the BLRP to mutual benefit

## **4 ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES**

4.1 It is possible to identify a number of strategic issues from this audit of access and from the research undertaken to inform the BLRP, as follows:

- Access to the landscape heritage is very important to visitors and local people and it has a spiritual, health and economic value
- Most people believe the landscape is 'natural' and in good health and there are misconceptions about threats to the landscape. At the same time, most people and businesses want to contribute to the health of the landscape, but do not know how to
- Physical access to the landscape heritage is generally good. Especially for walkers. however, there are some notable gaps:
  - Limited opportunities and disjointed network for horse riders
  - Limited opportunity in relation to growing demand for mountain bikers
  - Limited opportunity for people with mobility difficulties, especially at high level and no specific provision for people with sensory difficulties
- There is physical access to most of the characteristic habitats and landscape types, though limited access to wetlands
- The farming community is in the main unaware that some of its practices are affecting water quality
- Tourism businesses recognise the importance of the landscape to visitors, but most do little to safeguard it themselves, nor encourage their guests to do so
- Access to the cultural heritage is poor for most people, except specialists, who know where to find information)
- Overall physical and intellectual access for people with mobility and sensory difficulties is poor
- There are significant barriers to physical and intellectual access which constrain access by young people and disadvantages residents of Keswick and West Cumbria

## 5 SUMMARY OF THE BARRIERS TO ACCESS

5.1 A number of specific barriers are currently preventing access to the landscape heritage by the key target audiences for the BLRP and which, if not addressed, will constrain the ability of the partners to deliver the project, as follows:

Table 2: Barriers to Access to Landscape Heritage

	Residents	Visitors	Farmers	Tourism Businesses	Institutions	Young People	Disadvantaged in Keswick	Disadvantaged in West Cumbria	People with Mobility Difficulties	Walkers	Mountain Bikers	Horse Riders	Naturalists
Limited interpretation of landscape heritage	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Poor perception of public transport	•					•							
Limited access to wetlands	•	•											•
Not knowing they have negative impacts	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Low awareness of how to reduce impacts and operating costs			•	•									
Few opportunities to enjoy countryside activities						•							
Lack of education programmes			•	•		•							
Lack of disposable income						•	•	•					
No access to a car						•	•	•					
Few specialist access opportunities									•				
Disjointed physical access network											•	•	

## **6 ACCESS PLAN**

### **Proposals**

- 6.1 Current access to the Bassenthwaite catchment is governed by the physical nature of the catchment and the access policies of the landowners. Some parts of the catchment are very accessible to all of the key target audiences whilst others, for physical or policy reasons, are less accessible or not accessible at all to some or all audiences.

### **Access Plan Proposals**

- 6.2 The following Access Plan Proposals are recommended to tackle the barriers to access (described in Table 2, above) as well as opportunities identified through the research (*See Section 4, Audience Development Plan*) in the catchment; they are described in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Access Plan Proposals

Issue	Opportunities	Strategies	Proposed Action
<p>Access is important to people</p> <p>Misconceptions about the nature and health of the landscape</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build on public support and strong feeling to encourage residents and visitors to become more lake-friendly in their actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase awareness and understanding of landscape heritage</li> <li>▪ Provide information on mechanisms for being lake-friendly</li> <li>▪ Provide mechanisms for being lake-friendly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain the access network to a high standard</li> <li>▪ Public relations campaign to raise awareness of issues and opportunities to be lake-friendly</li> <li>▪ Encourage tourism businesses to promote landscape heritage, the threats and how people can help counter them</li> </ul>
<p>Gaps in the physical access network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve the access network by filling gaps and responding to changing demand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rights of way improvement planning</li> <li>▪ Develop facilities/routes to meet growing demand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure identified user needs are included in Rights of Way Improvement Plan (see Appendix)</li> <li>▪ Continue mountain biker liaison group; establish similar groups for other user groups e.g. walkers, horse riders and 'access for all'</li> <li>▪ Provide purpose-built mountain biking trails at Whinlatter Forest</li> <li>▪ Consult with Local Access Forum</li> </ul>
<p>Physical access to most landscape types/habitats</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create access to wetland habitat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote physical and intellectual access to existing wetland where appropriate</li> <li>▪ (Re) Create (new) wetlands</li> <li>▪ Provide intellectual access remotely</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop and promote circular self-guided trails from Keswick and Dodd Wood to wetland areas</li> <li>▪ Purchase land and create new wetland at Dubwath; provide facilities for public access and interpretation (including access for all)</li> <li>▪ Provide remote access in a variety of forms including web-site, interpretation centres, printed material, etc</li> </ul>



<p>Farmers don't recognise their negative impacts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage farmers to become more lake-friendly, at the same time reducing costs and improving the land</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with the farming community to deliver benefits to farmers and the landscape heritage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote advisory and grants schemes</li> <li>▪ Promote soil testing scheme and production of soil management plans</li> <li>▪ Identify 'good practice example farms' and organise open days for other farmers</li> <li>▪ Encourage farmers to provide additional access to meet identified needs through the ESA, permissive routes and access agreements</li> </ul>
<p>Tourism businesses don't recognise their negative impacts and don't influence visitors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage tourism businesses to become lake friendly at the same time gaining a marketing edge with visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Show tourism businesses how they can appeal more to visitors, reduce costs and counter threats to the landscape heritage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with the Tourism &amp; Conservation Partnership to develop a lake-friendly accreditation scheme</li> <li>▪ Provide programme of education and training for tourism businesses to support advice and grant scheme (see Heritage Plan Actions)</li> </ul>
<p>Intellectual access is poor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase people's understanding of the landscape, strengthen their feelings towards it and encourage them to become more lake-friendly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase the level of interpretation of the landscape heritage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Produce an interpretation strategy for the catchment</li> <li>▪ Install and maintain interpretation boards/exhibitions at key points (e.g. Whinlatter, Dodd Wood, Moot Hall, Blencathra Centre, Calvert Trust, etc</li> <li>▪ Work with organisations such as Keswick Museum to develop a programme of community events</li> <li>▪ Explore opportunities to interpret landscape heritage through public arts media, e.g. galleries and theatre</li> <li>▪ Work with local schools to develop an education programme</li> </ul>

<p>Physical and intellectual access is poor for people with mobility and sensory difficulties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create more access for people with mobility difficulties at low and high level</li> <li>▪ Create access for people with sensory difficulties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Programme of route improvements</li> <li>▪ Ensure promotion, information and interpretation material is accessible to all</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extend existing lake shore access for all around Derwent Water</li> <li>▪ Provide a high level 'access for all route e.g. at Lattig or in the Newlands Valley</li> <li>▪ Create access specifically for people with sensory difficulties</li> <li>▪ Involve people with mobility and sensory difficulties in the design of 'access for all' routes</li> </ul>
<p>Barriers to physical and intellectual access by young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide opportunities for young people to access the countryside</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve availability and use of public transport</li> <li>▪ Raise the profile of landscape heritage in education</li> <li>▪ Provide young people with opportunities to enjoy outdoor activities on land and water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage accommodation providers to promote public transport to their guests</li> <li>▪ Consider a 'round lake ticket' or 'catchment rover ticket'</li> <li>▪ Consider a round Bassenthwaite shuttle linking Keswick, Whinlatter and Dodd Wood</li> <li>▪ Develop a lake education programme (similar to 'The River of Life') and deliver in schools in the region</li> <li>▪ Work with Keswick school and outdoor centres to deliver a programme of outdoor activity training for young people</li> </ul>
<p>Barriers to physical and intellectual access by disadvantaged residents of Keswick &amp; West Cumbria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide opportunities for disadvantaged residents to engage with the landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve availability and use of public transport</li> <li>▪ Work with community organisations to provide a programme of events, visits and volunteering opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explore free or reduced cost bus ticket scheme</li> <li>▪ Organise a programme of events, visits and volunteering opportunities and promote jointly with community organisations in Keswick and West Cumbria</li> </ul>

## **Appendix 1**

### Specific Access Opportunities

#### For People with Mobility/Sensory Difficulties

- High level route, possibly in Coledale, Lattrigg or the Newlands Valley
- Make sure gates on level routes are wide enough for a power wheelchair
- Cut back overhanging vegetation on routes to encourage use by partially sighted people
- Forestry Commission and others could provide keys for locked gates/gantries where access to relatively level paths could offer access to wheelchair users
- All access information should have information for people with mobility/sensory difficulties
- Need to find a better way of handling tourist information enquiries from people with mobility and other difficulties; currently these are passed from Cumbria Tourist Board to Disability Action Cumbria, but the latter is not resourced to deal with this

#### For Horse Riders

- Current network is dis-jointed. Riders and ROW managers should sit together and determine where linking routes could be proposed
- Local riders have no-where to gallop
- Education for other users as they don't understand horses or the needs of riders
- Cut back overhanging trees on Cumbria Way on west flank of Lattrigg
- Repair upland bridleways which have become badly eroded, in particular bridleway over Watendlath Fell
- Provide a safe crossing of the A66 for horses west of Keswick
- Provide dedicated parking for horse boxes at Whinlatter
- Have signs on minor roads and bridleways to warn other users they might encounter horses

#### For Mountain Bikers

- Educate walkers to understand that cyclists have a right to use bridleways
- Provide a circular family cycle route at Whinlatter
- Provide a bridleway/cycle link between Whinlatter and Skiddaw Massif

## **Appendix 2**

### Stakeholders

Town and Parish Councils  
NPI Red Alert North West  
Partners' shooting tenants, grazing tenants and lessors  
Neighbouring farmers  
National Farmers Union  
Major timber buyers  
Ramblers Association  
Friends of the Lake District  
Countryside Agency  
British Horse Society  
Cumbria Bridleways Society  
Cumbria Wildlife Trust  
RSPB  
Cumbria Raptor Society  
Cumbria RIGS Group  
BBC Cumbria  
Rural Regeneration Cumbria  
English Heritage  
North West Development Agency  
Keswick museum  
Keswick Civic Society  
Neighbourhood Forum  
Keswick Market Towns Initiative  
Lake District Tourism & Conservation Partnership  
Keswick Old Folks Circle  
Keswick Tourism Association  
Churches Together  
Keswick Natural History Society  
Local walkers, mountain bikers and horse riders