

## Summary of West Cumbria Catchment Management Groups Workshop

8<sup>th</sup> May 2019

### Attendees:

21 people attended the workshop

Andrew Harrison – Cumbria County Council  
Becky Powell – National Trust  
Caitlin Pearson - West Cumbria Rivers Trust  
Chris Evans – Environment Agency  
David Bechelli – Copeland Borough Council  
David Kennedy – Environment Agency  
Gavin Murray – Cumbria County Council  
Jack Abernethy – River Corridors  
Group/Derwent Owners Association  
Jan Darrell – Friends of the Lake District  
John Gorst – United Utilities  
John Malley – National Trust

Julian Smith – Allerdale Borough Council  
Louis Manfield – University of Cumbria  
Luke Bryant – West Cumbria Rivers Trust  
Mel Fletcher – Natural England  
Michael Heaslip – Allerdale Borough Council  
Neville Elstone – Cumbria Woodlands  
Paul Barnes – Community/Farming  
representative  
Robert Frewen – CLA  
Simon Johnson – Environment Agency  
Vikki Salas - West Cumbria Rivers Trust

Meeting presentations are available on the attached Powerpoint slides. Any questions and discussions are summarised below.

### Project Pipeline

#### Vikki Salas (West Cumbria Rivers Trust)

New entries on the project pipeline spreadsheet include United Utilities projects investigating the removal of (what will be) redundant infrastructure after the West Coast supplies project is complete, and improving smolt passage through Yearl weir mill race. United Utilities will provide an update at the next partnership meeting and the mill race project is summarised below.

Updates for project reporting to the CSFP are due by 15<sup>th</sup> May. Please update using the google spreadsheet:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15SKBeMte6kpiH\\_v5XimW8QM3NWQfmT-wNlndMFsl4Qk/edit#gid=1172685711](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15SKBeMte6kpiH_v5XimW8QM3NWQfmT-wNlndMFsl4Qk/edit#gid=1172685711)

### Funding updates

**Natural Flood Management (NFM) projects** - Dave Kennedy (Environment Agency) confirmed that all the money from the DEFRA NFM program had now been secured for Cumbria, a total of £2.5 mil. Of this ~£80k is allocated as contingency. This was the maximum amount that the Minister was happy with retaining.

The projects in West Cumbria are Cocker catchment (£370k), Glenderamackin catchment (£370k), Bootle (£144k) and Flimby (~£155k).

Dave Kennedy will now take over part of Sam Townend's role as lead flood risk advisor for Copeland and will retain an overview of the NFM strategy. A post is currently being advertised for the day to day management of the Cumbria NFM program.

**WEG projects** – West Cumbria Rivers Trust were offered funding for all of their WEG applications, apart from Broughton beck which is still under review. Due to a number of different factors, including terms & conditions, risk, requirement for top-up-funding and bankrolling to name a few, only four projects were accepted, a decision ultimately made by the WCRT Trustees. The national Rivers Trust have set up a loan facility through Esmée Fairburn to bankroll WEG projects, which WCRT will be able to make use of to proceed with the four WEG projects. The accepted projects were:

- Cocker catchment restoration - ~£480k to complement NFM project;
- Glenderamackin catchment restoration - ~£355k to complement NFM project;
- Keekle phase 2 (see below for more detail) - £1.37 mil;
- Crookhurst Catchment - £234k to extend the Ellenwise project which has previously been funded by United Utilities to reduce phosphate inputs from agriculture.

WCRT were unfortunately unable to accept projects on Black beck, Lower Derwent (Gale Brook and Coups) and the Waver project. Alternative funding is available for Black beck and Lower Derwent and both will be proceeding this year.

The National Trust were successful with two WEG applications in West Cumbria, for Seathwaite river restoration (£467,600) and for Riverlands, which includes several sub projects (£446,844). By securing this money, the National Trust has been able to increase the Riverlands budget to £1.9M.

Allerdale Borough Council were successful in their application for £143k funding for Siddick ponds nature reserve. The project includes wetland habitat creation, reed bed management, island creation, invasive species control and reclamation of an abandoned allotment that is currently an eyesore and pollution source.

## **Project updates**

### **New project - Soapery beck/Yearl mill race smolt race – Luke Bryant (WCRT)**

*See attached slides.*

The aim of the project is to allow salmon and trout smolts migrating downstream to utilise the mill race around Yearl weir (the existing fish pass is frequently blocked by trees which are very difficult to clear and this is for upstream passage only anyway).

The project has been a great example of partnership working. In 8 weeks the idea has been agreed, permissions granted and work started. The project is being funded by the Rivers Corridors group working with West Cumbria Rivers Trust, Derwent Owners Association, Environment Agency, Natural England, Iggesunds and Allerdale Borough Council. Special permission has been granted for the work to go ahead outside the normal in-river working period, to ensure the measure is in place prior to downstream smolt migration this season.

The sluice and channel will require ongoing maintenance. There are agreed mechanisms in place for when the sluice will be lowered if high rainfall is predicted, to ensure the flood risk to neighbouring houses is not affected. The Environment Agency are providing flow measurements

to calibrate how much flow is going down the mill race to ensure predictions are as accurate as possible.

This project should not change the need to address Yearl weir as it only alleviates downstream migration. Addressing fish passage at Yearl weir is still a priority for the West Cumbria Catchment Partnership and is in the next AMP cycle for United Utilities.

### **Riverlands – Becky Powell – National Trust**

*See attached slides.*

Riverlands is a partnership project between the National Trust and the Environment Agency. Currently studies are underway to assess the history of the valleys and rivers of Seathwaite and Stonethwaite. Seathwaite river restoration has WEG funding which will pay for an initial feasibility study. Although funding for delivery is allocated from WEG, it may not be feasible for WEG to fund the delivery due to the time constraints of this funding. The project aims to put the river back to the lowest part of the valley, increase gravel attenuation and restore a wetland area.

A feasibility study on the river Liza suggested that the river would naturally reform into an anastomised channel (multiple channels) with greater gravel retention so an engineered river restoration project was not necessary.

Two PhD projects are being developed through Riverlands. One will look at the geomorphological reaction of rivers to restoration projects and one to look at the positive and negative effects of river restoration on agricultural businesses.

There are also plans for opportunity mapping through Riverlands to identify wetlands that could be restored. The NFM mapping done by JBA will feed into this but the Riverlands opportunity maps will also look at wider benefits from wetlands such as carbon sequestration and connectivity. This will follow on from the National Trust's sustainable land use mapping. The National Trust would welcome any ideas about what the opportunity mapping should focus on.

***Action: Partners to send any ideas to Becky Powell.***

Vikki Salas said that WCRT had been approached by Sim Reaney at Durham University who is developing 'Scimap plus' to map the potential for multiple benefits from agri-environment schemes. This will combine scimap diffuse pollution, scimap flood and biodiversity gains and could tie in well with any opportunity mapping done through Riverlands. Sim had requested a farmer event so farmers can input to the modelling. There was concern from the partners that this may be detrimental to ongoing ELMs work as the same farmers would be being targeted multiple times.

***Action: Vikki Salas to send details of the scimap plus project to Becky Powell***

Neville Elstone (Cumbria Woodlands) asked whether the National Trust's sustainable land management mapping includes trees and woodland as there is a meeting this week to map woodland opportunities within the World Heritage Site. The existing SLM data should be included.

***Action: Neville Elstone and Becky Powell to ensure that relevant existing information is considered in the World Heritage Site woodland opportunity mapping.***

### **St. John's beck restoration – Mel Fletcher – Natural England**

This project is looking at options for river restoration for St. John's beck using modelling, stakeholder engagement and an ecosystem services approach. The modelling is ongoing and will produce a list of possible options which will be discussed with partners and the community.

### **A66 Portinscale Highways Scheme –Highways England – Update provided by Vikki Salas.**

In 2018 the Environment Agency appraisal for Braithwaite FCRM scheme identified that any scheme would also reduce flood risk to the A66. Highways England are therefore willing to contribute to a scheme. The proposed scheme was taken to the community in December and received a mixed reaction from the community, with some strong negative views.

Due to the constraints on the Environment Agency's flood defence GiA funding, the flood risk to the A66 is now the main driver for the scheme allowing Highways England to provide the majority of the funding and the scheme to be more flexible. The Environment Agency are now appraising options that will reduce flood risk to the village and to the A66 including lots of small measures in combination. Currently, raising the road is not being considered as an option. It will be known by autumn if there are any viable options but the Environment Agency is optimistic that there is real opportunity for a scheme to provide multiple benefits.

In parallel, Highways England is working with WCRT to look at options for restoring Newlands beck to reduce flood risk to the A66 around Portinscale. A feasibility study has been completed which shows river restoration and 'slow the flow' could reduce flood risk to farmland in Newlands valley but there are concerns that if any works synchronised the flood peak in Newlands beck and the River Derwent it could increase flood risk to Braithwaite. If a scheme at Braithwaite addressed this, then the Newlands scheme could become viable. Highways England have scheduled a Working Group meeting for 15<sup>th</sup> May including local community members. All partners are using the Highways England commissioned flood model to develop and model options and are working together to produce combined outcomes.

### **River Keekle restoration – Luke Bryant, West Cumbria Rivers Trust**

*See attached slides*

The Keekle project will remove a plastic liner from the bed of the River Keekle to restore a more natural system. The project has two phases; phase 1 is funded by the Environment Agency River Restoration Program and is a 170 m trial site and phase 2 is funded by WEG and is removal over 2 km.

Phase 1 will start next month and the plastic liner will be recycled in Dumfries. The recycling company are confident they can recycle the plastic but it will depend on its condition.

Only a short section (~200 m) of the phase 2 site sits on contaminated material. These are deeply buried and the stone bed that will replace the liner should prevent any vertical erosion. The Environment Agency will be monitoring the site closely and AECOM has hazardous chemical teams on standby during the works.

### **Lower Derwent – Michael Heaslip – Allerdale Borough Council**

One working group meeting was held around one year ago but there is lots of work ongoing in the area including the Yearl weir mill race project, Siddick ponds restoration and Gale brook feasibility study. Yearl weir is the main issue in the area, which is a United Utilities asset.

Paul Barnes said that United Utilities, Iggesunds, the Environment Agency and CRAGG are meeting Sue Hayman this week to discuss Yearl weir.

**Action: Paul Barnes to bring any feedback from this meeting to the partnership.**

### **Catchment Partnership website – Caitlin Pearson - West Cumbria Rivers Trust**

The website is now live: [www.westcumbriacatchmentpartnership.co.uk](http://www.westcumbriacatchmentpartnership.co.uk). Please keep advertising it on partner's websites to ensure it remains visible on search engines and adding any news stories so the website remains up-to-date.

The 'Resources' tab has easy access for partners to find the relevant information including meeting notes, working group minutes, the full story map and a link to the repository of studies/data/reports. The repository can be filtered by key word using the 'Tabs' dropdown on the left hand side.

**Action: Partners to send any new studies or reports and news stories to [caitlin@westcumbriariverstrust.org](mailto:caitlin@westcumbriariverstrust.org)**

### **Cumbria River Restoration Program – Luke Bryant – West Cumbria Rivers Trust on behalf of Olly Southgate – Environment Agency**

*See attached slides.*

The Cumbria river restoration program is a partnership between the Environment Agency, Natural England, South Cumbria, West Cumbria and Eden Rivers Trusts and the National Trust. It covers SAC catchments with the drivers of improving SAC habitat and reducing flood risk to communities at risk. The program started in 2009. The funding is mitigation for historic hard engineering schemes. This year the funding for West Cumbria has been allocated to Coups/Gale brook.

### **Stabilising paraglacial landscapes – Louis Manfield – University of Cumbria**

*See attached slides.*

Throughout the Lake District there are a large number of landslips. In partnership with Friends of the Lake District and United Utilities, the University of Cumbria have been looking at why landslips are occurring and what can be done about them.

High Borrowdale was chosen as a test site due to the large number of landslips happening. This valley is in the east of the Lake District National Park between Kendal and Shap. A trial was set up to evaluate sisal as a material for stabilising slopes, compared to coir and jute which are more widely used. This is a new use for sisal in this country; unlike the other material it absorbs water giving it more weight to hold the land surface. Initial trials show vegetation colonisation is slower through the sisal but there has not yet been any very wet weather or landslips to test it properly. There was a discussion about how different vegetation types stabilise the soil. Friends of the Lake District planted 16,000 trees in the area but in almost all cases trees have fallen with the landslip – is there still a benefit of tree planting on these unstable slopes? Ground level vegetation, particularly mosses, appear to make a big difference to stability but it is very difficult to get moss to colonise.

The project team would like to extend the sisal trial to river banks and coastal sites but have not yet found anywhere suitable. Allerdale Borough Council offered to work with Louis to find a suitable location on the Solway coast, an area with extensive erosion. It could also be of interest to Network rail to stabilise embankments.

**Action: Allerdale Borough Council to work with Louis to find a suitable coastal trial site.**

## Discussions

### Barriers to delivery of Natural Flood Management features

DEFRA have commissioned a study on barriers to NFM delivery which several organisations have fed into but there are some issues that could be addressed at a local level.

#### a) Agri-environment schemes

- Difficulties adding works into existing agreements. Going forward it will be the RPA who are amending schemes.
- Lack of resource for Natural England advisors. This has previously been raised with CSFP but needs addressing at a senior DEFRA level. There is a DEFRA family senior working group (JOLT)

**Action: DK to find out more about JOLT and how we can raise issues with them.**

- Countryside Stewardship priority maps don't reflect communities at risk of flooding, including Flimby and Bootle.

**Action: Dave Kennedy to speak to integrated DEFRA teams about how the priority maps are created and how local priorities/knowledge can feed into national priority maps.**

#### b) World Heritage Site (WHS) requirements – Heritage impact assessments are required for all features created within the WHS but there is uncertainty about what this involves and concern that this could be a resource intensive process. If so, it could affect what can be delivered in the timescale of the NFM projects and reduce the value of the projects in reducing flood risk to communities at risk.

The WHS Technical Advisory Group (TAG) has a subgroup for rivers and water. Karen Slater has suggested a 'fast track' heritage assessment for schemes that don't require planning permission.

The guidelines for the heritage assessment are that any proposed change within the WHS cannot impact negatively on the Outstanding Universal Value of the valley. This is not evaluated using a cost:benefit approach; there can be no negative impacts. There is uncertainty about what is meant by 'negative' particularly as reducing flood risk is part of the management plan for the WHS.

Wider consequences need to be considered when evaluating the heritage implications of a scheme. For example, if a payment through Countryside Stewardship Making Space for Water helps a farm to remain financially viable then it is helping to preserve the farming heritage of the area. Becky Powell (National Trust) had a site visit to Goldrill beck with the TAG and feels more confident that landscape scale changes do not necessarily mean a change to the OUV.

SSSI and SAC designated areas have legislative drivers for protection and enhancement and WHS cannot prevent these legal requirements being met.

The main concerns over World Heritage Status are the timeframes for carrying out heritage assessments for projects with short timescales.

**Action: Partners to submit heritage assessments for interventions and share feedback.**

The TAG should be advising all groups such as the Catchment Partnership.

**Action: Vikki Salas to try and get a member of the TAG to speak at the next partnership meeting to explain the process.**

- c) Planning permission - Currently all water storage areas, bunds etc. that are not part of a field boundary require planning permission, including formal designs. This is very resource intensive and could affect what can be delivered in the timescale of the NFM projects.

A discussion is needed with all local planning authorities to address local planning policy for small interventions such as in-field bunds. It was suggested that Yorkshire Dales National Park could be a good model for how to deal with smaller interventions as they have already delivered a lot of NFM features there.

**Action: Vikki Salas to chat to Adrian Shepherd about how the Yorkshire Dales National Park planners deal with small scale NFM interventions.**

Cumbria planning authorities meet regularly, Michael Heaslip could add an item to the agenda about NFM interventions.

**Action: Vikki Salas to send a summary of the issues to Michael Heaslip.**

- d) Responsibility for maintenance and liability

WCRT received an email from Forestry England stating that they will only consider implementing NFM on their land if somebody else is paying, if the maintenance and liability is taken on by somebody else and if there is a plan for end of life removal. This is not possible for projects with short term funding.

WCRT would like to implement NFM on the Whinlatter estate above Lorton but meeting the above requirements is not feasible under the current funding arrangement. The farmers downstream are willing to implement interventions so it doesn't seem fair that the public estate are not. The Forestry Commission is represented on the Catchment Partnership but this is now a distinct organisation from Forest England who manage the estate.

In other areas National Trust have rangers and volunteers working outside of NT land so it may be possible for a ranger team to adopt maintenance on NFM features in Whinlatter as part of the Riverlands program.

**Action: Becky Powell to investigate potential for National Trust rangers to work within Forestry England estates.**

Some of these issues could be raised through the CSFP but we need to be clear about exactly what we are asking from them.

**Action: Vikki Salas to work with partners to identify what the CSFP board could help to address.**

Paul Barnes pointed out that we need to take advantage of opportunities where there aren't barriers to delivery, citing the example of Coledale valley where there was agreement with Commoners and Secretary of State permission for planting up to 20,000 trees but only a few thousand trees have been planted.

Pete Leeson (Woodland Trust) provided more detail about the background of the planting in Coledale valley and the barriers and difficulties that do exist in large planting schemes including: the locally negative view of tree tubes and their influence on the landscape which led to the first 4,000 trees being planted without tubes. Sadly, this was followed by high losses; sustained mainly by sheep browsing damage, followed by voles and occasional visits by roe deer. People often underestimate the ongoing maintenance requirements such as keeping stakes upright, and later, by the need to prune some trees. In total, over the length of the scheme some 8,000 trees have been planted in Coledale. A proportion (perhaps 4000) are now establishing well with additional growth from natural regeneration. Projects like these are long term schemes and it may take several years before the benefits begin to be realised.

### **Catchment Partnership funding and Next steps**

The Catchment Management Group/Catchment Partnership hosting is funded until June 2019 from the RFCC. West Cumbria Rivers Trust have sufficient funding from CaBA to continue quarterly meetings but are seeking further funding to maintain the current level of partnership resourcing and activities, including working groups, catchment action planning, funding bids and collating data and evidence.

It was agreed the next Partnership meeting should be in July before the summer holiday period and should focus on the barriers to delivery with a representative from the World Heritage Status technical advisory group.

### **Any Other Business**

- Young Farmer groups are looking for tree planting sites next winter.  
**Action: Partners to let Vikki Salas know of any suitable sites for planting.**
- Nick Chappell, Q-NFM project lead, sent a brief summary of the British Hydrological Society meeting 'NFM: Does it work?' (attached).