

## National Trust Ullswater Rivers Scheme

### FAQs

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**The National Trust is working with partners to restore Ullswater's rivers. The valley has suffered three major storm events in the last ten years and the catastrophic impact of Storm Desmond in 2015 got us thinking that little bit harder about how we can work with nature to make the valley more resilient. By reconnecting the rivers with the land around them we will improve flood resilience, water quality and habitats in the valley.**

#### **What's the plan?**

The Ullswater Rivers Scheme will work to slow the flow of Ullswater's rivers by reconnecting them with their floodplain - allowing the wider catchment to absorb the effects of the weather. In the first phase of the scheme our plan is to restore Goldrill Beck to a more natural course by re-meandering the river away from the A592 and reducing the height of the river banks at key sections. This will allow the water to overspill into the surrounding fields on Howe Green and Beckstones farms during periods of high rainfall. This approach will provide flood water storage, ensuring that the land provides, not just in terms of agriculture but also by aiding flood resilience downstream and allowing space for nature to thrive.

#### **Who else is involved?**

We are working with partners to deliver this scheme including tenant farmers, our local community, The Eden Catchment Management Group, the Environment Agency, Natural England and Cumbria County Council.

#### **What is this development going to cost?**

We are still at the planning stage with the Goldrill Beck project, but we estimate that the total cost of the project including design and permissions will be around £680,000. 84% of this cost will be funded through grants awarded from Natural England, the Environment Agency and a Water Environment Grant administered by Natural England.

#### **Who is funding the Goldrill Beck project?**

The majority of the cost of the Goldrill Beck project, 84%, will be funded through grants awarded by Natural England, the Environment Agency and a Water Environment Grant administered by Natural England. The Water Environment Grant (WEG) scheme, part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), provides funding for organisations and land managers to improve the water environment in rural England. The rest of the cost will be covered by the National Trust.

#### **How will the scheme help with flooding?**

This scheme will increase the flood resilience of communities further downstream and provide an environmentally sustainable means of reducing risk from heavy rainfall to the A592. The road adjacent to Goldrill Beck, one of the few access routes in and out of the valley, was seriously undermined during Storm Desmond. Design works completed by AECOM in 2018 indicated that our plan could reduce the flood peak by up to 5% through the provision of a large floodwater storage area below Cow Bridge. This area would be still be farmed however would have the capacity to trap and store water during flood events.

### **What will this mean for nature?**

This is also an opportunity to restore Ullswater's declining wildlife population. Goldrill Beck is a small part of the River Eden designated site, recognised as an SSSI in 1997, and given European levels of protection as an SAC in 2005. Goldrill is recorded as being in an unfavourable but improving condition, unfavourable due to past canalisation and lack of naturalised processes and declining Atlantic salmon populations. The site is only recorded as being recovering due to action plans being in place to address the unfavourable elements. By restoring a wandering channel and allowing the river to spill over into the adjacent fields we will be creating new opportunities for nature to flourish. As the land immediately surrounding the river gets a bit wetter, wetland plants will naturally establish themselves providing nesting opportunities for a diverse range of wildlife species. The project will also increase the quality and quantity of habitat to support Atlantic salmon and all other freshwater dependent species.

### **What does this mean for the World Heritage Site?**

A detailed assessment of the likely impacts to the World Heritage Site designation arising from the project has been undertaken. This assessment was undertaken using the latest guidance from Lake District National Park Authority and the International Council on Monuments and Sites for assessing impact within World Heritage Sites. This assessment concluded that the proposed interventions do not risk causing significant harm to the 'Integrity' or 'Authenticity' of the Outstanding Universal Values of the Lake District World Heritage Site. This judgement sits comfortably with the designation of the Lake District as a 'Continuing Cultural Landscape', which will continue to evolve and change as it reflects the needs of a changing society.

### **What are the timescales?**

On the 25th January, we submitted a planning application for the first phase of the Ullswater Rivers Scheme, the restoration of Goldrill Beck. The design submitted in this application has been developed by AECOM, alongside consultation with key partners including (but not limited to) the Environment Agency, Natural England, Cumbria County Council, Highways, tenant farmers and FOLD. Should planning permission be granted we intend to undertake the works in spring / summer 2019. During 2019 we will begin to explore further opportunities for river and catchment restoration in the valley as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the Ullswater Rivers Scheme.

### **Where can I find out more?**

It is important to us that our community in Ullswater are involved in the Ullswater Rivers Scheme. With this in mind we intend to hold more community open days and to host volunteering opportunities on-site as the project progresses.

You can find out more and follow the progress of the project here: [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/aira-force-and-ullswater](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/aira-force-and-ullswater)

We're also keen to hear your thoughts; you can get in touch with any questions via email on: [lakes.riverlands@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:lakes.riverlands@nationaltrust.org.uk)