

Peak District Local Access Forum

Date: 22 March 2012

Item: 10

Title: Water Recreation Task Group Update

Author: Sue Smith

Purpose of the Report

To update the Forum on the work of the Water Recreation Task Group, to advise on current capacity for this work, and to seek inputs from the Forum as appropriate.

Background

The NPA's Recreation Strategy identified water-based activities as an area of recreation where there may be scope to enhance provision. The setting up of a Water Recreation Task Group was one of the actions arising from the Recreation Strategy Action Plan. The main purpose of the Task Group was to look more closely at the current provision for water recreation in the Peak District. It sought to identify both opportunities and barriers and work collaboratively with a range of partners, including users and providers, towards making the most of opportunities to enjoy water based recreation in the Peak District.

Progress

Strategies – The Environment Agency's Strategy on Enjoying Water in the East Midlands was published in 2011.

Research – A dissertation on the evaluation of barriers to access to water for canoeing in the National Park was completed in 2011. It included contributions from LAF members and other NPAs. The key findings were that concerns could be identified and potentially resolved by considering access to the water separately from access on or along the water.

Further work was also proposed to assess the current issues affecting sailing on reservoirs in light of evidence that this activity was in decline in the NP and with the aim of encouraging better use of the reservoirs for sailing and other uses. A questionnaire was drawn up but has not been circulated at the present time.

Data – Water bodies covered by statutory designations, within major land-ownership, and adjacent to open access land have been quantified. This complements the information in the Recreation Strategy on resource provision. Further analysis could be obtained from the data gathered for the Environment Agency by the University of Brighton.

Update

In 2011, the Environment Agency withdrew from the task group as restructuring meant that they no longer had a recreational remit. The NPA now finds that it does not have the current capacity to take the lead in this area of work and has therefore decided to suspend the task group until such time as it may be possible to reconvene.

In the meantime, access management matters will continue to be dealt with by the Rights of Way and Access Team and promotion of opportunities by the Recreation Strategy Team. It is also hoped that the Forum could take on issues relating to access to water as part of their wider brief. It is recognised, however, that there is no representation by water companies on the Forum.

Recommendation

- 1. That the report be noted.**
- 2. That opportunities are taken to seek additional representation on the Forum from those with a water-based interest and an associated land management remit.**