



United Usk Fishermen's Association

*Newsletter
No. 10
June 2007*



The Future Funding of Management on the River Usk

This year's AGM at the Angel Hotel on 30th March was the opportunity for Committee Members of the UUFA to put forward the basis on which riparian owners and other supporters of the River Usk might fund the ongoing management of the river in the next few years. As readers will be aware, the improvement in the condition of the river's habitat has come about as a direct result of the serious investment in the upstream habitat by the work of the Wye and Usk Foundation (WUF). This, it is worth remembering, is work that otherwise was not and likely would not have taken place at all without the catalyst of a focused and well funded team who are able to work with farmers and landowners.

WUF enjoys the confidence and support of our regulatory and Government partners, Welsh Assembly Government, WEFO, EA Wales, CCW, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and others. This has resulted in significant financial support, and widespread cooperation over consenting procedures, as well as goodwill—a factor never to be underestimated.

The net result of all this is a project with a net worth of £1.1million, of which Usk owners have contributed, to date, some £33,000. The actual works are recorded elsewhere in this newsletter. Those attending the AGM were very impressed with the financial leverage that our cooperation with WUF has achieved, as I am sure readers will be too. The maths speaks for itself.

In my view it is this cooperative working, with reputable and experienced environmental charities with a clear remit, that is the best future for the management of the River Usk as well as other rivers in Wales.

And so to the future. Your UUFA committee is pleased to encourage all Usk riparian owners, and anyone else generous enough to contribute, to give a commitment to a further 3 years financial support to WUF. Our fundraising target is £16,000 pa over the next 3 years to allow the Foundation to continue its work. This year alone there is a projected spend of some £232,000.

We hope in time there might be ways for achieving a more permanent way of financing the activities of the Foundation, and that grant streams might see programmes to work on the lower river below Abergavenny. But for now the essential and logical task is for owners to follow the money currently available.

Owners will have each received a funds request on the basis of annual payments of 10 pence per metre of single bank owned (5 pence above Brecon) to achieve this. I am sure you will agree that this is both very good value for money, and as good an investment as any individual owner can make in improving the quality and value of this lovely River.

It may also be an opportunity that will in years ahead disappear as EU funds move to support other EU countries in the east. It is thus an opportunity worth grasping now.

Ross Murray

QUESTIONS

The last UUFA AGM was an opportunity for the Wye and Usk Foundation to answer some of the questions raised by members. These fell into three groups:

- Costs v Benefits: How is the money being spent and with what result?
- Where are the fish?
- What's next?

Below is a summary of the UP! Project costs projected to the finish date March 2008 taken from the working project spreadsheets. "UUFA CONTRIBUTION" means Usk riparian owner and fishermen contribution.

	TOTAL SPEND	CASH ONLY	UUFA CONTRIBUTION
• Survey and Targeting	£17,886	£17,886	£1089
• Fish Habitat Restoration	£534,433	£458,064	£27,896
• Fish Passes	£193,272	£131,938	£8,035
• Marketing	£76,260	£71,157	£4,333
• Monitoring	£57,731	£6,681	£407
• Research	£103,850	£44,00	£2,680
• Support Costs	£94,530	£80,818	£4,922
• Insurance and Accountancy	£12,557	£12,557	£765
Totals	£1,090,519	£823,101	£50,127

In the left hand column, you will find the total project spend including the "In Kind" contributions which are those services provided by, for example, Environment Agency Wales which are then costed and added to the total.

The middle column shows the actual cash spend and the right hand column is the proportion of that amount that is funded by the UUFA contribution. The items that will deliver more fish are "Fish Habitat Restoration" and "Fish Pass construction". Simon Evans has more details on Page 6. Survey and Targeting are the costs associated with our initial planning – finding the obstructions and the degraded banks over the 600km of Usk tributary system.

Marketing the benefits of the project is a requirement of the EU grant and for those owners who have elected to take part, over £33,000 has been raised to date and this will exceed £50,000 by the end of the project. Monitoring is always a costly item especially electro fishing and we are fortunate that the Agency does this on our behalf. The cost of this is met by them and this sum is contributed to the project, thus allowing a draw down of a corresponding amount of EU grant. This is also the case with Cardiff University and our PhD student who is researching siltation effects specific to the Usk.

Support costs are those necessary to run the project and include staff and vehicle costs, while Insurance and Accountancy are accounted for on a separate line as they do not attract EU funding. The bulk of the cash comes from the EU grant but BBNP, CCW, EAW and FC all contribute with others including WUF and UUFA Officers contributing cash and In Kind services.

Fish Passes

- 14 Sites @ £131,938 total or £9424 each

ie UUFA contribution of £8035 for 14 or £573 each

Habitat Restoration

- 45km @ £458,064 cash or £10180 per km

ie UUFA contribution of £27,896 or £620 per km

This cost includes all revetments, watergates, coppicing and fencing as appropriate.

Now the reasoning behind the original question (and I apologise to those like myself whose eyes glaze over at the mere mention of accounts and figures) is what will this deliver in respect of fish?

Passes

- 39.62km of improved salmon access
- 31.54km of new salmon access
- 99,06km of improved trout access

Habitat

- 45km habitat producing up to 5x more salmon and 3x more trout

Via a calculation which takes into account the area made available or improved and using our knowledge of existing population densities, we estimate that between 18,000 and 38,000 salmon smolts will be produced as a result of this work. Trout population predictions are more complicated other than to say that in addition to the improvements to the salmon population, there are considerable benefits to the native trout. This is all dependent on there being an escape of sufficient salmon to populate the new areas and that predation does not rise significantly.



Question 2 simply asked where the Fish (ie extra salmon) were, after three years of work. To answer this, we displayed a chart with the life cycle of the salmon, showing: two years in the river, two years in the sea but remembering that the eggs spawned from fish of one year don't hatch until the next, this gives us a five year cycle (it's four for grilse and 1:2 MSW's and six for the big ones) so the answer is that there will be no benefits to the rod catch inside five years (or four or six)

However, it is crucial to understand that not all the improvements took place in year one.....or even year two and so the full benefit will not be realised until five years after the completion of the work i.e 2013. Even then where new salmon access has been opened up it might take two generations of salmon to fully populate the area.

We can already see the project is working from the early electro-fishing data. Simon Evans has listed on page 6 some case studies of streams that have already benefited from the project



Finally, What next?

The Foundation listed some priorities and concerns:

- Completion of all Habitat & Access Restoration – no work has been done below Abergavenny and our habitat work has only tackled the worst areas elsewhere.
- Water Abstraction and Transfers – We believe an unsustainable amount of water is being abstracted and will be using every means available to correct this.
- Catchment Sensitive Farming – The lower Usk catchment is showing effects of diffuse pollution. We hope to have much more information on this at our AGM
- Management – More bailiffs?
- Byelaws/ Returns – While many would like to see the reduction in restrictions on catch and release, not many know that calculations to determine this are made from rod catch returns. The absence of full returns for the whole river would significantly affect the detail of future byelaws.
- Canoes – members had expressed concern at the proposals put forward by national canoeing organisations to rescind existing agreements. The Foundation may assist if requested with re instating them.

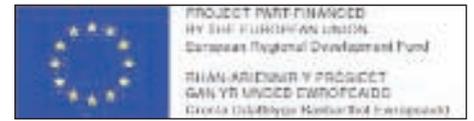
We would like to thank all those who have supported the Usk Project and hope the above explains how their contribution goes much further when used in partnership projects

Dr Stephen Marsh

Smith



Benefits from the Passport Scheme multiply - we need more Usk fishing



Usk Project Update

For the last three springs I have written a report for this magazine detailing the progress of the Usk Project, this year we can start to show the results, but first the facts and figures. 2006 was a very productive year. We have now completed 37.6km of stream restoration whilst also improving access for salmon and trout to over 96km of nursery areas. The extension of the Passport scheme into the Usk has proved a huge success for those fisheries participating and this year it is looking set to generate around £0.5m to the local economy. The significant field work downstream of Brecon has come to a close for now, with the end of Transitional funding but we have been successful in securing another £222,598 of funding from Europe and other Agencies for the Upper Usk subject to the Foundation being able to raise another £25,000 from donations.

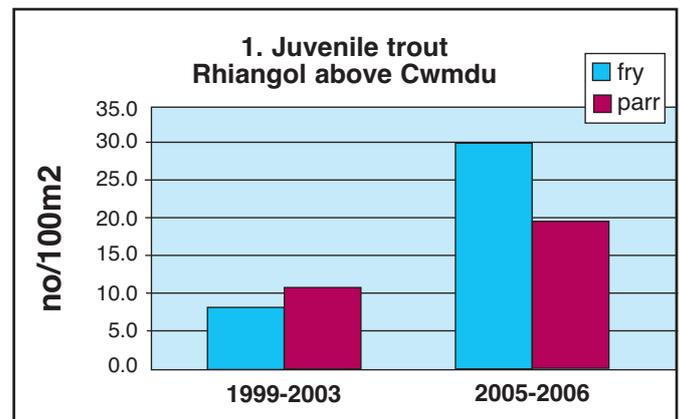
The problem to date has been that, whilst all can see fish passes being built, trees being coppiced and fences going up on river banks, the cry has been where are all the fish? Now following a second electro-fishing survey we can see the actual benefits of all this work. I will illustrate this with story of two streams.

The Rhiangoll

This was identified early in the project as one of the priority streams for attention due to its location in the catchment and unrealised potential as a trout and salmon nursery. In 2004 this stream was overgrazed, overshadowed and due to the Cwmdy bridge footings creating a near complete barrier to migration, reliant on sustained high flows in the winter to occasionally allow salmon and the larger main river trout into the middle and upper reaches to spawn.

This was the first stream to be worked on in the project and work got underway in 2004, 4.179km of stream was restored with the majority completed in 2005. In the autumn of 2004 we built a box fish pass on the bridge footings at Cwmdy. On my drive to work each day for 2 years I have seen it slowly recover as the grasses creep over the previously bare banks and the channel narrows and stabilises.

It is looking very good now and the last 2 summers EAW electro fishing showed that it was not just visual, and that as expected the fish populations were also responding well. In addition to the 350% increase in trout numbers shown in graph 1, salmon numbers are also slowly building up again with salmon recorded upstream of Cwmdy for 2 consecutive years for the first time (05, 06).



Excellent habitat on the Rhiangoll post coppicing and fencing



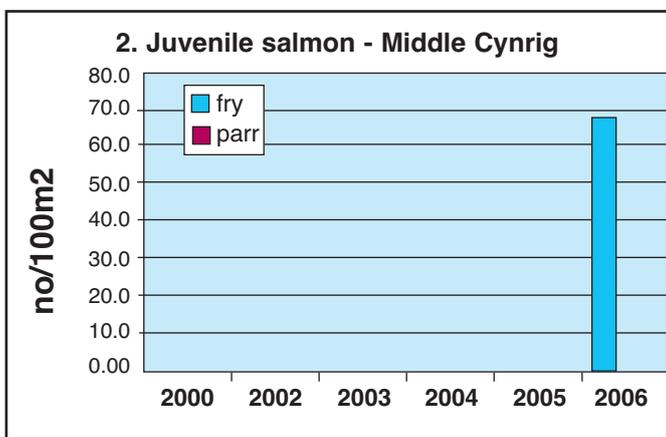
A soft revetment on the Rhiangoll installed in 2005, that has arrested erosion and is providing good cover

The Cynrig



Excellent habitat on the Rhiangoll post coppicing and fencing

In its middle reaches this stream offers some of the best juvenile salmon habitat to be found in the whole of the Usk. The problem is that due to the weir providing the water for Abercynrig fish culture unit, it was not possible for adult salmon to access it. In 2005 work we tried to build a fish pass but due to consenting problems only the back wall was completed in time for the autumn spawning run. It was frustrating to see salmon and grilse trying to run the face, and it seemed we would have to wait another year to complete the work.



Despite no one seeing a fish successfully make it over reports came in later in the year of a couple of salmon carcasses found upstream of the weir and sure enough, the electro-fishing last summer (graph 2.) showed for the first time wild spawned salmon fry in the Cynrig, and that as expected, the fry had flourished in the excellent habitat. In 2006 we completed the middle wall of the fish pass and last autumn dozens of salmon were seen going upstream. We wait to see just how many fish this stream can support but it should be worth hundred's of adult salmon to the Usk fishery.

In addition we have also improved the habitat in the lowest 1.2km of the stream to which salmon have always had access.

These two streams represent a fraction of the overall achievement of the project and there are other results from the Ysgir, Honddu and Bran that are just as impressive but sadly, I do not have the room here to show them all. This summer EAW are electro-fishing all the streams and key sites worked on to date and next year we will be able to report fully on the benefit that the Usk Project, reliant on your kind donations as seed money, has had to the river.

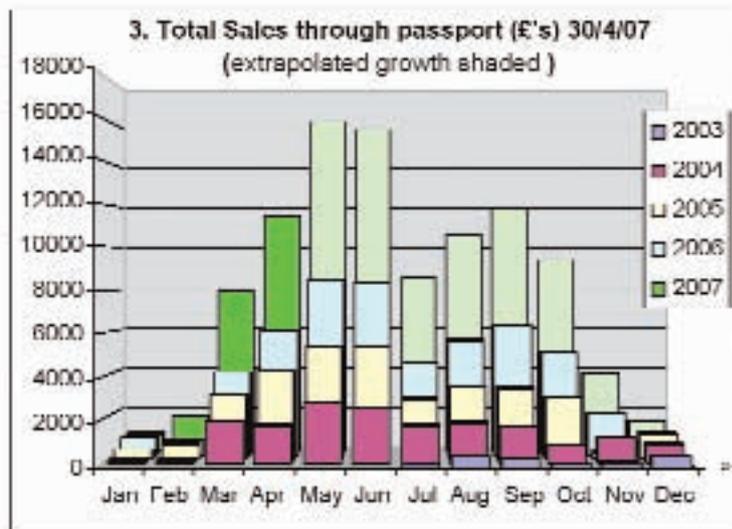


.... and after construction of fish pass

Finally I make my annual request for any fishing that people may want to market within the passport. As you can see from the graph 3, sales are going from strength to strength as more and more people return to fish the rivers. Usk fishing commands a high premium and we are having to turn people away every week as there are no spaces for them, so if anyone does want to make little bit of money by letting a few days we would be happy to accommodate them within the passport on their terms.

With thanks to the UUFA, EAW, Welsh assembly, CCW, MOD, FC and BBNP and all others who have supported the project so far.

Simon Evans





Giant Hogweed Project

Riparian areas of the lower River Usk are infested with the invasive plant Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) to varying degrees. The problem extends from the Crickhowell area to the tidal limit at Newbridge-on-Usk generally but the plant is found in small numbers close to the mouth of the Usk in Newport. The invasive nature of the plant leads to degraded habitats both in biodiversity terms and aesthetically. There is also reduced recreational value due to public health concerns associated with the plant (the sap from the plant can cause severe blisters which are sensitive to sunlight). The designated Usk Valley Walk is adversely affected in places by giant hogweed as is access for fishermen. This is an escalating problem with the potential seed bank in the ground increasing year on year.

Stuart Craxford of the Environment Agency set up a collaborative project (2005-06) and they funded the first phase of a co-ordinated control programme which included survey and mapping and the development of an appropriate control strategy. Principal partners include The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, Countryside Council for Wales, Keep Wales Tidy, Monmouthshire County Council, The National Trust and Newport City Council. The process involved substantial consultation with riparian owners and interested parties.

One Giant Hogweed flowerhead which can produce thousands of seeds

Existing and new information was used to map the extent of the problem in the Usk riparian corridor. There will be benefits for conservation, recreation and for flood defence maintenance issues. The main beneficiaries will be river users with better access and reduced associated health and safety issues at previously infested areas.

Control work on the ground was started in the Spring of 2006 with efforts centred on the Crickhowell and Abergavenny areas. The aim is to stop the seed production at the upper extent of the infestation and prevent the seeds entering the river and spreading the problems downstream. This is the start of a long-term eradication programme which is estimated will take 5 to 10 years.

The project contributes to the corporate strategy goal of an enhanced environment for wildlife and the overall Local Contributions objective of restoring degraded rivers.

It contributed towards collaborative actions in Brecon Beacons National Park and Monmouthshire LBAPs (Local Biodiversity Action Plans).

Proposed work for 2007

We will have 4 teams (Brecon Beacons National Park, Keep Wales Tidy, Monmouthshire C.C. and Environment Agency) working on the ground to continue herbicide treatment of Giant Hogweed with emphasis again on the Crickhowell, Gilwern and Abergavenny Areas. It is hoped to work downstream as far as Chain Bridge.

This will build on the successful work undertaken last year. There will be close collaboration between the spray teams who will meet regularly to co-ordinate the work. Riparian owners will be kept informed of work in their area.

CCW are providing £2500 funding per annum for the next 3 years. It is hoped that EAW will again provide funds or a dedicated spray team this year.

Stewart Craxford EAW



*Stands of Giant Hogweed
on the banks of the River Usk
near Abergavenny*

News from the



The Anglers' Conservation Association (ACA) is a unique organisation which uses the law to prevent pollution, and claims compensation on behalf of its members for any damage caused to their rivers or lakes. We act for our member fishing clubs and riparian owners: indeed, anyone who owns or leases water for fishing. Since 1948, we have recovered millions of pounds in damages for our members, won thousands of cases, and lost just three. We take on water companies, negligent farmers, statutory authorities and multinational corporations who pollute or damage rivers with equal zeal.

In 2006, our two in-house lawyers had a record year, winning 18 legal cases, recovering over £140,000 in damages for our members and advising more than 100 angling clubs and river owners on legal matters ranging from savage dogs to rampant bulls disrupting their fishing. We are currently fighting about 50 cases on behalf of our members throughout the UK.

We have been particularly active in South Wales recently, and I have listed below three examples of local cases we are fighting for anglers. Not only does this help out the people affected; it also sends a very strong message to polluters everywhere that they can't get away with abusing our rivers.

In August last year, as you will no doubt have heard, the Taf Fechan was polluted by a massive discharge of aluminium sulphate from the Ponsticill Water Treatment Works. This turned the river white, killing off many thousands of trout and bullheads as well as affecting the invertebrate population of the river. Tony Rees from the MTAA, and a UUFA committee member, has spent many years improving the habitat of this lovely stream and it was very depressing to walk along its banks and see dead trout lying in the water.

It is likely that Welsh Water will be prosecuted by the Environment Agency but, in the meantime, a claim has been made by the ACA against the water utility and, failing an agreed settlement, proceedings will be issued shortly.

Any settlement will no doubt be used by MTAA to restore the river to its former health.

On the Olway Brook, which flows into the Usk near Llangibby, the ACA has won damages for the riparian owner from a serial polluter farmer. The total amount owing is now nearly £13,000 in damages and costs. The farmer had polluted the river at least 14 times and caused the death of hundreds of brown trout in this tributary of the Usk, known to be used historically for spawning by salmon and in particular sea trout. At Hereford County Court, the District Judge dismissed the Defendant's case saying that he had no real prospect of successfully defending the ACA's claim.

The Islwyn & District Anglers' fishing on the River Ebbw has suffered from a series of pollution incidents over the past few years. The ACA and the member club have attended several meetings with the Environment Agency which has now installed monitors to cover the culverted discharge from two local industrial estates, thought to be the source of the pollution. The ACA will continue to follow developments and will pursue any polluters who are identified. Although no damages have been recovered, this case proves that pressure from the ACA can help to galvanise the authorities into acting.

On the River Usk, we are investigating the possibility of using the law to force British Waterways to take less water from the river to keep the canal topped up.

We believe that the canal is not being properly maintained, and much of the water abstracted from the Usk seeps away into the ground. Last summer there seemed to be more water flowing in the canal at Brecon than there was going down the river. We will keep the UUFA informed of progress with this initiative.

The ACA doesn't just fight legal cases after the event; we also campaign to change policy and practice which affects angling. We were one of the lead organisations in the development last year of the Blueprint for Water campaign (www.blueprintforwater.org.uk), which has been very effective at influencing government and its agencies of the need to protect water quality, quantity and habitat by properly implementing the European Water Framework Directive.

This campaign will have great benefits for anglers, but, working with the Salmon & Trout Association, we managed to secure the backing of eight non-angling organisations including WWF, RSPB and the National Trust. Together, we have over 6 million members and this backing has opened the doors of Ministers, the Chief Executives of OFWAT and the Environment Agency. With just 10,000 members, the ACA cannot hope to get access to these corridors of power working alone. If just a third of all anglers in the country joined the ACA, we would have as many members as the RSPB, which is widely recognised as the most powerful environmental organisation in the UK.

Club and owner membership is rather like an insurance policy – for a small annual fee, subscribers have the comfort of knowing that if any damage were to occur to their fishing, the ACA would, wherever possible, take action on their behalf free of charge and risk. What's more, all of the damages recovered are payable to the affected party or parties. Annual membership of the Association for clubs and owners starts at £50 a year, but the costs for the ACA of taking on a case can reach £20,000. Equally, some settlements in the past have seen hundreds of thousands of pounds in compensation being paid to fishing owners for damage to their waters, all because they paid just £75 a year in membership. We can only offer this unique service because of the generous support of our members.

We have recently launched a major recruitment drive to ensure that as many individual anglers, clubs and proprietors as possible are aware of the benefits of ACA membership and the need to support the organisation with subscriptions. Individual and club/riparian owner leaflets are freely available from the ACA; please contact us if you could distribute them to anglers who might support our work or to clubs or owners who might want protection. Thank you for your support.

For more information, please visit www.a-c-a.org telephone 01568 620447 or e-mail mark@aca.org

Mark Lloyd Executive Director, ACA

River Usk Fisheries

CRIMEWATCH Project

The Environment Agency Wales have now confirmed that they are to run a Fisheries Crimewatch scheme on the River Usk. This scheme will be a pilot similar to those being run in North and West Wales. Funding for the scheme, 10k, has been provided through the Agency's sustainable fisheries project.

The project is being managed by Steve Barker, A Senior Enforcement Officer with the Agency' Environmental Crime Team and will focus on the River Usk from Crickhowell downstream to Bulmore. It will run from June 2007 to April 2008.

The scheme has three main focuses, these are Intelligence and Education built on a foundation of Enforcement.

The Fisheries Crimewatch initiative aims to offer a mechanism to regain a positive working relationship with stakeholders and the general public by working in partnership to actively reduce environmental crime (fisheries).

A small group of stakeholders and Agency staff will oversee the project. The United Usk Fishermen's Association supports the project and active support is also being sought from the local Police Forces.

Some of the proposed initiatives to be included in the project are:

- A dedicated phone number for information, backed up by the Agency's 0800 service for "real time" events.
- Intelligence cards, giving guidance on submitting information
- An Education forum, to inform anglers and owners of their rights.
- Signage for all fisheries involved in the scheme
- Support for Angling participation events
- Three " Trout Home Coming" projects for schools within the community.

It is proposed that a formal launch of the project will take place at Usk Show in September 2007.

For further information please contact Steve Barker on 02920 245254.

Comment by the UUFA

We support this initiative as it represents a genuine effort by the EAW to reconnect with fishermen after a period when the duties of Steve Barker's team lost the fishing communities' confidence. People who walk the river on a daily or regular basis and see events that they feel are not the norm will be encouraged to help. The "Trout Home Coming" project in schools has proved popular in other areas and has introduced genuine interest in the well being of the river on which they live, apart from creating an interest in fishing at an early age.

News In: Environment Agency Wales Enforcement Officers caught three men and a juvenile from the Pontypool area fishing the River Usk without having bought an Agency rod licence or first obtaining permission to fish, on Bank Holiday Monday.

Enforcement officers went into action after receiving local intelligence on a suspect vehicle and four individuals at Llanover, near Abergavenny.

All four individuals were apprehended and admitted not having valid Agency rod licences. Their rods and lines were confiscated. The three men will be reported for the relevant fisheries offences, while the juvenile received an official warning. Enforcement action is now pending, which could result in the three men being prosecuted

Usk Canoe Access Agreement

The Welsh Canoe Association has been resisting the renewal of our Canoe Access Agreement dating back to 1984 which was made on behalf of the riparian owners by the UUFA for the benefit of canoeists. It has worked reasonably over the relatively small part of the river which they favoured, including stretches above Brecon and from Talybont to Crickhowell but excluding Glanusk for which separate permission has to be sought. The rest of the river seems to have been regarded as too flat and uninteresting. Recently the WCA has taken a much more aggressive stance and their main focus has been to establish a right to canoe on any coastal or inland water without the necessity of gaining permission. We understand that their ambition does not enjoy the support of all their members. They are lobbying Welsh Assembly Members with the aim of legislation that will provide unconditional access to all rivers throughout the year.

The fact is that we own or lease the assets over which canoeing takes place and we bought or leased them for the purpose, in most cases, of fishing. In addition, in the past few years we have invested in the improvement of our fishery by removing blockages, increasing the light reaching invertebrates and excluding farm stock thus cutting pollution and scouring, and increasing spawning and juvenile areas on our designated SAC river.

The WCA, on the other hand, have done nothing to improve the river on which they paddle nor have they offered to contribute in any way.

For the upper Wye WUF and the EAW met last March with the WCA (Pam Bell and Ashley Charwood, the Local and National Access Development Officers). Charwood went to great lengths to point out why free access should be theirs using the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as a basis. WUF reminded them that the river is not owned by the WCA nor does it have rights of navigation. WUF takes the view, that if the WCA do not wish to accept an agreement then the upper Wye will arrange agreements with clubs and organisations who have traditionally used our water, and have asked for permission. The percentage of resident Welsh canoeists is, we suspect, relatively low since most of the organisations that use the river attract their custom from further afield and often for their own commercial purposes.

This would seem a sensible route for the UUFA to take with the approval of our Riparian Owners.

At present we are hearing that WAG does not wish to support the WCA in their aim of a statutory right of access to inland waters and instead favours local access agreements such as we have been operating without much trouble for the past 24 years.

This agreement allowed canoeing on certain conditions throughout the fishing close season and on further conditions relating to the height of the river even during the fishing season though this was not much used. This was all dependent on canoeists applying in writing in advance through their organisers and certainly many, if not all, of those who sought advance permission abided by the conditions. Most importantly these agreements retained the riparian / fishery owners' right to refuse which statutory access would not. The BCU and WCA appear to dislike the very idea of having to apply for permission categorising it as 'feudal'.

We can join with WUF in negotiating through the auspices of the Environment Agency (who have a statutory interest in water sports) a standard form of 'local access agreement' for the Usk and Upper Wye (there is already a right of navigation on the Middle and Lower Wye) if our members wish. We anticipate that, given the present apparent wish for voluntary local agreements, this could follow the terms of our 1984 agreement with a little tweaking and updating. At present the EA are doing a study of this subject in Wales through Brighton University who will be reporting to them with a view perhaps to discussions between the parties in the autumn under EA chairmanship. We will, of course, wish to know what we will be discussing and to discuss our own stance at that time with our members but in the meantime and in the absence of statutory provision for access individual riparian / fishery owners cannot be bound in law by whatever is agreed unless they wish to. In short they retain the right to refuse. We must wait and see what EAW proposes whilst remaining willing to operate our 1984 agreement for canoeists who apply for permission.

David Jones Powell

Footnote: The long awaited CCW Report on Canoe Access has been published called "Managing Recreation on Inland Waters in Wales: A Review of Approaches". Countryside and Community Research Unit, University of Gloucestershire. CCW Policy Research Report No. 07/04 March 2007. The 136 page Report can be downloaded from [snowdonia-active.com](http://www.snowdoniaactive.com) at <http://www.snowdoniaactive.com/upload/documents/CCW%20Inland%20Water%20Final%20Report.pdf> We also learnt that the WCA have recently executed a sea change and according to Ashley Charwood at a recent forum run by the EAW on the Dee in North Wales the WCA does not wish to be involved in the negotiation of Access Agreements. This is contrary to anything that has been said and implied in the past. It would seem that the proposed position of Agreements with those that wish to canoe is the way forward! We will keep those interested informed.

The Usk Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy

The strategy is designed to help us understand how the rules for abstraction are formulated for a 'Water Resource Management Unit'. Thereafter the idea is to use our specialist knowledge for assessing the information for a WRMU to decide how the level of abstraction is set for licensing purposes so that it remains a sustainable water resource. The EAW have drawn on the opinions of a wide variety of interests covering abstractors, fisheries, recreation, biodiversity/conservation, navigation, tourism, industry and agriculture. The UUFA was represented to cover fisheries and all that is associated with fisheries.

From a fisheries perspective we feel that the Usk is being over abstracted and can be improved considerably by restricting abstraction in Brecon, for the canal. At Prioress Mill the rate of abstraction must be extended over a longer period every 24 hours, so that the flow to Llandegfedd Reservoir does not reduce the level of the Usk by more than a couple of inches. Those abstractions will, however, be further scrutinised in another consultation process, which is now well under way. This further consultation comes as a part of the Water Framework Directive within which the Habitats Directive is an important part. The consultation is undertaken using River Basin Districts which are defined areas. The Usk is a part of the Severn River Basin District.

One of the keys to assessing whether the Usk is achieving its required standards for the Habitats Directive is via its ability to sustain a thriving salmon and trout population at all stages of their life cycle taking into account the quality of the habitat and things like the amount of sediment present in the spawning areas and the amount, speed and quality of water. The Usk is an SAC designated river in which salmon and shad are of paramount importance. Too much abstraction, among other things, would adversely affect the species and it would be deemed necessary to abstract less. The Severn River Basin Management Plans, and all the others, for managing the water environment must be complete by 2009 which will comprise of plans called Programmes of Measures. These must be operational by 2012.

Because the River Basin Districts are so big not all rivers are represented for fisheries. In our case we are lucky as we are well represented by Stephen Marsh-Smith of WUF who is only too well aware of the advantages that the WFD and HD will bring to our rivers.

www.uskfishing.com

At last we have a web site which I hope will give our members the information that they want apart from news of the current subjects which are relevant to our river we hope that you will use it to ask questions and express your views. There is a general section that I hope will encourage fishermen to join the UUFA. "The members only" part which will be accessed by your name and a password, will access subjects that are currently covered in our Newsletter but also other information not in the Newsletter simply because we do not have the space. Please be patient as the content is built.

The members at the General Meeting in March agreed that the cost of membership should rise from £5 to £10 in January 2008 - last increased in 1995.

Officers & Committee 2007

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