

Voluntary Access Agreement Workshop

Brecon, 26th February 2011

Workshop Report

Agenda

- 10.30 Welcome
- 11.0 Introductions
 - Defining the Resource
 - Stakeholder mapping
- 12.45 Lunch
 - Stakeholder Analysis
 - Possible Management Options
 - Conclusions
- 3.00 End

Facilitator's Introduction

Purpose of the workshop

- To work through the preparation phase for developing access agreements

What it is not

- Individual water bodies
- Whether there should be access agreements or not

Working agreement

- One person speaking at a time
- Respect all contributions
- Don't dwell on history
- Help me keep to time

Session 1: Defining the resource

Discuss the sections and features along a river that are of importance / influence. Consider physical, economic, social and environmental factors.

Source:

- Land Use – Flow changes

Upper tributaries:

- Traffic and parking – impact on local communities
- Regulation and generation – flows
- Hydrogeomorphology – shape and(?)
- Access – tracks and roads
- Forestry affecting water quality
- Water sports, swimming - flat water , moderate moving white water

Reservoir:

- Fishing established as major contributor to economy £150 million
- Sailors etc pay for access to reservoirs
- Economic benefit of people visiting the area
- Litter

Dam:

- Water release
- Hydropower
- Manmade features
- Abstraction
- Modification – views, bridges etc, industrialisation

Lower Tributaries:

- Spawning areas – fish habitation – lakes, game, course etc. (x2)
- Mad made features: Dam release, weirs, fish ladders, canoe passes, Canalisation.
- People behaving badly – causing unnecessary conflict
- Damage to river banks caused by users
- Lack of awareness of other users needs (e.g. paddlers not caring about spawning beds)
- Outdoor pursuits centres – generate local income and employment
- Water mammals (everywhere) need seclusion
- Land next to rivers that public already have access to (NT)
- Spawning fish (upper reaches mainly)
- Seasonality
- Gorge walking impacts on spawning beds
- Introduction of disease, aliens
- Noise impact e.g. at night
- Industry
- Major events can generate significant income into area.
- Flow (abstraction spates)
- Health and wellbeing of people using rivers (recreation)
- Migrating fish (throughout system)
- Exploitation everywhere
- Shops providing for anglers, canoeists – employment /income into rural areas
- Angler payment for permits and licenses
- Existing accepted use of river for e.g. swimming in summer

Upper estuary:

- Effluent affecting water quality
- Overuse causing damage

- Social element of sports activities = wellbeing
- Pollution – CSO's mine discharges agri-pollution
- Many clubs managed as social enterprise, others rely on income to support their local community
- "Social nuisance" - parking, noise etc
- Safety e.g. livestock on land with walkers
- Estates and larger land owners want to encourage use that is cost neutral or generates some income

Lower estuary:

- Appreciation of the countryside
- SAC and SSSI
- Fee access to tidal areas
- Commercial netting interests in estuary
- Tidal effects

Plenary Discussion on the Key Issues (notes taken by facilitator)

- We all want the same thing!
- Awareness / education – knowledge of each other sports
- Equity – equitable solution
- Equity on regulation
- Ownership rights and assets
- Economic impact of access is important
- Need to get different parties talking – national and local level.
- Codes of conduct
- Concern that process being encouraged before there is understanding of the issues
- All parties must be prepared to come to the discussion and enter into negotiations
- All groups prepared to move forward
- Willingness from Welsh anglers to enter into voluntary agreements
- Canoeist view is that agreement must be based on sound environmental basis – will come to table on this basis
- How can representative bodies represent all users?? Membership – local agreements
- Stakeholders – interested parties

Session 2: Stakeholder Mapping & Analysis

Green Group:

Stakeholder Group	Interest/need	Engagement approach
Government Agencies	Protection of countryside. Legal compliance	
Angling associations	Fishing, water quality, river protection, Biodiversity, Members interests, minimize ownership conflict	
Canoe clubs	Access to river, freedom to paddle, minimize conflict, quality of environment	
Outdoor pursuits groups including Rafters	Utilise countryside, Commercial gain, quality of environment	
Other user groups e.g. ramblers, swimmers, shooters	Water quality, public safety, access	
Community, councils/county councils	Rates and revenue, traffic, Health & Safety, planning, ownership	
Landowners/farmers groups	Protection of land & livestock (cross compliance with WAG regs)	
Local business groups	Visitors/customers = revenue	
Utilities	Provide service revenue, H&S	

Red Group:

Stakeholder Group	Interest/need	Engagement approach
Paddlers, rafters, swimmers, sailors	Access (parking), clean water, consent, Appropriate river, lake W.B.	Nat. body, clubs, (UK wide) websites
Anglers, Rivers Trusts, R.O.s Fishing owners, Commercial fisheries (nets etc)	Above ditto G.E.S., Protection of rights, fish	Clubs, Nat. bodies, RO groups, Rep groups e.g. CLA
Statutory bodies, BBNP, EAW, CCW, ECW, LA's Parish/County, National	Jobs, recreation remit, control	Committees, letters, emails
Walkers, ramblers, wildlife interests, 4X4, Sustrans	Good unspoilt countryside above + environment, Places to trash	Associations?
Gen Public Businesses	? e.g. Accommodation/outdoor centre's/pubs	? Schools, LA's politicians?

Blue Group:

Stakeholder Group	Interest/need	Engagement approach
Owners (only one stakeholder – one dissenter)	Protecting and enhancing property, return on investment	Listen to potential tenants/users
Fish	Protection, seclusion	Keep heads down
Fishers: clubs, WFCA, WSTAA, FWA, Federations, Individuals	Access	Identify owner Speak nicely
Paddlers: canoe waves Individuals, clubs	Access	Hand in pocket (one dissenter) Acknowledge statutory constraints
Swimmers? Individuals	Access	
Communities	Economy	Encouragement
Statutory bodies: CCW, NPs, EA, LA's	Statutory duties	Publicity
Trusts	Protect resource and enhance	Liaise with owners and users

Yellow Group:

Stakeholder Group	Interest/need	Engagement approach
Riparian Owners	Protection of their asset Maximizing income (some cases) Environment	Identify who all owners are Create register Get permission to share Identify which want to obtain some reward
Owners of other rights e.g. shooting, fishing, access	Ability to exercise their rights Economic	As above Ascertain key seasons/peak activity times
Water companies	Bio security, water quality, catchment management	Liaison with water companies – DCWW/ST/Dee WC
Statutory bodies - CCW/EAW, LA's, National Parks	Bio security, Planning, Biodiversity, Consenting, Water quality/quantity, Protection of environment. Provision of funding, Local access forum, Fulfillment of statutory duty	FERAC, NAFW/LAF Ministerial advisory group & Sub group
Local business/Tourism providers	Cafes/restaurants Hotels, confidence in local economy, shops, garages	Local business forum, local access forum, tourism partnership, chamber of commerce/CBI
Water abstractors	Clean and plentiful supply. Uninterrupted supply	Via consenting team at EAW
Recreational users – paddlers, anglers, sailors, swimmers, informal recreation: picnickers etc	Clean water, adequate supply, access, egress, permission, clean environment. Good water quality and wildlife, safe, respect, enjoyment	Local access forum
Wildlife groups	Observational wildlife Biodiversity Enjoyment of wildlife	

Plenary Discussion on Engagement (notes taken by facilitator):

- Groups are relatively easy to engage with – individuals are more difficult
- Angling has long history – and evolved regs, canoeists more recent
- Diversity of groups – wide range of interests
- Nurture culture of ‘agreed’ access
- WAG needs to take lead as ‘honest broker’ within the law
- There is guidance on engagement available
- Building consensus is still the main barrier – no progress
- Easy win – information for paddlers about environmental issues on rivers
- Parties don’t all feel Brighton process is best way forward
- Funding context - difficult in current climate
- Canoe section within angling club - canoeists join angling club, benefit from information support
- Sharing of information – all parties need to have correct/comprehensive/up to date information
- WAG website being set up (EA/CCW site) – due for completion soon?

Session 3: Possible management options

Green Group:

- Scottish model – some for, some against – would require legislation
- Other users to pay licensing fee – legislation
- Information sharing

Red Group:

- Information one stop shop:
 - Environmental issues
 - Local facts/bylaws
 - Local preferences
 - Permissions – access across land, agreements
 - Gauges
 - Description
 - Link other river activities.

Blue Group:

- River catchment ‘user’ forums

Yellow Group:

- Local catchment access group & website for catchment
- Access arrangement – terms under which access is granted. Open licenses
- Local angling and paddling clubs. Meeting up.

Plenary discussions on Management Options (notes taken by facilitator):

- Tweed forum model – Tweed commissioners
- Must include wider users – not just anglers and paddlers – ‘new’ sports

- Use statutory resources to take things forward
- Some sections of the meeting feel that the law isn't clear. Some sections of the meeting feel that the law is completely clear.

Where next?

- Huge opportunity to open doors to greater access – take the opportunity
- Discussion on a continuous basis needed
- Huge issues to cover at agreement stage – liability etc
- Access fora set up for dialogue
- Need Canoe Wales to enter into dialogue and information sharing
- Potential income from access or other 'improvements'
- Not about income – its about property rights
- Must get everyone round the table.

List of attendees

Name	Organisation	Position
Cheryl Bulman	WSTTA/CPTAA	assistant secretary of WSTAA and also secretary of Cymdeithas Pysgota Tregaron Angling Association (CPTAA)
Tom Packham MSc MRICS	Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water	Estates Business Manager
Phil Jones	Officer of Pontardawe and Swansea Angling Society (river Tawe)	
Ray Lockyer	WSTAA	
Anthony Rees	Federation of Welsh Anglers and the Round Table Committee.	
Owen Struthers	Caerphilly Council	Countryside Planning Assistant
Gary Davies	Merthyr Tydfil Angling Association	Chairman
Paul Bowen	Crickhowell & District Angling Society	Access Officer
Nick Winder	Tirabad Resid'l Educ. Centre	
Gez Richards	Brecon Beacons National Park	water recreation officer
Dyfed Edwards	Fynnon Taf Angling Club	Head Bailiff / Riverbank maintenance officer)
Matthew Pritchard	Fynnon Taf Angling Club	
Jason Stone		Canoeist
Jeff Calligan	South Wales Outdoor Activities Providers Group	Mountain & River Activities
Robert Melvin	Fishery owner	
Richard Owen	Angler & journalist	
Jont Bulbeck	Countryside Council for Wales	Recreation & Access Section Access Section Head
S Robertson		
Phil Stone	Countryside Council for Wales	Senior Countryside Officer, Access & Recreation, West Region

Name	Organisation	Position
Gethyn Thomas	The Carmarthenshire Rivers Trust + Fisheries, Ecology and Recreation Advisory Committee (FERAC)	Chairman
Steven Marsh-Smith	Wye and Usk Foundation	Executive Director
Nick Brabner	Wye and Usk Foundation/United Usk Fishermen's Association	Trustee/Chairman:
Andy Schofield	Environment Agency Wales	Fisheries Strategy and Policy Manager
Jeff Harries	Tawe Kayak club	Chair
Rachel Evans	Countryside Alliance	
Gareth Bryant	Llandysul Paddlers Canoe Centre	
Steve Rayner	Brecon Canoe Club	Chair and Coaching/Development Officer
Richard Garner Williams	Salmon and Trout Association Wales	
RYAN PERROTT	Tawe and Tributaries Angling Association	
Gareth Williams	Tawe and Tributaries Angling Association	Chairman
Andrew Howell	Llandysul Angling Association	
Ben Underwood	Country Land and Business Association	Director Wales
Andy Shan	Individual	