

Appendix 2: Inventory of Resource Capability

The precursor to opening any negotiation is to establish what is physically and legally possible on the river in question. This relates to how much of the river could be canoed (and any modifications required to facilitate this), what environmental and other planning restrictions there are on this, and what potential there is for gaining access to the river from the public highway. In addition, there is a need to establish which organisations, agencies and government departments need to be consulted, and which can provide information and help in the negotiation and implementation processes.

The inventory could be written up as a formal document, or it could consist of one or more files of notes. Inventories should contain the following types of information:

Physical characteristics of the river

- Length
- Grades
- Play sites
- Weirs/locks (e.g. numbers and key issues)
- Portages (e.g. numbers and key issues)
- Surrounding landscape

Recreation

- Existing canoe use – existing agreements?
- Key canoeing users groups/organisations
- The catchment area of users (assessing whether it is of local, regional or national interest)
- The physical capacity to accommodate more canoe users
- Facilities – car parks, pubs, campsites, picnic sites
- The presence/absence/significance of other key canoeing rivers/facilities in the region
- The role of navigable waterways for canoeing close to the [case study?] site
- Existing angling use, key user groups/organisations and likely future use
- Other recreational use on the river and bankside and likely future use

Access

- Landownership features and the current access situation on the river
- The current access situation for ingress, egress and portage
- Current management and policing of access
- The current use of property rights
- Owner rents and income from the rivers
- Payment systems for recreation use and club membership
- Payment systems for facilities

Related policies

- Environmental policy designations and actions on the river/river system
- Rural economic diversification initiatives and the river/river system
- Social inclusion initiatives and the river/river system
- Educational users of the river/river system

Organisations that should be consulted

Environment Agency www.environment-agency.gov.uk

The Environment Agency website provides access to a variety of information pertinent to the context of canoe use. Alongside the overarching policies and strategies for the environment, it can be used to search for documents relating to water quality, regulations on water resources, statistical survey information about water use, resources on angling, and the Agency's legal duties regarding recreation. It also produces user guides to larger English rivers. In developing background information for negotiated access the Environment Agency should also be consulted for detail of its landholdings (e.g. around weirs, moorings, locks, sluices and pumping stations). The regional recreation officers can provide information relating to river uses and are able to access reports from river bailiffs. The Environment Agency also hold Regional Fisheries, Ecology and Recreation Advisory Committee (RFERAC) meetings, which are advisory groups that make recommendations on issues of concern in relation to fisheries, recreation, navigation and conservation. Membership details and minutes are contained on the website.

English Nature www.english-nature.org.uk

English Nature should be consulted for information relating to nature reserves, geological features, protected areas and important wildlife habitats. The website can be used to search for details of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), which need to be taken into account when managing access to, from and along the river. The website contains up-to-date information on new notifications of environmentally protected areas.

NOTE: from October 2006, English Nature, 2006 English Nature, the environment activities of the Rural Development Service and the Countryside Agency's Landscape, Access and Recreation division will be united in a single body called Natural England (for details, see http://www.countryside.gov.uk/WhoWeAreAndWhatWeDo/towards_natural_england.asp)

English Heritage www.english-heritage.org.uk

Some rivers pass through or past historically important buildings and features. English Heritage should be consulted for details of the location of its properties and the implications of heritage protection on access to the rivers.

Local Authorities

The website www.directgov.uk can be used as a portal to identify local authorities from which it is possible to search for their relevant planning, environment and/or recreation policies and officers. Local authorities should be consulted for information relating to recreation and tourism initiatives, local planning restrictions and developments and local authority land ownership. The local highways authority should also be consulted about issues of access from public highways to the river.

National Park Authorities www.nationalparks.gov.uk

A number of rivers in England flow through National Parks, which have a statutory duty to conserve natural beauty, wildlife and human heritage and to promote the understanding and enjoyment of these special qualities. Documents relating to these aspects and broader recreational strategies/policy should be consulted and National Parks officers may provide more specific information relating to the development of recreational opportunities for canoeing. National Park Authorities are also the local planning and highways authority for their administrative area.

Organisations that can provide essential information

British Canoe Union www.bcu.org.uk

Alongside a wealth of information about the practice and culture of canoeing, the British Canoe Union has a network of local and regional officers who can provide specific information, advice and guidance relating to rivers. There are also specialists who can be consulted relating to engineering and portage works that may be required in order to provide safe passage along the river.

Local Access Forums

The Defra website contains details about Local Access Forums (LAFs) established under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This can be found at: www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/cl/accessopen/accessopen13.htm

Local Access Forums are responsible for publishing Rights of Way Improvement Plans, which set out in detail the broad context for recreational access. Few plans make explicit reference to access to inland waters. However, access along the banks of inland waters is often a valuable recreational resource, meaning that some plans have policies and actions that may offer opportunities to those seeking canoe access to the waters.

Ordnance Survey

OS Maps are useful for providing information on specific environmental designations and prominent features on the river. These were used to identify footpaths, access to the road, weirs, pubs, campsites, bridges, and other environmental features. www.multimap.co.uk provides online maps at a various scales, which can be used for

this research. More detailed information relating to environmental designations, wildlife habitats, geological and historic features was obtained from the agencies below.

Defra www.defra.gov.uk

The Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) website holds information on the latest Government policy and strategy concerning the countryside and its uses. Information is available on environmental protection schemes, rural development initiatives, environmental statistics (e.g. on inland water quality & use), data on economic development and inclusion in rural areas, and general research pertaining to the environment and rural affairs, which can be used to ascertain a diverse array of contextual data from local population figures to spatial information about the British Countryside (using the Countryside Information System). The Wildlife and Countryside Research programme is also useful for research reports on countryside recreation.

Regional Development Agencies www.englishrda.com

The eight English Regional Development Agencies (Advantage West Midlands, East of England Development Agency, East Midlands Development Agency, London Development Agency, North West Development Agency, One North East, South East England Development Agency, South West of England Regional Development Agency and Yorkshire Forward) are useful for information relating to regional economic strategies which may have an impact on the positioning and profile of the countryside as a regional resource. A number of RDAs are developing policy toward rural economic development (e.g. Market Towns Initiatives and investing in environmental assets), and such schemes have identified the importance of investing in recreational routes to maximise the visitor potential of the regions.

Countryside Agency www.countryside.gov.uk

The Countryside Agency provides evidence and advice on different countryside dimensions – economic, environmental, community and recreation. It has a number of statutory duties relating to national parks and mapping open land for public access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Such information can be useful for mapping access to and from inland rivers. The website contains information relating to recreation and access, including day visitor surveys, diversity reviews (on how the countryside is used and by whom), country parks, greenways and national trails.

See Note Above with respect to the formation of Natural England

Forestry Commission www.forestry.gov.uk

The Forestry Commission has information relating to the uses and management of woodland, which has explored the nature of public access to forests and woodland and their association recreation and tourism. This information can be used to ascertain potential and future markets for users for negotiated access trails on inland rivers.

Sport England www.sportengland.org

At the regional level Sport England has obtained information relating to water use in areas where this is a prominent aspect of the sporting culture and have set regional watersport strategies, which should be consulted if access agreements are to be developed.

The Ramblers Association www.ramblers.org.uk

This website provides user-friendly information on various public rights of way schemes. There are conclusive maps on where you can walk, legal information on the obligations of walkers and land managers and details of how access is related to Defra's agri-environment schemes in England. Links to Local Access Forums, which are statutory advisory bodies on improving public access to land in their areas for all types of open air recreation, are also available.

Countryside Recreation Network www.countrysidecreation.org.uk

Countryside Recreation exists to share information and develop best policy and practice in countryside recreation. The site holds a number of reports pertinent to the development of countryside recreation and the journal 'Countryside Recreation' is a source for articles on contemporary issues affecting access to the rivers and countryside more broadly. Recent articles, for instance, have looked at watersports policy and access to important national watersport resources. The site also holds a searchable information database for content related to various government agency programmes and is a useful starting point for gathering contextual information.