

**Glenridding Common (Helvellyn)**  
**JOHN MUIR TRUST DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN**  
for potential lease period (2017 – 2019)  
**PREPARED IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE LAKE DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

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**INTRODUCTION**

A draft management plan was made available to help inform a consultation process on the proposal that the John Muir Trust lease Glenridding Common from the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) for a period of up to three years. **It is high level and preliminary and aims to give a clear sense of what the Trust would hope to deliver by way of management if a lease was to be approved. The proposals within this plan have been influenced and informed by the inputs to this consultation. It is intended to produce a more detailed management plan within 6 months of the commencement of the lease, to allow incorporation of detailed practical knowledge gained in working on the property and consulting further with local stakeholders.**

We provide some background on the John Muir Trust; the area of land under consideration; what the Trust’s overall aims for management of the land would be under a lease; and the sorts of actions we could envisage carrying out, within the designations that apply to this land.

Overall the John Muir Trust management would seek to recognise the wider strategic context of Glenridding Common within the Lake District National Park Partnership’s vision: as a key area of Common land within the National Park; its contribution to the Special Qualities of the Lake District; its cultural heritage and place within the Lake District

Landscape Character Assessment and as a major attribute of the candidate English Lake District World Heritage site.

### **WHO IS THE JOHN MUIR TRUST?**

The John Muir Trust<sup>1</sup> is a registered charity with a UK-wide membership dedicated to the protection of wild land for the benefit of people and nature. It has 2,500 members in northern England, a positive track-record of working with local communities and encourages active participation through local membership groups and work parties. It works with partners to deliver the John Muir Award – a successful outdoor environmental initiative that the Lake District National Park Authority has embraced as a core part of its educational remit.

The Trust is experienced in upland management and owns major properties in Scotland, including world-renowned landscapes such as Ben Nevis and works closely with crofting communities on a number of its properties. It is seeking to broaden its land management operations and thereby its membership base by management and association with high quality landscapes in England and Wales.

The Trust's mission is: *'To conserve and protect wild places with their indigenous animals, plants and soils for the benefit of present and future generations.'* The Trust's vision is: *'Of a world where wild places are protected, enhanced, and valued by and for everyone, whilst recognising that these are working landscapes; that contain people living and working in harmony with wild places.'*

### **WHAT LAND IS UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR LEASE?**

The land under consideration for lease is Glenridding Common, a property of around 1,000ha. Its south-western boundary runs along Helvellyn summit, which together with Swirral Edge and Striding Edge (both on the property) comprise one of the best known walking routes in the Lake District. Other landscape features include Catstye Cam and Brown Cove whilst on land to the north, the Lake District Ski Club uses slopes on the flanks of Raise. It includes 203ha in joint ownership with the National Trust (area B on Map). The area *excludes* Greenside mine and the associated area of mining archaeology within the Scheduled Ancient Monument (areas C and D on Map below) which will remain under management of the National Park Authority.

It has high environmental status as part of a Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest. It is registered common land which is managed through traditional methods by local farmers who have rights of communal grazing. A major industrial legacy based on lead mining is reflected in numerous archaeological features across the site, part of which is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (although the majority of these features are excluded from the proposed lease area).

These attributes heighten its significance to a wide range of stakeholders including the local community, farmers, neighbouring landowners, conservation interests, visiting public and other users.

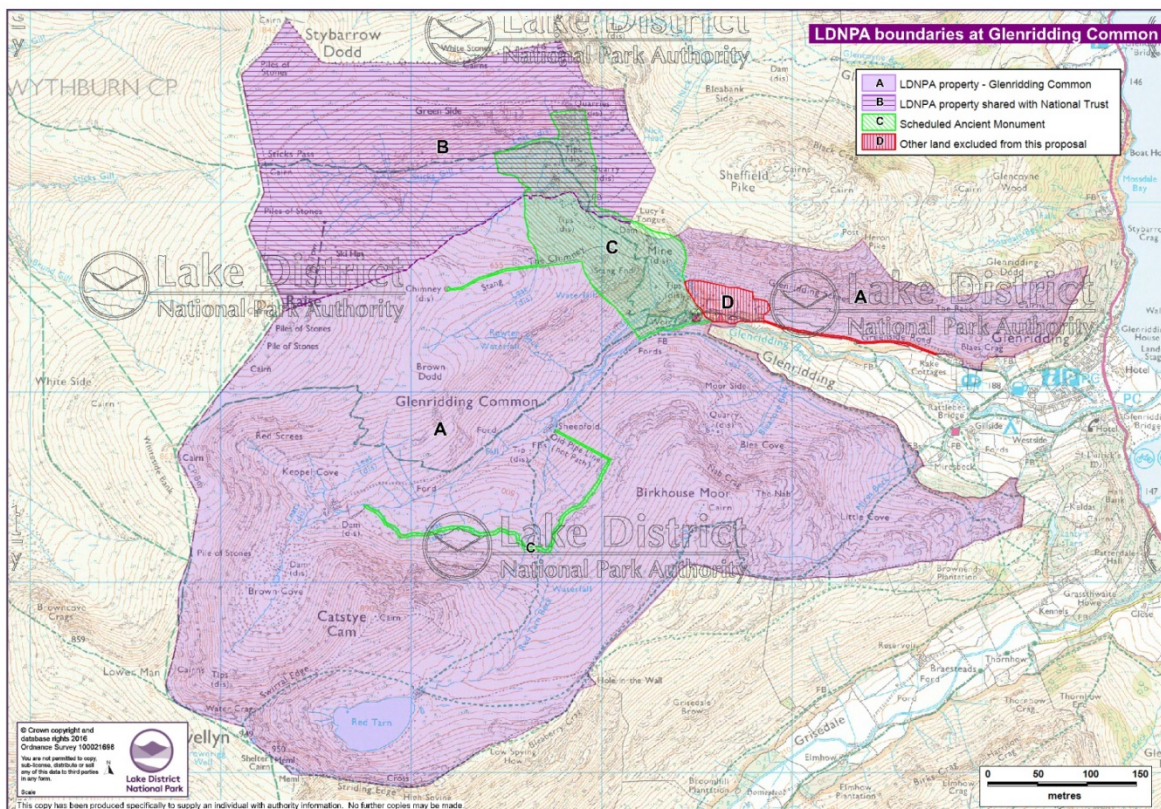
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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/>

## NATURAL HERITAGE DESIGNATIONS

Glenridding Common is part of the Lake District High Fells Special Area of Conservation which contains part of the Helvellyn and Fairfield Site of Special Scientific Interest and sits within National Character Area 8: the Cumbrian High Fells. The John Muir Trust recognises the Lake District Landscape Character Assessment (which aims to ensure that the ecology, landscape and culture is protected) as a key reference source for landscape character. The combination of unusually base-rich rock outcrops, harsh micro-climate and inaccessibility to sheep in the high altitude corries has provided a refuge for the arctic-alpine flora which is the main feature of biological importance. Additional biological interest occurs in the forms of large stands of juniper scrub woodland, a variety of montane and upland heath, grassland and flush communities, and two high-level nutrient-poor (oligotrophic) tarns. Helvellyn is also important for glacial and periglacial geomorphology. Red Tarn is only one of four sites containing the rare and endemic Schelley fish.

**Map: Indicative boundaries of proposed lease showing exclusions**



## COMMON LAND

Cumbria has the largest concentration of common land in Britain and possibly Western Europe with many of its commons situated in the National Park. Glenridding Common is one of many in the Lake District that provide an important resource for individual hill-farmers based on a system of collective management which has evolved over many centuries. The extent of active common land in the Lake District resulting in a landscape of special cultural significance is one of the key attributes of outstanding universal value which

has been identified in the current bid for World Heritage Site inscription for the English Lake District. Glenridding Common has two active graziers and there is a Higher Level Stewardship Scheme in place for a period of 10 years from April 2013.

The John Muir Trust recognises that Glenridding Common is managed through an agropastoral system of commoning that is one of the outstanding universal values of the Lake District National Park and we have made commitments that:

- We will support the system of commoning, including the rights of common exercised by legitimate commoners;
- We will not refuse consent to future agri-environment or other farming schemes that the commoners may apply for which would maintain sheep grazing at the same level as present or at levels acceptable to Natural England or similar body;
- We will consult with the local community and all those with legal interests on any planting schemes or other works on the holding which require S. 38 Consent under the Commons Act 2006. We will present an annual programme of other proposed works to the Parish Council and the commoners;
- To ensure unimpeded access for gathering, any works that may have the potential to compromise access routes used for the gathering of sheep will only be undertaken with the express agreement of the commoners;
- If, in the event of the failure of the current HLS Scheme and / or if no further scheme is available to the commoners, then we will not object to the commoners exercising their legal rights of common.

#### ARCHAEOLOGY

The property has historically been part of an industrial lead mining site and although most of the legacy is at Greenside, off the common (and excluded from the proposed lease area), there are a number of features of historical interest such as the Stang End chimney and the Kepple Cove water leat which fed an, at the time, unique electric generator. The Kepple Cove dam was the upper reservoir for the mine until it burst in 1927. This dam is now in disrepair and requires regular safety monitoring. Two of the features are designated Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

If granted a lease, the John Muir Trust will be meeting with local experts in the field of industrial archaeology around Glenridding with the intention of collating an inventory of condition, if not already available, of important features and how we can best prioritise future work of stabilisation and repair. We will work with these local interest groups to assess the availability of funding for enhancement, repair or interpretation. With expert guidance, there may also be the potential for engaging volunteers in these works.

#### RIGHT HOLDERS

Under the proposed lease the LDNPA would remain the landowner with the John Muir Trust being a leaseholder. The open common is grazed by two local farmers with commons rights. A third farmer grazes the northern part of the common which is jointly owned with the

National Trust. The Lake District Ski club has a lease. None of the existing rights would be affected.

### **WHAT WOULD A MANAGEMENT PLAN LOOK LIKE?**

The John Muir Trust produces public management plans for all the properties it manages<sup>2</sup> with actions based on our Wild Land Management Standards<sup>3</sup>. These standards have been developed for land currently managed in Scotland and will be modified in parallel with finalising this plan to take account of the different context in the Lakes such as different legal and land management arrangements.

### **POTENTIAL LONG TERM AIMS**

Although a draft management plan would cover actions for an initial three year lease period it would do so in the context of long term aims. During the development of a management plan and its actions, the Trust would seek to develop actions such as:

#### **ENGAGEMENT WITH GRAZIERS, NEIGHBOURS, LOCAL COMMUNITY AND PARTNERS**

- Develop management plan actions in consultation with graziers and ensure that any management decisions protect their rights, livelihoods and interests;
- The management plan will commit the Trust to liaison with the local community and other stakeholders on an annual work programme;
- Engage with the active communities of Patterdale and Glenridding and the National Trust, in matters affecting the wider valley such as flood management;
- Engage with wider stakeholders, community groups, businesses and users of the area over potential projects and the establishment of a 'user forum.'

#### **ENCOURAGE VISITORS TO RESPECTFULLY ENJOY GLENRIDDING COMMON**

- Ensure continued open access, whilst seeking to minimise negative impacts such as footpath erosion, through work with partners such as Fix the Fells and the LDNPA to maintain the network of footpaths and bridleways;
- Seek to work with Fix the Fells to implement their programme on a funding and priority basis by contributing in staff / volunteer time and financially where appropriate;
- Work with the LDNPA to help maintain the rights of way network through the use of volunteers and contractors;
- Engage with partners such as the British Mountaineering Council and fell top assessors to highlight the potential for damage to alpine plant communities from winter climbing on crags in marginal winter weather conditions; install temperature probes on Helvellyn crags to give climbers real time information on the suitability for winter climbing;

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<sup>2</sup> See for example:

[https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/assets/000/001/788/East\\_Schiehallion\\_Management\\_Plan\\_2015\\_to\\_2025\\_draft\\_original.pdf?1467275144](https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/assets/000/001/788/East_Schiehallion_Management_Plan_2015_to_2025_draft_original.pdf?1467275144)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.wildlandmanagement.org.uk/>

- Work with the public and graziers to minimise visitor impact such as sheep worrying by dogs and litter (especially around the summit area, Red Tarn and below the crags); use regular volunteer effort and dedicated clear up days alongside staff;
- Work with the residents of Greenside and the Lake District National Park Authority in their efforts to manage and maintain the bridleway access to the Common and in conjunction with the cottages and hostel community help with proportionate maintenance and finance;
- Work with event organisers to avoid potential conflict and increased erosion through licencing of large scale events to confirm liabilities and insurance<sup>4</sup>.

#### ENSURE THAT THE ECOLOGY, CULTURE AND LANDSCAPE IS PROTECTED & ENHANCED

- The John Muir Trust will work with other land managers and statutory bodies to enhance the condition of the common into a more favourable condition in relation to its designations;
- Maintain the contribution of Glenridding Common to the outstanding universal value of the English Lake District World Heritage site bid through supporting the World Heritage Site bid and if successful will, with other interests, support in an holistic way the aims of World Heritage Site management in the Lake District;
- Take account of the Landscape Character Assessment and guidelines;
- Work with The Patterdale and Glenridding Flood Group and partners to help in exploring delivery of natural flood management, including tree planting, in relation to flood recovery plans consulting all those potentially involved or effected;
- To ensure that archaeological and historical features, along with their settings, are appropriately maintained, following a condition survey with the LDNPA to ascertain present condition; Work with local experts on the potential for individual schemes;
- Collate existing extensive information, and develop monitoring plans for specific species (e.g. mountain ringlet butterfly and breeding bird surveys) as well as developing a baseline monitoring and survey programme;
- Where opportunities arise, enhance the biodiversity of the area, for example through continuation of downy willow planting and explore other opportunities;
- Work with neighbours on future initiatives and proposals for the wider landscape.

#### DEVELOP EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- Explore opportunities for information provision for safety, education and enjoyment and potentially membership at the Tourist Information Centre in Glenridding and at key entry points;
- The John Muir Award is well known in the valley, as a means for people to connect with, understand and care for wild places, through local outdoor providers, catchment and visiting schools, and community groups and the Trust would hope to develop the Award further, through management of Glenridding Common;

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<sup>4</sup>CCC have an events database which circulates the planned events to involved owners for comment. The NPA would forward to the John Muir Trust events requested for the common for licencing, mitigation of potential impact on the special qualities of the area, erosion and to ensure they do not impact on the work of the graziers. The Trust would then consent, or otherwise, proposed events

- Explore opportunities for volunteers to help in site management such as footpath maintenance, archaeological restoration and environmental survey work and develop links with John Muir Trust conservation work parties<sup>5</sup>;
- Use the Trust website, social media and other communications to provide information and advice on responsible and safe use of the area as well as information on its special qualities. Link to Fell Top Assessor information provision;
- We will establish a 'user forum' (including Patterdale Council, the commoners and stakeholder bodies) to gather at least annually to discuss the implementation of the management plan.

#### INCOME AND INVESTMENT

The Lake District National Park Authority has a duty to ensure that it fully explores all options for the management of the land that it owns. As part of this duty and as a public body with limited resources it recognises that there may be alternative organisations that could continue to improve and enhance the special qualities of the land. This is a major factor in the Park looking to lease Glenridding Common. The Trust offers a potential opportunity to access new and additional funding, which is not available to the Park, to manage and staff the property. We have a track record of accessing funding from a variety of sources for these purposes.

The Trust delivers land management on its existing properties through a mixture of membership funding, general donations, appeals, applications to Charitable Trusts and a range of other grant funders including lotteries. In addition, the Trust has existing designated funds which are set aside for major land projects. It is envisaged that the Trust would utilise some of its existing resources during the lease period, alongside accessing new support from charitable funders willing to contribute towards expansion and land management costs. The Trust would also plan to work with existing organisations who currently fund land management at Glenridding Common such as the Fix the Fells Partnership, Natural England and potentially the Environment Agency. The Trust would aim to employ a dedicated (part time) Property Manager and longer term a seasonal (summer) Ranger.

The John Muir Trust has agreed that as a minimum, the annual average level of spend contributed by the Trust will not fall below the current level and that it is likely to significantly exceed the amount currently budgeted by the National Park. This will include staffing, volunteering and contributions to the Fix the Fells programme. The Trust has already committed resources to employ a local Property Manager and representative (Pete Barron). If a lease is granted the Trust plans to recruit a seasonal ranger to assist with practical projects and public engagement in future years.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/support-us/volunteer/conservation-volunteering>