

THE FUTURE OF THE VALLEY LAKES



Crummock Water was first dammed in the 1880s with timber structures which were then replaced with the current stone/masonry ones in 1904. This

raised the water level by about 1.6m and the surface area by 2-3%. In 1912, a 200m section of Park Beck was canalised, preventing natural hydro-geomorphic processes and reducing biodiversity over this short stretch.

With the completion of the new pipeline from Thirlmere to West Cumbria (ending the need for Crummock Water to be used for public water supply), United Utilities has recently held drop-in sessions to tell everyone about their future plans. There's not enough space here to describe in any detail UU's initial proposals to reverse this process and re-naturalise Crummock Water and its shoreline. All the material shown at the drop-in sessions is now on the UU website (<https://www.unitedutilities.com/Crummock/>). There's also some interesting visualisations over time of the Crummock landscape done by the University of Newcastle in collaboration with United Utilities in an open-access paper published in [Landscape and Urban Planning 2022, 221,104372](#). There's no definite plans yet for what might be done in Ennerdale.

In 2020, I wrote an update about the work of West Cumbria Rivers Trust (through its Loweswater Care Programme). Since then, we have continued our monitoring of the lake and its feeder becks and have completed a long-standing goal of naturalising a previously-



canalised section of Dub Beck above the lake. 2023 marks the 10th anniversary of when we started practical work in the DEFRA-funded project "Improving water quality in Loweswater", so we will be holding a local meeting in Loweswater Village Hall on Wednesday 17 May in the evening to tell everyone about what we have achieved over this time. More on this in the May Link. Sorry but nothing about the other valley lake Buttermere on this occasion (probably a good thing).

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