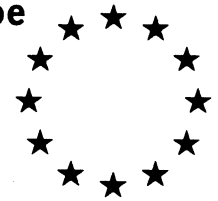
Council of Europe
Conseil de l'Europe



Strasbourg, 9 February 1996
[S:\ZP96\DOCUMENT\ZP44E.96]

PE-S-ZP (96) 44

Group of Specialists on Protected Areas (PE-S-ZP)

Strasbourg, 6 - 8 March 1996

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK (United Kingdom)

Category C

Renewal

On-the-spot appraisal
by Mr Hervé LETHIER (France)

INTRODUCTION

The European Diploma was awarded to the Peak District National Park, United Kingdom, in 1966, in category C[1]. It has been renewed three times, the latest renewal being for a period of five years which expires on 28 March 1996[2].

The purpose of this appraisal is to assess the appropriateness of renewing the European Diploma for the Peak District National Park for a further five-year term.

It has been drawn up subsequent to a field visit made on 25 and 26 April 1995, with Mr. Hacourt, of the Nature Conservation and Environmental Management Division (part I).

This visit enabled us to see how the conclusions and recommendations included in the latest renewal of the Diploma had been followed up, and to see whether, independently of these measures, the Peak District National Park still meets the conditions stipulated by the European Diploma, in Category C (part II).

The visit also enabled us to draw conclusions about additional proposals and new recommendations made to the Park authorities, aimed at preserving the Park's future character, in the spirit of the European Diploma (part III).

PART I THE VISIT

I-1 Persons met:

We stayed at Losehill Hall Training Centre, close to the Park, in the town of Castleton, Derbyshire. Throughout our visit, we were accompanied by John Anfield, Director of Planning. George Challenger, responsible for conservation issues, was with us part of the time.

On three occasions we met Christopher Harrison, Director of the Park, and advisers Martin Doughty and Norman Wilson, respectively Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Park Committee.

We also met, in chronological order, Peter Townsend (Director of Losehill Hall), Denis Ludlam (Losehill Hall Administrator), councillors Mrs. Wood and Mr. Drake (Yeam Parish), William Trinick (Park agent), Dr. John Barnatt (Park archaeologist), Peter Dumeril ("Blue Circle Cement" quarry manager), Dave Bent (Park technician in charge of quarries), David Wilson (National Trust), Mike Rhodes (Park technician responsible for upkeep of the Pennine Way), Peter McGowan (Park warden), Pat Waterfall (coordinator of the study group in charge of the Longdendale District management plan), Rod Starbuck (Agricultural Development Department), Gordon Danks (Park warden), and, lastly, Gordon Miller (Park warden and coordinator of the European Federation of Park Wardens).

---

[1] Cf. resolution (66) 22 of the Committee of Ministers.

[2] Cf. resolution (91) 11 of the Committee of Ministers.

I-2 The Programme

Reference should be made to previous appraisals[3] for more details about the status and general characteristics of the Park. The data included below will merely provide certain information about the way the visit went.

Peak District National Park, which is situated near the city of Manchester, was created in 1951. It covers an area of 1404 sq.km [542 sq.mi] and is visited annually by more than 20,000,000 people[4]. The Park has a permanent population of some 40,000 people. This very large number of visitors makes the Peak District Park one of the most visited parks in the world.

Resulting pressures have been increasing by the year, and make managing the park an ever more delicate task, particularly in terms of handling and accommodating visitors and dealing with road traffic. The result is that the park authorities are having to deal with ever greater infrastructural demands (access roads, carparks, basic facilities) and an ever greater demand for services (transport, accommodation, programmes). At the same time, they must keep a watchful eye on maintaining the integrity of the archaeology, environment and landscape of the area.

Added to this are the effects of industrial activities-- quarrying and construction in particular--which predate the creation of the Park.

The programme thus included a series of field visits illustrating the measures taken by local authorities to limit the negative effects of these developments. The information gathered during these visits was supplemented by various discussions with Park administrators and staff, as well as detailed documents either handed out on the spot or mailed to us after the visit.

The main places visited were the following:

a) *the village of Yeam (village improvements and restoration of traditional buildings)*

The village of Yeam, with about 1,000 inhabitants, has 450 dwellings.
It became a designated protected area in 1981[5], and is now a favourite stopover for visitors because of its central location in the Park, and also because of the quality of its buildings (old stone-roofed houses).

In the 19th century, local people worked in the lead mines. This activity no longer exists, but nowadays there are guided tours of the disused facilities.

Over the past ten years, around 100 houses have been built each year in the Park. Today, within the precincts of the village of Yeam, building permits are only granted for

---

[3] In particular the one made by Klemm, 1989.

[4] In 1994 the Park was visited by 23,000,000 people.

[5] The protected area was extended in July 1983 to the nearby hills, as well as to several sites and monuments associated with the plague which broke out in the village in the past.

main residences homes. In the village itself, The Park and the local parish[6] together encourage the restoration of old buildings, which thus helps to reduce the adverse effects of land pressures.

Much emphasis has also been laid on the provision of parking areas for tourist buses, the restoration of old listed buildings (there are some 2,800 within the Park), the promotion of traditional building materials (e.g. stone and stone roofing slabs) and the use of traditional colours, especially for the roofs of farm buildings.[7]

Upcoming work will focus on improving the traffic flow within the village at busy times of the year.

The village of Yeam provides a very good illustration of the way a park and local authorities can work in complementary ways--in the case in point in relation to the development and improvement of a small village which receives large numbers of tourists lured by the Park.

Mrs. Wood and Mr. Drake, both Yeam Parish councillors, acted as our guides when we visited the village.

b) Eastern Moors (management of an area of mixed archaeological and environmental interest).

The local archaeological wealth concentrated in the wildest part of the Park lends it a scientific and cultural interest that is greatly valued by visitors in quest of traces of man's very early presence in these parts.

This is the case with Eastern Moors[8], an area particularly difficult to manage because of its biological wealth, a high concentration of sites of archaeological interest, and livestock herding. Added to these factors are the effects of tourism which may at times show little respect for the anthropological and natural heritage.

---

[6] There are currently 120 parishes within the Park, i.e. about one per village. Each parish has a council elected for a four-year term, which can be annually renewed by third parties. The parishes are involved in particular in development and planning issues. Their responsibilities cover the protection of natural habitats surrounding built-up areas, and even the extension of protected areas.

The parishes are thus the Park's main partners. The Park itself can act in a technical and financial capacity, but it has no administrative courses of action.

[7] The Park assumes 20% of the cost of such work, thus partly making up for the extra cost incurred by the application of these building regulations, which involve an overall additional expenditure of around 100%.

[8] This zone, designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), covers an area of some 2,500 ha [6,175 acres], and is situated at the eastern end of the Park, at an average altitude of 300 m [1000 ft]. It is partly made up of limestone peatbogs, known as Eastern Edge, which looks down on the Derwent valley. The Park purchased this zone from the Severn Trent Water Authority in 1984 for the sum of £665,000 sterling, 20% from its own funds, and the remainder with the financial help of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Countryside Commission, and the Nature Conservancy Council.

According to the Park's annual report for 1994, about 30.5% of the Park's area is now designated as SSSIs or NNRs (National Nature Reserves). This represents almost 44,000 ha [110,000 acres] of protected areas.

The Park has taken on a qualified archaeologist, who has carried out a very detailed study of the area's archaeological wealth in the area richest in remains. This expert is working with the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments, and the Park agent responsible for the pastoral and environmental management of the site.

The Park administrators must, for example, solve the problem of the Park's natural ageing, which is detrimental to both the conservation of archaeological remains and local biodiversity.

The use of fire and the recourse to herding offer partial solutions to this problem, but their implementation must be thoroughly adapted to the extreme vulnerability of the habitat. The livestock load must not lead to the destruction or remains, be it direct (by trampling) or indirect (by compacting), and fire must be used with great caution so as not to rob the very fragile soil of its structure, or destroy remains that are above ground.

These issues are being dealt with by a management plan[9], which also makes provision for the upkeep and reconstruction of dry stone walls, an aspect which gives structure to the local landscape, which has been conspicuously marked by man's presence since the Neolithic period.[10]

c) Lathkill Dale Nature Reserve (joint management and educational schooltrips to the countryside)

The Lathkill Dale Nature Reserve lies in a small limestone valley hemmed in by grass- and woodland, and covers an area of 120 ha [200 acres].[11] It is also a good example of cooperation between the Park and other parties involved.

In this particular case, English Nature[12], which owns half the area of the Reserve and has drawn up a management agreement--for herding and forestry in particular--with the owners of the other half, is responsible for the management of all the area constituting the Reserve.

---

[9] The Eastern Moors management plan has three major goals: the conservation and development of environmental, scientific and historical wealth of the area, accommodating the public, and maintaining farming, within bounds compatible with the conservation of the area. This plan, which was drawn up in 1986 and revised in 1993, limits livestock pressures to around 2,000 ewes; it establishes a rotating programme for burning vegetation, designed to contain its growth, and it provides for the reconstruction of some 1,000 metres/year of stone walls, as compared with the 35 miles existing in this area.

Two main sectors have been singled out, the one completely open to visitors, the other described as a "sanctuary". Access to this latter is discouraged, and limited to a few trails. The management plan provides for a regular assessment of the way the area is being managed.

[10] In all some two kilometres of walls are restored each year in the park, at a cost of about £18 sterling/metre. The total budget for the area amounts to around £100,000 sterling per annum for the current 1993-1999 period.

[11] Lathkill Dale is located inside the Derbyshire Dale Nature Reserve (a National Nature Reserve or NNR), with a total area of 350 ha [865 acres].

[12] English Nature is the English division of the Nature Conservancy Council which manages the NNRs.

Hunting grounds are rented on an independent basis and only reared game (pheasants) may be hunted.

d) Miller's Dale station and outbuildings (transformation of an old railway track into a nature trail)

This visit enabled us to bring up the key issue of using and even developing public transport in the Park, in response to the problems posed by road traffic. It also helped us to see how the old railway infrastructures, stations and tracks may be put to recreational and educational use.

This time around, we noted a very marked determination, on the part of the Park authorities and of the Committee Chairman in particular, to promote the use of public railway transport within the Park.[13]

Such a formula nevertheless calls for a detailed technical, financial and economic analysis, extending considerably further than the Park's strict geographical boundaries. This line of thinking will have to be applied to the catchment area for visitors, i.e. the city of Manchester and its greater area, at the very least.

Where the second point is concerned, the use of presently abandoned railway structures may, in some instances, serve the interests and aims of the Park, as is well illustrated by the site of Millers Dale station, which has been partly developed as a Park Information Office, and the adjacent track, which has been converted partly into an area where people can walk and run, and partly into a nature trail.

e) Blue Circle Cement (restoration of quarries by filling in, revegetation, and landscape rehabilitation)

The extraction and processing of minerals from quarries is still a vital resource for local people. It also meets a national need for principally limestone material, 10% of which is met by the deposits mined in the park.[14]

Mining was going on in the Park well before it received its Diploma rating from the Council of Europe.

---

[13] The Park spent £135,000 sterling on the promotion of public transport in 1994, and £15,000 sterling in 1995. The effectiveness of the system set up is now being monitored. This should help toward a more detailed analysis than the current one, which is based on ticket sales and other partial evaluations.

[14] At the current time, there are some ten large limestone quarries in the Park, providing material for the manufacture of cement and aggregates. In the 1980s, their total annual production rose from 3.9 million tons to 8.9 million tons, and dropped in 1990 to 8.6 million tons.

These figures should be compared with the 100 million tons of authorised reserves, to which should be added 240 million tons of additional authorised reserves, made up of materials for cutting and dressing, or for the chemical industry.

It is generally admitted that these reserves should meet requirements for a further 35 years. This means that, in the current state of authorised mining operations, quarry activities will continue to be a major activity in the Park, in the long term, and will have to be constantly and closely watched by Park managers.

This very sensitive matter was raised at some length in the two previous assessments, which wound up by stating precise recommendations[15]. More recently, the Council of Europe has itself been worried by the enlargement of a quarry in the Park.[16]

The purpose of the Blue Circle Cement visit was to show the work undertaken in this respect by the Park since the previous assessment, in terms of negotiation and technical assistance to mine operators, and by the operators themselves, by bearing ecological and environmental constraints in mind.

We were especially impressed by the reclamation operations at the Blue Circle Cement site. The site visit helped us to see that the quarry issue was being taken seriously by the Park authorities and by the mining sector.

The Park has a small team of experienced technicians, working with the planning department. This team is responsible for negotiating mining conditions with licensee companies, and, together with these companies, examining the best ways of reclaiming these sites, both ecologically and environmentally speaking, based on the current state of the mines.

In the case of Blue Circle Cement, the issue was particularly delicate because of the legacy of the past, predating the creation of the Park.[17] It should be stressed that, as far back as 1943, the company hired a landscape gardener to draw up a general quarry reclamation plan. This plan is still the basis for current operations. At the present time, this company employs 234 people for mining operations. It extracts 1.3 million tons of material per annum, and earmarks about £30,000 sterling a year for site restoration.[18]

The lower areas of the mine have had more artificial landscaping, including the construction of a nine-hole golf-course, which it is planned to extend to 18 holes over the years to come.

The old settling tanks, that were in use when the screening-crushing unit operated on a water-based process--today the process used is a dry one, thus reducing the unit's polluting effects--have been turned into fishing ponds after re-embanking and revegetation.

But we were particularly impressed by the fill operations in the mined areas, extending to a depth of 70-80 metres [230-260 feet]. Revegetation seems to have been successful in delicate soil conditions, and with an almost total absence of humus-rich soil.

---

[15] In Parts II and III of this report we shall return to the way these recommendations have been considered and, more generally, to the development of this activity since the last appraisal.

[16] Cf. on this subject the Park's written reply JRA/LW/A296/MIN3913, dated 9 March 1994, concerning the Goddard quarry, explaining that this enlargement had been negotiated in the interest of the Park and at a constant extraction volume, so as to reduce the adverse end effects of the quarry.

[17] Old mine, traditional mining methods with a large working face, acquired mining rights...

[18] On average it plants 1,500 trees a year, 1.6 million in a single year, using just local stock from native species: *Sorbus aucuparia, Fraxinus excelsior, Salix caprea, Taxus baccata*...

The landscaped areas have been refashioned on the basis of structures roundabout. Dry stone walls, for example, have been built to recreate the surrounding network.

This is an outstanding example within the Park, where we noted that mining in the quarries was still a top-priority concern of the authorities, and posed a permanent threat to the Park's future, despite the relatively satisfactory results obtained since the last assessment.

To wind up this visit, the example offered by Blue Circle Cement also reminds us that flexibility is called for in dealing with the issue of quarry reclamation.

In this precise instance, the mining boundaries have actually been altered, but with a constant volume of authorised extraction. The purpose of this alteration was undoubtedly to satisfy the demands made by the company, which would thus have access to better quality material, but also to reduce the quarry's impact on the landscape, and simplify its reclamation. In this case, the 25-30 metre [80-100 foot] working faces initially authorised have been reduced to 15 metres [50 feet], based on a mining programme that shows more respect for the local landscape.

It should be remembered that these adaptations, regarded overall as positive by us and such as to reduce the future impact of the quarry, were negotiated in a situation of entitlement acquired by the mining company.

For the record, we observed a peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) wheeling over the quarry during our visit. The mining company thought that this species might have been nesting in the site for the past two seasons[19]as well as a pair of kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*).

We also noted the new arrangements appearing in the Park's Structural Plan adopted in 1994, which rules out the opening and enlargement of new quarries and submits current mining operations to very strict inspections.[20]These rules now apply to all mineral extraction operations, whatever their nature, as well as to waste storage depots.

f) Pennine Way (upkeep of a hiking trail using stone slabs and wooden structures)

The northern part of the Park is the wildest. It consists of huge peaty areas [21], much visited by hikers. The physical environment is extremely vulnerable to trampling, and it is an important area for certain species of nesting birds, including the golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) and more common native species, in particular the grouse (*Lagopus lagopus*). The Park contains 51 km [32 mi] of the Pennine Way, a hiking trail running east to west for 460 km [290 mi]. It is used each year by 200,000 visitors.

The Nature Trust owns part of this area and has a lease on the rest. With 2.2 million members and a budget of £145 million sterling in 1994[22], Nature Trust has a staff of 3,000

---

[19] Two nesting pairs have apparently been observed on the site.

[20]Cf. Peak National Park structural plan, adopted replacement, final edition, November 1994, chapter 8, pp.75-88.

[21]These habitats, called "moors", cover more than one-third of the total area of the Park, which owns 8.5% of them. They represent three-quarters of the ESAs designated to date in the Park.

[22]There is an annual subscription of £20 sterling.

full-time employees, including a unit of five technicians responsible for the management of the Pennine Way. It receives both financial and technical backing from the Park [23] for the upkeep and improvement of the Pennine Way, in particular the five kilometres [3 mi] on either side of the Snake Pass road, an area much visited by hikers.

Two protection techniques are used. One consists in installing duckboards on the wettest and most fragile stretches, after proper preparation of the ground (which is covered with sand to a depth of about 40-50 cm); the other in laying paving stones, some of which have been recycled, sometimes using a helicopter to transport them to the least accessible parts.

Both techniques cost roughly the same--around £30 sterling a metre.

g) Holm Moss (reclamation of peat moors in an environmentally sensitive area [ESA])

The Holm Moss peat moors are highly damaged in places. This deterioration stems from overgrazing, the effects of which have been accentuated by very active erosion in this windy area. The vegetation here, made up of heather and bilberry, only has skeletal soil, with frequent rock outcrops.

Holm Moss is situated in the North Peak ESA.[24]

In this respect, it is receiving special attention from the Ministry of Agriculture and its restoration is being carried out as part of a special operational programme.[25]

---

[23]The Park provides five technicians.

[24]About 80 Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) have been designated nationwide by the Ministry of Agriculture since 1987, the year when this programme was launched. Of the two ESAs created to date in the park, the North Peak ESA where Holm Moss is situated is the largest. Launched in 1988 and extended in 1993, its specific purpose is to maintain the open habitat and improve the quality and diversity of the plant life.

Assistance of up to 80% of operational costs may be granted to owners for the protection of sites of archaeological and historical interest, for example, or the renovation of farm buildings and the rebuilding of stone walls. The planting and upkeep of hedges, reclamation of ponds, and vegetation control may all be eligible for up to 50% assistance. But the total amount of assistance may not exceed £100 sterling/ha or, for each agreement, £2,000 sterling/year. Operations which cannot receive assistance under the conservation plan are nevertheless, and in principle, eligible for other assistance which can be drawn concurrently with previous assistance granted under programmes like the Ministry's Farm and Conservation Scheme and the Board's Farm Conservation Scheme.

[25]One-quarter of this programme is financed by the European Union under Article 21 of Community Regulation 797/85 on agricultural structures. The remainder is financed by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Experiments involve grazing techniques [26]as well as certain attendant programmes such as land reclamation, the restoration of farm buildings[27], and the limitation of enclosures.

They are made on the basis of agreements negotiated for a five-year period with the owner, who has an obligation to produce results, but is subsequently free to contractualise operations with his own partners (farmers, mining companies, shooting tenants, ...). There are two types of complementary agreements with different yardsticks. One obliges the owner to adopt a general management agreement, the other involves a two-year conservation plan for specific improvement programmes, and no longer just landscape maintenance, or the biological and historical interest of the area in question, or, where applicable, easy access for visitors.

h) Langsett Barn Information Centre (conversion of an old barn a Park information centre, and incorporation of the adjacent building)

Our field tour ended with a visit to the Langsett Barn Information Centre, installed in an old barn dating back to 1621 and located on the north-east boundary of the Park.

We visited the premises housing the centre, which has been the subject of a plan, generated by the Park, to incorporate the entire building.

PART II. CONSIDERATION OF THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE PREVIOUS EVALUATION

II-1 General Background

For the record, the aim of granting the Diploma is to encourage efficient protection and management of landscapes, reserves, monuments, and natural sites which are of outstanding European interest.[28]

On the expiry of the five-year period for which the Diploma is granted, the competent authorities of the Council of Europe, under whose aegis the Diploma comes, decide, in view of the report submitted by an expert and the conclusions of the Group of Experts, if it is appropriate to request the renewal of the Diploma from the Council of Ministers.

---

[26]For example, rules governing the reclamation of moors fix the maximum grazing pressure at 0.1 livestock units/ha, i.e., about 0.66 ewes/ha, and limits grazing to so-called "grazeable" areas where the plant cover is 10% or more. These rules ban horse grazing outside the period from 1 March to 30 September, and in this same period they reduce sheep grazing to 75% of the maximum capacity.

[27]Fodder is subject to authorization and rotation, as is the use of fire and the cutting of vegetation in the first year in which the contract is applicable. The use of fertilisers is prohibited, and the same goes for installing fencing, unless written authorization has been obtained from the administrative authority.

[28]Cf. Dr. Ing. Mario F. Broggio, 1992, the European Diploma, a prestigious network of protected areas, Council of Europe (CDPE/DPGE), Strasbourg, 15 pp + appendices

The Peak District National Park received the European Diploma in Category C, which combines the social and recreational functions of the area with the safeguard of its biological and aesthetic features, the overall aim being to conserve an environment of quality.

So it is in reference to these criteria and in the light of developments noted since the last assessment that the appropriateness of proposing the possible renewal of the Diploma should be examined.

II-2 Reminder of the conclusions of the previous evaluation

The previous renewal included conditions and recommendations from the Committee of Ministers[29], on the joint proposal of the expert and the representative of the Council of Europe. It is worth reminding ourselves of them briefly:

- *there were three renewal conditions:*

a) the abandonment of the plan to create a water recreation centre at Bottoms Reservoir. This project consisted in the recreational development of the shores of a reservoir of some 25 hectares [62 acres] built in the 19th century, within and on the edge of the National Park, on the river Etherow.

It was planned to construct a complex on the site, with an area of about 1,000 sq.m, containing a restaurant with seating for 80 people and various amenities for water skiing.

At that time, the expert deemed this project to be incompatible with the characteristics of a national park and contrary to the natural and aesthetic criteria which had merited the granting of the European Diploma[30]; the Committee of Ministers agreed with this assessment.

b) In accordance with the 1989 Water Act, measures designed for the long-term protection of the ecological and aesthetic characteristics of those areas of the Park belonging to the Water Authorities.

At the present time, these areas account for 15% of the Park's total area. In spite of the fact that the water authorities have every interest in guaranteeing the quality of the resource managed by them, and although they were created at the turn of the century to prevent all forms of degradation of the catchment perimeters, according to the authors of the last assessment there is reason to fear that these authorities have little interest in their properties and are even getting rid of them.
The Park is located at the head of a drainage basin, occupying a strategic position for water quality development. The maintenance of this quality depends directly on the development of the whole catchment basin, so its role here is an important one.

c) monitoring the resumption of mining in the quarries, as soon as it would appear that this mining has altogether ceased, and a meticulous examination of requests to

---

[29]Cf. Resolution (91) 11 concerning the renewal of the European Diploma for the Peak District National Park, adopted by the Council of Ministers on 17 June 1989 at the 460th meeting of ministerial delegates.

[30]Cf. For more detail, PE-ZP (89) 36 revised: Klemm evaluation report for the renewal of the European Diploma Category C, 1989, p. 13.

extend existing mining operations, taking into account national requirements, the possible existence of other sources of supply, and the impact on the environment.

- there were two recommendations presented to the authorities responsible for the management of the Park.

a) sufficient financial means making it possible to carry out in-depth ecological studies of important habitats for both fauna and flora, and an inventory of mineral deposits, in the light of recommendations listed in the national regulations;

b) particular attention given to the increase in funds available for the improvement of management projects and land purchases.

II-3 Conclusions concerning the application of Resolution (91) 11

The conclusions below apply both to respecting the conditions governing the renewal of the Diploma and to the application of the recommendations made at that time.

- Concerning the renewal conditions:

a) it was noted on the spot that the planned water recreation complex at Bottoms Reservoir had not been developed. The Park authorities specified that the project had been permanently abandoned for financial reasons and also for reasons of suitability. This suggests that, even with sufficient funding, this project will now never see the light of day.

Only a limited-use permit for one part of the reservoir has been granted to two motor boats. The fact that there is sailing here does not seem likely to endanger either the equilibrium or the high quality of the Park.

It was also noted that Chapter 7 of the Park's Structural Plan includes serious assurances concerning future development of recreational and tourist activities which, in the long term, respect the environmental and ecological integrity of the Park.

We thus propose that this condition laid down at the time of the previous renewal has been fulfilled by the Park Authorities.

b) The facts show that the water authorities, which own 15% of the Park's territory, have continued to cooperate closely with the Park since the last assessment. The 1994 Annual Report [31]refers, for example, to the consultative process undertaken with the Severn Trent, North West and Yorkshire Water Authorities for the formulation and implementation of various management plans, and more modest programmes, such as the publication of a leaflet dealing with the disturbance of small mud-dwelling birds (Limicolae), have also been jointly carried out.

On the other hand, the legal situation does not seem to have noticeably changed, based on the information gathered by us. During our visits to the Park and to the properties of the Water Authorities, we did not, however, note any environmental

[31]Peak National Park, 1995; Annual Monitoring Report 1994 (based on data for 1993/94), B5 2 c), p.36.

alteration or significant degradation of the environment either attributable to the Water Authorities or stemming from their activities.

The current situation thus seems such as to permit the Park to carry out its tasks in satisfactory conditions. But it only offers partial guarantees for the long-term future of the areas in question, as was emphasised in the previous assessment.

In this respect it is worth noting that the Park's Structural Plan does not contain any data on the state of the water resources, nor any specific objective for its conservation. The absence of any water policy in the Park is all the more lamentable in so far as the Park is an essential reservoir for the large urban areas situated downstream.

Another advantage of this sort of consideration would be to tighten the links between the Park and the area affected by it.

We therefore consider that the second condition laid down by Resolution (91) 11 is duly met. The current good relations between the Water Authorities and the Park have helped to guarantee the conservation of the areas in question. But the situation is still precarious because of the absence of any real water policy as well as any policy to protect the wetlands in the Park.

As a result of this state of affairs, we shall be making additional recommendations at a later stage.

c) We did not visit all the quarry sites where mining was either in progress or had ceased since the last evaluation. The same pattern also applied, incidentally, to previous visits.

In order to back up our assessment of this issue, we referred to information given to us by the Park authorities, as well as to information taken from planning and management documents adopted since 1989.

What emerges from these documents is that, whereas the national demand for materials has risen considerably in recent years despite a relative recession:

- no new quarry-opening permit has been granted within the Park since 1989,

- only one extension has been granted, but at a constant extraction volume, along with constraints concerning returning the land to its natural state, to reduce the impact that the initially authorised mining operations would have had.

With tourism on the rise in the Park, the issue of mining in the quarries is still one of the major problems which the Park authorities must tackle.

The fact that extraction rights predate the creation of the Park makes this a particularly sensitive problem to resolve. The Park has made extremely bold efforts to negotiate against an unfavourable economic backdrop, insomuch as the quarries and the associated public works sector guarantee a large number of jobs in this area.

Furthermore, even if the current situation is far from satisfactory, it has improved somewhat since the last assessment.

In our view, the Park authorities have, all in all, honoured the primary condition stipulated by Resolution (91) 11, concerning the resumption of mining operations. As the 1994 Annual Report for the Park suggests, it would nevertheless be necessary, and without further delay, to embark on an evaluation of the situation in the sites currently being mined.[32]

We also consider that the Park authorities have met the second condition by only authorising one mining extension since 1989, but at a constant extraction volume, and with the real aim of limiting the environmental impact.

We thus propose that the Park can be considered as having satisfied the third condition laid down by Resolution (91) 11.

- *concerning the recommendations.*

Since 1989, a certain amount of research and a certain number of studies have dealt with the biological wealth and the status of the areas and species represented in the Park.

Where habitats are concerned, the following projects may be mentioned:

- mapping and initial evaluation of important habitats for biodiversity. This project, undertaken by English Nature, will be continued in 1995/96 with the identification of key habitats of national importance. But the working knowledge of certain habitats should be improved--this is so, for example, with the grassland areas (cf. *infra*).

- continuation of studies of forest stands in conjunction with English Nature. Old semi-natural plantations and stands still need to be inventoried.

- continuation of studies of calcicolous grasslands; an evaluation of studies already carried out, the completion of additional projects concerning certain other grassland habitats (acid and mesotrophic soils), and, above all, a study of the threats endangering these habitats are all priorities.

- continuation of the highly detailed study of the moors, with English Nature; this type of habitat is the best known in the Park, and future studies in the 1995/96 period will focus on the effects of grazing on isolated moors.

- carrying out various studies of ponds.

On the other hand, there have been no serious studies of the Park's wetlands to date, despite their importance for water management (cf. II 3 b) and their extreme vulnerability.

Nor would it appear that aquatic environments have thus far caught the eye of the Park authorities. The only studies available are those carried out by the Water Authorities.

Knowledge of the Park's species and their status has stirred the Park in very differing ways, depending on the fauna and flora involved.

- With mammals, a study of bats would be the top priority for the Park services; in our view, the possible presence of a species as rare and vulnerable as the otter would also merit attention; this would enhance the image of the Park.

---

[32] Cf. Annual Monitoring Report, 1994 (based on data for 1993/94), p. 32.

- Birds have been especially well studied; a priority would be a study of the transitional areas between the moors and the other habitat types.

- The same goes for fish, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates, even though a more detailed study of the populations of white-legged crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) would seem to be desirable.

- A red book of endangered higher plant species in the Park was in the process of being published at the time of our visit, and the satisfactory state of knowledge of mosses and lichens means that, *a priori*, there is no major, short-term priority where plant species are concerned.

Most of the evaluation factors mentioned above have emerged from an exchange of letters between the expert and the Park, following the visit.[33]

In addition to these factors, we nevertheless found no clear and declared Park policy for improving biodiversity awareness. We had no information about the existence of any study of or programmatic document on biodiversity conservation.

The Park's Structural Plan makes no reference to these aspects, nor does it mention any sustainable development target.

For its part, the 1994 Annual Report does not contain any biological issues of strategic importance[34], and the additional resources requested at this time have other purposes than filling in any possible gap in this area.

Only very general and relatively disparate issues can be derived from the annual reports provided by the Park for the Council of Europe.

The situation is similar for the inventory of mineral deposits initially programmed for 1994[35]; and it is the same story for the development of funding allocated to the improvement of management projects and, in particular, land purchases.

These assessments must be coloured by the fact that, since the visit made in 1989, the protected areas have been significantly enlarged, but we had hoped to find more interest, and see more means earmarked for biodiversity conservation.

In this respect, the Park's Structural Plan, adopted in 1994 and currently being evaluated, is an essential strategic document for the management of the Park. It would undoubtedly gain in the future from incorporating some basic thinking about the Park's conservation objectives and the resources to be set aside to this end, on the one hand, and its sustainable development targets, on the other.

---

[33] Cf. letter GPC/LG/A926/A5524/A5525 of 26 May 1995 to the expert.

[34] Cf. 5.5 Summary of Findings of the 1994 Annual Report, p. ii.

[35] Cf. § B3 issues 7 of the 1994 Annual Report.

PART III BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

We consider that the Park's assets which warranted the renewal of the European Diploma (Category C) in 1989 have been maintained. Consequently, the criteria for the granting of this Diploma are still being met.

More specifically, the biological and aesthetic features of the Park, as appraised in 1989, have been maintained. Immediate threats posed by quarry enlargements have been lifted, and the conditions stipulated by Resolution (91) 11 have, on the whole, been complied with.

It is our view that the recommendations contained in this same Resolution have been followed with much less success.

The international importance nowadays attaching to sustainable development, the imminent creation of the NATURA 2000 network as part of the Habitats Fauna Flora directive, and the Council of Europe's stress on biodiversity conservation in particular, should all encourage the Park authorities to incorporate these issues in the next Structural Plan, and considerably increase the resources allocated to them.

This would appear to be all the more necessary in view of the significant rise in the number of visitors to the Park over the past five years, and also because, to date, there are view objective programmes aimed at limiting these numbers in ways compatible with the capacity of the natural environment to accommodate this increase.

This observation, incidentally, overlaps with the observation made in the 1994 Annual Report (cf § 4 of the summary, p. ii), which suggests increased resources for research and follow-up.

We therefore propose that the European Diploma for the Peak District National Park be renewed for a new five-year term, in Category C. We suggest that the renewal be subject to the following conditions:

- *with regard to natural resources*

  a) the next Structural Plan should include clear objectives relating both to the conservation of the Park's biodiversity and to the sustainable development of activities in the Park. To this end, a specific programme for research into and improvement of knowledge about biodiversity will be introduced in the sectors deemed to have priority (vulnerable and/or endangered habitats and species);

  b) a proper water resource management policy, with emphasis on water quality, should be formulated to cover the catchment basins at the head of which the Park is situated. In this respect, the strict protection of the properties of the water authorities and the additional purchase of land by the Park should be priority targets.

- *with regard to activities*

  c) a comprehensive and detailed examination of mineral deposits which are either being mined or have been abandoned, initially planned for 1993, should be made without further delay. This would help to reinforce the monitoring of mining operations, as recommended in the previous assessment;

d) the same goes for the study of semi-natural and man-made forest stands that remains to be completed. This study should be accompanied by technical consideration of the future management of these stands, with the dual aim of landscape conservation and the promotion of local species and stock;

e) the development of an evaluation methodology for assessing the Park's accommodation capacities (number of visitors, disturbance to wildlife, etc), by type of habitat and activity, would also be extremely helpful. This would help to provide a clearer *a priori* definition and a better *a posteriori* assessment of the balance between safeguarding the natural heritage and maintaining the Park's social and recreational functions.

We have decided against winding up these observations with recommendation proposals. In our view, this evaluation report contains enough data to serve as guidance to the Park authorities in the application of these conclusions.

Rolle, 20 December 1995.

Secretariat Memo

The Secretariat signals its agreement with the report and the expert's conclusions.

It would emphasise the efforts made by the authorities responsible for the Park to maintain the biological quality of the zone covered by the Diploma, while at the same time bearing in mind the socio-economic factors of the region.

It signals its agreement with the renewal of the European Diploma for the Peak District National Park.

APPENDIX I

RESOLUTION (91) 11

ON THE RENEWAL OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA AWARDED TO THE PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK (UNITED KINGDOM)

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 17 June 1991 at the 460th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.*a* of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Having regard to Resolution (65) 6 instituting the European Diploma;

Having regard to Resolution (66) 22 awarding the European Diploma to the Peak District National Park;

Having regard to the proposals of the Steering Committee for the Conservation and Management of the Environment and Natural Habitats (CDPE),

Renews the European Diploma awarded to the Peak District National Park in Category C until 28 March 1996;

Attaches to the renewal the following conditions:

1. the water recreation project for Bottoms Reservoir should not proceed as it is not consistent with the characteristics of a European Diploma-holding site;

2. provision should be made in line with the Water Act 1989 to ensure the long-term conservation of the ecological and landscape values of all lands included in the park which are at present in the ownership of Water Authorities;

3. i. controls on the resumption of mineral work where it appears permanently to have ceased should be implemented as soon as practicable;

ii. applications for extensions of existing works should be subject to the most rigorous examination and assessed against the need for the mineral in the national interest, the lack of alternative sources of supply and the environmental impact;

Addresses the following recommendations to the authorities responsible for management of the park:

1. sufficient financial means should be made available to carry out:

i. detailed ecological surveys of all important wildlife habitats;

ii. a review of mineral sites in the light of recommendations of the national legislation;

2. serious consideration should be given to further increases in the funds available for improvement of management schemes and, where appropriate, land acquisition.

APPENDIX II

Draft Resolution (96) ...
ON THE RENEWAL OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA AWARDED TO THE PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK (UNITED KINGDOM)

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.a of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Having regard to Resolution (65) 6 instituting the European Diploma;

Having regard to Resolution (66) 22 awarding the European Diploma to the Peak District National Park;

Having regard to the proposals of the Steering Committee for the Conservation and Management of the Environment and natural Habitats (CDPE);

Renews the European Diploma awarded to the Peak District National Park in Category C until 2001;

1. the next Structural Plan should include clear objectives relating both to the conservation of the Park's biodiversity and to the sustainable development of activities in the Park. To this end, a specific programme for research into and improvement of knowledge about biodiversity will be introduced in the sectors deemed to have priority (vulnerable and/or endangered habitats and species);

2. a proper water resource management policy, with emphasis on water quality, should be formulated to cover the catchment basins at the head of which the Park is situated. In this respect, the strict protection of the properties of the water authorities and the additional purchase of land by the Park should be priority targets;

3. a comprehensive and detailed examination of mineral deposits which are either being mined or have been abandoned, initially planned for 1993, should be made without further delay. This would help to reinforce the monitoring of mining operations;

4. the study of semi-natural and man-made forest stands should be completed before the next renewal. This study should be accompanied by technical consideration of the future management of these stands, with the dual aim of landscape conservation and the promotion of local species and stock;

5. the development of an evaluation methodology for assessing the Park's accommodation capacities (number of visitors, disturbance to wildlife, etc), by type of habitat and activity, would also be extremely helpful. This would help to provide a clearer *a priori* definition and a better *a posteriori* assessment of the balance between safeguarding the natural heritage and maintaining the Park's social and recreational functions.