

Briefing note- Cogra Moss Impounding Reservoir

Cogra Moss is an artificial water body near Lamplugh in West Cumbria. It is retained by a dam constructed of earth and clay across Rakegill Beck with both a concrete and a masonry weir that was built in 1880. It has a capacity of 295ML at top water level but it has not been used as a public water source since 1975 though it is used for recreational purposes.

During the summer of 2013 we discovered a buried tunnel whilst completing statutory ITIOS (In The Interest Of Safety) work in the embankments of the reservoir. Following a camera inspection the tunnel was found to be in poor condition and the Independent Panel Engineer, who was inspecting the dam at the time, served us with an ITIOS notice. This notice suggested that the tunnel should either be concreted up or have permanent access made available to it. Further ITIOS works were also identified to address the lack of siphon facility should the reservoir need to be drawn down in a planned event or during an emergency.

The future of Cogra Moss was also considered as part of the West Cumbria public inquiry into future water supplies for the area. In December 2014, the inquiry concluded that we no longer needed the reservoir as it will never again be used for customer supply. With this in mind the Inspecting Panel Engineer suggested that the best approach would be to discontinue Cogra Moss. In adopting this, the need to complete each individual elements of the ITIOS notice would be removed and we would be given a 1 year extension to the ITIOS completion date (the final date by which the Independent Panel Engineer must certificate the entire works as being complete).

So we are currently faced with 2 options, please note that we have a legal obligation under the Reservoir Act 1975 which is regulated by the Environment Agency to complete one of them, as suggested by the Independent Panel Engineer:

- 1) Satisfy all the ITIOS notices by making access available to the recently uncovered tunnel (which would then need an inspection of its own with the potential for a further investment need) and install a siphon arrangement to enable the water body to be drawn down at a controlled rate in the event of an emergency.
Legal completion date of 2016.
- 2) Discontinue the reservoir by removing its ability to impound more than 10ML of water at any time.
Legal completion date of 2017.

With the requirements clear we started to liaise with Jack Abernethy Chairman of Derwent Anglers Association as local fishing clubs would be adversely affected by the works at Cogra. The fishing clubs, and several members of the local community, have since raised objections to the discontinuance solution (option 2). Our engineering department is now progressing environmental, ecological and hydrological surveys as well as estimating both options to complete a Cost Benefit Analysis assessment for Cogra Moss. Our current timeframe shows that this exercise will be completed by late August 2015 and once we know all the facts we will be in a much better place to share our findings with the wider audience and adopt the appropriate solution for Cogra Moss, its ecology and wildlife and its users.

We will be carrying out a public exhibition in late September to consult with those affected on our preferred solution and to understand any concerns.