

13th Living Lakes Conference

Lake Management Challenges in a Changing World

Economic Dimensions of Lake Management RT 8: How can management influence tourism?

Creating a Management Strategy for England's largest lake

Location of lake

Windermere lies in the south east of the Lake District National Park in the North West of England. It is England's largest lake – approximately 11.5 miles long.

Objectives

The Strategy, created in 2005, sets out the vision and long term objectives for managing the lake and its shoreline. It identifies the issues and opportunities on and around the lake and proposes actions to address them.

The Strategy describes out detailed actions and projects and while focusing on the lake and its immediate surroundings, it does not consider them in isolation. Many issues cover a wider geographical area. For example, water quality depends on water quality in the lakes and rivers that run into Windermere; visiting the lake depends on transport links from nearby areas and further afield. The lake is also important to the local economy.

Who was involved?

The Lake District National Park Authority and South Lakeland District Council (who own the lake bed) prepared the Strategy. But although they are the lead partners, many other organisations have assisted and will be the lead partners in delivering the actions in the Strategy and reviewing its effectiveness. Organisations include:

- The National Trust (a landowning charity)
- Cumbria Tourism (the tourism marketing organisation)
- Outdoor recreation centres
- Lake user groups
- Cumbria Wildlife Trust
- Natural England (the Government's adviser on countryside management)
- Environment Agency (the Government's environmental regulator)
- Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
- Freshwater Biological Association
- United Utilities (the water company)
- Local schools and community groups
- Chamber of Trade
- Friends of the Lake District (a landscape conservation charity)

Actions to deliver the management plan

Since preparation in 2005 most of the plans objectives have been achieved. The plan is now due for its five-year review, which is starting in 2010. Actions include:

- Establishment of a Windermere Lake Users Forum
- Installation of new jetties and a water bus service
- Publication of lake user guides
- 'Lakes Alive' arts programmes and events celebrating the lakes
- Great North Swim with over 2000 swimmers
- Introduction of a Windermere Restoration Programme to improve water quality
- *Windermere Reflections* initiative to engage local communities.

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Lessons learned from the activity for the management plan

- Set out a clear vision of what the strategy is to achieve over its timeframe;
- Engage all interested parties from the beginning;
- Be sure to listen to what they say and set up structures to ensure good communication;
- Try and achieve 'quick wins' to give stakeholders confidence that the partnership will be successful;
- Look to exceed your initial objectives if opportunities come along to do more. For example, opportunities arose after the publication of the Strategy to develop a lakeshore cycleway, a water bus service and a catchment-wide restoration programme. The partnership of organisations which was established to deliver the Strategy, with its associated Lake User Forum, was well placed to take advantage of these opportunities and turn them into success.

Recommendations for Lake Chapala

- Be courageous and show leadership – but ensure local communities are supporting your actions;
- Ensure communication channels are appropriate: a combination of face-to-face contact, publications and web-based material can be effective.
- Review what you have achieved regularly, celebrate your successes and learn from your setbacks.