



Forestry England

Ennerdale Phytophthora Ramorum 2022

Public Engagement Pack



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Reason for this public engagement

During Summer and Autumn 2021 *Phytophthora Ramorum* was identified across 60 hectares of larch forest at the west end of the Ennerdale valley. To help control the spread of the disease and reduce the risk of a variant jumping into another tree species Forestry England is required to fell or kill standing the infected trees.

This information note and associated maps are provided with the aim of engaging people and organisations interested in Ennerdale to make them aware of the action Forestry England intends to carry out in response to this outbreak.

Ennerdale Management Plan background

The Ennerdale valley is managed by the Wild Ennerdale Partnership which includes the three landowners Forestry England, National Trust and United Utilities and Natural England the governments advisor of nature and conservation. The Wild Ennerdale Stewardship Plan approved in 2018 sets out the Partnerships vision for Ennerdale for the next 10 years and beyond. For more information about the Stewardship Plan you can visit <http://www.wildennerdale.co.uk/managing/stewardship-plan/>

The Stewardship Plan included commitments to reduce the dominance of Sitka spruce and development of a more natural tree'd landscape along the River Liza riparian corridor. Actions to deliver these commitments were carried out through the most recent period of planned tree felling which was completed in summer 2021.

The next planned valley wide tree felling activity was due to commence around 2026 however in Summer 2021 *Phytophthora Ramorum* was confirmed across areas of larch at the west end of Ennerdale forest.

What is *Phytophthora Ramorum*?

Across the country, larch trees are under threat from *Phytophthora Ramorum*, a highly destructive, algae-like organism called a water mould. It causes extensive damage and death to more than 150 plant species, including some forest species. Ramorum disease could inflict significant damage to our natural environment and plant-based industries if it were allowed to take its course without intervention. *Phytophthora Ramorum* is particularly destructive in larch species and can affect beech which is also found in Ennerdale.

Larch trees infected with ramorum have recently been spotted in Ennerdale. To prevent the disease from spreading further, outbreaks are subject to a process of swift response work following the issuing of Statutory Plant Health Notices by the Forestry Commission. These legally binding notices enforce us to either fell or kill standing infected trees to reduce the spread of the disease within the forest and to neighbouring woodland.

You can read more about Ramorum disease on the Forest Research website:

<https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/fthr/pest-and-disease-resources/ramorum-disease-phytophthora-ramorum/>

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Where are the affected areas of larch?

The felling is concentrated across the west end of the valley between Bowness Knott and Gillerthwaite with a small, isolated area in Silvercove. The attached map outlines which areas of Ennerdale are currently infected with ramorum disease and outline the working methods which will be used to fell larch species in these areas. The map uses some forestry terms which are explained in the Glossary of Terms at the end of this document

What will happen to the felled timber?

Structurally the timber is not affected by the disease. Timber harvested from infected areas is not wasted, it is dealt with using bio secure methods, and after processing goes on to be used for a variety of purposes. Much of the Larch timber harvested from Ennerdale will go on to be used in the construction industry where the carbon stored in the timber is locked up for decades to come.

When will the felling happen?

We plan to start felling in early 2022 and aim to complete all the felling and timber despatch before the end of the year.

Will Bowness Knott car park be closed?

We will have to close the car park at Bowness Knott for around 2 months whilst we fell the larch woodland around the car park and down to the lakeshore. As soon as it is safe and practical to do so we will reopen the car park. We will start at the west end of the forest and work eastwards so that work around the car park is completed during the shorter darker days of winter when less people will be affected by the loss of the parking. Unfortunately, there is no suitable site to open as alternative car parking.

How will we find out which parts of the valley are affected?

We will provide and update visitor information posters at Bleach Green and Bowness Knott car parks. When Bowness Knott is closed, we will provide temporary information at the car park entrance. In addition, we will maintain visitor information on our website www.wildennerdale.co.uk and on social media.

Will the work affect access up the valley?

To protect public safety, we will have to temporarily close parts of the forest and sections of forest road and path. Access up the valley heading east will be interrupted by the work. Where it is safe to do so we will manage access using bank persons. Between the Irish Bridge and Gillerthwaite there will be a diversion route for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Vehicles seeking access to the YHA, and Low Gillerthwaite Field Centre will need to check with these businesses to find out the times when vehicle access is safe and permitted.

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What about timber haulage?

The timber from the forest will be transported to several mills around north and west England. We recognise that timber lorries are large, loud, and noisy and they travel along narrow roads between the forest and the A5086. All timber lorries operate in accordance with the “Road haulage of Round Timber” Code of Practice including using routes agreed through discussion with the Timber Transport Forum and local Authorities. In addition, the code of practice we will be requiring timber lorries to abide by a lower speed limit of 25mph between the Forest and the A5086. Within the forest the speed limit for all vehicles is 15mph. Lastly, we will limit timber haulage to weekdays from Monday to midday Friday. Timber haulage will not be permitted at weekends, Friday afternoons and on bank or Public Holidays.

For more information about the Timber Transport Code of Practice visit <https://timbertransportforum.org.uk/>

Will the historic monuments be protected?

Ennerdale is one of the best examples of a settled medieval landscape and has over 500 historic features including 34 hectares of special features designated as scheduled. We are very aware of the special nature of these features including the twin walled longhouses and evidence of iron smelting.

We have very detailed maps of all the historic monuments in the valley. Ahead of harvesting we will mark out the location of the historic features and show them to the operators. Some of the harvesting includes areas of scheduled monuments that have a higher level of protection. In these areas we have developed a harvesting method to protect the features which involves having a permanent on-site Archaeologist to monitor and guide the operators work. A plan for protecting the scheduled sites has been shared with Historic England as part of a submission for Scheduled Monument Consent for the work.

How will the harvesting affect wildlife, birds and squirrels?

The wildlife and nature of Ennerdale are really special to us. We had not planned to fell this much woodland at one time, but we now must so that the disease doesn't spread further or into other species. To protect the wildlife using the larch forest we will survey the forest before felling and identify any squirrel dreys and raptor nests which we will avoid damaging during their breeding seasons. From our long-term squirrel monitoring we know that larch is not a preferred food source for our Red squirrels which will still have large areas of conifer seed to feed on. We will also continue our annual monitoring and grey squirrel control. Whilst we will lose the areas of mature forest, we will gain some new open and scrubby habitats which will provide other species such as butterflies and birds with new habitat opportunities. Much of the larch being felled has an understorey of native broadleaf and scrub species which will provide the starting point for the future new woodland habitats. Lastly, we will use the stem treatment method to create some new standing dead wood which will provide new habitats.

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What will happen to the felled areas?

Once harvested, there will be no future restocking of larch and there will need to be ongoing monitoring of remaining larch areas for further disease outbreaks.

Over the next couple of years, the felled areas will be replanted with native species including Scots pine, sessile oak, aspen, willow, and juniper. Birch and Rowan are expected to regenerate naturally but may be planted in areas where regeneration doesn't occur. Planting will be using manual planting techniques with no mechanised ground preparation.

Regeneration of spruce will be accepted but will be removed if it becomes dominant. Larch regeneration may occur and will be monitored for future disease symptoms and cleared if found to be infected. We will seek to proactively remove young larch from Ennerdale in the future to reduce the disease risk.

What will the forest look like in the future?

Whilst we are very sad to lose so much of our Larch woodland in the valley, we see this as an opportunity to initiate the development of a more natural future woodland which will be more species and structurally richer. This should provide more diverse habitats for nature and natural processes and be more resilient to climate change and future tree disease. The woodland will take many years to grow and develop and, in some senses, we are planning the seed source for future generations.

Glossary of Terms

Mechanised harvesting

The use of wheeled machines to fell and extract trees.

Manual fell and winch

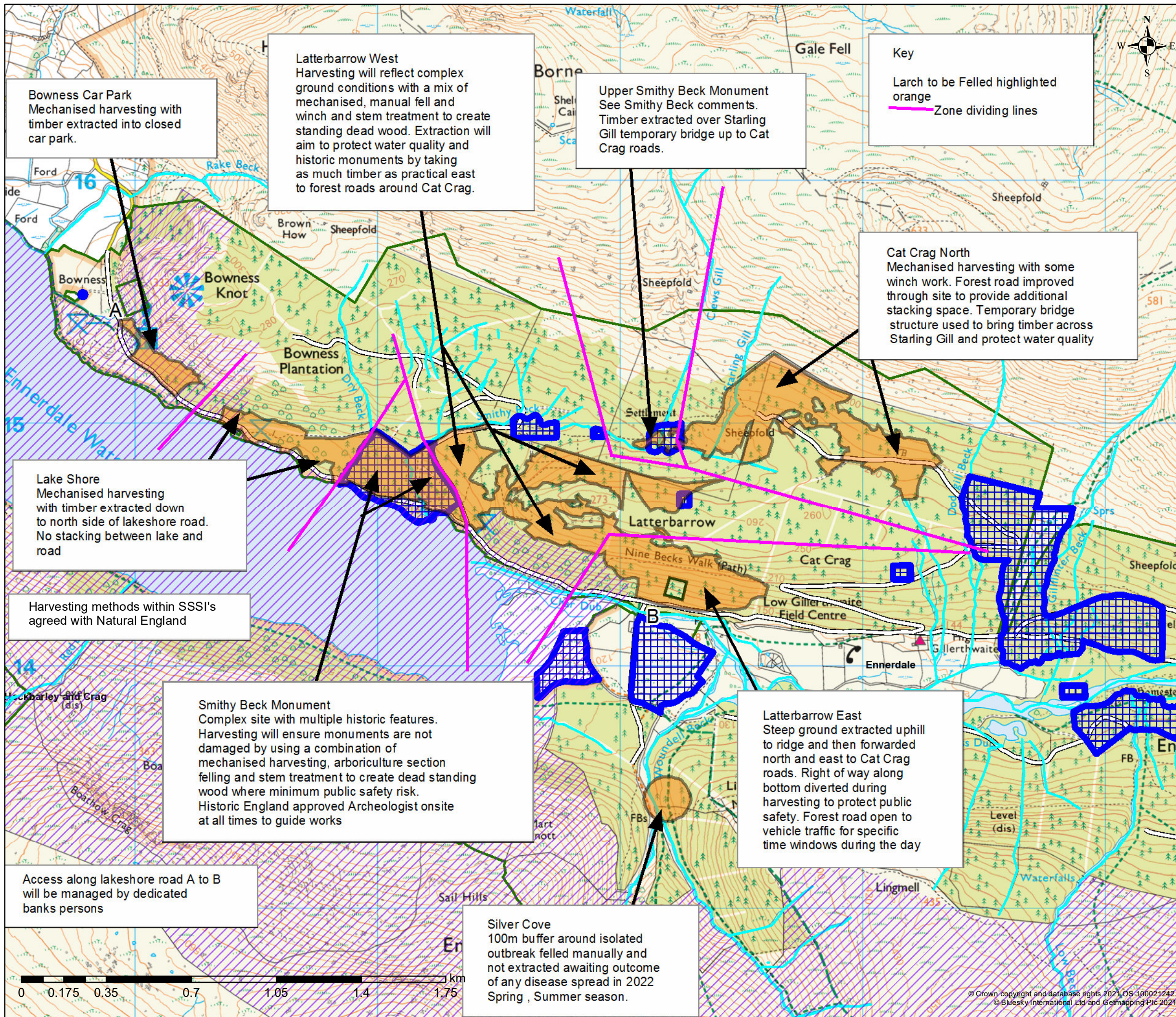
Used on slopes too steep for wheeled machines. Typically, an operator fells trees using a chainsaw. The felled trees are then extracted uphill by an excavator powered wire rope winch (like a cable car system). At the top of the slope a harvester machine processes the extracted trees in the forest and the timber is then secondary extracted by a wheeled forwarder machine.

Stem treatment to create standing dead wood

The use of an herbicide to kill a tree standing by applying the herbicide into the tree stem using a plug containing the herbicide knocked into a pre drilled hole in the tree. The plug opens inside the hole releasing the herbicide into the tree. This has been used recently in Crag at the west end of the valley. This approach may be used where felling and or extraction may damage historic or natural features. It will only be used where it won't create a public tree safety risk.

Arboriculture section fell

An arboriculture technique where an arborist climbs the tree and slowly takes the tree down in small sections which are lowered or dropped to the ground. Used where other felling techniques would have an impact on historic or natural features.



Bowness Car Park
Mechanised harvesting with timber extracted into closed car park.

Latterbarrow West
Harvesting will reflect complex ground conditions with a mix of mechanised, manual fell and winch and stem treatment to create standing dead wood. Extraction will aim to protect water quality and historic monuments by taking as much timber as practical east to forest roads around Cat Crag.

Upper Smithy Beck Monument
See Smithy Beck comments. Timber extracted over Starling Gill temporary bridge up to Cat Crag roads.

Key
Larch to be Felled highlighted orange
Zone dividing lines

Cat Crag North
Mechanised harvesting with some winch work. Forest road improved through site to provide additional stacking space. Temporary bridge structure used to bring timber across Starling Gill and protect water quality

Lake Shore
Mechanised harvesting with timber extracted down to north side of lakeshore road. No stacking between lake and road

Harvesting methods within SSSI's agreed with Natural England

Smithy Beck Monument
Complex site with multiple historic features. Harvesting will ensure monuments are not damaged by using a combination of mechanised harvesting, arboriculture section felling and stem treatment to create dead standing wood where minimum public safety risk. Historic England approved Archeologist onsite at all times to guide works

Access along lakeshore road A to B will be managed by dedicated banks persons

Latterbarrow East
Steep ground extracted uphill to ridge and then forwarded north and east to Cat Crag roads. Right of way along bottom diverted during harvesting to protect public safety. Forest road open to vehicle traffic for specific time windows during the day

Silver Cove
100m buffer around isolated outbreak felled manually and not extracted awaiting outcome of any disease spread in 2022 Spring , Summer season.

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (2009) (Eng.)
- Heritage Designations
- Watercourses
- Forest Roads
- Forest Roads
- Blocks
- Blocks



Image 1: Dead larch around Smithy Beck



Image 2: Larch tree showing early evidence of infection, summer 2021



Image 3: Aerial view of Car Crag showing spread of infection