

The state of the historic environment

Measuring changes in the historic environment

Archaeological sites, historic buildings, settlements, ancient and designed landscape features combine in the Lake District to form a rich, distinctive and internationally significant historic environment. A historic environment which already reflects thousands of years of change.

People first settled here about 12,000 years ago and settlements still shows clear evidence of their origins and evolution. There is evidence of Neolithic stone circles and Bronze Age settlements on the lower fells. Industrial activity is shown through medieval remains of the iron industry and post-medieval industrial archaeology including mines, quarries and woodland-related activities. Agriculture has left a legacy of remains with distinctive and unique stone-walled field patterns that were established as early as the thirteenth century.

Buildings are also an integral part of the National Park's landscape and heritage. There is a distinctive style of 17th century architecture in farmhouses and barns, while the 18th and 19th centuries led to the development of country houses and Victorian hotels and mansions.

All these features combine to form a cultural landscape in the Lake District with clear associations with the Picturesque and Romantic movements. It was in the Lake District that the early interest in conservation led to the formation of the National Trust in 1895 and eventually to the founding of the National Parks movement.

To help maintain the historic environment of the National Park, we will measure changes in the following key indicators:

SOP10

Changes in historic features

1. Numbers of archaeological/historic environment features
2. Condition of features

SOP11

Changes in the character of settlements

1. Number of changes inconsistent and consistent with defined settlement character

SOP10

Changes in historic features

It is easy to monitor the number of individual archaeological and historic environmental assets. In the National Park there are:

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- 275 Scheduled Monuments
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- 9 registered parks and Gardens of Historic Interest (10.8sqkm - 0.47% of the National Park)
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- 1,744 Listed Buildings
 - Grade I – 31 (including 10 churches)
 - Grade II – 120 (including 25 churches)
 - Grade III – 1,593 (including 43 churches)
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- 21 Conservation Areas (3.16sqkm – 0.13% of the National Park)
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- 1 (part of) World Heritage Site (Hadrian's Wall)
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- 6,412 records in the Lake District Historic Environment Record (LDHER)
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Source: Lake District Environment Record
April 2005/English Heritage

There is unlikely to be an increase in the number of scheduled monuments in the short-term due to the review of designations by English Heritage. However, following the current Heritage Protection Review being undertaken by English Heritage, the protection of designated heritage assets will be improved through simplified legislation and the application of management agreements to protected sites. This will make it easier to monitor their condition over time.

Only 20% of the National Park has been subject to archaeological survey and many more archaeological features will be identified and recorded in the future.

SOP11 **Changes in the character of settlements**

It is also important to understand and assess and monitor the condition of these sites and features in order to plan for their protection effectively. English Heritage's Buildings at Risk register does provide information about the condition of Scheduled Monuments and Grade I and II* Listed Buildings. It currently includes seven sites in the National Park. They are:

- **Calder Abbey, St Bridget Beckermeth**
- **Lowther Castle, Lowther**
- **Greenside Lead Mine, Glenridding**
- **Winster Potash Kiln, Cartmel Fell**
- **Coniston Copper Mines, Coniston**
- **Backbarrow Ironworks, Haverthwaite**
- **Lowwood Gunpowder Works, Haverthwaite**

We began a comprehensive survey of the condition of features within the National Park in 2005 in partnership with English Heritage, local amenity groups and volunteers.

Whilst it is important to monitor individual historic features within the National Park, we will also monitor the key historic settlements. We will measure the factors that are directly causing visual change in their character.

This will be done in an objective, value free way using a tested methodology. We will also monitor changes that detract, support or enhance a defined settlement character. For example, we will measure the effect of buildings being restored and walls rebuilt.

