



Current State of Himalayan Balsam in the River Kent Catchment September 2019

Highest points of current control for the Kent and its tributaries are:

- **Kent:** below Force Jump Waterfall at NY461044. Also in small stream above Kentmere Hall at NY449044 also E of the Kent at NY458043.
- **Oxenholme Beck:** Above Oxenholme Beck on land west of Hayclose Road at SD535903
- **Sprint:** Above Gurnal Bridge at SD523978 (Thornyslack Farm)
- **Gowan:** at Broadgate Farm Ings SD435993; at Heaning at SD432991; at Ashes Lane SD479964
- **Mint:** On private land (former quarry) adjacent to Moresdale stream, a small tributary of Lambrigg Beck (SD584955)

Positive control areas 2019

Overall we felt very positive about the balsam control this year with a significant improvement in all areas. The warm dry early summer helped with checking of river banks but we were hampered by high river levels in August.

- The **Sprint** remains almost clear and is being monitored.
- Lambrigg Beck has improved dramatically since last year.
- The **Gowan** catchment is steadily becoming clear of balsam. The site at the top of the catchment at Heaning (SD432991) is greatly improved. Fewer than 50 plants found on the whole Broadgate Farm/Holme field land. The landscaping at the filling station has now almost resolved the infestation there.
- The land around Croppers wood off the A591 and adjacent verges are now improving
- The major balsam infestation at the National Trust caravan site at Sedgewick is now very much under control.

Challenges and new areas in 2019

- Further infestation above Oxenholme Beck discovered in drainage channels. This has been tackled
- Infestation on the Ashes Lane campsite is widespread and is having to be tackled in stages.
- Infestation from Ashes Lane has spread onto adjacent land at Ratherheath
- Infestation reappeared in Cowan Head gorge
- Network Rail has still not satisfactorily dealt with the infestation on the embankment approaching Kendal railway station

Manpower and resources

In total 45 volunteers have spent over 650 hours clearing balsam from the whole of the River Kent catchment in 2019. This equates to well over 100 person days. We organised 18 work parties in the main catchment with Mary Chapman organising a further 9 work parties in Lambrigg Beck.

Ros Taylor secured a grant of £515 from Kendal Town Council in support of our work. This has enabled us to purchase new waders and gloves and reprint advice leaflets for landowners as well as paying for a contractor to trim a difficult site near Heron Hill School.

Other Invasives

- 11 reports of Giant Hogweed made to the Environment agency

Work this year

Control means – work parties needed and/or significant new areas or reinfestations tackled. Significant numbers of plants still being found

Monitoring means work parties not required. Relatively few plants removed and numbers of plants found is decreasing

Clear – means – no plants found in the area for at least 2 years

<p>Kentmere to Staveley</p>	<p>4 work parties plus additional volunteer time 69+ hours</p>	<p>Continue control work in the whole area. Fellside above Kentmere Hall is improving. Village patches are improving although a large area of plants tackled in a field in the village at NY459040 The northern tarn, the west bank and areas of the southern tarn are all improving. Garden at Rawe Cottage now under control River from factory to Staveley believed to be clear</p>
<p>Gowan</p>	<p>16 hours</p>	<p>The Gowan is moving from Control to Monitoring with some areas now clear. The site at the top of the catchment at Heaning that had spread to sections of the Dales Way and to adjacent wooded area is now well under control. Infestation in ditches at Broadfield and the land on the Holmeffield farm including hedgerows and stream down to Hill Farm are now almost clear. Plantation near garage at Ings is almost clear</p>
<p>Staveley to Burneside</p>	<p>35 hours</p>	<p>This section remains in Control with some areas in Monitoring. The section from Staveley to Bowston is in Monitoring though some infestations discovered at Cowan Head, Bowston and in the stream through Braban House. Control work undertaken at Croppers Wood and surrounding land on the A591 and the area is now almost clear Infestations tackled just north of Burneside and Croppers asked to deal with balsam on their land by the Weir</p>
<p>Ashes Lane</p>	<p>5 work parties plus additional volunteer time 122 hours</p>	<p>This is a main area of Control work</p>
<p>Carus Green and Kentrigg and Sprint</p>	<p>1 work party plus additional volunteer time 61 hours</p>	<p>Sprint is now in monitoring and is almost clear apart from the lower stretches on the Carus Green side. Carus Green golf course and the west bank of the Kent down to Kentrigg remain under control. Plants are still occurring on the river banks at Carus Green and Kentrigg and the gardens at Pepperhag. Patches on the golf course are being monitored and the infestation around the sheds on the Golf course is being tackled by the club estate team.</p>
<p>Mintsfeet & Dockray</p>	<p>3 work parties plus additional volunteer time 40 hours</p>	<p>This area remains in Control and is improving. Plants still occurring on river banks and there are still patches along the edges of the woodland and around the fisherman's parking area. The former Heinz factory dealt with infestation on their land at our request. Odd infestations around the trading estate are reducing</p>
<p>Mint</p>	<p>1 work party plus additional volunteer time. 40 hours</p>	<p>Control and Improving</p>
<p>Lambrigg Beck</p>	<p>9 work parties plus additional volunteer time 98 hours</p>	<p>Control and Improving</p>

Kendal Dockray Bridge to Nether Bridge	12 hours+	This section is being monitored . Plants appearing in a number of places are removed. Patches at Kendal Cricket club tackled SCRT continue to try to get Network Rail to properly deal with balsam on the railway embankment
Kendal Nether Bridge to Scroggs Wood/ Watercreek	3 work parties 39 hours	This area is in Control and improving . Area in the woodland back from the river by the WWTW was strimmed and is being monitored. WWTW have dealt effectively with all infestations within their boundaries. High river levels in August impeded dealing with late flowering plants. Control work continues around Scroggs Mill, the river islands and Scroggs Wood.
Natland Mill Beck & Oxenholme Beck	1 work party plus additional volunteer time 50 hours	Control work taken place to tackle the infestation above these becks. The pond at Oxenholme and the streams down to the river are being monitored
Watercreek to Hawes Bridge	15 hours	Both east and west banks are being monitored and are almost clear
Hawes Bridge to Force Bridge	1 work party plus additional volunteer time 25 hours	Control work undertaken to tackle a large area of balsam on the west bank at SD510886 opposite Dorothy's seat River banks on east and west are being monitored and are almost clear Some control work done on the campsite at Sedgewick which is greatly improved and moving into monitoring National Trust effectively controlling infestation around their wood handling facility and this is improving
Force Bridge to A6	8 hours	Lower priority control work continues in this section aimed at managing infestation
Other areas		SLDC land behind Heron Hill School is being controlled . Balsam strimmed and pulled in August and checked in September. Two areas of infestation on land off the A65 near Oxenholme are continuing to be controlled Work being done to control balsam around Fisher Tarn and Paddy lane Consultation about balsam on Kendal Golfcourse land

Challenges and priorities for 2020

A significant challenge in 2020 will be how we work around any EA flood prevention works in the Kendal area and how our access to the river banks will be affected in the future. We have established contact about our balsam control work with the EA. We will@

- Continue work to control infestation at Ashes Lane
- Work on the Ratherheath infestation with the landowners (Croppers)
- Continue our work at Kentmere
- Support the group tackling Lambrigg Beck and Mint as needed
- Support individuals undertaking control/monitoring of sections of the catchment and encourage others to take on areas
- Continue to try to get Network Rail to tackle balsam on the railway embankment in Kendal
- Continue work to check all sections of the rivers under monitoring

Judith Wallen,

October 2019