

# Q&A

## BOWSTON WEIR REMOVAL PROPOSAL



South Cumbria Rivers Trust work in collaboration with the Environment Agency and Natural England to identify, scope and deliver work that benefits the special nature of the River Kent. The River Kent and its tributaries are designated as a [Site of Special Scientific Interest \(SSSI\)](#) and a [Special Area of Conservation \(SAC\)](#).

**Q: What benefits would the removal of Bowston weir make to the River Kent?**

*A. Removal would allow the river to return to a more natural condition as it re-adjusts to many decades of being constrained. Greater variety in the form and flow of the river in turn benefits wildlife including aquatic invertebrates, fish, birds and plants who soon take advantage of new opportunities. Weirs also impede the movement of fish and eels. Even where fish passes are present they do not allow free passage to all species at all times.*

**Q: There are many other weirs in the area, will you be proposing the same for them?**

*A. There are many weirs on the River Kent system each of which has been assessed in terms of its individual and cumulative impact on the SSSI/SAC. We have considered other weir structures but at this time there are no plans for a similar proposal elsewhere.*

**Q: Will removing the weir increase the flood risk?**

*A. No. A Flood Risk Assessment concluded that the weir removal will have a neutral effect on flood risk.*

**Q: Will it affect angling on the river?**

*A. We appreciate that for anglers, weirs can provide pools where fish may hold. However, such structures can delay the upstream migration of threatened species such as salmon and there is evidence of weirs delaying the seaward migration of salmon and sea trout smolts. Such delays can lead to stress and vulnerability to predation from fish eating birds.*

**Q: How long would the work take to complete?**

*A. We anticipate the main structure removal to take approximately 3-4 weeks but this is dependent on the river conditions and weather at the time of the works. There are other elements in the proposal, including bed and bank work that may take longer.*

**Q: What about the historical value of Bowston weir?**

*A. We appreciate that the weir is a part of Cumbria's industrial past and the only remaining element of what would have been the wider local mill power infrastructure. The mill and its leat were dismantled many years ago and the weir has not since served its original purpose. The failure of the weir's sluice in 2016 was a reminder that this is an ageing structure. The removal proposal presents an opportunity to safeguard against future failure through a controlled and managed deconstruction. This also presents an opportunity to record Bowston weir for posterity purposes.*

**Q: Is the removal definitely going to take place and if so, when?**

*A. We are hopeful that it will but at the moment it is just a proposal. We currently have no permissions, consents or agreements to undertake this work but we are working towards having these in place for summer 2019.*

**Q: How would the removal be funded?**

*A. We have received a Water Environment Grant offer that provides funding to improve the water environment in rural England.*

**Further information overleaf..**



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**Q: How would the river look after removal of the weir?**

*A. Please see the visualisation below which indicates how the river may look following the removal of the weir:*



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

**Q: What if I have any further questions?**

*A. If you have any further questions or concerns about the Bowston Weir Removal Proposal then please contact: [admin@scrt.co.uk](mailto:admin@scrt.co.uk)  
We will gather your comments and respond over the coming weeks.*