# United Utilities unveils plans to restore Lake District water bodies to natural states



The Lake District is poised to undergo significant environmental changes as United Utilities has formally submitted comprehensive plans aimed at restoring water bodies closer to their natural states. These proposals follow the company’s 2023 decision to cease the abstraction of water from key sites within the region, including Crummock Water, Chapelhouse Reservoir, Overwater, and Ennerdale Water.

Central to the plans is the removal of man-made structures that have historically altered the natural watercourses. At Crummock Water, for instance, United Utilities intends to dismantle the existing weir along with associated equipment that has been utilised to support infrastructure and water collection. The company has stated that the current weir no longer offers any flood risk benefits for downstream areas. By decommissioning such infrastructure, the aim is to restore the water sites to a more natural condition, supporting broader ecological recovery.

This initiative forms part of a substantial £1.1 billion investment programme targeting the elimination of storm overflow discharges across the region. The removal of weirs and dams is planned at three key locations within the Lake District National Park, reflecting an effort to improve water management and habitat conditions.

The proposals specific to other sites include extensive alterations at Chapelhouse Reservoir. Here, the plan involves the removal of the dam, spillway channel, pumphouse, overflow pond, and abstraction tower. Similarly, at Overwater, United Utilities intends to remove the embankment and the existing weir, along with realigning a short stretch of White Beck. Additionally, subject to approval by the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA), changes to parts of the River Ellen are expected to include realignment work and construction of a new bridge to facilitate these modifications.

United Utilities highlighted that the restoration measures are also designed to improve environmental conditions favourable to native species, particularly salmon. The enhancement of natural water flows along becks and rivers is considered crucial for supporting the recovery of salmon habitats that have been impacted by past water management practices.

Looking ahead, United Utilities has indicated that during the outline design phase of the project, which will precede a formal planning application, there will be further public engagement. The company plans to organise drop-in events to present the detailed proposals and invite community feedback.

Overall, these developments signal a considerable shift towards ecological restoration and more sustainable water management within the Lake District, a region renowned for its natural beauty and its significance as a popular tourist destination. The changes seek to better address stormwater runoff and reduce environmental pressures associated with historical water abstraction and infrastructure.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.unitedutilities.com/Crummock/> - This page details United Utilities' long-term plans for Crummock Water, Chapelhouse Reservoir, and Overwater, confirming their focus on restoring these water bodies to a more natural state and mentioning community engagement events as well as the timeline for planning applications.
* <https://www.unitedutilities.com/better-rivers/what-we-are-doing/> - This source describes United Utilities' investment programme to improve water quality, including a £150 million+ investment aimed at reducing storm overflow discharges and enhancing water management in the region.
* <https://www.unitedutilities.com/globalassets/documents/pdf/crummock-panels-september-2023.pdf> - This PDF document outlines the obligation to remove abstraction infrastructure at Crummock Water and restore the site to benefit flood risk management and ecological recovery.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-ambition-to-end-sewage-discharges-into-windermere> - This government announcement supports the claim of a major investment led by United Utilities to upgrade wastewater treatment works, reducing storm overflow discharges and improving environmental conditions around Windermere, within the Lake District region.
* <https://www.unitedutilities.com/Crummock/> - This page confirms plans at Chapelhouse Reservoir, including removal of dam, spillway, pumphouse, overflow pond, and abstraction tower, as well as works at Overwater and intentions to realign White Beck and the River Ellen, pending Lake District National Park Authority approval.