

Employment

Severn Trent Water (STW) suggest that there will be employment benefits during construction. However, currently, the UK has the lowest unemployment in 50 years at 3%. STW have also admitted that they are looking abroad for assistance with construction

Environment

STW's submission notes a "Likely Significant Effect" on the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation and Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1 Special Protection Area) and admits that this is a sensitive landscape. Obviously, inundating the surrounding and in some parts ancient woodland with cold, peat-laden, semi-sterile water will lead to habitat loss. In addition, damage would result from both excavation and construction including noise and disturbance from workers, site machinery and delivery vehicles which would be particularly disastrous for rare species such as Goshawks and Hen Harriers.

Retaining water on the surrounding moorland is essential. The Moors for the Future programme are anticipating drier summers. The area is blanket bog and the peat is one of the main carbon stores to offset global warming. Blanket bog is the result of *Sphagnum* moss and this only grows in semi-aquatic conditions. In an effort to retain water, 16,432 mini dams have been created blocking 68 miles of drainage channels to slow and impede runoff. It is simply not sustainable to keep taking water from blanket bog without doing untold damage and at a time of global warming.

Despite the above, STW will be obliged to deliver a net biodiversity gain but they have freely admitted that this may not be in the Peak District National Park or even in the UK. The Upper Derwent Valley (UDV) would be left with a much poorer and depleted biodiverse environment whilst somewhere else entirely receives the benefit. A clear example of ecological and environmental eco/green washing and moral licencing.

STW appear to be looking to exploit areas where the water is gravity fed and of pristine quality in order to reduce their running costs. STW have the right to take water from 2 of the largest rivers in the UK. However, water quality is poor compared with upland rivers but where volumes are smaller. The poor quality of their larger rivers is in part due to sewage effluents. In 2021, there were 2537 STW sewage spills into the River Derwent which ran for a total of 17,695 hours.

Recreation

Such monumental projects in the heart of the Peak District National Park, the first and "mother" of national parks in the UK will inevitably have an effect on recreation. Raising any of the dam walls could inundate the start of the A57 Snake Pass, the road to King's Tree and the STW track on the east side of the valley which completes the 3 reservoirs circuit. The proposed top water levels would make restoration of the circuit in the valley very difficult because of cost and unstable shale geology. If attempted, there would be further massive environmental damage from bulldozing and laying of a new tarmac road and gravel tracks.

The area is very popular with visitors (1-2 million per year) from South Yorkshire, Greater Manchester and other surrounding cities of the Midlands and further afield. STW are rightly extremely health and safety conscious. They would definitely want to prevent visitors from wandering through massive construction sites. They would also anticipate additional visitors to arrive specifically to view the huge civil engineering works. STW say that they are experienced with major construction projects. However, when they commissioned Carsington Reservoir, it was supposed to take 3-4 years to complete but instead took 11 due to unforeseen structural problems. Civil engineering projects routinely suffer delays. It has long been apparent that there are geological problems in the UDV so it might not be unreasonable to speculate that the UDV north of the A57 will be sealed to visitors arriving on foot, bike or by car for a considerable period extending well beyond the projected 3-4 years.

Currently, there is a climb of 30m from Fairholmes Visitor Centre to reach Derwent Dam wall and its towers. Concern has

been expressed that if the wall is raised by for example 20m, it will prove too great for disabled visitors and those with children/pushchairs.