

**PRESENTMENT TO VERDERERS COURT - 21 October 2015** - Michael Mayes

Official Verderer, members of the Verderers' Court, thank you for this opportunity to speak to you. My name is Michael Mayes. I am a retired land surveyor living in the Parish of Hyde.

I am concerned about the EIA findings announced at the Latchmore Public Exhibition on 6 October. In the time available, I will limit my comments to Thompsons Castle stream as an illustration of wider concerns about the whole proposal.

It is intended to partially infill the stream to a maximum depth of one foot along its whole length. The main justification given for this is to remove nick points along the stream in order to prevent headward erosion into the mire.

This justification is far from clearcut as it is not based on any on-site monitoring of the hydro-geomorphology to assess both the need for and the impact of the proposed works. For example:

What is the variation in daily water-flow rates from the mire throughout the year ?

What are the rates of movement of nick-points on the stream ?

What is the rate of movement of the mire itself ?

Frequent observation of the stream over the past 12 years leads me to believe that headward erosion is not a major threat to the mire. This is due to its unique shape and the protection afforded by the natural embankment across its path at its downstream edge.

The steep slopes and funnel shape of the main mire result in a natural gravity fed movement and build-up of the vegetation at the embankment. This may from time to time cause a major collapse at this point during exceptional rainfall and run-off as happened in October 2001 recorded in detail by Hampshire Archaeological Group. HAG estimated that during that episode water flow rates were 130 to 150 times normal flows. It is important to note that the restoration works carried out in 2002 at the stock crossing below the mire had failed by the next year.

This is a characteristic of the particular landform at Thompsons Castle, not simply a threat from headward erosion by nick-points. Since 2003 I have observed that the mire has been naturally building up again behind this embankment across its path and is under no threat that can justify the proposed actions along the whole stream.

The question that should have been asked is - In what sort of timescale are these episodes taking place ? Until these are understood, the "Precautionary Principle" should apply.

Partially infilling the whole stream will also have a major negative effect on both existing habitats and the many rare species present. To dismiss the loss of rare species as a "short term significant effect..." as quoted in the Exhibition is unacceptable in terms of the protection that these species should be given.

Some of the species present on Thompsons Castle include:

- Southern Damselfly, a highly protected SAC species found in the stream where existing peaty sediments and mire vegetation have built up over many years.
- Scarce Blue-tailed damselfly, another rare species in the New Forest which is photographed on the stream by visitors on most days during the season.

- Many types of fish including eel which inhabit the stream because it flows throughout the year .
- Macro-invertebrates and reptiles, which are particularly important in the two deep sections below the footpath, as the deeper channels are important refuges and shelter for many species.

It is a sad fact that there are various local individuals who collect information on both rare and common species in these habitats on a regular basis, and none of their data or experience appears to have been taken into account.

Extensive photographic evidence has been collected during the recent works at Harvestslade, Amberslade & Broomy, North Sluffers and Ditchend which clearly show that the methods used have destroyed the existing fragile habitats.

The conclusion is that infilling the stream at Thompsons Castle will destroy its important habitats for reasons that have not been justified.

I hope that you, the Verderers, will make your own assessment of the EIA before considering putting forward the proposals which will be carried out in your name.

Thank you.

Michael Mayes

21 October 2015