



SITE: Latchmore Brook

Stream plan sparks fury

PLANS to restore wetland at a Fordingbridge beauty spot, sparking outrage among wildlife experts and walkers, have been formalised.

New Forest West MP Sir Desmond Swayne claims the Forestry Commission's application to fill-in and redirect the stream at Latchmore Brook as part of the EU-funded Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, could be described as "vandalism".

He said: "Much of Islands Thorns Inclosure is designated ancient and ornamental woodland. It includes a remarkable section of stream, a site of special geological interest with deposits set down over 40 million years ago. Extraordinarily it appears this is to be infilled too."

"An intervention on such a scale along miles of stream will have major impacts on the whole catchment. Vandalism is the word that comes to my mind."

Lauren
Howard



While veterinary surgeon Dr Fiona Macdonald claims the design of wetland restoration has serious implications for fish.

She said: "Domestic animals including fish enjoy protection under the Animal Welfare Act and must be kept in conditions appropriate to their species and needs."

"What a pity this is not enjoyed by their wild relatives in the New Forest."

Visitor Diana Mouzakitis said: "I have been following the application to straighten and restore the beautiful stream with great concern and worry."

"Apart from the destruction of the lovely stream I am very concerned about the massive tonnage of hoggin [sand and gravel] to fill in the present path of the stream."

"I have read and understand that in other areas of the New Forest where this has been done with a great deal of obvious damage to the surrounding areas the rerouted streams have tried to return to their original flows thus rendering all the destruction and works useless."

"It is very important that this thoughtless and destructive proposal for planning permission is not granted."

Sandy Gatward said: "The Forestry Commission must be aware of the value of such rare ancient and ornamental woodland and, of course, habitat for numerous endangered species, such as the kingfisher, southern damselfly and smooth snake, the disturbance of which has already resulted in a reduction."

Views can be logged for the next 16 weeks on the National Park Authority planning portal. The application number is 16/00571.