

Cumbria Flood Factsheet

2. Frequently asked questions

Information for flood affected farms in Cumbria - Monday 25 January

Brought to you by all public sector organisations in Cumbria

Can I clear gravel from my fields?

In general, yes, but let Natural England know if SSSI or Agri-Environment Scheme land is affected as they may need to provide consents and detailed advice particular to your case. Please refer to the [Post flood clean-up guidance factsheet](#) which provides more information on gravel removal from land.

What can I do with the gravel?

You may re-use on the field with consent from the Environment Agency. Stockpiling in fields or creating acceptable bunds around river may be approved. Hauliers may transport to a location within the catchment but disposal costs may be high.

Is there funding for clearing gravel from my fields or removing damaged fencing and other debris?

Yes, a maximum payment of £6,800 is on offer to the most seriously affected farmers to move debris and gravel (not silt) to the edge of the field through the Debris Recovery Grant. See the [Available support factsheet](#). The deadline for application is 26th February 2010. Natural England, Environment Agency and Cumbria County Council are also actively seeking funding to help deal with the river channel changes, in particular the deposition of gravel as a result of the flooding.

How much will it cost me to remove gravel from my land?

Contractors from the Environment Agency are working on costing various options for gravel removal, this involves quantifying the depth, volume and coverage of the gravel..

Can I receive payment for any emergency retrospective recovery work?

No, all work for the Debris Recovery Grant must be completed after the application has been approved.

Can we put gravel back into watercourses?

Usually not without Land Drainage Consent from the Environment Agency. As an emergency procedure to prevent further erosion, this can be discussed with the Environment Agency on site.

Can we clear gravel blocking watercourses?

This needs to be discussed with the Environment Agency. In cases where there is no environmental damage and where they do not cause flood risk issues elsewhere, in principle, the Environment Agency will allow works and they may not require consent. As an emergency procedure to prevent further erosion, this can be discussed with the Environment Agency on site.

The Environment Agency want to protect the environment and to manage flooding risks in catchments but we also want to protect you from inadvertently breaking the law. This is why it is important that you telephone the Environment Agency and Natural England to get advice as soon as you can.

Can we rebuild a damaged bund / river defence?

Generally no. Any work within 8 metres of a main watercourse needs Land Drainage Consent from the Environment Agency, but as an emergency procedure to prevent further erosion, this can be discussed with them on site.

Can I use gravel deposited on my land to repair holes in the river bank and fields?

Please contact the Environment Agency for Land Drainage Consent (charge has been waived). We will take each request on a case by case basis.

If I am unsure what my options are regards river restoration and erosion stabilisation where can I find help?

Natural England have commissioned a geomorphological consultancy firm to conduct a survey into how and if the river bank should be restored. It will go through all the best options for each farm and is on offer to those most severely affected in the Derwent and Cocker catchments.

Who will carry forward the proposals from the geomorphological survey?

Natural England and the Environment Agency would like to discuss in depth every option open to you. This could involve a fast track entry into a High Level Stewardship Scheme which would enable you to manage severely affected land in an environmentally beneficial way. We may put in place soft engineering techniques to stabilise the river bank such as tree planting and insertion of dead wood into eroded sections. You would also have the opportunity to claim funding to restore flood damaged fences and stone walls.

What if I decide to restore the land back to its pre-flood status?

We would work with you to come to a mutually acceptable plan, but we must bear in mind the Derwent, Cocker & Ehen are SSSI & SAC protected rivers.

Can we clear trees blocking rivers?

This strictly requires Land Drainage Consent but a telephone call to the local Environment Agency biodiversity officer may give a quick solution. Alternatively, as an emergency procedure to prevent further erosion, this can be discussed with the Environment Agency on site.

Can we clear trees and rubbish from our land?

A large range of waste material has been deposited other than gravels. Options for managing this include:

- Collection of smaller items where possible bagged or placed in container, stored in a secure location for collection either by local authority or private contractor.
- For larger items stored in a secure location for collection either by local authority or private contractor.
- If waste is to be removed from fields and disposed of by landowners then you have a Duty of Care to ensure that the waste is disposed of to a properly authorised site. You can talk to the Environment Agency about any specific issues you have to do with waste.
- Clean wood waste can be burnt under a waste exemption which allows the burning of waste plant tissue in the open. Many agricultural sites may have already registered but if they have not then they can do so via the Environment Agency's agricultural helpline 0845 603 3113. This is a free registration and the burning can take place immediately after telephone registration.

See the [Post flood clean-up guidance factsheet](#) for more information.

The river has taken a new course across my land, what can I do?

Please contact the Environment Agency. They will work closely with Natural England and yourselves to assess individual cases and give appropriate advice.

What do I do if other people's dead stock are on my land?

Contact Trading Standards on 01539 713137 who are making funding available for collection of other people's stock.

Public rights of way (footpaths, bridleways and byways) crossing my land have been damaged – bridges, surfaces, gates and stiles need repair, what do I do?

Please contact the Lake District National Park Authority if the land is within the National Park or Cumbria Highways for other areas.

What is the Flood helpline number and when is it open?

The number is 0300 060 4523 & 0977. Open normal working hours but messages will be taken out of hours and return of call as soon as possible.

Can the NVZ regulations be relaxed to help us get through the Cumbrian flood disaster?

Please contact your Environment Agency office for advice