

From: Rod Donington-Smith (K FAG)

To: Emma Gatén (Daily Telegraph)

Danger of Drought measures exacerbating Flooding Problems 11-08-2022

Dear Emma,

Having read recent articles (including several of yours) and letters to the editor, about the dire state of the country's preparation for dealing with prolonged periods of low rainfall and also the water companies' lack of investment, I would like to highlight an additional related problem.

Without the availability of any new reservoirs there will be a temptation for water companies to maximise their water holdings in their existing reservoirs. Without space being made available to hold back floodwater in times of heavy rainfall, there is an obvious risk of properties and businesses downstream being flooded by excessive water overflows. Here in Keswick, downstream of Thirlmere Reservoir (owned by United Utilities), there have been major flooding events in 2005, 2009 & 2015. By area Thirlmere accounts for only 28% of the River Greta's catchment but the distribution of rainfall is not spread evenly over the whole catchment. It is estimated that during Storm Desmond in 2015 40% of the river flow through town came via Thirlmere. It should be noted that the town has never flooded from the River Greta whilst Thirlmere is not overflowing but in 2015 515 properties suffered flood damage. United Utilities knows the situation but resists taking the measures required to effectively control the reservoir's water levels. Such measures would have little or no effect on the company's ability to fulfil its water supply duties but would have major beneficial effects in reducing flood risk.

Up to now the West Coast of Cumbria gets its water from Ennerdale and Crummock Waters but in future, at great expense (£300 million), their sole water supply will come from Thirlmere and both Ennerdale and Crummock will cease to be used and their water supply facilities removed. The reasons given for this change are to protect some fresh water mussels and to make it easier for fish to swim further upstream to spawn. Now that Thirlmere is about to acquire a whole new range of customers, who will be totally dependent upon it for their water supply, our fear is that United Utilities will become even more reluctant to release water to create the required space for holding back flood water.

If there are any points in this email you wish to discuss, please get in contact.

Regards,

Rod Donington-Smith (Email dated 11-08-2022)

For and on behalf of Keswick Flood Action Group.