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Your reference: 2025-BeaverWR-EOI-05

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Dear Giles

Please find below further information for a wild release expression of interest into the Ehen/Liza/Calder catchments (2025-BeaverWR-EOI-05). We have addressed the three key points that did not meet the wild release criteria.

1) Maximise success - release details

The proposed release strategy does not give sufficient assurance that a genetically diverse population would be established. Although it will be possible to add new release sites at a later date, the wild release licence application will need to identify enough release sites to be sure that beavers can be released in adequate numbers. It is also important that beaver releases are not spread out over a long period as the aim should be to get offspring from different families to mix as early as possible and for the population to grow rapidly. Phasing releases also runs the risk of potential release sites being colonised by dispersing beavers, making it more difficult to release sufficient numbers.

Our project would aim to release 15 pairs with any dependent young (approximately 30-50 beavers in total).

Some of these sites would be within the Wild Ennerdale boundary, but most would be in the wider Ehen/Calder catchment. During our engagement we would aim to secure 20 release sites by connecting with supportive landowners in the catchment. This is more sites than we may need to allow flexibility if sites were occupied early or become unavailable or if problem animals need to be translocated.

We would aim for 5 pairs/family groups to be released each year during the first three years of the project.



2) Governance structure

It's noted that you intend to find partners to represent other parts of the catchment. Natural England will require these partners to be identified before submitting a wild release licence application and for the Steering Group to have representatives from across the catchment.

As there are no current partners beyond the Wild Ennerdale boundary, the expression of interest for the whole Liza/Ehen/Calder project is being led by Forestry England. The project has a Forestry England project board. A national Forestry England group shares learnings across the current four beaver wild release projects it is closely involved in across the country.

If we were invited to prepare a wild release application, Forestry England would initiate a catchment-wide steering group. Representatives from across the catchment and Cumbria would be invited to join the steering group and/or working groups specific to particular issues, including but not limited to:

- Regulatory bodies and infrastructure providers (Environment Agency, Cumberland Council, Lake District National Park Authority, Network Rail, National Highways, Historic England)
- Landowners (farming representatives, Community Investment Companies, woodland managers, Sellafield and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority)
- Residents and businesses (Parish Councils and Business Associations)
- Beaver practitioners
- Conservation groups (Wildlife Trusts, Rivers Trusts, Woodland Trusts and Landscape Recovery Projects)
- Freshwater species specialists
- Veterinary and holding facility specialists
- Recreational groups (angling groups and kayaking groups)
- Wild Ennerdale partnership organisations (Forestry England, National Trust, United Utilities and Natural England).

It is hoped that further partnerships would develop during our engagement. If they do not, Forestry England would continue to lead the application.



3) Management post-licence and exit strategy

For a full wild release application Natural England will need some assurance that there is a workable plan to support landowners and other stakeholders once the ten-year licence expires. Trapping and removing the beavers is unlikely to be a realistic option after ten years of breeding and dispersal and Natural England would not licence this. We would suggest setting up a beaver management or advisory group with a plan for longer term funding and a transition towards that group taking on the role of supporting stakeholders to live alongside beavers.

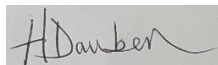
Forestry England would fund a permanent species reintroduction role based in Cumbria. This role would be a dedicated point of contact for beaver mitigation and monitoring. This role would initiate a beaver management group in the Liza/Ehen/Calder catchments, which could provide free advice and training and/or connect to paid services by contractors. If we were invited to prepare a wild release application, details of roles, responsibilities and services would be developed through a working group.

A Liza/Ehen/Calder population would be most sustainable if it could join naturally with other beaver populations in England, so we would consider the long-term implications of dispersal beyond these catchments and future strategic releases to improve connectivity to other beavers.

We would no longer consider removal of all beavers as an exit strategy.

Please let me know if I can help with any further clarification.

Kind regards,



Hayley Dauben
Species Reintroduction Project Officer

