



Mungrisdale, Saddleback and Bowscale Fell Commons (CL293, 66 & 60)

Woodland Exclosure Permission Renewal Summary



A report by
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For Mungrisdale, Saddleback &
Bowscale Fell Commoners
11 September 2023

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1. Background

This document provides a summary of the proposals and constraints for the consultation on the renewal of permission for the fencing of seven exclosures on Mungrisdale, Saddleback and Bowscale Fell Commons in the Lake District National Park. The commons concerned are formally known as:

- CL60 Two tracts of land known as Carrock Fell and Mungrisdale Fell (Cumbria) [also known as Bowscale Common]
- CL66 Saddleback (Cumbria)
- CL293 Mungrisdale Common (Cumbria)

The fencing was erected in 2009 as part of a Countryside Stewardship Scheme for the purpose of excluding sheep to protect planted trees and shrubs and to allow the development of trees, scrub and other habitats. Permission was granted for 15 years from the date of erection of the fencing. Fences were completed in early January 2009, therefore the consents expire on or around the end of December 2023. If the current agri-environment agreement is to continue to be extended, or if these areas are to be included in any future scheme, then these permissions need to be renewed.

Your views on the extension of permission for the presence of these fences on the common for a further 15 years are sort.

The closing date for consultation responses is: 13th October 2023.

Views and queries should be addressed to:

commonlandcasework@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

The Planning Inspectorate,
Commons Team 3A
Temple Quay House,
Temple Quay,
Bristol, BS1 6PN

Please note that this document presents a summary of the main constraints for the benefit of consultees and is not a full Environmental Impact Assessment.

2. Description of Project

The original project proposed to redress the imbalance of woodland on the commons. In 2008 only 1.9ha of remnant mature oak woodland was present within the 3,295ha of Mungrisdale, Saddleback and Bowscale Fells Commons, representing only 0.05% of the total area of the commons. The intention of the original project was to create five new areas of gill woodland and scrub and to protect two areas of existing woodland and scrub. All seven areas required fencing to protect the trees and shrubs from livestock grazing, with five of the areas also having native trees and shrubs

planted within them. The fencing encloses 76ha of open fell, 50.9ha of which has been planted as new native woodland and scrub.

Since 2009 there has been periodic maintenance of the fences, re-stocking of the trees and tidying up of tree tubes and stakes where they have become separated from trees. In 2023 Northern Habitat were commissioned to make an assessment of the condition of the seven enclosures. This concluded that whilst the fencing is currently stockproof all the posts will need renewing in the near future, with most of the sheep netting reusable. Scrub establishment was found to be acceptable or good in three of the five new woodland enclosures, but in need of restocking in two enclosures, Roughten Gill and Glenderamackin, where there has been poor establishment in parts of the enclosures. There are promising signs of natural regeneration in Young Wood, the area of remnant oak woodland and the Swineside juniper.

It is Natural England's opinion that all seven areas would benefit from further protection from grazing by sheep to capitalise on the success in establishing new woodland and promotion of natural regeneration in Young Wood and the Swineside juniper stand. If the fences were removed at the end of the current permission it is likely that there would be considerable damage by sheep to the young trees present in the areas of new woodland and that the regeneration in Young Wood and the Swineside juniper stand would be at least partially reversed. It is also likely that the changes in ground vegetation would revert back to the pre 2009 state where species-poor acid grassland prevailed.

In addition to increasing the extent of woodland and scrub on the common the aims of the project in 2009 was to improve habitat for ring ouzel; create a more visually interesting mosaic of vegetation on the common by adding areas of woodland and scrub into areas with little structural diversity; improve water quality in the Bassenthwaite Lake catchment through reducing sediment input into the Glenderamackin and Glenderaterra sub-catchments.

The proposal is to renew the permission for the seven temporary fences for a further 15 years commencing in 2024. Early in this period all the fencing will be renewed as the fenceposts have become rotten and some of the gates no longer close. The renewed fence will be 1.2m high sheep netting topped with one strand of plain wire. All gates will be replaced with kissing gates and two additional stiles will be placed in each fence to increase public access potential. All gates and stiles will be compliant with BS5709. Open Access symbol signs will be affixed to all gates and stiles.

Fence Lengths and Areas

Common	Enclosure	Fence Length (m)	Area Enclosed (ha)
CL60	Swineside juniper	1,318	11.1
CL66	Roughten Gill	2,582	17.9
CL66	Glenderaterra North	1,216	5.0
CL66	Glenderaterra South	473	2.1
CL293	Southern Fell	883	11.3
CL293	Glenderamackin	2,684	14.6
CL293	Young Wood	2,071	14.0

3. Site Description

Mungrisdale, Saddleback and Bowscale Fells Commons is an area of unenclosed fell covered by acid grassland and bracken, valley mires and flushes with small areas of dry heath. Woodland and scrub is confined to a small area of oak woodland (Young Wood) high up on the side of Bowscale Fell, stands of juniper in the Swineside valley and on the end of Tongue, some small areas of gorse on the moorland fringe and a few scattered trees on crags and in gills. In 2009 the areas of new planting were mostly covered by bracken and mat-grass *Nardus stricta* acid grassland, with small areas of upland flush.

Site visits in 2023 showed that there had been a marked change to the vegetation within the enclosures compared to that outside the fences. Sward heights are greatly increased and there has been considerable development of mosses and lichens amongst the grass. Dwarf shrubs such as heather and bilberry have become more abundant and species of plants associated with upland woodland such as wood sorrel, common dog violet, wood anemone and foxglove are now prominent in the enclosures. Establishment of planted trees has generally been good, with the exception of Glenderamackin and South Glenderaterra, where re-stocking is required.

4. Environmental Constraints

4.1. Biodiversity

With the exception of Southern Fell, the entire common lies within the Skiddaw Group Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Lake District High Fells Special Area of Conservation (SAC, Map 1). These two designations are selected for their upland habitats, including upland heathland, blanket bog, flushes, upland oak woodland and juniper scrub. The SSSI is also designated for its moorland birds, including ring ouzel.

4.2. Geodiversity

The commons are underlain by Skiddaw Slates and the Skiddaw Group SSSI is designated for its geological interest, which on the Mungrisdale Commons is represented by the outcrops of Loweswater Flags at Raven Crag and Mungrisdale Quarry.

4.3. Archaeology and Historic Environment

There are no Scheduled Monuments within the commons and no historic features within any of the woodland enclosures.

4.4. Landscape

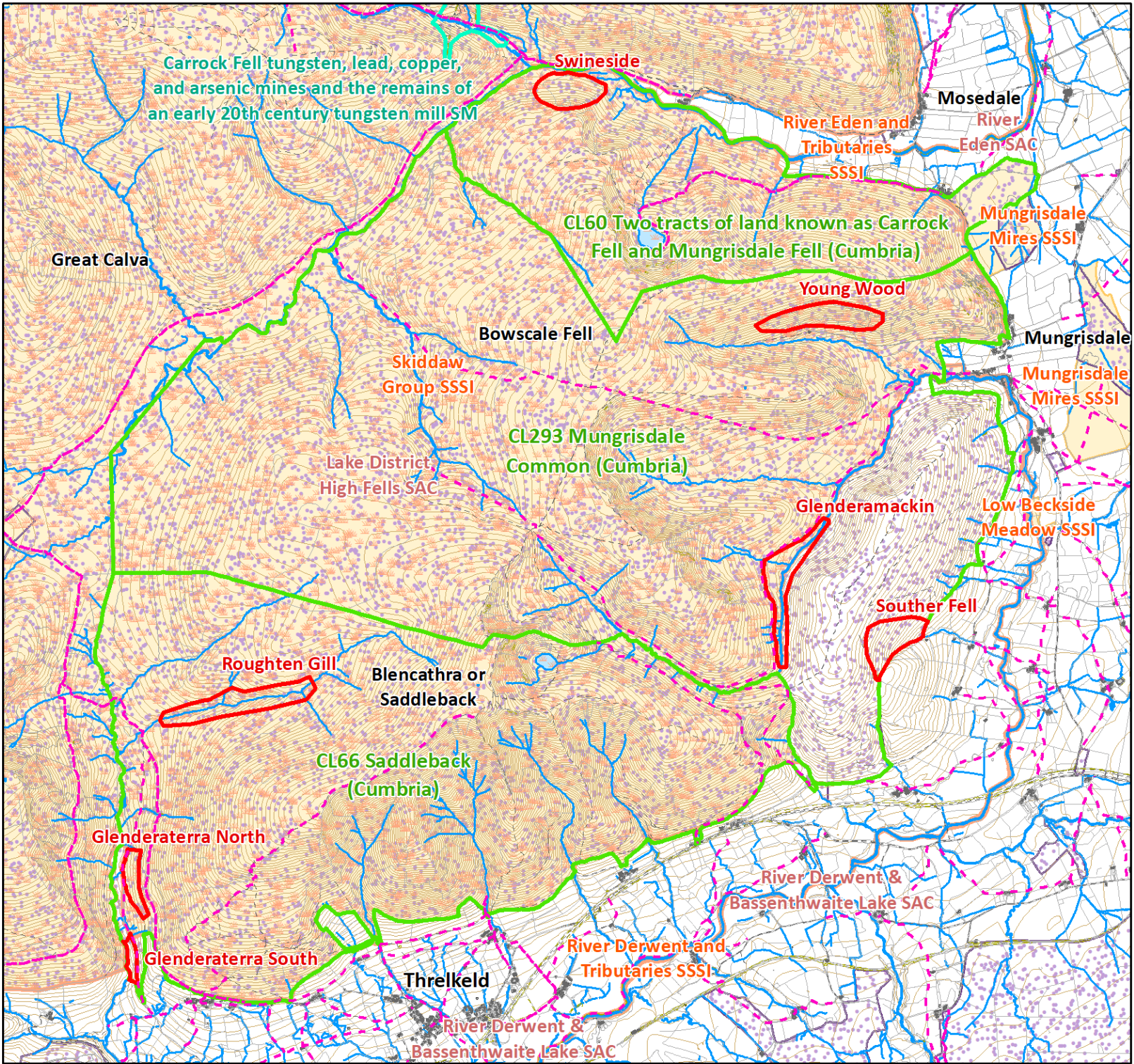
Mungrisdale, Saddleback and Bowscale Fells Commons are in the Lake District National Park and Lake District World Heritage Site. The whole area is open access land and registered common land.

The commons fall within the Borrowdale and Bassenthwaite Valley component of the World Heritage Site and is part of one of the largest areas of unenclosed land in the World Heritage Site and National Park; the Caldbeck, Uldale and Mungrisdale Fells. This is an area almost entirely devoid of trees and is mostly white fell (*Nardus* grassland) and bracken with areas of blanket bog on broader ridges. With the exception of the Roughten Gill and Glenderamackin enclosures the areas of new woodland are all on the periphery of the common and fit into the pattern of small peripheral

plantations and woodlands which are characteristic of the Skiddaw Massif. The Roughten Gill and Glenderamackin are designed to be gill woodlands and purposefully disrupt the treeless character of gills both on the commons and on the massif as a whole.

4.5. Access

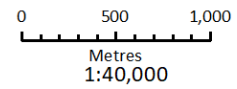
The whole of the commons is Open Access Land and the enclosure fences incorporate gates and stiles to allow the public to continue to access them. None of the enclosures cross public rights of way, though the Glenderamackin enclosure lies just below the public footpath running along the western side of the Glenderamackin valley. The Glenderaterra enclosures were created as two enclosures rather than one so that the public footpath and gathering track off the common to Wescoe Farm is unimpeded.



Mungrisdale Common Woodland Exclosures

Map 1: Designations

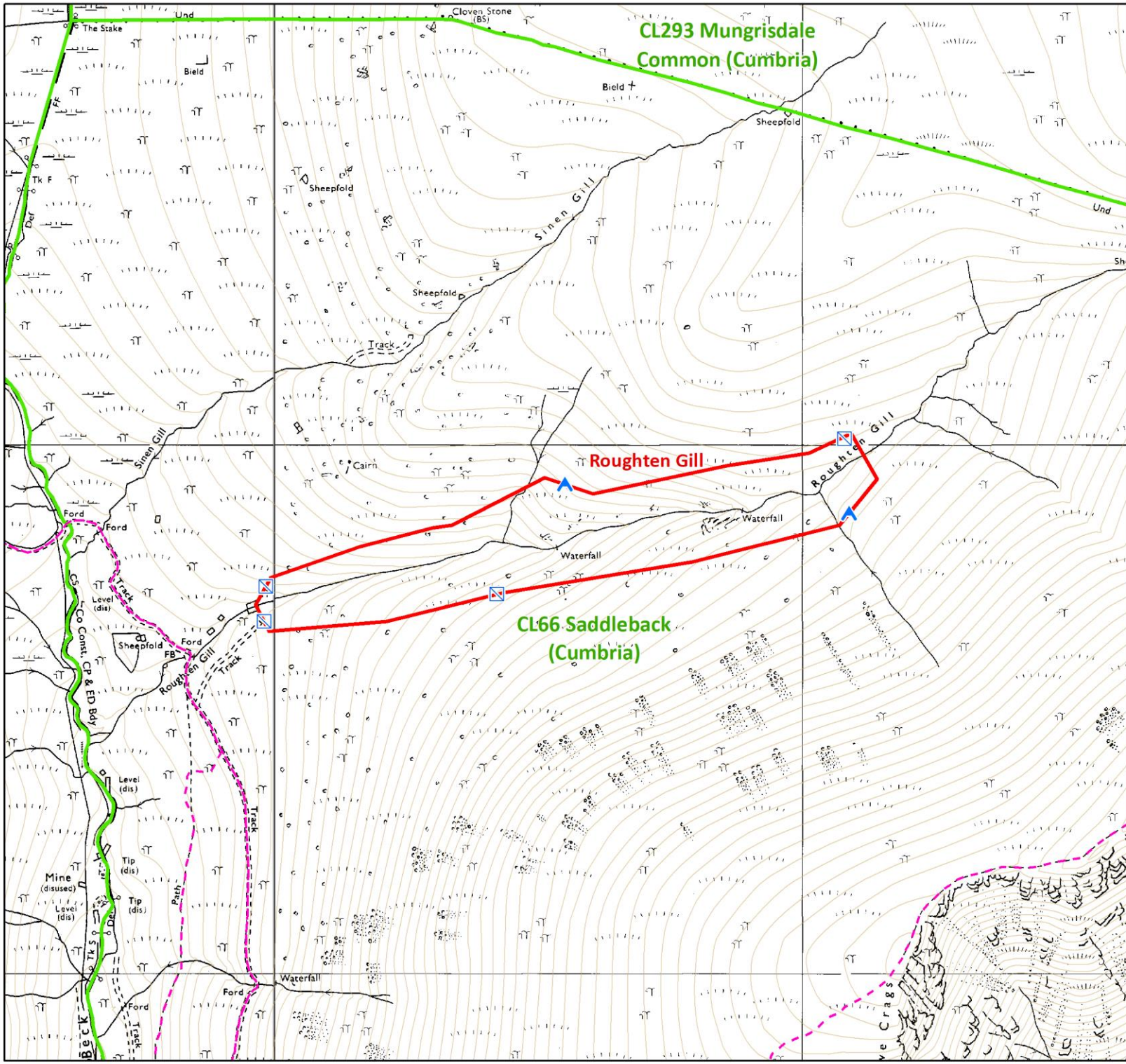
- Mungrisdale Common
 - Woodland Compartments
 - Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
 - Scheduled Monuments (SMs)
 - CROW Open Access Land
- Public Rights of Way**
- Footpath
 - Bridleway
 - Restricted byway



Drawn by R Jerram
10 July 2023

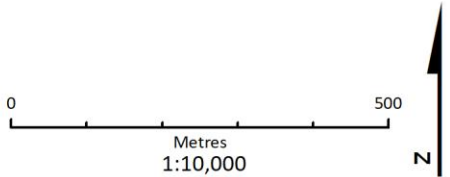
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Mungrisdale Common Woodland Enclosures Map 2: Roughten Gill Enclosure

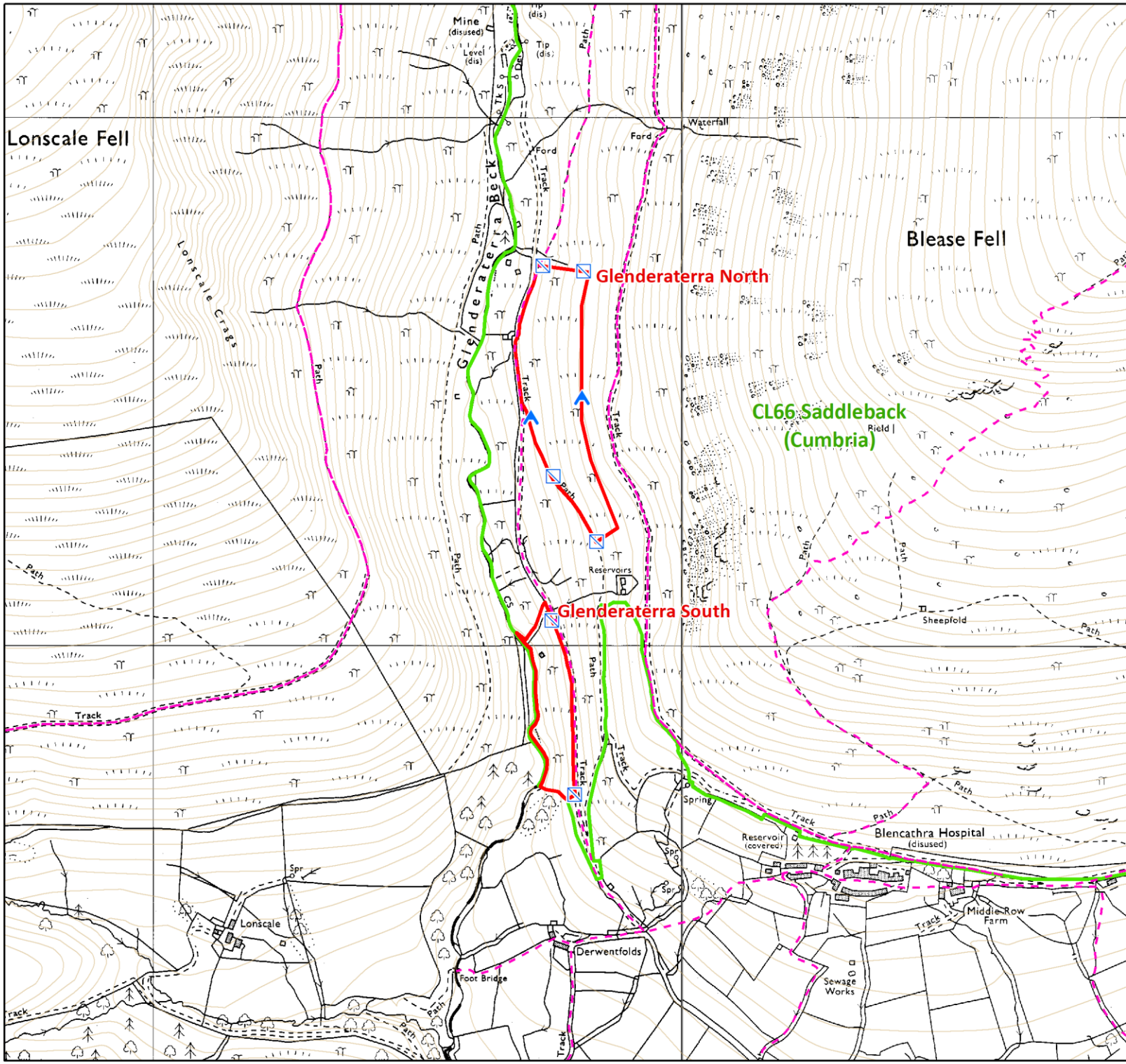
- Mungrisdale Common
- Woodland Compartments
- ▢ Gate
- ▲ Stile
- Public Rights of Way**
- - - Footpath
- · - · - Bridleway



Drawn by R Jerram
7 September 2023

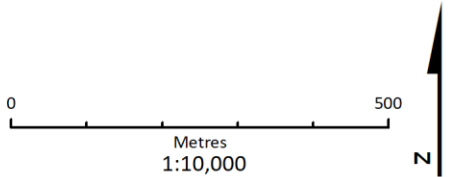
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Mungrisdale Common Woodland Exclosures Map 3: Glenderaterra Exclosures

- █ Mungrisdale Common
- █ Woodland Compartments
- ◻ Gate
- ▲ Stile
- Public Rights of Way**
- - - Footpath
- - - Bridleway



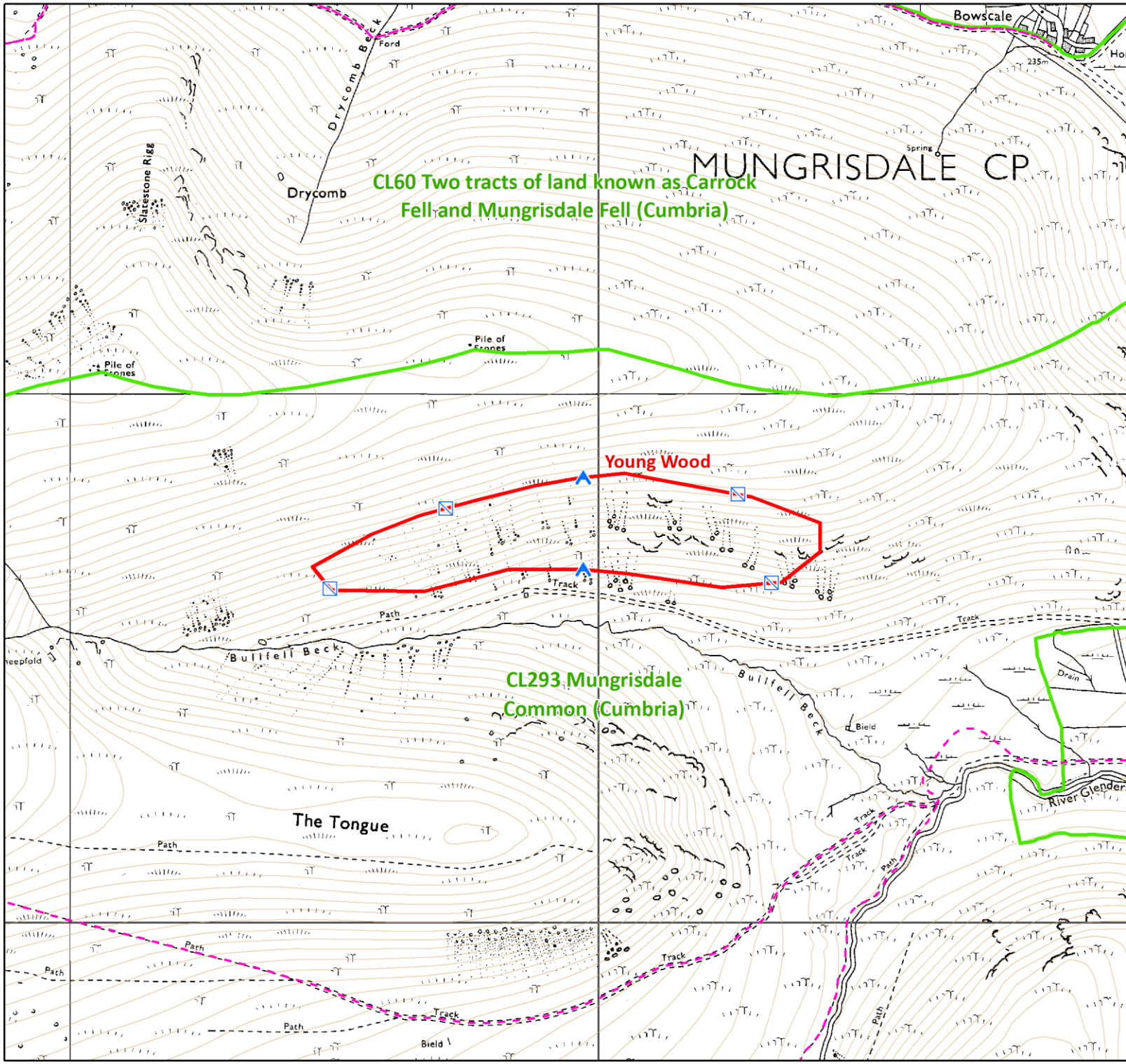
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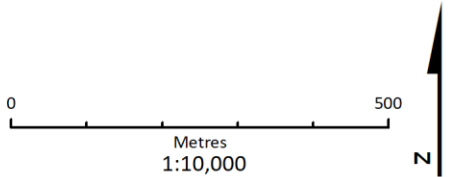


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**Mungrisdale Common
Woodland Exclosures
Map 5: Young Wood Exclosure**



- Mungrisdale Common
- Woodland Compartments
- ◻ Gate
- ▲ Stile
- Public Rights of Way**
- - - Footpath
- Bridleway

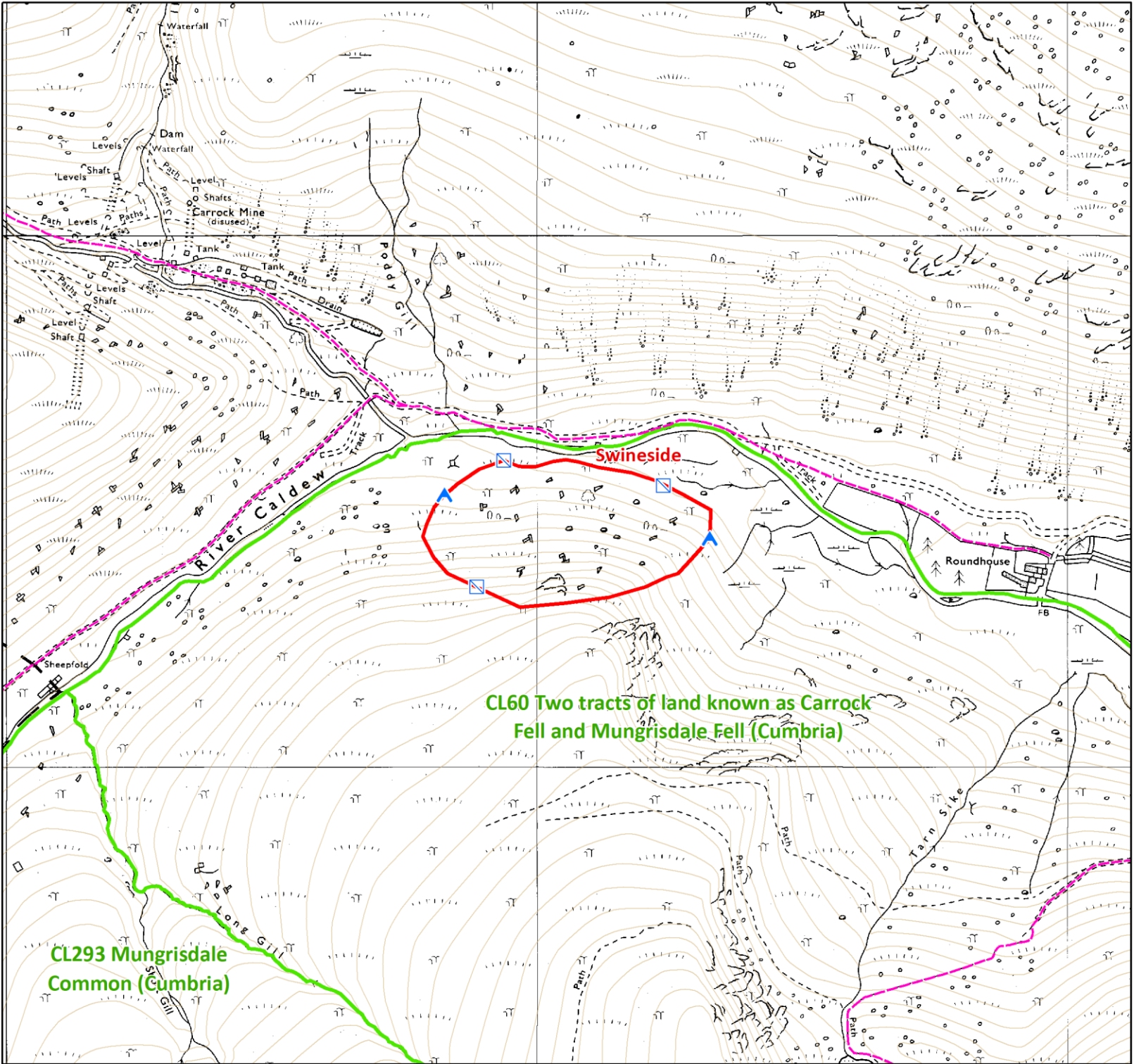


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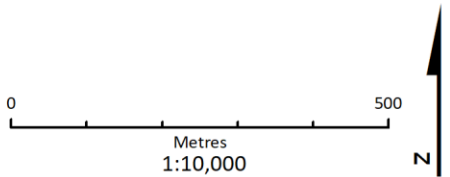


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Mungrisdale Common Woodland Exlosures Map 6: Swineside Exclusion

- Mungrisdale Common
- Woodland Compartments
- ◻ Gate
- ▲ Stile
- Public Rights of Way**
- - - Bridleway



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5. Scheme Benefits

- Protection and expansion of existing upland oak woodland at Young Wood through continued protection from grazing.
- Enhancement of existing juniper scrub at Swineside through continued protection from grazing.
- The continued protection from grazing of the areas new woodland creation will consolidate the gains from the first fifteen years of enclosure, allowing the young trees to become more established and more likely to survive in the long term once protection from grazing is finally removed.
- Enhanced sediment control within the Bassenthwaite Lake catchment.

6. Scheme Disadvantages

- A further fifteen years of enclosure of a areas of open fell and common land.

7. Indicators of Success

7.1. Restoration of Woodland (Young Wood)

- Tree species, Oak, Rowan and Birch should be present at irregular spacing, with an overall canopy cover of between 10% and 50% of the area.
- There should be no man-made loss of tree cover in the existing woodland area.
- All SSSI land should be in favourable or recovering condition.
- Cover of holly should be less than 10%.
- By year 30 (from 2009), there should be established Oak, Rowan and Birch seedlings and saplings free from sheep damage in any areas within the fence without a dense canopy. Under the existing woodland canopy there should be good development of basal shoots on established trees.

The following Skiddaw Group SSSI definitions of favourable Condition also apply to Young Wood:

Objective: Trees in and around Young Wood regenerating successfully. Fragmentary woodland consolidated i.e. wherever trees are present, these able to regenerate. Overall area of woodland increased. New woodland cover in a condition where trees able to regenerate.

Attributes: Woodland with diverse physical structure and age structure across the site. Native tree species able to regenerate in suitable locations (e.g. clearings or other open ground)
Frequent deadwood present.

7.2. Swineside: Restoration of Successional Areas and Scrub

- By year 30, cover of shrub species Juniper should be between 20% and 50% of the area.
- By year 30, shrub species Juniper should have a diverse age and height structure.
- No more than 50% of the scrub area should be mature, or over mature.
- By year 30, the following undesirable species Ragwort and or Creeping Thistle should be no more than occasional.
- All SSSI land should be in favourable or recovering condition.
- Archaeological or historic features have suffered no further degradation. The depth of soil covering the features has been maintained.

The following Skiddaw Group SSSI definitions of favourable Condition also apply to the Swineside juniper stand:

Objective: Thriving populations of Juniper at all existing locations, regenerating successfully.
Overall area of Juniper increased.

Attributes: Juniper growing strongly at current locations - at least one third of the Juniper scrub should be growing as dense patches of at least 0.4ha in total. At least 25% of Juniper should be fruiting and the cover of young and pioneer bushes must exceed that of old, ailing and dead bushes.

7.3. Creation of Successional Areas and Scrub

- By year 30, the following desirable species Birch, Hazel, Rowan, regenerated Oak seedlings, Blackthorn and Hawthorn should be present.
- By year 30, cover of shrub species Birch, Hazel, Rowan, regenerated Oak seedlings, Blackthorn and Hawthorn should be between 10% and 50% of the area. The vegetation within 2m of the edge of the scrub should be taller than 30cm.
- By year 30, tree species Birch, Hazel, Rowan, regenerated Oak seedlings, Blackthorn and Hawthorn should be present at irregular spacing, with an overall canopy of between 10 - 20% of the area.
- By year 30, there should be established Oak, Rowan and Birch seedlings and saplings free from sheep damage in any areas within the fence without a dense canopy.
- 95% of tree / scrub regeneration should consist of native species.
- By year 30, the following undesirable species Ragwort and or Creeping Thistle should be no more than occasional.
- Cover of holly should be less than 10%.
- All SSSI land should be in favourable or recovering condition.