CUMBRIA COUNTY WILDLIFE SITES

SITE NAME:	River Kent Mire	SITE REF:	L-NY40-26
Planning Authority	Lake District National Park Authority	**District**	South Lakeland
Review Status	Confirmed	**Review Date**	24/02/2010
Survey Status	Surveyed	**Survey Date**	24/02/2010 20/07/2009
Grid Reference	NY 448 068	**Area (ha)**	9.60

Site Description

The River Kent Mire is on the west bank of the upper reaches of the River Kent, 3km north of Kentmere, 1km south of Kentmere Reservoir, 7km east of Ambleside and 15km northwest of Kendal, at an altitude of 240m above sea level.

This is a complex mosaic of interconnected flushes and valley mires that have been much modified by artificial drainage and grazing and historical peat cutting, with a strip of alder woodland alongside the river. The site is on the floor of a glacial valley, with flat areas supporting accumulations of deep peat (several metres) with National Vegetation Classification (NVC) type M17a Deergrass-hare's-tail cottongrass (*Tricophorum cespitosum-Eriophorum vaginatum*) bog vegetation. A variety of bog moss (Sphagnum) species are present and abundant, with other species including hares-tail cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*), common cottongrass (*E. angustifolium*), Cross-leaved heath (*Erica tetralix*), ling (*Calluna vulgaris*), deergrass (*Tricophorum cespitosum*), heath-spotted orchid (*Dactylorhiza maculata*), cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccus*), bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), star sedge (*Carex echinata*), tawny sedge (*C. hostiana*), bog asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), heath milkwort (*Polygala serpyllifolia*). Height variations in the mire surface suggest historical peat cuttings, and there are very few bog pools. The mire was rather dry at the time of survey, and in many places the sward is rather grassy, and transitional to NVC M15 Deergrass - cross-leaved heath (*Tricophorum cespitosum-Erica tetralix*) wet heath, a community typical of shallow drier peats, which appears patchily on dry slopes where steps in the peat surface height occur.

Shallower peats on the site periphery have rank grassy NVC M25 Purple moor-grass-tormentil (*Molinia caerulea -Potentilla erecta*) acid grasslands which still contain a good variety of wetland plants including devils-bit scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), heath-spotted orchid (*Dactylorhiza maculata*), carnation sedge (*Carex panicea*), marsh pennywort (*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*), marsh hawksbeard (*Crepis paludosa*), ragged robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*), marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*). Additionally, several areas flushed by springs containing mildly base-rich ground-waters have NVC M10a Dioecious sedge-butterwort (*Carex dioica-Pinguicula vulgaris*) small-sedge mires over shallow peats, and NVC M11 Common yellow sedge-yellow saxifrage (*Carex viridula ssp. oedocarpa-Saxifraga aizoides*) small sedge mires on more open stony flushes on the valley side, with species including brown mosses, dioecious sedge (*Carex dioica*), common yellow sedge (*Carex viridula ssp. oedocarpa*), carnation sedge (*C. panicea*), star sedge (*C. echinata*), tawny sedge (*C. hostiana*), common sedge (*C. nigra*), glaucous sedge (*C. flacca*), pill sedge (*C. pilulifera*), devils-bit scabious (*S. pratensis*), bog asphodel (*N. ossifragum*), marsh arrowgrass (*Triglochin palustris*), starry saxifrage (*Saxifraga stellaris*), yellow saxifrage (*Saxifraga aizoides*), marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*), bog stitchwort (*Stellaria alsine*), common lousewort (*Pedicularis sylvatica*), round-leaved sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), tufted forget-me-not (*Myosotis laxa*), bulbous rush (*Juncus bulbosus*).

Along the river there are a few rank areas of soft rush (*Juncus effusus*) and stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) between the mire and the strip of NVC W7 Alder-ash-yellow pimpernel *(Alnus glutinosa-Fraxinus excelsior-Lysimachia nemorum*) wet woodland along the river banks. The woodland is patchy because grazing has prevented growth of young trees. The area along the southern boundary has recently benefited from under-planting with alder (*A. glutinosa*) and oak (*Quercus spp.).* The ground flora is a mixture of acid grassland, Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), male fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*) and lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*).

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Owner	
Guidelines for Selection	**Cumbrian Wildlife Sites Criteria for Selection (New Guidelines 2008)** Fe4: Basin or valley fen. HM1: Sites with a combination of habitats (at least borderline quality). HM2: Mosaic of habitats (rated by diversity score).

Print Date: ***02/07/2010***