



THREE MILE WATER CONSERVATION & ANGLING ASSOCIATION

Mossley Dam **Proposals for Fishery Development**

Suitability as Trout Fishery

The water analysis out in Nov 95 and Apr 01 would suggest that the dam is of a satisfactory standard to support salmonid fish.

The Association would wish to introduce both brown and rainbow trout.

Neither species will be able to breed in the dam as there is no feeder stream with suitable substrate to facilitate spawning. Regular introductions of fish will therefore be required to develop a reasonably productive fishery to meet the demands of angling.

A detailed GPS underwater contour survey should be carried out to gain an understanding of the underwater profile of the dam detailing shallow bars and deeper areas (estimated cost: £750). This will have a bearing on how the dam may perform as a fishery – deep water with a steeply shelving shore tends to be low in productivity and is usually a poor fishery.

Physical Requirements

It is suggested that the dam be developed for shore angling over an arc from the boardwalk in a clockwise direction round the north-eastern corner, while the remainder of the shore should be maintained as an exclusively conservation area (**Fig 1**).

Within this arc angling would be from the bank between points A & B; it would appear that the water is generally deeper in this area. From point B to point C the water is shallower and wading will be necessary for satisfactory angling (**Fig 1**).

It is not envisaged that extensive clearance of vegetation will be required to permit access along the shoreline although a path through the more heavily overgrown northern shore with access points to the water would be beneficial for angling. This would also ensure that anglers were largely kept to an established route thereby minimising disturbance to retained areas of vegetation.

It is suggested that a designated area for disabled anglers to be constructed as a continuation of the boardwalk at a lower level closer to the waistline. This needs only to be a relatively short section of 20-25cms with attendant safety features – design can be supplied.

Angling & Stocking Policy

The open season should be from 1st March to 31st October and it is suggested that fishing should be restricted to 8 rods/anglers per day. The Association would wish to retain 6 rod spaces while it is suggested that 2 additional spaces would be made available through the council.

Under 16s should only be permitted to fish when accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Fishing methods would be restricted to fly fishing only throughout the season.

The dam will require an initial stocking of take able-sized fish and repeat introductions of fish throughout the season to ensure an adequate head of fish to maintain reasonable angling. A stock of 100-150 take able-sized fish per hectare should be sufficient. This water is estimated to be in the region of 3ha and therefore a stock of 300-500 fish would be a good target.

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The increasing popular practice of "catch and release" should be encouraged to minimise the demands of stocking and the inherent costs. It is suggested that anglers should be restricted to a daily limit of 2 fish; all additional caught should be returned to the water unharmed.

The release of smaller fish in the autumn might also be considered so that they have the chance to over-winter and develop as more natural "wild" fish.

Safety & Insurance

Life-belts mounted on posts every 150-200m should be positioned around the accessible extent of the shore. The Association will extend their existing Liability Insurance policy for the Three Mile Water to cover the dam.

Management & Funding

It is envisaged that the council would carry out the initial works to develop the dam as a fishery but that the Association would then become responsible for management and maintenance of the fishery. The Association has established a very credible record in the management of Three Mile Water and work parties operating every Sunday through the close season, and general tidying of the river corridor, the Association recently received 1st prize in a conservation competition run by the Wild Trout Trust for their initiative on the river.

Management of the fishery would extend to protect activities which would entail regular patrols of the dam to ensure that regulations were being adhered to and visitors had paid a daily fee.

The Association has received funding from 2 sources to carry out works on the Three Mile Water: £2,000 received in 2000 from Groundwork (NI) towards survey of river. £4,700 received in 2003 from awards for all (National Lottery) towards habitat rehabilitation.

A recent application for a full development plan has been successful under the EU Peace 11 Programme, receiving £47,000.

Similar sources of funding may be accessible for development of the dam.

Additional Information

The Association in a few short days have got a 1,000 named petition put together, in support of the above project.

Local schools have been involved with the clean-up and study of the Three Mile Water River. The same schools have shown a huge interest in Mossley Dam, not just on an angling basis, but also for a nature study.

We believe handicapped angler's, should be catered for, with ramps and safety fixtures fitted.

