

Extension Work

Advantages and Disadvantages in the Lake District National Park

This is an essay about the advantages and disadvantages that arise in and about National Parks, focusing on the Lake District National Park.

The Lake District is shown on the map below. As you can see the Lake District is situated in Cumbria in the North West of England.

The Lake District National Park is the largest National Park in Britain. It was established in 1951 and covers an area of 2,292 sq. km. It is home to the largest lake in Britain -lake Windermere which is an amazing 16.9km long, 2km wide and has an area of 16sq km-quite a lot of water! It is also home to Scafell Pike which is the largest mountain in England rising to a very tall 966m. Both of these features, along with many more, encourage people to visit the park.

The Lake District is one of the National Parks in Wales and England, the others being

Exmoor
Dartmoor
The Pembrokeshire Coast
The Brecon Beacons
The Yorkshire Dales
Northumberland
Snowdonia
And
The North York Moor

7% of all the land in England is National Park Land and 20% of the land in Wales in National Parks.

A National Park is defined as an area of scenic beauty. National Parks have two main aims

- A) To preserve and care for the beautiful environment may it be coast or mountains and all the wildlife/plants in them
- B) To provide a place for recreation, relaxation and enjoyment open to everyone.

You would think it would be easy to provide a pretty, safe place for people to visit/live/work. You must think again! National Parks are at the centre of much controversy and arguments-as you are about to find out yet still manage to have many, many advantages.

One of the advantages of a National Park are that they are a great place for people to come and relax. Anyone can enjoy a visit to a National Park-families, individuals, the elderly and so on. Some parks (although not the Lake District) are also used by the army as part of their training process. Obviously, there are farmers on the land too who depend on it to make a living.

The Lake District is a place where you can do a number of activities-

- Walking
- Outdoor Pursuits (e.g. Canoeing, climbing etc)
- Going on a leisurely boat ride on the lakes (especially Windermere)
- Having a nice picnic or day out in some of the specially developed areas or on the mountains themselves.
- Camping
- Water skiing
- Angling
- Bird watching /general nature looking
- Power boating
- And generally relaxing and having a great time!

Here is a map of the Lake District itself. Note all of the high land (brown bits) and lakes (blue bits)

DISADVANTAGES

As with every national Park there are some disadvantages. These are usually roughly the same in any National Park and there is not positive way of getting rid of all the problem without banning people to go to the National Parks which kind of defeats the object.

Traffic Congestion is a major problem. The small, narrow steep, winding country roads just can't cope with the volume of traffic which is passing to get to the park. As most of the visitors to the National Park travel by car it is indeed a serious problem.

In the Lake District the main problems are at Great Langdale, Borrowdale and Kentmere. There is also another big problem-**car parking facilities**. These are restricted causing some people to leave their cars parked at the side of the road causing further traffic problems affecting the local people who just want to get on with their day to day business. As there are more vehicles about this leads to more air pollution, which makes the area less pleasant to visit.

As said before there are few solutions to this problem. You could build big two -lane roads to replace the small ones but this would cause a number of problems A) it would be very expensive B) it is probable that there will not be room to expand the roads C) It would spoil the scenic beauty and quaintness of the place and the villagers won't be happy. These are just some of the many hundreds of possible problems so this option is not really an options(it you get me).

The NPA (National Park Association) along with the Cumbria County council and Countryside Commission came up with a plan in 1995 to try to reduce traffic congestion. It involved restricting access along the very popular routes, closing some roads all together and encouraging the use of public transport. Walking and cycling rather than cars once inside the national Park. For this to be successful the public transport facilities would have to be greatly improved.

All of this would mean, perhaps, fewer visitors thus bringing less money into the area. The locals who make a living out of this trade would lose out.

Footpath erosion is a major problem in the Lake District like the Brecon Beacons in South Wales and indeed many other National Parks. The amount of walkers using the paths cause them to gradually erode becoming unsafe and unpleasant. As the designed paths are no longer suitable to walk on people are resorting to wandering off the paths and uncovering tree roots, trampling on plants and things like that. This problem can be sorted by completely banning the use of offending footpaths and replacing them with others. There are many disadvantages to this including lack of money, people wanting to 'wander' as the please and directing people to use the new footpaths. A problem that is related to this is **soil compaction**. This is when the footpaths are damaged either by being compacted or in other ways so that greenery cannot grow and cannot soak up excess moisture etc.

Along with damaging the National Park footpaths, **tourists often go onto farmer's land, leaving gates open, creating noise, letting their dogs foul the area and unintentionally distressing farm animals**. All of the above things are usually done without intent but never the less it is still aggravating and expensive for the farmer.

The local people who often enjoy the trade of the tourists also may feel very annoyed by them. I myself have a personal comment to add here. Fifteen to twenty years ago my Mum and Dad use to visit Lake Windermere and the Lake district every summer to do walking. My Mum said it was very beautiful, unspoiled land which was very quiet, quaint and friendly. When we visited last summer my Mum said she could hardly recognise the place. Apart from the ever-beautiful mountains and lakes it was tourist haven with every other shop being either a tearoom or a gift shop. It was **jam-packed, noisy and very different** (well, according to my Mum it was!) The Brecon Beacons seemed very unspoiled and quiet compared to Lake Windermere. Yes, the facilities such as shops, car parks, hotels, leisure facilities and toilets were much better and I am sure the locals earned a small fortune by it in the Summer Months but I am afraid to say **it resembled more like Disneyland in Paris than a beautiful National Park in the North of England.**

But this is only my view (although I am certain some of the locals feel the same way). If it wasn't for all the interest in National Parks the Lake district would be barely visited and a kind of waste of space.

Another disadvantage everywhere where tourists go, whether it be a National Park or not is that **all work is seasonal**. While the shops and services thrive in the warm summer month's trade begins to reduce to the local people when the weather turns cold. This means that some shops can't survive and have to shut.

In the summer some services can be so full the local people can't use them but in the winter the services are not needed and shut down.

Crime and Vandalism, noise pollution, litter, poaching and other things like that are a major problem in all National Parks and the Lake District is no exception. Car crime is very high in Car parks and there are some very inconsiderate people about. The Park Ranger is partly in charge of this area but he can't be everywhere at once and this DOES take place-maybe even putting people off visiting the park altogether.

Having **Second Home owners** in the area can put many noses out of joint. Second Home owners are like tourists, they only come when the weather is fine leaving services/shops to suffer when they are having a nice time back at home. They can 'revamp' their second homes to make them not in keeping with the area. They can also bring their own town influences into the countryside and raise house prices. In other words-Second homeowners are big problems in the Lake District.

As with any area-**people can take things too far**. On Lake Windermere the planners have decided to set a 16-km/h speed limit on the lake. This is because the noisy speedboats and water skiers are **spoiling the quietness of the lake and spoiling the enjoyment of others**. They also make **more air pollution**. Other lakes on the park such as Ullswater, Coniston Water and Derwent Water(see map on page2) have had this ban imposed and it seems to be working well.

But this is bound to ruffle a few feathers and arguments are taking place about whether the ban should take place or not. Some arguments are that tourists already have miles and miles of quiet land to enjoy, why not let this little bit of water be

noisy? They also brought up the point that **some lines of trade will suffer** when people go elsewhere to use their water ski's/power boats.

Now, I have gone on for ages about how awful National Parks are. You must be thinking ' Why one earth do we have National Parks if they cause all of this trouble?' As you are now going to find out, National Parks have many advantages too.

ADVANTAGES

One of the main advantages of a National Park, any national Park, is the money that tourists bring with them. In 1995 the UK had an amazing 23.5 million foreign visitors who spent an astounding £12 billion! That is an awful lot of money! Tourism also employs 1.5 million people in places such as hotels, cafes, pubs, travel agencies etc. Okay, so lots of these visitors didn't visit National Parks and didn't spend money in them but tourism in National Parks is big business.

In Windermere and Keswick-big places for tourists to visit in the Lake District (see page two map)- half of the workforce are employed in the tourist industry! That is an awful lot if you can compare that to the 6% nationally.

In 1995 tourists spent a great £ 446 million in Cumbria alone-most of it being spent in the Lake District. Some ways tourists spend money are:

- Accommodation- hotels, campsites, holiday cottages etc
- Food and Drink-restaurants, cafes, pubs, food shops etc
- Leisure- this is HUGE business from outdoor pursuits to boat trips to museums and so on
- And so much more little things such as gifts and general shopping

The services in the Lake District National Parks have increased due to the extra visitors. This is good news for the locals. If the area hadn't been changed to a National Park it would just be plain, rural land with very few services. Public transport had improved dramatically with more connections leading out of the Lake District so that tourists can easily get there but also letting the locals get out and about easier. The amount of shops are the same as services, there are more than there would have been had it not been for the National Park.

As the national Parks welcome everyone people have a lovely, beautiful place to visit. If the land weren't a national park it would be at risk to developments being built on the site which would spoil the scenic beauty. If people visit the Lake District and see how beautiful it all is they may be extra careful and be inspired to take better care of the environment. They may also realise that they need to protect the land for generations to come. Litter and Pollution may also be reduced as they realise that there is no need to spoil the natural world.

The Park Ranger and the people who care for the Lake District do a great job of protecting the environment in the Lake District. It is a nice, usually safe place for animals, birds and plants/flowers. People from the large towns and cities have an opportunity to see the beautiful British wildlife that they wouldn't find in the towns and cities. The park Rangers in the Lake District also encourage tree planting. We all know that we depend on trees to give us oxygen so that we can breathe so this is a great thing especially as so many trees are now being cut down to provide space for houses.

Park Rangers and workers in the National Parks all over Britain does a number of great things including

- Refuse permission for unsuitable buildings/developments that would spoil the park
- Arrange talks and guided walks to educate the people about the park
- Monitor and clean up pollution
- Encourage suitable developments and so much more.
- Some National Parks are home to some rare plants/flowers and the Lake District is no exception.

Now I have looked at all the information I now have to see whether or not the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. If you see what I have written you will discover I have written more about the disadvantages than the advantages. But this is not necessarily a bad thing. In my view I think anything that preserves the natural beauty of our world is a good thing. With all the overcrowding, noise and pollution of this world we need a place where we can just go to relax without too much noise, big buildings or offices. Yes, there are disadvantages but I think that people can put up with a bit of inconvenience if it means that we make this world a nicer place to be - don't you?