



South  
Cumbria  
Rivers  
Trust



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## Kent Invasive Plants Action Group. Himalayan Balsam Report 2010

### Summary & Highlights

- This is the first year, since work began on this project, that we have felt a real sense of progress. On the west side of the river, the Kentrigg meadow area south of Carus Green (SD944516), and the river bank at Dockray are now virtually clear and elsewhere other areas tackled, are much improved.
- A new volunteer group has been established in Staveley to tackle the River Gowan
- Over 30 volunteers spent well over 250 hours (equivalent to 36 full working days) in removing balsam between April and September.
- 15 work parties were organised, and advertised in Cumbria Wildlife Trust 's 'What's On Guide'. These attracted volunteers from as far as Carlisle and Lancaster as well as a number of new volunteers from Ambleside, Windermere and the Kendal area. Other work parties also took place to tackle specific **areas and** several individuals put in many hours of work on their own.



***Himalayan balsam*** at Carus Green. Two years ago this area was dominated by balsam. It has been strimmed by contractors for two seasons. The remaining plants were easily removed by volunteers.

## Progress

- The plant seems largely under control in Kentmere and down to Burnside including the gorge at Cowan Head. Monitoring of these stretches of river will need to be continued.
- Major effort has been focused this year on the west side of the river around Carus Green, including the golf course, and on the east side of the river on the United Utility field at Mintsfeet tackling the very dense patches in the field back from the river and the woodland area to the south.
- Funding from Natural England and the Environment Agency has enabled us to employ contractors to trim dense patches in these areas and this is proving highly effective.
- The new group in Staveley has started work on the River Gowan.
- The Rivers Mint and Sprint have been surveyed and mapped and some patches tackled.
- Progress south down the River Kent has been made, with both sides of the river tackled as far as Nether bridge in Kendal including the bad infestation by the Abbott Hall.
- We have also been reporting and monitoring **giant hogweed** and Japanese knotweed along the Rivers Kent, Sprint, Mint and Gowan.



*Volunteers remove Himalayan balsam from United Utilities field at Mintsfeet*

## Method

The plant is hand pulled by volunteers, broken up and left in piles away from the river to compost down.

Dense patches are trimmed two or three times (early summer, mid summer and late summer) with volunteers going over the areas to remove re-growth.

Work has continued into September – with flowering heads removed into plastic bags and taken away from the site once seed capsules start to form in order to reduce seed spread.

## Focus for 2011

- Monitor situation in Kentmere and the river south to Burneside.
- Continue work on the River Gowan using contractors as required to tackle dense patches.
- Continue to tackle the Carus Green area, hopefully with assistance from the Golf Club in tackling the infestation in the 'roughs' back from the river.
- Continue work on the United Utilities field at Mintsfeet and the wood, using contractors.
- Continue monitoring and control on the Rivers Sprint and the Mint.
- Maintain progress down the River Kent in Kendal.
- Start to tackle infestations south of Nether Bridge.
- Plan and start to implement options for tackling the area around the wastewater treatment works south of Kendal.
- Hold some volunteer days south of Scroggs wood in order to engage support from people living south of Kendal.



*Challenge ahead. **Himalayan balsam** around Water treatment works south of Kendal*

## Support from third parties

Having a dedicated **Invasive Non-Native Species Initiative Coordinator** funded by **Natural England**, **DEFRA** and the **Environment Agency** has been extremely helpful. Some of the benefits for example are providing equipment; help with training; providing help with contractors; liaison with land owners over access; taking action on reports on giant hogweed and other invasive species; designing and producing promotional materials (posters, leaflets etc) and advice on approaches in tackling new invasive species in the catchment.

Funding from the **Environment Agency** and **Natural England** has enabled us to purchase equipment such as waders, employ contractors, and to employ BTCV volunteers to tackle particularly difficult areas. This has made a significant impact on our progress most importantly on our morale!

We also appreciate the support provided by the following businesses: **Impact Training and Development** for continued help with the Cowan Head gorge; **Croppers Paper Factory**, Burneside and the **Heinz Factory**, Mintsfeet for tackling the plant within their boundaries; Carus **Green Golf club** for allowing access to the river; **South Lakeland District Council** for collecting bags of pulled plants in Kendal; Cumbria **Wildlife Trust** and **Friends of the Lake District** for help with advertising work parties.