

Broads Local Access Forum

02 December 2020

Agenda item number 6

Opening access to EA owned banks

Report by Tony Gibbons (Norwich and District Anglers Association)

Summary

Hopefully this project proposal, which comes under Broads Angling Services Group (BASG) objectives, will bring to the fore the value of opening up and maintaining stretches of river bank under the Environment Agency's (EA) control, so that both locals and visitors can fully enjoy and appreciate the benefits of angling and other users will see this as an opportunity to enjoy the pleasure of the Norfolk Broads.

Recommendation

That the BLAF supports the BASG so it can put in place the necessary program so that this project comes to fruition by no later than June 16th 2021, the start of the fishing season.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report proposes projects to improve access to a number of river banks under Environment Agency (EA) control to make them more presentable and an asset to the Broads.
- 1.2. The reason this needs addressing is that, over the last few years, it has become noticeable by both local and visiting anglers that there is a downturn in the availability of river banks that offer access for free fishing. This has been caused in most instances by lack of maintenance, allowing the banks to become overgrown and difficult to reach. As such, anglers have neglected these banks. There is no point dwelling in the past, but there is a need to rectify this so that the future of angling and leisure on Broadland rivers is made more available to all users. With this in mind, we have selected three river banks that will require less work to bring back to full usage.

2. Projects

- 2.1. Stretch one - River Thurne from Coldharbour Farm to Womack Dyke: This stretch of river banks is already well used by anglers. Having good parking and a pathway on the flood bank, when it has been cleared of vegetation, offers an ideal location. However, angling is restricted, due to the current state of the river bank. With the exception of the quay heading just above the gate and at the top end there is little availability for anglers to access the water. These quay headings, which at one time had No Mooring

signs in place, are now regularly full with moored boats. With needed facilities in place, this has to be an ideal starting point.

- 2.2. Stretch two - River Thurne upstream of Potter Heigham road bridge: The beginning of this length already has 10 established angling platforms, which are well used. Once past these you come to the Riverside Bungalows, with overgrown banks in between. Some have been used for dumping rubbish, which spoils the image of the area. These gaps could accommodate a further 12 angling stations, once the banks have been cleared. This will also allow walkers views of the river. Past the bungalows we come to the pond below Martham Boatyard, again well used. As we have access already in place and limited parking with minimum effort, this stretch could be brought back for full usage by June 16th 2021.
- 2.3. Stretch three - River Ant from Ludham Bridge to Johnson Street: This has been, in the past, the prime length of the Ant for match fishing. Again, there is a maintained pathway along the whole stretch, and parking at Ludham. The bank, however, has had little use over the past few years mainly due to it being inaccessible. To make this available again will take more work than the previous 2 lengths but, with its history, will soon attract anglers back to the area.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1. The financial and risk implications would need to be determined once an agreement had been reached on the project getting the approval of all parties.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. In concluding I feel that the time is right to put forward these ideas through the BASG, as hopefully they will be the group who will make the future of angling, and other activities which enjoy the same facilities, sustainable. Thank you for your consideration of this matter and for allowing us to put it to the BLAF.

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[Broads Plan](#) objectives: 6.4