

CALDBECK AND ULDALE COMMONS MINERAL COLLECTING POLICY

(Revised November 2007)

This policy covers the area of Caldbeck and Uldale Commons in the ownership of the Lake District National Park Authority and that part of Caldbeck Commons owned by Dalemmain Estate (see attached map).

Introduction

The Caldbeck Fells are a significant component of the Lake District National Park and are important for their landscape, cultural, environmental and recreational value. Various features of archaeological, geological or ecological interest have been given statutory protection. The Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) owns a substantial part of the Caldbeck Fells, comprising the majority of the Caldbeck Commons. Dalemmain Estate owns the remaining part of Caldbeck Commons including the Carrock Mine area. The LDNPA and Dalemmain Estate are concerned to conserve and protect the varied interests of the Caldbeck Fells while assisting visitors to appreciate and enjoy the area. The LDNPA has therefore worked with partner organisations to produce management proposals for the area that have been published as the 'Skiddaw Management Plan' (1997). This document outlines many of the current conservation issues on the Skiddaw Massif and includes options for future management.

The LDNPA is concerned to ensure that uncontrolled collection of minerals on the Commons does not cause damage to the special assets of the area, including its geology, minerals and archaeology. Potential problems could include:

- Large quantities of minerals being removed without adequate justification in terms of research and furthering knowledge. The minerals resource is likely to become exhausted if collection and removal is not subject to some control;
- Important archaeological sites, principally remains of early mining, could be damaged;
- Landscape damage would be caused by excavation for vein minerals;

The LDNPA is particularly keen to prevent the damage that has been caused in the past by commercial collectors seeking good mineral samples for their businesses and the police have been involved in helping stop this practice. Uncontrolled casual amateur collection can, in some circumstances, also cause damage and the LDNPA has therefore decided to adopt a policy on mineral collection on the Commons with the support of English Nature, the Dalemmain Estate, the British Geological Survey, the Cumberland Geological Society, the Cumbria RIGS Group, the Russell Society, the British Micromount Society and other interested parties.

The current policy is based on a review and subsequent revision of the policy that was introduced in 2000. It will apply to the LDNPA's property on the Caldbeck and Uldale Commons and that part of the Caldbeck Common that is owned by the Dalemmain Estate.

1. Policy

1.1 A permit system will operate to regulate collection of minerals on the Caldbeck and Uldale Commons in the ownership of the LDNPA and that part of Caldbeck Commons in the ownership of Dalemain Estate. The attached map shows the land covered by the policy.

1.2 The permit system is based on the designation of three zones of sensitivity to which different regulations apply. These are termed 'Green', 'Amber' and 'Red'. The zones are depicted on the attached map. All collecting will require a permit.

1.3 The LDNPA will implement this policy with the assistance of a small advisory group comprising English Nature, the LDNPA, the British Geological Survey, a representative from the collecting groups, Cumbria RIGS and an independent academic advisor. This group will evaluate applications for collecting in 'Amber' zones and reports arising from such work and will provide specialist advice for other matters arising from implementation of the policy.

1.4 All applicants will be required to agree to abide by the code of conduct for mineral collecting on the Caldbeck and Uldale Commons (Appendix 1).

1.5 The mineral collecting policy and permit procedure will be widely publicised and summarised at access points to the Caldbeck and Uldale Commons.

Green Zone

1.6 'Green' zones are those considered to be of low sensitivity from both the mineralogical and archaeological point of view. Permits for collecting in 'Green' zones do not require a research justification.

1.7 Permits for collecting in the 'Green Zone' will normally be issued to individuals for a period of one calendar year. However the National Park Authority will consider applications from groups for single or a limited numbers of visits. Each group must have a named leader.

Amber Zones

1.8 'Amber' zones include those sites that are of either mineralogical or archaeological significance or both and where some controlled collecting activity could be permitted. Permits will normally be issued only for those applications for which a sound scientific case has been made.

1.9 Consideration of applications for collecting in 'Amber' zones will take into account the relative sensitivity of each site and varied conditions may be attached to any permit. Educational groups may in some circumstances be allowed to collect material from sites in 'Amber' zones. In some cases collecting may be permitted only under the supervision of suitably qualified personnel (for example as part of an official LDNPA event).

1.10 It may occasionally be necessary to organise collecting for 'rescue' purposes. Any such proposals will be evaluated by the advisory group (see 1.3 above). In such cases the LDNPA may proactively offer permits to suitably qualified groups or individuals so that collecting can take place.

Red Zones

1.11 'Red' zones comprise a small number of sites of sufficient mineralogical or archaeological sensitivity that a total restriction on collecting will generally apply in order to protect the resource. In very exceptional circumstances consent for collecting may be given but only if a well-defined scientific case can be demonstrated.

1.12 As with sites in the 'Amber' zone, it may occasionally be necessary to organise collecting for 'rescue' purposes. Any such proposals will be evaluated by the advisory group (see 1.3 above). In such cases the LDNPA may proactively offer permits to suitably qualified groups or individuals so that collecting can take place.

2. Application procedure

2.1 Applications for permits must be made via the LDNPA, Blencathra Centre office. Application forms for collecting in 'Green' and 'Amber' zones are available from the Blencathra Centre and can also be downloaded from the Authority's web site (www.lake-district.gov.uk). Enquiries about research in 'Red' zones should be made directly to the LDNPA via the Blencathra Centre.

2.2 No charge will be made for this permit procedure.

Green Zone

2.3 Applications for permits to collect in 'Green' zones can be made at any time of the year. The LDNPA expects to process applications for collecting in 'Green' zones within 2 to 3 weeks. Permits for collecting in the 'Green' zone will normally be issued for a period of one calendar year. Applications will be assessed by the LDNPA in consultation with the advisory group where necessary. Permits for collecting in 'Green' zones must be carried by holders on the fells (see 3.1 below).

Amber Zones

2.4 Applications to collect in 'Amber' zones must be made by the end of December for permits for the following calendar year. Permits for collecting in 'Amber' zones will normally be issued for a period of one calendar year.

2.5 Consideration of applications for permits to collect in 'Amber' zones will be undertaken by the advisory group (see 1.3 above). This will be carried out in January of the year the permits are to apply.

2.6 Permits for collecting in 'Amber' zones will be restricted to those undertaking scientific and educational programmes. All applications must therefore include a clear statement of the aims and objectives. Information must also be supplied concerning locations and dates of collecting and arrangements for identification and storage of material.

2.7 Applicants for permits to collect in 'Amber' zones must also supply the name and address of an appropriate referee for the application and a named individual or institution which has the ability to verify the identification of the collected minerals.

3. Enforcement

3.1 Permits for collecting in both 'Green' and 'Amber' zones must be carried by individual permit holders on the fells as the National Park Rangers, Voluntary Wardens or police may wish to view the authorisation. Collecting without a permit could incur a fine up to £50 under the byelaws. The Caldbeck and Uldale Commons are within the Skiddaw Group Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is also an offence for anyone without reasonable excuse to intentionally or recklessly damage a SSSI knowing that what was damaged was within a SSSI. A conviction for this offence may result in a fine of up to £20,000 in the magistrate's court.

3.2 Permits for 'Amber' zones will be issued to an individual. An individual (e.g. a secretary of a club) may apply on behalf of several other individuals, but these must all be named in the application and must carry individual permits as above.

4. Code of Conduct

4.1 All applicants for permits for collecting will be required to agree to adhere to the Code of Conduct for Mineral Collecting on the Caldbeck and Uldale Commons (see Appendix 1).

5. Reporting

5.1 The permit system will require a report on collecting activity including information on the identification and storage of collected material. The advisory group will evaluate reports on collecting. More detailed reports will be required for work in 'Amber' zones than in 'Green' zones. It is expected that reports will be filed within 12 months of the visit. Individuals and groups that do not provide feedback on their site visits will be looked on unfavourably for future permit applications.

6. Storage, Display and Ownership

6.1 All minerals on the Caldbeck and Uldale Commons are the property of either the National Park Authority or the Dalemain Estate. In relation to the Green zone the policy is that collectors can retain collected material.

6.2 In relation to the Amber and Red areas the permit is subject to a requirement that a report be given to LDNPA of all collected material. The Authority reserves the right to retain ownership of any such material that it considers to be sufficiently rare or significant for research purposes or for permanent curation in an appropriate institution.

6.3 Collecting minerals for financial gain is prohibited.

7. Amateur Collecting and Educational Visits

7.1 The LDNPA recognises the interest and potential contribution of amateur collectors to furthering knowledge of minerals in the Caldbeck Fells. It is anticipated that many collectors and educational groups will be able to pursue their activities in the 'Green' zones. In addition, the LDNPA will, where resources permit, arrange geological and mineralogical activities on the Caldbeck Fells. These will be arranged in conjunction with the Minerals societies and other partner organisations and will be open to a limited number of individuals by application.

7.2 The LDNPA also recognises the educational importance of the geology and minerals of the Commons and that educational establishments will continue to wish to make visits. In order to assist with this and to obviate the need for removal of material for teaching purposes, the LDNPA will make available teaching collections containing samples of minerals from the Caldbeck and Uldale Commons.

Appendix 1. Code of Conduct for Mineral Collecting on the Caldbeck and Uldale Commons

The Caldbeck Fells lie within the Skiddaw Group SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), an area of significant importance for wildlife and geology. Parts of the Fells are also important for their industrial archaeology, showing changes in mining techniques and the development of the mines through time. A number of these sites are designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Access – always obtain permission to collect minerals through the LDNPA permit system (see below for contact details) and always carry your permit when collecting. Always respect the restricted areas that are protecting areas of high geological or archaeological importance.

Underground access – the underground parts of mines are dangerous and the mineral collecting permit does not grant access to these workings. A separate application is required to the LDNPA and consent will also be required from English Nature under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Some of the mine adits are of high archaeological, geological or mineralogical interest, any of which could be damaged by inappropriate access. Permit holders are asked to keep out of fenced areas around mine and airshafts.

Collecting – the archaeological value of mine spoil tips can be irreparably damaged by excessive digging. Collect only a few representative samples and obtain these from fallen or loose material at the surface of the mine dumps and fill in any resulting hole. As a general guide, disturbance of material should be restricted to the top 10 to 15 cm within an area of 0.5m² or less. Material crushed for examination or removed from the site should be kept to a minimum. Use small hand tools when collecting; do not use pick axes, sledgehammers, spades, power tools or explosives.

Do not collect from vein / rock outcrops or excavate large areas of mine dump. Do not dig around archaeological artefacts or at the base of mine spoil tips.

Collecting for commercial gain is not permitted.

Site management – avoid disturbing wildlife, especially during the bird-nesting season (March - July), and do not leave the site in an untidy or dangerous condition for those who follow. Please report any damage at these sites to the LDNPA.

Recording – always record precisely where minerals are found (eight-figure grid reference where possible) and record relevant contextual information. Ensure these details are kept with the specimen concerned. Any significant finds should be reported to the LDNPA for recording.

Identification and curation - where necessary, seek specialist advice on sample identification and care. Make specimens of key scientific importance available for study and keep them in a suitable store (for example, in a museum).

Ownership – In relation to the Green zone the policy is that collectors can retain collected material.

In Amber and Red zones the LDNPA reserves the right to retain ownership of any such material that it considers to be sufficiently rare or significant for purposes of research or curation.

Application forms can be obtained from:

Lake District National Park Authority
Blencathra Centre
Threlkeld
Keswick
Cumbria
CA12 4SG

Email: graham.standring@lake-district.gov.uk

Phone: 01768 79633

Fax: 017687 79264

and can be downloaded from the Authority's website:

www.lake-district.gov.uk