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Why the Lake District falls behind

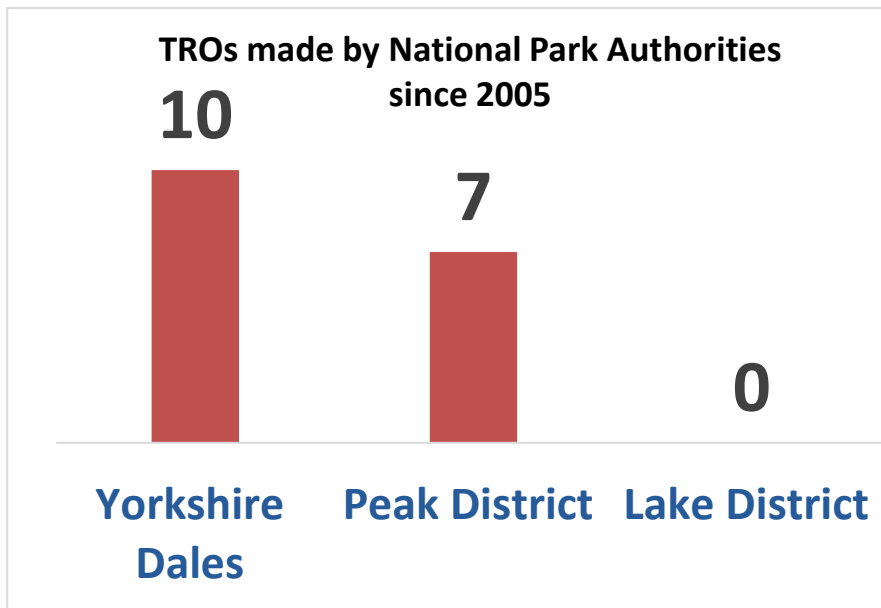
In March this year we wrote to the LDNPA, asking for a reset in the Authority's green lanes policy. One important question we asked is this: why has the Lake District not closed a single green lane to motor vehicles since 2006, when the Yorkshire Dales and the Peak District have made 17 between them?

The reply we received does not explain this conservation gap. The LDNPA wrote: "It's important to highlight that the figures you have quoted on the number of TROs in comparison to the number of unsealed roads in the Lake District National Park with other National Parks do not illustrate the whole picture. The data summarised below shows that the Lake District has less unsealed roads open to vehicle traffic as a proportion of unsealed roads compared with the Peak District and the Yorkshire Dales.

- In the Lake District there are 4 operative TROs and around 85 unprohibited unsealed roads and byways;
- In the Yorkshire Dales there are 12 operative TROs and 125 further unsealed roads and byways which have been assessed (to some degree) and where the NPA has decided that prohibition is not the preferred option;
- In the Peak District the figures are 6 and around 250 respectively.

That's not correct. Even in percentage terms the Lake District fares worse than the Yorkshire Dales. In the Lake District there are only **two, not four operative** TROs on green lanes with proven or possible public motor vehicular rights. (The TRO on the High Nibthwaite to Parkamoor unsealed unclassified road U5051 has not been in operation for many years. The TRO on U5531 in Little Langdale is not on a green lane, because most of this road (which runs between the U5527 road and the U5003 road) is sealed with tarmac. This means that there are only two TROs currently operative on green lanes in the LDNP, the permit TRO made by the LDNPA under delegated powers in 2004 for Gatescarth Pass and the seasonal TRO made by Cumbria County Council in 2005 for the section of U5566 through becks at Rusland Pool.)

Out of 85 green lanes in the Lake District only 2% have a TRO. This compares to 9% (or 7% if you exclude two restricted byways) in the Yorkshire Dales.



The Peak District National Park Authority identified 35 green lanes as potentially unsustainable priority routes. This is almost exactly the same number as in the Lake District, where 36 red and amber routes were identified (see next article). And in the Peak District 54% of these priority green lanes are fully or partially protected, with a further two lanes in TRO consultation. TROs exist for only two of the 38 priority green lanes in the Lake District, the permit and seasonal TRO mentioned above.

It matters little how you look at it, there is a dramatic gap in the conservation of green lanes between the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales/Peak District National Parks.

Much more important though than these percentages is the methodology. Taking the Yorkshire Dales as an example: after 2006 when new legislation came in, the Authority assessed the sensitivity of all green lanes to motorised use. It used four criteria:

- Ecological sensitivity
- Heritage sensitivity
- Surface sensitivity
- Tranquillity sensitivity

It is now urgent to conduct the same systematic, in-depth audit of green lanes in the Lake District, including environmental and heritage criteria as well as the impact on tranquillity.