

Risk Assessment Back to Basics

Roadford Lake – 21-22 January 2025

Task and Finish group

- VSG Action Plan 2022 – 2025
- NH, NR, JD, Outscape
- Conduct annual review of the needs of our members
- Provide membership with up to date case law and case studies
- Deliver a set of standardised risk assessments and inspection templates
- Promote stock of VSG publications

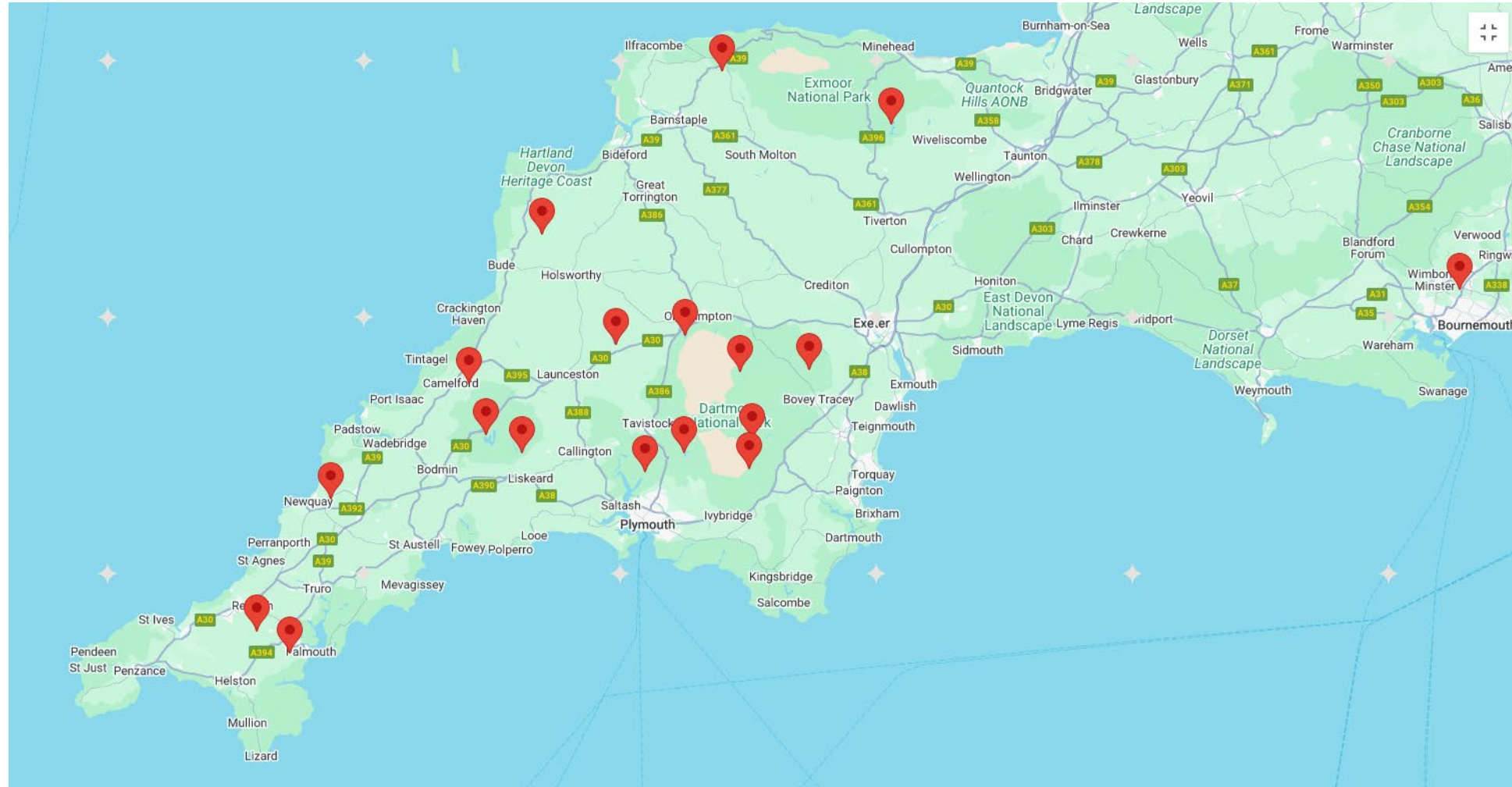
Balancing site objectives with visitor risk management

South West Lakes Trust




Our charity is dedicated to caring for and enhancing the South West's reservoirs and lakes: they are home to wonderful animals and boast important habitats and built historic sites. We pride ourselves on enabling people of all abilities to enjoy these special locations by providing access both on and off the water.

Our patch



Roadford Lake




ROADFORD  Quarry sinking with the Foundation 1 2 September 1989 Ref: 517,595,11



ROADFORD  Quarry sinking with the Foundation 2 21 January 1990 Ref: 518,100,12

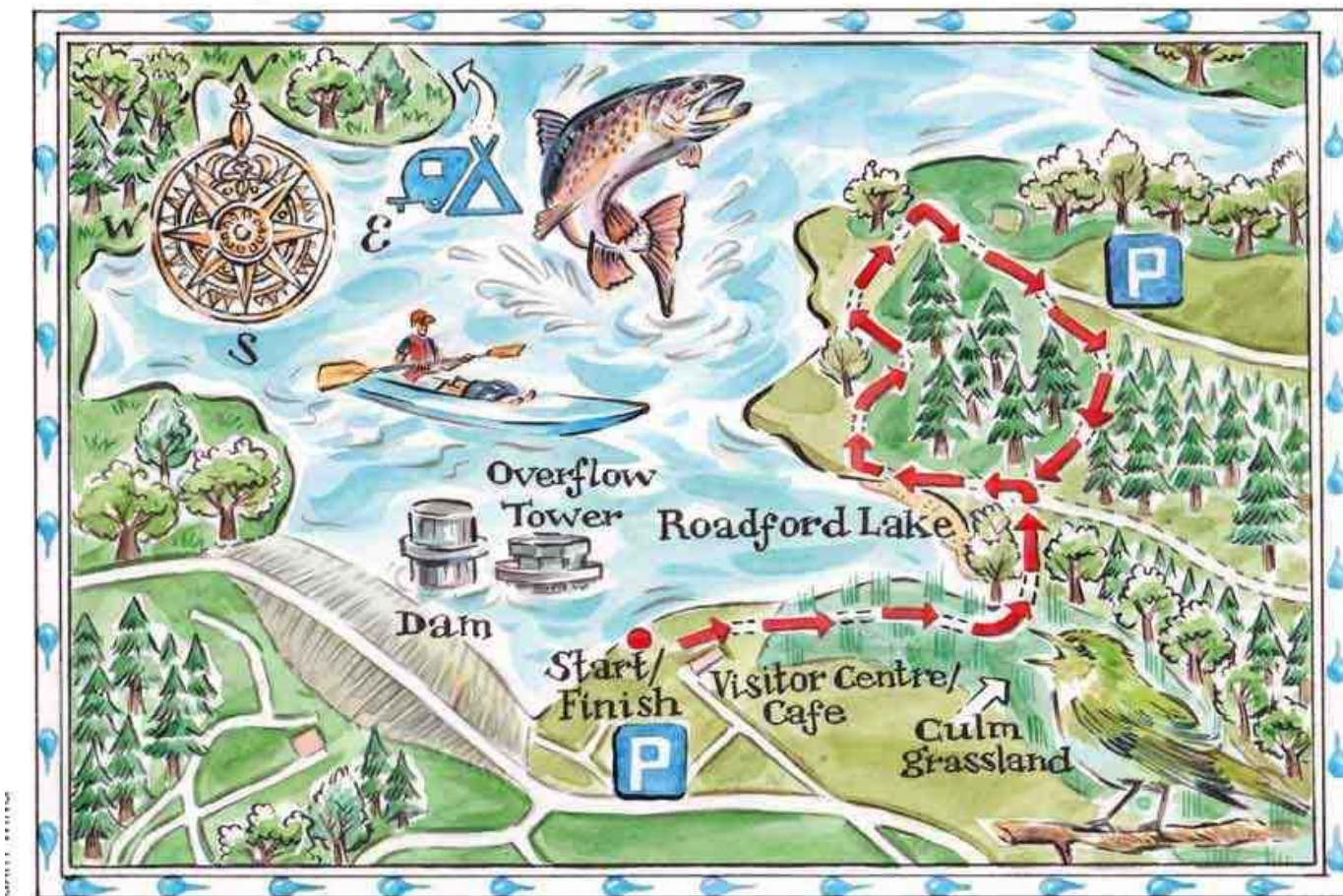


ROADFORD  Laying and rolling of asphaltic concrete membrane to upstream face 3 May 1989 Ref: 518,610,13



Roadford Lake

- Completed 1989 – 2 years to fill
- Strategic reservoir
- Designed with outdoor recreation in mind
 - Water sports
 - Footpaths
 - Tea shop
 - Good parking
- They are not all like this!











Balancing risk with benefit and site objectives

Occupational risk management vs recreational risk management.

Occupational risk assessments identify and reduce risks in the workplace.

- **Purpose:** Identify, evaluate, and control risks to protect workers from injury, illness, and other hazards
- **Benefits:** Increase awareness of risks, educate employees, and reduce incidents
- **Goal:** Eliminate or minimize risk

Occupational risk management vs recreational risk management.

Recreational risk assessments identify and analyse risks in sports and recreational activities.

- **Purpose:** Identify and analyse risks in sports and recreational activities
- **Benefits:** Help decision makers identify unacceptable risks and provide developmental benefits.
- **Goal:** Balance the benefits and risks of an activity

Getting more complex....

- We are a charity managing CAR on behalf of a water company
- CAR = Conservation, Access and Recreation
- CAR needs balancing before risks are assessed
- These lakes are not our assets
- Some of them are operational reservoirs
- We are working within a regulated industry
- Responsibilities are blurred, including safety.

Charitable objects

- **South West Lakes Trust's charitable objects, approved by the Charity Commission, are:**
- the protection and conservation for the public benefit of the natural environment in areas within the South West of England ("the Area of Benefit");
- the provision in such parts of the Area of Benefit as is appropriate of facilities for recreation and other leisure time occupation in the interests of social welfare both of the public at large and of persons who have need by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disability, poverty or social and economic circumstances;
- the education of the public as to flora, fauna, ecology and the natural environment and the conservation of the same;
- the conservation and preservation for the public benefit of sites, objects and buildings of special archaeological and historic interest within the Area of Benefit; and
- the promotion of citizenship or community development with the Area of Benefit;

VISION: Healthy Lakes, landscapes and lives



Public access - **enabling** more people of **all backgrounds and abilities** to **access the countryside**

Recreation - offering more opportunities for **safe participation in a variety of outdoor activities for all abilities**, learning new skills and **building confidence**.

Conservation and education - **safeguarding and enhancing the built and natural environment** and increasing the knowledge of our visitors and local communities.

Why managing visitor safety is important



- **Moral**
First and foremost we want our visitors to return home safe, happy and satisfied with their experiences. We have a moral obligation to consider their safety, and protect them from unnecessary or unreasonable risk. We also need to ensure that they do not feel overprotected. We must consider their right to willingly accept the risks that might come with the benefits they are seeking.
- **Legal**
We have legal duties to ensure the safety of those we don't employ but who are affected by our work – our visitors. These duties are explored in more detail in, The Law and visitor safety.
- **Financial**
People affected by accidents often look for someone to blame and want to claim compensation. We want to be able to defend unreasonable claims. There is often a clamour for something to be done after an accident. We need to be in a strong position to resist the introduction of inappropriate or excessive safety measures. We can then avoid creating unwelcome precedents and incurring unnecessary costs.
- **Reputation and Authority**
An entirely risk-free environment is not achievable or desirable. However we must be able to demonstrate to the public, regulators and government that we have done all that is reasonably practicable to manage risks down to acceptable levels. If there is a major accident, we are then in a much better position to retain trust.
- **Business**
For most of us, attracting and satisfying visitors form a key part of our business success. We want to optimise the use of our assets. It therefore makes good business sense to create an appropriately safe environment to attract visitors. This helps to create a virtuous circle. Money raised from visitors can be reinvested in conservation, maintenance and improvements. This in turn creates a better environment likely to attract new and repeat visits.
- **Marketing**
We need to be sure that our marketing material and publications give a balanced view of risk.

Key VSG principles

- **Take account of conservation, heritage, recreation, cultural and landscape objectives.**
- Avoid taking away people's sense of freedom and adventure.
- Avoid restrictions on access.
- Ensure that your visitors know the risks they face.
- Expect visitors to exercise some responsibility for themselves.
- Strike a balance between visitor self-reliance and management intervention.
- Assess risks and develop safety plans for your sites.
- Take account of the benefits that your site provides.

Accepting risks for the benefits

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Obvious?



Risk is low?



Physical precautions would have an adverse impact on the visitor experience.



**physical precautions would be impractical or
would cause damage to the landscape or habitats**



Accepting the risk confers significant benefits



Hierarchy of control



1. Can we eliminate the hazard?
2. Can we prevent access to the hazard?
3. Managing visitor movement
4. Informing and educating

Thank you

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