Lake District Foundation
Love Windermere Farmer Engagement Project
Jun 2024 – Mar 2025
Evaluation Report 1.0

Version	Date	Author	Rationale
0.1	25/04/2025	Lake District Foundation	First Draft
0.2	18/06/2025	Lake District Foundation	Addressing comments from funders
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Completed with funding from:

- FiPL30167 for Love Windermere – Farmer Engagement Phase 1: Workshops
- FiPL30168 for Love Windermere – Farmer Engagement Phase 2: Soil Sampling & Reporting
- FiPL40086 for Love Windermere – Farmer Engagement Phase 3: Workshop on nature-based solutions
- Westmorland & Furness Council Climate and Nature Fund

Contents

1. Executive summary

1. From April 2024 to March 2025, three Love Windermere Farmer Engagement projects focused on building trust in the Windermere farming community, to facilitate conversations about water quality pressures and opportunities for farmers and land managers to learn how to mitigate risks to water quality.
2. These projects have been partly funded through the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme in the Lake District National Park, alongside funding from the Westmorland & Furness Council Climate and Nature Fund.
3. The success of project has been evaluated by comparing actual activities and outcomes to the predicted outcomes using surveys, interviews, project management tools, and learning logs.
4. Phase 1 (FiPL 1 / 30167) delivered two introductory farmer workshops, with a total attendance of 52 and 47 farmers, advisers and local stakeholders.
5. Event locations, format and timings were designed to make them accessible to farmers, and to facilitate information-sharing and building community networks.
6. After both events, the majority of participants told us that the events had increased their knowledge of soil management, which demonstrated the need for Phase 2 of this project.
7. Phase 2 (FiPL 2 / 30168) provided 27 farmers and land managers in the Windermere catchment with free soil testing and subsequent Nutrient Management Plans (NMPs), completed by an independent and local farm consultant.
8. The NMPs aimed to encourage farmers to review their artificial fertiliser and manure use, to improve resource efficiency on the farm and reduce the risk of nutrient (Nitrate and Phosphate) enrichment in the lake and surrounding watercourses.
9. The participating farms represented a productive farm area of 714 ha. A catchment engagement map has been produced as part of Phase 2 and can be seen in Appendix 4: Number of farms participating in Phase 2 (soil samples and nutrient management plans) aggregated by sub catchment.
10. An additional 7 farms that attended the Phase 1 events were inspired to complete soil testing and Nutrient Management Plans during the course of this project, but did so independently of the project without taking advantage of the financial support available.
11. NMP preparation work revealed that artificial fertiliser usage on participating farms has been heavily reduced in the last 10-15 years due to recent behavioural changes and farm input cost pressures.
12. Around half (46%) of fields tested had soil P indices of 3 or above, which are above target levels for grassland. As soil P is attached to soil particles, any future efforts to reduce soil erosion risk should be focused in these areas.
13. The majority (80% of Phase 2 respondents) said that their interest in nutrient management had increased as a result of the project and 34 farmers attended the project summary event.

14. Phase 3 (FiPL 3 / 40086) delivered a workshop focussed on nature-based solutions and an overview of emerging nature markets. The event was attended by 18 farmers, representing 10 farms in the Windermere catchment.
15. Only 1 out of the 10 farms attending the workshop had previously participated in green finance initiatives or nature-based solutions (NBS), and interestingly, this was the only farm to report that they would be likely to explore any options or take any action following this event.
16. Of the 9 farms that had not previously participated in green finance initiatives or NBS the majority (8 farms) were unsure whether they would take any action, and half (4 farms) said that they would be interested in receiving further support, resources, or training.
17. Concerns about proceeding with green finance initiatives and NBS included low returns, one-off (rather than recurring) payments, lack of "real life" case studies, and lack of legal support.
18. Recommendations based on the experience and knowledge gathered across all three phases of the project include; continuing to use a community approach to influence farmer behaviour through informal group learning, supporting farmers to implement land management practice changes, land use change, natural flood management delivery or other water slowing/soil-loss reduction interventions in or near identified hotspot areas, and to consider other sources of nutrient loss on farms.

2. About this report

This report summarises and evaluates the Lake District Foundation's *Love Windermere Farmer Engagement* project which aimed to build relationships and improve farmer and landowner understanding of water quality in the Windermere catchment. The project phases covered in this report are summarised as follows:

Project Reference	Funder	Grant Value	Project Description	Project Timescale
LW Farmer Engagement Officer	Westmorland and Furness Council Climate and Nature Fund	£47,000	Recruitment, and salary of Farmer Engagement Officer, and Love Windermere Communications	January – December 2024
Phase 1 FiPL30167 / LW Farmer Engagement	Farming in Protected Landscapes	£9,998.39	Community Workshops	April - October 2024
Phase 2 FiPL30168 / LW Farmer Engagement	Farming in Protected Landscapes	£77,081.24	Soil Sampling & Reporting	June 2024 - March 2025
Phase 3 FiPL40086 / LW Farmer Engagement	Farming in Protected Landscapes	£4,550.71	Workshop on nature-based solutions	February - March 2025

For more information about the Project Funding, see Appendix 1: About the funding

This report will be used to:

- Document the successful completion of project outputs,
- improve how we work,
- demonstrate our impact to funders,
- share good practice with other organisations,
- and share learning with the people and communities we work with.

This report aims to be of use to many audiences but is primarily targeted towards:

- Funders – highlighting the impact we have made thanks to their support,
- Stakeholders and partners – how we delivered our work with recommendations and opportunities for improvement,
- Project participants – how their inputs will be used and built upon, and to share learning within the community.

We decided to produce this report as an A4 portrait document so that it can easily be read on screen and printed professionally or at home. The document will be hosted on the Lake District Foundation's website for at least 3 years. To request this document in any other format, please email info@lakedistrictfoundation.org

We plan to disseminate the report as follows:

Action	Audience	Target Date
Electronic copy shared	Love Windermere Partnership Board Love Windermere Land Use Workstream Project Funders	31st July 2025
Printed version sent by post to all project participants	Project participants i.e. land managers and landowners	31st July 2025
Added to LDF website	All	31st July 2025
LDF donor newsletter LDF business newsletter LDF stakeholder newsletter LDF Social media	LDF supporters Local businesses LDF partners and trustees All	30th September 2025
LDNPP newsletter and meetings	LDNPP members	30th September 2025
Direct emails	WHS Steering Group Love Windermere Partnership including all workstreams	30th September 2025

3. Project need and desired impact

We used a theory of change model to design and evaluate this project, starting with a Situation Analysis, followed by an Impact Statement that informed our Project Plan.

Situation Analysis: Why was this project needed?

The health of Lake Windermere has been well documented[i1]. There is a clear need and desire for action to reduce the nutrient input into the lake and the associated and documented benefits to nature recovery. As a member of the Love Windermere partnership, the Lake District Foundation is committed to working with partners to bring about a healthier future for the lake and the surrounding area, balancing the needs of nature, the community and the local economy.

[1] The state of lakes in the Windermere catchment – a long-term view | UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology www.ceh.ac.uk/news-and-media/blogs/state-lakes-windermere-catchment-long-term-view

There is data to suggest that one contributing factor, among others, of poor water quality in Windermere is nutrient "run-off" from farmland in the Windermere catchment[2]. Agricultural run-off falls into the category of *Rural Land Use* in the table below, which as a category has been modelled as contributing between 28 and 36% of total phosphorus concentration in the south basin of the lake (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Windermere South basin phosphorus source apportionment[3].

Sector	Contribution to current (post-2020) Total Phosphorus lake concentration
Rural Land Use	28-36 %
Storm Overflows	17-24 %
UU STWs	18-22 %
Private STWs	10-14 %
Septic Tanks	6-10 %
Urban	4-10 %

Effective nutrient management, informed by soil analysis results, aims to provide sufficient nutrients to meet crop growth requirements whilst reducing the incidence of diffuse water pollution and reducing input costs[4]. It is known that basic soil analysis (for pH, phosphate (P), potash (K) and magnesium (Mg)) forms the basis of good nutrient management practices that make the best economic use of artificial fertilisers and manures by optimizing the timing, location, application rates and type of product to match nutrient recommendations and minimise negative environmental impact[5].

[2] The Challenges – Love Windermere www.lovewindermere.co.uk/the-challenges/

[3] Phosphorus Source Apportionment data for the Windermere Catchment, Date: November 2023, Environment Agency

[4] Nutrient management - GOV.UK https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/farm-practices-survey-february-2023-greenhouse-gas-mitigation/nutrient-management

[5] Nutrient Management Guide (RB209) NutManGuideRB209S1_230526_WEB.pdf

Nationally[6]:

- In 2023, 70% of farmers were regularly testing the nutrient content (indices) of soil, and 60% have calculated a whole farm nutrient balance for nitrogen, phosphorus or potassium.
- Approximately 70% of farms had a manure management plan in 2023, showing little change since 2022.
- In 2023, only 56% of farmers had a nutrient management plan, showing little change since surveys began in 2011.
- In 2023, 43% of farmers kept track of soil organic matter on their farm, an increase compared to 36% in 2022.
- Of those not monitoring soil organic matter levels, the reasons were cited as:
    - Not considering it important enough to test for (36%)
    - Difficulty interpreting results (27%)
    - Expense (23%)
    - Other (25%)

The proportion of farmers in the Windermere catchment who are regularly testing their soils is low. The following factors are thought to influence current levels of soil analysis in the catchment:

1. They represent another cost to the farm business
2. Awareness of their purpose and benefits is low
3. Farmers are time-poor and reluctant to pay an adviser to do the work for them
4. Uptake of agri-environment scheme options that require soil analysis

Impact Statement: What did we hope to achieve?

Based on the Situation Analysis above we created the following Impact Statement against which we have evaluated the success of this project:

"Improved fertiliser and manure management (types, timing, location and rate of application) by farmers and land managers in the Windermere catchment following individual soil tests and Nutrient Management Plans will improve water quality in Lake Windermere."

[6] Nutrient management - GOV.UK https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/farm-practices-survey-february-2023-greenhouse-gas-mitigation/nutrient-management

4. Project Plan: What did we set out to do?

Audience, Mechanisms and Approach

We defined the target audience of the project as farmers and land managers in the Windermere catchment, as defined in the map below (Figure 1).

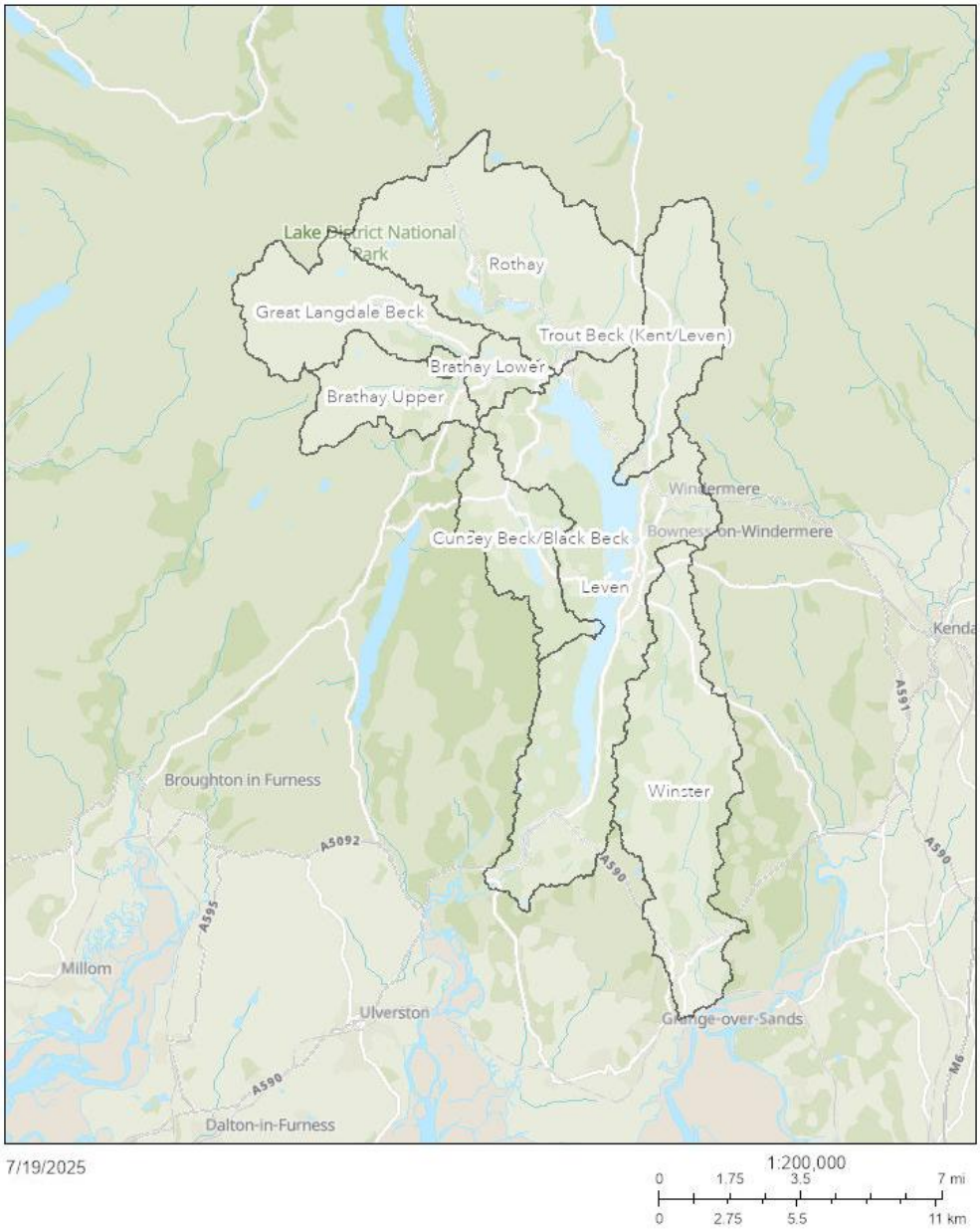

Figure 1: Windermere catchment area, with labelled sub-catchments, for the purpose of this project.

We aimed to use a community-centered approach, employing a Farm Liaison Officer who is well known and trusted within the farming community to lead the project, delivering events that included opportunities for networking and two-way discussions. It was important that all workshops were delivered without judgement and focused on evidence-based solutions. Finally, options for anonymity were built into the project, and balanced with the need for data sharing with project funders and partners.

Planned Activities

We set out to deliver the following activities:

Project Phase	Planned activities	Funder and Code	Targets	Target Date
1	Appoint a Farm Liaison Officer with experience within the community	Westmorland and Furness Council Climate and Nature Fund And Farming in Protected Landscapes 30167	1 x Farm Liaison Officer appointed	February 2024
1	Build relationships with farmers and land managers, and gauge the appetite and capacity for the project through events	Farming in Protected Landscapes 30167	2 x workshops delivered, attended by 50 farmers each	June 2024 - July 2024
2	Provide soil tests and one Nutrient Management Plan per farm (usually costing £16 per soil test, and £750 per Nutrient Management Plan on average)	Farming in Protected Landscapes 30168	35 farms testing 10 soil samples each and 1 nutrient management plan each	October 2024 – March 2025
2	Create a map of soil nutrient status, at the sub-catchment level	Farming in Protected Landscapes 30168	1 x map created	March 2025
2	Produce Catchment scale summary of soil nutrient status	Farming in Protected Landscapes 30168	1 x summary report created	March 2025
2	Deliver a Participant Feedback & Soils Summary Event to share headlines from the collective results	Farming in Protected Landscapes 30168	1 x workshop delivered, attended by 30 farmers	February 2025

	with farmers and discuss next steps			
3	Increase understanding of nature-based solutions and private finance among landowners	Farming in Protected Landscapes 40086	1 x workshop delivered. A simple form for farmers to complete and take away, acting as a draft action plan. The session should include an assessment of farmer knowledge and motivation at the start and end of the event, and barriers on implementing NBS will be produced.	February 2025
1,2,3	Disseminate findings to participants, funders, and partners	Farming in Protected Landscapes 30168 and 40086	Produce and disseminate x 1 report and x 2 podcast recordings	March 2025

Expected Outcomes:

1. Farmers will attend events, learn about nutrient management and water quality and undertake soil tests.
2. Soil test results will help the LDF and Love Windermere partners to better understand the soil nutrient status of farmland in the catchment.
3. Farmers will use the soil analysis results to:
    a. Highlight any opportunities to further reduce artificial fertiliser usage
    b. Optimise the use of manures
    c. Improve the timing of nutrient application to minimise run-off risk and nutrient losses to air
    d. Avoid applying fertilisers in areas of risk to water quality.

Project Assumptions:

This project was designed with the following assumptions in mind:

1. Water and sediment run off from agricultural land in the Windermere catchment is contributing phosphorous to Lake Windermere.
2. Farmers will engage with the project by attending workshops, participating in soil testing and creating nutrient management plans.
3. Farmers will adapt their nutrient management practices for the benefit of water quality.
4. Other sources of nutrient inputs into Windermere will simultaneously be addressed.

5. Evaluation

Evaluation Methods

To evaluate this project, we analysed:

1. Participants. Who took part in the project and what do we know about them? This metric was measured by surveys with project' participants at various points throughout the project.
2. Engagement. What did participants do, and to what extent? This was measured using surveys with project participants at various points throughout the project and project management tools and reports used throughout the project.
3. Feedback. What did participants and partners think of the project including how it was run? This was ascertained through surveys and interviews with project participants and partners.
4. Outcomes. What were the actual outcomes of the project, compared to the expected outcomes? This was determined through desk-based evaluation of project reports and learning logs
5. Impact. What is the long-term impact of the project? We will use the information gained from the above four components outcomes, and published literature, to extrapolate the effect of this project on the water quality of Lake Windermere. We use this approach because water quality in Lake Windermere is expensive to measure because many samples would need to be taken to account for seasonality and other variables. In addition, even if an empirical study was carried out, it may not be possible to attribute changes in lake water quality to this project. This approach to impact measurement is supported by the NPC's Four Pillars of Impact Framework.[7]

[7] Building your measurement framework: NPC's four pillar approach - NPC
https://www.thinknpc.org/resource-hub/npcs-four-pillar-approach/

Actual Activity

Project Phase	Planned Activity	Funder and Code	Actual Activity	Actual Date	Actual vs Expected
1	Appoint a Farm Liaison Officer with experience within the community.	Westmorland and Furness Council Climate and Nature Fund And Farming in Protected Landscapes 30167	1 Farm Liaison Officer appointed. The officer proved to be instrumental in securing farmer engagement with the project	February 2024	Achieved
1	Build relationships with farmers and land managers, and gauge the appetite and capacity for the project through events	Farming in Protected Landscapes 30167	1 x project launch event (52 attendees) 1 x Screening of 'Six Inches of Soil' film (47 attendees) Event locations, format and timings were designed to make them accessible to farmers, and to facilitate sharing information and building community networks. These events demonstrated the interest in and capacity for action and provided a basis for delivery of Phase 2. See Appendix 2: Examples of marketing for events	19th June 2024 17th July 2024	Achieved

2	Provide soil tests and one Nutrient Management Plan per farm (usually costing £16 per soil test, and £750 per Nutrient Management Plan on average)	Farming in Protected Landscapes 30168	5-10 soil samples per farm were collected across 27 farms by an independent farm consultant and sent to an independent laboratory for testing. See Appendix 3: Example soil test results (redacted). 27 farms had 1 nutrient management plan each created by an independent farm consultant. An additional 7 farms that attended the Phase 1 events were inspired to complete soil testing and Nutrient Management Plans during the course of this project but did so independently of the project without taking advantage of the financial support available The 244 fields tested have provided a good representative view of the catchment, as there is a spread across the full catchment area. See Appendix 4: Number of farms participating in Phase 2 (soil samples and nutrient management plans) aggregated by sub catchment	October 2024 – March 2025	We provided soil samples and NMPs to 27 farms, 8 below the target of 35.
2	Create a map of soil nutrient status, at the sub-catchment level	Farming in Protected Landscapes 30168	1 map created See Appendix 5: Map and table of % fields sampled with P index 3 or greater at participating farms, aggregated by sub-catchment	31st March 2025	Achieved

2	Produce Catchment scale summary of soil nutrient status	Farming in Protected Landscapes 30168	1 summary report created See Appendix 6: Catchment scale summary of soil	31st March 2025	Achieved
2	Deliver a Participant Feedback & Soils Summary Event to share headlines from the collective results with farmers and discuss next steps	Farming in Protected Landscapes 30168	1 workshop delivered, attended by 34 farmers See Appendix 7: Photo gallery of farmer engagement events	26th February 2025	Achieved
3	Increase understanding of nature-based solutions and private finance among landowners	Farming in Protected Landscapes 40086	1 workshop was delivered attended by 18 farmers, representing 10 farms in the Windermere catchment. Only 1 out of the 10 farms attending the workshop had previously participated in green finance initiatives or nature-based solutions (NBS), and interestingly, this was the only farm to report that they would be likely to explore any options or take any action following this event. Of the 9 farms that had not previously participated in green finance initiatives or NBS the majority (8 farms) were unsure whether they would take any action, and half (4 farms) said that they would be interested in receiving further support, resources or training.	13th March 2025	Achieved

			Concerns about proceeding with green finance initiatives and NBS included low returns, one-off (rather than recurring) payments, lack of “real life” case studies, and lack of legal support. See Appendix 7: Photo gallery of farmer engagement events		
1,2,3	Disseminate findings to participants, funders, and partners	Farming in Protected Landscapes 30168 and 40086	Produce and disseminate 1 report (this report) and 2 podcast recordings. https://soundcloud.com/lakedistrictfoundation	31st March 2025	Achieved

Project Outcomes

Phase 1 – Events (funded by FiPL30167).

52 farmers and land managers attended the 2-hour evening launch event on 19th June 2024. The event was held at the *Barn in the Fells* and featured an introduction to the Lake District Foundation and Love Windermere, a presentation about the importance of soil sampling and nutrient management plans delivered by guest speaker Paul Arkle from Cumbria Farm Environment Partnership, and a presentation about grants available to farmers by Veronica Waller from the Farmer Network.

11 out of 52 attendees completed a feedback form after the event, and 45% of respondents said that their interest in soil nutrient status had increased after attending the workshop and 73% said that their knowledge had increased. Over 90% said that the event met their expectations and 100% said that they would recommend a Lake District Foundation event to someone else.

An unexpected outcome of the event was that attendees said that they "enjoyed meeting like-minded people" and "getting advice from friends and peers." Subsequent events were designed to include time for peers to work together so that this benefit could continue. A criticism of the event was that the sound quality could be improved and so better equipment was arranged for subsequent meetings.

During the event, 9 attendees expressed an interest in soil testing and nutrient management plans, and this provided a strong basis for the continuation of the project.

47 farmers and land managers attended the screening of the film "Six Inches of Soil" on 17th July 2024, which addresses the issues of soil health and regenerative farming on British farms. Of the 15 attendees who completed the feedback form, all enjoyed the event and described the event as "interesting", "eye-opening" and "thought-provoking".

80% of respondents told us that they were inspired to make changes on their own farms after the event, and three attendees expressed an interest in soil testing (Phase 2).

Several attendees gave ideas about how to improve future events including:

1. Practical information on "sustainable" farming including farm visits and more information about soil nutrient testing
2. Continued support to access resources
3. Connect residents and visitors to the food system through community gardens, farmers markets and school visits.

Phase 2 – Soil nutrient testing and Nutrient Management Plans (funded by FiPL30168).

The project was able to provide up to10 soil tests and one Nutrient Management Plan per farm free of charge (usually costing £16 per soil test, and £750 per Nutrient Management Plan on average)

27 farmers and landowners took part in free soil nutrient testing and Nutrient Management Plans between October 2024 and March 2025. 5-10 soil samples per farm were collected across 27 farms by an independent farm consultant and sent to an independent laboratory for testing. See Appendix 3: Example soil test results (redacted).27 farms had 1 nutrient management plan each created by an independent farm consultant.

The 244 fields tested have provided a good representative view of the catchment, as there is a spread across the full catchment area. See Appendix 4: Number of farms participating in Phase 2 (soil samples and nutrient management plans) aggregated by sub catchment

The target number of farms was 35, and an additional 7 farms that attended the Phase 1 events completed soil testing and Nutrient Management Plans during the course of this project, but did not access financial support.

A soil nutrient status summary and feedback event for project participants was delivered on the 26th February and was attended by 34 landowners and managers.

Across the whole catchment, the proportion of fields tested with a P index of 3 or higher was 46%. In two sub-catchments, over half of the fields tested showed a P index of 3 or higher (Great Langdale Beck (80%, and Cunsey Beck / Black Beck 60%). See Appendix 5: Map and table of % fields sampled with P index 3 or greater at participating farms, aggregated by sub-catchment. However, only one farm was sampled in each of these sub-catchments, and more samples are needed to create a more accurate picture.

Soil test results are summarised in Appendix 6: Catchment scale summary of soil .

Phase 3 – Green Finance Initiatives and NBS event (funded by FiPL40086).

18 farmers, representing 10 farms in the Windermere catchment attended the workshop on 13th March 2025.

Only 1 out of the 10 farms attending the workshop had previously participated in green finance initiatives or nature-based solutions (NBS), and interestingly, this was the only farm to report that they would be likely to explore any options or take any action following this event.

Of the 9 farms that had not previously participated in green finance initiatives or NBS, the majority (8 farms) were unsure whether they would take any action, and half (4 farms) said that they would be interested in receiving further support, resources or training.

Concerns about proceeding with green finance initiatives and NBS included low returns, one-off (rather than recurring) payments, lack of “real life” case studies, and lack of legal support.

Throughout all 3 phases of the project, participant ages ranged from under 35 to over 65 but the majority were in the 55-65 age range. There was an equal spilt of male and female attendees. All farmers and land managers were based in the Windermere catchment, and Appendix 4: Number of farms participating in Phase 2 (soil samples and nutrient management plans) aggregated by sub catchment shows the spread of participants across the catchment.

An online survey was sent to participants across all phases of the project in February 2025 to understand their experience of the project, it's effect on them, and whether it was delivered effectively. The response rate was 20%. Of those who responded:

- 100% of respondents would recommend this project to others.
- 80% of respondents felt that their knowledge about nutrient management has improved, since taking part in this project.
- 80% of respondents felt that their interest in nutrient management has improved, since taking part in this project.
- Over 80% of respondents said that they would make changes to soil management practices following this project.
- The workshops and training sessions (60%) and financial support (40%) had the most significant impact on farming practices.
- Further support requested included mentorship / peer support, access to resources and tools, and more financial support.

The qualitative feedback from project participants included:

"The workshop was well organised and provided a great opportunity to speak directly to the experts, ask questions and learn information which was pertinent to this particular area and our own situation."

"We found the Nutrient Management Plan good, the results that came back were very useful. It's also good to know what grant funding is available."

"The project has allowed me to access information and resources which I didn't know were available."

When advertising the project various approaches were used including social media, direct emails and traditional post invitations. From the start of the project, it became clear that farmers were responding best to the postal invitations, and so this approach continued throughout. Informal feedback from participants revealed that it was important to have either an incentive or an offer of new information about a subject which was really of interest - to attract farmers. Speakers knowledgeable in grant funding opportunities were extremely popular as they provided relevant advice and knowledge which had value to farmers.

The events with lowest attendance were those where there were very short lead in times (less than 2 weeks). Future events should have a lead in time of at least 4 weeks to enable invitations to be sent, the liaison officer to make direct contact, and to ensure that people can make arrangements to be available.

At the end of the project the Project Manager (LDF), Farm Liaison Officer (LDF), and the Farm Advisor (who carried out soil sampling and created the Nutrient Management Plans) were interviewed.

An Interview with the Project Manager

Why did you want to work on this project, and what did you hope it would achieve?

Working on this project provided an opportunity to connect and build relationships with farmers who live, work and protect the iconic Lake District landscape which holds cultural and ecological importance for World Heritage Site status. Farmers and landowners play a significant role in nature recovery, of which water quality is intrinsically linked to how the land is used. Working on this project helped me better understand the complex funding landscape farmers are navigating and how the Lake District Foundation can support them in their efforts to improve water quality in the Windermere catchment.

Did anything stand out as unusual or interesting while delivering this project?

Compared to the modelled data that has been produced over the past few years, we are seeing lower levels of Phosphate within the soil than anticipated. There are a few outliers that can be managed and reduced through the implementation of nutrient management plans, but it is a promising trend that farmers are not as heavily reliant on fertilisers as once thought, and are introducing interventions that slow nutrient run-off and improve water quality.

Did you need to make any changes to the project during delivery?

Government party changes and pauses/revisions of environmental land schemes that will play a vital part in the bigger picture of water quality improvements in the catchment have led to uncertainty and may have reduced the likelihood that farmers engage with this process. We tried to work closely with participants and partners to understand the funding landscape and this informed a future project.

Feedback from the Farm Liaison Officer

As a farmer and land agent, I am passionate about farming, particularly in this area and I felt that I was in a unique position to help enable and enhance communication between the *Love Windermere* partners and the farming community. I am enthusiastic about fostering sustainable agricultural practices that benefit both the farming community and the environment. Supporting farmers whilst helping to protect this beautiful region feels like a meaningful way to make a lasting impact.

The positive way in which the project was received by the local farming community was really encouraging. The overall results show a lower level of Phosphate in the soil than anticipated, confirming the trend for decreased use of artificial fertiliser on most farms in the area, which was a positive and enables us to better inform modelled data.

One of the unintended consequences of the project was that it fostered a feeling of community and support among the farmers involved, which in turn helps reduce feelings of isolation among farmers. This can be considered a key success of the project given that farmers have previously reported that that they feel isolated due to less opportunities to meet together[8].

One or two of the events had limited promotion due to timescales and I would try to ensure that all events received the promotion times and strategies most suited to them.

Other than that, overall, I was extremely happy with how the project went. In future, if running a similar project I may look to have more tailored communication strategies, offer recognition or incentives, and possibly look at introducing pilot projects early on.

The interest shown by the farmers in how soil testing and Nutrient Management Plans can help them with their grass growth is interesting. Hill farmers have traditionally had a 'get what they can' approach to silage/hay making whilst other farmers tend to view it more as producing a crop. I believe the project has gone some way to changing that mindset and also to helping farmers view their slurry/farmyard manure as a tool to assist in grass management rather than just a waste product. I felt that the farmers very much engaged with the project, which was really positive.

An unexpected highlight of the events was that attendees said that they enjoyed meeting like-minded people and getting advice from friends and peers. We will make sure that our subsequent events continue to foster this benefit and include time for peers to work together.

Some farmers did refuse to be involved due to suspicion of our motivations, worry that they would in some way be 'implicated' in pollution issues, or somehow get in trouble from the results. We tried to mitigate this risk by anonymising the soil test results.

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[8] Loneliness and Social Isolation in Farming Communities: Summary of research findings https://www.fcn.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Loneliness-social-isolation-in-farming_FINAL-01.11.21.pdf

Notes from an Independent Farm Environment Advisor

As a farm environment adviser, I am always interested to work with farmers and help them to minimise the impact of their farming operations on the environment. To do this sort of work in such an iconic landscape as the Windermere catchment added to my interest in and enjoyment of the project.

I worked on similar project, on some farms in the Windermere catchment around 16 years ago and returned to a few of the farms as part of this project. One of the most interesting changes that quite a number of farmers have made since then, particularly in the last few years, is that they have stopped applying inorganic fertilisers. Although this was mainly driven by significantly increased costs for fertilisers, the farmers have adapted well, and many are managing their land more extensively and making good use of their on-farm nutrients instead. As a result of not using inorganic fertilisers, some farmers felt that soil testing was not relevant, but this project has been successful in convincing farmers that soil testing is still useful.

Given the results we have seen, I think it would be beneficial to run more events to cover interventions specific to this project and area, for example management to protect soil and minimise nutrient run-off risks, particularly when soil nutrient levels are high. Soil sampling on more farms within the catchment would further build up the understanding of soil nutrient levels and the current approach to management.

6. Key Findings, Learning, and Recommendations

The key findings from the project were:

a) Most of the farmers are no longer using any artificial fertiliser
b) The soil analysis results show that 46% of fields tested have a soil P index at 3 or above.
c) It is difficult to reduce levels as Phosphate tends to remain in the soil for many years. Therefore, fields with high P levels need careful management.
d) Identifying flow pathways and soil erosion/high P hotspots for focusing intervention planning to minimise soil erosion and run-off risk, following the Source, Pathway, Receptor principle, would ensure resources available in Windermere (i.e. officer time, future modelling and testing) are used most effectively to support farmers.
e) Intervention opportunities at these hotspots/intercepting these flow pathways that could be explored include land-use change such as riparian planting and buffer strips, soil structure and soil health improvements, manure management and storage, and addressing run off across farmyards through both infrastructure and nature-based solutions.
f) A significant proportion of the land would benefit from liming to correct pH status, though there are some barriers to uptake including accessibility and inflated cost (specifically transport) in remote areas.
g) Using a trusted Farm Liaison Officer, known to, and embedded in, the community as the “face” of the project played a large role in its success. We recommend continuing to use this approach for future projects in this community.

h) Organising social events worked well as a mechanism for sharing skills and knowledge, and we recommend continuing with this approach and building on the momentum for action within this community.
i) A positive and unexpected side effect was a perceived improvement to farmer wellbeing, and greater sense of community cohesion. Future work should aim to build on and further understand the scale of this impact.
j) Given that community learning worked well in this project, a future project could focus on creating a suite of case studies and exemplar farms where changes to nutrient management practices have been made.
k) Explore the potential of anaerobic digestors to make use of slurry to generate methane energy on a catchment scale - understanding the risks, barriers and consents needed for this approach.
l) Information sharing among project funders and partners is possible when agreements are put in place.
m) Given what we know about the participants, their feedback and the project outcomes, we can deduce that the project will have a positive impact on water quality, due to the improved interest in and knowledge about nutrient management on agricultural land within the Windermere Catchment[9]. Improved water quality in Windermere is correlated with improved tourism, higher biodiversity, and health benefits for people[10]. While it was not possible within the time frame of this project, future projects should include recording any behavioural changes made as a result of the project.
n) Better understanding of the following parameters is needed to fully understand the nutrient balance of the Windermere catchment, and these should be explored in future projects:
    1. Extent of farmer engagement and advice given through Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF)
    2. Number of farms that have had a CSF infrastructure audit
    3. Number of farms that have a manure management plan
    4. Number of farms that have manure storage issues
    5. Number of farms that could look at Capital Grants / FETF for infrastructure improvements
    6. What are the other barriers to infrastructure improvements (e.g. planning)
o) This report will be shared with the Love Windermere Partnership to support the ongoing collaboration of partners to further support farmers in the Windermere catchment to improve water quality, access funding to support actions needed, and implement changes.

[9] Phosphorus: challenges for the water environment - GOV.UK https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phosphorus-challenges-for-the-water-environment

[10] Cumbrian Lakes monitoring platform | UK-SCAPE | UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology https://uk-scape.ceh.ac.uk/our-science/projects/cumbrian-lakes-monitoring-platform

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: About the funding

This project was partly funded by the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme which is a part of DEFRA's Agricultural Transition Plan. It offers funding to farmers and land managers in National Landscapes (previously known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty - AONBs), National Parks and the Broads under four themes of Nature, Climate, People and Place. It is not an agri-environment scheme.

The programme funds projects that:

- support nature recovery
- mitigate the impacts of climate change
- provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and its cultural heritage
- protect or improve the quality and character of the landscape or place.

In the Lake District National Park, the fund is managed and administered by the Lake District National Park Authority.

The *Love Windermere Farmer Engagement* projects delivered multiple FiPL programme outcomes, in particular: improving farmer awareness of and interest in soils and carbon, increasing the resilience and sustainability of farm businesses. The projects also support the LDNP Partnership's Management Plan Outcome 3: securing the future of farming and forestry, nature recovery and climate change.

As part of FiPL funding, each agreement had associated claim evidence requirements and local grant conditions as follows:

Project Ref & Funding value	Local grant conditions	Evidence requirements
FiPL30167 £9,998.39	Summary of outputs/ feedback from events to be reported to LDNP (for duly reporting to Love Windermere Land Management Group).	Copies of project evaluation reports produced.
FiPL30168 £77,081.24	Summary of project outputs and farmer feedback to be regularly reported to LDNP (for duly reporting to Love Windermere Land Management Group).	Copies of project evaluation reports produced.
FiPL40086 £4,550.71	An impact report on the three FiPL Love Windermere Farmer Engagement funded projects should be submitted to the FiPL officer, for dissemination to the LAP.	

This report intends to meet the above conditions.

Appendix 2: Examples of marketing for events

Appendix 3: Example soil test results (redacted)

Contact : LIV ALLPORT
LAKE DISTRICT FOUNDATION
MURLEY MOSS
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CUMBRIA LA9 7AL
Tel. :

B498

Please quote the above code for all enquiries

Client : [redacted]

Local Rep : [redacted]

Telephone : [redacted]

Sample Matrix : Agricultural Soil

Laboratory Reference
Card Number 15437/24

Date Received 09-Dec-24
Date Reported 13-Dec-24

SOIL ANALYSIS REPORT

Laboratory Sample Reference	Field Details			Index			mg/l (Available)		
	No.	Name or O.S. Reference with Cropping Details	Soil pH	P	K	Mg	P	K	Mg
66106/24	1	[redacted] *Grazing into Grazing*	5.4	1	2-	2	14.4	152	97
66107/24	2	[redacted] *Grazing into Grazing*	5.4	4	2-	2	50.0	124	84
66108/24	3	[redacted] *Grazing into Grazing*	5.4	3	2-	2	30.4	136	89
66109/24	4	[redacted] *Grazing into Grazing*	5.4	4	2-	2	52.0	143	100
66110/24	5	[redacted] *Grazing into Grazing*	5.3	4	2-	2	67.2	176	99
66111/24	6	[redacted] *Silage into Silage*	5.4	4	1	2	47.2	104	82

If general fertiliser and lime recommendations have been requested, these are given on the following sheets.
The analytical methods used are as described in DEFRA Reference Book 427
The index values are determined from the AHDB Fertiliser Recommendations RB209 9th Edition.

Released by [redacted] On behalf of NRM Date 13/12/24

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DATE 13th December 2024

SAMPLES FROM [redacted]

SAMPLED BY [redacted]

Report reference 15437/24

LIV ALLPORT
LAKE DISTRICT FOUNDATION
MURLEY MOSS
OXENHOLME ROAD
KENDAL
CUMBRIA LA9 7AL
Tel:
Fax:

Fertiliser Recommendations

The phosphate and potash recommendations shown below, are those required to replace the offtake and maintain target soil indices. The larger recommended applications for soils below target index will allow the soil to build up to this target index over a number of years. Not applying fertiliser to soils which are above target index will allow the soil to run down over a number of years to the target index.
The recommendation should be increased or decreased where yields are substantially more or less than that specified. The amount to apply can be calculated using the expected yield and values for the offtake of phosphate and potash per tonne of yield given in the RB209 9th edition.
All recommendations are given for the mid-point of each Index.
Where a soil analysis value (as given by the laboratory) is close to the range of an adjacent Index, the recommendation may be reduced or increased slightly taking account of the recommendation given for the adjacent Index. Small adjustments of less than 10 kg/ha are generally not justified.
Efficient use of P and K is most likely to be achieved on soils that are well structured and enable good rooting.
For visual evaluation of soil structure (VESS), a score on 1 or 2 would be considered adequate.
Don't forget to deduct nutrients applied as organic manures.
For Nitrogen recommendations please refer to the RB209 9th edition or seek advice from an FACTS qualified adviser.
Target Indices:
Arable, Forage, Grassland and Potato Crops: P Index 2, K Index 2-
(In rotations where most crops are Autumn-sown, soils are in good condition and P is applied annually, high index 1 can be an adequate target.)
Vegetables and Bulbs: P Index 3, K Index 2+
(If vegetables are only grown occasionally as part of an arable rotation, it would be most economic to target index 2 for arable and forage crops.)
Fruit Vines and Hops: P Index 2, K Index 2, Mg Index 2
(Note: Cider apples respond to K Index 3, Mg Index 3)
A lime recommendation is usually for a 20cm depth of cultivated soil or a 15cm depth of grassland soil. Where soil is acid below 20 cm and soils are ploughed for arable crops, a proportionately larger quantity of lime should be applied. However, if more than 10 t/ha is needed, half should be deeply cultivated into the soil and ploughed down, with the remainder applied to the surface and worked in.
For established grassland or other situations where there is no, or only minimal soil cultivation, no more than 7.5 t/ha of lime should be applied in one application.
In these situations, applications of lime change the pH below the surface very slowly. Consequently, the underlying soil should not be allowed to become too acidic because this will affect the root growth and thus limit nutrient and water uptake, which will adversely affect yield.

Field Name / Ref / Soil Type	*Last Crop / Next Crop*		*P2O5*	*K2O*	*MgO*		*Lime*
[redacted]	**Grazing / Grazing**	*Units/Acre*	**40**	**0**		*T/Ac*	**1.7**
066106 / Medium		*Kg/Ha*	**50**	**0**		*Te/Ha*	**4.2**

Grass/clover swards are more sensitive to phosphate and potash shortages than pure grass swards. Phosphate may be applied in several small applications during the season, though there may be a small response if it all applied in early spring for the 1st grazing. Potash maybe applied in one application in June or July, or in several small applications during the season. At index 0, apply 30kg K2O/ha for the first grazing. Herbage analysis can also be useful to assess the adequacy of recent phosphate and potash applications. Phosphorus deficiency is indicated if the P concentration is below 0.35% and potassium deficiency is indicated if the herbage potassium is below 2.5% (DM basis) or the N:K ratio of the herbage is above 1:1.3.
Where there is a known risk of hypomagnesaemia, application of potash in spring should be avoided. Grass swards must contain a sufficiently high level of magnesium if the risk of hypomagnesaemia (grass staggers) is to be reduced. At soil Mg Index 0, apply 50 to 100 kg MgO/ha every three or four years. However the uptake of herbage magnesium decreases as nitrogen and potash increase: consequently hypomagnesaemia can occur when soil magnesium appears adequate. If there is a risk of hypomagnesaemia, 100kg/ha MgO may be justified to maintain soil Mg Index 2. Direct treatment of livestock may also be needed to avoid hypomagnesaemia. Where liming is also needed, use of magnesian limestone may be most cost effective. Herbage analysis is a useful indicator of the need for additional magnesium and for assessing the risk of hypomagnesaemia. Maintain magnesium concentrations above 0.20% (DM basis) and ensure the K:Mg ratio does not exceed 20:1.
Sulphur is an essential nutrient in maximising dry matter yield protein levels in both grazed and conserved grass. Sulphur deficiency is increasingly common in grassland, especially at second and later cuts in multi-cut silage systems using high rates of nitrogen, but also sometimes at first cut. Sulphur deficiency is indicated by yellowing of the sward. In contrast to N deficiency where the older leaves are most affected, sulphur deficiency can be identified by yellowing of the youngest leaves. Analysis of uncontaminated herbage sampled just before cutting is a useful indicator of deficiency. The information can be used to assess the need for sulphur for future cuts. The critical level is 0.25% total sulphur or an N:S ratio greater than 13:1.
Some soils are more at risk of sulphur deficiency than others. Apply sulphur to all grass grown on sandy and shallow soils, loamy and coarse silty soils in areas with >200mm rainfall between November and February, or clay, fine silty or peat soils in areas with >400 rainfall between November and February. On soils at risk of sulphur deficiency apply 40kg/ SO3/ha before each cut of silage or 20-30kg SO3/ha when up to 100kg N/ha is applied and an additional 20-30kg SO3/ha for each additional 100kg N/ha .
Sodium will not have any effect on grass growth but an adequate amount in the diet is essential for livestock health (0.15% DM basis) and can improve the palatability of grass. Herbage analysis is useful to assess the sodium status of grass and its balance with potassium. Where sodium levels are low (below 0.15%) or the K:Na ratio is higher than 20:1, mineral supplements may be required for some classes of stock or a sodium containing fertiliser may be used. Apply sodium in fertiliser at 140kg/ha Na2O in early spring, either in a single or split application, to improve herbage mineral balances. To improve pasture palatability, apply regular dressings of 10kg/ha Na2O throughout the season.

Fertiliser recommendations are based on **AHDB RB209 (Ninth Edition).** If a nutrient is deficient and no recommendation is given, either no recommendation is given in RB209 or we have insufficient data to give a recommendation. Apply Lime to the nearest half Ton / Tonne.
NRM is a UKAS accredited laboratory to ISO/IEC 17025

Report continued.....

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DATE 13th December 2024
SAMPLES FROM [redacted]
SAMPLED BY [redacted]
Report reference 15437/24

LIV ALLPORT
LAKE DISTRICT FOUNDATION
MURLEY MOSS
OXENHOLME ROAD
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Fertiliser Recommendations

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Some soils are more at risk of sulphur deficiency than others. Apply sulphur to all grass grown on sandy and shallow soils, loamy and coarse silty soils in areas with >200mm rainfall between November and February, or clay, fine silty or peat soils in areas with >400 rainfall between November and February. On soils at risk of sulphur deficiency apply 40kg/ SO3/ha before each cut of silage or 20-30kg SO3/ha when up to 100kg N/ha is applied and an additional 20-30kg SO3/ha for each additional 100kg N/ha applied.
Sodium will not have any effect on grass growth but an adequate amount in the diet is essential for livestock health (0.15% DM basis) and can improve the palatability of grass. Herbage analysis is useful to assess the sodium status of grass and its balance with potassium. Where sodium levels are low (below 0.15%) or the K:Na ratio is higher than 20:1, mineral supplements may be required for some classes of stock or a sodium containing fertiliser may be used. Apply sodium in fertiliser at 140kg/ha Na2O in early spring, either in a single or split application, to improve herbage mineral balances. To improve pasture palatability, apply regular dressings of 10kg/ha Na2O throughout the season.
Grass swards must contain a sufficiently high level of magnesium if the risk of hypomagnesaemia (grass staggers) is to be reduced. At soil Mg Index 0, apply 50 to 100 kg MgO/ha every three or four years. However the uptake of herbage magnesium decreases as nitrogen and potash increase: consequently hypomagnesaemia can occur when soil magnesium appear adequate. If there is a risk of hypomagnesaemia, larger amounts may be justified to maintain soil Mg Index 2. Direct treatment of livestock may also be needed to avoid hypomagnesaemia. Where liming is also needed, use of magnesian limestone may be most cost effective. Herbage analysis is a useful indicator of the need for additional magnesium and for assessing the risk of hypomagnesaemia. Maintain magnesium concentrations above 0.20% (DM basis) and ensure the K:Mg ratio does not exceed 20:1.
Herbage analysis can also be useful to assess the adequacy of recent phosphate and potash applications. Phosphorus deficiency is indicated if the P concentration is below 0.35% and potassium deficiency is indicated if the herbage potassium is below 2.5% (DM basis) or the N:K ratio of the herbage is above 1:1.3.
The amount of phosphate and potash applied for establishment may be deducted from the first season's grazing or silage/hay requirement.

Fertiliser recommendations are based on **AHDB RB209 (Ninth Edition).** If a nutrient is deficient and no recommendation is given, either no recommendation is given in RB209 or we have insufficient data to give a recommendation. Apply Lime to the nearest half Ton / Tonne.
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Grass Silage - Phosphate and Potash

(Taken from RB209)

When considering the maintenance recommendations (marked 'M'), full account must be taken of note b) beneath the table.

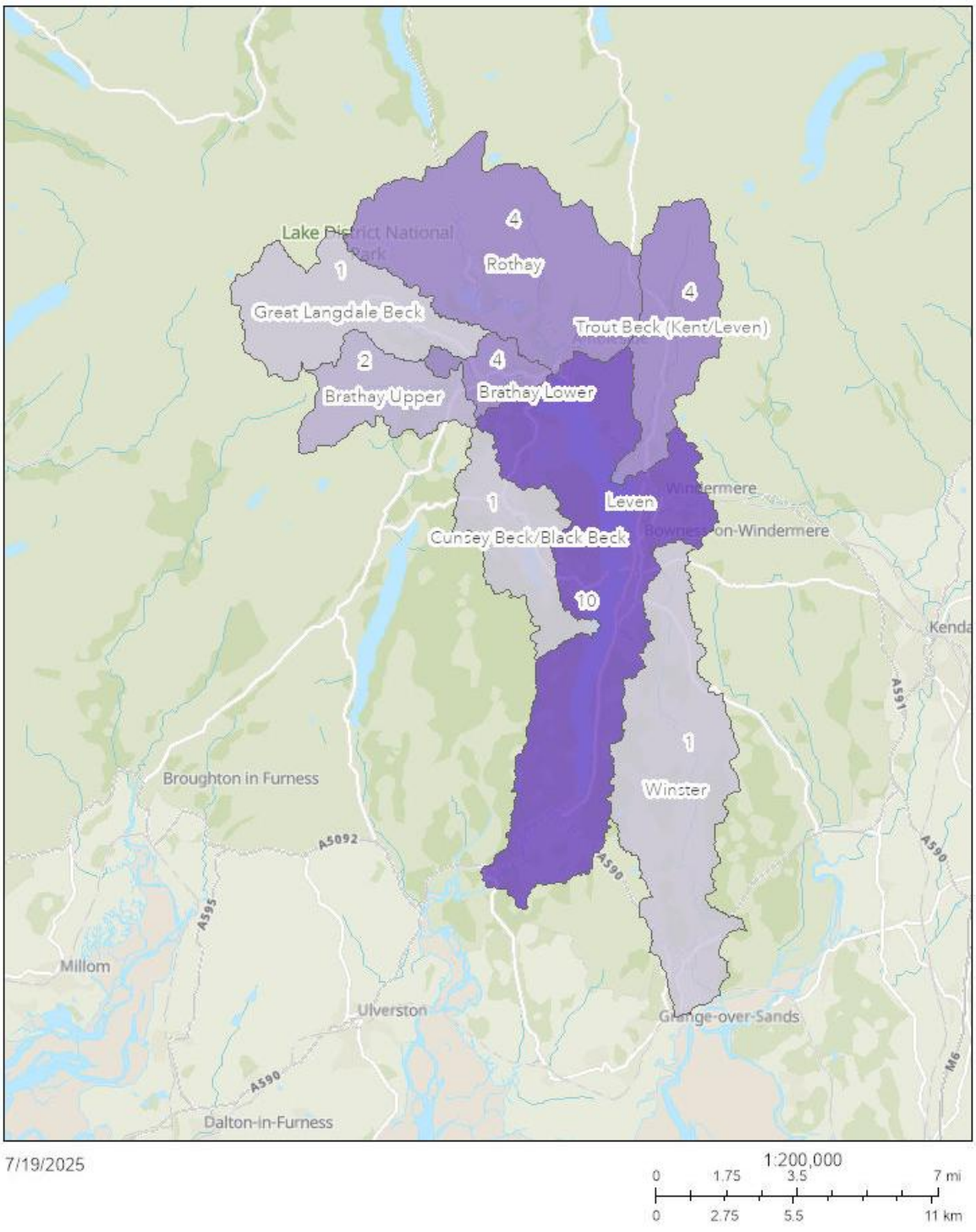
	P or K Index									
	0		1		2		3		4 and over	
	kg/h	unit/a	kg/h	unit/a	kg/h	unit/a	kg/h	unit/a	kg/h	unit/a
1st cut (23 t/ha)										
Phosphate (P_2O_5)[a]	100	80	70	56	40M	32M	20	16	0	0
Potash (K_2O)[b] - previous autmn	60	48	30	24	0	0	0	0	0	0
- spring	80	64	80	64	80M (2-) 60M (2+)	64M (2-) 48M (2+)	30	24	0	0
2nd cut (15 t/ha)										
Phosphate (P_2O_5)[a]	25	20	25	20	25M	20M	0	0	0	0
Potash (K_2O)[b]	120	96	100	80	90M (2-) 60M (2+)	72M (2-) 48M (2+)	40	32	0	0
3rd cut (9 t/ha)										
Phosphate (P_2O_5)[a]	15	12	15	12	15M	12M	0	0	0	0
Potash (K_2O)[b]	80	64	80	64	80M (2-) 40M (2+)	64M (2-) 32M (2+)	20	16	0	0
4th cut (7 t/ha)										
Phosphate (P_2O_5)[a]	10	8	10	8	10M	8M	0	0	0	0
Potash (K_2O)[b]	70	56	70	56	70M (2-) 40M (2+)	56M (2-) 32M (2+)	20	16	0	0

a. At soil P Index 2 or over, the whole of the total phosphate requirement may be applied in the spring. At P Index 0 and 1, the phosphate recommendation for the 3rd and 4th cuts may be added to the 2nd cut recommendation and applied in one dressing.

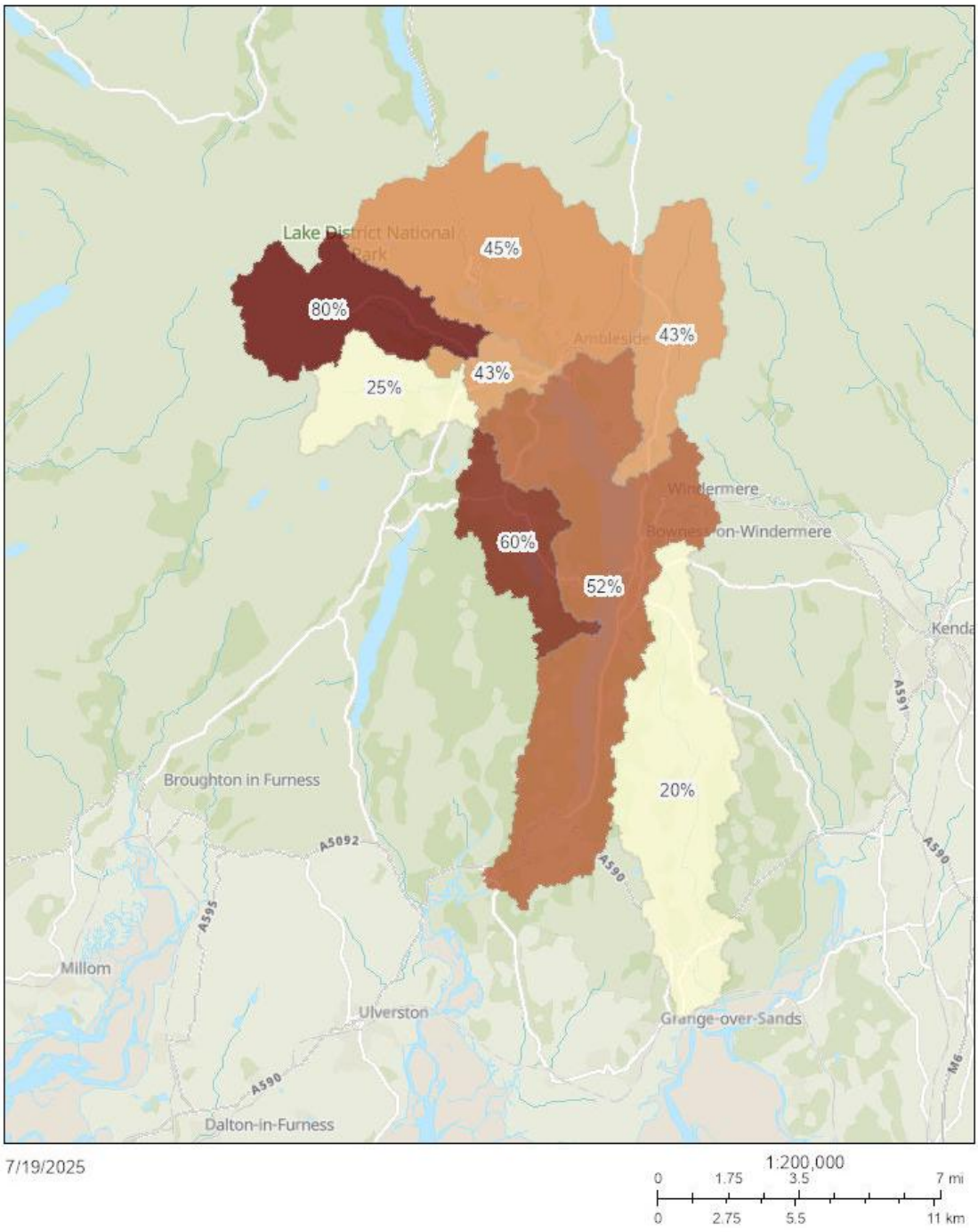
b. To minimise luxury uptake of potash, no more than 80-90 kg K2O/ha should be applied in the spring for the 1st cut. The balance of the recommended rate should be applied in the previous autumn.

The yields are based on wilted silage at 25% DM content as removed from the field.

Appendix 4: Number of farms participating in Phase 2 (soil samples and nutrient management plans) aggregated by sub catchment



Appendix 5: Map and table of % fields sampled with P index 3 or greater at participating farms, aggregated by sub-catchment.



Sub-catchment	Total number of fields sampled	Number of fields sampled with a P index of 3 or greater	% Fields sampled with P index 3 or greater
Brathay Lower	40	17	43%
Brathay Upper	20	5	25%
Great Langdale Beck	10	8	80%
Leven	95	49	52%
Rothay	38	17	45%
Trout Beck	21	9	43%
Winster	10	2	20%
Cunsey Beck/Black Beck	10	6	60%
Grand Total	244	113	46%

Appendix 6: Catchment scale summary of soil nutrient status

Soil health can be improved upon by undertaking actions that target the biological, physical, or chemical characteristics of soil. This project in the Windermere catchment focussed on creating a nutrient management plan which addresses chemical characteristics, specifically nutrient application (amounts, place and time).

Creating a nutrient management plan supports framers to:

- To target applications to avoid excess nutrients.
- Optimise agronomic benefits from nutrient inputs.
- Minimise environmental impact from nutrients.
- Optimise financial output

The information included in the plan, and used to inform actions includes:

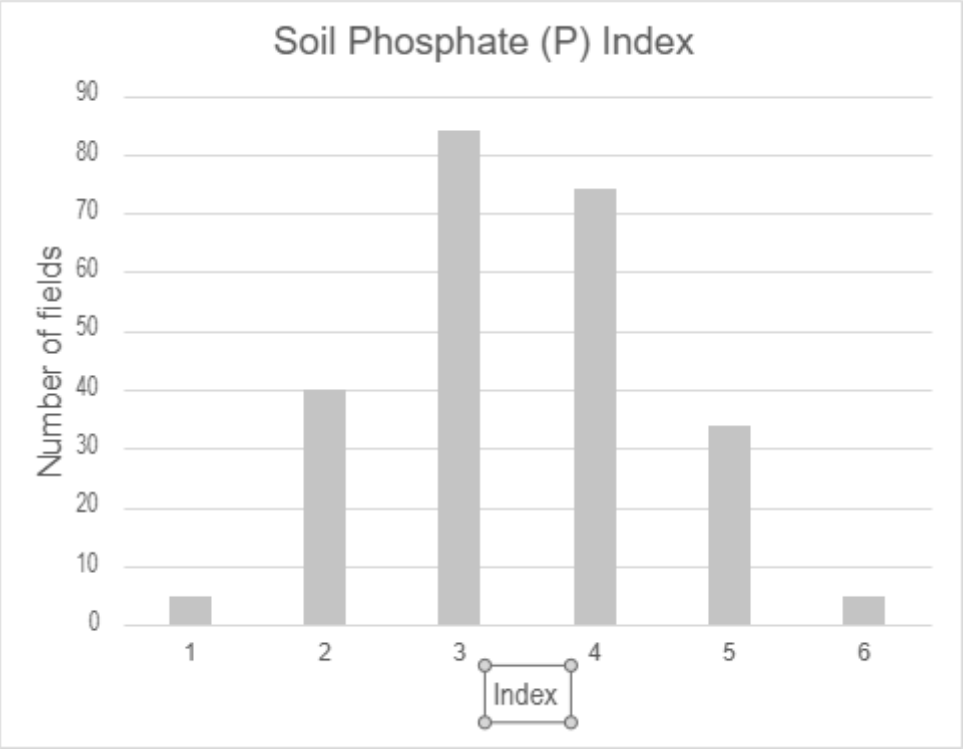
- Soil Type (light, medium, deep silt/peat)
- Annual rainfall figures (2103 mm – Ambleside)
- Previous management – (cropping/N use)
- Crop type (grass – grazing, silage, hay)
- Soil Nitrogen Supply (High, Moderate, Low)
- Soil Test Results – phosphate, potash, magnesium & pH,
- and Crop Nutrient Requirement (RB209 recommendations).

Soil test results are compared to target indices. Those for grassland are:

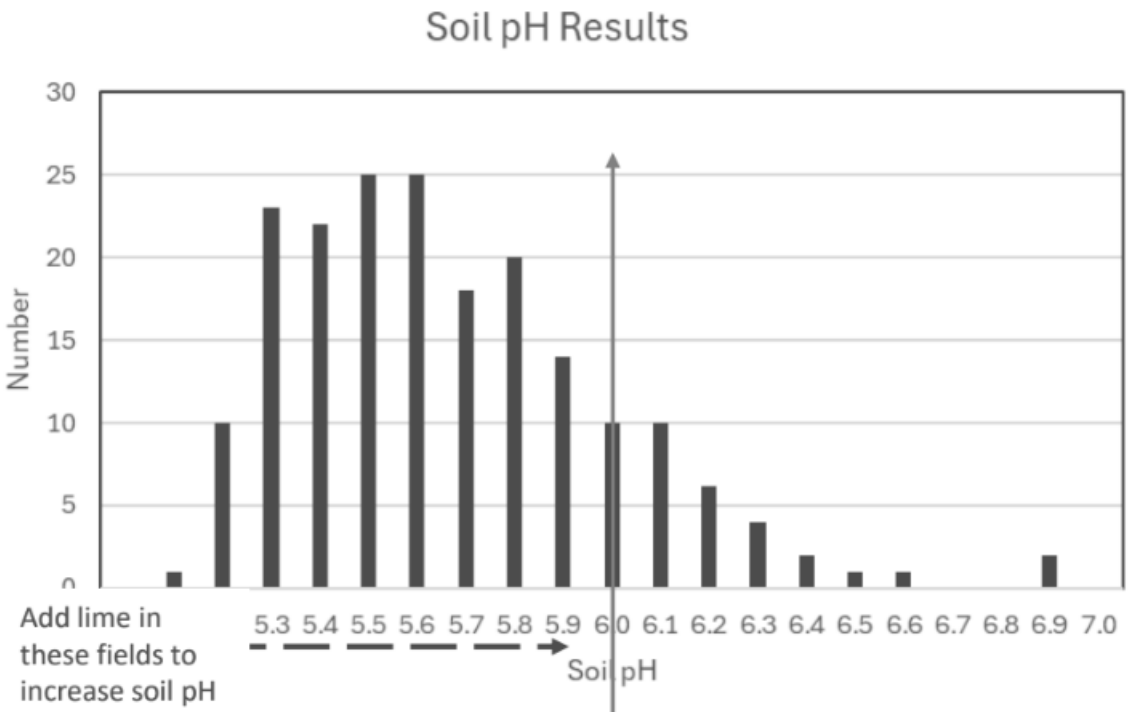
- Liming – target soil pH 6.0 (for grassland)
- P – target index 2
- K – target index 2-
- Mg – target index 2 (to avoid risk of grass staggers

244 fields (714 ha) on 27 farms sampled were sampled, and an additional 13 field samples measured outside of this project were provided. The land use across these farms was predominantly pasture/grazing or silage/haylage. Of the soils sampled, most were freely draining acid loamy soils over rock.

Macro nutrients (P, K, and Mg) showed Considerable variation among farms and field for each of these nutrients, particularly phosphate and potash.



Soil pH also varied, but mostly between farms. Farms tended to have either low or near optimum soil pH levels. Fields with below optimum pH would benefit from liming to correct pH status.



NMP preparation work revealed that artificial fertiliser usage on participating farms has been heavily reduced in the last 10-15 years due to recent behavioural changes and farm input cost pressures.

Around half (46%) of fields tested had soil P indices of 3 or above, which are above target levels for grassland. As soil P is attached to soil particles, any future efforts to reduce soil erosion risk should be focused in these areas.

Appendix 7: Photo gallery of farmer engagement events

Love Windermere Farmer Engagement Project

Evaluation Report FAQs

Executive Summary

The Lake District Foundation worked in partnership with farmers across the Windermere catchment to build trust, share knowledge and reduce nutrient loss to improve water quality. Funded by the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme and Westmorland & Furness Council, the project ran across three phases.

- Over 50 farmers and advisers joined workshops focused on soil health, nutrient management and nature-based solutions.
- 27 farms received free soil testing and Nutrient Management Plans, covering 714 hectares.
- Artificial fertiliser use on participating farms has significantly declined over the past 10–15 years. Nearly half of tested fields had high phosphorus levels, pointing to key areas for erosion risk reduction.
- Most farmers reported increased interest in nutrient management. A smaller number showed interest in nature-based solutions, with barriers including low financial returns and lack of legal support.

Recommendations: Continue community-led engagement, target erosion hotspots and provide better support for nature-based finance opportunities.

Why am I receiving this report?

We have circulated this report to all project participants (farmers) via post, and all funders and members of the Love Windermere partnership by email, in July 2025.

Can I share this report?

Yes, this report is publicly available via the Lake District Foundation website can be shared by freely.

How was this project funded?

This project was funded by grants from Westmorland and Furness Council and Farming in Protected Landscapes.

Lake District Foundation

LOVE WINDERMERE

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Lake District National Park

Farming in Protected Landscapes programme

Westmorland & Furness Council

Why was this project needed?

There is a clear need and desire for action to reduce the nutrient input into Windermere and achieve the associated benefits to nature recovery.

There is data to suggest that one contributing factor, among others, of poor water quality in Windermere is nutrient "run-off" from farmland in the Windermere catchment.

Soil testing and nutrient management plans, alongside information delivered in an accessible and inclusive format, are a recognised way to encourage actions that reduce run-off from farmland.

Why did the Lake District Foundation carry out this project?

As a member of the Love Windermere partnership, the Lake District Foundation is committed to working with partners to bring about a healthier future for the lake and the surrounding area, balancing the needs of nature, the community and the local economy.

The Lake District Foundation was uniquely placed to engage with farmers to explore knowledge of and interest in water quality issues among farmers and to inspire changes using a farmer-led approach.

The project aligns to the Lake District Foundation's strategic aims to improve and support the Nature, Water, Heritage, and People of Cumbria.

How can I comment on this report?

We welcome your feedback on the report. If you have any comments, questions or would like more information, please email us at info@lakedistrictfoundation.org. We're happy to provide further detail or arrange a phone call to discuss anything in more depth.

Lake District Foundation

LOVE WINDERMERE

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Lake District National Park

Farming in Protected Landscapes programme

Westmorland & Furness Council