

REOPENING WARDLOW SOUGH, CRESSBROOK DALE – SEPTEMBER 2019

The DCA is working with Natural England (Derbyshire Dales National Nature Reserve team) to reopen and secure the tail of Wardlow Sough in Cressbrook Dale. The sough was dug open in the 1970s but has since collapsed in as the surrounding hillock has slumped. The public footpath running above the sough tail has been diverted for some time as the small shake hole continues to settle. Permission has now been granted from English Heritage for work on this Scheduled Monument site. It is hoped that by reopening the sough and lining the tunnel, the ground will stabilise, and the footpath can be reinstated back to its original route. Once the adit is open, it will be secured with a gate and Derbyshire Key system and will be accessible by cavers much like Neptune Mine a short way down the Dale.

In simple terms, the job will require the digging open of the sough tail, the installation of a very large pipe, the burying of the pipe and then the fitting of a caver gate. Labour and energy are the most valuable resources DCA need for this job, especially as it needs doing in one stint ideally, so the sough tail is not left open. Digging must be done manually as heavy machinery are not permitted to move around on the fragile ecosystem surrounding the sough.

The DCA need volunteers to help with this job. Be part of something that cavers will appreciate for generations to come. We are anticipating that this project will potentially need 5-7 days depending on numbers involved. We are not asking you to be present throughout, even a single day can help greatly. If you would like to help you should complete the following Doodle Poll to show which days you are offering to assist. Please update the poll if you become unavailable again but do try to commit as the job needs planning around the days when there are enough people available. We hope to start on the 7th of September, but there will be the odd day of preliminary work done during August. If you struggle to use the Doodle Poll please contact the DCA Projects Officer direct, but the poll is the simplest way of recording who is available and when.

Doodle Poll: <https://doodle.com/poll/wu4vgizqvxr78mr7>

You will ideally have your own gloves and steel toe boots / wellingtons. DCA can provide most necessary PPE, but it is easier if you can supply some of your own. If anyone can supply their own pick or shovel it would save DCA buying more. A full plan and list of recommended stuff to bring will be provided in due course. *One major stipulation is that you must be a BCA member, either directly, through your club or via DCA/PDMHS etc. This job is being done under BCA's insurance so everyone involved must be a member.*

Many thanks in advance for the offers of help.

Pete Knight
DCA Projects Officer