

10 September 2009

Virginia Hawkins  
Secretary  
Sustainability Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

**Canoe access to rivers.**

Dear Madam,

I am writing to express my alarm at Welsh Assembly proposals to give equal access for canoe users on Welsh Waters throughout the year.

Firstly, as an angler I pay substantial monies as part of a licence fee to the Environment Agency for the rights to fish the waters. Also, I pay substantial moneys for the rights to access land so I am allowed to fish. Canoeists and fishermen during the fishing season are incompatible as canoeists on rivers disturb and can ruin the chances of catching fish on rivers. This can only lead to increased friction between anglers who pay for the right to fish and canoeists who do not pay a bean to go on the rivers.

Also, my licence fee pays towards the maintenance of rivers and fish stocks. Any reduction in the number of fishermen, especially on rivers such as the Towy which is THE prime sea trout river in Britain can do nothing but harm local tourism industry who rely heavily on anglers from the UK to come and fish the river. Much needed tourism will therefore be ruined as who would pay for prime fishing on a river which is plagued by canoeists during the fishing season?

Also I would wish to draw your attention to the fact that canoeists have the sea to use and are quite able to buy up fishing rights much the same as fishing clubs can, and have their members canoe the areas that they have bought, excluding fishermen from the land if they so wish.

Many rivers in Wales are prime fishing areas, and its only the fisherman that's helping the stocks of sea trout and salmon being maintained. If you allow canoeists to use the river, many fishermen would not use the waters that are commonly used by canoeists, thereby reducing the money going into conservation. Netting will return to the estuaries and sea trout and salmon stocks will inevitably suffer.

Giving such rights to a sport that does nothing for conservation, river management, the Tourist industry (more fishermen than canoeists) and pays nothing into either the Environment Agency coffers or substantially less into the economy is sheer madness.

If my fishing is ruined by canoeists, I will either consider moving clubs so that I pay less for my permit, demand a reduction in my fishing licence and will make sure that this issue is predominant in my thoughts when voting. My fishing is suffering enough as it is now what with the weather, let alone when these people canoe down prime fishing waters – waters where i've paid a lot of money to fish.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Budden', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Budden