



Dear

Longstone Edge – Backdale and Wagers Flat

As a member of the British Mountaineering Council, I am writing to express my concern at the recent High Court decision at Backdale Quarry within the Peak District National Park which has found in favour of the operators. This has allowed for the resumption of quarrying activity in one of our most treasured National Parks, destroying the fragile landscape in one of the Peak District's most treasured vistas.

The Peak District National Park Authority served a stop notice on operations at Backdale in January 2008. Sadly this decision was overturned in the High Court at the end of February 2008 when a High Court Judge disregarded the planning inspectorate's decision. He ruled that the removal and sale of limestone containing fluorspar could resume based on his interpretation of 1952 vein mineral permission.

As the national representative body for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers with over 65,000 members, the BMC would strongly request the Secretary of State for the Environment, Mr Hilary Benn to take this case to the Court of Appeal and to now support the Peak District National Park Authority in its decision to go for revocation.

The statutory purposes of National Parks are clearly set out in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and are restated in the Environment Act 1995. The purpose and designation of these areas is however, fundamentally flawed if, as is the case in the Peak District National Park, old mineral permissions, covered by older planning laws may be given the green light for more extraction work. This is of particular concern if, and when, stalled ROMPs (Review of Old Mineral Permissions) are looked upon favourably in other valued and 'protected' National Parks – so far this is a test case but could become much more widespread.

The Peak District National Park and National Parks across the country are dependent upon tourism. This relies on a special landscape, biodiversity and the opportunity for quiet enjoyment to sustain the specialist retail, service and domestic enterprises it generates. Quarrying of these landscapes will not help the local and national economy and will spoil the enjoyment of millions of visitors each year.

With so much at stake, and the need for an appeal to be lodged soon, I am writing to urge you to raise this issue with your colleagues and the Secretary of State to ensure our National Parks are protected from destruction by unnecessary quarrying activity.

Yours sincerely