

Avon BAP Agriculture Group Meeting  
 Agenda  
 September 26<sup>th</sup> 2006  
 10am – 12.30pm



Duchy of Cornwall Office, Newton St Loe  
 Chair: John Martin (RDS)  
 Minutes: Lucy Rogers

Item	Actions
<p><b>1. Introductions &amp; apologies</b></p> <p><b>Present:</b> John Martin (RDS), Mark Smith (FWAG), Nick Mould (Duchy), Susan Stangroom (NSC), Stuart Hales (AWT), Tim McGrath (AWT), Jacqui Reed (AWT volunteer), Ann Fay (British Horse Society), Lucy Rogers (Avon Biodiversity Partnership).</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b> Robert Moreton (Tortworth estate), Robin Marshall-Ball (BASC), Bill Morris (NT), Dan Merrett (B&amp;NESC), Karen Renshaw (B&amp;NESC), Mark Connelly (Cotswold AONB). Gordon Milward (Avon Gorge &amp; Downs), Dave Villis (SGC), Jan Walters (BCC), Les Davies (Mendip Hills AONB), Matthew Bufton (HMP Leyhill), Mike Rogers (Hawk &amp; Owl Trust), Nick Ward (BTCV), Sally Pattison (SGC), Craig Stenson (AWT), James Field (NSL&amp;M project), Tim Corner (BRERC), Helen Hall (BCC), Samantha Jarvis (NSC), Rupert Higgins (Wessex ecological consultancy).</p>	
<p><b>2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exposing lowland heath under plantation in areas such as Goblin Combe. SH talked to Fountain Forestry, and they will consider removing trees.</li> <li>• RDS technical advice notes – JM has provided link to technical advice notes plus illustrated guidance:</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://defraweb/rds/publications/default.htm">http://defraweb/rds/publications/default.htm</a></p>	
<p><b>3. Terms of reference</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ LR has drafted TOR to be able to give to new partners joining who may not know anything about BAP work.</li> <li>▪ There are now over 40 partners with the most recent being the British Horse Society, MCS, UWE, SEP and Bristol Channel Federation of Sea Anglers.</li> <li>▪ LR has circulated TOR to Steering group and all have fed back comments. Includes details of how Avon BAP</li> </ul>	

<p>relates to UA BAPs, structure of Partnership and what is expected of partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All new and existing partners will be sent a letter with new TOR and asked to sign up to actions and endorse the BAP and partnership approach.</li> </ul>	<p><b>LR/ALL</b></p>
<p><b>4. Update on agrienvironment scheme (JM)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JM to circulate newsletter showing all the latest ES news, both national and regional, as and when it appears:</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/es/default.htm">http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/es/default.htm</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance inspection reports suggest that 52% of ELS reports unsatisfactory, due to small errors, incorrect option selection and non establishment of buffer strips. If these errors are removed then further errors are only 7%.</li> <li>• In the SW there are 5141 ELS agreements - 500,000 ha. 5040 organic ELS agreements – 57,000 ha. 145 HLS agreements – 6,700 ha.</li> <li>• Have only reached 52% of December 06 target.</li> <li>• Budget OK for this year, but not known for next year.</li> <li>• BRERC have produced a report for RDS on area of priority habitats within agrienvironment schemes in SW. Discussion topic for next meeting. 2516 ha lowland meadow in SW, 830 ha in scheme. JM to circulate copy of report.</li> </ul>	<p><b>JM</b></p>
<p><b>5. Grassland project update (MS)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SITA funding secured for 2 year capital works at 2 sites – Goblin Combe and Little Solsbury. CTP funding from EN and BANES resulting in a 3.5 day a week post (2.5 days SITA, 1 day BANES site Horsecombe Vale, plus bigger project).</li> <li>• FWAG leading but uncertainty whether FWAG can bankroll project. Mark Smith to find out more.</li> <li>• Also need to recruit officer and clarify roles, make sure ABP and Agri group continue to play role and project concentrates on bigger picture (eg. the strategic delivery of sustainable long-term land management across a wide range of high quality grassland sites in Avon).</li> </ul>	<p><b>MS</b></p>

## 6. Nature Map update and mapping SNAs (LR)

- The SW Nature Map shows the best areas to maintain and expand (through restoration and/or re-creation) terrestrial wildlife habitats at a landscape scale. Should be available on internet soon.
- Nature Map was produced by the SW Regional Biodiversity Partnership. It selects landscape scale blocks of land, known as Strategic Nature Areas (SNAs), to improve habitat networks and to sustain wildlife within them.

NM is expected to be used by the region's decision-makers, organisations and businesses to;

- Identify major biodiversity concentrations and where targets to maintain, restore and re-create wildlife can best be met
- Assist in targeting Environmental Stewardship Scheme
- Focus for biodiversity partnerships and projects in the region
- Develop projects that help biodiversity to adapt to climate change
- Formulate sustainable choices for development - through Local Development Frameworks and the Regional Spatial Strategy
- Support from nature conservation organisations to landowners and managers.

However, does have shortcomings, eg excludes urban areas, arable areas, and coastal habitats.

RDS have mapped agrienvironment schemes with SNAs in Avon. Shows that total agricultural land in Avon is 98000 ha, 44,000 in SNAs. 22,000 ha in environmental stewardship (ELS and HLS), 13,000 ha in Countryside stewardship. Proportion of agrienvironment schemes in SNAs lower than in wider countryside, but this probably because many of Avons SNAs are wooded. JM to send CD around to those who want it.

JM

### Mapping SNAs

- The Avon BAP has set targets and actions (currently on BARS), but not specified locations.
- Nature map has designated areas of important biodiversity (SNAs) in Avon
- SWRBP has also set habitat targets for Avon using Nature Map as a tool for maintenance targets. Restoration targets drew on other info as well.

To help focus our effort in meeting targets and actions in

<p>Avon, and clarify things, could we take NM one step further to produce 'BAP atlas' of Avons SNAs with areas of priority habitat that need maintaining and restoring. This could focus our effort. Each focus group could contribute to producing BAP atlas.</p> <p>Need to use existing initiatives such as BAP, SW Targets, Nature Map in an integrated way to direct work at the local level.</p>	<b>LR/ALL</b>
<p><b>7. Focus Group development plan and targets</b></p> <p>Now that first priorities have been achieved, need to agree priorities for future.</p> <p>Can use BAP as starting point, but</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Need to prioritise</li> <li>2. A lot of the actions are ongoing (and therefore don't need our help although they need reporting on), need to focus on what the ABP should be doing to fill gaps</li> <li>3. Need to plan for next 1, 5, etc years.</li> <li>4. For each focus group we need to know what targets are and who is responsible</li> <li>5. Partners should feel ownership</li> </ol> <p>BARS can help focus on targets. What are the targets each group is responsible for? How do we address new issues?</p> <p>Need to use existing initiatives such as BAP, SW Targets, Nature Map in an integrated way to direct work at the local level.</p> <p>Can now use BARS to see what targets we have we set, and theoretically what work are we doing to meet targets.</p> <p>Action plans this group responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arable farmland</li> <li>• Species-rich grassland</li> <li>• Hedgerows</li> <li>• (elements of Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh/ purple moor-grass and rush pasture)</li> <li>• Cross cutting actions for farming and private ownership</li> </ul> <p>Reviewing the targets that this group is responsible for it was decided that an arable farmland project is a priority. It might be helpful to put the area of each priority habitat in Avon onto BARS. LR to check.</p>	<b>LR</b>
<p><b>8. BARS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now have all Avon BAP targets and SW targets for Avon on BARS. (and details of SNA targets once calculated?)</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can get print outs. All should be able to access this info. Must use this to keep track of progress against BAP and use to direct work of focus group.</li> <li>• Intend to use BARS as up to date action plan, avoid writing more SAPs. Work with other UAs closely, each access to others BARS.</li> <li>• Will tackle bars 1 action plan at a time and contact partners to ask about progress.</li> <li>• BARS link is <a href="http://www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk/">http://www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk/</a>. Anyone can look at the information held.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>9. Review of Avon BAP actions - Arable farmland</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most actions ongoing.</li> <li>• LR to ask BRERC about arable sites.</li> <li>• JM to send LR list of arable plant species.</li> </ul>	<p><b>LR JM</b></p>
<p><b>10. Updates around the table</b></p> <p>JM - will be working for Natural England from beginning of October, in Glos and Wilts team. There is no avon team, it is split between Glos and Wilts, and Somerset and Dorset. Will carry on with same work, working across several teams.</p> <p>TM – AWT setting up tenancy with existing graziers due to single payments. Browns Folly getting grazier and shepherd. In North Somerset working on management of Uphill and Walborough. At Folly Farm development is starting on the farm buildings to convert them to a learning centre, and an application has been made to Viridor for traditional breeds, grazing, green hay and parkland planting.</p> <p>NM – Looking into marketing to underpin livelihood of tenants. Thinking about a farm shop and visitors centre to help keep people on the land and provide local food.</p>	
<p>11 AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horse grazing to be included as an item on the agenda at the next meeting</li> </ul>	<p><b>LR</b></p>
<p>12 Next meeting date Tuesday march 27<sup>th</sup> 2007, from 10-12.30pm at Duchy Offices</p>	