

Avon BAP Steering Group Meeting
 12th September 2006, 10.00pm – 12.30pm
 Avon Wildlife Trust
 Chair: Kate Jeffries (EN)
 Minutes: Lucy Rogers



Agenda	
<p>1. Introductions & apologies Present: Kate Jeffreys (EN), Helen Hall (BCC), Karen Renshaw (BANES), Rachel Sharp (AWT), John Martin (RDS), Lucy Rogers (ABP), Sam Jarvis (NSC), Allan Davies (WEP), Simon Brenman (SWWT).</p> <p>Apologies: Melissa Clarkson (EA), Steve Grainger (AWT), Neil Maddison (Bristol Zoo), Rachel Fickweiler (SWBP), Michael Legg (JSPTU), Tim Corner (BRERC), Susan Stangroom (NSC), Dave Villis (SGC), Sally Patterson (SGC), Rob Spence (FC).</p>	
<p>2. Introduction to Nature Map – Simon Brenman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South West Nature Map identifies the best areas in our region to conserve, create and connect wildlife habitats at a landscape scale. • Nature Map was produced by the SWRBP. It selects landscape scale blocks of land, known as Strategic Nature Areas (SNAs), to improve habitat networks and to sustain wildlife within them. • This was achieved through regional consultation using the best available biodiversity data, local expert knowledge and the South West Wildlife Trust's Rebuilding Biodiversity methodology. • SNAs are selected for the maintenance, restoration and/or re-creation of wildlife habitats and will contain a mosaic of habitats and land uses (priority habitats, semi-natural habitats and other land uses). The aim is to achieve 30% coverage of priority habitat within SNAs. <p>NM is expected to be used by the region's decision-makers, organisations and businesses to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>What will help achieve this</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move from a site based approach towards the wider landscape scale 	

- A strategic approach to planning and development control
 - Focus on biodiversity outcomes, rather than detailed prescriptions
 - Blending the assets, skills, and imagination of different sectors to create effective local delivery partnerships
 - Sustained resources from Government, the private sector and voluntary bodies
- Discussed NM in context of other initiatives such as GI, and BAP targets and how this all fits in with planning – RSS and LDFs.

All these initiatives incorporated at the regional level, but not necessarily used at the local level yet.

Suggested that we should organise a workshop to discuss how to best use all these tools for planning. Need to discuss the new NERC* act.

*NB the NERC act is Natural Environment and Rural Community act – where LA have a duty to have regard for biodiversity. Starts October. Linked to formation of NE.

LR/ALL

3. Mapping SNAs to produce BAP atlas (also relates to focus group dev plan and BARS)

- 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 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. Shows work to do visually.
- Each focus group could contribute to producing BAP atlas.
- Eg woodland group look at woodland SNAs etc
- So the NM and SNA data set will remain ‘live’ and the ABP can feed back to the SWRBP as information changed or increases.
- SB will find out how the NM will be updated.

SB

4. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

- Avon BAP bird list – LR, JM and Tim McGrath have discussed modifying the Avon BAP bird list to exclude species such as scarce migratory birds. Complicated but will continue with this.
- RS to circulate SWBP coastal meeting minutes. Meeting date not fixed.
- Avon Biodiversity Partnership response to RSS – completed and submitted with input from partnership, and SWRBP and SWWT response. LR to put on website.
- Avon Biodiversity Partnership – terms of reference. Draft now completed, will circulate at Focus groups. Could partners check with organisations that OK to sign. LR to draft as letter.
- Avonmouth water voles - EN have report of Avonmouth which could be useful, KJ will forward report. HH suggested approaching developer in Avonmouth for money and will forward details

LR/JM

LR

LR/ALL

KJ
HH

- Pondways – LR to circulate how many public access ponds in each UA.
- Avon BAP co-ordinators role – managing pondways staff? - LR/RS to discuss and clarify how this will work.
- New Species Action Plans? – LR has decided not to write more SAPs but to add extra work into BARS after discussion with other LBAP co-ordinators.
- RS to look into NM coastal information
- JM to investigate how much of Avons SNAs are under agrienvironment schemes – Avons SNAs under agrienvironment schemes – map produced by RDS which shows SNAs and holdings under different types of AES in Avon. It has basic stats about proportion of land under agreement both within and outside SNAs. Interestingly a slightly higher proportion under agreement outside SNAs.
- Site for meetings – AWT offices if everyone in agreement, LR to check with Dave Willis

LR
LR/RS

RS

LR

5. Progress with projects – water voles, grassland, pondways, champions, estuary leaflet, birdwatch, hedges

Avonmouth water voles – Asked for money from Bristol Partnership and Bernard Sunley Trust. Unsuccessful. EA were keen but cant give money due to DEFRA overspend. Due to attend WFW meeting on 13th September in Exeter. Will talk to SWT and GWT about landscape scale project and funding opportunities.

Grassland – CTP funding from EN and BANES in place 2.5 days SITA, 1 day BANES plus bigger project. FWAG leading. 2 year part time, Horsecombe Vale as 3rd area. Next step is to:

1. recruit officer
2. clarify roles, make sure ABP and Agri group continue to play role
3. 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) rather than capital works.

LR to re-circulate list of grassland sites, would be useful to cross-reference these with Avons SNAs.

LR

Pondways – Have resubmitted bid as AWT led project and addressed further points. Waiting to hear. October?

Estuary Leaflet – finished! Contributions from NT, SGlos and NS. Would welcome ideas on where to distribute leaflet, and will provide PDF of leaflet for partners websites.

Champions - Increase awareness of zoo visitors to local protected and endangered spp by creating 50 Wildlife Champions in the Avon area, will encourage individuals, community groups and local associations the opportunity to Champion one species. They will be given an introduction pack on their chosen species and an introductory talk to explain why these species are of conservation concern. They will then be encouraged to use their own initiative to highlight the issues affecting the species and to undertake either

- Survey work - to establish extent of species
- Habitat work - to increase viability of the species

- Awareness work – to increase understanding of the issues
- Promotional work – to increase involvement of the wider community

Birdwatch – redesigned leaflet with money from BCC, launch beginning of October

6. Focus group development plan and targets (linked to SNA mapping)

Now that first priorities have been achieved, need to agree priorities for future.

Can use BAP as starting point, but

1. Need to prioritise further work.
 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
 3. Need to plan for next 1, 5, etc years.
 4. For each focus group we need to know what targets are and who is responsible
 5. Partners should feel ownership
 6. Will be discussing this with each focus group.
- As mentioned need to use existing initiatives such as BAP, SW Targets, SNAs, Nature Map in an integrated way to direct work at the local level.
 - BARS can help focus on targets. Now have all Avon BAP targets and SW targets for Avon on BARS and can see what work are we doing to meet targets (and details of SNA targets once calculated?)
 - Can get print outs from BARS . 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.
 - Each Focus group should know what action plans and targets working on, Eg woodland group – is the priority parkland or veteran trees?
 - Intend to use BARS as up to date action plan, avoid writing more SAPs. Work with other UAs closely, each access to others BARS. Will tackle bars 1 action plan at a time and contact partners to ask about progress.

7. Biodiversity By Design – discussion postponed until next meeting.

Need discussion on

- how to raise the profile of 'biodiversity by design' (ie designing spaces for biodiversity into the built environment) and influence development control policies.
- Share ideas on approach between all UA's in Avon.

8. Updates round the table

- HH – working on management plan for Avon Gorge, also development and planning work, and parks Green space strategy. Also have 3 more LNRs designated. Not managing to progress far with Bristol BAP due to other work commitments.
- RS – Planning and mitigation for Folly Farm, applying to Viridor for funding. Reserves summit coming up in October. White-clawed crayfish translocation a huge success, so more work to follow. RSS response, Radstock planning, developing the AWT consultancy, 3 biodiversity by design projects, GI, Batscapes, LAA consultation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JM – NE starting in October, will be a Wilts, Glos and Bristol team, and a Somerset and Dorset team. • AD – Adopting replacement local plan, publishing biodiversity and trees SPD, Weston AAP now at formal stage of consultation. • SJ – Planning work. Pauline Homer retiring, Gareth Withers working on public consultation for coastal trail. Applying for Viridor funding for Dowlais farm. Action for Nature SG meeting on Hedges in October. Designated new LNR at St Georges Flower Bank. • KR – Working on RSS – urban extension areas. Have published Action Plans, and now beginning to implement, and working groups emerging. Working on BARS. Grassland project – CTP funding for SITA bid. Batscapes coming to an end, conference in October, also planning work. • KJ – SSSI management. 	
<p>9. AOB – RS suggested we should look strategically at funding sources available for BAP work, eg aggregate levy money.</p>	
<p>11. Next meeting date and location Tuesday 12th December at AWT</p> <p>To discuss BARS, Biodiversity by Design, update on UA BAPs, funding sources.</p>	