

Avon BAP Woodland Group Meeting
 21st April 2008
 10.30 am – 12.30 pm
 Avon Wildlife Trust



Chair: Jim Fry
 Minutes: Matt Hamilton

| Item | | |
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| 1 | <p>Introductions & apologies Present: Jim Fry (FOA), Matt Hamilton (ABP), Bill Morris (NT), Colin Morris (Vincent Wildlife Trust), Sally Pattison (BANES & SGlos).</p> <p>Absent: Lorne Campbell (FE), Tim Corner (BRERC), Richard Ennion (BCC), Rob Spence (FC), Lucy Rogers (AWT), Robin Marshall-Ball (BASC), Mark Minkley (BANES), Mathew Bufton (HMP Leyhill), Norman Healey (The Deer Initiative SW).</p> <p>CM was introduced to the group and reported that Vincent Wildlife Trust Focussed mainly on bats, owning around 50 bat roosts and also working with Dormice. They own Kings Wood, adjacent to Goblin Combe.</p> | |
| 2 | <p>Minutes of last meeting and matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MH to approach the Woodland Trust and Confor about joining the Woodlands Group | MH |
| 3 | <p>Veteran Tree Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MH reported that with the help of volunteers he had drawn up a project brief and budget for the Veteran Trees Project. An expression of interest had been submitted to HLF, who had responded positively, but advised applying only for the Your Heritage Grant (maximum grant £50k). As a result of this, the budget was heavily trimmed! we are now looking at a part-time project officer for 3 years. MH reported that he had been in touch with the Ancient Tree Hunt, who can provide ready made recording forms, all existing records on the Ancient Tree Hunt website, training as a ATH verifier for our project officer and a letter of support. The next major decision to be made is which organisation will host the project officer. MH is investigating with BRERC the possibility of their hosting the officer, but HLF restrictions on constitutions and bank accounts may mean it is not viable. Even with the trimming of the budget, another £30-50k would still have to be found on top of any HLF bid - MH to continue to progress the project. BM asked whether the specialist ancient oak and ancient yew tree websites were linked with the Ancient Tree Hunt. MH to investigate. SP asked whether 3 days per week would be enough considering the amount of travelling the project Officer would have to do. MH replied most of the surveying will be done by volunteers, which should greatly reduce the project officers travelling time. | MH MH |

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| <p>4</p> | <p>Woodland Mapping and Green Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JF reported on the groups attempts to map ancient woodland that isn't under management, so that it can be targeted through EWG etc. • JF reported that there were problems with keeping the map up-to-date as the FC is constantly updating their records and woodlands are both coming into management and dropping out of it. • This is possibly solvable by creating an online system, but we lack the resources to do this and it may not be the most efficient way to move forward, as even with an up-to-date map we would be reliant on land agents to approach landowners who's woodlands were not in favourable management. • JF suggested putting the mapping project on hold while the possibilities of the new Green Infrastructure website were explored as an alternative. The group agreed • JF then gave the group a short presentation on the new Green Infrastructure tool to be launched on Tuesday 22nd April. Please see attached presentation and below summary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Several types of GI were mapped, including publicly accessible GI, and buffer zones were included which serve to highlight both opportunities for creation of GI and populations that don't have easy access to green space.</i> ○ <i>The GI tool also maps opportunities for GI creation – the data already on the system links in with SNA targets. Local people and organisations can also add in their own opportunities as long as they are linked with a strategic document (e.g. the BAP).</i> ○ <i>Thus both local and biodiversity needs will be shown on the tool and organisations (e.g. developers) who need/want to improve an area can access ready made and strategically significant solutions.</i> • MH asked if key strategic needs identified by the BAP can be put onto GI as ideas for developers in need of mitigation. JF said they could. MH to raise as an item at the next steering group | <p>MH</p> |
| <p>5</p> | <p>Dormice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP reported on the Dormouse project that comes to an end this October. The project started with a report by AWT collating all existing data. MH to locate and send to SP • SP has trained and surveyed with around 200 volunteers during the course of the project and is looking for more volunteers to take part in surveys this summer. MH to include volunteer request in the BAP Bulletin. • Unfortunately only 2 out of around 2000 dormouse tubes had been found to contain dormice, so it has been concluded that contrary to what was thought at the start of the project, dormice are not under-recorded, they are just very rare in Avon. • SP reported that nest boxes, nut hunting and 'what the cat dragged in' surveys had all been undertaken • CM suggested looking at owl pellets and raised the possibility that more dormice may have been found if it was possible to survey at a greater height above the ground – unfortunately the logistics of doing this make it impractical. • SP concluded that we have good populations of dormice in N. Somerset | <p>MH</p> |

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| | <p>and some scattered populations across BANES and South Glos.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was asked if trying to connect the scattered populations was possible. SP replied that she had been working on gapping up and creating hedges wherever possible, but that many of the populations are separated by large barriers such as major roads. • SP to put together a map of Dormice records across Avon • TC asked that incidental records of bank voles recorded when searching for dormouse eaten nuts be sent to BRERC | SP |
| 6 | <p>Updates around the table</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BM reported that he had been trying to get Leigh Woods into HLS to restore grazing to the old wood pasture. They have a grazer who is interested although as he is an organic farmer it may cause difficulties with stump treatment. The plans are for six cattle initially. • TC reported that BRERC have been carrying out surveys in Avon Valley Woodlands and veteran tree surveys in a couple of parishes. BRERC have also been inputting into NE Phase 2 HLS targeting map and will be looking to do some more hedgerow projects in the future. • CM reported that VWT polecat survey report had been published and was available on www.vwt.org.uk • JF reported that there was still rural renaissance funding for this year and that he was visiting landowners offering advice on a range of issues including biodiversity. | |
| 8 | <p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH reported that the South Glos BAP had been launched at the end of March and that the Bristol BAP would be launched on September 17th. • MH reported that an event raising awareness of the NERC Act amongst local authorities had been held in BANES on April 4th – the event was a success and there was the possibility of another event being held in Bristol in June. The Avon BAP Communications group were also planning a NERC event aimed at non local authority public bodies to be held in early September. • MH reported that the 2008 UKBAP reporting round would be held in September, meaning that BARS would have to be up-to-date by then. MH will be in contact with partners in the next few months asking for updates. MH also reported that after this year he hoped to train partners on BARS so that they would be able to report their own actions directly onto BARS in the future | |
| 10 | <p>Next meeting date</p> <p>Tuesday 23rd September from 10:30 – 12.30 at the Estate Office, Ashton Court.</p> | |