



## Lowland Woodland HAP Group Meeting 18<sup>th</sup> February 2008, Natural England Office, Bakewell.

### Present:

Tristan Galletly (Forestry Commission) **Chair**  
Hazel Earnshaw (Severn Trent Water)  
Glynis Foster (Derbyshire CC)  
Cathy Block (Derbyshire CC)  
Beverley Rhodes (Derby City)  
William Thornhill (Chesterfield BC)

Peter Lowe (Woodland Trust),  
Nick Law (Derbyshire Wildlife Trust),  
Kieron Huston (Derbyshire Wildlife Trust)  
Dan Abrahams (Natural England),  
Debbie Court (LD Biodiversity Partnership)  
**Note taker**

### Apologies:

Sam Lattaway (National Forest), Steve Wright (BTCV), Stephanie Birkinshaw (EDWP), Carl Hawke (National Trust), Marion Horton (Groundwork Derby and Derbyshire), Tina Bardill (FWAG), Lauren Stevens (Derbyshire County Council – Forest Schools)

### 1. Matters arising and action points from last meeting

None not covered on the agenda

### 2. Local Wildlife Sites Condition Assessment

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust has been applying a condition assessment to all Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). There are currently 206 Ancient Woodland sites and 195 secondary woodland sites on the LWS register. The assessment had revealed that 60% of these were classed as 'favourable maintained', 37% were 'favourable recovering' and 22% were classed as 'unfavourable declining'. Of the declining woods 39 were secondary and 22 were ancient. The assessment had revealed a number of issues within the woodland LWS:

- Rhododendron, snowberry and laurel were invasive within the shrub layer
- Himalayan Balsam was a significant issue within a number of woodlands
- The lack of woodland structure was an issues in some woodlands especially conifer plantations
- Sycamore and beech were a significant part of the woodland composition within a large number of woodlands. These were generally planted and even aged in structure which lead to an unfavourable classification

Landowner attitude was not recorded as part of the assessment.

The information gathered would be very useful to target landowners especially those classed as unfavourable declining. Also it could be used to map specific issues such rhododendron in the Derwent Valley.

Kieron said that the finished condition report should be available at the end of March and will be put on the website. This should provide a list of suitable sites which could be targeted for grant aid advice.

### 3. Natural England Woodland Network meeting

Dan reported that he will be attending a Natural England meeting on 20-21<sup>st</sup> Feb. The issues on the agenda included:

- Delivering the England Tree and Forestry Strategy
- Impacts of deer
- Woodfuel
- Impact of climate change on woodlands and woodland species
- Guidelines on sycamore and beech in woodlands – Keith Kirby

**Action – Dan to feed back to the group following the meeting**

### 4. Ancient Woodland Project

Peter Lowe started the discussion by talking about the Woodland Trust's PAWS project. They are promoting PAWS restoration throughout the UK as the time is now critical regarding the on and by concentrating efforts in 13 priority areas, one of which is the Derwent Valley (Belper – Buxton) and another is the South Yorkshire area which includes the Moss valley area and Chesterfield.

It is suggested that we look at the area of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and its buffer zone as a potential project area. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust has surveyed most woodlands and other LWSs within this area. There is a mixture of ownership within the proposed project area. Habitats other than woodland include grassland and wetland associated with the canal and River Derwent. Chatsworth estate own some woods within the area and they have a WMG but this does not include nay capital works and active PWAS restoration.

Lessons learnt from the WoodLIFE project which gave landowners 100% funding and organised for the work to be done show that even then some landowners still didn't go for it. One of the outcomes from the LIFE project was the creation of a list of specialist contractors.

Following a discussion it was suggested that the following were considered as part of the project:

- A Project Officer and some associated workers/contractors/volunteers
- Should offer top up grants to compliment EWGS grants
- Linking habitats up – not just woodlands
- Offer seminars and guidance for owners/managers
- Tie in with aims of the World Heritage Site Management Plan
- Focus on heritage within the sites
- Should aim for a 5 year project

Tristan reported that the regional Woodfuel strategy has identified 4 core areas to look at and EMDA will fund a Project officer for each area. The areas are Rockingham Forest, National Forest, Greenwood Forest and the east Derbyshire Woodland Project area. The Derwent valley could fit in with the last one.

Potential partners – NE, FC, DWT, Derby City, STW, Woodland Trust, DCC and possibly Sitwell and Chatsworth estates.

There was some discussion focused around which organisation might host the project. The Forestry Commission is looking at a 3-4 years project on woodland birds in the Peak District area so they are unlikely to be able to host the project. DWT might be interested but have many other projects which might take precedence over this project.

#### **Action Points:**

**Debbie will arrange a follow up meeting to talk more about the project in April.**

**Dan will prepare an overall brief for the project.**

**Kieron/Nick to look at the LWS within the World Heritage Site and its buffer zone to look at issues and work that is need to bring LWS up to favourable status.**

#### **5. Woodland surveying seminar**

Debbie had received £800 funding from the Learning and Skills Council via the World Heritage Site towards the woodland seminar so long as it was held within the World Heritage Site.

Following some discussion it was agreed to put this back to September and use it again as a management seminar rather than concentrate purely on surveying which was felt might have a limited audience. Topics that could possibly be included:

- Invasive species management
- Management for woodland birds
- PAWS restoration
- Veteran Trees management
- European Protected Species and woodlands

**Action - Debbie will develop a programme and circulate for comment and input**

#### **6. Project Updates**

##### **a) Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland under 2ha project.**

Long term there was still the ambition to add the ancient woodland sites identified to the Ancient Woodland Inventory.

**Action - Dan to send round the updated GIS layer to the LBAP partners**

##### **b) East Derbyshire Woodland Project**

No report was given as from the Steph was not at the meeting.

##### **c) Great Trees of Derbyshire Project**

The project was in its final stages as funding was due to run out at the end of March. DWT had submitted a follow-up expression of interest bid to HLF. There were currently more than 3,000 records on the project database. The project held a training day looking at management of veteran trees in November and recently held a mass tree surveying day at Chatsworth to survey tree previously identified by the estates 10 years ago. The day was very successful with 38 surveyors attending which resulted in approximately an additional 500 trees.

DWT were in the process of writing the final project report to HLF.

**Action – Debbie to circulate once complete.**

#### **d) GIS project**

No progress

#### **e) Forest Schools**

Lauren Stevens provided an update for the meeting:

A questionnaire was sent out to schools in October 2007 regarding Forest Schools.

To date, there are 75 schools involved in Forest Schools in Derbyshire. 108 DCC schools (25% of those questioned) replied to the questionnaires. Results from the survey are being used to plan a countywide strategy. Since the last meeting, All Saints Junior School in Matlock accessed a 6 session Forest School taster project, Alfreton Nursery School continued to access the mentoring service and Brampton Primary School have booked 8 mentoring sessions for this term. 15 representatives from different settings attended the first High Peak Forest School Sharing Group and 8 teachers and head teachers attended the first Amber Valley and Erewash Forest School Sharing group meeting. Linacre Woods and Kitchen Wood are now being used by local Forest Schools.

#### **7) Grant aid for woodland**

Tristan reported that the issues to do with European funding had now been resolved but they were not taking in any new applications in 2008/9. Tristan is able to have discussions on applications for the 2009/10.

#### **8) Draft revised Wood pasture, parkland and veteran tree HAP**

Debbie circulated a draft revised HAP for Wood-pasture, parkland and veteran tree. She requested comments on it by 19<sup>th</sup> March, especially on the 'vision'.

**Action – all to send any comments to Debbie by 19<sup>th</sup> March**

#### **9) Partner Updates**

Derby City – Continuing with woodland work (Rhodie clearing and thinning ) at Allestree Park LNR. Looking at possible WIG application for other sites in Derby.

Chesterfield BC – Thinning plantations and woodland work at Cobnar and Westwood. Due to budget constraints The Council might be looking at the disposal of some sites.

Woodland Trust – Work on PAWS project. Due to an imminent re-organisation Peter might lose Derbyshire from his area although he is likely to remain in contact via the PAWS project.

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust – Nick Law had carried out some woodland surveys in South Derbyshire looking at bryophytes, including some epiphytes.

Severn Trent Water – Linacre was now under FSC and had had some small scale thinning carried out there.

Natural England – There will be a re-organisation by the end of March. By 1<sup>st</sup> April there will be a Lowland Derbyshire team consisting of 8-10 people. Dan will be meeting with the National Forest soon to talk about large-scale habitat creation.

National Forest - Hugh Williams had left to go to the Forestry Commission.

Groundwork Derby and Derbyshire – Organising the first National Forest Walking Festival 17-26<sup>th</sup> May with approx 37 walks across the whole of the National Forest. See [www.thenationalforestwalkingfestival.org.uk](http://www.thenationalforestwalkingfestival.org.uk).

BTCV - Carried out 2 days task work at Moss Valley Woods SSSI this week with WREN Funding. The task involved hazel coppicing (10 year rotation) & sycamore removal.

**11. Date of next meeting – 10am 8<sup>th</sup> July 2008 (please note this is a change to the date agreed at the meeting) at location tbc followed by an optional site visit.**

Debbie Court  
2<sup>nd</sup> April 2008.