

Trees, Woods & Forests Biodiversity Task Group
Meeting 13th January 2009
FC Worcester 2pm

In attendance: Jeff Edwards (JM), Tony Fleming (TF), Andy Grundy (AG), Rebecca Lashley (RL), David Lovelace (DL), Justin Milward (JM), Sara Roberts (SR), Martin Sutton (MS), Simon West (SW), Helen Woodman (HW)

Apologies: Greg Jones, Chris Hastie, Greg Jones, Amanda Pearce

JE in attendance in place of AP

1. Minutes of Last Meeting

- ◆ Action Points 2, 3 and 4 picked up elsewhere in agenda
- ◆ Newt 2 – update will be given at AFIP meeting next week. DPSG meeting will also progress at meeting tomorrow 14/01/09.
- ◆ AG circulated information about SITA.

2. Exemplar Case Studies

- ◆ AG and JM circulated their reduced text case studies prior to this meeting.
- ◆ DL has not come up with what he intends as yet.
- ◆ *ACTION POINT 2.1 - Queenswood/Dymock is still to be done.* **DL**

- ◆ Edge Hill needs more reference to Biodiversity, even though driven by economics
*ACTION POINT 2.2 - **AG** will include map for compartments on East Edge, or references to these.*

- ◆ SR suggested following the template used by AWM for Environmental Natural Assets, where three or four were forestry related case studies and asking for inclusion in their webpages. This is an AWM/NE dedicated grant scheme/three to four-year programme. It covers rural parts of the region, protecting and managing rural assets and heritage through biodiversity. Nigel King is the NE contact for these schemes. Approval for them by April 2009.
*ACTION POINT 2.3 – **SR** to discuss possibility of biodiversity case studies inclusion on AWM Rural Evidence Base webpages (www.advantagewm.co.uk/what-we-do/improving-places/rural-evidence-base.aspx) with Clare Robinson.*

- ◆ Worth highlighting the social aspect/who does what.
- ◆ Final versions will be put onto Heartwoods and Growing Our Future websites.

3. Parkland/Woodpasture – update on project progress

JE attended steering group meeting on 15/12/08. The draft report and progress within the region were on the agenda. The consultants should complete within the schedule. Susanne Perry (NE) is leading the contract. The survey of two climate areas has progressed. RL is seeking the survey of two Worcestershire Pilot Areas.

ACTION POINT 3.1 – Carry forward woodpasture to next meeting, to look at GIS map of area if possible.

Parkland is easier to record. As with any inventory it will need records to be maintained for accuracy. Part of the contract is that the work will test methodologies that can be used by other regions for collecting similar data.

4. **ETWF Delivery Plan – alignment to RFF refresh**

The ETWF DP was launched just before Christmas and is on the FC website at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-7dyc7z. It was distributed to regional stakeholders jointly by FC and NE. It will be a significant part of the agenda at an event in March/April this year together with the RFF refresh. This delivery plan impinges on the work of this task group and National Woodland HAP. ETWF has a greater emphasis on trees than earlier versions of the England Forestry Strategy. Monitoring and evaluation will be crucial to its success. It was noted that climate change and natural and cultural assets should be more prominent. The refresh of the RFF will take place 2009-10, covering a five-year period and should not just align with the ETWF DP, but regional spatial, economic and biodiversity strategies also.

ACTION POINT 4.1 – SR to provide this group with timelines and project plan for the RFF refresh and the next meeting of this group to coincide with key input into it.

5. **National Woodland HAP – Biodiversity Integration Group Delivery**

- ◆ The delivery framework for the England Biodiversity Strategy, 'Securing Biodiversity' was launched. It has an ecosystem approach. Landscape-scale delivery and habitat actions incorporate as much species actions as possible; however some species will require special measures.
- ◆ 2009 will be year of transition for embedding of the framework. Information from the RSS Phase 3 Revision and Living Landscapes can feed into biodiversity integration and also the RFF refresh.
- ◆ Links to national 2015 minimum targets will need to be made. Yet to have a response back to this groups submission.
- ◆ SR asked if integrated - regional landscape on the England/Wales border was covered, as landscapes common to both countries.
- ◆ Four officers at a national level will be appointed within the next few months to look at two or three regions together.
- ◆ Issue of 'character areas' raised again.
- ◆ WM Regional BAP will lead on production of a regional delivery plan.
- ◆ The national Woodland Species group will become the Biodiversity Group for woodland. At a regional level this group will feed into their work and highlight gaps in delivery.
- ◆ JE sits on national Woodland HAP group, who are considering what to ask the regions. These questions will come directly to this group.

6. **Keepers of Time guidance**

Bill Heslegrave (FC) made the suggestion to present a regional iteration of the guidance. This could take a similar form to the climate change leaflet produced by the WFITG.

ACTION POINT 6.1 - JM to find out from BH when this guidance will be made public.

ACTION POINT 6.2 – Carry forward as agenda item for next meeting to ask this group or sub-group to produce.

7. **AOB**

Regional HAP Priorities for WOM

- ◆ SW suggested a biodiversity layer for WOM. Would need to ensure it would not conflict with, but align with Landscape for Living Biodiversity Map.
- ◆ JE said that the map in WOM most useful to biodiversity is the PAWS restoration map; though unfortunately it sits alongside priority areas for planting and is not refined for biodiversity targets.
- ◆ The idea of overlaying with the Landscapes for Living (LfL) map was suggested as an exercise.
- ◆ It was noted that WOM information/data did not feed into LFL.

- ♦ Visual representations in GIS of LfL, PAWS and Woodland Creation for WOM and RSS Habitat Networks could assist.

ACTION POINT 7.1 – Discuss possible assistance in this matter with Clare Edwards (NE)
SW, JE

- ♦ The cultural layer of WOM came from Landscape Characterisation. Andy Wigley (Shropshire CC) is leading a project to reiterate with Staffordshire and develop more consistency across the region.
- ♦ Tim Yarnell (FC) suggested looking at maps of historically wooded areas for restoration. This has happened at Credenhill with consequential species recovery. Historic landscape characterisation (HLC) can pick up woodland under two hectares. Looking at Tythe maps for woodland pasture could be useful in picking up smaller woodlands. WOM was informed by HLC approach.

ACTION POINT – Integration of spatial data into one map an aspiration - this group to show priorities/set agenda. Next meeting could look at spatial data sets.

- ♦ Simon Barker sent the following information on orchards:
The proposed meeting of the UK HAP group was postponed in November, probably until February, so nothing further to report regards that. However, the National Trust has succeeded in obtaining funding from Natural England's Countdown 2010 fund to run an Orchards Project to promote Traditional Orchards on behalf of the HAP Group. A Project Officer (Kate Merry) has been appointed on a two year contract commencing in February.

ACTION POINT – This group to feed into agenda/contents of the UK HAP group meeting in February
JM/ALL

- ♦ Environment Agency (EA) River Basin Management Consultations end 22nd June. Discussion on how best to make a response was had. There are three river catchment plans in this region
Wet Woodland links to GIS/Spatial Integration work
EA mapping flood plain management
Implications and impacts of priorities up and downstream and cross regionally

ACTION POINT – Group to feed into response from RA via Chris Blakeley.

ACTION POINT – Invite EA colleague to the next meeting. Possibly Mark Scott (Severn River Basin Management Plan Co-ordinator)
JE

- ♦ The work of the social Forestry Task Group links to this group. Judy Walker is the chair of the group. The main theme is quantifying benefits to participants, communities and woodlands and devising a model to do that. They are producing case studies also. Small Woods Association are producing a model for best practice evaluation. ETWF DP majors on social forestry.
- ♦ A steering group as part of the Forest of Feckenham Project will look at Butterfly Conservation and Brown Hairstreak in Worcestershire. Although this is mostly a hedgerow species, FC should be represented.
- ♦ AG is leaving Heartwoods at the end of the month. As of April he will be Production Manager with Midlands Wood Fuel. He will continue to chair the WETG for the time being.

- ◆ FC has been asked to put together an Open Habitats Policy and a consultation will be held in the next few months, with a report published winter 2009. Dominic Driver is leading this project (see www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infid-7fch5d for further details).
- ◆ Laura Jones is leading the Review of the Public Forest Estate (See www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infid-7jchjm for further details).
- ◆ DL informed all of book on *Landscape Origins of the Wye Valley*, is now in the shops, available as both paperback and hardback for £15. The profit will be going the River Wye Preservation Trust.
- ◆ The money for the Worcestershire Ancient Tree Project must be spent by April 2009. A funding bid will be put together for its continuation.
- ◆ Natural England is engaged with survey of Cannock Chase Country Park in relation to Phytophthora disease and its implications for heathland and bilberry in particular. GIS Mapping is being carried out
- ◆ SW has formed an Ancient Woodland project (Biodiversity TG) sub-group to look at PAWS restoration in the West Midlands. An initial meeting should take place in March.

ACTION POINT – Bring Shropshire Hills AONB Leader Project working with landowners to secure funding for PAWS restoration to the next meeting.

8. Date of Next meeting

2nd April 2009, 2pm at FC Worcester.

Draft Agenda

- Woodpasture
- Spatial data Integration
- PAWS restoration in Shropshire project
- EA Flood Basin Catchment Areas
- RFF Refresh