

# The Vision for Wildlife Project

## Project Report March 2006



*"I came along today because I support the Vision Project in this area. It is particularly important that we are aware of the species that are getting lost. Today has been hard work but I feel that I am contributing something to this biodiversity project. I hope it will be successful in encouraging more wildlife to the area. "*

Longstone resident

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Project Aims

The Peak District Biodiversity Action Plan (Reference 1) through its objectives and targets, aims to “encourage a diverse countryside where wildlife is an integral part of the landscape.” It also describes a vision of “a more diverse mosaic of linked habitats ensuring a sound future for those species that depend on a variety of habitats and providing a network of corridors and stepping stones for wildlife.” In order to proceed towards these objectives the Vision Project was set up with aims of conserving, enhancing, extending and linking existing sites of high wildlife value.

### Vision Project Aims

- Identifying, conserving and enhancing existing areas of high wildlife value within their landscape character framework
- Linking and expanding these through a targeted programme of habitat restoration and re-creation
- Involving local communities through a programme of walks, talks, local interpretation and practical conservation tasks.

The original Vision Project area covered approximately 35 km<sup>2</sup> centred on Longstone Moor Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - an area of limestone heath - and extending out to a number of limestone dales SSSIs (Map 2). In April 2005 the area was extended to include the core of Dark Peak moorland to the north (Abney, Offerton and Eyam Moors) and its surrounding cloughs and valleys (Map 1). With the exception of Cressbrook Dale (part of the Derbyshire Dales National Nature Reserve (NNR)) and small woodlands and former railways owned by the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA), all of the land is owned and managed by private individuals, primarily local farmers.

The ambition is to contribute to targets for all of the local and national priority BAP habitats and species present in the area.

**Table 1 National and Peak District Priority Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats in the Vision Project Area.**

<b>Priority Peak District BAP Habitats</b>	<b>Main Equivalent Priority National BAP Habitats</b>
Limestone Heath	Upland Heathland
Hay Meadow	Lowland Meadows
Rough Grazing	Lowland Calcareous Grassland
Limestone Dale	Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
Unimproved pasture	Lowland Meadows
Lead Rakes	
Upland Oak/Birchwoods	Upland Oak Woodland
Upland Ash Woods	Upland Mixed Ash Woods
Wet Woodland	Wet Woodland
Parkland and Veteran Trees	Lowland Wood Pastures and Parkland
River Corridors	(Including) Fen
Ponds	

**Table 2 National and Peak District Priority Biodiversity Action Plan Species in the Vision Project Area.**

National Priority BAP Species	Additional Peak District
	<b>Priority BAP Species</b>
Water Vole	Lapwing
Brown hare	Curlew
Pipistrelle	
Great Crested Newt	
Bullfinch	
Grey Partridge	
Linnet	
Skylark	
Song Thrush	
Spotted Flycatcher	
Derbyshire Feather Moss	
Appleyard's Feather Moss	
Pink Waxcap	

One of the objectives of the Peak District BAP is to provide greater opportunities for both local people and visitors to derive enjoyment from the area's wildlife and to help to safeguard and enhance it. An area based approach lends itself well to engagement with the local community, so in order to help to achieve this, the Vision Project has a further aim - that of involving local communities through awareness raising, education, interpretation and involvement in practical conservation tasks.

## **1.2 Funding**

Preliminary work on the Project started in 2002 on a very small scale and concentrating on the collation of existing ecological information, establishing contacts with priority local landowners, and identifying funding sources.

The project was funded by English Nature's Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund from January 2003 – March 2004. During this period it involved:

- the development of a baseline map of existing and "visionary" ecological/BAP habitat quality;
- the implementation of habitat conservation and restoration works designed to work towards the achievement of the "Vision" for the area;
- local community awareness raising and involvement.

Details of the project's design and achievements are outlined in the Project Report March 2004. Total project costs including match funding, volunteer time and PDNPA in-kind contributions were in the order of £188,000.

From April 2004 – March 2005 the project was funded by English Nature with match funding from the Peak District National Park Authority. Total project costs were in the order of £65,000 excluding in-kind contributions, volunteer time and contributions from local businesses. Details of the project's design and achievements are outlined in the Project Report March 2005.

From April 2005 – March 2006 the project officer and community officer have been funded by English Nature. Match funding from other organisations and individuals is shown in Table 3.

### **1.3 Project Design and Targets**

During 2005/06 the project has concentrated on habitat conservation and restoration and local community awareness raising and involvement. Work has been clearly focused towards the achievement of a suite of habitat and awareness raising targets (Table 4). The project has employed a project officer (4 days/week) and a community worker (2.5 days/week). In-kind time in individual project development and consultation has also been provided by officers of the Authority including members of both Conservation and Access & Recreation Services.

A steering group has guided the Project team comprising EN's Assistant Team Manager, the Ecology Team Leader and Head of Conservation Services from the National Park Authority.

**Table 3 Organisation expenditure**

Organisation	Action code	Cost (£)	Work days	Volunteer days
College of the Peak	Road verge - volunteer survey	0	0	49
	Road verge - volunteer training	2659.21	0	0
		<b>2659.21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>49</b>
Derbyshire Wildlife Trust	Awareness raising in schools	0	0.5	0
	River corridor restoration	1800	0	0
		<b>1800</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0</b>
English Nature	Awareness raising in schools	0	1	0
	Vision Project Officer support	30000	0	0
		<b>30000</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
Glebe Mines Ltd	Pond restoration	200	0	0
	Pastures restoration	0	0.5	0
	Pastures creation	500	5	0
		<b>700</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>0</b>
Peak District National Park	Awareness raising in schools	800	2	0.5
	Awareness raising - involving local people	80.51	0	0
	Awareness raising - local nature reserves	1295	0.5	0
	Awareness raising - Vision Project leaflet	3835	0	0
	Wider awareness raising	0	3.5	0.25
	Awareness raising - school grounds	250	0	0
	Awareness raising - walks and talks	146	7.8	0
	Awareness raising - Calver marshes panels	2988	0	0
	Awareness raising - village shows	162.55	3	0
	Ash woodland conservation	0	1.5	2
	Hay meadow conservation	2905	0	0
	Hay meadow restoration - seed harvesting	225.71	0	0
	Hay meadow restoration - seed spreading	200	0	2
	Pond restoration	14691.05	3	27
	Pond restoration - surveys	280	0	0
	Pastures conservation	60	0	0
	Pastures restoration	4288.3	13.5	64
	Pastures creation	0	0	5
	River corridor conservation	340	2.5	5
	River corridor restoration	1905	0	0
	Road verge - volunteer survey	67.45	0	0
	Road verge conservation/restoration	150	3	15
	Road verge - interpretation	356	0	0
	Road verge - volunteer training	0	4.5	0
	Veteran tree management	600	0	0
		<b>35625.51</b>	<b>44.8</b>	<b>120.75</b>

## 2. Habitat Conservation and Restoration

The successful negotiation of agri-environment agreements, notably the Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship Schemes (CSS and ES) which are administered by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), and the PDNPA's Environmental Enhancement Scheme (EES), or an informal agreement has underpinned all our work. Conservation Services at the PDNPA have made a commitment to the management and monitoring of the EES and informal agreements whilst DEFRA is responsible for the management of CSS and ES agreements, and carries out monitoring visits in partnership with the PDNPA.

Positive management has been achieved through the negotiation of a suite of management prescriptions designed on a site-by-site basis to deliver the site objectives and favourable condition. In some locations they have been facilitated through necessary boundary works. In addition conservation and restoration works have been carried out by landowners/managers, directly by PDNPA staff, by contractors, and by volunteers.

### **Definitions of Conservation, Restoration and (Re-)creation used in the Project**

Conservation - The maintenance and enhancement in quality of existing sites where the habitat is present.

Restoration - The restoration of a habitat on sites where it has been heavily degraded by management but is still present in degraded form.

(Re-)creation - The re-creation of a habitat on sites where it has been lost by conversion and has to be created again, or the creation of entirely new habitat.

Habitat targets and a summary of achievements and progress are shown in Table 4. Additional details may be found on the Biodiversity Action Recording System (BARS) at [ukbap-reporting.org.uk](http://ukbap-reporting.org.uk). Action on a site/holding basis is shown in Appendix I and on Map 7.

Increasingly we are looking at innovative ways of delivering habitat conservation and restoration. At Silence Mine (page 41-42) work will be driven by the Foolow and Great Hucklow village communities following compulsory purchase by the PDNPA and subsequent disposal to a village "trust". At Calver Marshes (page 35) an informal steering group has been set up including the relevant landowners, local naturalists and local people. This group is involved both in the review of work already undertaken and in developing and contributing to programmes of practical work, interpretation (Appendix IV) and awareness raising activities (see Appendix IV for 2006 events). Eyam Delf (page 37-38) continues to be managed as an informal Local Nature Reserve by a group of local people with support from the Vision Project and an underlying commitment from the landowner. This approach has been fostered by the Vision Project at both Highcliffe Mine, Eyam (page 39) and Black Plantation on Longstone Edge (page 28). Practical restoration works on two ponds below Longstone Edge (page 25) has been co-ordinated by a local volunteer with funding he secured from Earthwatch UK, and with support from the Vision Project and the Derbyshire Amphibian Recorder. A partnership approach with Derbyshire Wildlife

Trust's Water Vole Recovery Project has delivered habitat restoration works at Wardlow Mires (page 31).

Management aims and guidelines have also been produced for nine of the highest quality road verge/green lane sites within the Vision Project area (together with 12 elsewhere in the National Park and 14 in Derbyshire outside the National Park). The aim is to achieve favourable condition of the grasslands at these sites through working in partnership with Derbyshire County Council and local volunteers who are acting as "guardians" of the sites, and through education of the road users. Details are shown in Appendix II and the flier produced by the Vision Project is shown in Appendix IV.

As a result of increased awareness of the wildlife significance of road verges and green lanes, ecological issues will be considered when looking at the sustainability of routes particularly with regard to green lanes used by motorised traffic. This initiative is being driven by Derbyshire County Council in consultation with the PDNPA.

**Table 4 Targets, Progress and Achievements**

Target code	Text	Status	Progress report
Key Conservation	Produce a map of local and national BAP habitats within the extended VP area – 2006/07	Target achieved	Map uses existing digital data
Key Restoration/recreation	Produce a “Vision” map for the extended area - in draft 2005/06, final version 2006/07	No progress	Production of BAP map and LCA behind schedule and 2006 survey of grassland fungi crucial
Ash Woodland Re-creation	Creation of 2ha ash woodland at Rowland Common	Target not achieved	No progress with negotiations
Ash Woodland Restoration	Initiate restoration of 5ha ash woodland within Stoney Middleton dale	Target not achieved	EES agreement at one site in draft. Discussions with BMC over management of ash woodland associated with Furness Quarry
Hay Meadow Conservation	Secure high quality sites into appropriate conservation scheme agreements and implement enhancement works where necessary.	Target exceeded (due to plan action)	South Lee and Tor Cottage secured in EES agreements
Hay Meadow Restoration 1	Initiate restoration of 20 ha of hay meadows where this will link or extend existing high priority sites.	Target not achieved	Achievement has been compromised by practical and time implications of HLS applications. But also and more significantly by economic implications.
Hay Meadow Restoration 2	Contribute to the restoration of 15ha hay meadow using local provenance seed, including sites where management was secured in 2004/5 and sites within the extended area.	Target not achieved	Eyam barns; Dobbin Meadow; Pineacres; Eyam School; Due to seed Calver Peak site April 2006. Overall work compromised by work in SW Peak. Seed application using volunteers.
Heather Moorland	Consider the opportunities for conservation and restoration of heather moorland in the Abney, Eyam, Offerton and Shatton area.	Some progress (behind schedule)	Difficult negotiations with one of largest landowners crucial to achievement. Recognition of importance of grassland fungi in acid grasslands in this area affecting rates of progress with restoration.

<b>Table 4 continued</b>			
Limestone Heath Conservation	In partnership with English Nature progress negotiations over achievement of favourable condition on Longstone Moor SSSI.	Some progress (behind schedule)	SWES under debate VP Officer also involved in resolution of overgrazing on Castleton Poor Piece
Limestone Heath Recreation	Seek opportunities for limestone heath creation	Some progress (on schedule)	Ongoing consideration in quarry restoration plans
Limestone Heath Restoration	Initiate restoration of 5ha of Limestone Heath	Target not achieved	Under discussion on Highfields Farm, Dale End farm (Black Plantation) and Longstone Moor Farm
Oak/Birch Woodland Restoration	Initiate restoration of 2 Oak/Birch Woodlands in cloughs through appropriate boundary works.	Target not achieved	Under discussion on Chatsworth and Haddon Estates and on Shatton Edge
Pastures - Conservation/Restoration 1	Initiate conservation/restoration of 20 ha unimproved pasture, lead rake, daleside and rough grazing including lowland calcareous and acid grassland and metallophyte vegetation.	Target not achieved	Achievements nil although progress being made. In part owing to problems with HLS applications.
Pastures conservation/restoration 2	Carry out restoration management (primarily scrub control) on 10ha pastures concentrating on Longstone Edge - primarily lowland calcareous and lowland acid grassland, and on a further 5ha concentrating on the edges and cloughs of the extended area - primarily lowland acid grassland.	Target achieved	Longstone Edge: 4 scrub bashing events using volunteers (1 was PPCV), Dave Mallon (local Naturalist) and part-time rangers. Bramble control at W end. Edges and Cloughs: Shatton Edge using PPCV; Hucklow Edge using contractor; Highcliffe Mine using volunteers.
Pastures Re-creation	Create 3ha rough grazing (primarily lowland calcareous grassland but including lowland meadow and metalliferous grassland) on quarry restoration sites on Longstone Edge.	Target achieved	Seed dried and stored by Glebe Mines Ltd for use on Deep Rake and the Beeches in Sept/Oct.
Pond Conservation	Contribute to the conservation of identified high quality ponds	Target exceeded (due to plan action)	2. Hardrake Lane - removal of excess vegetation using volunteer rangers. 3. Pennyunk Lane - removal of excess vegetation using volunteers. 4. Butts Farm, Wardlow - concrete crack repair with mastic and cement using part-time rangers 1. Church lane farm - pond repair proves to have failed

<b>Table 4 continued</b>			
Pond Recreation	Re-create 5 dewponds targeting ponds where these can link or extend existing great crested newt pond clusters.	Target not achieved	1. Oarystones with epoxy resin 3. Rowland - clay and stone sett pond with Glebe clay and Tarmac grit 4. Rowland - first stage in concrete repair (clearing out vegetation) co-ordinated by Earthwatch volunteer and facilitated by PDNPA 2. Castlegate pond with epoxy resin proves to have failed
Pond Restoration	Contribute to the restoration of appropriate ponds	Target exceeded (due to plan action)	1. Oarystones - removal of vegn and crack repair with mastic and cement using volunteers 2. Pennyunk lane - removal of Canadian pondweed using volunteers. 3. Pennyunk lane - concrete crack repair with mastic and cement using volunteers 4. Rowland - crack repair with mastic co-ordinated by Earthwatch volunteer.
River Corridor Conservation	Contribute to achievement of favourable condition at 1 site	Target achieved	Himalayan balsam control (volunteers); mink control (volunteer); tree management (contractor); bird and bat boxes (volunteers and school children)
River Corridor Restoration	Carry out restoration management at 2 sites targeted at water vole habitat restoration	Target achieved	Work carried out at Wardlow Mires. Work at River Derwent underway but postponed to summer 2006 owing to planning permission requirement.
River Corridor Restoration 2	identify sites for habitat restoration/creation in future years	Some progress (on schedule)	Quote requested for further water vole habitat restoration works at Wardlow Mires Sita bid includes finances for additional river corridor pond at Calver Marshes Grindleford PC plans for allotment land includes a wetland adjacent to the R Derwent.
Road Verges / Green Lanes conservation/restoration	Initiate conservation/restoration management on at least 3 sites targeting sites where potential exists for the restoration of hay meadow and lowland calcareous grasslands.	Target achieved	Practical work carried out on 3 sites. 9 sites proposed as road verges with approved plans.
Veteran Trees	Contribute to the appropriate management of veteran trees throughout the area where appropriate.	Target achieved	Work carried out on veteran willow at South Lee Advice and promise of grant aid given for management of veteran beech and ash at Knouchley farm Work carried out on over mature oak and poplar at calver marshes

This report was generated on 18/04/2006 using the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) © 2004-2006

### 3. Awareness Raising, Education and Interpretation

This has been facilitated through walks, talks, parish magazines, leaflets, interpretation boards, activities in schools, attendance at village shows and practical conservation tasks. The objective was to increase awareness of local wildlife and BAPs amongst all social groups and throughout the Vision Project area, and to create opportunities for involvement in the Project. With the extension into the Dark Peak, Bradwell, Grindleford and Abney communities have been incorporated into the project. Additionally, opportunities have been taken for wider awareness raising. Table 5 summarises all activities in terms of the relevant audience, participant numbers and approximate age range. Appendix III gives details of publicity, articles produced both for internal and external audiences. Appendix IV details interpretive material produced. A Vision Project newsletter is in final draft form. It is proposed to send this to all households in the Vision Project area. A series of biodiversity resource packs have been produced for dales, woodlands, lead rakes, ponds and BAP species for use in local schools.

**Table 5 Community Events**

Type of activity	No of events	Target Group	No of Participants	Age range
Walks	12 (8)	General public, main parishes	145	7-70yrs
Talks	6 (4)	General public, main parishes	235	9-75yrs
School activities	35 (24)	Primary and secondary	440 – nb. repeated visits	2-18yrs
Village events/shows	9 (3)	Children, general public	570	2-80yrs
Practical Conservation Tasks	22	Schools, general public, guides, Lady Manners Green Group, part-time and volunteer rangers	274	6-70yrs
Road Verge Project	Training events: 14 Feedback event: 1	General public	40	35-70yrs
Community-led projects/ facilitated by Vision Project	5	Eyam , Calver, Gt, Longstone, Foolow/Hucklow, Eyam Guides	90	5-70yrs
Interpretative Projects	2 sets of panels	Curbar school; Taddington School, General Public		
	2 fliers	General public, main parishes		
	1 newsletter	General public, main parishes		
	5 biodiversity resource packs	All Vision Project Schools		
Wider Awareness Raising Events	21	General public, conservation organisations	452	30-65yrs

(The target is shown in brackets where appropriate)

## Work with local schools

### Learning more about local species:



Role-play activity about BAP species



Finding out more about types of fungi



Studying wildlife in wetlands



Great crested newts in the school pond

### Learning more about local BAP habitats:



Discovering Dales



A closer look at hay meadows



Learning about lead rakes... .ecology



....and cultural heritage

## Walks

Fungal forays in the Vision Area have highlighted some interesting 'waxcap grasslands' with rare species.



Funnel caps and yellow waxcaps



Scarlet hood waxcaps

Other special interest walks have included looking at mosses, grasses and butterflies.



## Village Events

Attending village shows with displays and activities for children is a good way of targeting all sectors of the community.



Gt. Longstone School were inspired to make their pond the theme of their well-dressing this year after working with the Vision Project on an information panel.



## **Community Feedback**

### **Training Courses**

*"The wildflower identification course.... increased my fascination of the plants we encounter on our walks"*

*"The course was excellent for awareness-raising and for stimulating independent learning"*

*"I also came away with a greater awareness of how to encourage insects in my garden"*

### **Practical conservation and restoration activities**

*"It will be nice to see the ponds when the life comes back to them"*

*"A most enjoyable day. There was some kind of work for every ability and age"*

*"Extremely pleasant and satisfying"*

### **Guided Walks**

*"We very much enjoyed your guided walk around Gt. Hucklow – it was very informative and stimulating".*

*"...even those who thought they knew the area very well learnt something new"*

*"I was amazed at the variety of wildlife so close to home and the number of different habitats. Locals also shared their knowledge of the history of the land which was very interesting too."*

*"More events of this kind please"*

*"...far exceeded our expectations. Truly excellent".*

*"It was really interesting to see aspects of the Vision Project in situ having had a very informative talk about it on a previous occasion"*

### **Talks**

*"the opportunity to ask questions and receive well informed answers was an added bonus".*

*"Very inspirational information/pictures from someone who was really enthusiastic"*

### **Schools**

*"Thank you for coming in to school this morning. I really enjoyed all that we learnt. I just wanted to say that I was rather surprised at what the great crested newt looked like!"*

*"I enjoyed the walk because I got to see where the creatures in the wildlife live and see a creature that lives in the wildlife"*

*"My favourite bit was building the bat boxes and hammering the nails in. It was really noisy! I also learnt a lot about bats in the country."*

#### **4. The Future**

It is proposed to deliver a further suite of habitat and awareness raising targets within 2006/07 thanks to a commitment from English Nature to continue to fund the Project. Appendix IV lists the proposed targets and selected actions.

During 2006/07 the Project will focus on:

1. The successful negotiation of Environmental Stewardship agreements where these can deliver hay meadow, pasture and limestone heath restoration targets.
2. The successful negotiation of Environmental Stewardship agreements where these can deliver landscape scale environmental benefits including the control of diffuse pollution in river catchments.
3. Survey and management works in relation to the conservation, restoration and creation of ponds and the restoration of hay meadows both of which will be delivered through the successful delivery of two projects funded by the Sita Trust.
4. Management works aimed at delivering enhancement and restoration of grasslands on Longstone and Hucklow Edges including lowland acid and calcareous and metallophyte grasslands.
5. A continued programme of awareness raising and education amongst the local community.
6. Working in partnership with other conservation organisations and with local people to deliver specific targets for individual sites including informal local nature reserves, road verge reserves and sites of particular importance for BAP species.