

The White Peak Partnership

Steering Group meeting

13:00 – 14:00 Thursday 3 October 2019 at Peak District National Park Authority, Aldern House

Minutes

Introductions & apologies

Attendees

Suzanne Fletcher (SLF) - Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) - Chair

Sarah Bird (SB) - Secretariat

Jon Stewart (JS) - National Trust (NT)

Mark Haslam (MH) - Environment Agency (EA)

Tim Brookes (TB) - Environment Agency (EA)

Andrew Pearson (AP) - Environment Agency (EA)

Ben Rodgers (BR) - Natural England (NE)

Marion Andrews (MA) - Natural England (NE)

Andrew Critchlow (AC) - National Farmers Union (NFU)

Margaret Baile (MB) - Severn Trent Water (STW)

Apologies

Kieron Huston (KH) - Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT)

Dan Abrahams (DA) - Natural England (NE)

Tim Allen (TA) - Historic England (HE)

Minutes from the last meeting

Minutes from the last meeting accepted as true. Actions from the last meeting that are not covered elsewhere have been completed with the exception of

- Action: TA to send project report. TA received data, no one has asked for a copy.
- Action: SB to consider incorporating comment from MH into NCA summary, and recirculate if changed.
- Update: JS enquired with PDNPA re river dove WEG. Proposals do not need planning permission. NT have been doing archaeological surveys.
- Action: JS to liaise with Ros Buck (NT) to look into links to specialists in PDNPA on how to record cultural heritage features and incorporate into PDNPA systems, and liaise with Anna Badcock or Natalie Ward.
- KH actions to carry forward to next meeting.

Update Defra ELMS – White Peak Test

The carbon ready reckoner first draft is complete, and has been tested with farmers and land managers in the White Peak at Manifold Agricultural Show and Hope Agricultural Show. So far, seven participants have tested it. Feedback is positive so far, with a few questions on calculating carbon storage and emissions. This feedback is currently with Faith Johnson.

At time of meeting, PDNPA was still waiting for a draft contract. At time of sending minutes, PDNPA have received a draft contract, and hope to send comments by 18/10/2019. Changes should be turned around quickly so the test can officially begin as soon as possible. The White Peak Test proposal is seeking funding from Defra for project officer backfilling, time foregone payments for farmers and land managers to encourage quality time, professional workshop facilitator and venue costs. Now working on the budget ready reckoner.

SLF current thinking: three phase approach.

1. First broadly accessible scheme to include forestry, simple actions to get people towards new regulation, probably in the transition period.
2. Second phase includes collaboration and actions for environmental improvement.

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3. Third phase is larger to include large-scale tree planting or wilding projects like Knepp, where private funding might come in.

Timescales now pushed to roll out late 2024. First payments to start late 2021.

Action: **SB to send Pro Forma to all.**

Nature Recovery Networks & White Peak Trials

The Board received a presentation from Ben Rodgers. See Appendix 1 for PDF of presentation.

Nature Recovery Networks (NRN) and Nature Recovery Areas:

DA has been discussing NRNs with the national lead at NE. The approach taken for doing the WP opportunity mapping is the right approach, and puts the White Peak 'ahead of the game' so will not need to re-do this. Comparison was done with NE habitat opportunity mapping for limestone grassland (see appendix 1, page 6. The two are fairly close. ELMS will be one of the main tools for delivering NRNs.

Nature Recovery Areas – additional focus on large landscape scale areas of habitat, including 'wilding' type approaches. National Parks in good position for NRAs. Looking for 'Knepp' style approaches. Probably won't cover the whole NP, just probably one or two large holdings. Scale is still to be determined, but a lot of work has already been done.

White Peak Trials:

To achieve functional NRNs there will need additional tools other than hay meadow restoration, as this will still leave large areas unsuitable for nature recovery. There has not been any money for this type of work so far. ELMS may offer the opportunity to do new things. Want to be able to go to Defra to say if they put money in, show what we can achieve. Generally known how to enhance nature on low fertility land, but not what can we do on high fertility productive sites.

NE and NFU approached by land owner when coming to the end of their agreement, want to take a more 'rewilding' approach. Discussed with the land owner, and the mini trials project has evolved. Funded by PDNPA, with contributions of staff time by NE.

1. Creation of structurally diverse grassland in whole field previously improved
2. Creation of structurally diverse grassland on silage margins
3. Herbal leys across the plateau to create the 'stepping stones' (farming approach)

Herbal leys are an option in HLS and CS but haven't been taken up at all in the national park. Herbal leys have slightly lower productivity, but land manager is not using fertilisers, they can improve soil structure, and there are benefits for livestock in self-medicating. Managed as a grazed system, completely rest and then mob graze. Can be used as silage, but there isn't much experience of this. Flowering period is something that the trial is looking at. There are some studies that have looked at this that suggest they need a six week closed period. Trials are looking as if a minimum tillage approach, using chemical treatment or not, release less carbon than ploughing. Also looking at scrub development on sites with limited seed source.

Trials are agreements for five years between PDNPA and the land owner, with aim to move into ELMS when available.

Significant monitoring programme, including farming opinion e.g. cattle productivity, how it compares to ryegrass. Have done invert and botanical monitoring before seeding. Soils condition testing on all. Will do carbon storage. Did water infiltration tests.

MH: Can we include water quality monitoring?

Action: **SB to feed back comment above to BR and Rebekah Newman.**

NRAs scope to do holding-scale enhancement – NT and others have sites in key locations that could contribute to that approach.

Water Vulnerability Mapping (WVM) update & demonstration

The Group received a demonstration of the GIS system that the WVM is based, using the EA system. Initially done at 1km² but was too coarse, now done in 500m². Each feature gives a score. As become aware of more things, can build the data set up. Features include mining – mineral veins, shafts on OS maps, drainage soughs. Tried to manipulate a slope dataset, national colleagues have done this part. Above 20 is high vulnerability, but depends on how the scoring system is set. Buffer to water courses, some 100m, some 200m.

John Gunn's work has been incorporated. MB: Can septic tanks be included? Not registered. Everyone that isn't registered with the mains sewage, presume they have private treatment. Septic tanks are a source, not a vulnerability?

Quarries included in the slope topography section. Is it picking up slope away from the river valleys?

Potential applications:

- NE diffuse water pollution plan
- Permitting
- Overlay catchments to check vulnerability at the top

MA: Use as a tool to direct action.

Lots to reality check. Next step, to ground truth certain areas. Feedback, too precautionary or not precautionary enough?

Could go down to 100m, but then would need to look at the scoring.

Use geology for incorporating fissures? Need to British Geological Survey, some work done by John Gunn.

Next steps?

EA will continue to refine. Can put on local drive. Could send to NE and NPA to test?

Action: EA to share with NE, NPA, NT, STW to ground truth.

Action: EA to consult BGS to see if they have updated surveys.

Severn Trent Water reverse auction update

December 2018 to run a reverse auction

Options:

- Low nutrient inputs into permanent grassland
- Taking grassland out of management
- Not applying phosphate fertiliser to high index soils
- Planting hedgerows

Got a lot of interest but many couldn't enter because they were already in a scheme. Was given 400 farms, split into 200 farms offered fixed price options and 200 farms offered phosphate reduction specific options with reverse auction (farmers put in a bid as to what they think they can deliver the work for).

Engaged with farmers, had drop in sessions at Bakewell market. Had issues setting up auction platform.

4 applicants for the phosphates. 15 signed up but 7 bid. 8 bids successful in total. No interest in hedgerows or grassland management. 136kg phosphate saved. 67 ha for low inputs, 50kg phosphate saved.

Will be run again. In the Dove south catchment as well as the Wye.

Draft options:

- Low nutrient inputs into permanent grassland
- Not applying phosphate fertiliser to high index soils
- Loosing soils on compacted soils

Event 2020 to promote. Can combine with others, e.g. NE, EA event for the Wye?

Action: MA to keep STW and NFU up to date with the diffuse water pollution plan.

White Peak advisers training day

Action: SB to ask if Jane can do a date in March, if not will put on a smaller group event on 7th.

Update: Advisers training day with focus on soils is booked for 7th November at Great Longstone.

Whole White Peak Partnership newsletter

Newsletter mailing list received from DWT.

Action: SB to make sure up-to-date and then send out newsletter.

Partner updates

PDNPA: Heritage lottery has approached woodland trust to put forward Ravine Woodland bid again.

Project Plan

Carry forward as main item for next agenda (one hour). Objective to prioritise.

Does there need to be a health and wellbeing item? Discussion for next meeting.

Action: All to use Mark's model as an example of putting together projects, plus costings if appropriate.

Action: BR to ask DA and others to liaise with JS on co-ordinating action on ash dieback.

JS plateau actions – Guidance and best practice project. Simple spreadsheet with asks, can be looked at during various meetings, whether options can be supported.

AC – The practical detail, with some site visits. What are the steps that we might take to bring more farmers in. Events that demonstrate the trials, what other interventions might they be able to offer. How does their farming system fit in with what we are asking for? Look on site, how would they join up the habitats.

Date, location & chair of next meeting – (Chair in order: DWT, EA, HE, NE, NFU, NT, PDNPA)

Next Steering Group meeting 15th January 2020. Chair Mark Haslam (EA).
