



Lowland Woodland HAP Group Meeting 18th January 2007, NE Office, Bakewell.

Present:

Tristan Galletly (Forestry Commission) Chair	Dan Abrahams (Natural England)
Cathy Block (Derbyshire CC)	Stephanie Birkinshaw (EDWP)
Ron Barker (Chesterfield BC)	Nick Law (Derbyshire Wildlife Trust),
William Thornhill (Chesterfield BC)	Anna Evans (Derbyshire Wildlife Trust)
Tom Watts (Chesterfield BC)	Debbie Court (LD Biodiversity Partnership)

Apologies: Glynis Foster (Derbyshire CC), Carl Hawke (National Trust), Sam Lattaway (National Forest), George Brydon (Derbyshire CC), Leon Hayward (BTCV), Peter Lowe (Woodland Trust), Dave Bramwell (Erewash BC), Hazel Earnshaw (Severn Trent Water) and Beverley Rhodes (Derby City)

1. Matters arising and action points from last meeting

Tristan has contacted the National Forest about annual GIS layers for Tender Schemes. This should come soon and will be distributed around the partnership. **Action: Tristan**

Tristan said he still needs to get woodland figures for and break them down into Local Authorities areas so they could be fed into the progress towards the Greenprint targets. This needs to be done by July at the latest. **Action: Tristan**

For action WD7 Dan distributed a draft candidate Woodland SSSI list. This list includes significant ancient woodlands over 20ha. He requested any comments on the sites and any suggested additions to the list to be sent to him. **Action: ALL**

The wet woodland and lowland parkland, woodland pasture and veteran tree HAPS UK targets have now been released so the LBAP HAPS will need to be revised accordingly **Action: Debbie**

2. Great Trees of Derbyshire Project

Anna Evans, the Project Officer for the Great Trees of Derbyshire, gave an overview and update on the project. The project is now about 6 months old and in that time they have made significant progress. The main outcomes of the project are to:

- Identify potential sites and trees for survey.
- Run training sessions on veteran tree survey techniques for volunteer surveyors.
- Undertake a comprehensive survey of trees across the county and produce a county inventory
- Produce information sheets on veteran trees, the importance and management of veteran trees.
- Run veteran tree events and courses.

They have run 3 very successful veteran tree surveying training courses and have trained 54 volunteers. Each were given a number of 1km grid squares to survey and record veteran trees. The courses were over subscribed and they plan to run 2 more courses in the spring as well as a number of specific sessions for rangers etc. They have recently written to all parish councils about the project and are beginning to get a good response. A veteran tree leaflet has been produced and will be reprinted to soon. They are also working on a Great Trees of Derbyshire leaflet. A number of press releases, radio interviews and articles in magazines have generated a lot of media and general public interest. 'Woody' a small educational wooden veteran tree, has been taken to shows, and visitor centres to generate further interest. So far 2050 veteran tree records have been received from surveyors, the general public and some LBAP partners such as the National Trust, Derby City rangers, Severn Trent Water. Anna distributed a map showing the distribution of these records and 1km grid squares that have already been allocated to volunteers. She asked for any suggestions of potential partners or sites to survey:

Action: ALL

There will be a veteran tree management workshop in the winter of 2007 and Anna requested any suggestions for content, speakers, and workshop leaders. Suggestions discussed included management of land around veteran trees, management of veteran trees in public open space. Any other should be sent to Anna (Aevans@derbyshirewt.co.uk). **Action: ALL**

3. Future woodland seminars/training

Debbie suggested that we do not hold a specific seminar this year for woodland owners but offer them an opportunity to attend the veteran tree surveying training courses and the veteran tree management course in the winter. Anna to send Debbie a flier once the dates for the courses are fixed and Debbie will post it to the attendees of last year's seminar and the local Small Woods Association.

Action: Anna and Debbie

Debbie said that the Hap says we will hold a woodland seminar in 2008. Nick suggested building upon the themes from last year and having a day on each of the topics covered the workshops, including surveying, management and archaeology. Perhaps having the surveying day in 2008, possibly holding it at a larger venue than last time. It was agreed for Debbie to compose a short questionnaire and send this around with the details of the veteran tree courses to gauge opinion on topics and interest.

Action: Debbie

4. Brief Project Updates:

A) Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands under 2ha

Dan reported that there had not been much more progress on the completion of this GIS layer due to the volunteer having other commitments. This layer had been purely a desktop exercise without any ground truthing but all agreed it was a very useful addition to our knowledge and should be finished asap.

Action: Dan

B) GIS Project

Tristan reported that the GIS project was still ongoing and had now been taken on by the Peak District National Park Authority to complete. It was envisaged that the final product will be a series of pdf maps showing current wooded layer, potential wooded area and PAWS restoration. These maps would be available for EWGS applicants to download from the Peak District website. A CD of the various GIS layers would also be distributed around the LBAP partnership.

Cathy raised Glynis' concerns about potential contradiction with the Landscape Character work. Tristan assured her that the maps would have 'health warnings' and refer people to the Landscape Character work for further information on appropriate species, woodland size and shape and more details on location.

C) Forest Schools

Stephanie reported that Lauren Stevens (Lauren.stevens@derbyshire.gov.uk tel 01246 208267), the Forest Schools Leader had been approaching appropriate schools to join the scheme. One of the main barriers is that it costs £700 to train a teacher to the right level to be able to run a scheme at one school. 15 schools are actively running at the moment and a further 40 are pending but need more resources such as a site and training. Rosliston Forestry Centre is running an open day event for 20 schools in South Derbyshire to find out more about the scheme. They are also looking at setting up a cluster group in North East Derbyshire.

5. Grant Aid

Tristan reported that applications in the woodland creation round had been good with approximately 80ha of woodland agreed for the LBAP area. This had unusually included 2 schemes within the National Forest that had not been subject to a National Forest Tender Scheme. In addition Tristan had processed a number of WIGs and woodland management grants before Christmas. Tristan to send Debbie the appropriate figures asap.

Action: Tristan

Funding for 2007/8 was still uncertain due to the need for a decision to be agreed at a European level. This is unlikely to be resolved before June but the Forestry Commission will still accept and process applications but not sign contracts until the issue is resolved.

6. Woodland data issues

Debbie has recently updated the parkland and wood pasture GIS layer with additional fields for veteran tree presence and any date information known. The layer includes 66 sites (7,874.85ha) in the LBAP area and 10 (1,194.36ha) in the Peak District LBAP. Debbie to send this layer around to LBAP partners.

Action: Debbie

As discussed, the Great Trees of Derbyshire Project has now begun to accumulate data on veteran trees. At the end of the Project a GIS layer will be distributed to LBAP partners. If anyone wants an interterm layer they should contact Anna.

Action: ALL

Debbie has also recently added some information to the wet woodland GIS layer that the DWT initiated. Nick said that DWT have also added some new sites and therefore need to complete the update before sending around. Debbie commented that any wet woodland on DWT reserves needed to be added. The layer shows about 150ha of wet woodland in the LBAP area. Will said that in addition there were small areas of wet woodland at Poolsbrook Country Park and another of their sites. Will to send maps of these to Nick law for adding to the wet woodland layer.

Action: Will

Nick to update wet woodland GIS layer with the additional information and send around to the LBAP partnership. hat they should be responsible for updating.

Action: Nick

Debbie said that she also wanted to create a GIS layer of woodland planted since 1980 to help monitor the HAP target. This will include new woodland in the National Forest, woodland on reclamation sites, and woodland planted through Woodland Grant Schemes and the East Derbyshire Woodland Project. She requested that LBAP partners help her to compile this layer by sending any woodland planting carried out **outside a Woodland Grant Scheme** to her by e-mail.

Action: ALL

7. Progress on HAP actions and outstanding actions

Debbie presented a number of tables, taken from BARS, showing the progress on the various woodland actions. All of the Parkland, Wood Pasture and Veteran tree actions were either completed or underway. This was mainly due to the Great Trees of Derbyshire Project.

For the lowland mixed broadleaved woodland HAP there were a number of updates and comments to be noted:

WD02, 03 – To be carried out once GIS project is completed.

WD 05 – Tristan commented that the FC do monitor the work done under EWGS but not the effect that this has on the woodland ecology itself.

WD11 – Tristan suggest that this could be a student project and also that the East Midlands wood fuel project was still running which will be doing something towards this action.

For the wet woodland HAP there were a number of updates and comments to be noted:

Wetwd 03, 07 – To be carried out once GIS project is completed.

Wetwd 06 and 12 – Nick reported that as part of the Wildlife Sites initiative DWT will be drafting some favourable condition guidelines for Wildlife Sites. The draft woodland guidelines should be circulated to the woodland group for comment so that it will help achieve this action.

Wet wd 08 – The Group agreed to adopt the FC wet woodland guidance, which Tristan confirmed was still considered best practice. This booklet (The management of semi-natural woodland: 8. Wet woodlands) is freely available to download from the FC website at [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/PDF/fcpg008.pdf/\\$FILE/fcpg008.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/PDF/fcpg008.pdf/$FILE/fcpg008.pdf). In addition we should be promoting locations and species mixed promoted within the Landscape Character work and DWT's habitat creation guide.

Wetwd 10 – Debbie to discuss deer issues with the National Forest and use information to amend the

Wetwd 11 – Invasive species are being dealt with through wetland group.

Wetwd 14 - Tristan to check if there is anything suitable in the FC library

Action: Tristan

Wetwd 15 – Debbie suggested that Sledge Wood near Repton could be put forward as demonstration site. Nick is working with adjacent land and the Parish Council too. Debbie to speak to Woodland Trust about this.

Action: Debbie

Wetwd 17 – Dan suggested that was unlikely that any Derbyshire SSSI designation would be made on wet woodland alone, it would be part of a habitat complex.

Debbie said that there were some main outstanding issues that were barriers to achieving the HAP targets including:

- EWGS funds
- Resources to fund woodland advice and encourage owners to go into EWGS.

There is potential for an Ancient Woodland Project proving advice and grant aid advice to woodland owners. It was thought hat this could either be a separate project or funding to aid resourcing an existing post such as FWAG for initial visits to owners. Debbie said she would include this in the LBAP Implementation strategy and talk to FWAG about it.

Action: Debbie

8. Partner updates

Derbyshire County Council – Stephanie reported that all of the planting from last years EWGS had now been done, some hedgerows had been planted and some active woodland management had taken place in some of the woods. In addition the Free Tree Scheme had given away 11,900 trees this year. Steph to provide Debbie with figures. **Action: Steph**

Chesterfield Borough Council – Started to selective fell sycamore and Scots Pine in Cobnar Wood. Beech is being felled in Westwood and it is being restocked with native species. A fence has been put up in Homebrook Valley Park to protect woodland by the stream from further damage.

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust – Nick passed around a sheet showing woodland surveys and advice in 2006. This amounted to 26 (334ha) surveyed and an additional 9 sites where woodland was a mosaic habitat. Of these 15 were ASNW sites, 2 PAWs, and 8 secondary woodlands. Advice was given to the owners of 4 sites. Nick said that he was going to pilot a study surveying bryophytes in some of the woodlands in South Derbyshire in 2007.

Nick is still keen to produce a vascular plant list for Ancient Woodlands in Derbyshire.

BTCV- Leon reported that BTCV have been carrying out some practical woodland work including removing sycamore and coppicing hazel in Moss Valley SSSI, removing rabbit fencing at FC sites in South Derbyshire, planting oak trees in Chaddesden Wood LNR, and seed collecting from Allestree, Chaddesden and Elm wood for the beginning of a potential tree nursery.

National Forest – Simon Greenhouse reported that 72 ha of new woodland planting had been carried out in the LBAP area through the Tender Scheme. The average size of the woodlands are 10ha and 4 of the sites have native black poplar included in the design.

LBAP update-

- The Annual Forum will be on 11th October at Masson Mill. The theme will be wetlands.
- Debbie is currently putting together an implementation strategy for the BAP
- Since last meeting a Heathland HAP had been produced.

9. AOB

Debbie requested briefs for student project from anyone asap. The project would need to include 15 days fieldwork and not cost the University more than £50 and the LBAP partners should be available to provide guidance if required. Please send any suitable projects to Debbie asap. **Action: ALL**

10. Date of next meeting

19th July 2007 10 – 1pm in the National Forest board room, Moira. The afternoon will be looking at some recent national Forest Tender Schemes. Please bring your own lunch!

Debbie Court
19th January 2007.