

Derbyshire LBAPs Phase II (ALSF SJA/TAL 003) Progress Report June 2005 – September 2005

Headings taken from ALSF application:

1. Linkages to national and local BAPs.

1.1 UK BAP.

The Project Officer attended the UK Biodiversity Partnership Conference in Bristol June 2005. This included participation in a number of workshops to discuss the issues surrounding the lack of progress on some UK BAP targets. It was also an opportunity to meet and share experiences with other LBAP officers outside the East Midlands region. As the sole representative at the conference from the East Midlands the Project Officer provided feedback to regional and local LBAP partners.

A number of national LBAP questionnaires have been sent to the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity partnership which the Project Officer has responded to.

1.2 Regional

The regional LBAPs officers met in September to discuss issues ongoing regional LBAP issues such as invasive species, the provision of a biodiversity education pack, BARS and the 2005 reporting round. Contact and ongoing discussion is maintained between the LBAP co-ordinators by e-mail. The Regional Biodiversity Forum is in the process of employing a regional biodiversity co-ordinator to look at the structure of regional biodiversity initiatives and will hopefully provide some guidance to the LBAP co-ordinators.

Action points and issues were taken from the co-ordinators meeting to the Regional Biodiversity Forum which met the following week. Information was also provided on county LBAP progress.

1.3 Links with neighbouring LBAPs

Close contact and liaison has been maintained with the Peak District and National Forest LBAPs. The Derbyshire Biodiversity website and the newsletter have enforced this in the publics and LBAP partners mind. Discussions have taken place over issues associated with BARS to ensure LBAP partners are not being asked for duplicate information and appropriate links on BARS are made between the plans.

The Project Officer has attended a number of the Peak District HAP groups to ensure every opportunity is taken to work on county initiatives to achieve BAP targets where it is appropriate.

1.4 Greenprints

Closer links have been made with the various Greenprint initiatives within the county. The Project Officer attends the Chesterfield Greenprint Steering Group to ensure that there is no duplication of effort for projects taking place at a county or regional level. This will also provide a holistic overview of the work that the Greenprints do encouraging cross-boundary working. Discussions have also taken place with Bolsover District Council, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and the Bolsover Countryside Partnership as to the Project Officer's role in the Bolsover Greenprint.

2. Local Feedback

2.1 Annual Forum

Following the Annual Forum in May, copies of the talks and feedback from the workshop were posted on the Derbyshire Biodiversity website. The website statistics package showed that the talks were some of the most popular items downloaded from the website.

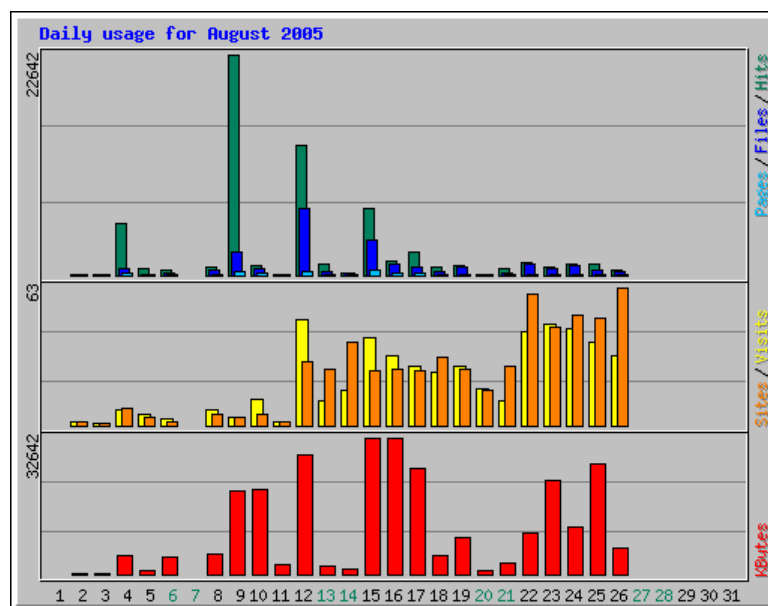
Early discussions have taken place as to the location and date of 2006 Annual Forum. It is proposed to have it in September and with money through the ALSF a more suitable can be booked and catering arranged.

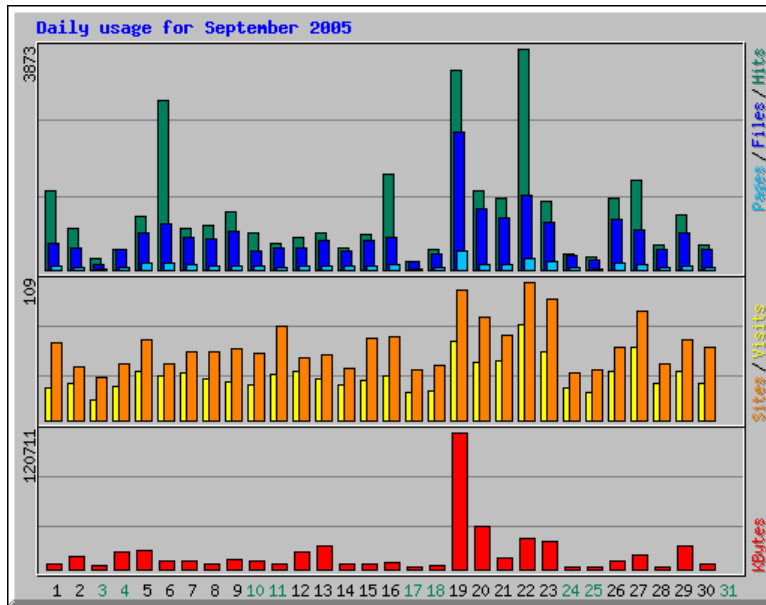
3. Making the LBAP accessible.

3.1 Website

After many months of planning, text preparation, alteration and finalisation the Derbyshire Biodiversity website (www.derbyshirebiodiversity.org.uk) was finally launched on 12th August. The website was publicised through LBAP partners and mailing groups.

The charts below have been produced from the statistics package for the website. The number of visits refers to the number of visitors the website receives each day. This will include repeat visitors. The 'Kbyte figures' refers to the amount of information that is looked at, so pages with pictures and documents downloaded increase this figure. All the usage before 12th August can be attributed to the website designer and the Project officer making alterations prior to the launch.





Usage of the website increased during August and September. The tables below quantify the usage. The important figures to look are the total visits (individual users including repeat users) and unique sites which refers to the unique individuals accessing the site (does not include repeat users)

Monthly Statistics for August 2005	
Total Hits	63852
Total Files	23141
Total Pages	3296
Total Visits	499
Total KBytes	273176
Total Unique Sites	232

Monthly Statistics for September 2005	
Total Hits	30920
Total Files	17813
Total Pages	2356
Total Visits	1071
Total KBytes	417093
Total Unique Sites	508

The Project Officer used the website to publish final drafts and completed versions of the HAPs and SAPs thus encouraging LBAP partners to use the website. The newsletter was also put on the website.

Various documents and news items have been added since the launch and the numerous links are checked on a regular basis to ensure they are up to date.

3.2. Newsletter

One of the action points followed up from the Annual Forum in May was to publish a newsletter to keep LBAP partners up to date. The first newsletter was published on 16th September. This was subsequently put on the website on 19th September and an e-mail to LBAP partners was sent round with a link. Paper copies were sent to Local Groups and other LBAP partners without access to the internet.

The Project Officer edited and co-ordinated the newsletter, encouraging neighbouring BAP partners to write articles so that it was seen as a county-wide newsletter. The newsletter has sections which will hopefully become regular features on UK BAP, Regional BAP issues as well as raising the profile of a local group and a biodiversity project within the county. It is hoped that the LBAP partners will use the 'Help wanted' section to ask other LBAP partners to share expertise and resources. Feedback so far has been very positive and an electronic mailing list is being developed for the next issue.

The website statistics package showed that during September 184 copies of the newsletter were downloaded. In addition a further 300 copies were sent out by post and distributed at events.

3.3 Talks

The Project Officer has continued to receive requests for talks. There was only one talk delivered over the summer as the majority of local groups only have talks during the autumn, winter and spring period. The Biodiversity Jigsaw talk was delivered by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Project Officer to 20 members of the Trent and Lower Derwent DWT Group on 14th September.

The local English Nature office organised a Local Nature Reserve Day on 17th September. The day was organised for LNR Friends of Groups and local authorities who own and manage LNRs. Sixty-four people attended the event. As part of the day the Project Officer gave a talk making the connection between LNR and BAP habitats and species, showing how management of LNRs can help achieve BAP targets.

The Project Officer is developing a short 14 hour training session to be delivered as an evening class as part of the Chesterfield Greenprint. The course will be delivered through the Workers Education Association in Spring 2006. It will focus on taking the message of biodiversity to the general public identifying BAP habitats and species and how they can get involved in the BAP process through surveys and submitting records.

3.4 Annual Report

The 2001-2004 Lowland Derbyshire BAP Progress report was printed in June and has now been distributed to all LBAP partners, local groups and county recorders. A web-friendly version has been put on the website and during August and September over 100 copies were downloaded.

4. Implement Habitat Action Plans

4.1 Habitat Action Plans

Following discussion at the LBAP exec meeting in June, the Project Officer has spent some time re-formatting the Habitat Action Plans. This resulted in background documents being produced for woodland, grassland and wetland habitats in lowland Derbyshire. These documents contain information on habitat ecology, and distribution at national, regional and local levels. When updated information becomes available these documents can be updated without having to update the HAPs. On the website these background documents are alongside the HAPs and can be downloaded as PDF documents.

4.2 Woodland

The Woodland Habitat Group met in July. The main focus of the meeting was to assess which actions and targets had been completed. Partners were also asked to list sites they owned/managed with woodland interest. The update was the first step to revising the woodland targets so the HAP is in line with the 2005-2010 timescale of the other HAPs. The meeting was followed by a site visit to Shining Cliff Woods to look at woodland management and restoration after rhododendron clearance.

4.3 Grassland

The Grassland Group has not met for over a year but regular contact has been maintained between the partners by e-mail recording progress and discussing potential funding opportunities.

The Project Officer has had a successful meeting with the Highway Engineers at the County Council regarding management of road verges. A list of existing Wildlife Sites and other known verges of importance were given to the County Council to confirm which of them are part of the adopted highway. A follow-up meeting is due to be arranged for next month with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and the Peak District National Park to take this forward hopefully in time for the 2006 cutting season.

4.4 Wetland

The Wetland HAP group has not met since February but regular contact has been maintained by e-mail. The Project Officer produced Final Drafts for the four wetland HAPs based on comments from the previous draft. Once final comments were received the completed HAPs were put on the website in on 9th September.

4.5 Farmland

The Farmland Group has also not met since February but have commented on draft HAPs for Ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows and cereal field margins. The Project Officer has been working on final drafts of these HAPs based upon previously comments received.

5. Implement Species Action Plans

5.1 Lower land Plants

A Final draft SAP for Oak Polypore was produced formatted and sent around the appropriate LBAP partners for comment in September. No major comments were received so the SAP will be put on the website in October.

5.2 Mammals

A Final Draft Water Vole SAP was produced by the Water Vole Officer for Derbyshire Wildlife Trust in September. A background document was also produced with details on species ecology and local distribution. Comments were received back and it is expected to produce the completed SAP in October.

5.3 Birds

The Project Officer has publicised Derbyshire Ornithological Society's swift survey on the website and encouraged other bird groups to get involved. Discussion has also taken place with Derby Homes regarding a project to erect appropriate bird and bat boxes on rental properties owned by Derby Homes.

5.4 Invertebrates

The Project Officer co-ordinated a regional training session looking at habitat management for the Dingy Skipper. This species has been highlighted by Butterfly Conservation as being a regional priority especially on aggregate sites across Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire. The training was provided by a local entomologist and was attended by 20 people from all three counties.

6. Increasing capacity of partners in key sectors to implement HAPs and SAPs.

6.1 BAP Audits

The Project Officer has been carrying out a BAP audit of Derbyshire County Council's countryside sites. This has involved liaising with Head Rangers to record and in some cases survey locations of priority BAP habitats and priority BAP species. This information will then be collated onto a number of GIS layers and totals calculated so that targets for management can be set.

In addition, discussions have taken place with mineral planners at Derbyshire County Council to record on GIS the location and details of BAP habitats created as part of restoration schemes of aggregate and coal extraction sites. This will then form the basis of recording potential for schemes in the future.

6.2 Widening the active LBAP partnership

The Project Officer has met with Creswell Crags, the Highways Agency and HM Prison Service to discuss their participation in the LBAP process and ways in which they can contribute towards the targets.

7. Increasing contribution to biodiversity targets of aggregates industry.

7.1 Aggregate industry contacts

The Project Officer has contacted other relevant organisations nationally and locally that have received ALSF and whose targets include working with operators on their sites. Contact has been maintained with existing contacts mineral operators made through Phase I of this project with a view to developing the regional mineral biodiversity forum.

Through contact with the RSPB the Project Officer attended a seminar in Gloucestershire to help develop a web tool that would be useful to predict the contribution of the mineral industry through restoration schemes towards BAP targets. Useful contacts were made through the seminar.

8. Monitoring and Reporting.

8.1 UK BAP 2005 Reporting

The Project Officer has entered information on BARS for the 2005 UK BAP reporting round.

8.2 BARS

The completed wetland HAPs have now been inputted into BARS long with an action plan recording the activities of LBAP co-ordination.

The Project Officer has spoken to number of key LBAP partners about BARS highlighting the advantages of using it for their own organisational purposes and linking this with the LBAP actions. Training has been delivered to the Chesterfield Greenprint officer who has now set up the Chesterfield Greenprint n BARS linking to the Lowland Derbyshire LBAP to avoid duplication. Technical advice has been given to neighbouring Derbyshire LBAPs on inputting and linking LBAPs on BARS.

9. Community Strategies, Development Plans and similar strategic partnerships.

9.1 Local Strategic Partnerships

The Project Officer has maintained contact with the Local Strategic Partnership in the county and attended meetings in Bolsover, Amber Valley and a workshop for the High Peak and Derbyshire Dales Community Strategy.

9.2 Training for Planners

Discussion has taken place with Derby City with regards to delivering a package of training for planners and land managers including biodiversity, protected species and Wildlife Sites. The Project Officer has developed a one hour session entitled 'Biodiversity – the Basics' which can be delivered as an introductory session. This session will be delivered in October and will be repeated to Bolsover District Council and other Local Authorities as required.

The Project Officer has arranged a seminar on 'Biodiversity and Local Development Frameworks' for November to be delivered by the Association of Local Government Ecologists. The course has been run successfully in other regions, some free places have been allocated to the organisations which provided match funding for the ALSF application.

10. Engaging local business

Discussion has taken pace with various LBAP partners as to which local businesses they are already working with to avoid duplication. Some businesses are involved in the Local Strategic Partnership and there has been some interest to host a seminar for small businesses on biodiversity within the Amber Valley LSP.

11. Raise Funding for LBAP initiatives

11.1 Funding information.

A number of funding schemes started or have requested application in recent months. Details have been circulated to LBAP partners.

11.2 Support of Funding bids

The Project Officer has discussed with a number of LBAP partners funding for Biodiversity projects and has written supporting letter to accompany applications where appropriate.

12. Miscellaneous

12.1 Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership logo

A new logo has been developed for the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership. The logo appears on the website and will be used in all future relevant promotional items including stationary which is currently being developed.



Debbie Court
Biodiversity Project Officer

5th October 2005

