

Nature Map Strategic Working Group Meeting Minutes
Friday 3rd February 2006 10.30 – 1.00, English Nature, Renslade House, Exeter

Present: Basil Greenwood (EN, Chair), Phil Tolerton (RDS), Pat Lehain (RDS), Simon Brenman (SWWT), Harry Barton (Wilts WT), Mark Robins (RSPB), Tim Corner (BRERC), Heather Sohl (SWRBP), Rachael Fickweiler (SWRBP).

Agenda Items (actions in bold)	Action
1. Welcome and Apologies	
Apologies were received from Richard Ormerod, Antonia Nichol, Lyn Jenkins, Mark Durk, Laura Jones, Colin Studholme, Victoria Whitehouse.	
2. Development Plan	
<p>Mark R updated the group on the Development Plan. There has not been much progress since the draft was circulated. Few comments were received on the draft. There are some big challenges and opportunities around the restoration/recreation potentials and we need to work out how to deliver these. 90% of delivery will occur at the local level with NM enabling this.</p> <p>MR tabled a 4 Es model – Enable, Engage, Exemplify, Encourage for discussion/feedback on how NM achieves these four things.</p> <p>Need to determine what the tasks are for the RBP.</p> <p>NM is not another bureaucratic process.</p> <p>NM is about influencing at a regional level, legitimising at a local level, supporting projects and providing credibility at a local level. NM is delivery focussed and visionary. NM is the region’s response to the challenge of climate change. It is also about prioritisation and focussing of effort at a regional scale.</p> <p>Getting NM into regional strategies and building up of partnerships will enable local delivery.</p> <p>NM is about advocacy, ownership and recognition for work and consensus views.</p> <p>It was agreed that recognition and ownership of NM is required at director or higher level within organisations. NM is relevant to the developing Natural England and the review of Environmental Stewardship. However, the value/strength of NM is that it is built up from local knowledge to provide a regional vision, rather than coming down from director level.</p> <p>NM can provide the tools for ambitious projects. It may enable those who are not in conservation organisations to contribute, eg planners.</p> <p>NM is trying to achieve a living landscape, linking people and economy etc, exemplifying. It is not a static process.</p> <p><u>What can the RBP do?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as contact point • connect up networks of projects and activities • information – methodology development • Advocate at a regional scale • Skills base to run and manage large projects <p>It may be individual partners that need to provide some of this rather than the RBP, but we need to clarify the RBP work programme.</p> <p>PT made the point that a large amount of the land under SNAs is in private ownership and we must be seen to be trying to work <u>with</u> landowners, not inflicting NM on them.</p> <p>MR to collate the ideas from the meeting, and circulate the 4Es and a template for RBP action. All to comment on this.</p>	<p>MR All</p>

<p><u>Signing off NM</u> NM needs formal endorsement from the partner organisations. Partnership Chairs to write to Chief Execs, their representatives, chairs of LBAP partnerships and copy to LBAP co-ordinators. There needs to be enough information provided to enable recipients to understand NM and be prepared to advocate it in the future. First need to get NM signed off by the partnership, although this will be for the stage of the process we have reached so far, rather than a finished product as NM is a changing thing. The process is ongoing, but the product is finished for the time being. The group agreed that NM should be reviewed in 5 years. Partners should take the summary information, when completed, back to their organisations and explain why buy-in is required.</p>	<p>BG</p>
<p>3. Communications</p>	
<p>Version 4 of the NM summary was circulated. HS had combined the comments received for version 3 from the December circulation. The one liner had not changed much, but the group mostly agreed that they preferred the previous wording of ‘the best’ instead of ‘priority’ and ‘landscape scale’ instead of ‘large areas’. Since version 3, the summary has altered to exclude the terms ‘SNA’ and ‘SWWT rebuilding biodiversity methodology’ as these were thought to be too technical and the mention of one organisation could confuse ownership of a partnership project. Some of the group felt that the inclusion of RB helped explain what NM is and how it was formulated. Others felt that this information would be readily available for those who were interested and that it was not necessary in the summary. In addition, BG commented that the RB methodology has been strongly questioned. During a meeting with HS, Kevin Watts, Landscape Ecologist with Forest Research, felt that recent work and existing papers and references have discredited the principle of the threshold level used in the RB methodology. Questions have been raised by others in the past about the methodology also (EN, RDS). HB said that the SWWT welcomed criticism as this allows for improvements to be made. HS said the main concern is that if the partnership is going to claim that NM is based on the best available science, then we need to make sure that this is the case and the principles are correct or NM will be questioned. HS, BG, SG & HB to agree new summary wording and then circulate. All to comment on this. <u>Leaflet & Letter distribution</u> Work on the leaflet has been delayed by the lengthy consultation to agree the text. When the summary and one liner have been agreed, the leaflet can be completed and go to the designer. It will then be sent out with the Your Region, Your Nature booklet. A reduced version of the distribution list will be circulated. Please have a look at this and make any necessary amendments. The power point presentation is still to be completed for similar reasons. Events for inclusion of NM information have been investigated and include: SWO Annual Conference – but they are asking for £500 to have a display Rural Affairs Forum ERDP Event Group agreed that we need to get the messages for NM right before rushing to attend any events. MR to produce quick displays for Rural Affairs Forum & ERDP Event. Some LBAPs have been providing details of events they are planning for 2006. HB suggested AONB events might also be suitable. Including NM on other organisations’ websites is important.</p>	<p>HS All</p> <p>HS All</p> <p>MR</p>

<p>4. Developing the Science</p>	
<p><u>Rebuilding Biodiversity Technical Manual</u> SB would like to see RB merge with NM and for the partnership to take over the improvement of the methodology. SWWT have produced a CD of the RB technical manual and a covering letter (tabled) and SB intends to send these to the key regional contacts (at directors level). SB will inform partners of the date of issue of the letter so that they can make follow up contact with the key contact recipients. The letter is asking if they will join in with the next phase of improvements. BG asked whether there would be a peer review of the methodology. SB said this would be undertaken when a working group had been developed that wanted to take the work forward and could agree areas that need to be strengthened. SB would like RB to have a stronger methodology and wider ownership. HS suggested that the International Association of Landscape Ecologists would be happy to look at it.</p> <p><u>FC Ancient Woodland Mapping Work</u> FC has contracted Forest Research to undertake a scoping study of areas for priority action for ancient woodland. This is based on a permeability score for landscape types indicating how easy it would be for ancient woodland species to move into/through it. This then enables the production of maps showing buffered areas of ancient woodland. NM overlaid onto these maps shows quite good correlation but some anomalies. This method can be used for other habitat types also.</p> <p>HS to circulate papers on this work.</p>	<p>HS</p>
<p>5. Use in Policy Development</p>	
<p><u>RSS Update</u> The text to be included in the draft RSS was circulated, any comments should be sent to Basil. The final draft is due to the ODPM at the end of March. In principle, the RA seems happy to include NM.</p> <p><u>LDF Development</u> Mike Oxford is to produce guidance on NM use in LDF development. A draft is due on 23rd Feb. HS will circulate this and ask for comments, although the timescale for this will be very short, eg comments in by beginning of March. The RBP are considering a series of seminars/meetings on the detailed application of using NM in LDFs, so any ideas on this should be passed to HS. County LDF meetings are taking place, aimed at forward planners regarding the inclusion of biodiversity into LDFs. These meetings will include mention of NM. Mike Oxford is facilitating these and LRCs are to be invited too.</p>	<p>HS All</p>
<p>6. AOB</p>	
<p><u>Targets Matrix</u> This has been developed to help to represent spatially where the targets for restoration/expansion would be delivered. HS has produced a matrix of habitats by LA and Natural Areas. The aim is that this will appear in an annex or the implementation plan of the RSS as these are developed. MR was keen that there should be some grading of the importance of each area within the table (eg large dot if very significant for that habitat), to show ‘major’ opportunities as against ‘some’ opportunity, but this could be tricky to achieve.</p>	
<p>Date of next meeting Friday 31st March, 10.45, Exeter</p>	