

Nature Map Working Group Meeting
Wednesday 27th June 2007 10.30 to 3pm
Avon Wildlife Trust, Bristol
Chair: Basil Greenwood

Minutes

Present: Basil Greenwood (Natural England), Simon Brenman (South West Wildlife Trusts), Naomi Brookes (Biodiversity South West), Mark Robins (RSPB), Ray Perrins (South West Observatory), Phil Tolerton (Natural England), Tim Corner (BRERC), Simon Bates (NE), Colin Studholme (Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust), Craig Dixon (Devon LBAP), Jo Isley (BRERC), Alison Slade (Teignmouth District Council), Tim Brooks (FWAG).

Agenda Item	Action
1. Welcome and Apologies	
Richard Ormerod (GOSW), Karen Lloyd (Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust), Lyn Jenkins (EA), Craig Frost (RA), Mark Durk (FC), Victoria Whitehouse (CWT)	
2. Minutes and Matters Arising	
Final copy of NM LDF guidance just produced. BG will ensure that copy is submitted to RSS EiP library, LGA and Regional Assembly. CS to send copy of Gloucs LAA which highlights NM. PT will no longer provide copy of integration maps to NB as events have now superseded this.	BG CS
3. SW Nature Map – short term priorities for Environmental Stewardship Targeting	
PT gave an update on current HLS targeting work. Although HLS is a DEFRA programme NE is the lead on delivery. Agri-environment schemes form a key element of the RDPE. Voluntary modulation agreed is based on regionalisation (i.e. England, Scotland and Wales) and will be at 12% in 2007, rising to 14% from 2009. UK government will support with 40% contribution. There is £3.9 billion available for over 7 years in RDPE and £2.9 billion to be directed to Axis 2. This is a significant sum of money, and therefore a top priority for NE. Budget is tight in this first year (2007/08), particularly as classic schemes are still in play. There are five priorities for HLS – <i>biodiversity, landscape, access, historic environment and resource protection</i> , although likely to be new objectives for climate change adaptation and Water Framework Directive (split by regulatory and voluntary parts) in due course. There is a review of progress of Environmental Stewardship at present to ensure schemes are as effective as intended and covers both ELS and HLS (note, not a full comprehensive review as yet). This includes review of HLS targeting to ensure more effective targeting which is spatial and evidence based. Targets will focus on multiple objectives and will be on a comprehensive list based criteria with a spatial approach. This targeting is being undertaken in two parts Phase 1 is an internal NE interim stage and has to be complete by the end of July. Phase 2 will be more evidence based and data led with consultation with regional partners. This phase will start in August and finish in April 2008. Consultation due to start late autumn. PT is working on this process nationally and	PT/NB

<p>is championing the inclusion of NM as a key tool in this region. PT will organise a workshop with NB in the autumn as part of the Phase 2 consultations for this group.</p>	
<p>4. Regional Consistency, local refinement?</p>	
<p>There are local refinement projects across region on Nature Map. The question was raised to consider whether BioSW requires a position statement on retaining regional consistency of NM whilst allowing local change/refinement. Should statement also cover custodianship and ownership of NM?</p> <p>Gloucestershire LBAP is currently undertaking review of their NM using a volunteer to lead the process. 2 elements to this work – need to add in things that were not originally included i.e. arable flowers and birds. Also wanted to change some of the SNAs from the first round as they felt they were inaccurate and didn't closely follow methodology. Noticed that many of the same habitats SNAs were of different sizes and did not have enough replicates. They have now reviewed SNAs in Severn Vale, and there have not been many changes from the original. They are now reviewing Forest of Dean and the Cotswold's (through Cotswold Water Park) which are more difficult and will include new SNAs. Once complete they are happy there will be an accurate map for county with SNAs that are drawn down to field boundary. They have not taken account of landowners or where it is ecologically possible to restore habitat. This work will be launched in September; deadline has been set by LAA.</p> <p>TC reported that BRERC are under pressure from Cotswold AONB to remap all its SNAs in Avon in line with changes being made in Gloucestershire. They have reservations about this work and how it fits with the Regional NM, for example method used to map to field level and regional consistency of approach that was gained from original workshops. Group discussed this issue and it was raised that regional consistency important originally due to these cross border issues. Group felt a decision needed to be made about whether this type of work represented a local map and priorities or truly reflected regional priorities. There needs to be clarity about what the products are as the Regional NM is in RSS and other strategies. There was an expectation that local refinement would take place but that we can't be heavy handed about this. For example, what Gloucestershire is undertaking is great as they are using the map and making it better, however this has been at the expense of the relationship BRERC have with the Cotswold AONB, and this sort of problem should have been avoided. This break down in communications in partly the fault of BioSW who should have stated how refinement work could be taken forward.</p> <p>CD reported that Devon is also planning to undertake some refinement work on their NM. There are 2 parts to this work – firstly they would like to produce profiles for each SNA similar to a Character Area Profile. This will also provide an opportunity to refine boundaries where there have been mistakes, but they have not yet defined a methodology for this. Devon LBAP will also produce a Devon NM which will identify the county priorities and connectivity issues i.e. riparian networks. The Wildlife Trust and LRC are currently pulling the first draft of this together. Group felt again this raised the importance of not calling these other areas SNAs as there was great potential for confusion with the Regional map.</p>	

<p>Avon has mapped to field level the potential for creation and restoration in each SNA but have not defined SNA boundary. They have also worked with Devon on some SNAs which were originally incorrectly coloured and are holding this information until a process can be put in place to account for these changes.</p> <p>AS reported that Teignbridge District Council have used NM in their LDF but had concerns about the boundaries. They have therefore merged sites from the data layer and have also added Cirl Bunting. They are not happy with detail of draft core strategy and this is going to enquiry.</p> <p>Refinement of NM has to be at a county level as it is a strategic level unit. The purpose of a regional NM was to tell a story and raise awareness. It is tested at the local level where action happens. There is a question about how we get accord right as some of the discussions are hindering local use. Nature Map is a regional opportunity map and therefore where gaps are identified locally these need to be reviewed to determine whether these are regionally or locally important. If regionally important then BioSW will need to sign off this work. Gloucestershire will need to undergo this process. The habitat targets in the RSS may also need to be reviewed for Gloucestershire if the NM changes are significantly. BioSW will also need to define what constitutes a local and regional SNA.</p> <p>There is also a need to clarify in terms of monitoring and mapping ways of targeting and costing in SNAs. Tim fed back on LRC response to this proposal later in meeting.</p> <p>NB and BG to draw up a brief position statement to capture issues raised at meeting to also include discussion about custodianship and ownership of master copy and local data. This will be drawn up in brief and circulated to group for comment. All to submit comments.</p>	<p>NB /BG NB ALL</p>
<p>5. Nature Map Phase 2 Project – Visioning workshops feedback</p>	
<p>SBates and NB gave a brief update on proposed visioning workshops across the region. Ultimate aim of project is to agree challenging visions for one SNA in each of the 7 counties of the SW, to include a dialogue with other sectors on how these visions can be achieved. NB reported that John Waldon has been contracted as facilitator to undertake this contract for BioSW across the region. Prior to John’s appointment the first visioning workshop was held in Devon, which was facilitated by SBates and Craig Dixon. The feedback was generally positive and attendees included representatives from archaeology, the renewable energies sector, farming community, landscape, AONB, Neroche Project/FC and the biodiversity sector. Overall achieved the majority of aims for the day, but lessons have been learnt. John was in attendance at this meeting and has also provided some positive feedback for following sessions. This group wanted to ensure that John and NB manage expectations from these workshops, and consider follow up. NB to prepare a summary sheet of options that can be circulated at workshops to provide examples of opportunities. NB also reported that in the selection of SNAs in other counties she had asked LBAPs to choose SNAs where work was anticipated or opportunities existed to ensure this process was complimentary with existing work programmes and to manage follow up expectations.</p>	<p>NB</p>
<p>6. LDFs and Nature Map</p>	

<p>NB reported that LDF guidance for NM prepared by Mike Oxford was now finalised and ready for circulation. NB presented a draft press release, prepared by Alison Slade, and ‘calling card’. The press release will go to planning press, and be adapted as a cover letter to accompany guidance that will be circulated to head planners. The leaflet will be used to provide a brief summary of guidance whilst also signposting the web link where it can be downloaded and will be circulated to all planning departments etc. ALL to provide comments on press release by Friday 29th June and leaflet by Friday 6th July.</p> <p>Group felt it was important that any ‘stories’ about Local Authorities who are using NM should be collected for future press etc. ALL to send to NB if they have examples. For example South Hams and Dartmoor have used it, in Gloucs NM incorporated in LAA; CS to send NB copy.</p> <p>Group felt that LDF guidance required advocacy plan, NB to review current NM advocacy plan to ensure it’s embedded within this. RA, RDA and GOSW all key audiences, as well as compliance group for RSS.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>ALL CS</p> <p>NB</p>
<p>7. Climate Proofing Nature Map</p>	
<p>NB, SBates and MR reported back on NM climate change proofing workshop that was held in March. There is a need to develop framework to take this work forward and to capture outputs from workshop and momentum. Message from workshop that this was just the start of the process and that there is a need to increase the literacy of BioSW with regard to the climate ‘story’ for biodiversity within 3 years. TC reported BRERC want to progress connectivity issues raised at workshop both within and outside SNAs. This work is to be taken to BioSW Steering Group for discussion about how this can be developed into a programme of work for the partnership.</p> <p>RP meeting with Bournemouth University who are about to undertake a PhD study on climate change and biodiversity issues and are interested in using NM. Devon Wildlife Trust also undertook study on impact of climate change on Devon wildlife. NB to ask Richard White for a copy.</p>	<p>NB NB</p> <p>NB</p>
<p>8. Report back on LRC thoughts</p>	
<p>TC reported that as requested by this group, he presented BRERC work on the Avon SNA project to SWLRCs as a proposal to gain consensus on using this mapping methodology across the rest of the SW. This was not well received by LRCs due to other possible work commitments at the time. One area of concern was lack of funds from BioSW to support this work. TC made the case for work to be supported through other means, for example BRERC sourced money locally for their work, from Local Authorities and LBAP, and in total it cost £6,000 to complete for all Avon SNAs. However, SWLRCs have chosen not to progress this at this time. Devon and Dorset LRCs have consequently asked TC for further details. The NM Group expressed disappointment at this result and has asked that this be considered at another SWLRC meeting.</p> <p>RP reported that a discussion about monitoring NM and other strategies was held at the recent BIRG meeting. This identified that most strategies (i.e. AMRs, LDFs etc) have similar indicator monitoring needs i.e. priority habitats, species and NM. The work that Avon has completed on mapping opportunities in SNAs and proposal for ground truthing</p>	

<p>would provide a framework for developing a system of meeting these indicator needs. BIRG felt a region wide discussion about addressing these needs strategically needs to be held. This will be discussed at the next SWLRC meeting, along with possible proposal from BioSW to undertake a project to identify monitoring needs and costed options for meeting these. LRCs will need help in identifying where money may be sourced to deliver this work. There was a feeling from BIRG that if a range of organizations all need this data for similar needs then there should be a regional agreement about how meet this and financial support for this. TC felt that if the SWLRCs work collectively then delivering this may be a possibility. However the onus is on BioSW to demonstrate that this needs to happen and will need to assist with process. A clear project proposal is required from BioSW to identify needs and outline possible proposal.</p> <p>Region needs to be more strategic in its thinking with regard to LRCs as they are valued in SW but BioSW keep coming up against blocks in working with them effectively. There is a history to explain this view, and lessons should be learnt from previous work. There is a role for BioSW in taking a strategic view of LRCs and partners to ensure LRCs are paid for work. For example opportunities to discuss NERC Act with Local Authorities also need to emphasise the need to support LRCs.</p>	
<p>9. Report back from BIRG</p>	
<p>RP asked question which arose in BIRG with regard to monitoring the effectiveness and implementation of NM. He gave an example of how Cornwall is recording NM project activity. BIRG felt this was a useful way to monitor activity and therefore an output based approach. However this did not address biodiversity outcomes of this work. The monitoring project proposal discussed above could also encompass this need. A targeted monitoring programme concentrating on priority habitats within SNAs could be a potential way forward to meet these needs. Group emphasised need to look at different scales and schemes to come up with a variety of options.</p> <p>BioSW need to map regional data/monitoring needs in terms of BioSW. There needs to be a clear statement of need. There is not enough direction from regional and national bodies on what they need in data terms and they often get caught in long term monitoring. There is a need for fast track monitoring which can't be data heavy, using a different approach such as traffic lights.</p> <p>RP will draw together BIRG notes and circulate to steering group. RP to work with NB to draw up a clear regional data/monitoring proposal to take to LRCs. TC will introduce this to SWLRCs when appropriate, and discuss the need for a number of costed elements. This will be an opportunity to draw together all work discussed under items 8 and 9.</p>	<p>NB/ RP/ TC</p>
<p>10. Communications and advocacy</p>	
<p>NB reported that draft NM leaflet will be revisited, finalised and printed. ALL to feedback comments on leaflet to NB by Friday 6th July.</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>11. AOB</p>	
<p>None</p>	
<p>12. Date of next meeting</p>	
<p>2nd October 2007</p>	

