

South West Wetland Strategy Group

MINUTES

Time: 10.30 am -12.30pm (12.30+ for lunch, then WfW pm)

Date: 14th March 2007

Venue: Natural England, Renslade House, Exeter

Aim of meeting: Look at overview of wetland work in the SW; identify long term project focus; discuss funding and resources.

Attendees:

Water for Wildlife UK Manager – Chris Rostron

South West Biodiversity Co-ordinator - Naomi Brookes

Wessex Water – Ruth Barden

South West Water – Martin Ross, Environmental Planning Manager

South West Water – Cathy McGarvey

EA SW regional - Lyn Jenkins

Apologies:

Somerset Wildlife Trust – Lisa Schneidau

RSPB – Richard Archer

1. Matters arising from last meeting

LJ still to pull list of CSF and other project together.

NE – no obvious rep dealing with wetland issues, or even biodiversity matters.

Biodiversity partnership – **LJ to ask Tim Loveday about pulling out GIS layers for wetlands from the Nature Map.**

Paul Stevens – European Funding Officer, has said that water and wetlands are a priority – **LJ to chase.**

2. Identifying wetland BAP priorities, and checking on progress and whether / how targets are being met.

Review of BAP working group at workshops. Key outcomes were:

- Nature Map and promotion. Need to identify key site for nature conservation and disseminating good practice.
- WFD and diffuse pollution. Need better links to food and farming, as well as AMP / PR09. Important to improve co-ordination between delivery projects. CSF not filtering down to farmers yet. **LJ to check with agric person in EA as to progress. Invite CSF officer to do presentation? LJ**
- RBLP – starting to identify significant water management issues (SWMIS). Need to finalise scope of environmental assessment with cost / benefits identified in October.

3. Pulling out the wetland aspects of Nature Map – link to Wetland Vision

As above, LJ to talk to TL.

4. Update from Biodiversity SouthWest - LJ

As above, item 2. 5 county water vole bid not successful, but could be worked up to submit to other funders.

5. Overview on development of larger landscape scale projects and how proposed targets could be supported through the AMP process.

AMP – previous round done by Doug ? of NE. Still around, but no regional water-related officers at NE. Alastair Burn seems to want to continue focus on SSSI. LJ said that Basil ? is regional link currently.

AMP – work to improve groundwater / river quality will have knock on effects for biodiversity, need to find the links. CM attended catchment management meet at UU, shortly to be follow up meeting held by Severn Trent to pull together best practice. Urban d.p. still not tackled – would be good opportunity to look at SUDS etc in next AMP round.

Wildlife Trusts promoting the large area approach, being more ambitious about creating landscape scale initiatives. Much more focus on joining up reserves and looking at larger blocks of habitat.

6. Funding and support for wetland projects

EA being restructured and funding cut – no support for external projects, apart from two long-term commitments. Regional habitat creation targets do have money attached, as part of national 200ha aim, as well as replacement for Natura 2000 sites. Will need to draw up list of potential sites by end of 2007/8. Difficulty of finding replacement sites may cause problems.

AMP looking like next major opportunity for accessing resources to progress projects on the ground.

7. AOB and date of next meeting

EA lost 61 posts this year, similar number over next two years. Mainly within environmental protection teams. No money for collaborative projects or any end of year underspend. Otter corpse collection – area teams don't have resources to do it, so may rely more on Wildlife Trust officers.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 4th September, 11 – 12.30, EN officers at Exeter, tbc