

**South West Regional Biodiversity Partnership
Nature Map Strategic Working Group Meeting
Friday 31st March 2006
English Nature, Renslade House, Exeter**

Present: Basil Greenwood (EN), Antonia Nichol (NT), Heather Sohl & Rachael Fickweiler (SWRBP), Simon Brenman (SWWT), Mark Robins (RSPB), Harry Barton (Wilts WT), Phil Tolerton (RDS), Lyn Jenkins (EA), Richard Ormerod (GOSW)

Agenda Item	Actions
1. Apologies	
Victoria Whitehouse, Colin Studholme, Pat Lehain, Mark Durk	
2. Development Plan	
<p>MR has produced first draft but cannot put any more time into developing this. HS to produce next draft and subsequently the action plan.</p> <p>SB is meeting with PT and Mark Watson re: NM use in Agri-environment schemes. Carol Somper (Forum for the Future) had expressed concern that this had gone ahead without other sectors (e.g. landscape) engaged, but this was not entirely the case and it was agreed from the beginning that biodiversity would be the priority, working with other sectors later. Integration with other sectors is possible through layering the map for various specific purposes. Gathering case studies to demonstrate this integration will help, e.g. North Wessex Downs project (HB).</p> <p>NM is beginning to be mentioned both regionally and locally and people want to know more about how to use it. Within organisations, awareness is varied. PT felt that there was patchy knowledge within RDS, LJ was planning to inform EA more fully when the supporting information is available. SB felt that the Wildlife Trusts were keen to develop projects but not necessarily working with partners yet. SB would like to see a landscape scale project in each County as examples.</p> <p>Comments incorporated within Nature Map development plan (draft v2 - attached). Importance and urgency were attributed to each action.</p>	HS
3. Use in policy development	
<p><i>RSS</i></p> <p>At present Nature Map (NM) and the SW targets are in the draft RSS. We need to support this through the consultation process (May-July). RO is promoting NM within Government Office. BG is leading on taking NM through to Natural England. Hilary Neale at the Regional Assembly could be called upon to support NM. The Towns, Cities and Development (TCD) group are looking closely at this. It was suggested that a standard paragraph/bullet points could be produced by TCD group for organisations' individual responses. HS to follow up. We need strong messages on NM use in spatial planning beyond the impacts of development. LJ to look at the relevance of NM to appropriate assessment.</p> <p><i>Regional Economic Strategy</i></p> <p>Nature Map is not mentioned specifically in the RES. Need to do some specific work around this but there is not currently a good RBP lead into RES. Donna Sibley is working on the economic driver. LJ to talk to Donna regarding opportunities for NM. BG to work on contacts too. This will require a long term commitment to working with the RDA to increase biodiversity inclusion. Case studies would be useful if they had an economic dimension.</p>	<p>HS LJ</p> <p>LJ BG</p>

<p><i>Guidance on NM use in Local Development Frameworks (LDFs)</i></p> <p>For planners, NM does some of what PPS9 requires of them but the evidence base for this is weak. Need to be clear that NM is more than just a planning tool. RO will ensure that planning colleagues are fully informed of NM. Should the RBP do a presentation to relevant planners?</p> <p>Mike Oxford is preparing guidance on the use of NM in LDFs. Any comments please (by 10th April) to HS. Is there anything missing? LJ commented that she felt it was a good document. The monitoring aspect featured strongly in LDF seminars held so far. Should the guidance encourage planners to go to LBAPs for help?</p>	All
<p>4. Communications</p>	
<p>Pam Beddard is preparing a communications strategy for the SWRBP. She has suggested that NM has its own communications strategy. The group agreed and felt that it would be sensible if Pam was asked to prepare this. HS/RF speak to Pam.</p> <p>The NM leaflet has been produced and we are waiting to find out whether HLF funds can be secured for administration costs. Louise Doret (RSPB) is looking into this. The HLF logo will need to be incorporated into the leaflet if funding is secured. £5k is being requested. The leaflet will be available as a PDF on the SWRBP website when finished. There will also be posters available for use by partners. PT needs copies by the 26th April – HS to provide.</p> <p>The leaflet will be distributed alongside the ‘Your region, your nature’ booklet. Basil will draft a letter to go with this. A distribution list has been collated for this and we need to make sure that no one is missing and that none of the information is out of date. The amended list will be circulated, please have another look at it.</p> <p>The leaflet layout had been discussed in previous meetings. There were still some queries about the leaflet and suggested improvements – HS to assess any suggested changes. 2,000 leaflets will be printed.</p> <p>Several events across the region have been identified for inclusion of NM material: Bristol Festival of Nature, 3-4 June – stand will be included Protected Landscapes Forum, 10 May – BG to host a workshop Wilts BAP Forum, 28 June – PT to do a presentation</p> <p>There is a UK Biodiversity Partnership conference in Belfast which may provide another opportunity for NM publicity. HS/RF to look at possibilities.</p> <p>LJ sits on the L&RSIG and reported that they are very keen on NM. In addition they are trying to get additional interest from aggregates levy companies to involvement with biodiversity. Louise Doret (RSPB) and Phil Denham (EN) to be involved in this – MR and HS to ask them (respectively).</p> <p>There are a critical group of people that we need to get NM messages too, eg farmers, CLA, NFU. This should be at the County level as well as regional level. Need to draw up a list of these organisations and identify the appropriate individuals.</p> <p>It would be useful to share information around opportunity mapping with other regions as some are struggling with this. In regions where maps exist it would be worth looking at the similarities and the way the maps are being used.</p> <p>At the local level it is important to have local biodiversity partnerships support for NM and projects can be initiated through these. RBP will need to help enable this local activity. HS/RF to look at what help LBAPs need to enable this work.</p> <p>LRCs will need to be involved too. SWWT meets with SW LRCs and will bring this up.</p>	<p>RF/HS</p> <p>HS</p> <p>BG</p> <p>RF all</p> <p>HS</p> <p>BG PT</p> <p>HS/RF</p> <p>MR</p> <p>?</p> <p>HS/RF SB</p>

<p>HS will draft a presentation on the NM. PT would like this by 26 April for RDS meeting.</p>	<p>HS</p>
<p>5. Methodology and process for reproducing the NM</p>	
<p><i>Further work on the Rebuilding Biodiversity methodology</i> HB has been looking at the criticisms of the Rebuilding Biodiversity methodology and tabled a paper detailing some first thoughts on a response. In general he felt that some of the criticisms were fair, and some caused by misunderstanding of the methodology. Harry felt that it is difficult to apply the work done on functional aspects of landscape ecology in Welsh woodlands to the SW, but that it should still be used to help inform future work to improve the Rebuilding Biodiversity methodology. HS reported that Kevin Watts who undertook the work in Wales felt that the principles could be applied to habitats other than woodland. PT questioned what the intent was behind the SWWTs recent request by letter (from SB) for partners to engage with improving the Rebuilding Biodiversity methodology. SB responded that SWWT were keen to create a structure within which this level of detail of the work can be discussed. SB was hoping that the letter would generate positive responses from partners stating their willingness to join in and create the energy and drive to move this forward by providing the expertise or maybe financial help. SB would like to widen it out from a Wildlife Trust initiative and is prepared to accept new science to the process. HB feels that the scientific credentials of the methodology have been called into question and he is keen to address this through dialogue. There are two issues to discuss; (i) the credibility of the approach used so far and (ii) the future development of the methodology to improve it. A meeting was suggested with Kevin Watts and Roger Catchpole to discuss the questions and concerns, i.e dealing with issue (i). SWWT will take this forward and SB will organise a meeting in May/June. It was agreed that the NM working group is different to the group needed to discuss the detail of the Rebuilding Biodiversity methodology.</p>	<p>SB</p>
<p>6. AOB</p>	
<p>Pam Beddard has produced a discussion paper on her planned approach to the SWRBP communications strategy. RF will circulate this for comment. Ray Perrins has been appointed as the new Regional Biodiversity Information Manager. He starts on the 10th April and the post is initially for 18 months. The aims of the post are to improve the availability and use of biodiversity information in the SW.</p>	<p>RF</p>
<p>7. Date of next meeting</p>	
<p>4th May, 2pm, Renslade House, Exeter (HB and AN gave their apologies in advance)</p>	