

Provisional Management Plan

Under the restoration scheme for the [REDACTED] it is proposed to manage the new habitat areas for up to 10 years following soils replacement. The newly-created waterbodies, the species rich grassland and woodland areas shall be managed for a period of 10 years, whilst the grassland and hedgerows shall be managed for a period of 5 years. Management of the Northumberland Wildlife Trust (NWT) Reserve area to the east of the site shall continue to be undertaken by the NWT in perpetuity.

The draft proposals detailed below will provide a framework for the management of the restored site areas, into the 15 year management period.

The land will be managed with the aim of conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the site according to the habitat types of the particular areas. The outline aims and proposed techniques will be supplemented by detailed prescriptions for the management of each habitat, to be presented separately for agreement with the MPA. The detailed plans will be submitted prior to the implementation of any works and take into account the requirement for regular review of management operations as the habitats develop.

The management regime for each area of the Site shall be as follows to accord with the requirements of each habitat type: -

Ponds and Waterbodies

The vegetation within and around the existing ponds will be assessed to determine the levels of colonisation by locally native and invasive species. In addition to the management of existing ponds, it is proposed to create new ponds within an area currently managed by the Northumberland Wildlife Trust (NWT) to the east and within the site as part of the restoration proposals. Natural colonisation of two of these newly created ponds is proposed whilst the remaining waterbodies are to be artificially planted-up. Care will be taken to ensure that non-native or invasive species are not included in any donor material.

Fencing of the new ponds and waterbodies will be implemented where required to exclude livestock, to prevent poaching and maintain a balance between ephemeral and more established vegetation.

Areas of open water and associated vegetation will provide habitat for great crested newts and other amphibians and will be left largely unmanaged. The marginal vegetation however will be monitored to ensure that this does not exceed 50% of the open water. If cutting is required it should be undertaken in the autumn (outside of the amphibian breeding season Mid March – Mid June), with the arisings left by the ponds edge for 48 hours to allow any trapped animals to escape. The arisings would then be cleared to the designated composting area. Any scrub tree planting surrounding the water bodies should be controlled to ensure over shading doesn't affect the vegetation within the pond or create considerable leaf fall, (which should be cleared).

Species Rich Grassland within the south western corner of the site

Three years after the initial sowing of the species-rich grassland an assessment will be made of how well the grassland has established. If the sward is suitably robust then an appropriate low intensity mowing regime will be introduced, with the aim of developing the grassland. The regime will also take into account the pond margins to assist colonisation by great crested newts which may extend their range from the adjoining area. Control of invasive scrub species will be undertaken where required. No herbicides or fertilisers should be applied except by prior agreement with Northumberland County Council.

Grassland within the northern half of the site

The grassland across the site will be managed at low intensity with only 50% of the grassland cut at each time to create a variety and structure of grassland habitats that would be of most benefit to great crested newts. The grassland will be cut during spring and late summer to a height no less than 100 mm, with the arisings removed within 48 hours to a designated composting area. This would also act as suitable hibernacula. The remainder of the grassland will be cut every other year. Grassland around the bottom of hedgerows and woodland will not be cut at all, similarly to help provide a more structured habitat.

New Woodland (including woodland edge)

Three years after the initial planting of the woodland an assessment will be made regarding the establishment of these areas. If there has been significant failure then losses will be replaced with agreed species. Management will then be undertaken to promote stand development and control invasive species. The use of herbicides and intervention by mowing will be minimised to allow natural regeneration of ground flora and woody species within the stands, the aim being to create ecologically diverse woodland. The need for brashing or formative pruning will be assessed during the management period and implemented where required.

New Hedgerows

Three years after the initial planting of the hedgerows the hedges will be assessed and beaten up as required. The need for light trimming, to continue the development of a dense hedge will be assessed. Once a hedge is established it is then proposed to initiate a rotational trimming regime under which specific sections of hedge are cut on at least a 1 in 3 year basis, to ensure continued cover and food supply for birds and hedgerow fauna.