

Site Improvement Plan

Rook Clift

Site Improvement Plans (SIPs) have been developed for each Natura 2000 site in England as part of the Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 sites (IPENS). Natura 2000 sites is the combined term for sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protected Areas (SPA). This work has been financially supported by LIFE, a financial instrument of the European Community.

The plan provides a high level overview of the issues (both current and predicted) affecting the condition of the Natura 2000 features on the site(s) and outlines the priority measures required to improve the condition of the features. It does not cover issues where remedial actions are already in place or ongoing management activities which are required for maintenance.

The SIP consists of three parts: a Summary table, which sets out the priority Issues and Measures; a detailed Actions table, which sets out who needs to do what, when and how much it is estimated to cost; and a set of tables containing contextual information and links.

Once this current programme ends, it is anticipated that Natural England and others, working with landowners and managers, will all play a role in delivering the priority measures to improve the condition of the features on these sites.

The SIPs are based on Natural England's current evidence and knowledge. The SIPs are not legal documents, they are live documents that will be updated to reflect changes in our evidence/knowledge and as actions get underway. The information in the SIPs will be used to update England's contribution to the UK's Prioritised Action Framework (PAF).

The SIPs are not formal consultation documents, but if you have any comments about the SIP or would like more information please email us at IPENSLIFEProject@naturalengland.org.uk, or contact Natural England's Responsible Officer for the site via our enquiry service 0300 060 3900, or enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

This Site Improvement Plan covers the following Natura 2000 site(s)

UK0030058 Rook Clift SAC

Site description

Rock Cliff SAC is a *Tilio-Acerion* forest of slopes, screes and ravines, associated with rocky slopes on the base rich soils of the South Downs. This ancient woodland is dominated by large coppice stools of Large-leaved lime *Tilia platyphyllos*, together with Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and some Beech *Fagus sylvatica*. The presence of Large-leaved lime as a canopy dominant makes this woodland virtually unique. The site also supports a number of mollusc species, notably the Cheese snail *Helicodonta obvolvata*, and a rich bryophyte flora.

Plan Summary

This table shows the prioritised issues for the site(s), the features they affect, the proposed measures to address the issues and the delivery bodies whose involvement is required to deliver the measures. The list of delivery bodies will include those who have agreed to the actions as well as those where discussions over their role in delivering the actions is on-going.

Priority & Issue	Pressure or Threat	Feature(s) affected	Measure	Delivery Bodies
1 Deer	Pressure/ Threat	H9180 Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes	Partnership working to maintain deer populations at a suitable level.	Forestry Commission, Natural England, The Deer Initiative
2 Forestry and woodland management	Threat	H9180 Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes	Finalise Woodland Management Plan and implement recommendations.	Forestry Commission, Natural England, South Downs National Park Authority, Landowner(s)
3 Feature location/ extent/ condition unknown	Threat	H9180 Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes	Carry out Large-leaved lime survey.	Forestry Commission, Natural England, Landowner(s)

Issues and Actions

This table outlines the prioritised issues that are currently impacting or threatening the condition of the features, and the outstanding actions required to address them. It also shows, where possible, the estimated cost of the action and the delivery bodies whose involvement will be required to implement the action. Lead delivery bodies will be responsible for coordinating the implementation of the action, but not necessarily funding it. Delivery partners will need to support the lead delivery body in implementing the action. In the process of developing the SIPs Natural England has approached the delivery bodies to seek agreement on the actions and their roles in delivering them, although in some cases these discussions have not yet been concluded. Other interested parties, including landowners and managers, will be involved as the detailed actions are agreed and delivered. Funding options are indicated as potential (but not necessarily agreed or secured) sources to fund the actions.

1 Deer

Deer are currently present in numbers that threaten potential regeneration of the woodland shrub and canopy species.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1A	Continue with partnership working between the Forestry Commission and the Deer initiative to ensure deer populations are maintained at an acceptable level in the area. Provide infrastructure to enable deer control and install deer exclusion fencing to enable 5 year monitoring of woodland regeneration.	£2,500	2015-20	Partnership agreement	Staff time, New Environmental Land Management Scheme (NELMS)	Natural England	Forestry Commission, The Deer Initiative

2 Forestry and woodland management

The woodland as a whole requires management, however, there is currently no agreed management plan in place stating management priorities or timescales. Previous recommendations to coppice the Large-leaved lime have been followed. Further work is required for sustainable management into the future.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
2A	Work with the landowner to submit a Woodland Management Plan that will address the health and ongoing management of the woodland at Rook Cliff.	£1,000	2014-15	Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE): England Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS)	England Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS)	Forestry Commission	Natural England, Landowner(s)

<i>Action</i>	<i>Action description</i>	<i>Cost estimate</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Mechanism</i>	<i>Funding option</i>	<i>Delivery lead body</i>	<i>Delivery partner(s)</i>
2B	Work with the Landowner to submit a Countryside Stewardship application that addresses the recommendations from the EWGS Woodland Management Plan. Work with the South Downs National Park to support action on the ground.	£10,000	2015-20	Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE): Common Agricultural Policy 2014-20 (New Environmental Land Management Scheme)	New Environmental Land Management Scheme (NELMS)	Forestry Commission	Natural England, South Downs National Park Authority, Landowner(s)

3 Feature location/ extent/ condition unknown

The distribution and abundance of Large-leaved lime trees within the woodland is not recorded. It is therefore not possible to monitor change or identify management requirements.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Action description</i>	<i>Cost estimate</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Mechanism</i>	<i>Funding option</i>	<i>Delivery lead body</i>	<i>Delivery partner(s)</i>
3A	Carry out a Large-leaved lime survey in Rock Clift that maps each mature tree and notes regeneration.	£1,100	2015	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	New Environmental Land Management Scheme (NELMS)	Natural England	Forestry Commission, Landowner(s)

Site details

The tables in this section contain site-relevant contextual information and links

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Rook Clift SAC H9180# *Tilio-Acerion* forests of slopes, screes and ravines

Site location and links

Rook Clift SAC

Area (ha) **10.82** Grid reference **SU820182** [Map link](#)

Local Authorities West Sussex

Site Conservation Objectives [European Site Conservation Objectives for Rook Clift SAC](#)

European Marine Site conservation advice [n/a](#)

Regulation 33/35 Package [n/a](#)

Marine Management Organisation site plan [n/a](#)

Water Framework Directive (WFD)

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) provides the main framework for managing the water environment throughout Europe. Under the WFD a management plan must be developed for each river basin district. The River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) include a summary of the measures needed for water dependent Natura 2000 sites to meet their conservation objectives. For the second round of RBMPs, SIPs are being used to capture the priorities and new measures required for water dependent habitats on Natura 2000 sites. SIP actions for non-water dependent sites/habitats do not form part of the RBMPs and associated consultation.

Rook Clift SAC

River basin

[South East RBMP](#)

WFD Management catchment

Arun & Western Streams

WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)

n/a

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Rook Clift SAC	Rook Clift SSSI

National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Rook Clift SAC	n/a

Ramsar	
Rook Clift SAC	n/a

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Rook Clift SAC	n/a

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1.0	06/03/15	

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ipens2000

