

Site Improvement Plan

Subberthwaite, Blawith & Torver Low Commons

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)

UK0030285 Subberthwaite, Blawith & Torver Low Commons SAC

Site description

Subberthwaite, Blawith and Torver Low Commons SAC comprises a range of upland habitats including twenty-nine types of mire plant communities, heath, open water, base rich flushes, acid grassland, bracken and some woodland and juniper scrub.

Located in the south of the Lake District National Park, Cumbria, this diverse mosaic of habitats supports an Outstanding Dragonfly Assemblage, Natterjack Toads and rare sedge, rush and orchid species.

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 Hydrological changes	Pressure	H7140 Very wet mires often identified by an unstable `quaking` surface, H7150 Depressions on peat substrates	Investigate hydrological damage and restore where appropriate	Lake District National Park Authority, Natural England
2 Change in land management	Pressure	H7140 Very wet mires often identified by an unstable `quaking` surface, H7150 Depressions on peat substrates	Implement an agri-environment scheme in order to manage to appropriate grazing levels	Natural England
3 Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Threat	H7140 Very wet mires often identified by an unstable `quaking` surface, H7150 Depressions on peat substrates	Investigate solutions to atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Natural England
4 Public Access/Disturbance	Pressure	H7140 Very wet mires often identified by an unstable `quaking` surface, H7150 Depressions on peat substrates	Continue to support the actions of the community group which is addressing the problem	Lake District National Park Authority, Natural England
5 Vehicles: illicit	Pressure/Threat	H7140 Very wet mires often identified by an unstable `quaking` surface, H7150 Depressions on peat substrates	Reduce and control damage by vehicles	Cumbria Constabulary, Lake District National Park Authority, Natural England
6 Deer	Threat	H7140 Very wet mires often identified by an unstable `quaking` surface, H7150 Depressions on peat substrates	Continue to support The Deer Initiative	Lake District National Park Authority, The Deer Initiative

7	Water Pollution	Threat	H7140 Very wet mires often identified by an unstable `quaking` surface, H7150 Depressions on peat substrates	Investigate any possible sources of pollution, and manage appropriately	Environment Agency, Natural England
8	Climate change	Threat	H7140 Very wet mires often identified by an unstable `quaking` surface, H7150 Depressions on peat substrates	Restore the site to make it as resilient as possible to the challenges of climate change	Lake District National Park Authority, Natural England

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 Hydrological changes

Historic anthropogenic modification of the SAC features, principally through alteration to the underlying hydrology through the creation and maintenance of drains, works to dry and in turn degrade the features.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1A	Undertake hydrological survey and remediation works	£30,000	2014-18	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Not yet determined	Natural England	Lake District National Park Authority
1B	Hydrological restoration works	£200,000	2014-18	Habitat creation / restoration strategy: Habitat restoration	HLS/NELMS	Natural England	n/a

2 Change in land management

Expiry of an Environmental Stewardship Agreement terminated current influence upon the land management decisions relating to this site. Specific grazing regimes and nutrient input restrictions are critical to the conservation of the SAC features and these measures may not be implemented in the absence of an agri-environment scheme.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
2A	Continue negotiations with the Commoners to take up an agri-environment agreement.	£50,400	2014	Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE): Environmental Stewardship Entry Level Scheme (ELS)	Rural Development Programme (RDPE)	Natural England	n/a

<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	Continue negotiations with the Commoners to take up an agri-environment agreement.	£180,000	2014	Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE): Environmental Stewardship Higher Level Scheme (HLS)	Rural Development Programme (RDPE)	Natural England	n/a
<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>
2C	Continue negotiations with the Commoners to take up an agri-environment agreement.			Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE): Common Agricultural Policy 2014-20 (New Environmental Land Management Scheme)	Rural Development Programme (RDPE)	Natural England	n/a

3 Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

Atmospheric nitrogen deposition currently exceeds the site-relevant critical load for ecosystem protection and in turn, there is a risk of harmful effects to both SAC features despite them currently being in favourable condition. The critical load for both SAC features is 10-15kg/N/ha/yr whilst the average deposition is 18.43 kg/N/ha/yr and the total deposition is 21.98 kg/N/ha/yr. This can have a direct, negative impact upon bryophytes and can be toxic to vascular plants and mycorrhiza.

<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	Further investigate potential atmospheric nitrogen impacts on the site, based on the application of guidance from Chief Scientist Group Nitrogen Task and Finish Group.	Not yet determined	2014-17	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Not yet determined	Natural England	Not yet determined

4 Public Access/Disturbance

Subberthwaite, Blawith and Tover Low Commons SAC experiences a high annual footfall. This public pressure potentially damages the SAC features through littering, noise pollution, footpath erosion, and disturbance of ground flora and fauna by dogs.

<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>
4A	Investigate the extent of impacts on the SAC features.	Not yet determined	2014-20	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Not yet determined	Not yet determined	Lake District National Park Authority, Natural England
4B	Support the local community group.	Not yet determined	2014-20	Advice: Access Strategy	Not yet determined	Not yet determined	Lake District National Park Authority, Natural England

5 Vehicles: illicit

Illegal use of this site for off-road vehicles could directly damage the surface of the SAC features.

<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>
5A	Help the local community in prevention of illegal use of the area by motor vehicles. This should be primarily by the Police due to their powers under the Road Traffic Act and the National Park.	Not yet determined	2014-20	Advice: Access Strategy	Not yet determined	Not yet determined	Cumbria Constabulary, Lake District National Park Authority, Natural England

6 Deer

Despite uncertainty surrounding the population size and distribution of deer on the site, their browsing and wallowing appears to be damaging the surface of the SAC features and no management decisions have yet been made regarding their control. This threat requires further investigation and monitoring.

<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>
6A	Maintain funding to The Deer Initiative and South Cumbria Deer Management Group, to monitor and control deer where appropriate.	£5,000	2014-20	Partnership agreement	SSSI funding	The Deer Initiative	Lake District National Park Authority

7 Water Pollution

The SAC features may be negatively influenced by diffuse water pollution stemming from intensively farmed holdings within the surrounding catchment. This may be enhancing the nutrient regime of the site and in turn, altering the composition of these habitats.

<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>
7A	Investigation of water quality flowing onto the site.	£30,000	2014-16	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	SSSI funding	Natural England	Environment Agency
7B	Depending on the outcome of the above water pollution investigation, further action may be needed to eliminate or reduce impacts through a Diffuse Water Pollution plan and/or monitoring.	£10,000	2016-20	Diffuse Water Pollution Plan	SSSI funding	Natural England	Environment Agency

8 Climate change

Alterations in temperature and rainfall patterns and carbon dioxide concentrations as a result of climatic change may negatively impact upon the SAC features. Many of the species associated with these features are sensitive to such changes as they exist within a narrow tolerance range of environmental conditions. Changes could include the loss of wetlands through dessication.

<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>
8A	Investigate the effects of climate change on SAC features.	£30,000	2014-18	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Not yet determined	Natural England	Lake District National Park Authority
8B	Review the outcomes of the study, and undertake works to ensure the robustness of habitats potentially affected by climate change.	£200,000	2014-18	Habitat creation / restoration strategy: Habitat restoration	HLS/NELMS	Natural England	n/a

Site details

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

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Subberthwaite, Blawith & Torver Low Commons SAC	H7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs
	H7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i>

Site location and links

Subberthwaite, Blawith & Torver Low Commons SAC

Area (ha) **1865.17** Grid reference **SD269896** [Map link](#)

Local Authorities Cumbria

Site Conservation Objectives [European Site Conservation Objectives for Subberthwaite, Blawith & Torver Low Commons 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.

Subberthwaite, Blawith & Torver Low Com

<i>River basin</i>	North West	North West RBMP
<i>WFD Management catchment</i>	Kent/Leven	
<i>WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)</i>	GB31229321, n/a	

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Subberthwaite, Blawith & Torver Low Commons SAC	Subberthwaite, Blawith & Torver Low Commons SSSI

National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Subberthwaite, Blawith & Torver Low Commons SAC	n/a

Ramsar	
Subberthwaite, Blawith & Torver Low Commons SAC	n/a

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Subberthwaite, Blawith & Torver Low Commons S	n/a

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1.0	09/10/2014	

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