

English Nature Research Report 641

Best practice study - ‘opportunity’ maps for landscape scale conservation of biodiversity

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Introduction

English Nature is aware of a number of approaches which have aimed to deliver biodiversity, on a landscape scale, by the restoration, re-creation and creation of BAP habitat. These approaches might be described as "opportunity maps" : the term "nature map" or "ecological network" is also used. In particular a number of projects have focused on producing maps which set out where habitats should / could be created. English Nature is interested in the concept and how it might be applied at a range of spatial scales from national to local .

What was done

An analysis of the generic issues surrounding "opportunity map" products was undertaken in conjunction with the developers of the maps, their partners and using peer reviews :

- what was the motivation to produce the map(s) in the first instance ?
- how these maps made available ?
- the ownership of the map and reaction to it (positive and negative) within the environmental groups and in the wider world ?
- the scope of the map and whether or not only environmental dimensions were taken on board ?
- how successful was the subsequent use of the map as a means of influencing policy and delivery on the ground ?

Results and conclusions

A table summarising where all (40) known opportunity maps have been produced on a district, county or regional scale in England . The table will contain links to images of the maps and provide links to, or at least references to material which is available.

A short list of up to 8 maps / products, to be studied to address best practice and the key issues arising from the development and use of the product.

Examination of how such maps fit with existing strategies such as BAP, Local (Development) Plans, regional planning guidance, agri environment targeting, and how different methodologies can be matched and note the outstanding issues which have limited the uptake or use of the product.

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English Nature's viewpoint

This is an existing and emerging area of work which has implications not only for the delivery of BAP but also how conservation measures can be delivered in the context of other drivers and issues. The work is particularly relevant as it can provide guidance to organisations contemplating developing such maps. It is relevant to the promulgation of an ABD approach and is also significant in terms of the way Natural England might address nature conservation, landscape and land management issues.

Selected references

ENGLISH NATURE. 2003. Report to English Nature Council - *A nature map of England*. PowerPoint presentation. Simon Bates, Exeter office.

ENGLISH NATURE. Natural Area Profiles - provide a comprehensive overview of the nature conservation interests within each of the 120 Natural Areas. Available as CD-ROM from English Nature.

GRIFFITHS, G. and others. 2004. The Living Landscapes Project - Landscape character and biodiversity. *English Nature Research reports*, No. 475.
A useful overview of recent landscape character work and its role and influence on biodiversity including restoring landscapes.

ENGLISH NATURE. Lifescapes - English Nature draft internal review document. Summary of concept and outputs.

Norfolk (L BAP) - enhancement areas. see map in Appendix 4 below. Available from:
<http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/images/Biodiversity%20Poster.pdf>

Newlands - Assessment of derelict land for new woodland planting - but assessment against environmental, social and economic attributes. Available from: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newlands>
[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/PBRSMMethodology.pdf/\\$FILE/PBRSMMethodology.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/PBRSMMethodology.pdf/$FILE/PBRSMMethodology.pdf)

Kent Lifescapes Information system (KLIS) - Kent County Council trial website showing habitat opportunities down to field level in Kent. (public release autumn 2004?) Contact
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OWLS - Oxfordshire County Council - use of LDU2s (landscape characterisation) as a unit with "bio-scoring". Enhancement opportunities recorded for each area. (OWLS final report Vol. 2 Landscape Types - Landscape guidelines and Biodiversity Strategy with Recommendations).
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Further information

For the full report or other publications on this subject, please contact the Enquiry Service on 01733 455100/101/102 or email enquiries@english-nature.org.uk

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