

Appendix 7

Natural England management objectives

2.4 Site Objectives

i) Objectives

Management plan objectives set out what we want to do during the period of the plan to move the site towards realisation of the Vision.

Individual objectives should be specific to a feature or group of features, measurable and achievable within the plan period. To allow us to monitor achievement of objectives, one or more measurable attributes are identified for each interest feature. A site-specific target, which defines the desired condition of the feature, is then assigned to each attribute.

Attributes

An attribute is defined as a characteristic of a feature which can be monitored to provide an indication of its condition. For each feature of interest it should be possible to define one or more attributes for which targets can be set to allow us to monitor achievement of objectives. Examples of typical attributes are listed in the following table:

Feature	Examples of Attributes
Geological/geomorphological	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extent of exposure/landform• Integrity of exposure/landform• Visibility, e.g. vegetation cover, obscuring trees
Biological habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extent• Distribution• Habitat structure• Physical characteristics, e.g. sward height• Floristic composition, e.g. presence or absence of positive/negative indicator species
Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Population size• Species distribution• Habitat factors
Archaeological/historical features	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fabric condition• Sward structure• Scrub cover• Other structures, e.g. no fence posts
Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fabric condition• Status of tenure
Public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visitor levels, trends and/or types• Numbers of events/type of events• Accessibility for various users
Education, Research Demonstration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of events/users• Accessibility
Estate assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fabric condition• Compliance with legal obligations

For further information on biological and geological/geomorphological attributes, see Natural England's Intranet site or the JNCC website: www.jncc.gov.uk

Targets

Targets describe the desired state of an attribute under normal conditions. Because wildlife populations are subject to natural change it may be necessary to set targets within a range, rather than fixed upper or lower limits.

ii) Methods

This section explains how we intend to implement the objectives. Achievement of objectives may be possible via a range of methods, of which one or more may be deemed suitable for this site. The preferred way of approaching this section is therefore to briefly describe the range of management options and then, by reviewing constraints and other factors, identify the most appropriate method. References used to support decisions or, for biological objectives, appropriate case studies described on www.conservationevidence.com, should be listed at the end of the section. When deciding on methods, particular consideration should be given to social, environmental and economic sustainability.

Likely Significant Effect

On cSAC, SPA and Ramsar sites the method statement should assess the likely significant effect of the management proposals on the internationally important features of the site (see Section A.1 .b). This should therefore confirm that either;

- the works proposed are necessary for the nature conservation management of the site
- the proposals are not necessary for nature conservation management but will have no significant effect on the internationally important nature conservation features of the site

A text box is provided in the templates for this purpose.

iii) Monitoring

The final stage of objective setting is to outline how achievement of this objective will be monitored. This should comprise a brief statement describing the method of monitoring that will be used for each of the targets described.

2.4.1 Geological and Biological Objectives

Each of the key features shaded grey in Section 1.8.1 needs to be addressed within the Site Objectives. In some cases a single feature may require a single objective; more commonly it should be possible to group features into a limited number of objectives, using the BAP Broad Habitat groupings as a guide. For example, a range of neutral grassland communities within a hay meadow reserve may all need identical management, in which case a single objective can be used to cover a number of habitat and species features (see example below).

Separate objectives should only be written for non-priority features (unshaded cells in Table 1.8.1) when they cannot be incorporated into objectives for the key features.

Geological and biological objectives and their associated attributes and targets should closely follow the site-specific standard Conservation Objectives for the constituent SSSI (see Common Standards Monitoring, Section A.1 .c). However, as targets for achievement of favourable condition may be on a shorter or longer timescale than the plan period, and because aspirations for NNRs may extend beyond favourable condition, management plan targets need not necessarily be identical to those derived for CSM.

The full set of standard Conservation Objectives for the site should be referenced or hyperlinked or may be appended to the main plan.

There is no requirement to set individual attributes and targets for non-priority features but their management should be encompassed in the Objective Methods.

Example: 2.4.1 Biological Objective	
Objective 1:	
Subject to natural change, to maintain the unimproved neutral grassland in favourable condition, with particular reference to the internationally important lowland haymeadow community (MG4: <i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> - <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i> grassland) and its associated species.	
Features addressed by this objective:	
1, 2, 3	
Attributes/targets for key features:	
<p>Feature 1: MG4 grassland Attribute: Extent Target: MG4 present over 60-75% of whole site area (approx. 26-33ha) (see Map xx)</p> <p>Attribute: Sward structure Target: Sward height <10cm in summer, no more than 5% bare ground or 25% litter cover</p> <p>Attribute: Sward composition Target: 40-90% herbs in sward prior to hay cut</p> <p>Feature 2: MG8 grassland Attribute: Extent Target: MG8 present over 5-15% of whole site area (approx 2-7 ha) (see Map xx)</p> <p>Attribute: Sward structure Target: Sward height 5-15cm in June-August, no more than 15% bare ground in May & 5% in July, no more than 25% litter cover</p> <p>Feature 3: Snakeshead fritillary Attribute: Extent Target: Sub-populations present in at least 5 meadows</p> <p>Attribute: Population size Target: A minimum of 250 flowering plants with 75% producing seedheads</p>	

<p>Objective Methods:</p>
<p>MG4 grassland is traditionally managed as hay meadow with a late hay cut followed by aftermath grazing. MG8 grassland is characteristically managed as summer grazed pasture, with ground conditions often being too wet in the summer months to permit the taking of a hay crop. However, as much of the MG8 at Mottey occurs as mosaics within the MG4 it is not possible to manage the communities differently.</p> <p>The hay meadows should ideally be mown after the rare/local plants have set seed around the middle of July. However, hay may be cut earlier to accommodate agricultural practices if the crop is far enough advanced to permit this to take place. Aftermath grazing by cattle or sheep should generally follow from early September to the end of October, but stock may need to be removed earlier if wet ground conditions start to cause poaching. Shading of the community by overhanging branches should be prevented by appropriate hedgerow management.</p> <p>Other management practices, such as chain harrowing, may be continued on the hay meadows, to remove dead grass, clear the ground and rejuvenate the sward, but only before the breeding waders have arrived (i.e. before 31 March) and if the ground is dry enough to support the farm machinery. However, this should only take place when justified on sound conservation grounds or to prevent proven damage to farm machinery. This will prevent disturbance to the nesting birds, damage to early-flowering plants, e.g. snakeshead fritillary, and rutting of the fields.</p> <p>Management of the grassland communities will also necessitate maintaining appropriate water table levels (high winter water levels but a lowering of the water table in late spring) by controlling the system of underground drains and surface drainage ditches, and by liaising with neighbouring landowners and other statutory agencies to prevent activities leading either to the drawdown of the water table or diversion of the water supply away from the reserve.</p> <p>Occasional applications of well-rotted farmyard manure should be tolerated in the hay meadows to maintain yields, at a rate not exceeding 3 tonnes per hectare per 5 years. No other inputs of fertilizer are necessary or desirable.</p> <p>As a component of the MG4 grassland, the snakeshead fritillary has identical management requirements. Additional management is therefore restricted to avoidance of trampling of flowering plants in April and early May and possible protection from browsing hares to ensure seed production.</p>
<p>Likely Significant Effect: These proposals are necessary for the nature conservation management of the site.</p>
<p>Monitoring Methods:</p>
<p>Monitoring of vegetation communities will be undertaken as part of the standard site condition assessment. The snakeshead fritillary population will be monitored by annual counts of flowering plants and seedheads. Regular monitoring of water table levels and occasional monitoring of soil and water chemistry should also be undertaken.</p>

2.4.2 Landscape and Cultural Objectives

When writing objectives for conservation of landscape features, bear in mind that landscapes are dynamic features subject to change and modification. Future change should therefore be accepted, but the rate and scale of change may need to be considered in the plan.

Objectives should be written for all the key features ticked in the grey cells of Tables 1.8.2 and 1.8.3, as for biological features. Separate objectives should only be written for non-priority features (unshaded cells) when they cannot be incorporated into objectives for the key features. As for geological and biological objectives there is no requirement to set individual attributes and targets for non-priority features.

Objectives for scheduled monuments and other historic buildings can be written as for biological objectives, with a goal of achieving and maintaining good condition.

Every plan should include an objective which addresses the socio-economic use of the site. This should consider Natural England's relationships with other users and how we manage those relationships.

Similarly, every plan should include one or more objectives which address education, research, demonstration and public access, drawing from access and interpretation plans for the site as appropriate.

Example: 2.4.2 Landscape & Cultural Objectives - Public Access

Objective 4:

To encourage low-key public access to the site at a level that is compatible with the conservation requirements of the reserve's wildlife and historical features.

Features addressed by this objective:

16

Attributes/targets for key features

Feature 16: Public access

Attribute: Visitor numbers

Target: 3000-5000 visitors p.a.

Attribute: Visitor satisfaction

Target: 90% of visitors satisfied with the experience of their visit.

Objective Methods:

Public access to the site is currently provided via the network of public footpaths and bridleways (see Access Provision map) and through a programme of escorted visits. The access policy for the reserve identifies a restricted area for visitors to the south and west of the lake; this objective will therefore be achieved through the development of access facilities in the northern and eastern parts of the reserve.

Whilst access to the reserve via public transport is relatively easy, a lack of car parking makes development of further access difficult. The main priority for the period of this management plan is for the provision of a small car park off Wood Lane and the provision of an easy-access path to the public hide at the east end of the lake. Interpretation of the reserve's wildlife, the important glacial landscape formations and historical features should be enhanced through interpretation panels in appropriate places and through the provision of a local walks leaflet, which should be made available at appropriate outlets in the neighbourhood.

Natural England will participate in the local access initiative currently being developed by the County Council which seeks to provide a variety of opportunities for sustainable access in the area.

Likely Significant Effect: These proposals are not necessary for nature conservation management but will have no significant effect on the internationally important nature conservation features of the site.

Monitoring Methods:

Visitor numbers will be monitored following the installation of a visitor counter in the Wood Lane car park. Visitor satisfaction will be measured via a questionnaire to site visitors.

2.4.3 Estate Asset Objectives

Estate Asset Objectives should cover all items listed in Table 1.8.7 and should also address health and safety compliance on the reserve. An individual objective should be included for the latter.

A chartered surveyor must be consulted when assessing the status of property assets.

Example: 2.4.3 Estate Asset Objective

Objective 7:

To maintain reserve buildings and estate structures not addressed by other objectives in an appropriate condition

Features addressed by this objective:

23, 24, 25, 26

Attributes/targets

Feature 23: Access drive and bridge

Attribute: Fabric condition

Target: Maintain in good serviceable condition

Feature 24: Reserve Base

Attribute: Fabric condition

Target: Maintain in good serviceable condition

Feature 25: Old Pumphouse

Attribute: Fabric condition

Target: Keep weatherproof

Feature 26: Fishing Rights

Attribute: Lease expiry

Target: Renew in Year 4

Objective Methods:

Regular maintenance of all the above is required to keep them in desired condition.

Under the terms of the NNR lease Natural England is required to maintain the main access track and the old railway bridge. Potholes appearing in the track should be infilled with crushed stone and compacted and the bridge should be repointed as and when required

The reserve base should be treated with a water-based preservative on a 3 year rolling programme.

Maintenance of the old Pumphouse, which is used as a materials store will require occasional repointing and replacement of roof tiles, as appropriate, to maintain it in a weatherproof condition.

The fishing lease expires in 2009; renewal negotiations should seek to establish a no-fishing zone at the west end of the lake to reduce disturbance of wildfowl.

Likely Significant Effect: These proposals are not necessary for nature conservation management but will have no significant effect on the internationally important nature conservation features of the site.

Monitoring Methods:

All buildings/structures will inspected as part of six-monthly reserve safety inspection and as part of triennial audit by the Buildings Manager. A full structural survey of the bridge should be undertaken every 10 years. In addition, the electrical installations at the reserve base will be checked every three years by a qualified electrician.