

WBP Coastal Ecosystem Group 11th Meeting June 3rd 2014, Ynyslas National Nature Reserve

Present: Mike Howe (NRW) Joint Chair; Emmer Litt (NRW) Joint Chair ; Sean McHugh (WBP); Rick Park (NRW); Olivia Burgess (Crown Estates); John Clark (WEL/RSPB Cymru); Heather Lewis (NRW); Duncan Ludlow (NRW); Mike Bailey (NRW); Angus Garbutt (Centre for Ecology and Hydrology); Steve Chambers (Welsh Government); Sue Byrne (NRW)

Apologies: Jane Hodges (Pembrokeshire Coast NPA); Matty Murphy (NRW); Mark Winder (Swansea CBC); Quentin Grimley (NRW); Chris Wynne (Wildlife Trusts Wales); Nick Edwards (NRW); Kirsty Lindenbaum (NRW); Shelagh Malham (Bangor University); Pippa Moore (Aberystwyth University); Kate Collins (NRW); Julie Creer (NRW)

1. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the January 2014 meeting were accepted as a true record.

2. Rick Park, national habitat creation manager with NRW and Olivia Burgess, Marine Policy Manager with Crown Estates attended the meeting and both gave presentations.
3. Group Updates. The 'Recording coastal environmental change' report is expected to be available in July. NRW are compiling the report to present to WG – the rapid response coastal infrastructure /defence headline report was produced earlier in the year and Emmer circulated the Wales Coastal Flooding Review Phase 2 Report. Thank you for all CEG input to date. Heather Lewis, Coastal Ecology Specialist at NRW attended the meeting and together with Julie Creer will take a lead on driving the work of the group forward. Julie is taking the lead on sand dunes, soft cliff and vegetated shingle, with Heather leading on saltmarsh and hard cliff. John Clarke (RSPB Cymru) informed the group that his organisation is working with NRW on purchasing a site near Twyn containing sand dune and shingle habitats.
4. Evidence Gaps. CEG needs to review & refine evidence gaps work to complement the Academics spring seminar held in Cardiff. Due to diary clash CEG were unable to attend the seminar. A report is expected in the coming weeks and the evidence gaps work is listed on the WBP web site <http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/en-GB/WBP-Evidence-Gaps-Project>
5. £6m Nature Fund. Mike Howe and Olivia Burgess attended the Llandudno Junction nature fund workshop and selected CEG members submitted coastal projects. Welsh Government will be contacting all organisations who submitted projects and informing them of the next steps. The emphasis will be on collaborative multi-partner projects in the seven Nature Action Zones. All project proposals and supporting information are available to view on the Welsh Government website link: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/natural-resources-management/nature-fund/?lang=en>
6. Article 17 Reporting. Condition assessment metrics available for qualifying species & habitat SAC features from the JNCC website <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6397>. CEG members are encouraged to study the Welsh section of the report. If required, Mike Howe can distil the information further if CEG members require.

7. Sea Cliff Symposium Sept 2013. The Symposium proceedings will feature in the Journal of Coastal Conservation and Mike Howe will send a link to the proceedings when available.
8. Priority Habitat Maps. Maps and associated synopsis are available for sand dune, saltmarsh, maritime hard cliff and soft cliff from <http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/en-GB/Coastal> and GIS layers are available from NRW. A mapping review is needed together with integration with particularly lowland grassland & heathland mapping to promote connectivity & landscape scale projects. Heather Lewis and Julie [surname] will take this work forward.
9. CEG work plan/ membership. CEG Work plan has been updated & extended to 2016 and will be reviewed at the next meeting. CEG Membership list - Mike and Emmer will start this work off before handing over to Heather and Julie.
10. Coastal Habitat Creation Session

CEG received two presentations from Rick Park and Olivia Burgess respectively.

National Habitat Creation Programme Rick Park, NRW

NHCP programme is designed to establish new habitats to compensate for losses to protected habitats resulting from coastal squeeze. The programme aims to create like-for-like habitat compensation by converting land to generate new habitats such as saltmarsh. In due course, the newly created habitats will be designated as SAC's and SPA's in addition to providing coastal protection for communities.

Coastal Squeeze context: Coastal squeeze is the process where intertidal habitats are progressively reduced in area and lose functionality when caught between rising sea level and fixed sea defences or high ground.

NRW lead on the work in Wales with multi-partner support including Welsh Government, Local Authorities, Crown Estates & third sector organisations. Habitat Assessment are required when coastal defences form part of Natura 2000 sites and this programme is a strategic measure to address mitigation for major pressures by 2015. Protection of people and properties forms a significant element of the work in addition to coastal habitat compensation. A sea level rise of 80cm in the next 100 years was used as a baseline to extrapolate likely effects on the Welsh coast. Sand flats, mud flats and saltmarsh are the most likely habitats to be created during the course of the programme typically on a 1:3 ratio. A 50-100k habitat creation cost per hectare is used as the threshold in determining project initiation. Potential sites and the compensation levels are outlined in the presentation for given time frames. By 2025, 784 Ha of intertidal habitat compensation will be required. Note: the Severn Estuary SAC/SPA habitat loss (679Ha) is included in the 2025 total and 2/3 of this figure relates to England. Habitat loss scenarios are also given for 2055 and 2105.

Sandscaping in the UK: Introduction to the SuCCeSS framework Olivia Burgess Crown Estates

Sandscaping involves 'working with nature' to:

- Support dune flood defences
- Gradually supplies sediment to both sides

- Large scale experiment for innovative coastal management
- New habitat creation– above and under water
- Create transformed habitats for recreation through coastal realignment

The project aims to deliver long-term confidence and economic, social and environmental benefits for coastal communities with minimal risk using proven technologies. Present phase- early stage thinking; driving forces are innovation; collaboration; and changing people's perceptions.

The project is envisaged to have a 20 year lifespan and a pilot study is currently taking place in the Netherlands with the preliminary results released in 2016. The sand/shingle used for 'landscaping' is typically sourced from marine dredging activities.

SUCCESS - Sustainable Coastal Communities through coastal Engineering and Landscaping is about enabling sustainable coastal communities through governance and capacity building underpinned by healthy ecosystems. Crown estates are in discussions with Welsh Government, NRW & local Authorities to create a framework and criteria to assess whether a scheme is viable. A steering group is proposed involving Welsh Government, statutory agencies, Local authorities, NGO's, engineering companies and academics. Crown Estates are currently working on feasibility studies in England and building up contacts in Wales to 'open the conservation' and assess feasibility.

Both presentations were well received by attendees. It was noted that political support would be crucial to ensure success.

11. Field Excursions to Ynyslas Dunes & the River Leri

Mike Bailey, Senior Reserve Manager at Ynyslas introduced the group to the reserve; Ynyslas dunes, Cors Fochno and the Dyfi Estuary are all part of Dyfi NNR. The excursion visited Ynyslas dunes and various vantage points to view, sand dune and sand flat habitats. The sand dunes at Ynyslas are underlain by a shingle ridge and embryonic, fore dunes and fixed dunes are all represented here. Dune slacks are also present. The dune habitats at Ynyslas are important for invertebrates and fungi and are a thriving holiday and recreational destination. Winter sheep grazing has been introduced in the central area where the dunes vegetation is becoming rank. At the southern end of the dune-estuary interface, saltmarsh is accreting. The group then made a short journey to the River Leri to view mixed habitats including area for potential habitat compensation (saltmarsh) east of the river. Significant infrastructure is also present in the area including a railway and power lines illustrating the challenges faced in delivering habitat compensations schemes. Critical infrastructure will require secondary coastal defence schemes to protect from sea level rise which adds to the complexity of potential projects.



Embryonic dune Ynys Las



Fixed dune Ynys Las



CEG members at Ynyslas



CEG members at the River Leri site

Our thanks to Mike Bailey and the Ynys Las team for hosting the meeting and the field excursion. Thanks also to Rick Park and Olivia Burgess for their informative presentations.

12. AOB

EUCC symposium France, 17-19 June 2014 dedicated to the Integrated Management of Coastal Dunes took place on 17- 19th June in northern France. Mike Howe is hoping to attend and will report back to CEG. WREN and SITA bids for sand dune rejuvenation have been submitted and the respective panel verdicts are expected in late June/early July.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The group is aiming for a December 2014 meeting, further details to follow.

Actions

No.	Actions	Who	By	Comments
1	£6 Nature Recovery Fund	ALL	Nov 1st	Details of the fund and how to apply are listed on the WG website: http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/natural-resources-management/nature-fund/?lang=en
2	WBP Evidence Gaps Project	ALL	Winter 2014 meeting	Review the information, identify gaps and put forward potential projects. Details of evidence gaps and project proposals are on the WBP website. Link: http://biodiversitywales.org.uk/en-GB/WBP-Evidence-Gaps-Project

3	Article 17 Reporting	ALL	Winter 2014 meeting	To review the Welsh specific section of the report http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6397
4	Dune rejuvenation project funding bids	MH	August	Mike to report back to CEG re: funding bid outcomes (SITA & WREN). Update: SITA Trust bid successful - NRW has secured £150K for work on Kenfig, Merthyr Mawr and Newborough Warren this winter.
Previous Actions update				
	Coastal vegetated shingle priority areas		Ongoing	Peter Rhind was working this up but was unable to complete. NRW coastal team will take this forward
	Sand dune Workshop Proceedings to be made available	MH		Proceedings have yet to be finalised and published.
	Priority Habitat Map Integration		Ongoing	NRW coastal team will take this forward
	CEG work plan CEG Membership	All		CEG to review the Plan and discuss in winter 2014 meeting Mike & Emmer to fine tune NRW representation, LBAP and WG membership to be reviewed by Sean. Chris will canvass Wildlife Trusts to seek a deputy representative.
	Proposed sand dune movement & hydrology project at Llangennith	EL	Winter 2014	Emmer will investigate and update the group at the next meeting
	Sea Cliff Symposium	MH		MH to circulate symposium proceedings when available
	Integrated Management of Coastal Dunes conference	MH		MH to circulate conference proceedings when available