

## DETAILED PROJECT PLAN

HLF Programme Area			
Area	Programme Title	Main Area (tick <b>one</b> box only)	Links to Other Areas
A	<b>Conserving or restoring the built and natural features</b> that create the historic landscape character.	✓	
B	<b>Increasing community participation</b> in local heritage		✓
C	<b>Increasing access</b> to and <b>learning</b> about the landscape and its heritage		✓
D	<b>Increasing training</b> opportunities in local heritage <b>skills</b>		
E	Scheme staffing, overheads and running costs		✓

PA3

## Natural Connections



*Rhôs pasture* (© DNPA)

Heading	Content
Summary	The Project aims to encourage better management and enhance natural networks within a number of wet valleys in the Moor than meets the eye area. The wildlife found in these areas includes a number of nationally rare species, including one, the Bog Hoverfly, which is only found on Dartmoor. They require extensive, suitable and inter-connected habitats in order to survive.
Project description	Existing small fragmented areas of Rhôs pasture in small valleys are currently being managed on an individual basis, if at all. Some are under management agreements through the Higher Level Scheme (HLS) or with the National Park Authority. However, there is currently no integrated management plan for all the sites within one valley. Without proper and integrated management, important wet valley systems will not reach their full conservation potential, resulting in the loss of Rhôs pasture and threatening the delicate mosaic of valuable habitats. The loss of these habitats will result in the disappearance of key BAP species such as

	<p>marsh fritillaries, which have an internationally important stronghold in the National Park, and the bog hoverfly that is not found anywhere else in the UK.</p> <p>The connected Rhôs pasture valley systems that enable these rare species to survive constitute one of the characteristic moorland fringe landscapes of Dartmoor. They have been created and maintained by local farmers over the centuries and depend upon ongoing extensive grazing with beef cattle or local ponies. Without intervention, the importance of the habitats and need for ongoing management will not be properly shared with landowners, and the public will not be able to access the sites and enjoy species such as the willow tit and the narrow-bordered bee hawkmoth.</p> <p>Through our scheme, the proposed Moor than Meets the Eye Community Ecologist will work with local landowners to develop integrated management plans for the two Rhôs pasture Key Wildlife Areas within the Project boundary which cover 1,112 ha. The potential for developing a new approach to agri-environment schemes will be assessed that would enable small parcels of land not large or significant enough to gain HLS payments in their own right to benefit from a valley wide agreement, utilising the experience gained from managing schemes on the commons of Dartmoor over many years.</p> <p>A number of wildlife issues will be taken forward through the Project. Research on the bog hoverfly to benefit habitat management will be carried out with Paignton Zoo and the University of Exeter, and studies to look at the small population of the nationally declining willow tit will be furthered using local volunteers. Invasive plant control (Himalayan Balsam, Skunk Cabbage and Japanese Knotweed) will be co-ordinated on a catchment approach to increase the long term success of measures already being tackled on a piecemeal basis within the valleys.</p> <p>A pilot catchment management approach will be developed with landowners in the Barramoor Valley, linking to the Water Framework Directive and the West Country Rivers Trust's Dart and Teign River Improvement Programme.</p>
<p><b>Beneficiaries and communication</b></p>	<p>Local landowners and communities, visitors, conservation sector, volunteers.</p> <p>Although this work will take place on private land the benefit will be for conservation of the heritage by promoting a landscape scale approach which may not add any particular benefit to each farmer but will allow movement and connectivity across the valley for wildlife species. Benefit likely to be 80% public.</p> <p>The information and monitoring will be stored by DNPA but shared with the Dartmoor Biodiversity partners.</p>
<p><b>Project buy-in</b></p>	<p>Meetings have been held with the local community on several occasions. Discussions have taken place with Natural England, Duchy of Cornwall, Two Moors Threatened Butterfly Project, West Country Rivers Trust and Paignton Zoo regarding their support and involvement in the various project elements</p>
<p><b>Project lead</b></p>	<p>DNPA – Norman Baldock. Senior Ecologist</p> <p>The project will be delivered by the Community Ecologist</p>

<b>Partners / contractors etc.</b>	Rhôs pasture owners and land managers, Natural England (Martin Longley), Duchy of Cornwall (Tom Stratton), Two Moors Threatened Butterfly Project (Jenny Plackett), Paignton Zoo and Exeter University (Tracey Hamston), West Country Rivers Trust (Bruce Stockley) and local volunteers.
<b>Project development</b>	<p>Since the first round submission was made, further discussions have taken place with the partners listed above to agree co-operative working with the Community Ecologist and project outputs. County Wildlife Site monitoring visits to 11 farms with Rhôs pasture fields (33% total). Meetings held with Natural England and the Duchy of Cornwall regarding the detail of how the post would enhance existing and future agreements in line with the new AES (follow-on from Environmental Stewardship in 2015).</p> <p>Local volunteers have expressed interest in working on Willow Tit populations within the Project area and Exeter University research staff have offered to supervise MSc student projects to find out more about the ecology of the Bog Hoverfly. Paignton Zoo staff are keen to facilitate the development of genetic signature development for this species to make surveying and monitoring much easier and more effective.</p>
<b>Activities and Timetable</b>	<p><b>Jan 2015 - March 2015</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin compilation of Integrated Management Plan contents, based on the Key Wildlife Area maps, AES agreements, CWS monitoring and species conservation priorities.</li> <li>• Meetings with project partners to co-ordinate timetable of works and priorities.</li> <li>• Continued on-site advice and habitat monitoring in small-scale as at present.</li> <li>• Make contact with Rhôs pasture owners not in existing agreements to establish the potential for habitat management or incorporation into AES with adjacent landowners.</li> <li>• Initiate plans for interpretation of the wildlife associated with the Rhôs pasture Key Wildlife Areas as part of MTMTE interpretation strategy.</li> </ul> <p><b>April 2015 – March 2016</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compilation of the Integrated Plans with priorities for AES and other habitat management works to be put in place with landowner agreement. Initiate research projects with partners.</li> <li>• Approach landowners regarding the occurrence of invasive species and draw up plans to treat the site from the top of the catchment downwards.</li> <li>• Outline plans to be written and agreed with owners and Natural England. Contact all owners in the Barramoor Valley regarding their potential involvement in the pilot catchment management work that links directly to the Rhôs pasture sites within this valley that forms the core of this Key Wildlife Area.</li> <li>• Develop research work on Willow Tit and Bog Hoverfly with volunteers, MSc students from Exeter University and Paignton Zoo staff</li> </ul>

**April 2016 – Jan 2018**

- Enable priorities highlighted by the Integrated Plans to be acted upon through liaison with landowners, partner organisations and volunteer groups.
- Co-ordinate implementation of the invasive species control work and research on key wildlife species.
- Organise walks, events and trails to fulfil key elements of the Interpretation Strategy.
- Continue research work on Willow Tit and Bog Hoverfly

The budget of £5,000 will be used to fund conservation management works that can't be funded through other schemes to facilitate good management and will be spent in years 2 and 3 of the project. Some may be used for student or volunteers travel expenses if required to support elements of this project. See table overleaf.

Activity Timeline	Y1						Y2				Y3				Y4				Y5									
	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
PA3 Natural Connections																												
County Wildlife Site monitoring completed.																												
Integrated Valley Plans produced for the two key wildlife areas.																												
Map invasive species within the Project area and plans in place to treat sites in descending order of altitude.																												
A catchment management plan produced for the Barramoore Valley																												
Develop interpretation for the wildlife value of Dartmoor's Rhôs pastures																												
Delivery of actions from plans																												
Implement invasive species plans																												
Implement events, activities and display material																												
Research on Willow Tit and Bog Hoverfly																												

Budgets	Cost Breakdown		
Estimated Total Cost	Cost:		Contingency:
	£22,431		£0
VAT	a. Is VAT applicable?	b. Is VAT reclaimable?	c. VAT amount:
	YES	YES	£0
Lead Partner Contributions	Type:	Secured:	Unsecured:
	Cash (source):	£0	£0
	Staff:	£0	£0
	Volunteers:	£0	£4,000
	In-kind:	£13,431	£0
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>£13,431</b>	<b>£4,000</b>
Other Contributions	Type:	Secured:	Unsecured:
	Cash (source):	£0	£0
	Staff (source):	£0	£0
	Volunteers (source):	£0	£0
	In-kind (source):	£0	£0
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
<i>Moor than meets the eye contribution</i>	Contribution:		Intervention Rate (%)
	£5,000		22%

There is a cash donation from Action for Wildlife of £10,692 to contribute to the post of the Community Ecologist. This is shown in Programme E.

<b>Outputs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated Valley Plans produced for the two key wildlife areas.</li> <li>• County Wildlife Site monitoring completed.</li> <li>• Research on Willow Tit and Bog Hoverfly written up.</li> <li>• Distribution map produced of invasive species within the Project area and plans in place to treat sites in descending order of altitude.</li> <li>• A catchment management plan produced for the Barramoor Valley</li> <li>• Display materials showing the wildlife value of Dartmoor's Rhôs pastures</li> </ul>
<b>Output indicators and targets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 Integrated Plans produced by the end of Year 2.</li> <li>• 20 County Wildlife Site landownership parcels monitored by the end of the Scheme, with plans in place with landowners to improve management at 10.</li> <li>• Populations of Willow Tit and Bog Hoverfly in the project area are stable or increasing.</li> <li>• Treatment of invasive species in place at 10 sites in line with the systematic approach required.</li> <li>• Catchment Management Plan for the Barramoor Valley being implemented on 5 farms.</li> <li>• A display of the wildlife value of Rhôs pastures installed in the Haytor Visitor Centre by 2016</li> </ul>

<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Heritage will be better managed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Improved habitat management and connectivity in the two Rhôs pasture Key Wildlife Areas.</li> <li>○ Improved management in County Wildlife Sites within the Project area</li> <li>○ Improved catchment management in the Barramoor Valley</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Heritage will be in a better condition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The populations of Willow Tit and Bog Hoverfly in the project area are stable or increasing.</li> <li>○ Reduced distribution of invasive species.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increased awareness of the wildlife value of Dartmoor Rhôs pastures</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Evidence</b>	<p>Habitat monitoring will evidence improvement in condition. Current condition is known or will be recorded in Years 1-2, so differences in condition are measureable.</p> <p>The work with volunteers will establish the distribution of willow tit and bog hoverfly, which can be reassessed at the end of the Project.</p> <p>Number of displays and events will be recorded.</p> <p>WFD status will be monitored by the Environment Agency for the River Bovey catchment.</p>
<b>Wider context</b>	<p>Links to PA2 Postbridge Haymeadows Project, which is seeking to achieve similar goals in a different habitat. Some of landowners will be the same for both Projects, so the Comm Ecologist will be able to co-ordinate works.</p> <p>Links to PA1 Moorland Birds as Rhôs pastures provide abundant food source of invertebrates, and, in turn, birds eg red-backed shrike.</p> <p>Links to PB2 Parishscapes, such that community can understand the history and heritage of their parish</p> <p>Links to Visitor Centres at Haytor and Postbridge</p>
<b>Legacy and maintenance of benefits</b>	<p>The Project will improve the connectivity and management of Rhôs pastures and wet woodlands in the area which will be maintained through better working of existing agreements, improved knowledge through on site advice and the establishment of new agri-environment agreements.</p> <p>The information gained of key species requirements will be used to take forward management work thereafter. Improved appreciation of the value of these wet valleys will be carried forward through interpretation, and by working with local volunteers and landowners.</p>

Risks and Risk Mitigation	Risk	Severity	Likelihood	Measures
	Unwillingness of some landowners to take part	M	M	It is known that the main landowner and some others are keen to get involved. Much can be done without all landowners participating
	Partner organisations do not contribute	M	L	Discussions have taken place with all partners who are currently enthusiastic to participate
	Volunteers and local communities do not get involved	H	L	Several groups have been involved in similar work and recent meetings indicate they are keen to contribute here
	Insufficient funding is available through AES to enable landowners to improve habitat condition	H	L	HLS agreements currently in place for some sites and new scheme on the horizon
<b>Background information</b>	<p>The three Rhôs pasture Key Wildlife Areas that make up the Natural Connections Project areas are regionally recognised for their importance within the South West Nature Map. This strategic document has been incorporated into the DNP management plan 2013-2017, and the DNPA biodiversity strategy 'Living Dartmoor', which sets out action and direction from 2013-2023 and will be available on the DNPA website.</p> <p>The aims and objectives, as well as targets, are linked to the government's England Biodiversity Strategy 'Biodiversity 2020'.</p> <p>The aims and objectives also complement those of Natural England's Environmental Stewardship Scheme and the follow-on AES.</p> <p>The wet valleys that hold these key habitats lie along sections of the following watercourses: West Webburn River and Walla Brook, and the Bovey River and Barramoor and Dury Brooks. The latter three watercourses are classed as being in 'Moderate' status by the Environment Agency and are currently failing Water Framework Directive due to the levels of Copper, Zinc, Fish populations and phyto-benthos.</p>			