

## LANCASHIRE BAP TEMPLATE FOR HABITAT ACTION PLANS

### ENCAPSULATED COUNTRYSIDE

(Line Drawing of Habitat)

#### **Summary**

Encapsulated countryside comprises fragments of semi-natural vegetation or agricultural land which has become surrounded by urban land uses. Such sites are often important in providing valuable components of wildlife corridors. These are systems which no longer receive the formal management associated with rural environments.

Current factors affecting encapsulated countryside are development and recreational pressures as well as changes in land management, including neglect.

#### **Action Plan Aim**

***Assess, monitor, raise awareness and improve management of encapsulated countryside in Lancashire.***

#### **Habitat Description**

Encapsulated countryside frequently includes former agricultural features such as hedgerows and ponds and comprises habitats including grassland, scrub, woodland, marsh and water courses. They are systems which no longer receive the formal management associated with the rural environment and are now isolated within urban areas. They are often valuable components of wildlife corridors or functional stepping stones in an ecological network.

#### **National Status**

Unknown.

#### **Regional Status**

Unknown.

#### **Local Status**

Seven sites in Lancashire have been identified as non-statutory wildlife sites (BHS). Trends are not known.

#### **Current factors affecting the habitat**

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- Development pressure
- Changes in land management, including neglect
- Recreational pressure

#### Development pressure

Land on the urban fringe or within a conurbation will often be particularly attractive for development and may be viewed, incorrectly, as brown field sites.

#### Changes in land management, including neglect

Rural land encapsulated within a conurbation may become socially and economically less viable agriculturally because of difficulties associated with:

inability to expand the landholding to benefit from economies of scale;

accessibility for livestock and agricultural machinery and transport;

high pressure from public use, on and off public rights of way;

urban fringe vandalism;

unfamiliarity with or hostility to modern agricultural practice from urban-based private and corporate neighbours.

This can lead to abandonment of agriculture or change to an urban land use detrimental to the existing biodiversity resources.

#### Recreational pressure

High levels of disturbance resulting from uncontrolled or unmanaged access by people and their vehicles, horses and dogs may lead to increased pressure on vegetation and fauna to the detriment of the overall biodiversity resource.

### **Important Sites**

Cuerden Valley Park, Chorley & South Ribble Boroughs;  
Darwen Valley Parkway, Ewood, Blackburn with Darwen Borough;  
Dog Kennel Wood, Bamber Bridge, South Ribble Borough;  
Don River Valley, Burnley Borough;  
Frenchwood Knoll in Avenham Park, Preston City (see also Urban Parks);  
Grange Park, Preston City (see also Urban Parks)  
Hurst Grange Park, South Ribble Borough;  
Savick Brook Valley, Lea, Preston City

### **Current Action / Mechanisms**

- *Policy*  
Local plans may recognise areas of encapsulated countryside as important green spaces and recreational resources, particularly if they occur near existing country parks, local nature reserves or other allocated sites. Specific habitats

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such as grassland, woodland or water bodies may be covered by other habitat action plans within the Lancashire BAP.

- *Site Safeguard*

Some encapsulated countryside sites are identified as BHS, but this is on the basis of the nature and quality of the semi-natural habitats and/or the types and/or populations of native species they support, rather than on their urban location.

Where a local authority has legal tenure, a site may be declared as a statutory Local Nature Reserve under the terms of the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended). However, this is not dependent on being urban-encapsulated countryside.

PPG9 Nature Conservation currently recognises that sites may be protected because these are “*of value to the community*”. Encapsulated countryside may be so valued.

- *Land Management*

No specific information.

- *Advisory*

The BHS project advised landowners and land managers on the ecological importance of their site and on appropriate management practices and sources of funding. Funding for the project was exhausted in March 2004.

- *Research and Monitoring* (Local research and monitoring underway)

No specific information.

- *Public Relations* (Initiatives aimed at raising general awareness of the habitat and its conservation)]

No specific information.

### Indicators of Habitat Quality

Indicators are dependent on the type of semi-natural habitat(s) encapsulated – see Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan for examples.

### Habitat Targets

Target	Area	Measure	Timescale
Assess Resource of encapsulated countryside	Lancashire	Resource assessed	2010
Establish 25% of encapsulated countryside in	Lancashire	25% in favourable management	2012

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favourable management			
Raise awareness of encapsulated countryside	Lancashire		Ongoing

#### Proposed Actions

Action (priority: H, M, L)	Area	Measure / Milestone	Partners	Timescale
<b>Research and monitoring</b>				
Identify and map the location and distribution of encapsulated countryside (H)	Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Blackpool Borough Council	50% encapsulated countryside identified and mapped	LCC, BDBC, BBC	2010
Gather existing and new field data on the biodiversity resource of encapsulated countryside sites (M)	Lancashire	Method of data collation identified and implemented	LCC, BDBC, BBC	2008
Identify quality of encapsulated countryside sites against current BHS criteria (M)	Lancashire	100% of sites surveyed against BHS criteria	LCC, BDBC, BBC	2010
<b>Site safeguard and monitoring</b>				
Identify resources needed to deliver Lancashire BAP targets on encapsulated countryside	Lancashire	Key resources identified	LCC, BDBC, BBC, TWT, Groundwork, WT, NE	2008
<b>Habitat protection and management</b>				
Develop suite of interlocking partnership projects (H)	Lancashire	Establish a partnership of projects working towards delivering the	TWT, LCC, LAs, BDBC, BIBC, EA, NE	2015

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		Encapsulated Countryside BAP	
Identify and secure project funding <b>(H)</b>	Lancashire	Project funding secured	LCC 2010
Support delivery of management and funding source advice through BHS programme <b>(H)</b>	Lancashire	Targetted BHS advisory system established	LRF, NE, FWAG, LCC, TWT 2010
<b>Advisory</b>			
Engage owners, managers and land users of encapsulated countryside in BAP delivery	Lancashire	Guidance to be produced that highlights importance of encapsulated countryside for wildlife	LCC 2009
<b>Publicity</b>			
Develop a programme of events to promote importance of encapsulated countryside	Lancashire	Programme of publicity implemented (i.e. wildlife walks, leaflets, awareness days)	TWT, LCC, BDBC, BIBC, EA, DEFRA, WT 2010
One awareness raising event aimed at planners and owners / managers of encapsulated countryside	Lancashire	One-off habitat awareness event organised	LCC 2008

### Related Action Plans

All relevant UK and all other local HAPs & SAPs.

### References and additional reading

Date (30<sup>th</sup> June 2004)

Draft No. (2)

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