

# Winchester Downs Cluster

## Operational Management Plan

Target	Habitats and Land management	Outcomes	Training and what's needed to deliver this	Progress
		What do you want to achieve?	How do we achieve this	Objectives achieved
Arable	Soil and water	Improved resource management, meaning - Improved soil condition (SOM, Soil Structure, reduced soil erosion), greater awareness of reduced and alternative inputs; and impact of green break crops. Increased use of pasture in rotations, carbon sequestration and a measure soil of carbon.	Improved soil condition advice, also independent local advice on cover cropping & dissemination of best practice  Testing of Soil Organic Matter, Science based metric of soil health.  Pond creation and restoration mapping and funding options	-SWFC and FCT spoke at members meetings on Regenerative Agriculture and soil health.  -Soil and Farm Carbon Project started looking at this; link with FCT getting us the most up-to-date advice.  -One pond restored, mapping exercise needs to be completed
	Hedges and field edges	A better connected hedge network with a variety of hedge sizes and management that is functional and sensitive to wildlife and landscape.  Continuation of and improved quality and connectivity of field margins created under ELS / HLS.  Establishment and management of good habitats for Wildlife, farmland birds and Shooting	Hedge management training and advice on support with creation, laying and subsequent management.  Farm conservation advice, training and continued financial support on establishing and managing field margins.  Support Farmers into new CS / Agri-environment schemes. Share lessons learnt with group.  All members to contribute to the Big Farmland Bird Count and share wildlife records	- Hedge management training with GWCT  - 15 Farm walks with specialist advice covering Countryside Stewardship and land management for key habitats and species - CS options and habitat management / Farmland Bird ID and habitat management / Game and Cover Crops / Supplementary feeding / Lapwing & Grey Partridge management  - 14 new CS agreements (2 planned for next year) and 14 are still in HLS  - 9 members have joined Living Record - HOS carried out surveys on 5 farms, 8 farms targeted for 2021 - Lapwing surveying carried out by SDNPA on 3 priority farms - Barn Owl monitoring carried out by Hawk Conservancy Trust on 12 Farms - GP monitoring carried out on 3 farms - New population of Corn Bunting discovered
Grassland	Species rich grasslands, restoration meadows, wildflower strips, chalk downland & wooded pasture	Maintain, create and restore wildflower rich grasslands in a way that fits a commercial farming system.	Identify areas of grassland suitable for restoration or under restoration and in need of advice.  Training in species rich grassland restoration and management.	-Sites identified; mapping in progress; advice given by facilitator.  - 3 Grassland restoration workshops carried out using local sites as examples of success -Downland and scrub management covered on CS fam walk -Wood Pasture, planned for 2021

		<p>Managing grazing, wildflower enhancement, scrub management and wooded pasture; within limits of time and budget</p> <p>Co-operative or contract grazing supporting meadow restoration and increasing a return to mixed farming</p>	<p>Need site based advice and management plans.</p> <p>Develop local grazing networks through making tailored restoration plans and communicating within the group.</p>	<p>-Grassland restoration and downland management advice and support given to 22 farms.</p> <p>-Cluster has facilitated Grazing links on 3 farms. (Cover Crops, Downland and Grassland restoration)</p>
<b>Woodland</b>	Woodland management, for wildlife and / or timber.	<p>Managing woodlands for wildlife through creating wider better connected rides, glades and graded woodland edges.</p> <p>Managing a long term sustainable timber crop potential while creating the optimal environment for wildlife, and reasonable economic return.</p> <p>Maintain and restore small areas of woodland which on their own maybe too small to be part of an F.C scheme but have a valuable local contribution to the environment in that area.</p>	<p>Identify areas of woodland suitable for restoration or in need of advice.</p> <p>Training in managing woodland for wildlife and shooting Providing training in woodland management for sustainable timber production and creating management reports</p> <p>Aggregation to make small scale coppicing viable. Linking to local contractors, and communicating within the group.</p>	<p>-FC and SDNPA spoke on Timber Markets, grants and Ash Dieback -3 Woodland Management farm walks looking at Ash dieback and liability / woodland management and coppice restoration / Woodcock and ride management</p>
<b>Rivers</b>	River habitat & Water quality	River habitat management, resource protection and improve multi-functional land use.	<p>Need training and advice in riverine habitat management, water quality and flood management. Engage with Wessex Chalk Streams and partners.</p> <p>Identify areas suitable for restoration and in need of advice. Work with landowners and partners, then feedback to the group.</p>	<p>Cluster has links with Test and Itchen Catchment Partnership and the associated Water Cress and Winterbournes project</p> <p>Farm Walk to learn from floodmeadow restoration at Grange Farm Cheriton</p> <p>All 7 landowners that own parts of the Itchen are in Stewardship or carrying out positive river management.</p>
	Flood meadows and fen	<p>River, flood meadow, fen and riparian habitats managed in a joined up way along the Upper Itchen.</p> <p>Co-operative or contract grazing supporting meadow restoration and resource protection</p>	<p>Need site based advice and management plans.</p> <p>Develop local grazing networks through making tailored restoration plans and communicating within the group.</p>	
<b>Community</b>	Awareness and Promotion	<p>Communicate to wider population the activity undertaken and benefits provided by farmers &amp; landowners.</p> <p>Where feasible support school, non-school (such as Beavers/Scouts/Young Farmers) and adult education visits to create a greater understanding of farming, the countryside and the environment.</p>	<p>Provide greater PR in media to create more understanding in general public. Share progress and successes within the partnership, then publicise aggregated information.</p> <p>Identify mechanisms to support. (incl. H&amp;S issues, Help on farm visit days, link with Country Trust)</p>	<p>- Public environmental education signage for members to use on footpaths. - Website created for the cluster - Southern Farm Clusters group formed - Living Record app being used for Cluster - Social Media pages set up on Instagram and Twitter and training given to promote the work of the Clusters</p> <p>- Run 6 Country Trust events per year - Forest Schools 3 mornings per week (Longdown House), this has extended to running sessions for parents too - Twyford school wildlife monitoring and tree planting project at Hill View Farm</p>

		Engage with skilled visitors e.g. Southampton Natural History Society, local ecologists, trainee naturalists	Develop network of groups – liaise to enable groups to contact farmers. Share information generated within the group.	-Permissive access ELM focus group - Bioblitz June 2018 (The Holt)
	Historic Environment	Work to remove identified Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) from historic risk register  More recognition for historic features such as barns	Provide advice and support to enable removal of SAMS from Historic risk register. Where there is conflict between NE/EH on management, provide assistance or resolve. Identify buildings and historic features under threat	

