Business Plan update

April 2014 to September 2014

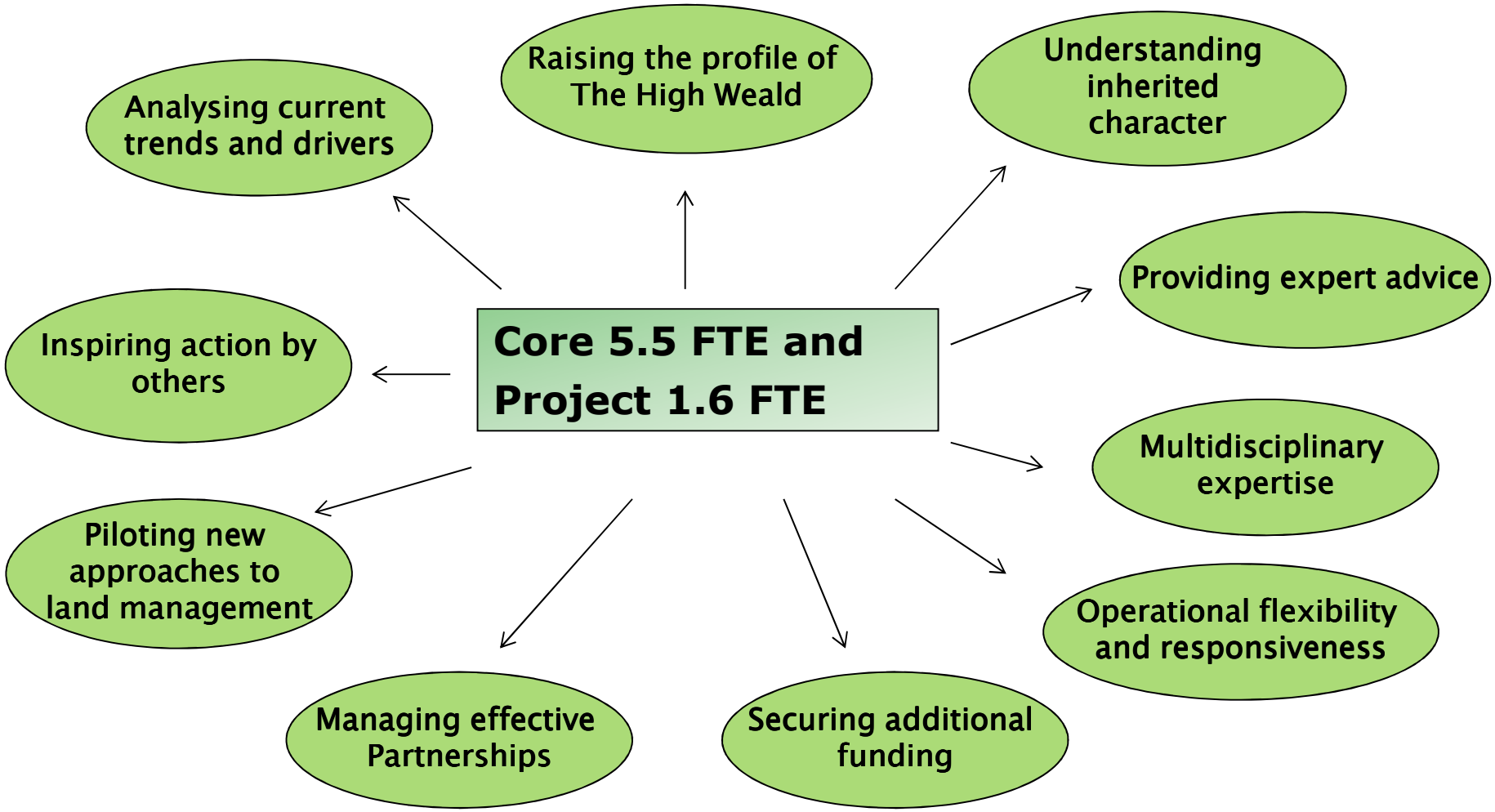
Focus

Management Plan 2014-2019

Published April 2014

Emphasis development and delivery of projects and partnerships to meet the Plan's objectives

Our activities

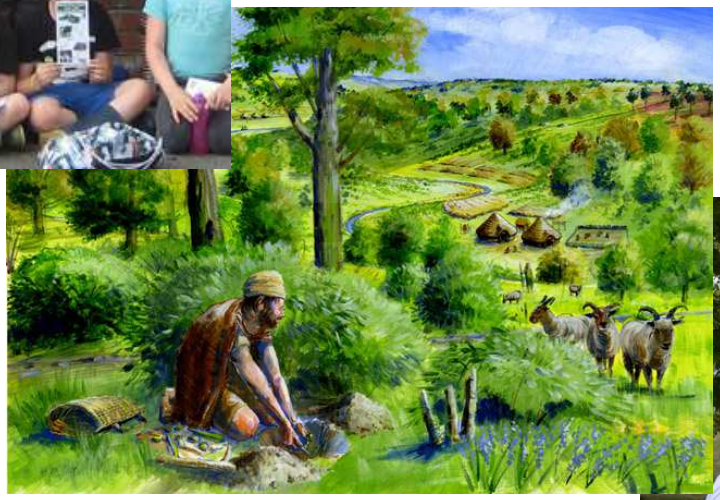


Landowners

- New Environmental Land Management Scheme
- Leader Strategies
- Restocking the Weald Feasibility Study
- Brede Farm Habitats Project; 6 grants awarded
- Events: Datatag; Game Management; Dormouse identification

Young people

Welly Walks!



New curriculum: historic timeline, Stone Age, rocks and soils

Solar Kiln Project

Visitors

- Visitor Management Partnerships
- Our Land website
- Landscape Awareness Training Tool
- RGS Discovering Britain Walk
- 2 Walking Festivals
- Slow Bodiam guide

Policy and decision makers

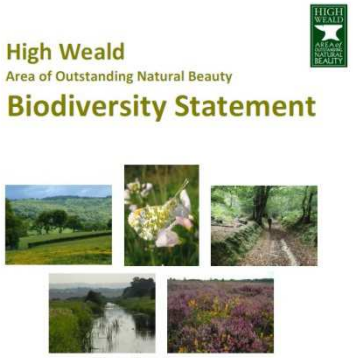
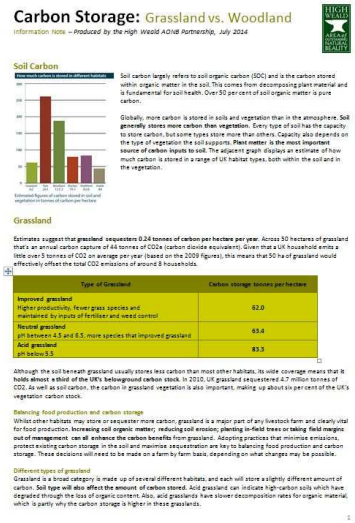

High Weald
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Biodiversity Statement

Photo credits: Author (butterfly) & High Weald AONB Unit Image Gallery (all other images).

A report produced by: High Weald AONB Unit
For: High Weald Joint Advisory Commitee

April 2014


Carbon Storage: Grassland vs. Woodland

Information Note – Produced by the High Weald AONB Partnership, July 2014

Soil Carbon

Soil carbon largely refers to soil organic carbon (SOC) and is the carbon stored within organic matter in the soil. This comes from decomposing plant material and is fundamental for soil health. Over 50 per cent of soil organic matter is pure carbon.

Globally, more carbon is stored in soils and vegetation than in the atmosphere. Soil generally stores more carbon than vegetation. Every type of soil has the capacity to store carbon, but some types store more than others. Capacity also depends on the type of vegetation the soil supports. Plant matter is the most important source of carbon inputs to soil. The adjacent graph displays an estimate of how much carbon is stored in a range of UK habitat types, both within the soil and in the vegetation.

Grassland

Estimates suggest that grassland sequesters 0.24 tonnes of carbon per hectare per year. Across 50 hectares of grassland that's an annual carbon capture of 44 tonnes of CO2e (carbon dioxide equivalent). Given that a UK household emits a little over 5 tonnes of CO2 on average per year (based on the 2009 figures), this means that 50 ha of grassland would effectively offset the total CO2 emissions of around 8 households.

Type of Grassland	Carbon storage tonnes per hectare
Improved grassland Higher productivity, fewer grass species and maintained by inputs of fertiliser and weed control	62.0
Neutral grassland pH between 4.5 and 6.5, more species that improved grassland	65.4
Acid grassland pH below 3.5	83.3

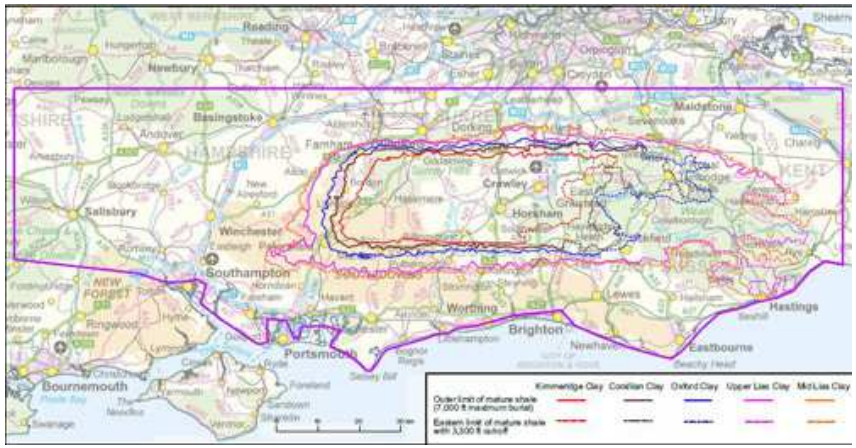
Although the soil beneath grassland usually stores less carbon than most other habitats, its wide coverage means that it holds almost a third of the UK's belowground carbon stock. In 2010, UK grassland sequestered 4.7 million tonnes of CO2. As well as soil carbon, the carbon in grassland vegetation is also important, making up about six per cent of the UK's vegetation carbon stock.

Balancing food production and carbon storage

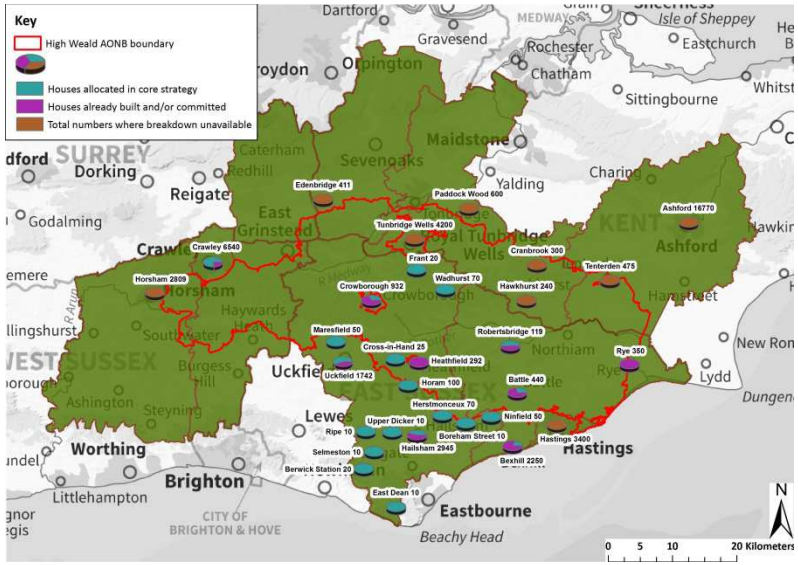
Whilst other habitats may store or sequester more carbon, grassland is a major part of any livestock farm and clearly vital for food production. Increasing soil organic matter, reducing soil erosion, planting in-field trees or taking field margins out of management can all enhance the carbon benefits from grassland. Adopting practices that minimise emissions, protect existing carbon storage in the soil and maximise sequestration are key to balancing food production and carbon storage. These decisions will need to be made on a farm by farm basis, depending on what changes may be possible.

Different types of grassland

Grassland is a broad category is made up of several different habitats, and each will store a slightly different amount of carbon. Soil type will also affect the amount of carbon stored. Acid grassland can indicate high-carbon soils which have degraded through the loss of organic content. Also, acid grasslands have slower decomposition rates for organic material, which is partly why the carbon storage is higher in these grasslands.



High Weald AONB reports & information sheets on topical issues



Policy and decision makers

- Over 100 policy and planning consultations
- Organised launch of Kent Farmstead guidance – 95 attendees
- Initiated High Weald Planning and Design group
- Developing a ‘Fieldscapes’ project with English Heritage to further understanding of historic fields and boundaries
- Exploring use of drone technology for landscape monitoring, with a focus on unimproved grasslands

Community

- Neighbourhood plans
- Increased social media presence
- Dark Sky Party
- Community Landscape Fund; 4 grants awarded
- Woodfair
- Woodlands in the Weald leaflet

Income generation

- Grant-aid applications
- Service charges
- Contracts
- Corporate fundraising

Further information

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