BAP Targets for key habitats within the Wyre Forest Acid

Contributing projects:

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust's Living Landscapes project of which the Wyre Forest Acid Grasslands and Heaths is a key focus.

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust's Flagship Reserves project where key sites will be used to develop, apply and demonstrate landscape scale conservation methods and promote community involvement and access, and best practice. The Devil's Spittleful is one of 13 reserves in Worcestershire chosen to meet the criteria for this approach, and has been expanded with the acquisition of additional fields from Blackstones Field Farm.

Wyre Forest acid grasslands are a target area for Higher Level Stewardship.

Hartlebury Common, a 90ha SSSI owned and managed by Worcestershire County Council, is being restored under a Higher Level Stewardship agreement.

Wyre Forest District Council own and manage a number of areas of heathland including 43ha at Rifle Range, Vicarage Farm Heath and Habberley Valley with a focus on healthland restoration funded through stewardship.

Creation and management of acid grassland promoted by Wyre Forest District Council through the development process, including adjacent to the new Stour bridge in Kidderminster, and at through a cycle track development in Hartlebury.

Blackstone Fields project to create 18.9 ha of acid grassland / heathland mosaic adjacent to the Devils Spittleful and Rifleranges reserves, from farmland.

Ongoing substantial tree clearance and reintroduction of sensitive grazing to restore condition of the Devils Spittleful. A total with Blackstone Fields of 22ha of restoration.

The 1250 square kilometres of the Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark was created to celebrate and promote the geological, landscape and associated heritage between Gloucester and Bridgenorth. www.geopark.org.uk

Taking a multi-sector approach: linking biodiversity to other agendas

Access and recreation	The many large sites in conservation ownership in close proximity to urban areas are a currently under-utilised resource. Promoting responsible community access, and especially educational access, is a high priority.
Biodiversity	Within Worcestershire this area must deliver the entirety of our BAP targets for lowland heathland.
Climate change adaptation	The opportunities for improving connectivity of sites with habitat in the neighbouring counties of Staffordshire and Birmingham and the Black Country will improve resilience of the habitat to climate change and have a huge positive impact on enabling species movement.
Community	The large urban population on the doorstep of this area provides a huge opportunity for community engagement and for promoting volunteering on sites in conservation ownership. Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Worcestershire County Council and Wyre Forest District Council all offer a range of volunteering opportunities on their sites, including habitat management, walks and talks to raise awareness of the importance of this habitat.
Economy	The economics of management of the small acid grassland sites within this area are unique to this BDA. The prevalence of horse ownership and grazing means landowner engagement and educational initiatives must be very focused.
Green Infrastructure	The area around Kidderminster, Bewdley and Stourport has been assessed in places to be of High GI value where the biodiversity contribution from all forms of development should be focused on protecting and enhancing existing sites.
Health	Activity to promote access to the countryside and volunteering can make a major contribution to the health and well being agenda.
Partnership working	Addressing the serious threat of habitat degradation and loss in this area depends in large part on successful engagement with the horse-owning community. Excellent opportunities exist to form partnerships with the health and well being sector and education sectors to promote outdoor recreation, learning and volunteering.

Integrating habitat and species needs

Key Worcestershire LBAP species who