



## **Sparsely vegetated land enhancement Plan**

### **Habitat to achieve : Species Rich grassland**

Time scale : 30-year period

Site Location:

Brewery Brow

Parton

Whitehaven

Cumbria

CA28 6PF

**Prepared by:**

Mrs Sandy Brown

Head of Farm & Environmental Advisory

20.11.2024

## **Species Rich Grassland Restoration Plan**

**Enhancement of modified grassland to improve biodiversity and soil condition. Working towards a species rich neutral grassland mosaic containing indicator flower species, grasses, and improved soil condition.**

Flower/herb species rich grassland provide important habitat and foraging sites for invertebrates, including wild pollinators such as bumblebees, solitary bees, butterflies and hoverflies, and farmland birds like the yellowhammer. It can also improve vegetation nutrient content for farm animals as well be important as part of an integrated pesticide management plan around a farm.

### **Previous Management**

Field number NX98200557 has been managed as a rough wasteland for several years. This 81 m<sup>2</sup> area will be enhanced from waste land to good condition species rich grassland.

### **Summary of grassland enhancement**

This plan will see the commencement of targeted cutting and the overseeding or planting of a wildflower mix (seeding rate: 20-30 kg/ha or 8-12 kg/acre), which will be managed over a 30 year period following an incremental, target driven management schedule.

### **Strategic Plans in the Area**

No targeted.

# **Species rich grassland restoration plan schedule**

## **Years 1-2**

Apply soil to the site, landscape as necessary

Obtain soil samples and reseed, begin to follow cutting regime.

## **Years 2-5**

Continue to manage as per plan. Indicator species should be evident ( see list of indicator species).

## **Years 5-10**

Continued managed, carry out further overseeding as required.

## **Years 10-15 years**

Maintain and manage as a species rich neutral grassland. Repeat overseeding procedure if flower abundance reduces

## **Years 15-30 years**

Maintain as a species rich neutral grassland. Repeat overseeding procedure if flower abundance reduces

## Recommended management

To assist in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this enhancement it is recommended that the following plan is followed.

- sow an appropriate seed mix between April/May and early September (mid to late summer is usually the best time to sow wildflowers)
- sow the wildflower species component at a minimum seed rate of 2 kilograms (kg) per ha
- in the first 12 months after sowing, cut the margin or plot regularly to help the sown species to establish.
- cuttings should be removed or shredded to prevent weed ingress and patches of dead material developing.

When flowers/herbs and grasses are fully established (typically from the second spring after sowing) you should manage as follows.

- Cut in the spring (before April) if necessary to prevent grasses smothering the flowering species, remove stock whilst the flowers are blooming.
- It may be possible to encourage further natural development of seeds by allowing the seeds to set before cutting.
- Therefore, cut the area each year between 15 August and 31 October to leave a plant height of between 10 centimetres (cm) and 20cm. Leave at least, 10% of the area uncut.

## Keeping records

Records or evidence should be collected such as timings of management and photographs. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your work.

- Seed invoices
- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices.
- Stock records to show grazing activity on parcels.
- Photographs of the field.

## Monitoring

Should be conducted annually to check on progress of wildflower establishment.

## What to sow

The seed mix should contain both grasses and perennial flowering plants, such as:

### Flower species

- agrimony
- bird's-foot trefoil
- black knapweed
- field scabious
- lady's bedstraw
- greater knapweed
- meadow buttercup
- ox-eye daisy
- red campion
- red clover
- ribwort plantain
- sainfoin
- salad burnet
- self-heal
- sorrel
- white campion
- wild carrot
- yarrow
- yellow rattle

### Grass species

- common bent
- crested dog's-tail
- sheep's fescue
- slender red fescue
- smaller cat's-tail
- smooth-stalked meadow grass
- sweet vernal grass

Sow at 20-30 kg per ha to provide enough plants when the mixture is established.

### When to sow

To meet the requirements, establish the mix in spring or late summer or early autumn

## **How to sow**

Wildflower seed is very small so will not germinate if drilled too deeply. Broadcast or trickle the seed on top of the seed and roll or harrow to help ensure good seed to soil contact, retain moisture, and reduce movement of slugs within the soil profile.

Check for slug damage and control using wildlife-friendly slug bait where necessary.

## **Controlling weeds**

Top emerging flowers and weeds at least 3 times in year 1 for spring sowings and at least twice in year 2 for late summer / autumn sowings. Regular topping prevents weeds smothering the slow-growing flowers so that all sown species establish successfully, and toppings can be left.

Before the beginning of April each year make sure vegetation is short enough to allow flower species to grow without competition from dominant grasses. Cut and remove summer growth between 15 August and 31 October to help reduce soil fertility and boost flower numbers in subsequent years.



Figure 1 Anticipated species rich grassland after 30 years enhancement