



Dartmoor Farming Futures on The Forest of Dartmoor

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Dartmoor HLS agreement

The Forest of Dartmoor is a large area of open common that covers 11,170 ha in the centre of Dartmoor that is surrounded by the home commons.

It is made up of a rolling plateau broken up by river valleys and rocky tors.

The predominant vegetation habitats are blanket bog, wet and dry heath and acid grassland all of which are dominated to some degree by *Molinia*.









To help manage the old ESA the commoners sub divided it into 19 management areas each containing the lears/hefts of 6-10 graziers

After 7 years of ESA the commoners became increasingly frustrated by the rigid prescriptions that they felt were failing to deliver the expected environmental benefits and that they could do a better job of managing it themselves

This led to the development of the Dartmoor Farming Futures Pilot which is under pinned by our HLS agreement

The commoners agreed 10 outcomes that they felt they could deliver.

Public Access



Archaeology and Historic Environment



Nature and Biodiversity



Landscape





Water Quality and Quantity





Carbon



Food Production

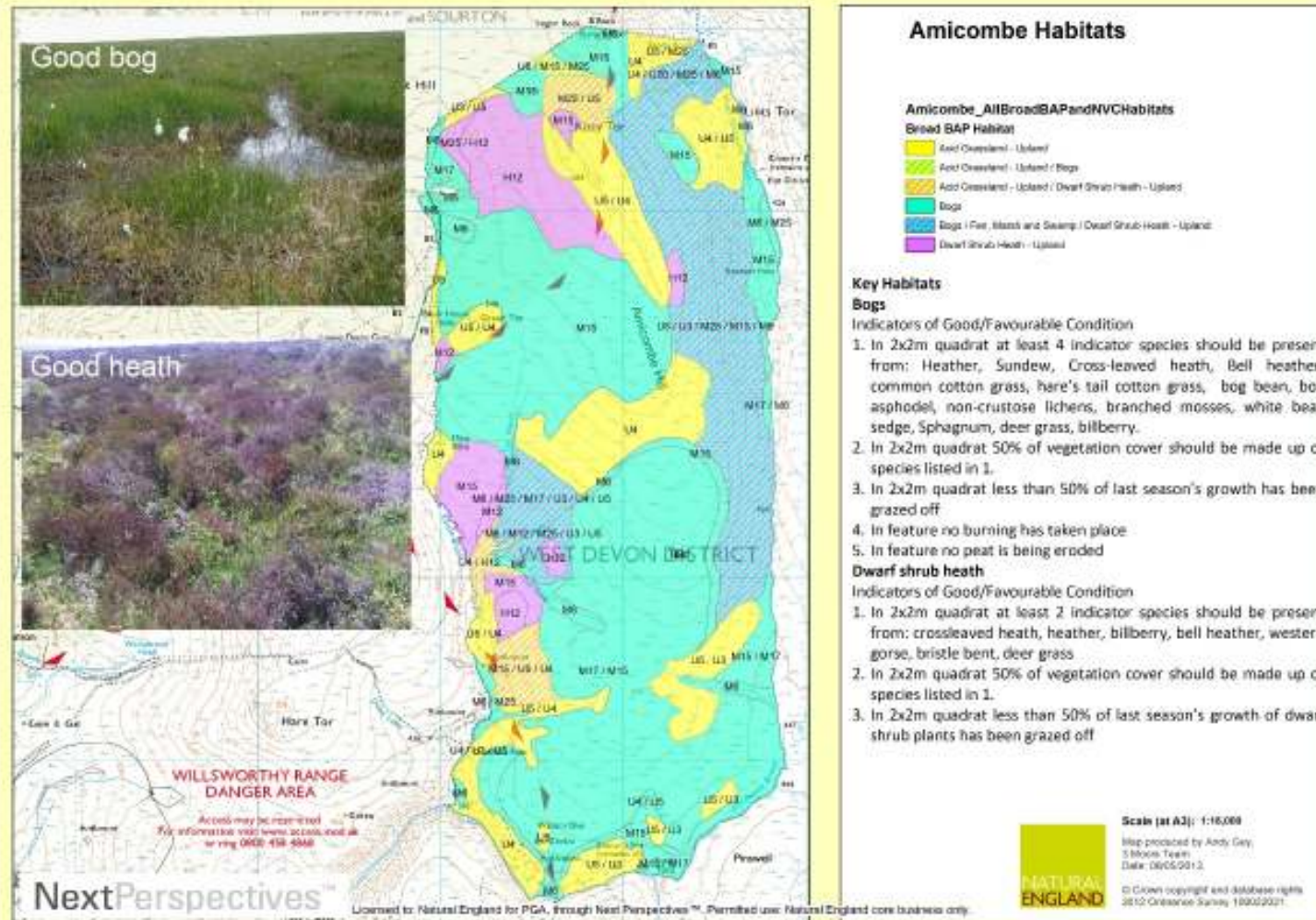


Fire Prevention



Natural resources	further information	Outcomes	monitoring program
Public access	Whilst all of the common is public access land most access is on well defined paths.	1. Ensure selected access routes and areas used for public access and amenity are maintained in a suitable condition.	The main access routes within each Management Area will be checked annually. A map showing areas where vegetation is hampering access will be provided if necessary.
Archaeology and historic environment	Archaeology in the Common is well documented and includes 56 Scheduled Monuments (SMs), numerous Nationally important sites and 3 Premier Archaeological Landscapes (PALS)	2. The areas of land that fall within the 3 PALS will be managed by grazing stock and where appropriate burning and cutting aiming to achieve the conditions sought by the individual PAL	Work undertaken in accordance with site requirements to be recorded by photographs including photographs of sites before work.
		3. Of the 56 SMs found on the common 12 SMs appear on English Heritage's "at risk" register and these will be prioritised for appropriate management to enable them to be removed from the register. The required management will be decided on a site by site basis.	Work undertaken in accordance with site requirements to be recorded by photographs including photographs of sites before work.
Nature or Biodiversity	Large areas notified as SSSI and SAC	4. Manage sympathetically the entire common to maintain, and where appropriate, enhance the quality of the biodiversity and within notified sites (SSSI) to achieve 50% in favourable condition by 2020. Specific vegetation management will be undertaken to deliver individual management area plans agreed in advance with Natural England.	Over a period of 3 years the vegetation within 20 quadrants in the bogs and 20 quadrants in the heath will be recorded in each management area.
Landscape	Landscape recognised as of international importance	5. Provide sufficient live-stock and swaling programme to ensure an open landscape remains whilst protecting the mosaic of different vegetation and sward heights. All swaling will be in accordance to a previously agreed plan and follow the Heather and Grass Burning Code.	Selected views to be recorded annually by photographs, in a way that enables year on comparison. Take remedial action if hazards or adverse change recorded.
water - quality and quantity	Water captured by blanket bog and other areas feeds abstraction points (c20) and 6 reservoirs.	6. No actions by the commoners will result in reducing the water quality reaching the various abstraction points.	SWW & EA annual monitoring of water quality.
		7. To facilitate blanket bog restoration design and conduct trials on the previously agreed 110 ha by 2015 and then after only on sites agreed in advance by the commoners.	Evidence of trials underway to include photographs and maps.
carbon	Estimated to be in excess of 9.7 m tonnes/carbon in peat soils. (7.2 mt in blanket bog)	8. Maintain healthy heathland soils. Provide vegetation management and reduce the adverse impacts of wild fires.	Record condition and changes to areas of exposed peat. Photographs will record remedial action. Natural England to investigate the use of LIDAR and CASE again
food production		9. Ensure that leared flocks and herds remain the principle means of stock management and that all stock are appropriate to the higher moor.	Stock counts undertaken monthly from May to October and once in February will record number, type and position of livestock.
Fire		10. Ensure the Forest Fire Plan is kept up to date and sufficient commoners are trained to fight fires. Ideally there will be no wildfires during the term of the agreement. Fire parties to be in attendance in the event of a wild fire.	Plan reviewed annually. A record of all response to callouts and list of participants will be kept.

Vegetation maps



Natural England carried out reunification of SSSI's to match management areas and created simplified maps to aid commoners in carrying out vegetation assessments

Vegetation monitoring

Farming Futures Biodiversity Monitoring Form	Notes										
Method:											
1. Sample points should be chosen randomly to avoid bias											
2. Sample points should be well distributed so they cover the whole feature											
Date											
Unit											
Assessed by											
Sample number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Bogs (assess June – Aug)	Pass?	Pass?	Pass?	Pass?	Pass?	Pass?	Pass?	Pass?	Pass?	Pass?	
1. In 2x2m quadrat at least 4 indicator species should be present from: Heather, Sundew, Cross-leaved heath, Bell heather, common cotton grass, hare's tail cotton grass, bog bean, bog asphodel, non-crustose lichens, branched mosses, white beak sedge, Sphagnum, deer grass, billberry.											
2. In 2x2m quadrat 50% of vegetation cover should be made up of species listed in 1.											
3. In 2x2m quadrat less than 50% of last season's growth has been grazed off											
4. Within the whole feature no burning has taken place											
5. Within the whole feature no peat is being eroded											
Dwarf shrub heath (assess Feb – Apr)											
1. In 2x2m quadrat at least 2 indicator species should be present from: crossleaved heath, heather, billberry, bell heather, western gorse, bristle bent, deer grass											
2. In 2x2m quadrat 50% of vegetation cover should be made up of species listed in 1.											
3. In 2x2m quadrat less than 50% of last season's growth of dwarf shrub plants has been grazed off											



After receiving training by Natural England commoners carry out their own assessments and complete this simple tick box form

So far commoners have carried out 280 assessments in heath of which 84 passed (38%) and 196 failed and 335 in bog of which 127 passed (30%) and 208 failed which Natural England says is the result they would expect to get.

Application to deviate from the HLS prescriptions

The Dartmoor Farming Futures trial enables changes to the HLS prescriptions on the Forest if such changes are considered to better deliver the agreed outcomes. A list of the 10 outcomes are enclosed with this form. If you wish to deviate from these prescriptions, please complete the form below and send it to the Administrator.

Your name:

Mobile number:..... email address:

Have you discussed your proposal with other graziers within the Management Area? Yes/No

What do you wish to do:

Which outcome/s are you hoping to achieve by the proposed management?

How do you consider the proposed management will help achieve this outcome/s?

What could go wrong and how will you avoid this?

To enable changes to land management to be assessed you will need to keep accurate records

Do you agree to keep records? Yes/No

Can you provide a photograph/s before change implemented and re photograph at regular intervals afterwards ?
Yes/No

Do you need help with providing the above information? Yes/No

Declaration

I understand that:

I must inform the administrator when the new management will start.

If instructed to do so by the Trustees I must revert to the HLS prescriptions.

Signature of grazier: Dated:

Any commoner wishing to deviate from the HLS prescriptions needs to fill out an application form for the Trustees who discuss the proposal and either say yes or no.



Report on cattle extension

How many cattle stayed out at first?	25 cows came back last week in October the rest came back 8 Nov							
When first cattle came off	27/10/2013	How many?	25	Why?	Started to drift back on Sheepstor common which they have to cross to get home, we have no rights on this common so took cows home to avoid hassle. During October they occasionally drifted back onto sheepstor but only when weather was bad and when it happened i would drive them back across the plym river to the forest via hentor.			
When next cattle came off	08/10/2013	How many?	all	Why?	As above			
Were any of the following used?	Buckets		Minerals	yes	Cobs	yes	None	
How often were cattle returned to common?	4/5 times							
Did you have any other problems?	Cows are now used to coming home at the end of October after 10 years of this happening and it is hard to break or change their routine. I think with persistence and a good autumn they can be persuaded to stay out for a bit longer. Our problem is Sheeptor common. The cows only have to cross the river to be on the wrong common. With easy crossing places available and it being their route home it can generate hassle.							

Controlled burn in 2014



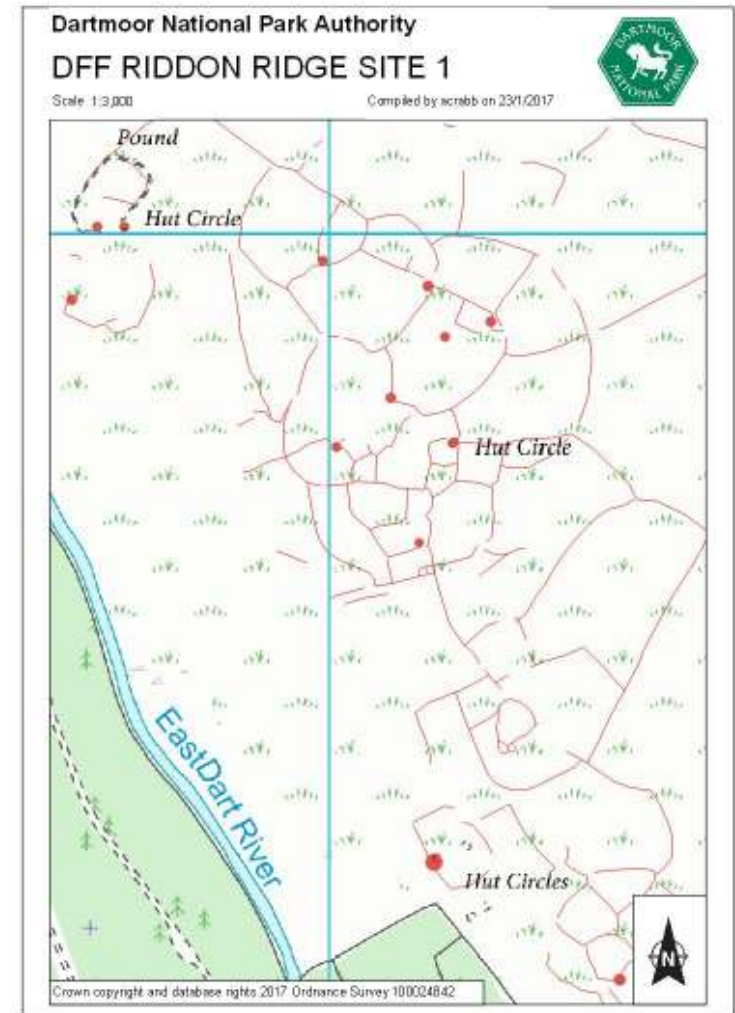
Showing regrowth of burn in the foreground



Riddon Ridge site 1

Out wintered cattle were encouraged to forage around the archaeology and so help reduce the vegetation height

9/2/17



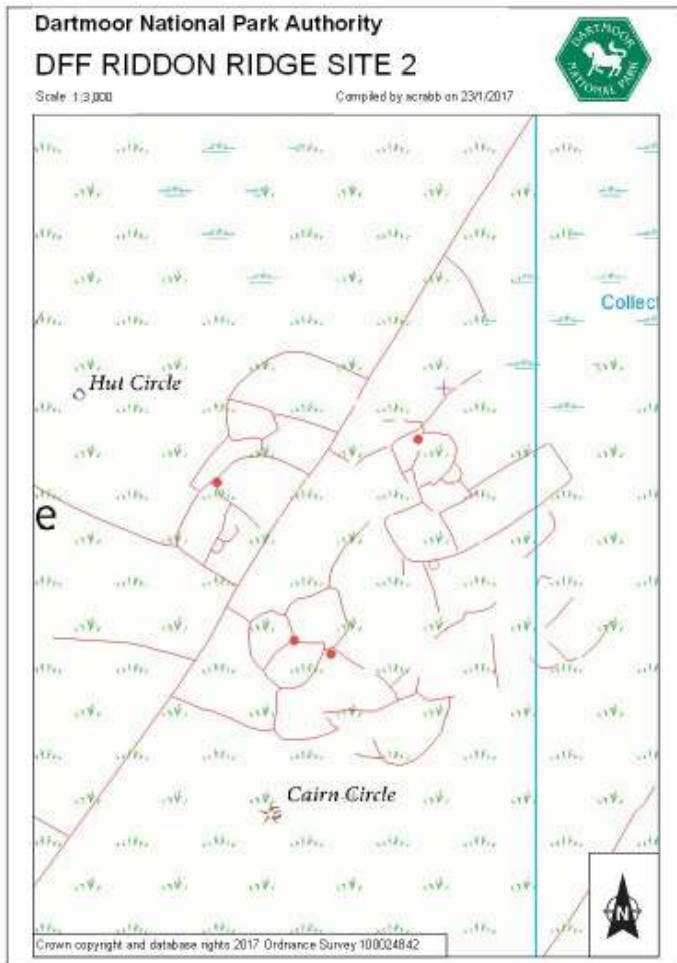
Riddon Ridge site 1

Areas have been burnt to better show archaeology.

Cattle out wintered and fed hay on target areas to widen paths as fire breaks



Riddon Ridge site 2



Lime has been spread on a previously burnt area to encourage grazing to expose the archaeology raised ph from 4 to 4.8. Repeating this year.

1/11/17



Dunnabridge trial



Burnt and sprayed



Burnt sprayed and scarified



Burnt

2
0
1
6



2
0
1
7



Fernworthy trial



Area for
burns and
tracks

Photos taken 1/11/17



Area for
topping
and
tracks

