

Morning Session

The history of nature conservation on the Sefton Coast – Dr P.H. Smith, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Sefton Coast Partnership.

The fact that the Sefton Coast, especially its sand-dunes, is really special for wildlife has been known for over 200 years. But only from the 1950s onwards were official steps taken to protect parts of the coast. Now most of it benefits from a wealth of regional, national and international designations which recognise its unique nature conservation value. This talk will describe the battle that took place, and is still taking place, to ensure that the coast's natural heritage is conserved for future generations to enjoy.

Nature Conservation Strategy – John Houston, Biodiversity Project Officer Sefton Coast Partnership.

Work has now begun on the preparation of a revised nature conservation strategy and biodiversity delivery plan for the Sefton Coast. The unique natural values of the Sefton Coast can only be effectively conserved through a partnership approach and through a better understanding of the natural processes which act on the environment. The revised strategy will therefore take a landscape-based approach towards identifying current issues and concerns. Longer term trends such as climate, geomorphological processes and soil development will need to be better understood.

An Issues Report has been prepared to start a period of active discussion and consultation to help identify current problems and opportunities for nature conservation.

Following the Forum there will be opportunities for the involvement of partner organisations, specialists and the general public in assisting with the development of the vision for nature conservation on the coast. Any vision, however, will have to be tempered by the statutory requirements for nature conservation as set down by Government.

Along with the Issues Report a number of outline broad principles are presented for discussion. These include the need to accept change and to work with it, to actively manage the semi-natural habitats of cultural value, and to support an ecosystem based approach to coastal management.

The strategy will also be a delivery mechanism for identifying, planning and funding nature conservation activity across the coast, for encouraging recording and for supporting the North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan. The strategy will support annual work programmes and restoration projects. Following stakeholder involvement in consensus building a draft strategy should be prepared by late 2006.

Climate Change and Geomorphology - Graham Lymbery, Coastal Defence Sefton MBC. This short presentation will focus upon the changing form of the Sefton Coast and how Climate Change might impact on this in the future. In order to simplify the presentation it will focus on the last couple of hundred years and only look forward to the next fifty to a hundred years.

Parallel Session 1 (1.35 to 2.20pm)

The Forest Plan – Nick Roche & Paul Nolan, Mersey Forest.

The Forest Plan was approved for implementation in January 2003 after extensive stakeholder consultation. 2006 is the fourth year of a five year cycle of woodland management operations and the Plan is therefore due for its first proposed review. This review must be completed by mid 2007 in order that the activities can be adjusted for the start of the second 5 year cycle of operations.

The Session will provide an overview of progress to date and will then outline a proposed schedule for the Review, inviting comments on how the review should proceed over the 17 months between February 2007 and July 2007. The parameters of the review will be laid down and views will be sought on how to best consult with interest groups and stakeholders. Views on the best methods to feedback to those consulted will also be sought.

Parallel Session 1 cont.....

The Birds Of The Sefton Coast –

Steve White, Lancashire Wildlife Trust & Dave McAleavy, Coast & Countryside Sefton MBC. The presentation will provide an overview of the main bird habitats and sites, including the nature reserves at Marshside and Seaforth, intertidal areas, dunes, woodlands and adjacent farmland. The ornithological importance of the Sefton Coast will be assessed with emphasis on:

- Breeding birds: historical changes and current trends
- Wintering wading birds and wildfowl
- Migrant songbirds

Plants – Dr P.H. Smith, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Sefton Coast Partnership.

With the completion in 2005 of an inventory of Vascular Plants (flowering plants and ferns), we now know that the Sefton Coast Partnership area supports more than half the

flora of South Lancashire – a remarkable 1177 species, sub-species and hybrids, including many rarities! This talk will discuss the results of the Inventory, illustrate and suggest reasons for this great diversity of plants, and speculate on what might happen to our flora in the future.

Herptiles - Alice Kimpton, English Nature.

Frogs, toads, newts and lizards are all found on the Sefton Coast. This presentation will cover aspects of their lifestyles, habitat requirements, threats, losses and gains.

You will find out about adaptations to help the rare natterjack toad survive in the dunes, why sand lizards turn green in the spring and what great crested newts eat for dinner.

The presentation will also answer questions about why these animals need managing and what you can do to safeguard their future in Sefton.

Parallel Session – 2 (2.40 to 3.25pm)

Red Squirrels – Fiona Robertson & Steve White, Lancashire Wildlife Trust.

For the Sefton Coast Forum 2006 the presentation on red squirrels will look at:

- The success of the refuge designation following last year's forum.
- The national picture and future funding.
- Monitoring of red and grey squirrel populations.
- Disease

Invertebrates – Steve Judd, National Museums Liverpool.

From tiger beetles to mining bees - a look at some of the rare and unusual species that make the Sefton Coast such a special place nationally for insects.

Nature outside nature reserves – Paul Rooney, Liverpool Hope University.

This talk will challenge the perception that the only worthwhile nature is to be found within the confines of a Nature Reserve. Using a range of locations on the Sefton Coast as examples it will illustrate the valuable contribution to Nature Conservation these

make and discuss how this value can be maintained.

Climate Change and the Visitor Economy – Prof John Handley, Manchester University.

The Sefton dune system is of international significance as a haven of biodiversity, with its special character providing the setting for world-class links golf courses and an informal countryside access and recreation network of regional significance. Research carried out by the University of Manchester suggests that the influence of climate change has uncertain implications for the regional visitor economy, though it is likely that as conditions become less comfortable in urban areas, the coast will become even more attractive as a visitor destination. However, what is more certain is that the impacts of climate change, including sea level rise, storm events and changes to the dune system water table, are likely to adversely affect the environmental integrity of the dune system. This presentation will discuss the main findings of the research carried out, the implications for the future management of the Sefton dune system, as well as highlighting some key generic messages regarding the impact of climate change on vulnerable locations.