



Community Action Plan

St Maurice's Site of Interest for Nature Conservation

Updated September 2017

Purpose

This document has been created in partnership with the Scottish Wildlife Trust, North Lanarkshire Council, St Maurice's High School and the community of Condorrat and Westfield. The Action Plan identifies the history of the site, key issues and solutions that would be manageable by the students and local community to enhance natural heritage and achieve positive change. This document will also recognise key contacts within North Lanarkshire Council to encourage and develop safe working practice and to gain appropriate permissions required while working on council owned land.

Natural Connections project

Cumbernauld Living Landscape aims to enhance, restore and reconnect green areas of the town. Over 50% of Cumbernauld's town centre is made up of green spaces: parks, woodlands and gardens. However, these areas are often disconnected from one another and many are not as good for people – or wildlife – as they should be.

The Natural Connections project will encourage young people from marginalised groups to learn about, value and celebrate their local natural heritage. It will also give them the opportunity and skills to make real and lasting improvements to their environment. In addition, the project will promote and celebrate the town's greenspaces to the wider community through outdoor "Living Windows", an interactive web-map, a fold-out activity map and public events and displays.

Natural Connections will enable local residents and the marginalised groups to take action to improve three sites within Cumbernauld, St Maurice's, Ravenswood LNR and Cumbernauld Glen. These improvements will address improving biodiversity, safety, access, encourage health and wellbeing through participating in volunteers' days and give local volunteers and the marginalised groups lifelong learning skills.

St Maurice's SINC - History of the site.

St Maurice's Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) is a 17 hectare site with a variety of habitats including, open grassland, wildflower meadows, woodlands, a pond and wetland marsh area and wetland meadow. Owned and managed by North Lanarkshire Council this site is of particular interest due to the number of UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) species present including reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* and the small pearl bordered fritillary *Boloria selene*. Historically the area was known for the quarrying of sandstone and particularly the farming of arable crops and of flax for weaving. The nearby village of Condorrat is a famous weaver's village, birthplace of revolutionary John Baird (1790-1820). Much has changed over the years with the development of the road system, including the newly upgraded M80. Little is known about the formation of St Maurice's pond however it is reasonable to assume that much of the subsoil from the housing developments of Westfield and Condorrat in the 1970's would have been spread here. Evidence of this appears in the form of unusual plant species that favour calcareous sites found within the site which tends towards an acidic marsh landscape. Today the site is used by fishermen, dog walkers, and recreationally due to the good path route and the onsite BMX track.

Why the site is important

The St. Maurice's SINC has two important habitats; Ponds and Woodlands which are included in the Scottish Biodiversity List and the UK Biodiversity List of Priority Habitats. Increased development of available land to urban expansion has caused the decline in these rich habitats, which has had a knock on effect, reducing the biodiversity found within these habitats to alarming levels. The importance of the St. Maurice's site is strengthened by the species which use it for their homes or during migration. UK Biodiversity Action Plan Bird species such as reed bunting, sky larks *Alauda arvensis subsp. arvensis/scotica* and swifts *Apus apus* use the rich landscape for feeding and shelter. Important mammal species that have been noted on the site include Western European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*, and badgers *Meles meles* and the Small pearl bordered fritillary butterfly has been seen during June and July. Further enhancement and protection of the site will ensure these and other species have a safe haven for years to come.

From the point of view of local residents, St Maurices offers a place for recreational use and a chance to reconnect with nature. Access to a small car park onsite allows for patrons from further afield to visit, enjoy and explore. The simple path is an excellent walking route for beginners who can benefit both physically and mentally. The calming influence of the pond and the inspiring surrounding landscape help to relieve everyday stresses, while the woodlands provide cool shade in the height of summer. Property values in the area may be inclined to be higher due to access to a local greenspace and education of the site to local communities and inclusion to decision making on enhancements to the site will promote stewardship and protection of the site.

The site is also important for eco-system services; these are services which our environment does for us. Services such as air and water purification, carbon storage, noise regulation, green travel pollination and accessible nature all of which we take for granted in an urban setting. The eco-system services provided by the St Maurice's site are especially important due to the volume of traffic which uses the network of major road systems in the area; particularly the M80 which cuts through the large housing schemes of Westfield and Condorrat.

Objectives

- Enhance and protect the biodiversity of the site
- Involve the community, local groups and schools in the decision making and practical management of the site
- Raise the awareness of the site through Natural Connections school workshops and practical volunteer days

Outcomes

- Build the confidence of students and increase skills
- Increase wildlife biodiversity
- Increase wildflower biodiversity and abundance
- Create a safer place for people to visit
- Reduce anti-social behaviour
- Raise awareness and appreciation of the site

Contacts

Before any work commences please ensure permissions are gained from the management/ land owner of the site. St Maurice's pond is managed by the Land services department and the Conservation team including the Countryside Ranger Service North Team. For any questions or comments on site maintenance please contact:

Regeneration and Environmental Services

William Thompson

Assistant Area Manager

ThomsonWi@northlan.gov.uk

Or

Chris McKnight Area Supervisor

McKnightC@northlan.gov.uk

Senior Conservation Officer

Toby Nevitt

Greenspace Development

NevittT@northlan.gov.uk

To record an interesting sighting of wildlife please contact Biodiversity Officer, taking note of the date, time and location of sighting:

Kirsty Mooney

Assistant Biodiversity Officer

MooneyKi@northlan.gov.uk

If you have any questions regarding the Cumbernauld Living Landscape or community engagement within Cumbernauld contact:

Ian Mackenzie

Project Development Officer

Imackenzie@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk



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Community Action Plan

Short term

Action	Target completion	Responsibility	Measure of success	Notes	Progress as of September 2017
Tree planting	Oct 2015- March 2016	Students/Community/volunteers	No. of trees planted	NO trees are required for this site unless replacing dead stock	-
Tree guard removal	When necessary	Students/Community/volunteers	No. of tree guards removed	Removal of tree guards will allow further tree growth	Orchard has deer proofing around trees – this needs to be higher!
Wildflower planting	Aug 2015 – March 2016	Students/Community/volunteers Grow Wild seed promotion packs once per year	Coverage of per/m ² of wildflower seed sown or number of plants planted	Plant species must be native and areas check for what type of species are suitable for the site. Species such as bluebell and yellow rattle require planting in autumn as they need frost conditions to germinate.	
Litter picking	Ongoing	Students/Community/volunteers	Volume of litter removed - per bag	Organise days through Keep Scotland Beautiful to increase profile of group. Clearing of outflow stream would be best during winter and spring months	Natural Connections 12 bags of waste removed –2016 3 bags of waste removed –2016 3 tents, 3 bags and trug of broken glass removed –2016 4 bags of waste removed –2016
INNS/Scrub removal	Ongoing where/when necessary	Students/Community/volunteers	Area per/m ² cleared	Carry out tasks while reducing damage to meadow	Natural Connections 112.8m ² cleared of European larch – December 2016 37.7m ² cleared of Rhodi – December 2016
Survey of wildflowers	October 2015	Students/Community/volunteers Approach other organisations i.e. Cumbernauld Living Landscape Plantlife etc.	Set benchmark to No. of species and abundance currently present	Bioblitz complete on site by May 2017	Natural Connections Go wild at St Maurice's Pond citizen science fun day -July 2016 Wildlife recording day (*SCH) – April 2016
Pond clearing	Autumn	Students/Community/volunteers Approach other organisations i.e. Cumbernauld Living Landscape Froglife etc.	Area of pond cleared of vegetation	How can this be measured? Volume of material removed?	

Fence mending	March 2015	Students/Community/volunteers	Length per/M of mended fence	Only where necessary	
Bat/bird house making – Bug habitats	March 2015	Students/Community/volunteers	No of habitats made and installed	Check landowner is happy to have bat boxes due to licencing laws	
ID Surveys	March 2015	Students/Community/volunteers	End of session evaluation	Delivered by sister organisations	
Exploring Natural History through creativity	March 2015	Students/Community/volunteers	End of session evaluation	Very simple and fun activity nature art/ photography	
Bush skills	March 2015	Cumbernauld Living Landscape Community Engagement Officer to be approached	Learning new skills End of session evaluation	Dependant on capacity	

***SCH – Natural Connections Schools workshops**

Medium term

Action	Target completion	Responsibility	Measure of success	Notes	Progress as of September 2017
Drainage improvements	Where and when required	Students/Community/volunteers	Reduction of flooding to path(s)	Assess if this is required on each site. Would require a work team to assist i.e. TCV Project team	
Scrub removal	Ongoing where/when necessary	Students/Community/volunteers	Area per/m ² cleared	Carry out tasks while reducing damage to meadow	See short term tasks
Tidy and improve Forest Schools Area	Ongoing when required	Students/Community/volunteers	Information from Forest Schools Leader, that they are happy with condition of the site	Maintain this area for both high school use and for Forest school use. Practive LEAVE NO TRACE	
Dry stone wall repair	Ongoing due to anti-social behaviour	Students/Community/volunteers	Wall remains constructed, anti-social behaviour reduced in this area	Instructor and funding needed for this	
INNS Removal	Ongoing	Students/Community/volunteers	Survey area to compare Area/m ² from previous survey	Rhododendron and salmonberry only at St Maurice's Pond. INNS must be cut and left to mulch at site of cutting due to current laws regarding INNS	See short term tasks
Improvements to the boardwalk	Ongoing when required	Students/Community/volunteers/contractors	Area safer to walk for dog owners Reduced complaints	Gaps between boards too wide	TCV Volunteers (Contracted) 2017 20m of boardwalk complete

Long term

Action	Target completion	Responsibility	Measure of success	Notes	Progress as of September 2017
Wildflower meadow management	Ongoing	Students/Community/volunteers	Reduction of nitrogen rich grasses and increase of wildflowers per/m ² Can be surveyed before and after	Removal of cut hay essential to encourage wildflower growth	See short term tasks
Woodland management (weeding and pruning)	Ongoing	Students/Community/volunteers	Healthy growth of trees, clear line of vision through woodland, better feeling of safety	Semi mature to mature branches laterally thinned at a maximum of 5" (head height), not exceeding 20% of tree mass, materials used to create brash deterrent for deer and to encourage regeneration or removed for the use of bug habitats	See short term tasks
Scrub removal	Ongoing where/when necessary	Students/Community/volunteers	Area per/m ² cleared	Carry out tasks while reducing damage to meadow	See short term tasks
Removal of INNS species	ongoing	Students/Community/volunteers	Compare coverage of INNS before and after Native species return	Rhododendron and Salmon berry found at St Maurice's	See short term tasks
Path maintenance	Where and when required	Students/Community/volunteers	Reduction of flooding to path(s)	Assess if this is required on each site. Would require a work team to assist i.e. TCV Project team	
Tidy Forest Schools Area	Ongoing when required	Students/Community/volunteers	Information from Forest Schools Leader, that	Maintain this area for both high school use and for Forest school use	

			they are happy with condition of the site		
Remove horsetail/mareestail weed from pond	When required	Contractors	Area cleared	Anglers request – Large area of pond is being taken over by horsetail/mareestail weed Conservation concern – low, however good to monitor over time as pond may need clearing of material/silt	



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