

PART 3

HLS - Management of environmental features

General conditions on all HLS agreement land

On your HLS agreement land you must follow the general management conditions set out below, unless specifically stated otherwise in a subsequent section of this agreement. HLS agreement land is all land on which Higher Level Stewardship management prescriptions apply, including items within a Capital Works Plan

- Do not apply lime.
- On the conventional land that you manage: do not apply pesticides, except for the control of spear thistle, creeping thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock, common ragwort, nettles or other undesirable species named in your agreement. Herbicides may only be applied to these species by weedwiper or by spot treatment.
- Do not allow your agreement land to be levelled, infilled, used for the storage or dumping of materials or used by motor vehicles or machinery (except where necessary for the management of the land), if this is likely to cause long-term damage from rutting or compaction of the soil, or otherwise damage areas being managed under the scheme.
- Do not light fires (including burning brash or cuttings) where they could cause damage to features of archaeological or historic interest, or within ten metres of tree canopies or on any areas managed for their wildlife habitat interest. (This does not restrict your ability to manage heathland vegetation by controlled burning in compliance with the Heather and Grass Burning Regulations 1986 and accompanying Code.)
- Do not allow your agreement land to be used for organised games or sports, rallies, camping or caravanning, shows or sales where this is likely to damage areas being managed for their wildlife habitat interest or features of archaeological or historic interest; where this is likely to cause excessive or unreasonable disturbance to wildlife being encouraged under your agreement; or where this would cause unreasonable restriction to Public Rights of Way or "access land" as designated under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- Do not carry out or permit metal detecting or archaeological fieldwork on any of the archaeological sites on your holding identified in your Farm Environment Plan, unless agreed with your Natural England adviser in writing. In some cases a derogation will also be required.

HC15 - Maintenance of successional areas and scrub

Land parcels and associated features managed under this option:

RLR Field Number: TM43601687

General description of the management required:

The aim of this option is to maintain habitat mosaics at the field and landscape scale for specific BAP species and to protect soils and watercourses. It is also suitable adjacent to woodland to enhance or maintain the quality of the woodland edge environment and to maintain scrub on limestone pavement. This option is not appropriate on archaeological sites, or where scrub will be detrimental to the landscape. The option will require some form of regular management of vegetation, such as extensive grazing, on part or all of the site to maintain suitable conditions for species and to prevent the development of woodland. The option may require the exclusion of livestock in some or all years.

Indicators of Success

- Nesting bird species, such as linnet, should be present.
- Cover of shrub species such as hawthorn and blackthorn should be between 20% and 50% of the area. The vegetation within 2m of the edge of the scrub should be taller than 30cm.
- Shrub species should have a diverse age and height structure. No more than 50% of the scrub area should be mature, or over mature.
- Trees should be present at irregular spacings, with an overall canopy of between 5% - 10% of the area. By year 5, there should be no trees above 4m tall.
- Undesirable species including ragwort and creeping thistle should be no more than occasional.

Management Prescriptions; the dos and don'ts of management

The following rules apply across the whole area being managed under this option.

- Supplementary feeding is not permitted.
- There must be no ploughing or other cultivation such as reseedling, rolling or chain harrowing.
- Unless otherwise agreed with your Natural England adviser, all mature or over-mature standing trees and all standing and fallen deadwood must be retained, unless it is a genuine safety hazard. Tree surgery must be limited to that required for the safety of people and livestock.
- There must be no new drainage or modification/improvement to existing drainage systems. Existing drains can be maintained.

HO2 - Restoration of lowland heath

Land parcels and associated features managed under this option:

RLR Field Number: TM43600792

RLR Field Number: TM43601687

Features: G05 Lowland dry acid grassland - BAP habitat, M03 Lowland heath - BAP habitat

RLR Field Number: TM43613203

Features: G05 Lowland dry acid grassland - BAP habitat, M03 Lowland heath - BAP habitat

General description of the management required:

This option is aimed at restoration of lowland heathland that is not currently in good/favourable condition, including on sites whose management has been neglected. Such sites are likely to have become degraded by scrub, bracken, gorse, invasive grasses or secondary woodland encroachment, and in some cases overgrazing and too frequent burning, and may or may not currently be under active management. Soil type, management history and location in relation to existing heathland sites will be significant factors in determining suitability. Significant site clearance and weed control may be needed, but it is expected that, following suitable treatment, heathland vegetation will re-establish without the need for seeding from external sources. This option will help to restore and strengthen the vegetation mosaics characteristic of lowland heathland, and thus enhance the integrity of the historic landscape character of the area, retain and manage historic environment features and benefit heathland wildlife.

Indicators of Success

- By year 5, cover of dwarf shrubs should be between 25% and 90%.
- By year 5, there should be a wide range of age classes of dwarf shrubs present. This should include 10% - 40% cover of pioneer stage, 20% - 80% cover of building/mature stage, less than 30% cover of degenerate stage and no more than 10% cover of dead dwarf shrubs.
- Recently burnt areas should cover less than 10% of the land.
- By year 5, cover of common gorse should be less than 50%.
- By year 5, a firebreak network should be established over at least 50% of the land.
- By year 5, at least 2 desirable wildflower species (see Appendix to Part 3) should be occasional.
- By year 10, cover of bryophytes and lichens should be at least 10%

Management Prescriptions; the dos and don'ts of management

The following rules apply across the whole area being managed under this option.

- Remove areas of scrub and invasive trees agreed with your Natural England contact, together with arisings, (or burn on metal sheets and remove ash). Control unbrowsed regrowth with approved herbicide or by stump winching (but do not carry out stump removal on archaeological features).

- Restore a balanced range of dwarf shrub age classes by burning, or cutting and removing a number of patches each year. The area to be restored will depend on existing structure composition, but each should be less than 0.5ha.
- Control bracken in areas agreed with your Natural England adviser. Use an approved herbicide or, if no ground-nesting birds, deer or other vulnerable wildlife are present, cut twice annually or bruise with a suitable roller. Remove or till the compact litter mat where it is greater than 5cm deep. Take advice from your Natural England adviser if the work will be done on areas with archaeological interest.
- In areas targeted to benefit rare species and where no bare ground exists, remove turf from small (5-20 sq m) areas or strips to create a number of patches scattered in unshaded areas across the site. A small pushed blade is the preferred tool to use for turf removal. Do not use this prescription on archaeological sites or historic features.
- Agree a plan with your Natural England adviser to reverse any drainage of wet heath or mire to restore original hydrology.
- Provide fire control measures as agreed with your Natural England adviser, including fire breaks, a fire plan and an adequate water supply.
- After successful establishment, operations involving ploughing, sub-surface cultivation, reseeding, installation of new drainage or modification of existing drainage systems are not permitted unless agreed with your Natural England adviser.
- Do not apply fertilisers, organic manures, lime or waste materials (including sewage sludge).
- Supplementary feeding should be confined to mineral blocks.
- Control undesirable plant species such as creeping thistle, spear thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock and common ragwort, so that by year 5 their cover is less than 15% and by year 10 their cover is less than 10%. Agree control methods with your Natural England adviser.
- Control trees and scrub so that by year 5 their cover is less than 25% and by year 10 their cover is less than 15%. Some scrub and trees should be maintained.
- Follow the agreed management plan to be produced by Suffolk Wildlife Trust by 30 April 2013.