CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES

CORE MANAGEMENT PLAN

INCLUDING CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

FOR

COED Y CERRIG SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST INCLUDING COED Y CERRIG SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION

Date: 10th March 2008

Approved by: David Mitchell

More detailed maps of management units can be provided on request.
A Welsh version of all or part of this document can be made available on request.

Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru
Countryside Council for Wales

NATURA 2000

Ramsar

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government
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PREFACE

This document provides the main elements of CCW's management plan for the site named. It sets out what needs to be achieved on the site, the results of monitoring and advice on the action required. This document is made available through CCW's web site and may be revised in response to changing circumstances or new information. This is a technical document that supplements summary information on the web site.

One of the key functions of this document is to provide CCW's statement of the Conservation Objectives for the relevant Natura 2000 site. This is required to implement the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, as amended (Section 4). As a matter of Welsh Assembly Government Policy, the provisions of those regulations are also to be applied to Ramsar sites in Wales.

1. VISION FOR THE SITE

This is a descriptive overview of what needs to be achieved for conservation on the site. It brings together and summarises the Conservation Objectives (part 4) into a single, integrated statement about the site.

Around a third of the site is covered by wet alder and willow woodland. The understorey includes locally native shrubs typical of this habitat and the ground flora consists of a variety of typical wetland plants, such as lesser pond-sedge, common marsh-bedstraw, meadowsweet, yellow pimpernel, opposite-leaved golden-saxifrage, marsh-marigold, hemlock water-dropwort, water mint, lady fern and rushes. A stable or increasing population of marsh fern is also present. Canopy shading from trees and shrubs should be low in the vicinity of at least one of the colonies, to improve the potential for the fern to grow spore-producing fronds. This wet woodland grades into areas of permanent open swamp dominated by lesser pond-sedge or other typical wetland plants, where the hydrological conditions are suitable. Adjacent areas of marshy grassland and spring-fed mire are intimately linked to the wet woodland and swamp. The wet woodland has a variable canopy structure, based on a small-scale patchwork, with alder of different ages and some standing as well as fallen dead wood. Ash does not make up more than 25% of the canopy. Plants associated with nutrient enrichment, such as stinging nettle and cleavers, are not dominant over large areas and invasive alien plants like Japanese knotweed and Indian balsam are absent.

The drier ground supports woodland, which is mainly composed of ash, oak and beech, although the latter species occupies no more than about 5% of the site. In the past, elm was an important component of the woodland, but Dutch elm disease killed many of these trees. It is possible, and desirable, that elm could again feature prominently in the canopy. There is an understorey here that includes abundant hazel, some wych elm and evidence of natural regeneration of trees and shrubs. The ground flora in these areas includes a wide range of typical woodland plants, such as dog's mercury, herb-robert, hart's-tongue, tufted hair-grass, bluebell, enchanter's-nightshade, honeysuckle, wood sorrel, creeping soft-grass and ferns and locally uncommon plants, including nettle-leaved bellflower. The dry woodland is developing a diverse structure with mature and ancient trees, natural regeneration, canopy gaps and areas of fruiting hazel. Hazel nuts are an important food source for the dormouse population. The canopy and understorey structure have many branches overlapping with each other and with tree trunks to allow easy movement by dormice around the wood. Invasive tree species such as sycamore and patches of young beech are rare or absent. Dead wood, including fallen and standing trees are found throughout the drier woodland. A system of wide paths on south-facing slopes are kept open to maintain the population of nettle-leaved bellflower and other light demanding plants, such as violets and brambles, which provide food for a variety of species including silver-washed fritillary butterfly and dormice.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Area and Designations Covered by this Plan

Grid reference(s): SO294212 (SSSI);
SO291210 (SAC)

Unitary authority(ies): **Momouthshire** (Brecon Beacons National Park)

Area (hectares): **20.55 (SSSI);**
9.1 (SAC)

Designations covered: **Coed y Cerrig SSSI and Coed y Cerrig SAC**

Detailed maps of the designated sites are available through CCW's web site: **http://www.ccw.gov.uk/interactive-maps/protected-areas-map.aspx**

Map 1 shows the area covered by this plan.

2.2 Outline Description

The site includes a large area of species-rich fen meadow, in association with some rush pasture. There is also an important area of alluvial ash and alder woodland, with transitions to drier woodland dominated by ash and oak.

2.3 Outline of Past and Current Management

The wet Alder dominated woodland comprises areas that have been traditionally managed as coppice, together with areas that were managed as grazed fen-meadow, but from which grazing has now ceased and onto which wet Alder woodland has spread. Coppice management was traditionally carried out to provide timber for the charcoal and clog making industries. Coppicing ceased before the Second World War. The dry woodland was managed for high forest oak and beech on the plateau and upper slopes. On the steeper slopes the traditional practice of coppice-with-standards was employed with mainly ash, elm and hazel coppice below ash standards.

Coppice management was re-introduced into the wet woodland in 1994, with small coupes being cut on a rotation.

The dry woodland has not seen any significant management in recent years. A small area was coppiced in 1986/7 by the owner prior to purchase by the Nature Conservancy Council. There are some minor works carried out annually to maintain habitat diversity (clearing of rides and glades). There have been no requests to carry out silvicultural activities within the SSSI, outside of the NNR, but a small amount of wet alder dominated woodland (adjacent to the coupe cut by CCW in 1994) outside of the SSSI was cut by the owner in 1997.

2.4 Management Units

The plan area has been divided into management units to enable practical communication about features, objectives, and management. In this plan the management units have been based on ownership, but also with reference to land management requirements.

The following table confirms the relationships between the management units and the designations covered:

Unit number	**SAC**	**SSSI**	**NNR**
Coed y Cerrig			
1		✔	✔
2	✔	✔	✔
3		✔	
4	✔	✔	
5	✔	✔	
6		✔	
7		✔	
8		✔	
9	✔	✔	
10		✔	

3. THE SPECIAL FEATURES

3.1 Confirmation of Special Features

Designated feature	***Relationships, nomenclature etc***	***Conservation Objective in part 4***
SAC features		
Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: **1. Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion, Alnion incarnae, Salicion albae*) (EU Habitat Code: 91EO)** with associated wetland habitats.	Wet woodland dominated by alder ash and willow, generally corresponding to the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) types W5 & W7. The ground flora consists of a variety of swamp and fen plants. Associated areas of open sedge swamp, fen-meadow and spring-fed bog vegetation provide additional interest.	1
SPA features		
Not applicable		
Ramsar features		
Not applicable		
SSSI features		
2. Non-SAC, Dry Broadleaved Woodland	In addition to the Alluvial forest described above, also present is dry woodland (NVC types W8, W10, W11 and W14).	
3. Marshy grassland and fen	Some is closely associated with Alluvial forest	
4. An important population of marsh fern *Thelypteris palustris.*	This is a rare plant in south Wales, which is also declining throughout the UK.	

3.2 Special Features and Management Units

This section sets out the relationship between the special features and each management unit. This is intended to provide a clear statement about what each unit should be managed for, taking into account the varied needs of the different special features. All special features are allocated to one of seven classes in each management unit. These classes are:

Key Features

KH - a 'Key Habitat' in the management unit, i.e. the habitat that is the main driver of management and focus of monitoring effort, perhaps because of the dependence of a key species (see KS below). There will usually only be one Key Habitat in a unit but there can be more, especially with large units.

KS – a 'Key Species' in the management unit, often driving both the selection and management of a Key Habitat.

Geo – an earth science feature that is the main driver of management and focus of monitoring effort in a unit.

Other Features

Sym - habitats, species and earth science features that are of importance in a unit but are not the main drivers of management or focus of monitoring. These features will benefit from management for the key feature(s) identified in the unit. These may be classed as 'Sym' features because:

a) they are present in the unit but may be of less conservation importance than the key feature; and/or
b) they are present in the unit but in small areas/numbers, with the bulk of the feature in other units of the site; and/or
c) their requirements are broader than and compatible with the management needs of the key feature(s), e.g. a mobile species that uses large parts of the site and surrounding areas.

Nm - an infrequently used category where features are at risk of decline within a unit as a result of meeting the management needs of the key feature(s), i.e. under Negative Management. These cases will usually be compensated for by management elsewhere in the plan, and can be used where minor occurrences of a feature would otherwise lead to apparent conflict with another key feature in a unit.

Mn - Management units that are essential for the management of features elsewhere on a site e.g. livestock over-wintering area included within designation boundaries, buffer zones around water bodies, etc.

x – Features not known to be present in the management unit.

The table below sets out the relationship between the special features and management units identified in this plan:

Coed y Cerrig			**Management Unit**							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SAC		✔		✔	✔				✔	
SSSI	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
NNR/CCW owned	✔	✔								
SAC features										
1. Alluvial forest	x	KH	x	KH	KH	x	x	x	x	x
SSSI features										
2. Non SAC dry broadleaved woodland	KH	?	KH	x	x	KH	KH	KH	x	x
3. Marshy grassland and fen	x	Sym	x	x	KH	x	x	x	x	x
4. Marsh fern	x	KS	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Unit 1 - NNR broadleaved woodland (non-SAC)

Unit 2 - NNR alder woodland (SAC)

Unit 3 - Private broadleaved woodland (non-SAC)

Unit 4 - Private broadleaved woodland (SAC)

Unit 5 - Marshy grassland included in SAC boundary, with small area of alder woodland by stream and on boundaries

Unit 6 - Private broadleaved woodland

Unit 7 - Private broadleaved woodland

Unit 8 - Private broadleaved woodland

Unit 9 - Road straddling SAC habitat

Unit 10 Road straddling SSSI

4. CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

Background to Conservation Objectives:

a. Outline of the legal context and purpose of conservation objectives.

Conservation objectives are required by the 1992 'Habitats' Directive (92/43/EEC). The aim of the Habitats Directives is the maintenance, or where appropriate the restoration of the 'favourable conservation status' of habitats and species features for which SACs and SPAs are designated (see Box 1).

In the broadest terms, 'favourable conservation status' means a feature is in satisfactory condition and all the things needed to keep it that way are in place for the foreseeable future. CCW considers that the concept of favourable conservation status provides a practical and legally robust basis for conservation objectives for Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites.

Box 1
Favourable conservation status as defined in Articles 1(e) and 1(i) of the Habitats Directive

"The conservation status of a natural habitat is the sum of the influences acting on it and its typical species that may affect its long-term natural distribution, structure and functions as well as the long term survival of its typical species. The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as favourable when:

- Its natural range and areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing, and
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- The conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The conservation status of a species is the sum of the influences acting on the species that may affect the long-term distribution and abundance of its populations. The conservation status will be taken as 'favourable' when:

- population dynamics data on the species indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis."

Achieving these objectives requires appropriate management and the control of factors that may cause deterioration of habitats or significant disturbance to species.

As well as the overall function of communication, Conservation objectives have a number of specific roles:

- Conservation planning and management.

  The conservation objectives guide management of sites, to maintain or restore the habitats and species in favourable condition.

- Assessing plans and projects.

Article 6 (3) of the 'Habitats' Directive requires appropriate assessment of proposed plans and projects against a site's conservation objectives. Subject to certain exceptions, plans or projects may not proceed unless it is established that they will not adversely affect the integrity of sites. This role for testing plans and projects also applies to the review of existing decisions and consents.

- Monitoring and reporting.

  The conservation objectives provide the basis for assessing the condition of a feature and the status of factors that affect it. CCW uses 'performance indicators' within the conservation objectives, as the basis for monitoring and reporting. Performance indicators are selected to provide useful information about the condition of a feature and the factors that affect it.

The conservation objectives in this document reflect CCW's current information and understanding of the site and its features and their importance in an international context. The conservation objectives are subject to review by CCW in light of new knowledge.

b. Format of the conservation objectives

There is one conservation objective for each feature listed in part 3. Each conservation objective is a composite statement representing a site-specific description of what is considered to be the favourable conservation status of the feature. These statements apply to a whole feature as it occurs within the whole plan area, although section 3.2 sets out their relevance to individual management units.

Each conservation objective consists of the following two elements:

1. Vision for the feature
2. Performance indicators

As a result of the general practice developed and agreed within the UK Conservation Agencies, conservation objectives include performance indicators, the selection of which should be informed by JNCC guidance on Common Standards Monitoring[1].

There is a critical need for clarity over the role of performance indicators within the conservation objectives. **A conservation objective, because it includes the vision for the feature, has meaning and substance independently of the performance indicators, and is more than the sum of the performance indicators**. The performance indicators are simply what make the conservation objectives measurable, and are thus part of, not a substitute for, the conservation objectives. Any feature attribute identified in the performance indicators should be represented in the vision for the feature, but not all elements of the vision for the feature will necessarily have corresponding performance indicators.

As well as describing the aspirations for the condition of the feature, the Vision section of each conservation objective contains a statement that the factors necessary to maintain those desired conditions are under control. Subject to technical, practical and resource constraints, factors which have an important influence on the condition of the feature are identified in the performance indicators.

[1] Available through www.jncc.gov.uk and follow links to Protected Sites and Common Standards Monitoring.

4.1 Conservation Objective for Feature 2: Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion, Alnion incarnae, Salicion albae*) (EU Habitat Code: 91EO)

Vision for feature 1

The vision for this feature is for it to be in a favourable conservation status, where all of the following conditions are satisfied:

- Around a third of the site is covered by wet alder and willow woodland.
- This wet woodland grades into areas of permanent open swamp dominated by lesser pond-sedge or other typical wetland plants, where the hydrological conditions are suitable. Adjacent areas of marshy grassland and spring-fed mire are intimately linked to the wet woodland and swamp.
- The remainder of the site supports mainly dry semi-natural woodland.
- The wet woodland has a variable canopy structure, based on a small-scale patchwork, with alder of different ages and some standing as well as fallen dead wood. Ash does not make up more than 25% of the canopy.
- Young trees/saplings and/or vegetative re-growth of the above species are present.
- The understorey includes locally native shrubs typical of this habitat and the ground flora consists of a variety of typical wetland plants, such as lesser pond-sedge, common marsh-bedstraw, meadowsweet, yellow pimpernel, opposite-leaved golden-saxifrage, marsh-marigold, hemlock water-dropwort, water mint, lady fern and rushes.
- Plants associated with nutrient enrichment, such as stinging nettle and cleavers, are not dominant over large areas and invasive alien plants like Japanese knotweed and Indian balsam are absent.
- This wet woodland grades into areas of permanent open swamp dominated by lesser pond-sedge or other typical wetland plants, where the hydrological conditions are suitable. Adjacent areas of marshy grassland and spring-fed mire are intimately linked to the wet woodland and swamp.
- There is no significant input of nutrient-rich water from ditches and surrounding land.
- All factors affecting the achievement of these conditions are under control.

Performance indicators for Feature 2

The performance indicators are part of the conservation objective, not a substitute for it. Assessment of plans and projects must be based on the entire conservation objective, not just the performance indicators.

Performance indicators for feature condition		
Attribute	***Attribute rationale and other comments***	***Specified limits***
A1. Extent	The extent of wet woodland should be maintained, but not increased at the expense of the open sedge-swamp, fen meadow or spring-fed bog areas. NB. Woodland extent includes coppiced areas and temporary glades but not permanently open areas (see map 2).	*Lower limits:* 7.3 ha of wet woodland within the whole site; AND: 0.4 ha of fen meadow in unit 5; AND: 0.4 ha of open sedge swamp in units 2 and 4. *Upper limits:* 7.7 ha of wet woodland within the whole site; AND: 0.5 ha of fen meadow in unit 5; AND: 0.7 ha of open sedge swamp in units 2 and 4.

A2. Location	The distribution of the wet and dry woodland is determined by hydrology. Wet woodland is largely confined to units 2 and 4.	*Lower limits:* Wet woodland in units 2 and 4, AND: Fen meadow/spring-fed bog present in unit 5, AND: Open sedge swamp in present units 2 and 4 (see map 2). *Upper limit:* N/A
A3. Canopy cover	Cover should be sufficient to maintain the presence of shade tolerant plants but there should also be enough open areas to support light demanding plants and encourage tree and shrub re-generation. Canopy cover should be assessed across the entire alluvial forest area indicated on map 2.	*Upper limit:* 90% *Lower limit:* 50% AND: There should be a varying pattern of canopy breaks over time.
A4. Canopy composition	The canopy should consist of locally native trees that a re typical of wet woodland. Limits should be met in at least 90% of habitat in units 2 & 4 (see map 2).	*Lower limit:* Alder is present within 10m radius of a sampling point. *Upper limit:* N/A AND: The canopy should consist entirely of locally native trees, such as alder and rusty willow. AND: Ash should make up no more than 25% of the canopy.
A5. Regeneration	There should be signs of regeneration (mainly from coppice re-growth) throughout the wet woodland. Limits should be met in at least 90% of habitat area in units 2 & 4.	*Lower limit:* 1% young re-growth over 1.5m tall and under 10 years old present. *Upper limit:* 20% young re-growth under 10 years old.
A6. Understorey and ground flora	A shrub layer and ground flora, typical of the alluvial forest plant communities should be present. There should be no extensive cover of 'weedy' plants, which are indicative of disturbance and nutrient enrichment. Limits should be met in at least 80% of habitat in units 2 & 4.	*Lower limit:* Within the alluvial forest, vegetation within a 20m radius of a sample point will be in 'good condition' (see below). *Upper limit:* Japanese knotweed and Indian balsam are absent.

Definition of Alluvial Forest in good condition:

a) A shrub layer, at a height of 2–5m, is present, composed of locally native shrubs, such as hazel; bird cherry; rusty willow; guelder-rose.
b) The ground flora is composed of locally native wetland plants that are typical of NVC woodland types W5 & W7.
c) The cover of any of the following, alone, or in combination, does not exceed 10%: nettle; rosebay willowherb; cleavers; hedge bindweed.

Performance indicators for factors affecting the feature		
Factor	***Factor rationale and other comments***	***Operational Limits***
F1. Livestock grazing	In units 2 & 4 there should be no deliberate grazing but light grazing, preferably by cattle or ponies, is desirable in unit 5 to maintain the fen-meadow vegetation.	*Lower limits:* Unit 5 should be subject to light summer grazing by cattle and/or ponies at least 4 in every 5 years. *Upper limits:* No significant grazing in units 2 and 4; AND: No significant grazing outside the growing season in unit 5 or heavy grazing at any time during the summer.
Light summer grazing is defined as - cattle and/or ponies at a rate of 0.4 LSU/ha/year for the period April to October. Heavy grazing is defined as greater than 1 LSU/ha/year (1 LSU is equivalent to a cow/horse, plus calf/foal).		
F2. Drainage	Hydrology is important in maintaining wet woodland. New drainage ditches could cause drying out of the site, leading to a loss of alluvial forest in favour of drier woodland types.	*Upper limit:* No new drainage ditches to be installed within units 2, 4 & 5.
F3. **Public Access**	In theory, public access to the Nature Reserve area could cause a lot trampling damage but in practice the ground is so wet that visitors tend to keep to the boardwalks provided. Limits should be met in at least 90% of habitat area in unit 2, shown on map 2.	*Upper limits:* No more that 30% bare ground with signs of trampling within 10m radius of a sample point; AND: No net loss of habitat to provide additional boardwalks. *Lower limit:* N/A.

5. ASSESSMENT OF CONSERVATION STATUS AND MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

This part of the document provides:

- A summary of the assessment of the conservation status of each feature.
- A summary of the management issues that need to be addressed to maintain or restore each feature.

5.1 Conservation Status and Management Requirements of Feature 1: Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion, Alnion incarnae, Salicion albae*) (EU Habitat Code: 91EO)

Conservation Status of Feature 1

The conservation status of this feature within the site is considered to be **Favourable** (2005).

Monitoring carried out in June 2005 measured the majority of performance indicators listed in 4.1 above and indicated that the condition of the feature was **favourable, maintained** [Draft Monitoring Report by L Barton-Allen, October 2005]. However, there is a threat to future conservation status if coppicing and glade maintenance is not kept up in units 2 & 4 or sufficient grazing maintained in unit 5.

Management Requirements of Feature 1

Woodland Management

Small-scale coppicing over a long cycle is desirable to maintain the dominance of alder and create a varied canopy structure in the wet woodland. More frequent coppicing is required to maintain the open glades that are dominated by sedge swamp.

Standing and fallen dead timber provides an important habitat for a variety of wildlife, including fungi, invertebrates and birds and is also essential for nutrient recycling and restoring soil nutrients. Therefore dead and decaying trees should normally be retained. Wherever possible, standing dead trees should be allowed to decay and fall naturally. Movement and cutting/tidying of fallen trees and dead wood should be avoided unless essential for legal obligations or public safety.

Grazing

Past sporadic grazing in the wet woodland may have restricted the ash content and light grazing can have some positive benefits on overall species composition. However, the marsh fern and other grazing sensitive plants would be at risk from uncontrolled and anything more than light grazing. Consequently, exclusion of stock may be the best policy for units 2 & 4.

In the open wetland area of unit 5, light grazing in spring, summer and autumn would prevent domination by rushes and purple moor-grass, maintain the diversity of plant species and prevent the spread of scrub. However, heavier grazing is likely to eliminate sensitive species and could cause localized physical damage to the sward leading to invasion by “weedy” species. Fencing may be required in order to graze this area.

Drainage and road maintenance

The alder woodland and associated swamp, marshy grassland and spring-fed mire, as well as the marsh fern, are found in areas of impeded drainage in the valley bottom. There should be no drainage works that could interfere with the springs and the generally waterlogged ground. Drainage maintenance along the roads (units 9 & 10) must be undertaken in a very sensitive manner.

Maintenance of the road itself need to be carefully considered so as not to affect the drainage and adjoining habitat; CCW needs to be consulted before any materials are brought in to maintain the road so that there is no risk of invasive species such as Indian balsam being imported.

Nutrient Enrichment

The wet woodland has developed relatively fertile valley soils because nutrients accumulate here as a result of down-slope water movement and leaf-fall. However, further enrichment from agricultural run-off would promote dominance by weed species, such as nettles. No new agricultural drains should be routed into the site and existing drains may need to be diverted if they are causing an enrichment problem.

Public Access

Maintain boardwalks and footpaths to minimise trampling damage within the wet woodland.

6. ACTION PLAN: SUMMARY

This section takes the management requirements outlined in Section 5 a stage further, assessing the specific management actions required on each management unit. This information is a summary of that held in CCW's Actions Database for sites, and the database will be used by CCW and partner organisations to plan future work to meet the Wales Environment Strategy targets for sites.

Unit Number	CCW Database Number	Unit Name	Summary of Conservation Management Issues	Action needed?
2	000283	Unit 2	NNR - actively managed SAC alder woodland	Yes
4	000285	Unit 4	SAC woodland with S15 agreement	No
5	000286	Unit 5	Marshy grassland included in SAC boundary - being scrubbed over and in need of remedial grazing and scrub clearance	Yes
9	000290	Unit 9	Road within SAC but with no SAC habitat. Road straddles an area of SAC habitat and included for management reasons such that any works on road does not affect the SAC	Yes

7. GLOSSARY

This glossary defines the some of the terms used in this **Core Management Plan**. Some of the definitions are based on definitions contained in other documents, including legislation and other publications of CCW and the UK nature conservation agencies. None of these definitions is legally definitive.

Action A recognisable and individually described act, undertaking or **project** of any kind, specified in section 6 of a **Core Management Plan** or **Management Plan**, as being required for the **conservation management** of a site.

Attribute A quantifiable and monitorable characteristic of a **feature** that, in combination with other such attributes, describes its **condition**.

Common Standards Monitoring A set of principles developed jointly by the UK conservation agencies to help ensure a consistent approach to **monitoring** and reporting on the **features** of sites designated for nature conservation, supported by guidance on identification of **attributes** and monitoring methodologies.

Condition A description of the state of a feature in terms of qualities or **attributes** that are relevant in a nature conservation context. For example the condition of a habitat usually includes its extent and species composition and might also include aspects of its ecological functioning, spatial distribution and so on. The condition of a species population usually includes its total size and might also include its age structure, productivity, relationship to other populations and spatial distribution. Aspects of the habitat(s) on which a species population depends may also be considered as attributes of its condition.

Condition assessment The process of characterising the **condition** of a **feature** with particular reference to whether the aspirations for its condition, as expressed in its **conservation objective**, are being met.

Condition categories

The **condition** of **feature** can be categorised, following **condition assessment** as one of the following[2]:

Favourable: maintained;
Favourable: recovered;
Favourable: un-classified
Unfavourable: recovering;
Unfavourable: no change;
Unfavourable: declining;
Unfavourable: un-classified
Partially destroyed;
Destroyed.

Conservation management

Acts or undertaking of all kinds, including but not necessarily limited to **actions,** taken with the aim of achieving the **conservation objectives** of a site. Conservation management includes the taking of statutory and non-statutory measures, it can include the acts of any party and it may take place outside site boundaries as well as within sites. Conservation management may also be embedded within other frameworks for land/sea management carried out for purposes other than achieving the conservation objectives.

Conservation objective

The expression of the desired **conservation status** of a **feature,** expressed as a **vision for the feature** and a series of **performance indicators**. The conservation objective for a feature is thus a composite statement, and each feature has one conservation objective.

Conservation status

A description of the state of a **feature** that comprises both its **condition** and the state of the **factors** affecting or likely to affect it. Conservation status is thus a characterisation of both the current state of a feature and its future prospects.

Conservation status assessment

The process of characterising the **conservation status** of a **feature** with particular reference to whether the aspirations for it, as expressed in its **conservation objective**, are being met. The results of conservation status assessment can be summarised either as 'favourable' (i.e. conservation objectives are met) or unfavourable (i.e. conservation objectives are not met). However the value of conservation status assessment in terms of supporting decisions about **conservation management**, lies mainly in the details of the assessment of feature **condition**, **factors** and trend information derived from comparisons between current and previous conservation status assessments and condition assessments.

Core Management Plan

A CCW document containing the conservation objectives for a site and a summary of other information contained in a full site **Management Plan**.

[2] See JNCC guidance on Common Standards Monitoring http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2272

Factor Anything that has influenced, is influencing or may influence the **condition** of a **feature**. Factors can be natural processes, human activities or effects arising from natural process or human activities, They can be positive or negative in terms of their influence on features, and they can arise within a site or from outside the site. Physical, socio-economic or legal constraints on **conservation management** can also be considered as factors.

Favourable condition See **condition** and **condition assessment**

Favourable conservation status See **conservation status** and **conservation status assessment.**[3]

Feature **The species population, habitat type or other entity for which a site is designated. The ecological or geological interest which justifies the designation of a site and which is the focus of conservation management.**

Integrity See **site integrity**

Key Feature The habitat or species population within a **management unit** that is the primary focus of **conservation management** and **monitoring** in that unit.

Management Plan The full expression of a designated site's legal status, **vision**, **features**, **conservation objectives**, **performance indicators** and management requirements. A complete management plan may not reside in a single document, but may be contained in a number of documents (including in particular **the Core Management Plan**) and sets of electronically stored information.

Management Unit An area within a site, defined according to one or more of a range of criteria, such as topography, location of **features**, tenure, patterns of land/sea use. The key characteristic of management units is to reflect the spatial scale at which **conservation management** and **monitoring** can be most effectively organised. They are used as the primary basis for differentiating priorities for conservation management and monitoring in different parts of a site, and for facilitating communication with those responsible for management of different parts of a site.

Monitoring An intermittent (regular or irregular) series of observations in time, carried out to show the extent of compliance with a formulated standard or degree of deviation from an expected norm. In **Common Standards Monitoring**, the formulated standard is the quantified expression of favourable **condition** based on **attributes**.

Operational limits The levels or values within which a **factor** is considered to be acceptable in terms of its influence on a **feature**. A factor may have both upper and lower operational limits, or only an upper limit or lower limit. For some factors an upper limit may be zero.

Performance indicators The **attributes** and their associated **specified limits**, together with **factors** and their associated **operational limits,** which provide the standard against which information from **monitoring** and other sources is used to determine the degree to which the **conservation objectives** for a **feature** are being met. Performance indicators are

[3] A full definition of favourable conservation status is given in Section 4.

part of, not the same as, conservation objectives. See also **vision for the feature**.

Plan or project **Project:** Any form of construction work, installation, development or other intervention in the environment, the carrying out or continuance of which is subject to a decision by any public body or statutory undertaker.
Plan: a document prepared or adopted by a public body or statutory undertaker, intended to influence decisions on the carrying out of **projects.** Decisions on plans and projects which affect Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites are subject to specific legal and policy procedures.

Site integrity The coherence of a site's ecological structure and function, across its whole area, that enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it is designated.

Site Management Statement (SMS) The document containing CCW's views about the management of a site issued as part of the legal notification of an SSSI under section 28(4) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as substituted.

Special Feature See **feature**.

Specified limit The levels or values for an **attribute** which define the degree to which the attribute can fluctuate without creating cause for concern about the **condition** of the **feature**. The range within the limits corresponds to favourable, the range outside the limits corresponds to unfavourable. Attributes may have lower specified limits, upper specified limits, or both.

Unit See **management unit.**

Vision for the feature The expression, within a **conservation objective**, of the aspirations for the **feature** concerned. See also **performance indicators.**

Vision Statement The statement conveying an impression of the whole site in the state that is intended to be the product of its **conservation management.** A 'pen portrait' outlining the **conditions** that should prevail when all the **conservation objectives** are met. A description of the site as it would be when all the **features** are in **favourable condition**.

8. REFERENCES

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