

**NFAF 32/4**

**Item 7, Annex 2 – HLS Site Visit, supporting documentation**

**SUBMISSION TO VERDERERS COURT 17 APRIL 2013**

**SUBJECT: RESTORATION OF SSSI UNITS 447 FURZEY LODGE MIRE AND 448 HAWKHILL MIRE.**

REGULATORS (NATURAL ENGLAND) REPORT ON CONDITION:

UNIT 447: UNFAVOURABLE RECOVERING

UNIT 448: UNFAVOURABLE RECOVERING

Both units have been damaged by previous drainage works; Unit 447 is heavily scrub and tree invaded.

**FORESTRY COMMISSION OBJECTIVES FOR BOTH UNITS:**

1. Restore both units to a condition which will allow natural reversion to favourable condition over time.
2. Maintain and enhance the passageway.

**Proposals to achieve objectives discussed at the Consultation Meeting 7 March 2013 (Notes Attached)**

**Refer to Map:**

**A. Furzey Mires Unit 447**

1. The Problem: Nick point and headward erosion into small mire .  
Agreed Solution: Infill overdeepened ditch with heather bales for a distance of 25m between points A and B to reduce erosional water flow and create smooth gradient.

2. The Problem: Nick point and very deep hole eroding southwards.

Agreed Solution: Infill hole and drain with heather bales from nick point to a short distance past the junction of the two drains to ensure a smooth gradient. Some infill of the second drain is necessary to successfully achieve this. Specifically, points C - D, = 11m and C – E = 20m.

3. The Problem: Nick point and headward erosion into mire. Need to maintain a crossing point.

Agreed Solution: Infill drain with heather bales between points H and I (10 m) to ensure smooth gradient and reduce erosional flow. Construct a firm

crossing point using gravel mainly from stream bed which has washed out and deposited where animals are using it to cross.

4. The Problem: Widespread scrub and tree invasion over Unit 447 (Furzey).

Agreed Solution: A combination of extensive tree and scrub cutting and removal (burn and timber removal when ground conditions are firm) over the whole area to the west of the main drain in Furze Mire 1. No cutting apart from small lawn clearance of scattered scrub and birch and willow removal necessary to implement drain infilling, to east of main drain where habitat conforms to emergent woodland. The whole area will be put into the 2014 burn programme after winter tree and scrub work has been completed.

5. The Problem: Heavily poached and saturated passageway between pine clumps.

The Solution: Construct a new passageway using boards and gravel approximately 20m between points F and G, and no more than 4m wide and 3m from Inclosure fence. Also, cut and remove all Scots Pine along Inclosure fence to widen area available for passageway use. Remove any scrub and birch / willow growth along drain alongside Inclosure and remove silt from drain in the few places where water is overtopping and flowing over passageway.

6. The Problem: Old post and rail constructed to deflect animals and other passageway traffic from entering Hawkhill mire has fallen into disrepair and no longer effective.

Agreed Solution: Remove old post and rail and replace using new post and rail fencing. It will follow the line of the existing fence line to the north but will be repositioned to the south west along K and J and will run for 23m.

#### **B: Hawkhill Mire Unit 448:**

1. The Problem: Nick point and headward erosion in deep drain into mire some 15m above culverted crossing on passageway.

Agreed Solution: Lift culvert, infill with heather bales but grade as far as required towards Inclosure to ensure smooth gradient with no drop off and replace culverted/piped passageway on top of infill. Distance L – M = 23m

2. All debris (railway sleepers and pierced steel planks) left from the laying of the gas pipeline in the 1960s should be removed. The passageway will be made good following any works necessary to implement this work.

3. The Problem: Nick point and headward erosion into large mire.

Agreed Solution: Infill with heather bales between points N and P (100m).  
Construct discreet crossing point at point Q ensuring firm base.

Many thanks for meeting me back in March to look at our thoughts on restoring the mires and heathland at Furzey and Hawkhill. I am pleased to report that the Verderers have supported our proposals as amended as a result of the site meeting, and I attach for your information a copy of the plans as submitted to them.

From Russell Wright – Forestry Commission 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2013

# **HLS/SSSI Consultation Site Visit Notes**

## **Furzey Lodge Mire (Unit 447) & Hawkhill Mire (Unit 448)**

### **7 March 2013**

Present: Richard Deakin (Verderer), Diana Westerhoff (Verderer), Anthony Pasmore (Verderer), Barry Dowsett (Verderer), Dave Readhead (Verderer), Brian Ingram (CDA), Richard Stride (CDA/ FC), Billy Howells (CDA), Mike Eccles (CDA), Robert Maton (Agister), Lynden Bowen (NF Access Forum), Brian Tardoff (NFA), Ian Barker (NPA), Lawrence Shaw (NPA), Frank Green (NPA), Alex Lovegrove (Bournemouth University - PhD student), Russell Wright (FC), Marianne Bergin (FC), Jane Smith (FC), Philip Stride (FC), Jonathan Cooke (FC), Andy Page (FC)

#### **Furzey Lodge Mire**

##### **Area 3 - Stop 1 (A-B) – Mire nick point**

General area has become heavily invaded with scrub, particularly on the drier areas. Agreement for wide scale scrub removal with a request to leave the big holly bushes and the odd character oak. Clearance would also open up a “lost lawn” and restore historic views.

Request that once first cut of trees/scrub has taken place, the site needs to be reassessed to ensure balance of tree/scrub removal is correct.

Agreement reached to stabilise/protect upper mire through installation of a few heather bales below first nick point. Extent 5-10m length between the two holly bushes (A - B on map)

##### **Area 3 - Stop 2 – Downstream of first tributary**

NE explained level in drain should be raised to prevent impoverishment of lawn habitat and to restore SSSI condition. Consensus felt levels in drain had not changed for last 20 years and work was not necessary.

##### **Area 3 – Stop 3 – (C, D – E) 2<sup>nd</sup> tributary**

Obvious nick point developing approx 10 m upstream of tributary junction. Agreement reached to infill with heather bales from nickpoint to junction with downstream tributary drain and to bed level raise upstream and downstream for about 11m along tributary drain (marked E on map) to prevent sudden drop off and to ensure that restoration solution is sustainable.

##### **Area 2 – Stop 4 (H-I)– Mire nick point**

Obvious nickpoint eroding back into mire. Gravel, which has been washed out has been deposited a few metres downstream where gradient eases. Stock are favouring this gravelly deposition area as a “natural” crossing point, probably due to its firmer base. Support to repair nick point and bedlevel raise with heather bales for 10-20 metres downstream and construct a firm crossing point.

### **Area 1 – Stop 5 ( F-G)– Passageway along Inclosure boundary**

Low point along passageway at boundary of Inclosure is very wet, boggy and clayey with scattered remnants of old sleepers from past gas pipeline construction. Request to construct a proper passageway (4ft wide) between the two pines.

Request to clear Inclosure boundary ditch where pipes have blocked or is water spilling back out from ditch where it has become silted up.

### **Stop 6 – Old post & rail fence (J-K)**

Post and rail fence was installed historically to discourage people/stock from diverting into the mire from the passageway. The fence has now deteriorated and has largely collapsed. Widescale support to repair and extend original fence line. FC must ensure that the structure is maintained into the future.

### **Hawkhill Mire**

#### **Area 3 – Stop 7 ( L-M)– Nick point close to passageway culvert**

Nickpoint has developed ~ 10-15 m upstream of culverted passageway crossing point.

Two options suggested:

1. Infill and stop short of passageway culvert. This would leave a sudden drop off point.
2. Lift culvert, infill with heatherbales but grade as far as required towards Inclosure to ensure smooth gradient with no drop off and replace culverted/piped passageway on top of infill.

Consensus preferred option two.

Remove any debris left over from pipeline construction.

#### **Area 1 – Stop 8 N-Q-P)– Mire nick point**

Main nick point migrating upsteam into mire, with further small secondary nick points visible downstream to an eroded stock crossing point.

Discussion over how far infill with heather bales should extend, given need to avoid sudden drop off points, relative to position of crossing point.

Consensus reached that heather bale infill should generally extend to gorse bush downstream of stock crossing point. Construction of a formal/hard crossing point was not favoured in case it attracted attention and tempted riders from main passageway, thus creating new desire lines/pathways through the mire. Consensus agreed to construct a “soft crossing point” but with firm base similar to that in Island Thorns – but which would not stand out as an obvious stock crossing point.

NB – Restoration plan presented to Verderers should include exact length of heather bale infill proposed.