



Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment (AA)

***Gloucestershire Minerals & Waste Development Framework: Evidence
gathering / baseline for AA
(Updated Report following Consultation - February 2007)***

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Section 1 - Introduction

Introduction

The EU Natura 2000 network provides ecological infrastructure for the protection of sites which are of exceptional importance in respect of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species within the European Community. These sites, which are also referred to as 'European sites' consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Offshore Marine Sites (OMS). Note: there are no OMS designated at present. Ramsar sites (Internationally Important Wetlands) are treated as if they were European sites in accordance with the Government's policy statement of November 2000 and the DEFRA circular 01/2005 (paragraph 5). The European sites in Gloucestershire (or close to its boundary) are:

- **Rodborough Common** SAC – (Stroud)
- **Dixton Wood** SAC – (Tewkesbury)
- **Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites** SAC – (Forest of Dean, Monmouthshire)
- **River Wye** SAC – (Forest of Dean, Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, Powys)
- **Wye Valley Woodlands** SAC – (Forest of Dean, Monmouthshire, Herefordshire)
- **North Meadow and Clattinger Farm** SAC – (Wiltshire)
- **Cotswold Beechwoods** SAC – (Cotswold)
- **Bredon Hill** SAC – (Worcestershire)
- **Walmore Common** SPA – (Tewkesbury)
- **Severn Estuary** SPA – (Stroud, Forest of Dean)

"The purpose of Appropriate Assessment (AA) of land use plans is to ensure that protection of the integrity of European sites is a part of the planning process at a regional and local level. The requirement for AA of plans or projects is outlined in Article 6(3) and (4) of the European Communities (1992) Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora ("Habitats Directive")."

Evidence gathering for Appropriate Assessment (AA)

The Gloucestershire Minerals & Waste Development Framework SA Framework (comprising the SA Context Report and the SA Scoping Report)* contains a large volume of environmental data and specifically details the sites and species protected under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC). Thus the evidence gathering process for AA started with the SA Framework process.

*Original and updated reports are available at the following website address:

<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=11577>

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Draft Guidance on AA (August 2006) states (on page 8) that it would be best practice to collect information for AA, especially in relation to:

1. European sites within and outside the plan area potentially affected;
2. The characteristics of these European sites;
3. Their conservation objectives; and
4. Other relevant plans or projects.

In accordance with this guidance the following (above) information (1 – 4) was presented for scrutiny by **Natural England** as the statutory consultee in November of 2006. It was also presented to the following:

- Authorities in which the site is located;
- Authorities whose plans and projects may potentially have an impact on European sites; and
- Organisations who have particular environmental interests in the listed European sites.

Consultees were sent the report via email or they received a printed copy where the email address was not available. The original consultation list was as follows:

Gloucestershire:

- Cheltenham Borough Council
- Cotswold District Council
- Forest of Dean District Council
- Gloucester City Council
- Stroud District Council
- Tewkesbury Borough Council

Neighbouring:

- Monmouthshire County Council – (River Wye Sites, Wye Valley Woodlands, Severn Estuary)
- Herefordshire County Council – (River Wye Sites, Wye Valley Woodlands)
- Powys County Council – (River Wye Sites)
- Wiltshire County Council – (North Meadow & Clattinger Farm)
- North Wiltshire District Council – (North Meadow & Clattinger Farm)
- Worcestershire County Council – (Bredon Hill)
- Wychavon District Council – (Bredon Hill)
- South Gloucestershire Council – (Severn Estuary)
- Bristol City Council – (Severn Estuary)
- Sedgemoor District Council – (Severn Estuary)
- North Somerset Council – (Severn Estuary)
- Newport City Council – (Severn Estuary)
- Cardiff Council – (Severn Estuary)
- The Vale of Glamorgan Council – (Severn Estuary)

Owners / interested groups:

- Natural England
- Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Slimbridge Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust
- Cotswold Water Park Society
- Woodland Trust
- Wye Valley AONB Partnership
- Cotswolds Conservation Board
- Forestry Commission – Forest of Dean Offices
- The National Trust
- The Crown Estate
- Environment Agency
- GOSW
- Countryside Council for Wales

The report was also made available to all stakeholders and member of the public on Gloucestershire County Council's website.

Consultation responses on the original Minerals & Waste Development Framework: Appropriate Assessment Baseline Report (November 2006)
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Following a 5 week consultation (6th November to 4th January), there were 2 responses to the original AA Baseline Report as detailed below. Note: changes have been made to this baseline report in the light of the consultee comments and recommendations.

- J. Harvey - Deputy Gaveller – Forest of Dean (Received 30/12/2006)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above document. It is noted that the "Active" indicated in Appendix 3 relate to 2003, but it should be noted that there are some 12 Freeminer quarries of limited output that produce mineral returns to the FC and 2 further that are dormant.

It may be of interest to note that the FC were and are objectors to the designation of the Wye Valley & Dean Forest cSAC sites as the conflict in legislation between the Dean Forest Mines Acts & Natura 2000 was unresolved prior to the imposition of SAC status on the sites by the DETR.

- Helen Lancaster – Natural England (Received 2/2/2007)

Letter:

Natural England supports the general approach that the county council has taken but has a number of comments on matters of detail. Our response is given in the attached annex. We appreciate that much of the information was taken from the Natura 2000 data forms on the JNCC website. However the information on these forms was compiled some time ago; in the intervening time we have gained a clearer understanding of some of the off-site effects that affect the integrity of the European sites. We have suggested amendments to the 'Vulnerability' section which reflect this.

The situation with the Severn Estuary is particularly complex with regard to the Ramsar criteria; our advice is that the Appropriate Assessment should focus on the features of the Special Protection Area and the possible Special Area of Conservation. Under the requirements of the Habitats Regulations it is the features of the European site that must be considered.

Further comments:

1. General Comments:

cSAC should be replaced with SAC as all the candidate Special Areas of Conservation in Gloucestershire have now been confirmed as Special Areas of Conservation. References to English Nature should be replaced with Natural England.

2. Rodborough Common:

Vulnerability: We recommend that the following comments be added.

The sentence beginning ‘The numbers of cattle grazing’ should include ‘and most of the stock tend to remain on the plateau’. It would also be useful to include a sentence saying that it is hoped that the site will enter the Higher Level Scheme in 2007.

Relevant plans or projects: We recommend that the sentence beginning ‘Any other major development’ should be replaced with the sentence ‘Any other major development identified in Development Plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on Rodborough Common SAC, including increases in traffic flows over the Common’

3. Dixon Wood

Vulnerability: We recommend that you add the following sentence: ‘Rare deadwood species such as violet click beetle are mobile species which may depend on features outside of the wood for their life-cycle. These may include veteran trees beyond the boundary of the wood and hawthorn blossom for feeding. Impact on these features on the scarp slopes between Teddington and Cleeve Common may also affect the integrity of the site.’

4. Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites

Vulnerability: We recommend that you add the following sentences: ‘The designated sites only cover the major maternity and over-wintering roosts. The bats also depend on features outside the designated sites including intermediate roosts, foraging grounds and hedgerows/tree belts that the bats use as commuting routes. Impact on these features can also affect the integrity of the site.’

5. River Wye

Vulnerability: Fishing activities are implicated in the decline of the salmon but it is apparently Irish trawlers rather than local fishermen which have had the greatest impact. The trawler problems have now been resolved. There is an increase in demand for abstraction – this is being addressed through the Environment Agency’s Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy as well as the Review of Consents process.

Relevant plans or projects: Plans that should also be included on the list are the Ross and Hereford Flood Defence Schemes, the Asset Management Programme 4, the Catchment Flood Management Plan (all Environment Agency plans or projects) and the Hereford Growth Point. We would advise that you also consult the Environment Agency to ensure that there are no other plans that should be considered (such as river navigation issues).

6. Wye Valley Woodlands

Vulnerability: We recommend that the sentence beginning ‘Principal pressures are from...’ should also include the phrase ‘increasing deer numbers’. Our understanding is that Forest Enterprise should now be referred to as the Forestry Commission.

Relevant plans or projects: Cinderford Regeneration Project and Lydney Docks Regeneration Project are highly unlikely to have any impact on the Wye Valley Woodlands so could be deleted from this list. The Wye Valley AONB Management Plan should be added to the list of Relevant Plans.

7. North Meadow and Clattinger Farm

Vulnerability: We recommend that the sentence beginning ‘However the traditional hay meadow management’ is deleted and replaced with ‘However the traditional hay meadow management is uneconomic in the present agricultural climate. Part of the site is currently in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme; North Meadow is owned by Natural England and is a National Nature Reserve.’

Relevant plans or projects: We would recommend that this list should also include

- Oxfordshire Waste Local Plan (adopted)
- Oxfordshire Minerals Local Plan (adopted)
- Oxfordshire Minerals & Waste Local Development Framework
- Swindon Borough Council Local Plan (adopted)
- Swindon Borough Council Local Development Framework
- Mineral extraction in Cotswold Water Park e.g. Cerney Wick Farm Quarry, Latton Farm Quarry
- Landfill sites in the Cotswold Water Park e.g. Sandpool Farm
- Restoration sites in the Cotswold Water e.g. Cerney Wick Farm, Cleveland Lakes

The housing proposed at Bourton on the Water is unlikely to have any impact on North Meadow and Clattinger Farm so could be deleted from the list.

8. Cotswolds Beechwoods:

Relevant plans or projects: Replace ‘Adopted Stroud Local Plan’ with ‘Adopted Tewkesbury Local Plan’.

9. Bredon Hill

Vulnerability: As referred to under the section dealing with Dixton Wood, violet click beetle is a mobile species. The scarp slope that begins at Cleeve Common and extends north into Worcestershire contains many veteran trees in woods and hedgerows and is an important resource for deadwood invertebrates including the violet click beetle. Impacts on the hedgerow and veteran tree resource in this area may affect the integrity of the site.

10. Walmore Common

Relevant plans or projects: We recommend that these projects are added to the list:

Development of wind turbines or wind farms along the Severn Estuary and the area around Walmore Common.

Development of telecom mast system in the area around Walmore Common.

Open access on common land.

Operation of sluice and water levels; implementation of a Water Level Management Plan and ditch management rotation.

11. Severn Estuary

General Site Character: Replace ‘Heavily grazed saltmarsh fringes’ with ‘Grazed saltmarsh fringes’. Include reference to the importance of the estuary for migratory fish.

Vulnerability: This section appears to deal more with the various designations covering the estuary rather than potential impacts on site condition. It should be noted that it actually incorporates several Sites of Special Scientific Interest rather than just one. Only part of the estuary has been designated as a National Nature Reserve (Bridgewater Bay). It should be noted that the Severn Estuary Strategy is concerned with management of the whole estuary and adjoining land. Its relevance to the designated sites is limited. We would recommend that the last sentence beginning ‘This integrated approach...’ should be deleted and replaced with ‘The site is also being considered for designation as a Special Area of Conservation (pSAC)’.

Conservation Objectives: The Severn Estuary Ramsar criteria shown on the JNCC website result from a review that has not yet been implemented. At the moment therefore these are not the correct criteria to use (although this situation may change in the near future). Since the requirement for an appropriate assessment stems from the Habitats Regulations it is the features of the European sites that need to be considered. We would advise that the Conservation Objectives need to be drawn from the Special Protection Area citation and the Reasons for Recommendation as a Possible Special Area of Conservation. Both documents are enclosed.

Relevant plans or projects: The list of plans should also include the Shoreline Management Plan, the relevant Catchment Flood Management Plans and Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (consult

the Environment Agency to establish which plans are key to the Estuary). Rights of Way Improvement Plans along the estuary should also be considered; the impact of access on both habitats and birds can be considerable.

The list of projects should also include the Environment Agency flood defence proposals for Avonmouth and Caldicott, the Crown Estate licences for sand and gravel dredging in English and Welsh water and the assorted wind turbine proposals in South Gloucestershire and around Avonmouth.

Lydney Docks are actually in Gloucestershire.

Other plans & projects

The Draft Habitats Regulations 2006 state at 85B: "Where a land use plan – (a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site in Great Britain (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and (b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site. The plan making authority for that plan shall, before the plan is given effect, make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives."

Paragraph 5.9 of DCLG Draft Guidance on AA (August 2006) *Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment – Guidance For Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents August 2006* states: "The assessment of significant effects of a given option needs to take account of the option's impact in combination with other plans and projects. Only other key plans and projects which the RPB or LPA consider most relevant should be collected for the "in combination" test. An exhaustive list could render the assessment exercise unworkable. Consult Natural England on the list identified."

Bearing this in mind the basic list of relevant plans is as follows:

- * South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).
- * Relevant Local Development Documents (LDDs) within the Local Development Framework (LDF) of the District Authority in which the site is located.
- * The Adopted District Local Plan.
- * Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan (LTP2).
- * Relevant Local Development Documents (LDDs) within the Local Development Framework (LDF) of other District Authorities in Gloucestershire / or neighbouring Authorities (only if deemed necessary).
- * Welsh Unitary Development Plans (UDPs) and other Development Plans (as necessary).
- * Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004. (This plan is saved until Oct 2007).
- * Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003. (This plan is saved until September 2007).
- * Other Minerals and Waste Local Plans / Local Development Frameworks (as necessary).

Note: The above is a general list – the details are contained in the following information for each European site. The potential 'in-combination' effects of these plans and projects will be considered in the assessment of options in relevant AA Reports. The list of relevant projects is considered in this report under the information for each European site.

This baseline report presents data and evidence related to European sites. Subsequent AA reports will be produced focused on testing plan options in emerging Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and other Local Development Documents (LDDs) within Gloucestershire County Council's Minerals and Waste Development Framework (MWDF). These AA Reports will assess the same plan options as the SA process and at the same stages i.e. at Issues & Options / Preferred Options & Submission. However it is important to be aware of the fact that SA and AA are two separate processes. "In terms of assessing options, AA is a standard which must be passed, and SA is a means of comparing options." The AA process is designed to ensure that development options that are likely to have significant detrimental effects on European sites will be dropped (or modified) early in the process of plan formation.

These AA reports will assess options in terms of the AA Tasks suggested in DCLG Guidance:

AA Task 1: Likely significant effects

Basically this is a screening process and this will determine whether the subsequent steps of AA (Tasks 2 & 3) are required. This test will be chiefly carried out by Gloucestershire County Council's qualified Ecologist and will include taking account of the potential 'in-combination' effects of other plans and projects (as highlighted in this baseline report). Natural England will be consulted along with others as is deemed necessary.

AA Task 2: Appropriate Assessment and ascertaining the effect on site integrity

To be completed for plan options if there are found to be likely significant effects.

AA Task 3: Mitigation measures and alternative solutions

To be completed where a plan option has been found to have likely significant effects on the integrity of a European site.

Section 2 – European sites in an near Gloucestershire

Rodborough Common

Designation: Special Area of Conservation – (SAC)

District: Stroud

Grid Reference: SO849036

Area: 104.26ha



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See the hyperlinks on the Map in Appendix 1 for more mapped data

1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: Heath, Scrub, Maquis and Garrigue. Phygrana (10%) Dry grassland. Steppes (70%) Improved grassland (10%) Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (10%)

Vulnerability: The grassland is dependent upon the maintenance of grazing, and this is co-ordinated through a Commoners Committee. The numbers of cattle grazing has declined with the general decline in the livestock industry, and most of the stock tend to remain on the plateau. The site owners (National Trust) have developed a project to restore management to the species-rich slopes of the site, and a number of authorities are working together to provide traffic-calming measures on busy through roads to reduce the number of livestock injuries and promote further uptake of common rights. Recreation has an impact on areas accessible by cars, and is causing localised erosion. Scrub management is being addressed through the Environmentally Sensitive Areas scheme. Management issues are being addressed through continued liaison, joint working and a Site Management Statement between Natural England and the National Trust. It is hoped that the site will enter the Higher Level Scheme in 2007. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – Joint Nature Conservation Committee [JNCC]) & consultation response from Natural England – Feb 2007).

2. Conservation objectives:

Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: [Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates \(*Festuco-Brometalia*\)](#)

Rodborough Common is the most extensive area of semi-natural dry grasslands surviving in the Cotswolds of central southern England, and represents CG5 *Bromus erectus* – *Brachypodium pinnatum* grassland, which is more or less confined to the Cotswolds. The site contains a wide range of structural types, ranging

from short turf through to scrub margins, although short-turf vegetation is mainly confined to areas of shallower soils.

Source: Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ☐ Plans within **Stroud** District Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) & potentially other District LDFs within Gloucestershire.
- ☐ Adopted Stroud Local Plan.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.

PROJECTS:

- ☐ Cotswolds Canal Restoration Project.
- ☐ Housing at Hunts Grove (c.1,500 – 1,750).
- ☐ Proposal for the Aston Down site.
- ☐ Housing at Lister Petter site (c.650).
- ☐ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on Rodborough Common SAC, including increases in traffic flows over the common.

4. Comment on plans or projects:

The nearest development to Rodborough in the above list is the Cotswolds Canal Restoration Project.

Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have 'in-combination' effects are welcomed.

Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning.

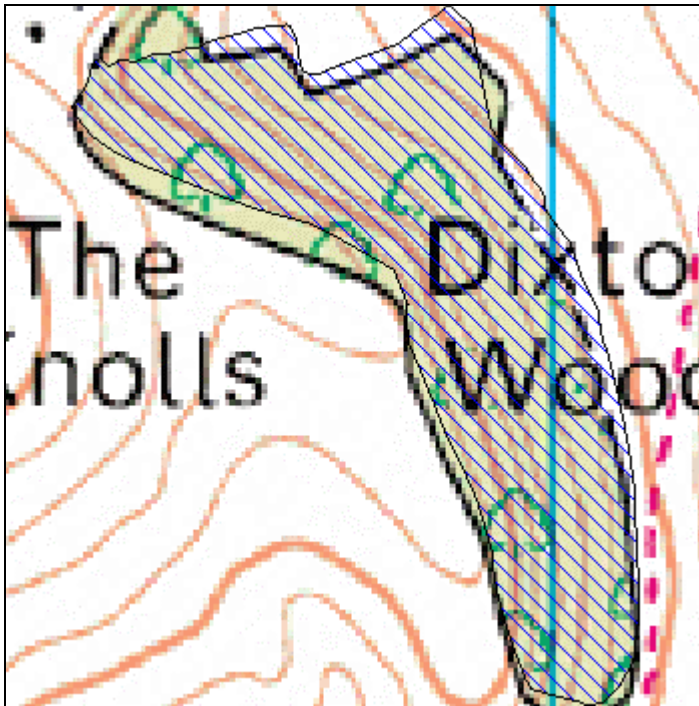
Dixton Wood

Designation: Special Area of Conservation – (SAC)

District: Tewkesbury

Grid Reference: SO979313

Area: 13.14ha



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See the hyperlinks on the Map in Appendix 1 for more mapped data

1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (100%)

Vulnerability: Dixton Wood is an area of broadleaved woodland (formerly partially grazed) with a dominance of ash including exceptionally large ancient pollards. *Limoniscus violaceus* is largely dependent on these pollards (for breeding). Principal risks to the site's integrity are lack of future replacement pollards (age-class skewed to older generation) and game management practices. These issues will be addressed through a Management Agreement with the owner of the site. This will include provision for creation of new pollards as well as management of existing resource to prevent loss through senescence and wind-blow. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – Joint Nature Conservation Committee [JNCC]).

2. Conservation objectives:

Habitat of Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: [Violet click beetle](#) *Limoniscus violaceus*. The Violet click beetle *Limoniscus violaceus* was discovered at Dixton Wood in 1998 and it has been found at the site on a single occasion subsequently. It is a small site with large number of ancient ash *Fraxinus excelsior* pollards, and supports a rich fauna of scarce invertebrate species associated with decaying timber on ancient trees. Rare deadwood species such as the violet click beetle are mobile species which may depend on features outside of the wood for their life-cycle. These may include veteran trees beyond the boundary of the wood and hawthorn blossom for feeding. Impact on these features on the scarp slopes between Teddington and Cleeve Common may also affect the integrity of the site. Source: Joint Nature Conservation Committee & consultation response from Natural England – Feb 2007).

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ❑ Plans within **Tewkesbury** Borough Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) & other District LDFs within Gloucestershire.
- ❑ Adopted Tewkesbury Local Plan.
- ❑ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ❑ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.

PROJECTS:

- ❑ National Grid gas pipeline project.
- ❑ Proposed Gloucester Parkway Station.
- ❑ Housing at Brockworth (c.1,400).
- ❑ Housing north of Gloucester with associated infrastructure and employment (c. 2,000) (as proposed in Draft RSS).
- ❑ Housing north west of Cheltenham and associated infrastructure and employment (c. 3,000) (as proposed in Draft RSS).
- ❑ Housing at Leckhampton (c.360).
- ❑ Housing at M and G Sports (c.350).
- ❑ Housing at Brockworth District (c.185).
- ❑ Housing at Mill Lane, Brockworth (c.120).
- ❑ Housing at Southam (c.120).
- ❑ Various waste disposal operations at Wingmoor Farm.
- ❑ Housing and associated infrastructure and employment north west of Cheltenham (c.1,000) (as in Draft RSS).
- ❑ Housing and associated infrastructure and employment on Leckhampton White Land (c.650) (as in Draft RSS).
- ❑ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on Dixon Wood.

4. Comment on plans and projects:

The above list of projects relates to the whole of Tewkesbury Borough, the majority of developments will be not near enough to Dixon Wood to have significant effects on the site.

Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have 'in-combination' effects are welcomed.

Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning.

Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites

Designation: Special Area of Conservation – (SAC)

District: Forest of Dean / Fynwy (Monmouthshire)

Grid Reference: SO605044

Area: 142.7ha



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1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (26.2%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (73.8%)

Vulnerability: The site is composed of parts of a number of buildings in everyday use (mainly roof-spaces) used by the bats for breeding and a series of mines used by bats for hibernation. Within the roost the bats are vulnerable to disturbance at critical times, structural alteration and changes in the characteristic ventilation patterns. The designated sites only cover the major maternity and over-wintering roosts. The bats also depend on features outside the designated sites including intermediate roosts, foraging grounds and hedgerows/tree belts that the bats use as commuting routes. Impact on these features can also affect the integrity of the site. Any proposed changes which are likely to have an impact on the bat populations within the breeding roosts will be discussed with the relevant owners and occupiers. Where appropriate to any populations potentially damaging works will be addressed through appropriate planning regulation, management agreements and monitoring of individual roosts. Regular liaison takes place with site-owners. The human use of the mine systems (continued mineral working and recreational caving/research) is regulated by Forest Enterprise in consultation with Natural England where appropriate. Site Management Statements have been agreed with the owners of working mines to secure conservation of the populations alongside continued working. In addition, the preparation of Cave Conservation Plans will be promoted to maintain and enhance the underground environment for bats. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – Joint Nature Conservation Committee [JNCC] & consultation response from Natural England – Feb 2007).

2. Conservation objectives:

Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: [Lesser horseshoe bat](#) *Rhinolophus hipposideros*. This complex of sites on the border between England and Wales contains by far the greatest concentration of lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros* in the UK, totaling about 26% of the

national population. It has been selected on the grounds of the exceptional breeding population, and the majority of sites within the complex are maternity roosts. The bats are believed to hibernate in the many disused mines in the area.

[Greater horseshoe bat](#) *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*

This complex of sites on the border between England and Wales represents greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* in the northern part of its range, with about 6% of the UK population. The site contains the main maternity roost for bats in this area, which are believed to hibernate in the many disused mines in the Forest.

Source: Joint Nature Conservation Committee

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ☐ Plans within the **Forest of Dean** District Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) & potentially other District LDFs within Gloucestershire.
- ☐ Adopted Forest of Dean Local Plan.
- ☐ Monmouthshire County Council's (Unitary Authority) Development Plan.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.

PROJECTS:

- ☐ Cinderford Regeneration Project.
- ☐ Lydney Docks Regeneration Project.
- ☐ Housing at East Lydney (c.1,200).
- ☐ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on the Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites (SAC).

4. Comment on plans and projects:

The above list of projects relates to the whole of the District, but it is likely that the majority of developments will not be near enough to bat sites to have significant effects.

Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have 'in-combination' effects are welcomed.

Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning.

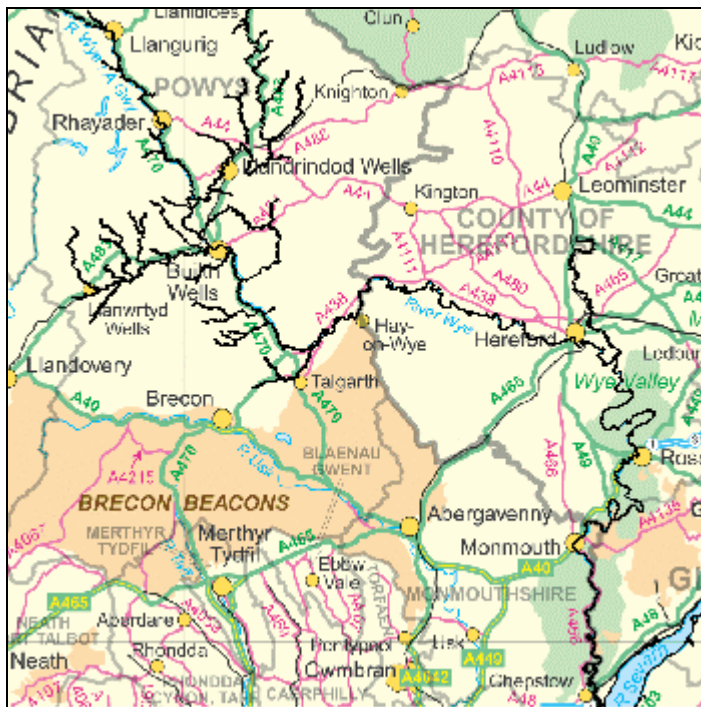
River Wye

Designation: Special Area of Conservation – (SAC)

District: Forest of Dean / Fynwy - Monmouthshire / Herefordshire / Powys

Grid Reference: S0109369

Area: 2234.89ha



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1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: Tidal rivers. Estuaries. Mud flats. Sand flats. Lagoons (including saltwork basins) (9.5%) Salt marshes. Salt pastures. Salt steppes (1.5%) Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (52.5%) Bogs. Marshes. Water fringed vegetation. Fens (3.1%) Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (1%) Dry grassland. Steppes (5.3%) Humid grassland. Mesophile grassland (2.4%) Improved grassland (10.4%) Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (12.3%) Inland rocks. Screes. Sands. Permanent snow and ice (0.2%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (1.8%)

Vulnerability: Water quality impacts arising from changing agricultural land-use within the catchment are having direct and indirect effects on the SAC interests through effects of diffuse pollution such as nutrient run-off and increased siltation. Natural England and the Countryside Council for Wales are seeking to address such issues through improved targeting of existing and new agri-environment schemes and through improvements in compliance with agricultural Codes of Practice. Water quality is also affected by synthetic pyrethroid sheep-dips and by point-source discharges within the catchment. The impact of sewage treatment works on the SAC is being addressed through the Asset Management Plan process and review under the Habitats Regulations. Loss of riparian habitat is occurring as a result of changes in agricultural land-use practices and other factors, including riverside development and the loss of alder tree-cover through disease. These impacts and concerns over water quality will be identified and actions recommended within the joint Natural England/Environment Agency/Countryside Council for Wales conservation strategy for the river. Fishing activities are implicated in the decline of the salmon but it is apparently Irish trawlers rather than local fishermen which have had the greatest impact. The trawler problems have now been resolved. There is increasing demand for abstraction from the river for agriculture and potable water. This is being addressed through the Environment Agency's Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy as well as the Review of Consents process. Demand for increased recreational activities is a source of potential concern for the future. Regularisation of the functions of the competent authorities, currently being sought, should reduce the risk of damage to the SAC as a result of developments for such activities. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard

2. Conservation objectives:

Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: [Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation](#)

Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site: [Transition mires and quaking bogs](#)

Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

[White-clawed \(or Atlantic stream\) crayfish](#) *Austropotamobius pallipes*

[Sea lamprey](#) *Petromyzon marinus*

[Brook lamprey](#) *Lampetra planeri*

[River lamprey](#) *Lampetra fluviatilis*

[Twaite shad](#) *Alosa fallax*

[Atlantic salmon](#) *Salmo salar*

[Bullhead](#) *Cottus gobio*

[Otter](#) *Lutra lutra*

Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:

[Allis shad](#) *Alosa alosa*

Source: Joint Nature Conservation Committee

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ☐ Plans within the **Forest of Dean** District Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) & potentially other District LDFs within Gloucestershire.
- ☐ Adopted Forest of Dean Local Plan.
- ☐ Monmouthshire County Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP).
- ☐ Relevant plans within Herefordshire Council's (Unitary Authority) Local Development Framework (LDF).
- ☐ Powys County Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP).
- ☐ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.
- ☐ Ross and Hereford Flood Defence Schemes.
- ☐ The Asset Management Programme (4).
- ☐ The Catchment Flood Management Plan.
- ☐ Hereford Growth Point.
- ☐ Any other Environment Agency plans – e.g. covering river navigation issues (as advised).

PROJECTS:

- ☐ Lydney Docks Regeneration Project.
- ☐ National Grid gas pipeline project (?)
- ☐ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on the River Wye.

4. Comment on plans or projects:

The above list of projects relates to the whole of the District, but it is likely that the majority of developments will not be near enough to the River Wye to have significant effects.

Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have 'in-combination' effects are welcomed.

Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning.

Wye Valley Woodlands

Designation: Special Area of Conservation – (SAC)

District: Forest of Dean / Monmouthshire / Herefordshire

Grid Reference: SO530957

Area: 916.24



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1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: Heath, Scrub, Maquis and Garrigue. Phygrana (10%) Dry grassland. Steppes (0.2%) Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (87%) Coniferous woodland (0.7%) Inland rocks. Screes. Sands. Permanent snow and ice (0.6%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (1.5%)

Vulnerability: A significant proportion of the SAC is already managed sympathetically by Forest Enterprise (now the Forestry Commission), the Woodland Trust and county Wildlife Trusts. Principal pressures are from lack of management (particularly traditional management, e.g. coppice), increasing deer numbers and inappropriate management proposals which would alter the recognised woodland stand types. Felling license approval and Forestry Commission consultation with Natural England/Countryside Council for Wales are adequate in addressing the latter issue. Positive management is being promoted through management plans (CCW), Site Management Statements (EN) and management agreements, and the Woodland Grant Scheme (including specialised targeting) is being encouraged where possible and appropriate to return some woods to active management. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – Joint Nature Conservation Committee [JNCC] & consultation response from Natural England – Feb 2007).

2. Conservation objectives:

Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

[Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests](#)

The Wye Valley contains abundant and near-continuous semi-natural woodland along the gorge. Beech stands occur as part of a mosaic with a wide range of other woodland types, and represent the western range of *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests. Such a variety of woodland types is rare within the UK. In places lime *Tilia* sp., elm *Ulmus* sp. and oak *Quercus* sp. share dominance with the beech. Structurally the woods include old coppice, pollards and high forest types. Lady Park Wood, one of the component sites, is an

outstanding example of near-natural old-growth structure in mixed broad-leaved woodland, and has been the subject of detailed long-term monitoring studies.

[Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes, screes and ravines](#)

The woods of the lower Wye Valley on the border of south Wales and England form one of the most important areas for woodland conservation in the UK and provide the most extensive examples of *Tilio-Acerion* forest in the west of its range. A wide range of ecological variation is associated with slope, aspect and landform. The woodland occurs here as a mosaic with other types, including beech *Fagus sylvatica* and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* stands. Uncommon trees, including large-leaved lime *Tilia platyphyllos* and rare whitebeams such as *Sorbus porrigentiformis* and *S. rupicola* are found here, as well as locally uncommon herbs, including wood barley *Hordeum europaeus*, stinking hellebore *Helleborus foetidus*, narrow-leaved bitter-cress *Cardamine impatiens* and wood fescue *Festuca altissima*.

[Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles](#)

Wye Valley is representative of yew *Taxus baccata* woods in the south-west of the habitat's range. It lies on the southern Carboniferous limestone, and yew occurs both as an understorey to other woodland trees and as major yew-dominated groves, particularly on the more stony slopes and crags.

Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:

[Lesser horseshoe bat](#) *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

Source: Joint Nature Conservation Committee

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ☐ Plans within the **Forest of Dean** District Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) & potentially other District LDFs within Gloucestershire.
- ☐ Adopted Forest of Dean Local Plan.
- ☐ Monmouthshire County Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP).
- ☐ Relevant plans within Herefordshire Council's (Unitary Authority) Local Development Framework (LDF).
- ☐ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.
- ☐ Wye Valley AONB Management Plan.

PROJECTS:

- ☐ National Grid gas pipeline project (?)
- ☐ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on the Wye Valley Woodlands.

4. Comment on plans or projects:

The above list of projects relates to the whole of the District, but it is likely that the majority of developments will not be near enough to the Wye Valley Woodlands to have significant effects.

Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have 'in-combination' effects are welcomed.

Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning.

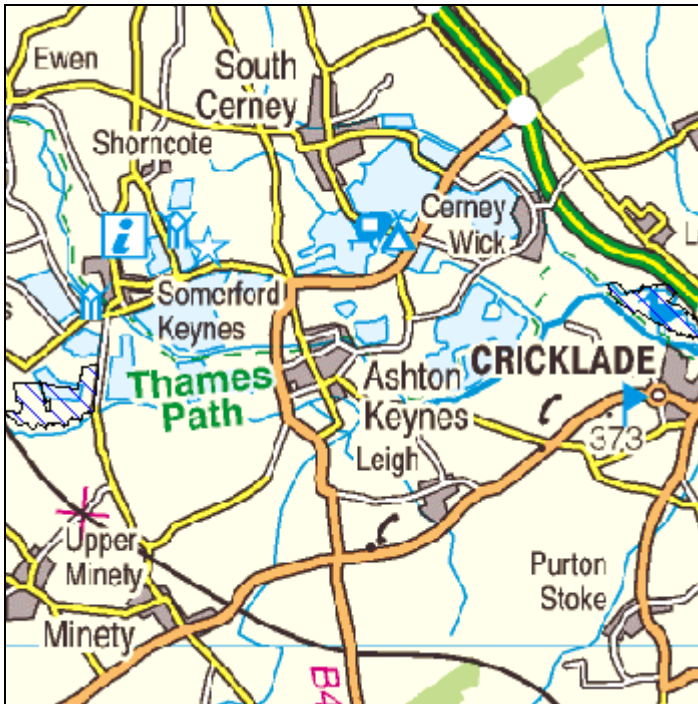
North Meadow & Clattinger Farm (Wiltshire Sites)

Designation: Special Area of Conservation – (SAC)

District: Wiltshire

Grid Reference: SU014934

Area: 104.88ha



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1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (2%) Dry grassland. Steppes (15%) Humid grassland. Mesophile grassland (71%) Improved grassland (12%)

Vulnerability: These grasslands are partly a National Nature Reserve (NNR), with the other part owned by a wildlife charity. The habitat is dependent on traditional agricultural practices of hay-cutting with aftermath cattle grazing or seasonal cattle grazing. These management requirements are addressed in the NNR management plan and in a site management statement concerning the private land which stipulates an appropriate regime. The wildlife charity is developing a management plan with Natural England to secure the long-term maintenance of the interest feature. However the traditional hay meadow management is uneconomic in the present agricultural climate. Part of the site is currently in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme; North Meadow is owned by Natural England and is a National Nature Reserve. Adjacent extraction and renovation of gravel workings are a potential threat to water levels and are subject to monitoring and mitigation measures. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – Joint Nature Conservation Committee [JNCC] & consultation response from Natural England – Feb 2007).

2. Conservation objectives:

Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

[Lowland hay meadows \(*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*\)](#)

North Meadow and Clattinger Farm in the Thames Valley in southern England is one of two sites representing lowland hay meadows near the centre of its UK range. As in the case of the Oxford Meadows, this site represents an exceptional survival of the traditional pattern of management and so exhibits a high degree of conservation of structure and function. This site also contains a very high proportion (>90%) of the

surviving UK population of fritillary *Fritillaria meleagris*, a species highly characteristic of damp lowland meadows in Europe and now rare throughout its range.

Source: Joint Nature Conservation Committee

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ☐ Plans within North Wiltshire District Council's Local Development Framework (LDF).
- ☐ Adopted North Wiltshire Local Plan.
- ☐ Plans within Cotswold District Council's Local Development Framework (LDF).
- ☐ Adopted Cotswold District Local Plan.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.
- ☐ Wiltshire Waste Local Plan.
- ☐ Wiltshire Minerals Local Plan.
- ☐ LDDs within Wiltshire's emerging Minerals & Waste Development Framework.
- ☐ Oxfordshire Waste Local Plan (Adopted).
- ☐ Oxfordshire Minerals Local Plan (Adopted).
- ☐ Plans within Oxfordshire's Minerals and Waste Development Framework.
- ☐ Swindon Borough Council Local Plan (Adopted).
- ☐ Plans within Swindon Borough Council's Local Development Framework.

PROJECTS:

- ☐ Housing at Kingshill North and South (c.490).
- ☐ Mineral working / restoration / landfill operations at Sandpool Farm, Somerford Keynes.
- ☐ Mineral extraction in the Cotswold Water Park at Cerney Wick Farm Quarry and Latton Farm Quarry.
- ☐ Restoration sites in the Cotswold Water Park e.g. Carney Wick Farm & Cleveland Lakes.
- ☐ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on North Meadow & Clattinger Farm.

4. Comment on plans or projects:

The above list of projects relates to the whole of the District, but it is likely that the majority of developments will not be near enough to North Meadow & Clattinger Farm to have significant effects.

Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have 'in-combination' effects are welcomed.

Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning.

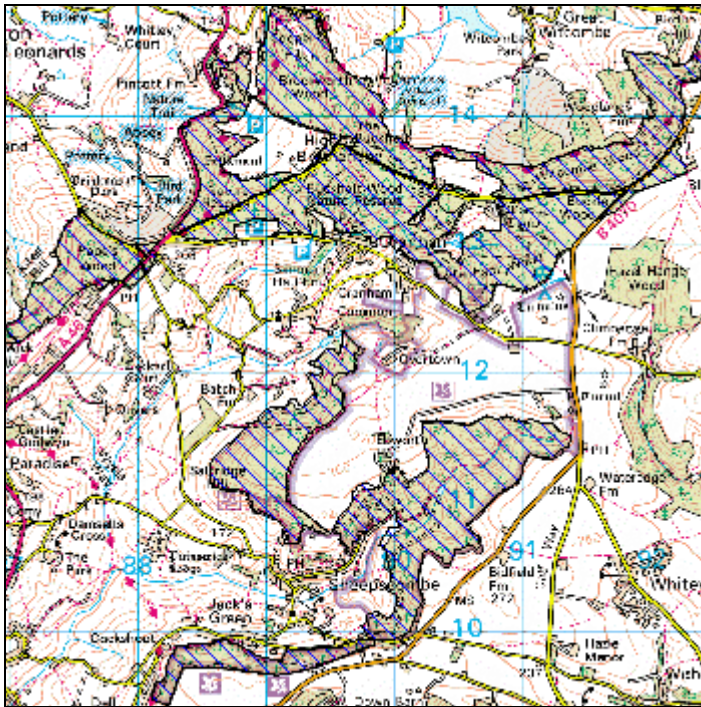
Cotswold Beechwoods

Designation: Special Area of Conservation – (SAC)

District: Stroud / Cotswold

Grid Reference: SO898134

Area: 585.85ha



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1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (1%) Dry grassland. Steppes (1.5%) Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (82%) Coniferous woodland (5%) Mixed woodland (10%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.5%).

Vulnerability: The woodland is being maintained by a variety of silvicultural practices including selective forestry, group fellings and small areas of coppicing. Age-class and structural diversity is being enhanced through a sympathetic Woodland Grant Scheme. Early removal of planted conifers is being encouraged in areas where planting occurred in the 1970s. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – Joint Nature Conservation Committee [JNCC]).

2. Conservation objectives:

Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

[Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests](#)

The Cotswold Beechwoods represent the most westerly extensive blocks of *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests in the UK. The woods are floristically richer than the Chilterns, and rare plants include red helleborine *Cephalanthera rubra*, stinking hellebore *Helleborus foetidus*, narrow-lipped helleborine *Epipactis leptochila* and wood barley *Hordelymus europaeus*. There is a rich mollusc fauna. The woods are structurally varied, including blocks of high forest and some areas of remnant beech coppice.

Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:

[Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates \(*Festuco-Brometalia*\)](#)

Source: Joint Nature Conservation Committee

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ☐ Any relevant plans within **Stroud** District Council's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).
- ☐ Adopted Stroud Local Plan.
- ☐ Any relevant plans within **Tewkesbury** Borough Council's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).
- ☐ Adopted Tewkesbury Local Plan.
- ☐ Any relevant plans within **Cotswold** District Council's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).
- ☐ Adopted Cotswold Local Plan.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.

PROJECTS:

- ☐ Cotswolds Canal Restoration Project.
- ☐ Housing at Hunts Grove (c.1,500 – 1,750).
- ☐ Housing at Brockworth (c.500).
- ☐ Proposal for the Aston Down site.
- ☐ Housing at Lister Petter site (c.650).
-
- ☐ Proposed Gloucester Parkway Station.
- ☐ Housing at Brockworth (c.1,400).
- ☐ Housing north of Gloucester with associated infrastructure and employment (c. 2,000) (as proposed in Draft RSS).
- ☐ Housing north west of Cheltenham and associated infrastructure and employment (c. 3,000) (as proposed in Draft RSS).
- ☐ Housing at Leckhampton (c.360).
- ☐ Housing at M and G Sports (c.350).
- ☐ Housing at Brockworth District (c.185).
- ☐ Housing at Mill Lane, Brockworth (c.120).
- ☐ Housing at Southam (c.120).
- ☐ Various waste disposal operations at Wingmoor Farm.
-
- ☐ Kingshill North and South (c.490).
- ☐ Bourton on the Water (c.100).
-
- ☐ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on the Cotswold Beechwoods (SAC).

4. Comment on plans and projects:

The above list of projects relates to the whole of the districts of Stroud, Tewkesbury and Cotswolds, but it is likely that the majority of developments will not be near enough to North Meadow & Clattinger Farm to have significant effects.

Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have 'in-combination' effects are welcomed.

Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning.

Bredon Hill (Worcestershire site)

Designation: Special Area of Conservation – (SAC)

District: Wychavon, Worcestershire

Grid Reference: SO965406

Area: 359.86ha



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1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. *Phygrana* (10%) Dry grassland. Steppes (10%) Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (80%)

Vulnerability: Bredon Hill is an area of pasture woodland and ancient parkland providing habitat for *Limoniscus violaceus*. The main threats are the lack of a replacement generation of trees for the current ancient trees over much of the hill, as many of the younger trees have been removed to increase stock grazing areas; the overall number of ancient trees suitable for *Limoniscus violaceus* is relatively small. Management agreements are being used to preserve existing tree stocks and to provide replacement planting. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – Joint Nature Conservation Committee [JNCC]).

2. Conservation objectives:

Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

[Violet click beetle](#) *Limoniscus violaceus*

Violet click beetle *Limoniscus violaceus* were recorded at Bredon Hill in 1989, although there is a 1939 record from 'Tewkesbury', which may refer to Bredon Hill. It has been found in each of several years since. It should be noted that the Violet click beetle is a mobile species. The scarp slope that begins at Cleeve Common and extends north into Worcestershire contains many veteran trees in woods and hedgerows and is an important resource for deadwood invertebrates including the Violet click beetle. Impacts on the hedgerow and veteran tree resource in this area may affect the integrity of the site. Bredon Hill is a very important site for fauna associated with decaying timber on ancient trees, including many Red Data Book and Nationally Scarce invertebrate species.

Source: Joint Nature Conservation Committee & consultation response from Natural England – Feb 2007.

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ☐ Any relevant plans within Wychavon District Council's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).
- ☐ Adopted Wychavon Local Plan.
- ☐ Plans within Tewkesbury Borough Council's Local Development Framework (LDF).
- ☐ Adopted Tewkesbury Borough Local Plan.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.

PROJECTS:

- ☐ Housing north of Gloucester with associated infrastructure and employment (c.2,000) (as proposed in Draft RSS).
- ☐ Housing north west of Cheltenham and associated infrastructure and employment (c.3,000) (as proposed in Draft RSS).
- ☐ Housing at Brockworth District (c.185).
- ☐ Housing at Mill Lane, Brockworth (c.120).
- ☐ Housing at Southam (c.120).
- ☐ Various waste disposal operations at Wingmoor Farm.
- ☐ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on Bredon Hill.

4. Comment on plans and projects:

The above list of projects relates to the whole of Tewkesbury District, but it is likely that the majority of developments will not be near enough to Bredon Hill to have significant effects.

Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have 'in-combination' effects are welcomed.

Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning.

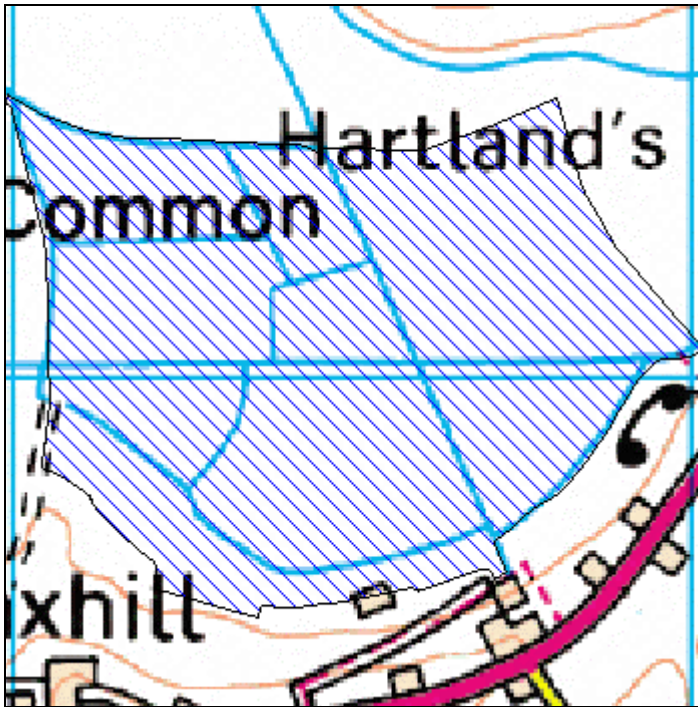
Walmore Common

Designation: Special Protection Area (SPA) & Ramsar site

District: Forest of Dean

Grid Reference: SO745150

Area: 52.85ha



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See the hyperlinks on the Map in Appendix 1 for more mapped data

1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: Walmore Common occupies a low lying area in the Severn Vale, which is subject to winter flooding. The site is a wetland overlying peat providing a variety of habitats including improved neutral grassland, unimproved marshy grassland and open water ditches. The common is part of a series of sites within the Severn Vale which, in winter, form an important refuge and feeding area for wildfowl.

Vulnerability: The site is a Ramsar site, a EU Special Protection Area and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. A water level management plan, currently in preparation, will ensure appropriate conditions are retained for the wintering bird interest. The marsh grassland and ditches will be maintained and enhanced by maintaining high water levels from spring to autumn. The nearby Timber Preservation plant has contingency plans in the event of accidental spillage. (Source: Ramsar Sites Information Service at: <http://www.wetlands.org/rsis/>)

2. Conservation objectives:

This site qualifies under Ramsar criterion 6 by supporting species/populations occurring at levels of international importance:

The qualifying species/populations (peak counts in winter) is Bewick's swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*, 43 individuals, representing an average of 0.5% of Great Britain's population (5 year peak mean 1998/9 – 2002/3).

Source: Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ❑ Any relevant plans within the **Forest of Dean** District Council's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).
- ❑ Adopted Forest of Dean Local Plan.
- ❑ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ❑ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.

PROJECTS:

- ❑ Development of wind turbines or wind farms along the Severn Estuary and the area around Walmore Common.
- ❑ Open access on common land.
- ❑ Operation of sluice and water levels; implementation of a Water Level Management Plan and ditch management rotation.
- ❑ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on Walmore Common (SPA).

4. Comment on plans and projects:

The above list of projects relates to the whole of the Forest of Dean District, but it is likely that the majority of developments will not be near enough to Walmore Common to have significant effects.

Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have 'in-combination' effects are welcomed.

Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning.

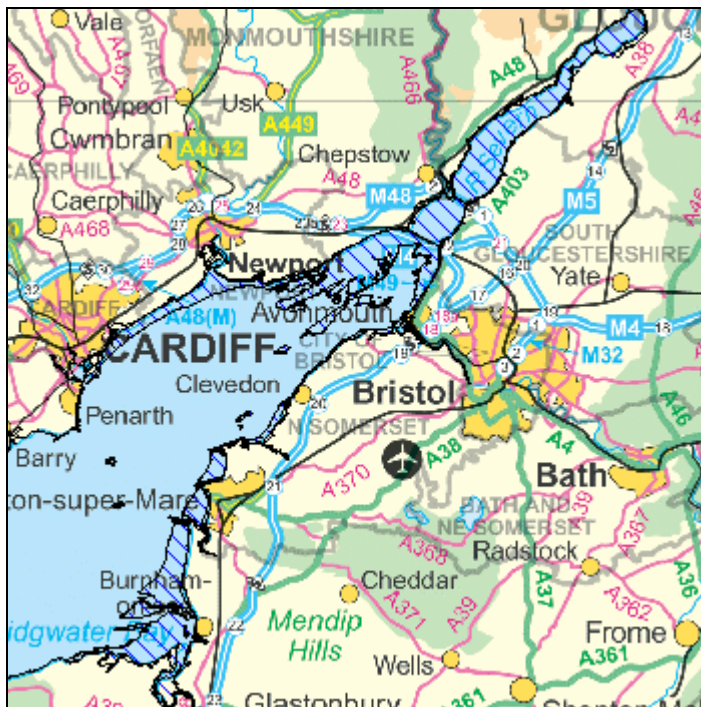
Severn Estuary

Designation: Special Protection Area (SPA) / Ramsar site / pSAC

District: Stroud / Forest of Dean

Grid Reference: 51 13 29N 03 02 57W

Area: 24662.98 ha



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See the hyperlinks on the Map in Appendix 1 for more mapped data

1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: The estuary's classic funnel shape, unique in Britain, is a factor causing the Severn to have the second-largest tidal range in the world (after the Bay of Fundy, Canada). This tidal regime results in plant and animal communities typical of the extreme physical conditions of liquid mud and tide swept sand and rock. The species-poor invertebrate community includes high densities of ragworms, lugworms and other invertebrates forming an important food source for passage and wintering waders. A further consequence of the large tidal range is the extensive intertidal zone, one of the largest in the UK, comprising mudflats, sand banks, shingle, and rocky platforms. Glassworts and annual sea-blite colonise the open mud, with beds of all three species of eelgrass occurring on more sheltered mud and sandbanks. Large expanses of common cord-grass also occur on the outer marshes. Grazed saltmarsh fringes the estuary with a range of saltmarsh types present. The middle marsh sward is dominated by common saltmarsh-grass with typical associated species. In the upper marsh, red fescue and saltmarsh rush become more prominent. The estuary is an important habitat for migratory fish.

Vulnerability: The conservation of the site features is dependent on the tidal regime. The range is the second highest in the world and the scouring of the seabed and strong tidal streams result in natural erosion of the habitats. The estuary is therefore vulnerable to large scale interference, including human actions. These include land-claim, aggregate extraction/dredging, physical developments such as barrage construction flood defences, pollution (industrial, oil spillage), eutrophication and tourism based activities and disturbance. These issues are being addressed through existing control measures and as part of the Severn Estuary Strategy. Since June 1995 the Severn Estuary Strategy has been working towards the sustainable management of the site, through the involvement of local authorities, interested parties and local people. This integrated approach is being further developed in conjunction with the SAC management scheme for the nature conservation interest of the estuary. The site is being considered for designation as a Special Area of Conservation (pSAC).

2. Conservation objectives:

Article 4.1 Qualification 79/409/EEC

Over winter the area regularly supports:

Cygnus columbianus bewickii (Western Siberia/North-eastern & North-western Europe)

3.9% of the GB population

5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96

Article 4.2 Qualification 79/409/EEC

Over winter the area regularly supports:

Anas strepera (North-western Europe)

0.9% of the population

5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96

Anser albifrons albifrons (North-western Siberia/North-eastern & Northwestern Europe)

0.4% of the population

5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96

Calidris alpina alpina (Northern Siberia/Europe/Western Africa)

3.3% of the population

5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96

Tadorna tadorna (North-western Europe)

1.1% of the population

5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96

Tringa tetanus (Eastern Atlantic - wintering)

1.3% of the population

5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96

Article 4.2 Qualification 79/409/EEC: An Internationally Important Assemblage of Birds

Over winter the area regularly supports:

84317 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 01/04/1998)

Including: *Cygnus columbianus bewickii* , *Anser albifrons albifrons* , *Tadorna tadorna* , *Anas strepera* , *Calidris alpina alpina* , *Tringa totanus*.

Source: Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Note: Contemporary data and information on water bird trends at this site and their regional (sub-national) and national contexts can be found in the Wetland Bird Survey report, which is updated annually. See www.bto.org/survey/webs/webs-alerts-index.htm.

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ☐ Any relevant plans within the **Forest of Dean** District Council's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).
- ☐ Adopted Forest of Dean Local Plan.
- ☐ Any relevant plans within **Stroud** District Council's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).
- ☐ Adopted Stroud District Council Local Plan.
- ☐ Any relevant plans within South Gloucestershire Council's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).
- ☐ Adopted South Gloucestershire Local Plan.
- ☐ Adopted South Gloucestershire Minerals & Waste Local Plan.
- ☐ Any relevant plans within Bristol City Council's emerging Local Development Framework.
- ☐ Adopted Bristol City Council Local Plan.
- ☐ Any relevant plans within North Somerset Council's emerging Local Development Framework.
- ☐ Adopted North Somerset Local Plan.

- ❑ Monmouthshire County Council's Development Plan.
- ❑ Newport City Council's Unitary Development Plan.
- ❑ Cardiff City Council's Unitary Development Plan.
- ❑ The Vale of Glamorgan Council's Unitary Development Plan.
- ❑ The Shoreline Management Plan
- ❑ Relevant Catchment Flood Management Plans & Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (EA).
- ❑ Rights of Way Improvement Plans.

PROJECTS:

Stroud

- ❑ Cotswolds Canal Restoration Project.
- ❑ Housing at Hunts Grove (c.1,500 – 1,750).
- ❑ Activity / development at Sharpness Docks.

Forest of Dean

- ❑ Lydney Docks Regeneration Project.
- ❑ Housing at East Lydney (c.1,200).

Other – outside of Gloucestershire – English / East side of Estuary

- ❑ Development associated with the decommissioning of Berkeley power station.
- ❑ Oldbury power station.
- ❑ Avonmouth Docks.
- ❑ EA flood defence proposals for Avonmouth.
- ❑ Wind turbine proposals in South Gloucestershire and around Avonmouth.
- ❑ Hinkley Point B power station.

Other – outside of Gloucestershire – Welsh / West side of Estuary

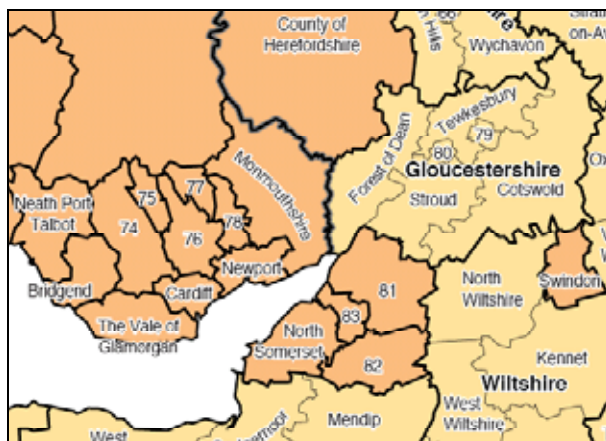
- ❑ Development projects / activity at Chepstow Docks.
- ❑ Development projects / activity at Newport Docks.
- ❑ Development projects / activity at Cardiff Bay (Docks).
- ❑ Development projects / activity at Newport Docks.
- ❑ Development projects / activity at Barry Docks.
- ❑ EA flood defence proposals for Caldicot.

Other –

- ❑ The Crown Estate licences for sand and gravel dredging in English & Welsh water.

4. Comment on plans or projects:

Impacts on the tidal Severn Estuary could potentially arise from a number of different sources or different kinds of development in a number of Authorities (both in England and in Wales) adjoining the Estuary. (See map below from: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/downloads/uk_laduacty.pdf But the assessment of 'in-combination' effects cannot be totally exhaustive; the list of other plans and projects has to be workable.



Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have 'in-combination' effects are welcomed.

Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning.

Section 3 – Conclusion

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Draft Guidance on AA (August 2006) states that it would be best practice to collect information for AA, especially in relation to:

1. European sites within and outside the plan area potentially affected;
2. The characteristics of these European sites;
3. Their conservation objectives; and
4. Other relevant plans or projects.

In accordance with this guidance an evidence gathering / baseline report presented the following above information (1 – 4) for scrutiny by [Natural England](#) as the statutory consultee and other stakeholders with particular interests in the effective protection of European sites in and around Gloucestershire. Natural England responded on the 5th February 2007, and their comments and recommended changes have been incorporated in this updated report. Natural England recommended that the following additional 'plans or projects' should be included for North Meadow & Clattinger Farm:

- ☐ Oxfordshire Waste Local Plan (Adopted).
- ☐ Oxfordshire Minerals Local Plan (Adopted).
- ☐ Plans within Oxfordshire's Minerals and Waste Development Framework.
- ☐ Swindon Borough Council Local Plan (Adopted).
- ☐ Plans within Swindon Borough Council's Local Development Framework.

In the light of this recommendation, Oxfordshire County Council and Swindon Borough Council have also been consulted on this (updated) report.

This evidence gathering / baseline report will inform reports that will accompany Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and other Local Development Documents (LDDs) within Gloucestershire County Council's Minerals and Waste Development Framework (MWDF). These AA Reports will assess the same plan options as the SA process and at the same stages i.e. at Issues & Options / Preferred Options & Submission. But it is important to be aware of the fact that SA and AA are two separate processes. "In terms of assessing options, AA is a standard which must be passed, and SA is a means of comparing options." The AA process is designed to ensure that development options that will have a detrimental significant effect on European sites will be dropped (or modified) early in the process of plan formation.

Contacts:

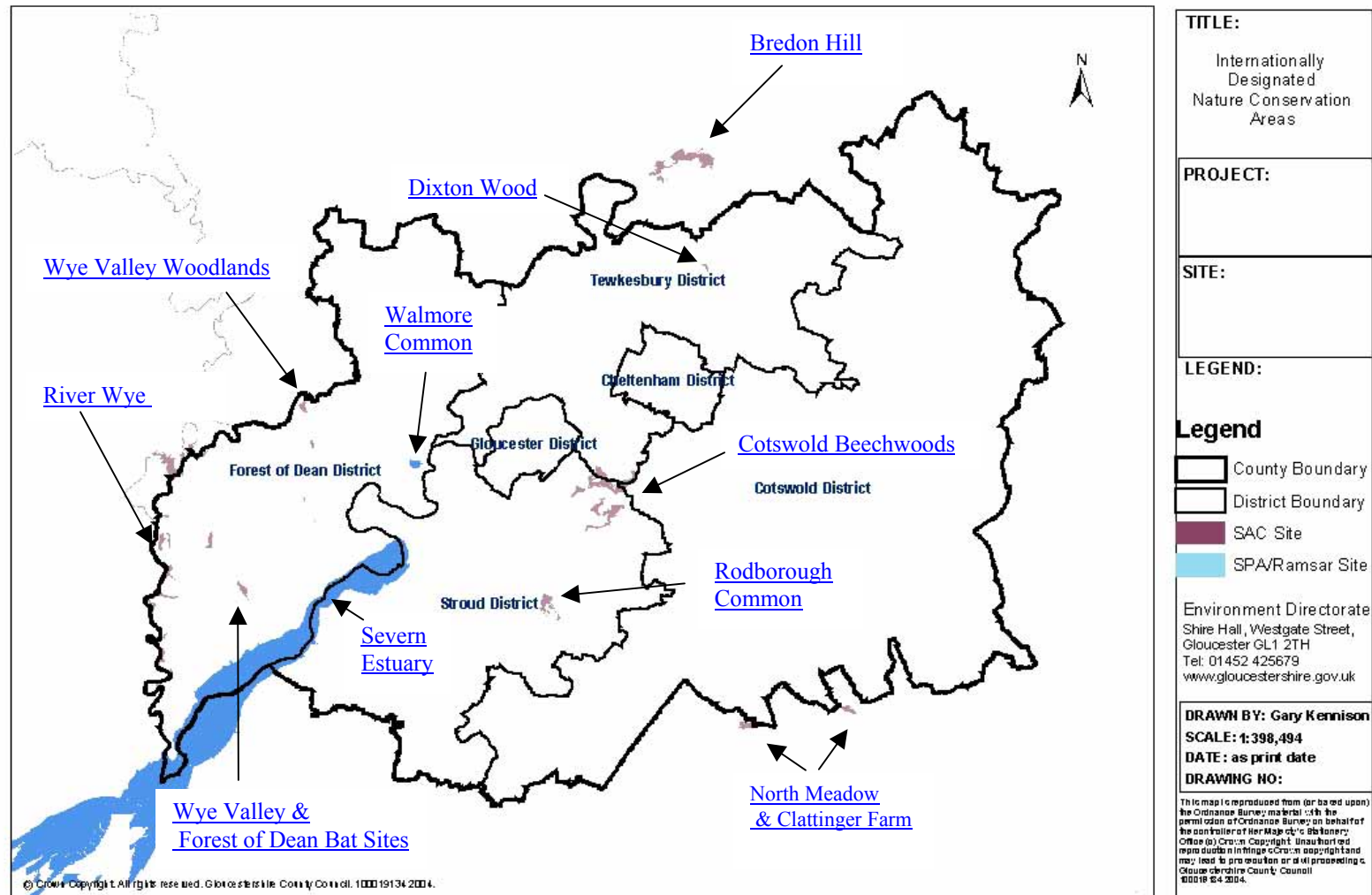
If you want to comment on the contents of this report please send your comments to:

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Appendix 1. European sites in Gloucestershire and neighbouring authorities. (Source: GCC GlosMap 2006) If viewed on-line click on [site name](#) for link to site information from the JNCC website.



Appendix 3. The Spatial Distribution of Active* Mineral Sites in Gloucestershire. (Source GCC Minerals & Waste Planning Policy). * 'Active' means those sites that have provided a mineral return for the year 2003. It does represent those sites that may have a valid permission, but have not been in operation during 2003. Additionally, it should be noted that there are some 12 Freeminer quarries of limited output that produce mineral returns to the Forestry Commission (FC) and 2 further that are dormant.





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