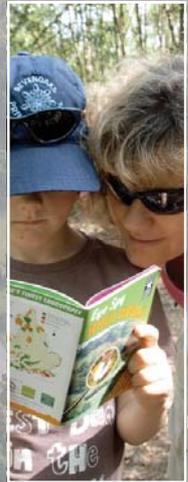


Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme

Monitoring Report 2009 to 2012

Involving people with the unique heritage in one of England's Finest Landscapes





Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme

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The Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme (WFR LPS), supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, commenced delivery at the start of 2009 and was completed in late 2012.

Its achievements and successes are reported through two linked reports:

- this Monitoring Report; and
- a complementary Evaluation Report.

In effect, this Monitoring Report is a delivery and output report for the Scheme. It focuses on:

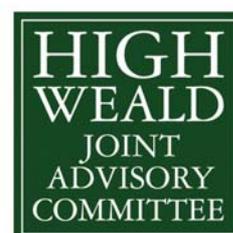
- the mechanics of what was delivered through the Scheme, and how
- where delivery took place
- the main outputs
- the partnerships developed
- the main contacts for individual project work; and
- what is being delivered as legacy.

As well as reporting a Scheme-level view of delivery, it incorporates 39 stand-alone reports on individual, but inter-linked, project activity; which are also downloadable online at www.highweald.org/wealdforestridge .

The Evaluation Report should be consulted for a broader overview of the Scheme's many successes and consideration of the diverse outcomes achieved.

Simon Aguss

Weald Forest Ridge Scheme Manager





Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme

Foreword

The Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme has now come to the end of its delivery period. As the Partnership Board, we have been privileged to play a small part in the rediscovery, conservation and enhancement of the unique history, character and wildlife of this beautiful place. Our role has been to steer and guide this innovative Scheme to completion: to oversee dedication, enthusiasm and hard work deliver huge heritage-related benefits both for people, and for the Weald Forest Ridge.

Statistics are easy to quote.

- 15,000 school children educated in heritage issues;
- 16,000 people participating through walks, talks and hands-on events;
- 973 people trained; 995 volunteers;
- over 200ha of national Biodiversity Action Plan habitat enhanced or restored;
- over 900ha of open access land worked on; and
- £1.1m of match-funding invested alongside £1.6m of Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

But the Scheme is about much, much more than numbers. Its great strength has been its partnership working: between Delivery Partners, other public and voluntary sector organisations, local people, volunteers, land managers, funders and the Scheme's Management Team. We have seen, through our attendance at the annual Partnership Forums, how bringing people together fosters the sharing of aims and their integration into mutually beneficial project delivery.

There have been a huge range of delivery outputs, which will remain after 2012 and help provide a lasting legacy. Just one example is the suite of archaeological toolkits produced within the Historic Environment Awareness Project. These are not only being used by local community groups: they have also been heralded as exemplars nationally and promoted as best practice to other HLF-supported Schemes.

Most importantly, there are people who have been inspired and enthused to continue to learn about, participate in, and help conserve their local heritage in the Weald Forest Ridge.

For achieving all of this, everyone involved in delivering the Weald Forest Ridge LPS deserves congratulations and a huge thank you. There is far too much for us to say about the Scheme in a short introduction, so please read on to find out about the wonderful projects that have revealed the unique character of the Weald Forest Ridge, and have drawn people together to enhance our environment now and for the future.

<i>Alan Betts</i>	<i>Forestry Commission</i>
<i>Andy Robertson</i>	<i>(formerly) East Sussex County Council</i>
<i>James Seymour</i>	<i>Natural England</i>
<i>Jason Lavender</i>	<i>High Weald AONB Unit</i>
<i>Paul Roberts</i>	<i>English Heritage</i>
<i>Rowena Moore</i>	<i>Community representative</i>
<i>Sarah King</i>	<i>Wealden District Council</i>
<i>Sean Ashworth</i>	<i>Environment Agency</i>

The Weald Forest Ridge Partnership Board



Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme

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Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme Monitoring Report - Executive Summary

The Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme

The 328km² Weald Forest Ridge lies in the north and west of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), in South-East England. It is the highest ridge of the AONB and its landscape character is defined by the remnants of four ancient, medieval hunting forests spread along its length: Ashdown, Broadwater, St Leonard's and Tilgate. 325,000 people live within the Ridge and its eight neighbouring towns: Horsham, Crawley, Haywards Heath, East Grinstead, Crowborough, Uckfield, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge.

Under the Heritage Lottery Fund's Landscape Partnership Scheme programme, the £2.7million Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme (WFR LPS) commenced delivery in early 2009 and was completed in late 2012. The Scheme aimed to enable its audiences – both within the Ridge and in the eight neighbouring towns – to reconnect with their local landscape; more easily access and enjoy the Ridge; understand its unique natural, cultural and built heritage; take part in caring for it; and leave a legacy for future generations. The High Weald AONB Unit was the Scheme's Lead Partner and the Unit led a broad partnership of delivery organisations and wider stakeholders.

This Monitoring Report details the delivery work undertaken in the three years of the Scheme. This is done at a project, as well as a whole Scheme level and includes stand-alone project reports presented to a pro-forma template. The Monitoring Report should be read in conjunction with its sister Evaluation Report for a full overview of the many successes achieved by the WFR LPS.

What Was Delivered?

31 projects were delivered within the WFR LP Scheme, divided across four operational Programmes. Within the Monitoring Report, delivery of these projects is reported under five themes, rather than the four Programmes, as the themes more accurately reflect the Heritage Lottery Fund's core values of conservation, participation and learning. The five themes are:

- enhancing publicly accessible sites
- understanding and conserving the historic environment
- public celebration and learning
- learning in schools, and
- training and skills.

The 31 projects were delivered by 20 different organisations – known as Delivery Partners – who were responsible for individual project programming, procurement and spend to agreed budgets. The partners ranged from environmental charities – such as the RSPB and Woodland Trust; through public bodies like the Forestry Commission and local authorities; to community organisations. Individual projects varied enormously in financial value: from under £500 to almost £500,000, although financial value was not necessarily a measure of their impact. Four of the projects employed dedicated project staff to undertake delivery – equating to 3.2FTE's.

A fifth, Scheme Management Programme employed 2.8FTE posts within the High Weald AONB Unit. The three posts acted as the Scheme's Core Team, responsible for day-to-day delivery of the WFR LPS including: financial management; overall co-ordination; promotion and communications; fostering partnership working; Scheme branding; and reporting to the HLF. A Partnership Board had an overarching role to steer and advise on the LPS delivery.

contd.

Key Outputs

Strong, centrally co-ordinated project management allowed accurate recording of delivery outputs by each Delivery Partner in their individual projects. The Scheme Management Team collected and collated these outputs, using the national LPS Output Data system developed by consultants for the HLF in 2009 and 2010.

Highlights of the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme include:

- Over 200ha of Biodiversity Action Plan habitat conserved or restored.
- Over 55km of routeways or self-guided trails created or improved.
- Over 14,500 pupils and staff from 89 primary schools undertook learning activities with the Scheme.
- Almost 1,000 volunteers participated in the Scheme, contributing volunteer time valued at around £300,000.
- Over 340 events were staged, with over 18,000 attendees.
- Over 970 trainees and work placements engaged with heritage to enhance their knowledge and skills.

What Does the Future Hold?

Sustainability and legacy were essential elements of the overall design and delivery of the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme. A key part of the Scheme's exit strategy was investing these elements predominantly with the Delivery Partners and their projects. For example, Delivery Partners will maintain any physical site improvements they have implemented until at least 2020, as part of their Partner Agreements within the Scheme.

But legacy has been far more deep-rooted in the Scheme than just these conservation and access site enhancements. Many of the participation and learning outputs provide the actual legacy. There are, for example, archaeological toolkits, resource packs for schools, self-guided walks leaflets, interpretive trails, continuations of guided walks programmes, a stunning LiDAR survey, an i-phone app and a new community education post. Wherever possible, these resources have been made available in appropriate web locations, as well as in hard copy.

But some of the most enduring legacies lie with the people, organisations and communities who have participated in, and benefited from, the Weald Forest Ridge LPS. There has been an enhancement of people's understanding and enjoyment of the archaeological, cultural and environmental heritage of the Weald Forest Ridge, alongside an increased skills base, so that the unique landscape of the Weald Forest Ridge can be appreciated and cared for, now and in the future.

Section	Section Title
1.	Introduction

1.1 The Heritage Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) seeks to make a lasting difference for heritage and people, in the areas of conservation, participation and learning. Using money raised through the National Lottery, the HLF gives grants to sustain and transform Britain's heritage. This heritage is seen as very diverse: from museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions.

1.2 Landscape Partnership Schemes

A Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) is an HLF grant programme targeted at areas of countryside that have a distinctive landscape character and are recognised and valued by local people. Individual schemes are expected to be led by a partnership made up of regional, national and local organisations with an interest in the area, together with community groups and members of the community.

At the time that initial development of the Weald Forest Ridge LPS commenced, in 2004, the HLF's priorities for support under the LP programme were schemes that provided long-term social, economic and environmental benefits for rural areas by:

- conserving or restoring the built and natural features that create the historic character of the landscape;
- conserving and celebrating the cultural associations and activities of the landscape area;
- encouraging more people to access, learn about, become involved in and make decisions on their landscape heritage; and
- improving understanding of local craft and other skills by providing training opportunities.

Delivery of an LPS is based around a portfolio of numerous projects, fitted into themed programmes, which conserve the landscape heritage of the designated area. The delivery is led by a partnership of organisations, normally with a Lead Partner, and steering and advice is given by a Landscape Partnership Board.

1.3 The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was designated in 1983. It is one of 46 AONB's in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and is the largest in South East England. The designated area of 1,461 km² extends across parts of four counties (Surrey, East Sussex, West Sussex and Kent), 11 districts or boroughs, and 99 parishes.

The High Weald Joint Advisory Committee is the partnership organisation responsible for the AONB designation. It delegates day to day management responsibility to the High Weald AONB Unit, led by two Co-Directors.



Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme

Section	Section Title
2.	The Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme

2.1 Weald Forest Ridge Area

The Weald Forest Ridge is a deeply incised and faulted sandstone ridge that stretches east to west between Tonbridge and Horsham, covering 328km² of West Sussex, East Sussex and Kent. It is an historic landscape and its identity is closely linked with ancient hunting forests established during or soon after William the Conqueror’s reign.

The Weald Forest Ridge has a set of distinctive features that contribute to its complex landscape character. These features include:

- the remnants of four medieval hunting forests
- sandstone rock outcrops
- ancient woodland, often in gills
- ridge top settlements
- distinctive zones of heathland
- historic parks and gardens
- all overlooking a medieval landscape of small irregular fields interspersed with isolated farmsteads.

A wide range of designations, from European to local, recognise the importance of the Weald Forest Ridge area, which lies almost entirely within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Fig. 1: The boundaries of the High Weald AONB and Weald Forest Ridge.

2.2 LPS Bid Process and Timescales

In 2004, a partnership emerged – led by the High Weald AONB Unit (HWU) – which sought to address a range of threats and issues to the area, and aimed to conserve and enhance the Ridge.

A Project Planning Grant was obtained from the HLF at this time and, in 2006, a Stage 1 Landscape Partnership Scheme application was submitted. This application received a Stage 1 pass in May 2007, and a Development Phase commenced later the same year. The Stage 2 application was approved in September 2008 and the WFR Scheme Manager (already appointed from the Development Phase) immediately commenced recruitment and project enabling processes, so that the WFR LPS commenced its three-year delivery period at the start of 2009.

2.3 Scheme Inspiration

The Weald Forest Ridge’s landscape heritage has close associations with ancient medieval hunting forests. The importance of these medieval forests was recognised in Michael Drayton’s epic “Polyolbion” – a long topographical poem of the English counties written in 1611.

Drayton introduced each song of the “Polyolbion” (a chapter that often related to a specific county) with an argument that set out what issues the entire song would cover. Parts of Drayton’s 17th song refer to the four medieval forests of the Weald Forest Ridge: likening them to wood nymphs, or maidens. The four Forests referred to are clearly identifiable nowadays as Broadwater (Water-downe), Ashdown (Ash-downe), St Leonards (Saint Leonards) and Worth (Whord).

The Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership used Drayton’s “Polyolbion” as the inspiration for conserving the Weald Forest Ridge’s heritage. Project work, including heritage interpretation, was carried out at all of the four Forests, and several other areas of delivery – including the Giant Maidens project – also took their inspiration from the “Polyolbion”. (See Appendix 1 for relevant excerpts from Drayton’s “Polyolbion”, as well as a modern-day response from a local poet involved in the WFR development.)



Fig. 2: The Maidens of the Weald.

2.4 Scheme Vision, Aims and Objectives

Partnership work at Stages 1 and 2 defined a Vision for the Weald Forest Ridge:

In 10 years, the Weald Forest Ridge will be an area where both local people and visitors experience a strong sense of place. The area's rich natural and cultural heritage will be valued in its own right and as an asset that supports peoples' economic, social and cultural wellbeing.

It will be a place that has enriched its natural beauty through conserving its distinctive features, and is able to offer a variety of habitats, wildlife, cultural heritage and activities that are accessible to residents, people living in neighbouring towns, and visitors. It will be a welcoming place that enhances peoples' quality of life through their participation and celebration of its unique landscape and culture.

Above all, it will be a treasured place where local people, working alongside specialist organisations, have the knowledge and skills to enjoy and care for the Weald Forest Ridge, in a way that brings long-term benefits to all.

The Partnership set four Strategic Aims for the WFR LPS:

1. To encourage more people to get involved in caring for the Weald Forest Ridge's unique landscape heritage.
2. To conserve and enhance the distinctive natural and built features that make the Weald Forest Ridge a special place.
3. To provide opportunities for people to learn about, access, celebrate and benefit from the Weald Forest Ridge's landscape heritage.
4. To give people the knowledge and skills to protect the Weald Forest Ridge landscape for future generations to enjoy.

These aims defined the Scheme's four Delivery Programmes:

Landscape Scale Connectivity (Programme 1)

Conserving the Weald Forest Ridge's natural features, including its semi-natural habitats and geology, and enhancing access to, and knowledge of, these features.

Archaeology and Special Features (Programme 2)

Understanding and protecting the distinctive features that give the Weald Forest Ridge its historic character, in particular its landscape archaeology and medieval forests.

Learning & Celebrating Heritage (Programme 3)

Celebrating the Weald Forest Ridge's cultural, built, and industrial heritage; through enhanced orientation, activities and events aimed at local residents, visitors, and people from the neighbouring urban towns, including schools.

Reconnecting People & Place (Programme 4)

Reconnecting people with their landscapes, by offering advice and training opportunities to landowners, crafts people and volunteers to help conserve and care for the Weald Forest Ridge.

The four Delivery Programmes were underpinned by a fifth, Scheme Management programme: a cross-cutting programme ensuring the effective promotion and delivery of the entire WFR LPS.

23 objectives were derived from the four Strategic Aims and five Programmes. These are listed in Appendix 2.

2.5 Scheme Delivery Mechanisms

The Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership consisted of people representing national, regional and local interests. This was co-ordinated by the High Weald AONB Unit, acting as Lead Partner for the LPS. East Sussex County Council, as the host for the HWU, acted as the Accountable Body to the HLF.

The Weald Forest Ridge Partnership Board consisted of up to nine people, who steered and advised on the delivery of the LPS and how the LP Fund was managed. The Board formally met three times a year, and its full composition is given in Appendix 3.

The Scheme Management programme employed a dedicated Weald Forest Ridge Core Team of 2.8FTE posts:

WFR Scheme Manager	Simon Aguss (2008 – 2012)
WFR Scheme Officer	Ruth Dawson (2009) James Sharpe (2010 – 2011)
WFR Administrator	Trish Tiltman (2009 – 2012) (0.8FTE)

This Team was responsible for the day-to-day management of the WFR LPS, and more detail of the work undertaken is given in Sections 8 and 10 of this Report. The Scheme's Management Structure is presented in Appendix 4.

2.6 Projects and Delivery Partners

In total, 31 projects were delivered between 2009 and 2012 across the four Delivery Programmes: ranging in value from under £500 to almost £500,000. Each project was delivered by a designated Delivery Partner; who had full responsibility for programming, procurement and spend to agreed budgets, whilst reporting to, and being co-ordinated by, the WFR Scheme Management Team.

20 different Delivery Partners delivered these 31 projects: ranging from local authorities, statutory agencies, and national and regional charities; through to theatre companies and community organisations. Each Delivery Partner was contractually bound to the WFR LPS through a Partner Agreement. The Delivery Partners are identified against their project work in Sections 3 to 7 of this Report, and fully named in Appendix 5.

2.7 Recording Outputs and Achievements

The Scheme Management Team set a strong project management ethic for the LPS during the Development Phase. Each project was worked up by the Delivery Partner using project plan, work programme and budget proformas drawn up by the Scheme Manager. These three documents defined each project during delivery, and were reviewed and updated at

the end of the first and second delivery years.

Consequently, there were clearly defined target activities, outputs and outcomes for each project from the start of delivery. This centrally co-ordinated project management approach enabled accurate and ongoing recording of delivery and outputs by each partner throughout their project durations. The Scheme Management Team set up individually adapted proformas with Delivery Partners for this recording.

During Scheme delivery, the HLF developed the national LPS Output Data collection system (through Cumulus Consultants and CEPAR). The WFR LPS's robust output recording systems were easily fitted into this system to record overall Scheme outputs. Individual project outputs are identified in Sections 3 to 7 of this Report, whilst collated, whole Scheme outputs are given in Section 9.

2.8 Production of the WFR LPS Monitoring Report

The next five Sections of this Report consider the detailed delivery within the WFR LPS.

39 standalone summaries are presented under five themed headings, which are not identical to the Scheme's four delivery programmes and have involved splitting some projects down into more than one summary. The themes have been used as they are more representative of the range of work delivered in the LPS, and more accurately reflect the HLF's core values of conservation, participation and learning. They also enable some delivery carried out under the Scheme Management programme to be more representatively presented under the themes.

The five themed headings are:

- Enhancing publicly accessible sites (Section 3).
- Understanding and conserving the historic environment (Section 4).
- Public celebration and learning (Section 5).
- Learning in schools (Section 6).
- Training and skills (Section 7).

Appendix 6 sets out the inter-relationship between the 39 summaries in Sections 3 to 7 and the Scheme's 31 projects.

Each summary is presented to a set design:

- A title block of Theme, Project Name, Project Aim, Project Reference and Delivery Partner.
- Text on "What Was Delivered?"
- Key Outputs.
- A location map (where appropriate).
- Quotes and soundbites.
- Text on "What Does the Future Hold?"
- Partnerships and match funding information.
- Illustrative photographs and images.
- Contact details for further information.

This design allows Delivery Partners to also use the summaries for their own promotional and reporting purposes. Each summary is available as a separately downloadable pdf at www.highweald.org/wealdforestridge.



Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme