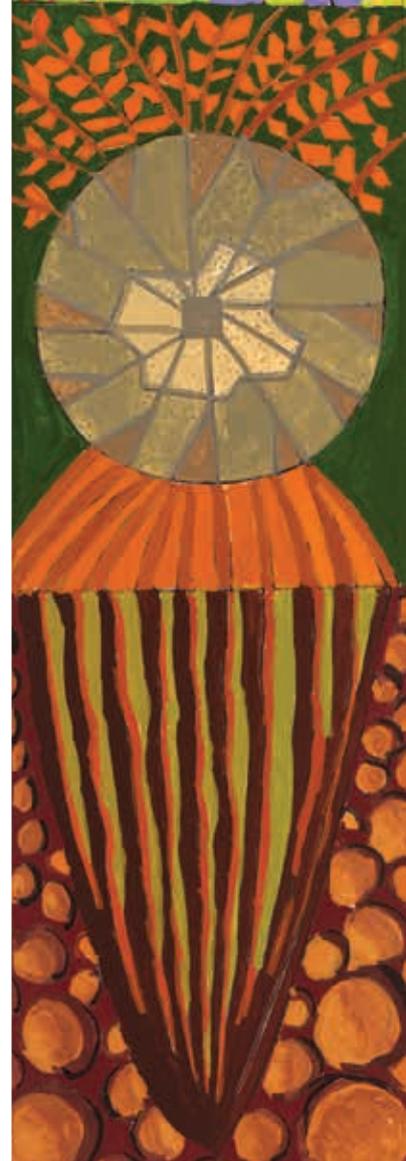
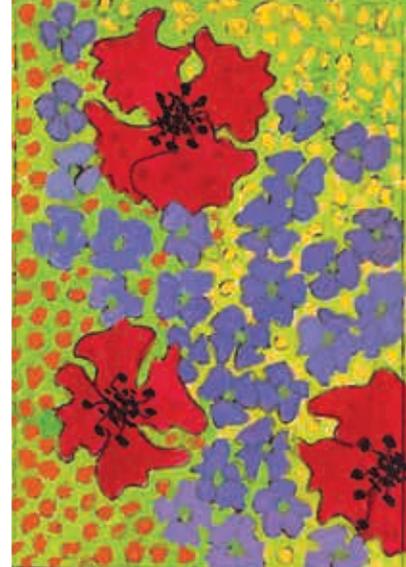


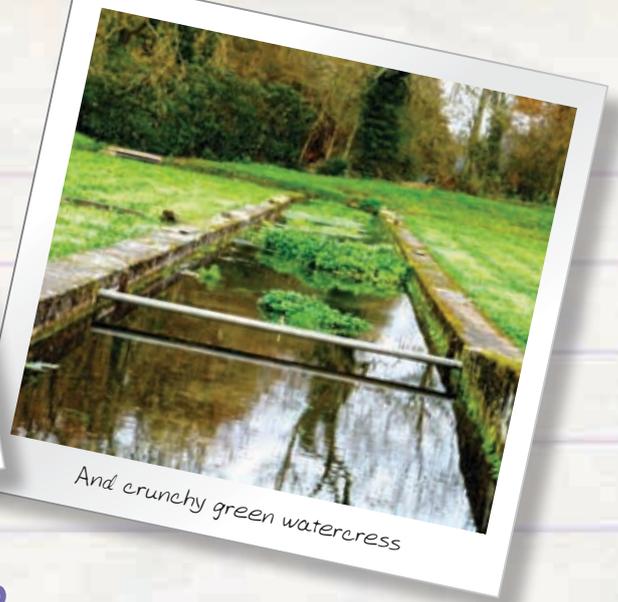
Rural Land Management

'Sow, Breed, Reap'





Corduroy textured



And crunchy green watercress

Sow, Breed, Reap

Sparkling clean, fast flowing
Temperate Chalk Rivers
Home to insect hungry jumping trout
Rare butterflies
And crunchy green watercress

In spring
Corduroy textured
Freshly ploughed
Rich brown earth
Transforming into vast patchworks
Yellow, blue, red and green

In summer
Reaping crops
Harvesting grain
Metal braced millstones
Grinding flour
Bread rising

In autumn
3000 years of coppicing
Cutting, expanding, creating space
Materials for making by hand
Hurdles and thatching spars
Heat of the log fire
In winter



Transforming into vast patchworks



Yellow, blue, red and green



3000 years of coppicing

11. Rural Land Management

Rural land management encompasses farming, forestry, fisheries and game management. In this deeply rural AONB, landowners and managers have been the custodians and sculptors of the landscape for centuries. Today and tomorrow, their activities will continue to shape and mould the landscape we see around us.

11.1. Special characteristics and qualities that make this AONB special, as a whole, with regards to rural land management:

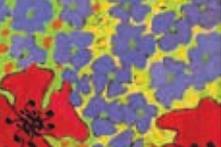
- The agricultural character of the AONB is typified by arable cropping, especially the south-eastern sector and on the West Wiltshire Downs.
- The Vale of Wardour and the north-western edge of the area are mostly grasslands.
- A typical AONB farm is slightly larger than the regional average and consists of predominantly arable land with some permanent pasture and woodland. It is the mixed nature of the holdings that contributes significantly to the special qualities of the landscape and its biodiversity.
- The mosaic of broad-leaved, mixed and coniferous woodland, shelterbelts, copses, hedgerows and veteran trees is a distinctive and key element in the AONB landscape.
- The AONB is one of the most intensively managed game landscapes in the country. This reflects the heritage of the area as a Chase and supports the social and economic development of rural businesses and communities.
- The legacy of previous land management adds to the historic dimension of the landscape.

Aim

11.2. We want the sustainable management of our rural land. This will meet the demand for food, fuel and other produce in ways that conserve and enhance the landscape character of the AONB and deliver increased public benefits.

Achievements to date

- **'Raising Our Game'** - Production of the first integrated landscape management advice for game managers in a protected landscape. Research conducted with game managers by the AONB with analysis by The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust.
- **'A Landscape View of Trees and Woodland'** - Guidelines for tree planting for each landscape character type within the AONB.
- **Co-ordinated Wood Fuel Initiative (2007-2009)** - This was undertaken jointly with Protected Areas in South West England. It included distribution of a wood fuel information and questionnaire leaflet, two demonstration projects and two practical seminar events attended by 50 interested parties. A Wood Fuel Fayre attracted 150 attendees.
- **Biennial Cranborne Chase Woodfair** - This major event attracts around 7,000 visitors over a weekend. It acts as a showcase for the AONB and its woodland management, woodland owners, crafts people and allied industries.
- **Land Managers Seminars** - Since 2013, the AONB has instigated regular land managers seminars that focus on topics of current interest.



Key issues

1. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union steers the agricultural industry. The reform of the CAP, and the new schemes that will come out of it, will affect the AONB. Increased levels of targeting and reduced budgets for the agri-environment schemes will mean less area covered by pro-nature activities.
2. The predominance of the agricultural sector in the AONB makes it essential, for the sustainable development of our rural land, that farmers are encouraged to adopt good environmental and agricultural practices and that the sector is supported by pro-nature policies.
3. Many woodlands are either under-managed or do not have a coherent management plan. The burgeoning wood fuel market offers an opportunity to bring more small woodlands into positive management.
4. The AONB is one of the most intensively managed game landscapes in the country and the effects of this are not fully appreciated and valued. This sector can create significant social, environmental and economic benefits but, if poorly managed, can have negative impacts
5. The impact of pests (and particularly pest and wildlife management) is a major issue for forest managers, landowners and nature conservationists.
6. The rivers of the AONB, particularly in the catchment of the Hampshire Avon, are some of the finest trout streams in the world, valued highly by fishermen. However, this heritage and the benefits that flow from it are threatened by climate change and other factors.

The Issues Explained

11.3. Farmland covers over 80% of the AONB. The landscapes we cherish are the result, in part, of the stewardship of land managers over past generations; and to the commitment of many today. European farming grant schemes are the largest single public investment in the AONB. In 2008, they provided some £3.5 million of grant aid per year²⁷. The uptake of environmental stewardship schemes within the AONB has been above the national average. However, some landowners are now coming out of the scheme or did not go in because the payment rate did not keep up with potential profits from arable cropping.

11.4. There are many practices that can be adopted by farmers that will bring environmental and commercial benefits, such as:

- sustainable utilisation of soil, minimising erosion;
- effective water catchment management;
- avoidance of direct pollution and measures to reduce diffuse pollution;
- farm waste minimisation and recycling.

National and local policies must support and encourage farmers in making decisions that bring these “win-win” solutions to the challenges of the future.

11.5. Creating local woodfuel supply chains is one of the top five recommendations in a recent review of the business opportunities that arise from valuing nature correctly²⁸. Businesses using the wood fuel may enjoy reduced costs with local and secure fuel supplies. They may also benefit from the Renewable Heat Incentive. There may be marketing benefits for some companies from using green energy. The report identifies the main barrier to be a lack of confidence in the long-term consistency of the supply chain preventing demand. This lack of demand then holds back the confidence to increase the supply. There is a need for technical support and training to ensure managing woodland for fuel is done sustainably. The need is to develop local cooperatives surrounded by groups of users. This will help link local supply chains.

²⁷ 'Strengthening the Landscape Character through Entry Level Stewardship', Dr J Batten 2008

²⁸ 'Realising nature's value: The Final Report of the Ecosystem Markets Task Force'. March 2013 www.defra.gov.uk/ecosystem-markets/files/Ecosystem-Markets-Task-Force-Final-Report-.pdf

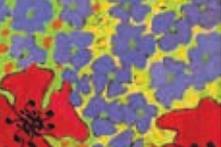


- 11.6. Our research for the 'Raising Our Game' document highlighted the importance of game shooting as a reason for acquiring, retaining and managing land. It has a significant effect on the local economy.
- 11.7. Game management provides significant employment and housing, 30.5 full-time equivalents in our sample of 42 shoots.
- 11.8. There are approximately 120 shoots in the AONB, mainly being of modest size that barely, or rarely, make a profit from their activity. A few shoots are larger concerns with the turn-over of a medium-sized company.
- 11.9. It attracts a large number of day and weekend visitors to the AONB and therefore can support a significant hospitality service.
- 11.10. The biodiversity of woodlands is being reduced by the impact of deer and grey squirrels. Most commentators regard deer browsing as being an important threat to woodland biodiversity in the UK²⁹. Grey squirrels also have an economic impact so there is a need for collaborative deer management and grey squirrel control.
- 11.11. A significant proportion of the River Avon System is within the AONB. It holds two Natura 2000 sites (The Hampshire Avon SAC and Avon Valley SPA). The advent of the Catchment-based Approach and the priorities under the Water Framework Directive provide the policy and delivery environment in which beneficial programmes such as "*Keeping Rivers Cool*" and "*The Strategic Framework for the Restoration of the River Avon System*" can be implemented faster than before. Much good work has already been done such as the Wild Fishery Protection Zone that was instigated by the Ebble Valley Conservation & Fishing Association and the river restoration work of the Wessex Chalk Streams Project. Much more remains to be achieved if our world-class fisheries are to be sustainable in the face of climate change and other challenges.



Sheep on the Chase - Clare Shepherd

29 See <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1469-8137.2008.02579.x/full>



Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE	POLICIES
<p>RLM A <i>Farmers, foresters, fishery managers and gamekeepers are aware of how their activities can strengthen landscape character and enhance the natural environment of the AONB</i></p>	<p>RLM1 Encourage the take-up of agri-environment scheme options that benefit the natural and historic environment of the AONB.</p> <p>RLM2 Support and encourage appropriate woodland management that increases biodiversity, including PAWS restoration.</p> <p>RLM3 Work with partners, such as the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, to disseminate appropriate information and advice on how game management practices can positively contribute to AONB purposes and collaborate in further research to this end.</p>
<p>RLM B <i>Good agricultural practice examples are widely disseminated</i></p>	<p>RLM4 Identify good agricultural practices that that are appropriate to the challenges facing the farmers of the AONB and disseminate through networks, partnerships and events.</p>
<p>RLM C <i>Collaborative approaches to the problems caused by pests, particularly deer and grey squirrel, are in use where appropriate</i></p>	<p>RLM5 Work with partners, such as Deer Initiative and key estates, to encourage collaborative deer management.</p> <p>RLM6 Work with partners to instigate grey squirrel control in areas where timber quality is being severely affected.</p>
<p>RLM D <i>The development of practical pro-nature policy supports the wide-spread adoption of good practice in environmental and resource management.</i></p>	<p>RLM7 Work with Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, National Association of AONBs, National Farmers Union and other appropriate partners to develop national and local policy and grant aid that supports the sustainable management of high nature value farmland, prioritises biodiversity conservation and rewards land managers for delivering environmental and other public benefits.</p>
<p>RLM E <i>The Hampshire Avon and its tributaries in the AONB, has a secure future as a fishery and the services it provides are enhanced by enlightened management and restoration.</i></p>	<p>RLM8 By working with and supporting partners such as Environment Agency, Wessex Chalk Streams Project, private land owners, fishery managers and Natural England, encourage the delivery of programmes and projects that bring environmental benefits to the catchment while at the same time securing an economic future for fisheries.</p>

(Additional Information: Rural Land Management Appendix 31)







“
The sound
of the combine harvesters
working late
into the long summer evenings

Shirley Vickers, AONB, local resident

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