



The B-Lines Update

Issue 7

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Welcome to our latest update

B-Lines - the message spreads

Since the last B-Lines update, our mapping and partnership development has continued to extend into new parts of the country. With assistance from Natural England we are now working from Northumberland in the north of England to Sussex. In addition we are developing plans for B-Lines in Wales and Scotland.

This newsletter aims to give you a flavour of the current B-Lines work and hopefully encourage you to get involved in developing the B-Lines in your area.



Small Copper © Joanna Dixon

Help is at hand - new B-Lines resources



Several new B-Lines resources have been developed that will provide guidance to enable everyone to take part in creating the B-Lines. There are three new leaflets available to download on our website, each focused on a different area of the urban environment; [gardens](#), [allotments](#) and [community](#) green spaces. They contain information such as how to choose the right plants for pollinating insects in your garden, how to create a wildflower meadow and why cutting grass less can be an easy way to help! They will be used to engage with communities within the B-Lines and all three leaflets are available to download now.



Making a difference in Avon

Since finalising the West of England B-Lines map towards the end of last year, Buglife and Avon Wildlife Trust have been busy working with landowners, farmers, local community groups and other project partners to start restoring wildflower-rich habitat within the B-Lines network.

Over the winter months AWT's Grassland Restoration Team have been working hard to clear and remove scrub from numerous sites to prevent important grassland habitat from being lost. We joined forces with Natural England and the Mendip Hills AONB to help restore calcareous grassland on a SSSI grassland near Loxton in North Somerset.

Contractors cleared dense areas of scrub and our army of volunteers made a great difference to the site by carrying out further scrub clearance works and removing arisings from the grassland. We hope all this hard work will help wildflowers to flourish in future years.

Later in the year our tasks will be turning to seed harvesting, green haying, sowing and hay making, looking to restore and create a number of wildflower-rich habitats across our West of England B-Lines.



If you have land which you are interested in restoring to wildflower-rich grassland or would like advice on how to manage land for pollinators please contact Clare Dinham on clare.dinham@buglife.org.uk for further details.

For further information on volunteering opportunities with the AWT Grassland Restoration Team please contact Anna David on annadavid@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk.

Clare Dinham

Helping create the B-Lines

We are always on the lookout for people to help create the B-Lines. We know it is a big task, but a concerted joined-up effort could make a real difference. We are already working with, or advising some local authorities on the B-Lines to restore wildlife sites under their ownership or convert areas of amenity grassland to wildflower-rich meadows. But we need more to get involved! Small changes to management of public greenspace can make a big difference to our insect pollinators, and can also make local environments more pleasant places to live.

We would encourage everyone living, managing or farming land within the mapped B-Lines to do something to make a difference, or get in touch with us to see how we might be able to help.

Please look at our developing [B-Lines map](#) and see what you can do to help.

Caring for God's Acre encourages communities to B-Line their Burial Grounds

Britain has over 20,000 churchyards, cemeteries and burial grounds ranging from quarter of an acre to 45 acres. The community of grasses and flowers in an old site may have been there for many centuries, relatively undisturbed. Most cemeteries although more recent, were in place before the widespread use of chemicals and when wildflowers were still common across the countryside. Whether regularly mown or allowed to grow long, burial sites often contain the only areas of species rich, flowery grassland within a town, city or county parish. These fragments of wildflower-rich habitat provide incredibly important habitats for insect pollinators and other wildlife, and provide valuable stepping stones of habitat across the country.

Caring for God's Acre (CfGA) is a national charity dedicated to the conservation of these special sites which are found in the heart of communities. As part of a Heritage Lottery Funded National Project, CfGA is taking this message across England and Wales through a series of conferences called 'The Beautiful Burial Ground'. In April B-Lines assisted us with this project by presenting at our Cumbrian conference which has inspired us to encourage communities to B-Line their burial ground. We are pleased to be working in partnership with Buglife to help improve our burial grounds for insect pollinators.

For more information on managing burial grounds to enhance them for wildlife www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk or ring the helpline on 01588 673041



Help is at hand—new schools resources

Making B-Lines depends on whole communities doing something to help. Every person and every business that lives, works or has influence over land within the B-Lines network can take some positive action.

B-Lines is committed to working with schools to help pass key messages about our insect pollinators to our young people. We have therefore produced a schools resources pack, which outline simple educational activities for introducing primary school children to the world of bees, butterflies and hoverflies and the wildflowers on which they feed.

We have been putting some of these activities into practice in our B-Lines projects, where we have been enthusing school children about pollination in a fun and memorable way. We are also working with the children to make their school grounds more pollinator friendly areas.

Our School Grounds:
Making a pollinator improvement plan

Learning Objectives:
Communicate; share experiences, ideas and information.
Explore and discover interesting features of habitats.
Improve understanding of conservation and biodiversity.

Key Topics: Science, Literacy, Design

Location: Indoors and Outdoors

Equipment:
Paper/pens
Large sheets of paper
Measuring reel (optional)
Compass

Key Words: Habitat, Pollinator, Flower, Nectar, Pollen, Shelter

Background:
How attractive are the school grounds to you? How attractive would the school grounds be if you were a pollinator? We want to look at what we can do on the school grounds to make them better for pollinators, such as bees, butterflies, hoverflies and moths. In this session we will create a plan of the school and annotate it with things we could do to make the school grounds a more attractive place for pollinators and people.

Closing in on identifying a B-Line from North to South

2015 has already been a significant year in the growing the B-Lines. With support from Natural England we have spent the last three months working with partners to map B-Lines across Kent, East and West Sussex, Norfolk, Suffolk and Northumberland. Four workshops were held with conservation partners across these six counties, pulling together local knowledge and experience to review and refine outputs from habitat data modelled by Local Records Centres. The maps will be made available to local authorities and conservation partners over the coming months and we will be looking to pick up some of the ideas identified during the mapping projects and develop them into new projects on the ground. In particular we will be looking to maintain the impetus within the South Downs Way Ahead NIA, and looking towards filling gaps in conservation delivery within other parts of the newly mapped B-Lines network.

Our mapped B-Lines are getting close to linking the north to the south of England!!



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Making a B-Line for the North East

Working with the Durham Wildlife Trust we have delivered pollinator themed sessions at 10 primary schools across Sunderland and South Tyneside. These sessions included interactive activities such as dressing up as bees and flowers to demonstrate the process of pollination in a fun and memorable way, examining real life insects and making bug hotels. The sessions introduced the students to the B-Lines project and gave them valuable training towards becoming pollinator scientists. Children learned about the process of pollination and why this is so valuable to both wildlife and people. The young scientists then explored the anatomy of bees and how this makes them well suited to their role in pollinating plants.



© Paul Evans

The Making a B-Line for the North East Project has also been carrying out a range of habitat works across Sunderland and South Tyneside. The autumn and winter months have been spent working across a suite of Local Wildlife Sites restoring important magnesian grassland and other wildflower-rich habitats. We have also begun to create a number of small wildflower-rich grasslands in parkland areas, hoping to bring insect pollinators, wildflowers and other wildlife into the centre of local communities

We keen to work with, and develop new partnerships to deliver stretches of the B-Lines network, both in our countryside and urban environments. If you have any contacts who might be interested, please spread the word about B-Lines and ask them to get in touch with paul.evans@buglife.org.uk.

Thank you.