

The B-Lines Initiative

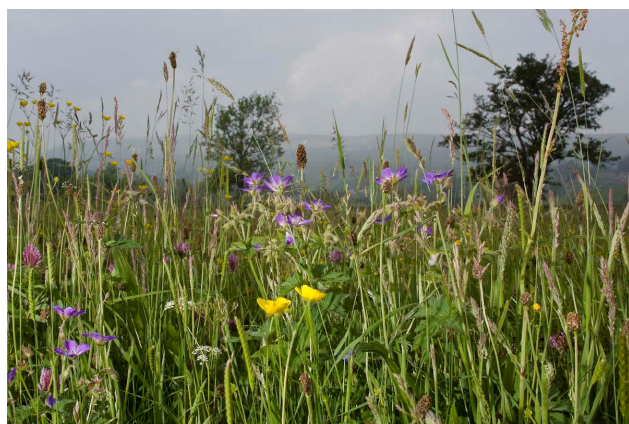


Welcome to our latest update on the B-Lines initiative.

May 2012

Developing the B-Lines concept

We are now almost a year into the B-Lines Initiative and are currently finalising a short report on our initial work/findings. Drawing on experience from the Yorkshire Bee-Roads pilot project, this report will outline a list of 'guiding principles' which we hope will provide enough information to help a range of local partnerships, communities, farmers and wildlife organisations deliver the B-Lines vision across the country. The report recognises the challenges of developing a comprehensive and



Hay Meadow in Wensleydale © Robert Goodison

coherent B-Lines habitat network across Britain, but also highlights many ways that current projects and programmes could, and in some cases already are helping. Further detailed advice is provided alongside a number of important case studies from the Bee-Roads pilot project. We would very much welcome comments on this report, and will use these to continue to develop the B-Lines concept over the coming years.

Please keep checking the Buglife website for the report, which will be made available next month.

Some key guiding principles for B-Lines

As outlined above a list of twelve 'guiding principles' are being developed to underpin the development of the B-Lines. These 'guiding principles' outline the types of habitat we consider should form the core part of the B-Lines, provide guidance on the amount of habitat needed and suggest how this might be best located. They also highlight the importance of maintaining and enhancing existing wildflower-rich habitats, while promoting the need to restore/recreate some of that which has been lost.



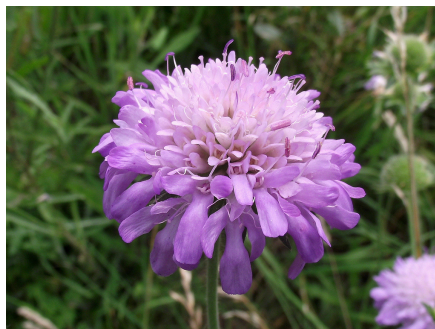
Common blue butterfly © Roger Key

Identifying the B-Lines

Over the last few months we have worked with a range of partners, including Yorkshire's two National Parks, the Howardian Hills AONB, North Yorkshire County Council and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, using more detailed local datasets and knowledge to refine the mapping. We have now finalised our Yorkshire B-Lines, which have been mapped at a width of 3km (to allow flexibility of delivery on the ground) and the basic map is available on our website.

Making B-Lines

We have been encouraged by the amount of interest that has been forthcoming from across Yorkshire and beyond. We are currently working with around ten landowners/managers in north Yorkshire, and subject to funding are hoping to embark on the restoration and creation of in excess of 30 hectares of wildflower-rich grasslands. In addition to this work we are also assisting a number of other partners to develop wildflower-rich habitats within the mapped B-Lines and have recently begun discussions with both Groundwork and the National Trust. The link with Groundwork is very exciting as we are looking to work with them to expand their 'Dell-ve into Nature' project in Eastfield (Scarborough) - restoring and creating new wildflower-rich links into and across this urban settlement.



Field scabious (*Knautia arvensis*) © Dave Riseborough

Other work

We are trying to identify all possible opportunities to create the Yorkshire B-Lines and therefore continue to be busy working with, and talking to a number of other conservation and farming partners. Most recently we have engaged with Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council to link in with their DEFRA Biodiversity Offsetting pilot, and will look to trial ways to link individual landowners/farmers into this process. We have also met with Natural England to explore ways of increasing their role in delivering the Yorkshire B-Lines, in particular looking at opportunities both to review agri-environment scheme delivery within the identified B-Lines and to provide guidance on how B-Lines could be delivered through the Environmental Stewardship Scheme.

A thank you

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Co-operative Group for the funding and support provided to the Bee-Roads pilot project through their Plan Bee Campaign. With their help we have really been able to put B-Line on the map!

Can you help?

We are keen to work with, and/or 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 us. Thank you.

We will continue to place information on the Buglife website on a regular basis – www.buglife.org.uk/conservation/How+Buglife+is+taking+action+to+protect+wildlife+sites.

Paul Evans
(paul.evans@buglife.org.uk)

Supported by the Co-operative's Plan Bee Campaign

