

The B-Lines Initiative

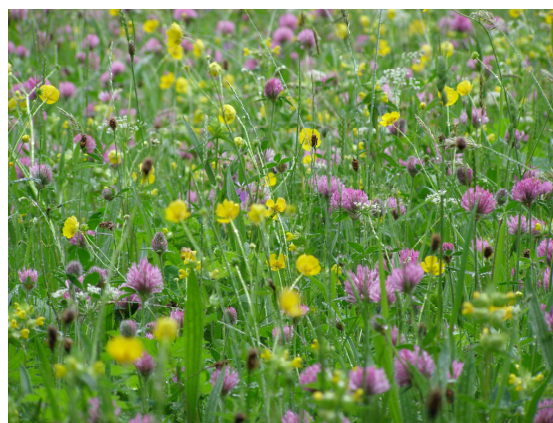


Welcome to our latest update on the B-Lines initiative.

Sept 2012

A report on the practicalities of delivering a B-Lines Network

Slightly later than planned the B-Lines report is now available on our website (www.buglife.org.uk). This report has been drawn together from experience gained during the Yorkshire 'Bee Roads' pilot project and with expertise and help from a wide range of individuals who have commented on the B-Lines approach. This report lays out initial findings from the pilot project; identifying the challenges faced in developing a coherent B-Lines habitat network and providing a set of recommendations as to how the B-Lines Initiative could be taken forward. The report highlights existing programmes and projects which could help deliver B-Lines, and identifies some key gaps in our knowledge about insect pollinators and their habitat requirements at a landscape-scale. This report is just the start - we are planning to develop the B-Lines concept further over the coming year, and develop more detailed guidance to help delivery on the ground. We continue to value input and advice from partner organisations and individuals so please do pass any thoughts and ideas onto us. Thank you.



Wildflower meadow © Paul Evans

Restoring Ryedale's Lowland Meadows

Following an application to the SITA Trust back in March, Buglife has been awarded a grant of £110,000 to take forward a project in Ryedale District, North Yorkshire. This two year project aims to restore and create over 30 ha of wildflower-rich lowland meadow habitat by working with farmers and landowners on eight separate sites. The main focus will be on developing high quality lowland meadows, rich in wildflowers and supporting a range of insect pollinators and other wildlife. Eventually these wildflower-rich areas will provide important habitat stepping stones along one length of our Yorkshire B-Lines linking the important meadows of the River Derwent with those of the North York Moors. The project includes creating a new area of



floodplain meadow alongside the River Derwent, developing large areas of lowland meadow at The Arboretum Castle Howard, and restoring degraded grasslands in the Howardian Hills. We are receiving help and assistance from a number of partner organisations including North Yorkshire County Council, The Yorkshire Naturalists Union, The Arboretum at Castle Howard (and their volunteer groups) and the Ryedale Naturalists.

Meadow creation site © Paul Evans

We have hit the ground running with this project; contractors having already harvested seed from a nearby wildflower-rich meadow and volunteers busy collecting wildflower seed from other local areas. The grassland creation sites have already undergone a range of different cultivation works to reduce potential weed burdens and to prepare seed beds for wildflower seeding. However, we do not expect to see instantaneous results as we fully recognise that the development of high quality wildflower-rich grasslands is a long-term process and will require ongoing sympathetic management into the future.

Working with others to deliver B-Lines

(Information provided by Mark Hewitt, Restoration Consultant, The Rural Estate Management Service, Tarmac)

The realisation of the B-Lines vision is going to depend on a large number of different individuals and organisations developing individual sites which will then in time grow into a coherent network. In recognition of this fact, we are therefore continuing to approach and work with interested individuals and organisations, and most recently with Tarmac. At Scorton in North Yorkshire, Tarmac operates a sand and gravel quarry; the site sitting within what is often referred to as the Swale corridor and is also mapped as one of the Yorkshire B-Lines. By their nature, sand and gravel quarries tend to be found in concentrated areas within the landscape which presents opportunities for extensive habitat creation and management across and between quarry sites and the creation of habitat connections into the wider landscape. Over the last four years Tarmac has undertaken a programme of phased restoration at Scorton, creating high quality habitat that has included the sowing of 1ha of species rich grassland, the planting of 3km of mixed native hedgerows, the management of 4ha of grassland to create species-rich swards, and the sowing of 20ha of Parkland grassland (with this to be over seeded this autumn with a native flower mix). All of these habitats are linked together in a complex mosaic with the aim being that the whole site is a rich and diverse, contiguous area of high quality habitat just as is being championed by the B-Lines project. As such a very important habitat stepping stone is already well on its way to being created. We will hope to work with Tarmac over the coming years to make the most of the work being done here at Scorton and to look for further opportunities on their wider landholdings.



Wildflower meadow at Scorton © Mark Hewitt

Providing guidance and information

We have recently developed a series of B-Lines Fact Sheets which provide guidance to farmers and landowners who wish to restore and create wildflower-rich grasslands. As there is a plethora of guidance now available on the web, including the great information library on the Flora Locale website (see www.floralocale.org), these B-Lines Fact Sheets aim to summarise existing good practice and provide a number of weblinks to other information sources.

A thank you

Once again Buglife 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. And further thanks to the Waterloo Foundation who have also recently provided funding towards creating a new meadow in Yorkshire.

Can you help?

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.

We will continue to place information on the Buglife website on a regular basis.

Paul Evans
B-Lines and Meadows Officer

The B-Lines Report and Fact Sheets are available at
www.buglife.org.uk/conservation/currentprojects/Habitats+Action/B-Lines/The+B-Lines+Project



Supported by the Co-operative's Plan Bee Campaign