

Countryside Stewardship

Case study: Anthorn Farm

Name: Richard Irving

Region/County: Cumbria

Address: Anthorn Farm, Kirkbride

Farm Size/Type: Mixed sheep and beef

Cropping: permanent grassland

Stocking: Suffolk Cross flock, Beef Sucklers and small but expanding Beltie herd

Land features: Bowness Common SSSI and Upper Solway Flats and Marshes

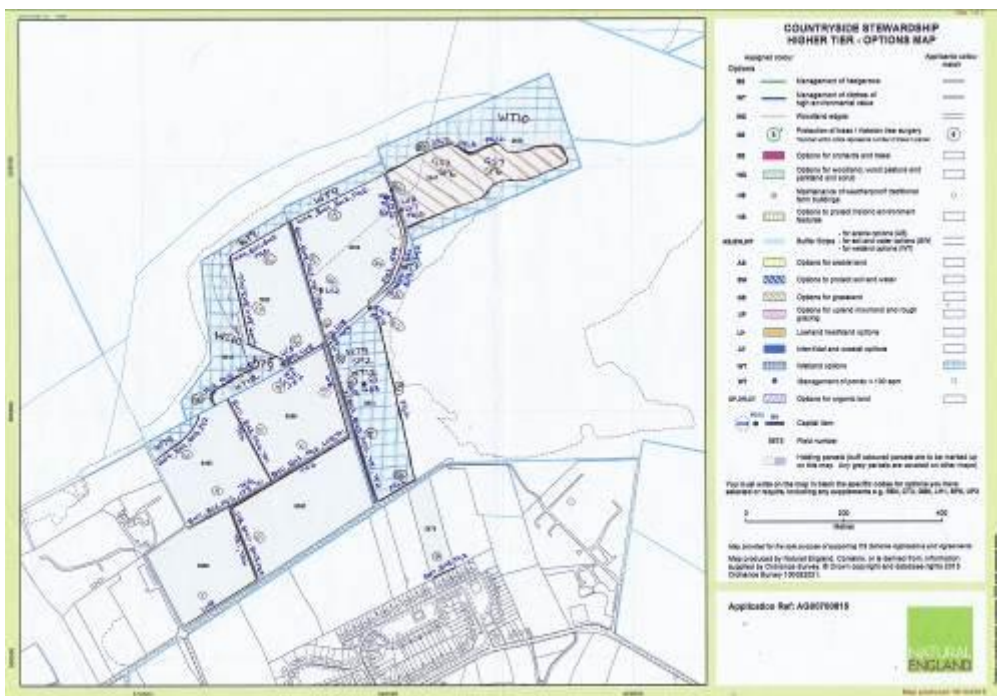
Key objectives:

1. Active drains in peat and past peat cutting have damaged the edges of Bowness Common SSSI (Lowland Raised Bog) where it meets the agricultural land of this holding. Through this scheme, ditches in peat will be blocked, and a capital works plan will fund new ditches and fences on mineral soils on the adjacent agricultural land. (Further hydrological restoration works alongside this will be delivered through Water Framework Directive funding in 2016.)
2. Farmland on peat will be allowed to get wetter under the Fen Creation option. This will re-create wet grassland and wet woodland 'lag' habitats that help support the hydrology and recovery of the bog.
3. There will be a change towards hardy cattle grazing on the new bog edge 'lag' habitats, replacing sheep which would have grazed the more interesting plants in the sward.
4. SSSI and at 'Marina Hill' will be opened up through scrub control, molinia cutting and sensitive cattle grazing under the Restoration of grassland for target features option. This will create more opportunities for wildlife diversity, in particular Cumbria BAP Priority Species Marsh Fritillary, and this management also supports the re-wetting of the adjacent bog land.
5. Cumbria Butterfly Conservation is keen to be involved with opportunities at Marina Hill, as a target site for Marsh Fritillary butterfly. This will provide another potential network site to link with successful re-introductions at Finglandrigg NNR and other local sites on the Solway peninsula
6. On the saltmarsh, grazing and management will maintain and enhance the saltmarsh Upper Solway Flats and Marshes SSSI and the natterjack toad population. This forms an extension to other areas of the saltmarsh already under HLS.
7. New hedgerows will re-create important linear habitat across the farmland.

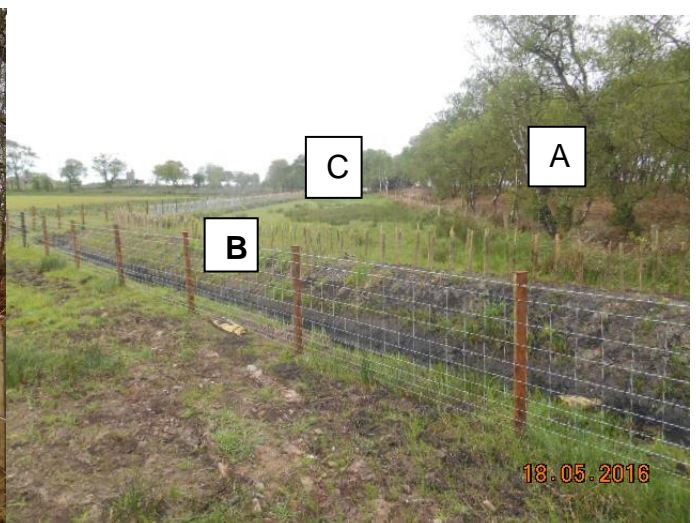
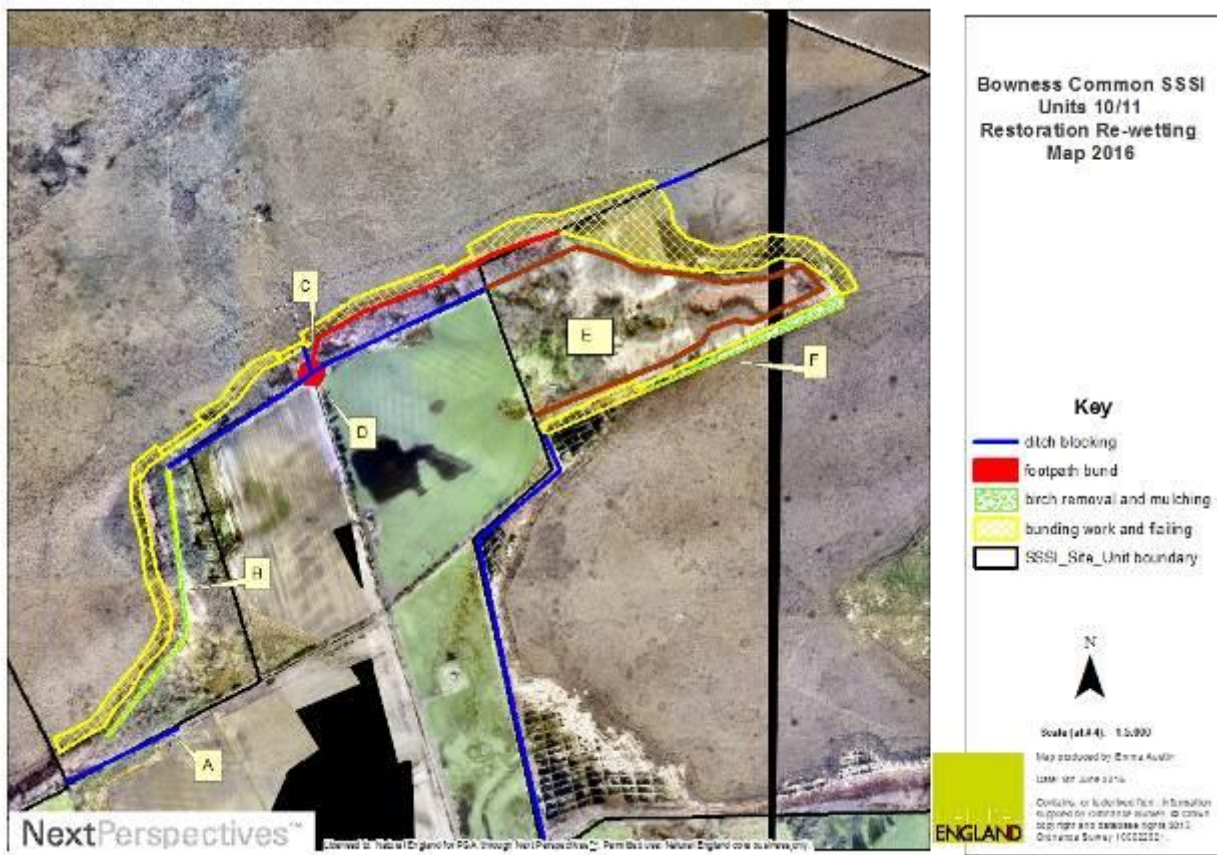
Figure 1. Aerial shot of Lowland Raised Bog and HT land (yellow = SSSI boundary)



Map 1. HT Options and capital works, with fen creation, management of lowland raised bog, restoration of grassland for target features, raised water level and cattle grazing supplements, and ditch creation and fencing and hedging items



Map 2. Hydrological restoration work (being funded through WFD). This includes ditch blocking and peat bunding works



The western end of the holding before and after HT capital works to: block the SSSI perimeter drain in peat (A), hidden within the line of birch); provide a new agricultural drain in mineral soil to protect the farmers grassland which has not come into an option (B) and; create a new area of transitional lag habitat to the bog (C).



An area of fen creation option on previous created through blocking of the SSSI bog grazed, and receive the raised water level (out of shot to the right) and recreate a 'm



The area of Grassland for Target Features to the east of the site, before and after the introduction of HT management, which involves scrub management, new stockproofing against the peatland and a change to extensive cattle grazing. The aim is to reduce molinia and litter dominance in year 1 to create habitat niches. Areas will then be chosen for scabious plug planting, with the aim of attracting marsh fritillary adults (or introducing larvae) thereafter. The site will form part of a successful network of sites on the Solway being targeted by Butterfly Conservation and local wildlife groups for this Cumbria BAP species.

The hydrological restoration work on the SSSI (peat bunding and ditch blocking) is taking place during September and October 2016.

Where can I find out more?

Please follow this [link](#) for the latest information on Countryside Stewardship.