

Landscape Scale Conservation



Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Working to conserve and enhance the landscape

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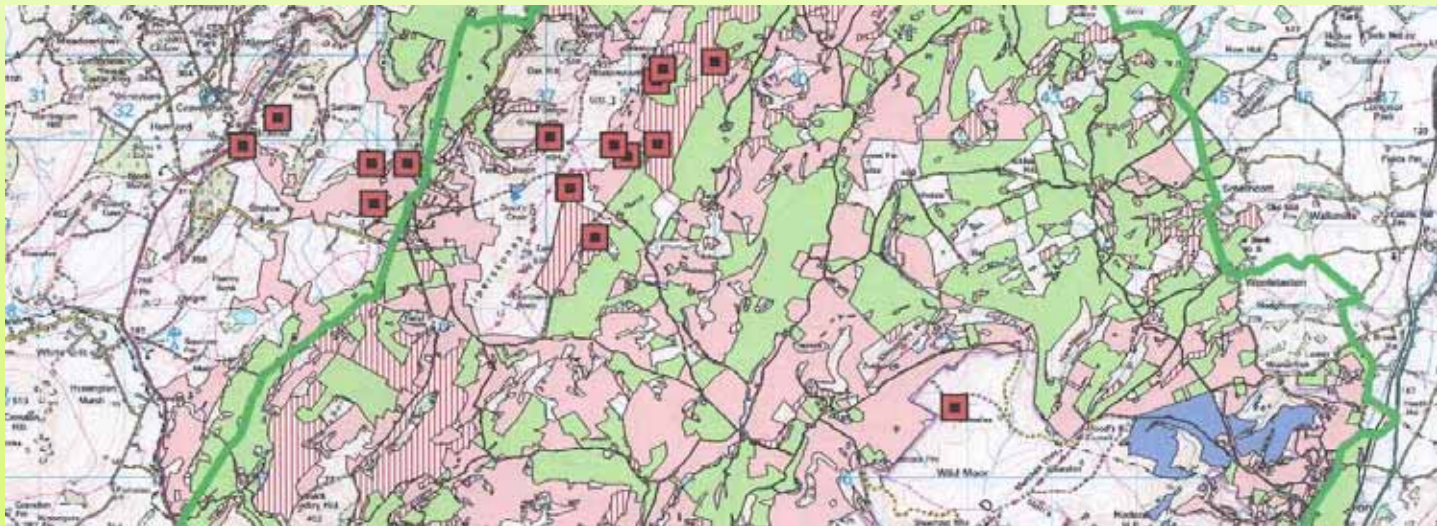


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Landscape scale conservation

What is it?

- Definitions?
- Pursuing conservation by looking at large areas of countryside.
- Mostly focussed on ecological/ biodiversity, but not exclusively.
- To complement protection of particular sites.
- Wildlife benefits from increased patch size and proximity of habitats, and from functionality of the landscape and quality of habitat. Overcome effects of fragmentation of habitats.



History of conservation in UK

- 1949 National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act
- Nature Conservancy (later NCC then EN)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest – SSSIs (and National Nature Reserves)
- Scientific basis - representative examples of habitats, landforms etc.
- Protected sites the cornerstone of nature conservation in UK for decades. Voluntary sector too – NT, Wildlife Trusts.
- Animals move!
- Separation of landscape conservation – National Parks Commission (later CC then CA) – National Parks and AONBs

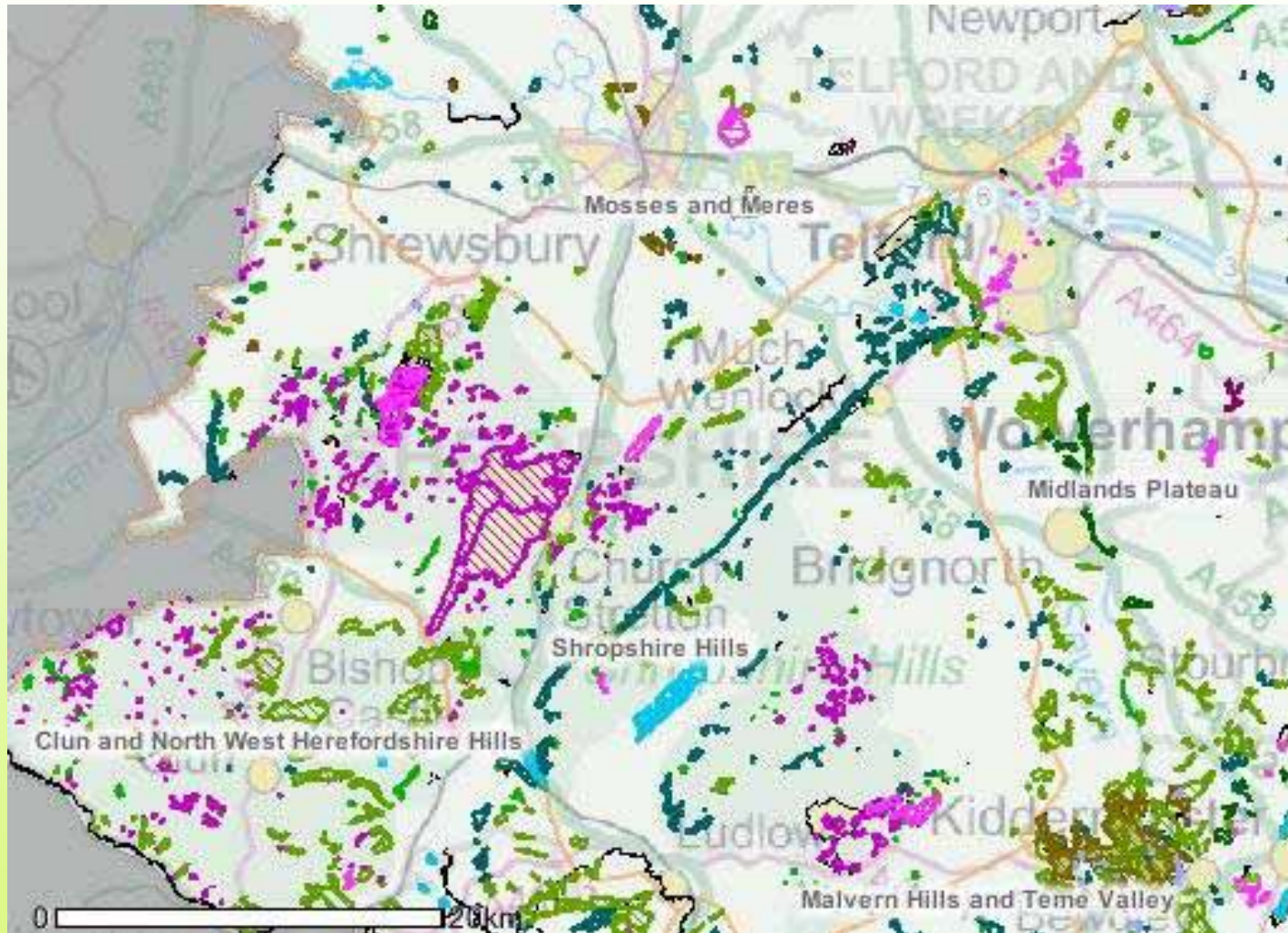
More history

- 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act.
- Strengthened protection of SSSIs but all had to be renotified.
- Strengthened species protection.
- Small programmes for 'wider countryside' (agricultural and forestry policy, community & education).
- Conservation effort increasing, wildlife declining.
- Growing realisation that protected sites alone were not going to stop decline in wildlife. More resources gradually put towards wider countryside.
- EU Birds Directive, Habitats & Species Directive.
- English Nature defined 'Natural Areas'.

Other influences

- Ecology - ecosystem theory. Landscape ecology - Wildlife corridors, core areas and buffer zones. Networks and connectivity of habitats.
- Landscape profession – landscape design and assessment.
- Agri-environment schemes – Stewardship and ESAs. FWAG. ‘Whole Farm’ approach.
- Habitat creation and restoration. Techniques improved, needed policy to guide. ‘Big areas’.
- Water environment – ‘Catchment management plans’.
- Biodiversity. Convention 1994. BAPs, HAPs & SAPs. Targets.
- Grassroots & community conservation, including urban areas. People’s views and involvement.
- Improved data and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

Biodiversity Action Plan habitats



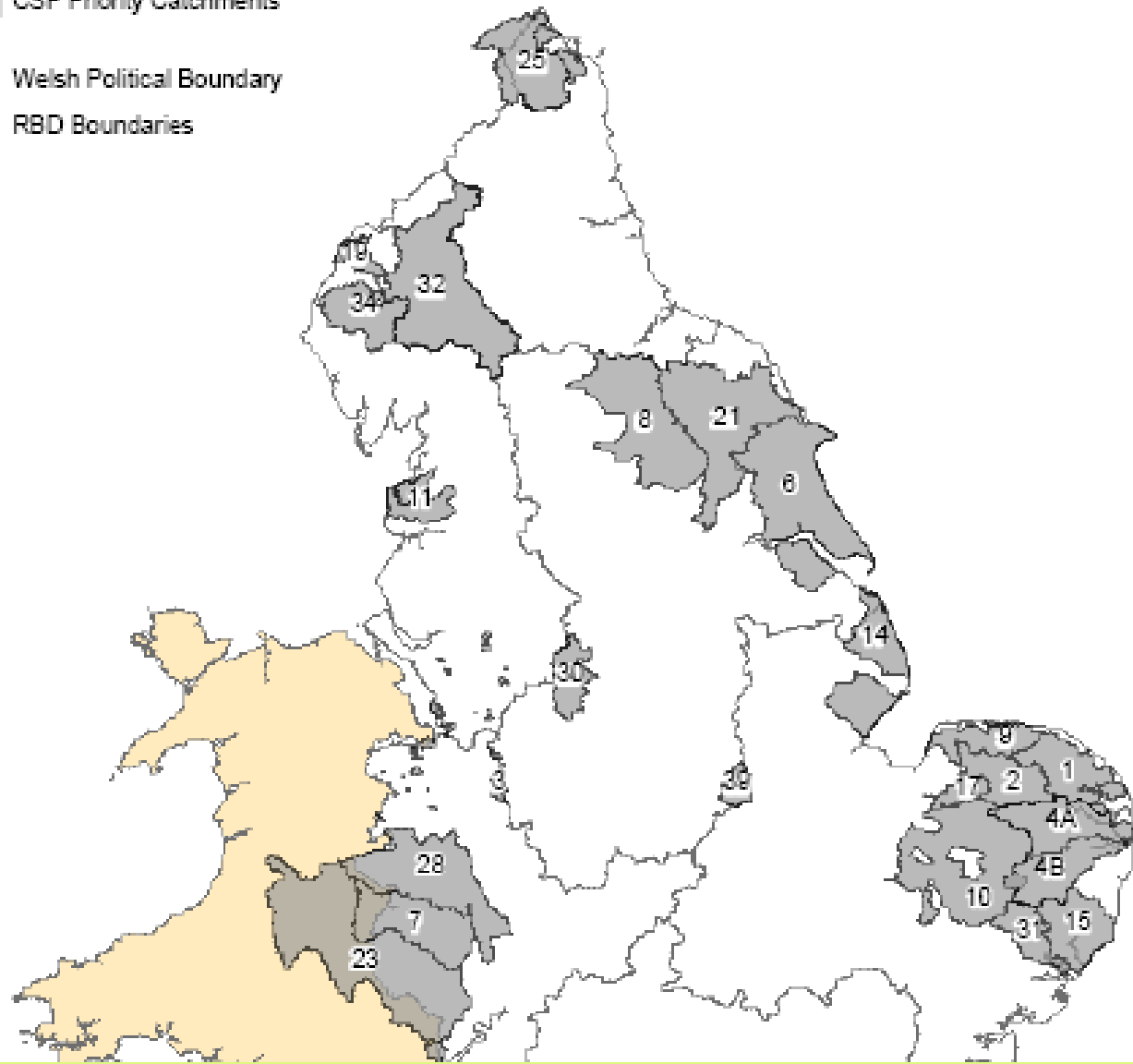
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Recent & current influences

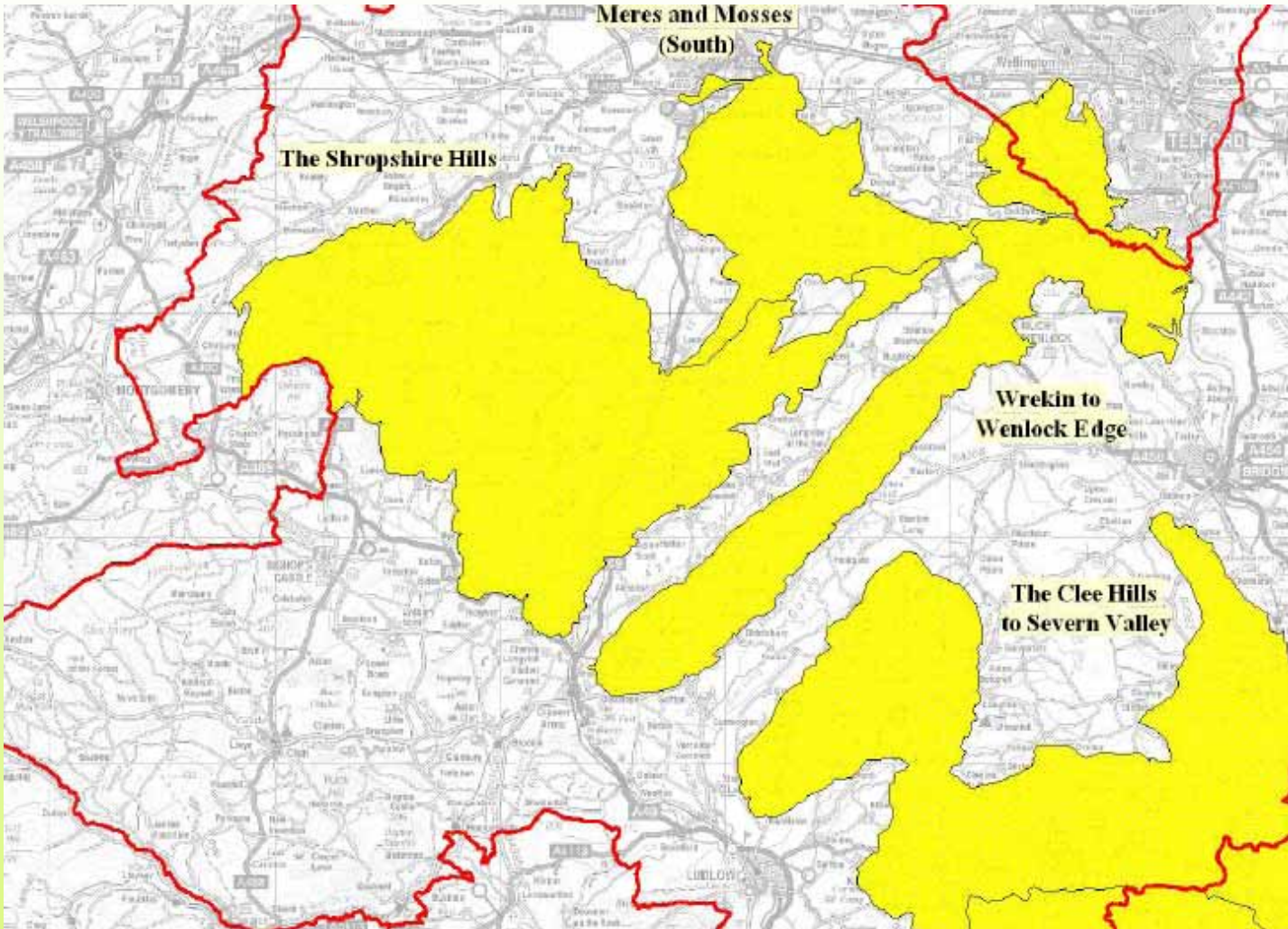
- Joint Character Areas
- Landscape Character Assessment
- Environmental Stewardship – targeting statements
- Climate change – ability of species to adapt
- European Landscape Convention
- Historic environment – sites vs wider landscape, characterisation
- EU Water Framework Directive – diffuse pollution. (Flooding)
- Biodiversity Enhancement Areas and opportunity mapping
- Planning policy – PPS9 Biodiversity & geological conservation.
- Demonstration projects – Lifescapes, community landscape ‘vision’ projects, Land Management Initiatives
- Funding – HLF landscape partnership scheme

England Catchment Sensitive Farming Delivery Initiative (ECSFDI) priority catchments

- CSF Priority Catchments
- Welsh Political Boundary
- RBD Boundaries



Biodiversity Enhancement Areas



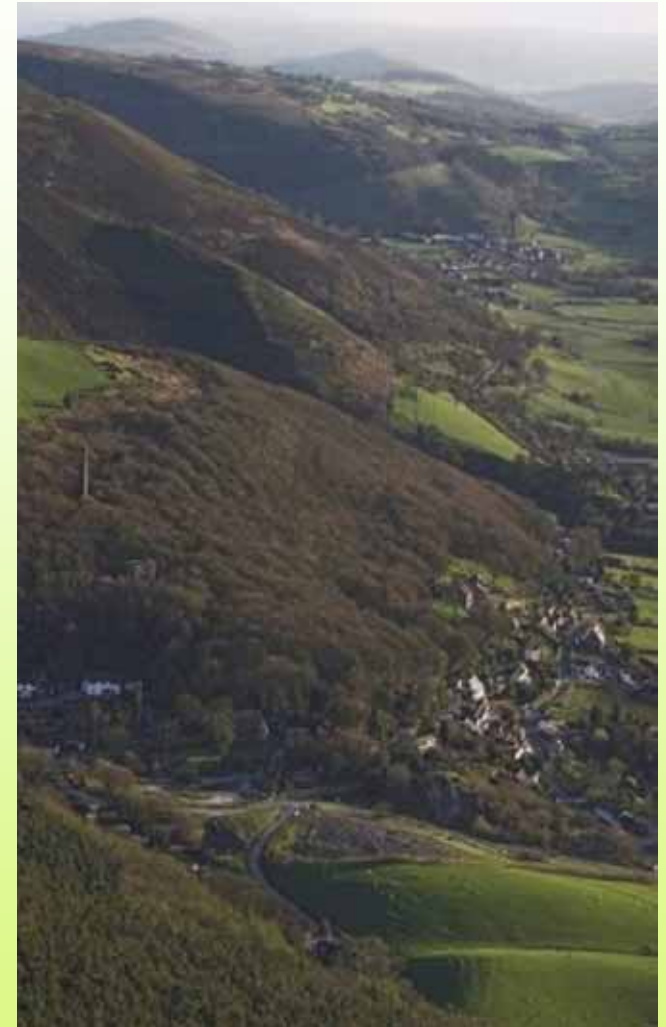
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Biodiversity Enhancement Areas

- Defined in the Regional Spatial Strategy –
- *'Areas for concentrated biodiversity enhancement, where ecological integrity should be reinforced by buffering habitat units from adverse impacts, restoring and re-creating locally characteristic habitats, and expanding and linking isolated habitat units. They are areas that offer some of the best prospects for retaining environments with a rich and resilient biodiversity'.*
- Initiative of West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership
- Profile and priorities – consultation
- Not a designation – target action in area-based approach
- Use existing mechanisms for delivery. Pilot at Cannock.

Landscape scale conservation in the Shropshire Hills

- Back to Purple
- LongStones – Long Mynd & Stiperstones area
- Blue Remembered Hills Project
- River Teme Catchment pilot project
- The Wrekin
- Clun Forest
- Biodiversity Enhancement Areas
- Woodland Sensitivity mapping - county
- The AONB!



The future



Working towards *Natural England*
for people, places and nature

- Natural England – unites landscape and biodiversity functions. Links with English Heritage, Environment Agency & Forestry Commission. *Clarify the role of AONBs, but make it work in other areas too.*
- Defra vision – ecosystem approach
- Rural Development Programme for England 2007-13.
- Sustainable Development – linking environment with social and economic concerns.
- New planning system - spatial planning not just land use.

Key points for success

- Integrating different interests – biodiversity, earth science, historic environment, resource protection. Local and national priorities. Partnership working.
- Role of information.
- What scale? Targeting limited funding.
- What mechanism? Avoiding too many layers.
- Need for engagement – local community and landowners.

