

Ross' notes:

Here are some useful links to the High Weald website to get the ball rolling:

- Sussex Lund - <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/sussex-lund.html>
- Upper Rother & Dudwell Farm Cluster - <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/upper-rother-and-dudwell-farm-cluster.html>
- Hedges - <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/land-management/hedges.html> & <http://www.hedgeline.org.uk/index.php?page=23>
- Rough Grassland - <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/land-management/grassland/2264-benefits-of-managing-rough-grassland.html> this is perfect Barn Owl habitat (apex predator showing all the other prey species are in place)
- Meadows - <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/land-management/grassland.html>
- Deer - <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/deer-management.html>

Himalayan Balsam: This is the current guidance for the management of Himalayan Balsam from the organisation that is leading on the introduction of the Biological Control fungal agent... <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/downloadDocument.cfm?id=1766>

Wildlife Corridors / verges between parishes (Herstmoneux, Dallington, Burwash, Battle, Wadhurst, Stonegate, Ticehurst, Robertsbridge), and Rother Clerks looking at eco policy on verge management. I mentioned a piece of equipment that would cope with our High Weald countryside Verges. Here are some links to look at:

- <https://butterfly-conservation.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/Road%20Verge%20Symposium%20-%20Workshop%20Notes.pdf>
- <https://cdn.buglife.org.uk/2019/10/Roberts-Phillips-Managing-road-verges-for-pollinators-report-040119.pdf>
- Something like this... <https://youtu.be/RPnH8eprTnc> or this <https://youtu.be/aAF5cc19MTI> from people like this... <https://southcavetractors.com/municipal/> and in smaller flatter areas... http://www.grilloagrigarden.co.uk/fd2200_4wd

There are a lot of conversations to had here about what, ultimately is a huge, but very beneficial project that could work across many parishes and town councils if managed properly by the right people. It will be costly and need meticulous planning and control, but once set up would answer many of the wildflower verge management issues currently facing many town and parish councils. The equipment I have indicated above varies in cost from £20,000+ to about £300,000, this means working with a dedicated contractor and the highways agency to develop a clear verge management plan to be implemented over many years and committed investment or contracts for the contractor.

Ponds: There were a couple of suggestions about tadpole ponds and amphibian habitats. In the High Weald there are plenty of ponds already, because of the historic land uses here around clay and iron extraction, so often we just need to look at managing the ponds we currently have or if necessary dig some new ones. We would always try to find space for a new pond rather than desilting an old one. Ponds (like every habitat) have a life cycle and certain species are associated certain stages of that lifecycle, so it's best to let the pond do its own thing until there is no pond left anymore. Here is the link to our ponds pages... <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/land-management/ponds.html> and also the fresh water habitats trust are brilliant ... <https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/>

There was mention of a pond that had been filled in around Burwash somewhere. If I could have a rough location I can look up the historic maps and see what I can find, as there could well be a project for the restoration of it.

Leylandii: These trees can have a massive visual impact on the landscape and are welcomed as a Sussex Lund application for their removal and replacement with native hedging, there would need to be a public benefit for this (i.e. they have to be visible in the landscape).

Wildlife boxes: There were suggestions for Swift, Swallow, Hedgehog, Barn Owl, Dormouse boxes along with Hedgehog tunnels. These all massively help out wildlife and make it easier to survey it too. First, you need to identify the need and location of boxes. Ensure the habitat for the animal or bird is there and if you already have them ensure that the habitat is well managed and has a long term management plan in place so that if your boxes then produce more Barn Owls (for example) then there is the habitat for those fledged owls to hunt in and breed for themselves.

Deer: At the High Weald we are working closely with many landowners to help set up deer management groups that are necessary to effectively control the deer to any level. Because of this we have produced some really useful information for landowners about deer management and how to work with stalkers etc.... <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/deer-management.html>

Hares, grey squirrels, thistles: sorry to lump all these together, but they can all be covered more under good land management. Hares need habitat and no persecution, if they are allowed to breed and given field margins of rough grassland to hide in then slowly they should return (a great book is "the running hare" by John Lewis-Stempel). Grey Squirrels just need to be controlled until Pine Martens return to the High Weald, they can have a huge effect on trees by bark stripping and eating all the hazel nuts of the tree before they have ripened, this has a negative effect on dormice as they cannot eat unripened hazel nuts. Creeping Thistle It rarely propagates itself by seed (the fluffy heads often have no fertile fruits). Instead, its root propagation is very efficient; fragments of a rhizome can remain dormant in the soil for years and then appear when there is a gap in the sward. A small cutting can spread into a 20m patch in just two years. For ways to control... http://www.magnificentmeadows.org.uk/assets/pdfs/Thistle_Control_in_GrasslandLATEST.pdf

River Dudwell – I can follow up on a potential project to survey for Signal Crayfish and maybe some restoration work and natural flood management with the help of the Environment Agency and the Wild Trout Trust <https://www.wildtrout.org/>. I just need Simon to chat to his colleagues and we can go from there.