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# Broadwater Warren

## NEWS UPDATE

Summer 2009



### Environmental Impact Assessment — Public consultation opens

These first two years since we took over Broadwater Warren have been all about pulling together an Environmental Statement (ES). This identifies all the potential impacts that our planned restoration of the woodlands and heathland would have, including all the many benefits, and how we can best mitigate for those that might be negative.

Thank you to those people who contributed to the early rounds of public consultation and helped us spot all the things we need to be aware of, which range from birds to bees, deer to dormice, landscape to harvesting operations, erosion to water table, and archaeology to access.

Our extensive survey work has turned up all sorts of things that have helped us fine-tune our earlier plans.

#### Help for Dormice

One of the key findings was the wider presence of dormice on the reserve than had previously been known. We have amended our plans to allow scrubby corridors for them to move through the reserve.

We also took into account public affection for the area of very mature conifers overlooking the Warren. Although not as rich in wildlife as other habitats, we recognise its visual appeal. It will need some thinning to best look after the mature trees, and we will make the margins less regimented, but we propose retaining it.

We completed the ES a few weeks ago and submitted it to Forestry Commission. Now it is ready for the main stage of public consultation. Over to you to have your say.

#### How to take part

The consultation runs from 5 June to 3 July 2009. Copies can be viewed at:

- Forestry Commission – South East England Region, Kent and East Sussex Area Office, Park Lane, Goudhurst, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 2SL during office hours (9.00-17.00, Mon-Fri)
- RSPB Wealden Office, Unit 10 Sham Farm Business Units, Eridge Green, Tunbridge Wells, TN3 9JA (9.00-17.00, Mon-Fri during office hours but please ring 01892 752 430 to make an appointment).
- Wealden District Council, Pine Grove, Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 1DH during office hours (9.00-17.00, Mon-Fri)
- Tunbridge Wells BC, Tunbridge Wells Gateway, Grosvenor Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 2AB, (9.00-17.00, Mon-Fri; 9.00-18.30 Thurs; 10.00-16.00 Sat).

Alternatively, a copy can be obtained on line at: [www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forestry.nsf/byunique/inf-d-7bmg4k](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forestry.nsf/byunique/inf-d-7bmg4k)

Any comments about the application should be made to the 'Forestry Commission, Regional Director for South East Region, Alice Holt, Wrecclesham, Farnham, Surrey, GU10 4LF' within 28 days of 5 June 2009.

For general enquiries regarding this application, or for a printed copy (subject to a £15 charge for copying and postage), please contact the RSPB Wealden Office.

Photo: Great Tussock Sedges in the woodland mire (Adrian Thomas)

## Unexploded ordnance (UXOs)

An unexploded WWII mortar was found recently at Broadwater Warren. With the reserve's long history as a military training ground, this was not wholly unexpected, and it was dealt with safely in controlled explosions.

There is little risk to the public, but if you find an unusual metal item poking up out of the ground on the reserve, contact the police on 999, and please call the RSPB Wealden Office too.

Caroline and some of the reserve volunteers have been trained in the use of special equipment that will allow them to check the ground before work begins!

## Car park now open

We completed the car park on 15 May and opened it to the public on 16th!

We plan to hold a proper launch event in the autumn once the Environmental Impact Assessment process is complete, but for now visitors at least have a safe place to park off the road. The automatic gates are open 7am-7pm, with exiting always possible over the 'one-way teeth'.

The car park is so new that it inevitably looks a little raw but the banks should green up naturally this summer.

## Surprise discovery



Our volunteer team, which is now about 20 strong, cleared an area of boggy ground last winter towards the northwest of the site. We knew it was good for wetland plants, but it was getting encroached with bushes.

It was great to then find that the work has allowed the re-emergence of Cotton Grass.

It is a rare species in Sussex and hasn't been seen for many years at Broadwater Warren.

Who knows what else is waiting to be rediscovered?!

## Key information at a glance:

- The RSPB acquired Broadwater Warren in January 2007.
- The reserve covers 180 hectares (445 acres) and is a remnant of the ancient Waterdown Forest, one of the four medieval hunting Forests of the High Weald Forest Ridge within the High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- In the 1990s it was earmarked as a landfill site, but this was defeated by local people.
- Our plan is to restore the reserve to its original mosaic of heathland and ancient woodland. It also has a rare woodland mire.
- It is a key project identified by the Weald Forest Ridge Partnership to resurrect the once well-known Forest Ridge name and celebrate the area's local distinctiveness.
- Without the RSPB's intervention, it is extremely likely that Broadwater Warren would have been sold in small plots and public access lost.
- With the RSPB, you get our commitment to protect and manage it in the best interests of wildlife, and to maintain

and enhance access for visitors.

- Lowland heathland is one of the world's rarest habitats — the UK holds 20% of the global total, but an estimated 85% of UK heathland has been destroyed in the last 200 years. It makes heathland restoration one of the national conservation priorities.
- The work will involve clearing some (but not all) of the conifer plantations which were planted as a timber crop.
- The restoration will take about ten years
- We opened a small car park in May 2009, and have established a main nature trail for visitors to follow. There will be some extra path improvements and boardwalks, but there will be no visitor centre or toilets on this 'quiet enjoyment' site.
- The work at Broadwater Warren is taking place as part of the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme, which is enabling people to: reconnect with their local landscape; more easily access and enjoy it; understand its unique natural, cultural and built heritage; take part in caring for it; and leave a legacy for future generations.

The RSPB is very grateful to the many organisations and individuals who are supporting the work in Broadwater Warren, especially

- The National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund
- GrantScape under their 2006 Biodiversity Challenge Fund, the European Leader+ fund (delivered by the WARR Partnership)

- Natural England
- GEAR (Groombridge and Eridge Alternatives for Rubbish)
- Veolia Environmental Trust (through the Landfill Communities Fund)
- the High Weald AONB Sustainable Development Fund
- and of course RSPB members, without whom we would be able to do none of our work.

If you received this by post and would be happy to receive further updates about Broadwater Warren by e-mail, please send your email address to [alan.loweth@rspb.org.uk](mailto:alan.loweth@rspb.org.uk). This will enable us to circulate future updates more efficiently and save on office time and postage. Thank you.

If you would like to find out more about Broadwater Warren, please contact Caroline FitzGerald, RSPB Wealden Office, Unit 10, Sham Farm Business Units, Eridge Green, Tunbridge Wells, TN3 9JA  
01892 752 430 [caroline.fitzgerald@rspb.org.uk](mailto:caroline.fitzgerald@rspb.org.uk)

[www.rspb.org.uk/broadwaterwarren](http://www.rspb.org.uk/broadwaterwarren)