



*Natura 2000
Networking
Programme on behalf
of the European
Commission*



Sefton Council



*Natura 2000 Networking Programme managed in
partnership by project partners EUROPARC
Federation, Eurosites and European Landowners
Organization (ELO)*

Natura 2000 Networking Programme

Wild Places, Open Spaces: Natura 2000 on the North West Coast

Workshop report

Introduction

The Sefton Coast Partnership is a member of Eurosites. It is responsible for the preparation of an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan for the area of the Sefton Coast in north-west England. The core of the site is the Sefton Coast SAC, at over 2000ha the largest dune system in England. Key partners include the local authority (Sefton Council), Natural England, the National Trust, RSPB, the local Wildlife Trust and other land managers. The site is also part of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA.

The Sefton Coast Partnership is one of several similar local coastal partnerships in north-west England. These are supported through the regional work of the North West Coastal Forum, a not for profit, multi-sector partnership which aims to promote and deliver ICZM to secure the long-term sustainability of the region's coast. The Secretariat of the North West Coastal Forum is provided by the North West Regional Assembly and their work is funded by many regional partners, including Sefton Borough Council and Natural England.

The Natura 2000 workshop was held in Southport, on the Sefton Coast, and was a regional event, advertised to a wide range of stakeholders across the region through the North West Coastal Forum.

The format of the event was a single working day to attract key decision makers within the region, people who would not have the time to attend anything more than a day. This worked well with some 60 delegates attending on the day representing the full length and breadth of the region and covering a wide range of experiences from the detail to the strategic overview.

The list of delegates is attached. There was a good representation from the key land managers along the Sefton Coast, from representatives of other management schemes, from the tourism and heritage sector, from interest groups and from policy makers and senior staff of organisations such as RSPB. The RSPB's Regional Director for Northern England chaired the event.

The event was also promoted through and supported by Natural Economy Northwest an initiative established by the Regional Development Agency to help people and organisations to realise the economic value of nature and the economic benefits of investment in the natural environment. Linking this to the opportunities for Natura 2000 was a focus for discussion.

Purpose of the workshop

- To stimulate discussion on the significance of Natura 2000 for the north-west coast and how the region could benefit from positive association
- To present examples of the management of Natura 2000 sites
- To provide an update of the Natura 2000, including funding guidance
- To introduce potential opportunities for networking, participation in Green Days, twinning-lite etc

Results

The presentations gave a wide range of examples of Natura 2000 in practice, from the broad scale to the detail. The Natura 2000 Ambassador, John Houston, presented updates on progress with the network, funding and networking opportunities. This fulfilled the information aspect of the meeting.

Two 'guest' speakers, Egbert Beens of Staatsbosbeheer and Tim Thom of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority gave their experiences of Natura 2000 as a brand and Natura 2000 in an upland farming area. These helped to show how Natura 2000 can be linked to local economy, tourism and marketing.

Ian Henderson of the Arnside and Silverdale AONB discussed the links between Natura 2000 and cultural heritage. The two go very well together in maintaining traditional land management and produce.

The fisheries sector was not so sure that Natura 2000 would be seen as a positive brand by consumers whose first reaction might be that wildlife is protected in designated sites but could see that eco-labels linked to sustainability have value.

There was some discussion about Natura 2000 as a label: what about quality control? Currently there is no guidance on how and when a producer could use 'Natura 2000' to help promote produce. However, there was interest in looking at possible links to already well-established quality marks such as FSC timber.

Conclusions and further action

All the presentations were well received and the event was a considerable success in bringing the audience up-to-date with issues concerning Natura 2000. It is now widely recognised that the coast of north-west England is one of the most important natural areas in Europe considering the chain of estuaries from the Dee to the Solway and current discussions on marine sites.

The North West Coastal Forum is interested in taking the initiative further, perhaps with a larger conference and greater promotion of Natura 2000 in its work, including Interreg projects such as 'Quality Coast'.

The meeting focused on what we term the 'soft' side of Natura 2000 as opposed to the 'hard' side of Article 6, European case law etc. This allowed people to start thinking outside their current, often limited, knowledge of Natura 2000 to think what the network means across Europe, and how it has a real impact on the lives of people, and what more we could do to celebrate and promote our sites as part of the European network.

We hope that the meeting will be remembered as a milestone in our awareness of Natura 2000 and will be the catalyst for further activity in the coming years.

Contact detail of workshop host

Caroline Salthouse
Regional Coastal Project Officer
North West Regional Assembly
Wigan Investment Centre
Waterside Drive
Wigan
WN3 5BA

+44 1942 776941

caroline.salthouse@nwra.gov.uk

Contact details of workshop participants

A list of delegates is attached. For further information please contact Caroline Salthouse

Relevant background papers

The meeting was an opportunity to disseminate a range of information on Natura 2000, the NNP and opportunities for future involvement. The Natura 2000 poster set was displayed as well as a series of relevant Commission publications including Natura 2000 newsletter, LIFE-Nature review booklet, Biogeographical Region booklets, the Natura 2000 finance guide and others.

Natura 2000 Green Days flags were also displayed. The Sefton Coast and Countryside Service will use these in future years as part of the Green Days promotions.

The delegate's pack included;

- NNP leaflet
- Commission publication 'Natura 2000-conservation in partnership'
- Draft text of an article to be published in 'In Practice' the newsletter of the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2500 members)
- Power Point handouts of information presentations, including 'Update on EU funding for Natura 2000' with kind permission of Peter Torkler (WWF Germany)
- Twinning-Lite (note prepared by Roelof Heringa)
- Notes on the speakers