

Workshop 3 – Managing aggregates sites for invertebrates

Discuss opportunities for maximising biodiversity value of sites during active phases, and identify any barriers to implementation.

Opportunities:

- low cost (natural regeneration)
- wildlife can be accommodated within active sites without impacting on normal operations
- good communication is necessary at all stages
- can reuse on-site resources – soils with seed bank, overburden
- Each quarry has a biodiversity fund target the quarry managers for advice / information
- Rotation of extraction compartments creates mosaics of habitat / successional stages (plan succession)
- Some areas of overburden piles may be there for a long time – plan for this
- DIGGERS ARE GOOD!
- Machinery areas could be valuable too- as very ephemeral
- ID key parts (habitat) in extraction envelope and phase extraction so that they remain in place and /or are managed appropriately.
- Ephemeral habitats such as sand faces are good and can be destroyed and renewed as phasing of seasonal works.
- Build protocols which explicitly recognise the dynamic nature of vegetation and that the site may need to be re-managed in the future.

Barriers:

- industry fears of protected species moving in and impacted operations
- industry fears of forming relationships with conservation organisations.
- Unequal status in public's and planners minds of invertebrates with other groups (e.g bats, badgers)
- Client expectations

Where are the opportunities for achieving multiple objectives/end uses on site together with biodiversity post-extraction?

Education:

- quarries can provide opportunities for environmental education
- can use educational benefits to justify management for biodiversity

Potentially damaging activities:

- 'sacrificial' areas of sites identified and used to direct activities away from sensitive wildlife, e.g. public access and nesting birds.
- Controlled, periodic disturbance from certain activities can be employed as a management tool (e.g. motorbikes)

Geo-diversity:

- many common goals for biodiversity and geodiversity – 'win-win situation', e.g. maintenance of geological exposures can benefit bare ground invertebrates.

Any examples?

- a potential golf course being developed in an ex-sand pit, opportunities for biodiversity within the design, the golf course will provide a source of funding for ongoing management of the site.
- Within gravel pits developed for fishing – wildlife ponds can be created within the complex of the site and kept fish free (an example of using ‘sacrificial areas’).

How can the conservation sector best engage with the aggregates industry?

- Communication is key, at all levels in the company.
- Build contacts and relationships at a site level, e.g. with site managers.
- There is need for better integration for the industry with BAP, e.g. through BAP reporting, incorporating corporate BAPs with county/national BAPs, making the links between work on sites and BAP delivery.
- Communication is a two way process!
- Try to get advice on good practice adopted as an industry standard (modified at local level) – some parts of industry do this already as company practice (e.g. Hansons)
- During consultation phase promote benefits of biodiversity to the community and the developer
- Try to engage in dialogue before any restoration plan is completed or try to modify the plan before it is implemented.