

The B-Lines Initiative

September 2011 (Update no. 1)

Welcome to the first of a series of updates on the B-Lines initiative.

Since the launch of B-Lines on the 15th May at Buglife's 'Get Britain Buzzing Campaign' event at the Royal Academy, we have been busy gathering information on, and trialling aspects of the B-Lines concept and wanted to keep you all informed of progress.



The first three months of B-Lines have been primarily focussed on the development of the Yorkshire pilot project, which will test the B-Lines vision in a real life geographical location. A Project Implementation Group of key organisations, including the NFU, FWAG, Natural England, North Yorkshire County Council, the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and the West Yorkshire Biodiversity Group was convened in late May to help guide the development of the project. These organisations are continuing to provide invaluable technical assistance to the project. We have also received support from a number of other Yorkshire-based bodies including the CLA, National Parks and the Universities of York and Leeds.

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Defining the B-Lines

A key output of the pilot project is the identification and mapping of potential B-Lines across Yorkshire. With the kind assistance of Natural England, and data provision from a range of other partners, we have now completed the first phase of this work and developed a Yorkshire-wide map. To produce this map we have used a number of data sets to identify key wildlife sites and also gathered information on existing initiatives (for example green infrastructure work, Living Landscapes etc) which could work alongside B-Lines to deliver wildflower-rich habitat creation and pollinator conservation in a more integrated manner. We are currently consulting more widely on the map and will be looking to further refine it using local datasets and stakeholder/local community engagement.

Making B-Lines

We have been actively working with farming and landowning groups/individuals to identify land falling within the potential B-Lines where there may be opportunities to

work with us to create/restore wildflower-rich grasslands. Over the last few months we have had several interested individuals come forward who are keen on developing grasslands on their land and are now in the process of working up plans on three separate sites. We are currently creating/restoring c. 10 hectares of chalk grassland on a farm in the Yorkshire Wolds, which involves both expanding, and starting to link several small fragments of existing grassland. This is a very exciting project which gives us the opportunity to create a substantial wildflower-rich grassland and pollinator resource. Over the coming months we will continue to promote the B-Lines initiative across Yorkshire and identify future habitat creation/restoration areas.



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Future B-Lines – developing the concept

Over the first three months of B-Lines we have made contact with a wide range of national organisations from across the biodiversity, farming, development planning and academic sectors, and collated views on a number of important issues. We very much hope to continue to work with interested organisations to guide the development of the B-Lines concept into the future, and in order to take forward the debate/discussion we are planning to hold several workshops. The aim of these events will be to allow organisations to impart their knowledge and expertise into the work and to try and answer some key questions/issues which underpin the future implementation and success of B-Lines.

We are currently considering dates in the week beginning 31st October with the workshops being held in either York or Peterborough. The likely themes of the individual workshops are:

- **Making landscapes work for pollinators – now and into the future – the role of B-Lines** - *What do we actually need to make our countryside function ecologically for our insect pollinators?*
- **Creating B-Lines - What and how?** - *What should B-Lines look like and how should they be delivered?*

I will be in contact with you shortly with a more formal invite, or feel free to contact me direct if you are interested in attending.

Future Updates

To enable us to update people on a regular basis and in the easiest fashion, we will aim to provide short update notes on a six weekly basis. However if you would prefer a different form of contact please do not hesitate to contact me.

Information will also be placed on the Buglife website on a regular basis – www.buglife.org.uk/conservation/currentprojects/Habitats+Action/B-Lines

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