



'Reversing the trend' - a plan of action for meadows

The challenges facing our meadows and other precious species rich grasslands are such that it requires the combined effort of many to work together to effect change. Plantlife, The Wildlife Trusts and the Rare Breeds Survival Trust are willing to play a full part but we also call on others, in government, academia, education, food and farming businesses, and individuals and communities, to help add value and support our endeavours. Together we will be able to achieve more and ensure our efforts are sustained in the future.

Our vision: A glorious wild flower meadow in every parish.

To support our vision Plantlife, The Wildlife Trusts and the Rare Breeds Survival Trust will:

1. Enhance our existing species rich meadows and help restore degraded meadows by direct action and by promoting best practice for others.
2. Create new meadows to build up a stronger network of wildlife rich grasslands sites and to capture the benefits they offer such as a habitat for pollinators.
3. Use our meadow nature reserves as show cases for best practice and to create costed management plans to inform and inspire others on grassland conservation.
4. Work with others, including government and statutory bodies, to develop an inventory of our most important species rich grasslands and to provide data to help target protection and resources.
5. Ensure a central hub of information, resources and advice is available to enable others to conserve and create species rich meadows and grasslands.
6. Support local "Grazing Animal Projects" to enable support effective grassland management, using native or rare breed stock where appropriate.
7. Develop educational resources and hold a national 'meadows day' to provide opportunities for people to enjoy and learn about meadows.
8. Capture people's stories and social history of meadows and celebrate their place in our shared heritage.
9. Establish a national award to celebrate the importance of our grasslands and recognise those who work hard to conserve them.
10. Review progress against our ambition in 2016 and hold a meadows seminar to identify with others what to do next.

We call on Government to play their part by:

1. Setting out their programme to ensure our best meadows and grasslands are **statutorily protected**.
2. Working with us to **improve knowledge** of the extent and condition of grasslands in a national inventory and act on its findings in policy and resourcing decisions.
3. Ensuring existing mechanisms protect important sites and promote achievement of **biodiversity targets** for the threatened plants and other species that rely on meadow management.
4. Building on our efforts by targeting these sites for **agri-environment support and develop** and support other **innovative funding mechanisms** to support long term management.
5. Give **leadership to everybody** by recognising the value of meadows in achieving ecosystems services, such as a place for pollinators, and help us promote & celebrate grasslands as a key feature of the countryside and part of our national life.

We invite others to join us in:

- celebrating our grassland heritage
- participate in identifying their important grasslands
- helping build our collective skills to conserve important grasslands

In particular we invite those with the right skills, remits and resources to take forward work to:

1. Educate a new generation of farmers and land managers to manage meadows and share knowledge through mentoring and training.
2. Establish markets for a wide range of meadow produce and support businesses which use these.
3. Provide targeted advice and support on the ground to farmers, communities or others who own and manage meadows.
4. Improve our knowledge of the costs and benefits of meadows and develop the business case for good grassland management as part of a thriving rural economy.
5. Support communities and local groups to develop their own grassland initiatives and managed their own meadows.

This plan of action follows from a conference held in July 2014. For further information and details of the outputs from the 'Reversing the trend' conference please see http://www.plantlife.org.uk/uploads/documents/REVERSING_THE_TREND_Master_Document.pdf

A number of the actions being taken forward by the three charities are part of our Coronation Meadows project or the HLF funded "Save our Magnificent Meadows" programme. For more information please visit www.magnificentmeadows.org.uk.