
7 Recommendations for geodiversity action plan

Objective 1 Raising awareness of the area's geodiversity

1. Hold a series of presentations and workshops with Limestones Landscapes stakeholders, local businesses, community groups etc. to promote the contents of the geodiversity audit and action plan
2. Establish a group of operators of working quarries and encourage them to consider controlled access to and protection of exposed geological features and to continue making available stockpiles of interesting waste material
3. Prepare a master interpretive plan and undertake a comprehensive analysis of existing interpretation associated with sites and features of geodiversity interest.

Objective 2 Conserving/restoring

1. Undertake consultations to agree priority sites for enhancement and development
2. Clearing and stabilising faces and improving access at up to 10 sites to conserve and enable access to good quality geological sections that represent the full spectrum of geodiversity in the area. A number of these are SSSIs and money might be available for match funding under the Natural England Face Lift programme. To include: Middridge Quarry (Marl Slate Formation — world famous fossil locality); Bishop Middleham/Trimdon Grange quarries (Raisby Formation); Tunstall Hills (Reef); Ford Quarry (Reef); Fulwell Hills Quarry (to include sensory rock trail — see below)
3. Prepare a clear collecting policy and seek to identify a site (or sites) suitable for collecting by educational and recreational groups drawing on best practice.

Objective 3 Access and learning

1. Create a sensory rock trail with interpretation for visually impaired — the rocks of the area have possibly the widest textural variation of any in Britain and variations can be easily distinguished by touch. Initially within single quarry (e.g. Fulwell Quarry), and consider extending to additional locations.
2. Open days at active quarries — incorporate opportunity to search for fossil fish from stockpiled Marl Slate.
3. Investigate further links with quarry companies — e.g. establishing viewing area with interpretation could also feature biodiversity. Possible match funding from Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund.
4. Prepare ipod trails, web-based materials to encourage visitors. Include magnificent fossil material from the area some of which is held in local museums. (Preparation of ipod trail, other media materials, could be undertaken by local school, as a community event, in conjunction with Durham University, BGS etc.)

Objective 4 Education

1. Prepare educational and explanatory materials at variety of levels — school, university, U3A.-Lifelong Learning. Could involve RIGS education officer nationally and Tees RIGS group
2. Coastal trail/Quarry trail leaflets linked to GPS/mp3 etc.
3. Series of talks from 'experts' comparing the past to what we can see in other parts of the world today, e.g. Sand dunes in UAE. Sabkhas in the Arabian Gulf. Investigate twinning with other areas/countries.

(Plate 25) Modern desert dunes in the United Arab Emirates.

Objective 5 Increasing community participation

1. Investigate and celebrate important local people associated with geodiversity in its widest sense
2. Involvement of community group in cleaning up and explaining a site e.g. reef Limestone at Tunstall Hills.

3. Event to celebrate the unusual rocks of the area — opportunities for art and photography — could coincide with the launch of the sensory trail
4. Quarry open days
5. Establish local children's geology club on the lines of North Pennines 'Rock Detectives' or Geologists' Association 'Rockwatch'.
6. Link in with events at Sunderland (and other) museums

Objective 6 Training and skills

1. Provide support and training for heritage bodies and the existing network and new volunteers e.g. National trust staff and volunteers, coastal rangers in understanding and explaining the world class geodiversity of the area. Durham wildlife Trust.
2. Students on science outreach projects from Durham University (Dr Paula Martin, the programme co-coordinator is a member of the North-east geodiversity Forum) could work with schools.

Objective 7 Seek additional funding

1. Investigate Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF)
2. Investigate Natural England 'Face-Lift' programme for SSSIs

References



(Plate 25) Modern desert dunes in the United Arab Emirates.