

National Forest Management Grant 2024/2025

Standard Options Guidance

This guidance provides applicants with the information needed to select the correct options when applying to the Management Grant. It details how much will be paid for each option, where it can and cannot be used, how the option will benefit the local environment and any requirements that are applied when this option is chosen as part of a grant scheme.

Options have been split into three sections: [woodland operations](#) that promote good stewardship of woodlands; options that are specifically intended to restore and create [habitats](#); and options that are intended to benefit populations of [priority species](#).

Section 1

Woodland Options

W1 - Survey / Plan Production

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% of £600.00 per plan.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the creation of a small woodland management plan, deer management plan, or ecological surveys.

For woodland management plans this item can only be used for small woodland management plans. A small woodland management plan is typically for sites up to 10 hectares in size. For sites over 10 hectares funding can be available through Countryside Stewardship.

How will the option benefit the woodland?

Promote further planning/surveying of sensitive sites and highlight threats and opportunities.

Requirements

Results must be supplied and approved before the grant is claimed.

W2 - Timber Extraction

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% of £370.00 per hectare of timber extracted.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the extraction of felled timber from ride edges to roadside.

This item **can only be used** for the extraction of timber felled using **H1** (Ride Edge Thinning) option.

How will the option benefit the woodland?

Allow for easier woodland access and supply the woodland economy with usually unviable timber.

Requirements

Photo evidence of timber volume extracted to be supplied with claim.

W3 - Pruning

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% of £335.00 per hectare of pruning.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the formative and high pruning of trees which are between 5 and 30 years old.

This item cannot be used for tree surgery of mature trees.

How will the option benefit the woodland?

Promote resilient trees and allow easier public access into the woodland and other beneficial options.

Requirements

Photographic evidence before and after to be supplied with claim.

W4 - Fence Removal

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% of £2.20 per linear meter of fence removed.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the removal of any form of fencing that restricts access into woodland.

How will the option benefit the woodland?

Removes barriers to wildlife movement around woodland sites and allows access for public and other woodland operations.

Requirements

Photographic evidence before and after to be supplied with claim.

All material must be removed from site and disposed of appropriately.

W5 - Tree Guard Removal

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 100% of £335.00 per hectare of tree guards removed.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This can be used for the removal of tree guards from trees not threatened by browsing damage.

How will the option benefit the woodland?

Removes plastic from the natural environment.

Requirements

Photographic evidence before and after to be supplied with claim.

Guards are to be removed from the site and recycled if possible (see option W6).

W6 - Tree Guard Recycling

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 100% of £310.00 per hectare of tree guard clearance.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can only be used for the recycling of Polypropylene tree guards removed from woodland under the W5 – tree guard removal option. Guards should be collected and sent for recycling with a specialist agricultural recycler.

This option is only to be used where a minimum of 1,100 guards per hectare are to be removed.

How will the option benefit the woodland?

Promote the responsible disposal of tree guards which have been removed from woodland.

Requirements

Invoices should be supplied when the grant is claimed

W7 - Mensuration Plot

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% of £21.00 per mensuration plot.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the completion of mensuration plots which calculate basal area, top height, and estimated compartment volume.

How will the option benefit the woodland?

Improve statistical knowledge of woodland area to allow for well-timed thinning interventions which support resilient woodland habitats.

Requirements

Mensuration results must be supplied when the grant is claimed.

W8 - Squirrel Spring Traps

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% of £10.00 per trap.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the purchase of approved lethal spring traps which are suitable for dispatching squirrels.

How will the option benefit the woodland?

Reduce squirrel populations to protect from bark stripping and predation of woodland birds.

Requirements

Cull records must be supplied when the grant is claimed.

W9 - Squirrel Live Cage Trap

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% of £35.00 per trap.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the purchase of approved live cage traps suitable for trapping squirrels.

How will the option benefit the woodland?

Reduce squirrel populations to protect from bark stripping and predation of woodland birds.

Requirements

Cull records must be supplied when the grant is claimed.

W10 - Squirrel Kania/WCS Tube Trap

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% of £75.00 per trap.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the purchase of Kania/WCS Tube spring traps.

How will the option benefit the woodland?

Reduce squirrel populations to protect from bark stripping and predation of woodland birds.

Requirements

Cull records must be supplied when the grant is claimed.

W11 - Squirrel Goodnature A18 Trap

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% of £170.00 per trap.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the purchase of Goodnature A18 traps.

How will the option benefit the woodland?

Reduce squirrel populations to protect from bark stripping and predation of woodland birds.

Requirements

Cull records must be supplied when the grant is claimed.

W12 - Squirrel Bait Stations

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% of £35.00 per bait station.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used to supply/build and installation of squirrel bait stations within woodland habitats.

How will the option benefit the woodland?

Reduce squirrel populations through air rifle shooting to protect from bark stripping and predation of woodland birds.

Requirements

Photographic evidence of installed bait stations to be supplied with claim.

Bait stations must be proofed to deter gnawing from squirrels and have a reinforced target area.

W13 - National Forest Squirrel Activity and Impact Assessment – Base Payment

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% of £145 per site.

This item is a base rate payment for completing the NF Squirrel Activity and Impact Assessment. The hectare option, to appropriately fund the assessment between differing site sizes can be found below.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the surveying of squirrel damage across a site. Using the methodology to gain a greater understanding of the squirrel damage occurring and the appropriate next steps in control and monitoring. This option **can be used with or without option W15 Squirrel Control**.

How will the option benefit the woodland?

Enable future surveys and control methods to have a baseline. Helps to build a National Forest dataset on squirrel damage in the Forest and influence future control approaches.

Requirements

Submission of the survey results with claim.

W14 - National Forest Squirrel Activity and Impact Assessment – Hectare Payment

The grant will fund up to 60% of £25 per hectare.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the surveying of squirrel damage across a site.

To be used alongside W13. This option pays for each hectare of the National Forest Squirrel Activity and Impact Assessment.

In 2023/24 this payment had been included within the squirrel control grant option and is now being separated for those sites completing a survey but not applying for control funding at this time.

W15 - Squirrel Control

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% of £145.00 per hectare.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the time taken to set, monitor and maintain traps/bait stations per hectare in the woodland. Traps must be set for a reasonable amount of time and **control must be carried out leading up to or during the period** when damage to trees normally occurs (May–September).

Management works should be carried out by competent and trained individuals, with insurance being the responsibility between site owner and controller.

How will the option benefit the woodland?

Reduce squirrel populations to protect from bark stripping.

Requirements

This option can **only** be used alongside the **W13/4** Squirrel Activity and Impact Assessment option.

Map detailing the proposed trap locations.

Control method should be stated on application.

Cull **and effort** records must be supplied when the grant is claimed.

W16 - Deer Management

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% of £90.00 per ha of deer control.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the control of deer, in line with the conditions below.

Evidence should be available for an application, utilising either a deer management plan, impact assessment or exclusion plot evidence. See W1 or W17 for further funding information.

Each application will be assessed, and only fully compliant submissions will be awarded funding, further conditions and evidence might be added once an initial application is submitted. Discussions at application or pre application stage with NFC staff are highly recommended.

Funding can be awarded on an annual basis, with future funding dependent on further applications.

If controlling deer species other than muntjac, **you must abide by control seasons.**

Management works should be carried out by competent and trained individuals, with appropriate insurance levels being the responsibility of site owner and controller.

How will the option benefit the woodland?

Promote sustainable deer populations, aiming to reduce the adverse impacts of high deer pressure levels and browsing or the prevention of adverse impacts arising. Enabling natural regeneration to promote diversity of species and structures within woodland areas.

Requirements

Deer management plan in place or applied for as part of the application

Map detailing the proposed control land holding area.

Cull **and effort** records must be supplied when the grant is claimed.

Initial assessment of impact and/or activity assessment. Assessments will be required to the standard FC template, as part of this funding option.

W17 - Deer High Seat

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% per deer high seat option.

- a) Full High Seat £400.00
- b) Lean to High Seat £265.00
- c) Portable Aluminium High Seat £280.00

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the purchase of deer high seats. To support deer control.

How will the option benefit the woodland?

Promote further planning/surveying of sensitive sites and highlight threats and opportunities.

Requirements

Map detailing the proposed seat locations to be supplied with application.

Cull records can be supplied when the grant is claimed.

W18 - Deer Exclusion Plot

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% of £212.00 per plot.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the supply and installation of Deer Exclusion Plots within a woodland. This item can be used as a pre cursor to or alongside deer control (W15), to establish the levels of damage currently being inflicted upon the woodland.

How will the option benefit the woodland?

Provide the woodland owner and the NFC a reference point to understand deer pressure.

Requirements

Photographic evidence of installed plot to be supplied with claim.

W19 - Bird Box

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% of £11.95 per bird box.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the supply and installation of bird boxes within woodland habitats.

How will the option enhance biodiversity?

Provide nesting habitats for birds which would otherwise be absent due to the lack of holes and crevices in young woodland. Variation of box and hole size to encourage different bird species.

Requirements

Photographic evidence of installed boxes.

Squirrel protection around the opening to prevent gnawing or a statement on squirrel impact risk, to prevent boxes becoming habitat for grey squirrels.

Box to be designed specifically for birds and sited in a suitable location for the species designed for.

W20 - Bat Box

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% of £11.95 per bat box.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the supply and installation of bat boxes within woodland habitats.

How will the option enhance biodiversity?

Provide roosting habitats for birds and bats which would otherwise be absent due to the lack of holes and crevices in young woodland.

Requirements

Photographic evidence of installed boxes.

Box to be designed specifically for bats and sited in a suitable location for the species designed for.

W21 - Owl Box

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% of £65.00 per owl box.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the supply and installation of owl boxes within woodland habitats.

How will the option enhance biodiversity?

Provide nesting habitats for owls which would otherwise be absent due to the lack of holes and crevices in young woodland.

Requirements

Photographic evidence of installed boxes.

Box to be specifically designed for owl species and sited in a suitable location for the species.

W22 - Mammal Box

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to 60% of £28.50 per mammal box.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the supply and installation of mammal boxes within woodland habitats.

How will the option enhance biodiversity?

Provide nesting habitats for small mammals which would otherwise be absent due to the lack of habitat in young woodland.

Requirements

Photographic evidence of installed boxes.

Site and application to consider the risk of grey squirrels. It's likely that most sites will have a risk and should implement measures to reduce squirrel impact e.g., squirrel proof opening, squirrel control

Box to be specifically designed for a target species and suitably located.

W23 - Tree Surgery Minor - Less than 20 cm limb diameter

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund 60% of £120 per tree.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for tree surgery on mature fully grown trees where improvements are made for their safety or health.

How will the option benefit trees?

Maintain and enhance the character of the landscape by managing and/or restoring mature trees, to prolong their lives, and maintain their wildlife and/or historic value.

Requirements

Preferably complete between 1st September and 1st March, or complete pre work nesting survey.

W24 - Tree Surgery Major - Greater than 20 cm limb diameter

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund 60% of £245 per tree.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for tree surgery on mature fully grown trees where improvements are made for their safety or health.

How will the option benefit trees?

Maintain and enhance the character of the landscape by managing and/or restoring mature trees, to prolong their lives, and maintain their wildlife and/or historic value.

Requirements

Preferably complete between 1st September and 1st March, or complete pre work nesting survey.

W25 – Maintenance of Wood Pasture

How much will be paid

The grant will fund 60% of £350 per hectare

Where to use this option

It is available for the maintenance of existing lowland wood pasture and parkland. Recreational parkland is only eligible where it forms part of the farmed environment. Option based off Countryside Stewardship WD4.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

It will maintain lowland wood pasture and parkland on sites that support veteran trees or parkland features. Maintaining for either predominantly wood pasture, parkland, or a combination of both:

- undisturbed standing and fallen deadwood that will provide habitats for invertebrates
- additional semi-mature or mature trees that will provide continuity of the tree population
- newly planted trees, spaced evenly with open crowns or patches of regeneration with space to allow open-grown crowns to develop
- open-grown scrub covering 10% to 20% of the wood pasture
- flowering trees and scrub such as hawthorn, crab apple and wild pear to provide food and nectar sources for invertebrates
- well managed unimproved or semi-improved grassland or heathland, grazed by traditional breed cattle in wood-pasture and deer and traditional breed cattle in parkland
- well-maintained historic and archaeological features
- well-maintained historic designed landscape planting and features

Requirements

You must:

- graze or cut to maintain the area of closely grazed turf interspersed with taller tussocks
- keep all mature and veteran standing trees and all standing and fallen deadwood, if it is consistent with the National Tree Safety Group Document Common sense risk management of trees: landowner summary - leave fallen dead wood uncut and in situ
- protect existing trees to prevent damage from livestock and wild animals - manage tree guards to prevent any damage to growing trees
- protect parkland features, such as fencing, historical structures, lakes, and ponds
- plant additional trees or encourage regeneration where required
- carry out maintenance works and minor repairs on structural historic or archaeological features on a 'like for like' basis to retain the character of the feature in its local setting

It is likely you will not be allowed to:

- use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot tree or weed wipe for the control of injurious weeds, invasive non-natives, nettles, rushes, or bracken or apply any fertilisers or manures
- use supplementary feeding; harrow or roll; allow damage to existing trees or vegetation or remove deadwood from the site

Section 2

Habitat Restoration and Creation Options [2020 – 2025]

The following options are intended to enhance biodiversity and their funding is supported by Severn Trent



H1 - Ride Edge Thinning

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to £1.75 per linear meter of ride edge.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for thinning ride edges with variable depths of 2-10m.

Where shrubs are present, coppicing (H3) may be used with thinning ride edge measurements starting at the tree line.

This item can also fund the thinning of woodland compartment edges as well as formal rides, and the thinning of ash (infected with *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) where planting lines are causing competition between other species.

How will the option enhance biodiversity?

Increase light levels reaching the woodland floor to develop ground flora and shrub species.

Increased tree health resilience.

Requirements

Thinning percentages must be specified in application.

Photographic evidence before and after thinning to be supplied with claim.

H2 - Scallop Creation

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to £635.00 per hectare of scallop created.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the creation of scallops on ride edges which are no more than 6 m in depth and 10 m in length, these should be focused on the south-facing edges of rides.

How will the option enhance biodiversity?

Create niche habitats on ride edges with shrubs and tall grass which will be used by invertebrates, ground-nesting birds and small mammals.

Requirements

Photographic evidence before and after to be supplied with claim.

Detailed maps showing proposed sizes and locations must be supplied in the application.

H3 - Coppicing

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to £1,385.00 per hectare of coppicing.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for coppicing on ride edges (6 m depth) to encourage mixed-age coppice growth. It can also be used for the maiden cut of new coppice coupes or restorative cut of over-mature species throughout the woodland.

This item cannot be used for cutting species that will not react well to coppicing or used for on-going coppice rotation cuts.

How will the option enhance biodiversity?

Create structural diversity with dense habitats for nesting birds and associated invertebrates, allow increased levels of light to reach ride side ground flora.

Requirements

Photographic evidence before and after to be supplied with claim.

Statement on deer risk and mitigation where required

Detailed maps showing proposed sizes and locations must be supplied in the application.

H4 - Pond Restoration (first 100m²)

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to £4.00 per m² of clearance.

Cost Considerations

This option is funded per m². Therefore, the cost per hectare for this option alone is £40,000/ha. Using this option alongside other habitat improvement options will reduce this cost/ha to an approvable level.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the clearance of reeds, shrubs and silt from any number of ponds up to a total area of 100m². Consider timing and methods to avoid damage to any resident fauna.

How will the option enhance biodiversity?

Restore pond to protect wetland habitats from succeeding to scrub. Reduce nutrient levels within the waterbody.

Requirements

Photographic evidence before and after clearance work.

Restoration work to be undertaken between September and January to avoid amphibian nesting period.

H5 - Pond Restoration (> 100m²)

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to £1.44 per m² of clearance.

Cost Considerations

This option is funded per m². Therefore, an example cost per hectare for this option at 100 m² alongside H4 at 100 m², is £27,200/ha. Using this option alongside other habitat improvement options will reduce this cost/ha to an approvable level.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the clearance of reeds, shrubs and silt from any number of ponds over an area of 100m². Consider timing and methods to avoid damage to any resident fauna.

How will the option enhance biodiversity?

Restore pond to protect wetland habitats from succeeding to scrub. Reduce nutrient levels within the waterbody.

Requirements

Photographic evidence before and after clearance work.

Restoration work to be undertaken between September and January to avoid amphibian nesting period.

H6 - Creation of Deadwood

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up £40.00 per hectare.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the creation of deadwood within woodland habitats.

How will the option enhance biodiversity?

Deadwood habitat is generally lacking in young woodland. This can be increased by ring-barking at least 15 trees per hectare (greater than 15cm diameter at breast height (DBH)).

Requirements

Photographic evidence of ring barked trees with claim.

Ringbark at least 15 trees (15cm+ DBH) per hectare.

Ensure ringbarked trees are not close to routes used by the public.

H7 - Veteranisation of trees

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to £875.00 per ha (at least 5 trees per ha).

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the veteranisation of trees within woodland habitats. This item is most valuable when used on trees close to existing veteran trees.

How will the option enhance biodiversity?

Increase veteran tree features within young woodland, providing niche habitats.

Requirements

Photographic evidence of trees with veteran features to be supplied with claim.

This item should be used on trees which have a DBH greater than 20cm.

H8 - Hedge Laying

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to £15 per metre.

Cost Considerations

This option is funded per m. Therefore, the cost per kilometre for this option alone is £15,000. Using this option alongside other habitat improvement options will reduce this cost/km to an approvable level.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

This item can be used for the restoration of planted boundary lines of shrubs that are:

- over 20m long
- less than 5m wide between major woody stems at the base
- formed of at least 80% native shrubs

How will the option enhance biodiversity?

Lengths of hedgerow will rejuvenate with new growth to form a continuous hedge.

Requirements

You must:

- carry out work between September and March when the hedge is still dormant
- remove old fencing and wire
- partially cut through stems near ground level, laying the pleachers (cut stems) over at an angle from horizontal to form a stock-proof barrier
- remove the uncut heel from each pleacher
- keep pleachers in position by crooking, staking, or staking and binding
- keep all existing hedgerow trees

Do not:

- lay hedges downhill
- obstruct or block [access to open access land](#)
- disturb breeding birds

H9 - Hedgerow Coppicing

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to £4.80 per metre.

Cost Considerations

This option is funded per m. Therefore, the cost per kilometre for this option alone is £4,800. Using this option alongside other habitat improvement options will reduce this cost/km to an approvable level.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

Only on planted boundary lines of shrubs that are:

- over 20m long
- less than 5m wide between major woody stems at the base
- composed of at least 80% native shrubs

How will the option enhance biodiversity?

If successful there will be lengths of hedgerow rejuvenated with new growth to form a continuous hedge.

Requirements

You must:

- carry out work between September and March when the hedge is still dormant
- remove old fencing and wire
- encourage vigorous regrowth from the base of the plant by cutting the stems down to ground level (less than 10cm)
- keep all existing hedgerow trees

Do not:

- obstruct or block [access to open access land](#)
- disturb breeding birds

H10 - Hedgerow Gapping Up

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to £11.40 per metre.

Cost Considerations

This option is funded per m. Therefore, the cost per kilometre for this option alone is £11,400. Using this option alongside other habitat improvement options will reduce this cost/km to an approvable level.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

On planted boundary lines of shrubs that are:

- over 20m long
- less than 5m wide between major woody stems at the base
- made up of at least 80% native shrubs

How will the option benefit biodiversity?

Lengths of hedgerow with gaps planted up will create a continuous length of hedge.

Requirements

You must:

- carry out work between 1 November and 31 March when the hedge is still dormant
- use native species, with no one species making up more than 70% of the total
- remove individual guards and tree shelters once the plants are established
- replace all failures in the following planting season

H11 - Annual Pollinator Mix

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to £3000 per ha for a 5-year agreement.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

The option must be re-established each year. It can be kept in the same location if working well, or moved around the farm, but the same area must be retained.

Only available on cultivated land.

Mixture diversity must be maintained.

Do not use where evidence or records exist for important arable plants or adjacent to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (see Magic.gov.uk).

How will the option enhance biodiversity?

This option provides areas of flowering plants to boost essential food sources for beneficial pollinators as well as invertebrates that will help to feed farmland bird chicks in the summer.

Once considered weeds, some cornfield annuals are now among the rarest flowers in the UK and uncommon to see in the farmed landscape.

Requirements

Establish a mix containing at least 4 of the following: Crimson Clover, Red Clover, Berseem Clover, Persian Clover, Phacelia, Native Corn Flower, Native Corn Marigold and Native Corn Chamomile, Borage, Common Vetch, Field Poppy.

The type of mix can be established on all soil types and in most locations, but it works best in south or south-southwest areas with a sunny aspect. Some cornfield annuals are best suited to medium and light soils. Check with your seed merchant for the best mix for your soil type and situation.

Establish as early as possible after harvest considering topography and soil type, following the guidance of your agronomist, and chosen seed merchant.

Retain the mix until 1st September the following year.

H12 - Stock fencing on areas brought into grazing

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund:

- a. Post and wire fencing: up to £5.80 per metre
- b. Sheep netting fencing: up to £7.50 per metre
- c. Permanent electric/Clipex fencing up to £3.00 per metre
- d. Temporary electric fencing: up to £2.40 per meter
- e. Metal gate: up to £168 per gate
- f. Wooden gate: up to £234 per gate

Cost Considerations

This option is funded per m. However, this option can include in the cost per hectare calculation any area fenced to manage livestock and improve habitat value. Therefore, include in the application the area that will be fenced this will be added alongside the metre calculation for new fencing and the cost per hectare taken from this.

E.g., 1300 m sheep netting fencing, plus 8.7 hectares fenced area, results in 10 ha/km at a cost of £9,750. Overall cost per hectare, £975/ha.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

Where fencing is to be erected along ditches, these must have a connection to a stream or river.

Existing fencing may only be replaced where it is no longer stock proof.

How will the option enhance biodiversity?

Livestock access to watercourses can cause erosion of riverbanks, resulting in the loss of soil, and contamination of water by nutrients and bacteria.

Preventing livestock access to watercourses and allowing the establishment of a buffer strip adjacent to watercourses reduces contamination and provides an area for wildlife.

Requirements

Fences must be a minimum of 1.5m from the top of the bank of the watercourse.

Fencing should prevent animal movement upstream or downstream.

The fence should be at least 1.05m high and suitably stock proof.

All the materials used should meet the relevant British Standards. Go online to BSigroup.com and search the standards database.

It is your responsibility to obtain permission from the Environment Agency, Natural England, or your local council, if required, before erecting any fencing.

When erecting a fence, consider installing gates to allow management activities or husbandry operations. Applicants are entitled to apply for a gate to install with their fencing to comply with Basic Payment Scheme regulations.

H13 - Arable Grass Margins

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to £1250 per ha for a 5-year agreement.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

Applicants who apply for this option will be committing to maintaining a grass margin buffer zone for 5 years from the beginning of the agreement.

Upon entering into this 5-year agreement you will receive a single payment in year 1 of the agreement.

This single payment is expected to cover any maintenance for the 5 years. Payments will be based on the area of land designated to the buffer zone.

How will the option enhance biodiversity?

Grass margins in arable fields provide a habitat for all manner of flora and fauna, especially when enhanced with wildflower seed mixes. Buffer strips also capture run-off and nutrients from fields, preventing these from reaching watercourses.

Requirements

The margin may be topped annually and should be maintained to preserve a healthy sward

Any buffer zone created for Ecological focus Area (EFA, CAP greening criteria) cannot be claimed. EFA is a regulatory requirement which cannot be funded.

For guidance to the Basic Payment Scheme, go online and search for: BPS 2020. (gov.uk/government/publications/basic-payment-scheme-rules-for-2020)

Unproductive field corners may be included in the area claimed at the discretion of the NFC

The location of grass margins must be placed in arable fields and marked on the submitted maps. The grass margin cannot be relocated to another field.

H14 - Riverside Grass Margins in Grass Fields

How much will be paid?

- a. 15m - The grant will fund up to £900 per ha for a 5-year agreement.
- b. 30m - The grant will fund up to £1000 per ha for a 5-year agreement.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

Grass fields only.

How will the option enhance biodiversity?

Livestock grazing in riverside areas can lead to harmful pathogens entering the water. Riverside margins will stabilise riverbanks and reduce soil erosion. Riverside margins also intercept run-off, reducing the risk of nutrients, pathogens and sediments entering water. Undisturbed margins can also boost biodiversity.

Requirements

Applicants who apply for this option will be committing to maintaining a grass margin buffer zone for 5 years.

Margin width is measured from the top of the bank.

Pesticides, fertiliser or lime cannot be applied to the margin.

Livestock are not allowed to graze the margin from its date of establishment until the end of your contract.

The margin may be mown, but not between March 1st and August 16th.

Pre-existing margins established during expired stewardship schemes may be included.

The location of the riparian margin must be marked on the map submitted with your application. Note, to maintain claims on your single farm payment scheme, a gate or moveable rail should be installed.

Riverside margin width and length is used in the grant calculation.

H15 - Restoration towards species-rich grassland

How much will be paid

£145 per hectare

Where to use this option

It is available only on parcels of grassland that have high or medium potential for being restored to grassland priority habitat.

How this option will benefit the environment

It will restore grasslands that have the potential to become priority grasslands. It will increase the number and frequency of important plant species. Many other priority species, such as bumblebees, butterflies, birds or bats, will also benefit. Buried archaeological features will not be disturbed.

Requirements

You will probably need to:

- increase the presence and abundance of high-value plant species, for example by deliberately introducing new species
- maintain a range of plant heights suitable for invertebrates, birds or other priority species
- manage the grassland by grazing, hay cutting, or a mixture of both
- maintain a continuous cover, particularly over historic features
- use very little or no manure, fertiliser, pesticide or supplementary feed
- maintain scrub, rushes and other potentially dominating plants at the levels set out in the agreement
- control undesirable plants (these can be specified in the agreement)

You will need to agree a detailed timetable setting out how you will restore the grassland and the timetable to achieve it. This should include details of how you will introduce seeds or plants, identify the source of the material and the varieties and quantities you will use. It should also set out how you will manage the grassland after you have introduced the plants or seeds.

It is likely you'll not be allowed to:

- plough, cultivate or re-seed, unless agreed with the NFC
- harrow, roll or allow scrub or bracken to encroach on historic or archaeological features
- carry out activities that may disturb breeding birds or damage nests

H16 - Creation of species-rich grassland

How much will be paid

£267 per hectare

Where to use this option

It is available for whole or part parcels, only on arable, set-aside or temporary grassland that has high or medium potential for the creation of priority habitat.

How this option will benefit the environment

It will create priority grasslands and establish a wide range of important plant species. Many other priority species, such as bumblebees, butterflies, birds or bats, will also benefit, and buried archaeological features will not be disturbed.

Requirements

You will probably need to:

- establish a flower-rich grassland in the first year
- maintain it as permanent grassland
- maintain a range of plant heights suitable for invertebrates, birds or other priority species
- manage the grassland by grazing, hay cutting, or a mixture of both
- maintain a continuous cover, particularly over historic features
- use very little or no manure, fertiliser, pesticide or supplementary feed
- maintain scrub, rushes and other potentially dominating plants at the levels set out in the agreement
- control undesirable plants (these can be specified in the agreement)

You must have a detailed implementation timetable to create the grassland. This should set out how you will create it, including details of the varieties and quantities of seed or plant material you will use and where they'll come from, and how you will manage the grassland after you have introduced the seeds or plants.

Do not:

- plough, cultivate or re-seed after the grassland has been successfully established, unless agreed with the NFC
- harrow, roll or allow scrub or bracken to encroach on historic or archaeological features
- carry out activities that may disturb breeding birds or damage nests

H17 - Restoration of forestry and woodland to lowland heathland

How much will be paid

£184 per hectare

Where to use this option

Available only on lowland heathland that has established tree cover over most of its area

This option cannot be used:

- on areas of heathland with scattered trees and scrub

- on woodland being cleared on grassland areas (without dwarf shrubs)

How this option will benefit the environment

It re-establishes lowland heathland on forested land or land recently (since 1900) colonised by woodland. Once trees are felled and removed and extensive areas of sandy soil are exposed, heathland areas should develop over the first 2 to 3 years. The area will have a tree cover under 15%, with a diverse mosaic structure and composition, including undisturbed bare ground and varied heathland vegetation types.

The cover of undesirable species will be low and vegetation that increases when undermanaged (bracken, scrub, dense grass tussocks) should be kept under control. Locally characteristic plant communities and the species they support (such as nightjar, woodlark, smooth snake or sand lizard) will successfully colonise the site, if within their range.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- remove trees and scrub, along with the accumulated organic litter layer when it's deeper than 5cm
- graze or cut to manage the colonising heathland vegetation, leading to a balanced range and distribution of dwarf shrub age classes
- follow set times for grazing or cutting
- carry out hydrological restoration measures, if needed, such as damming ditches or blocking drainage, if appropriate
- create or maintain between 1% to 10% of bare ground cover – do not create bare ground on historic or archaeological features
- maintain tree or scrub cover below 15%
- maintain the full range of age classes of Western or European gorse
- manage bracken so that cover is less than 10%

The agreement will set out what must not be done. It is likely that agreement holders will not be allowed to:

- plough, cultivate or re-seed
- apply fertilisers, manures or lime
- carry out supplementary feeding
- use pesticides, including herbicides, except to spot treat or weed wipe or to control injurious weeds or invasive non-natives

H18 - Restoration of wood pasture and parkland

How much will be paid

£244 per hectare

Where to use this option

It is available to restore existing lowland wood pasture and parkland that is in poor condition. Recreational parkland is only eligible where it forms part of the farmed environment.

How this option will benefit the environment

It restores existing lowland wood pasture and parkland on sites that support veteran trees or parkland features. If successful there will be many of the following, depending on whether the site is predominantly wood pasture, parkland, or a combination of both:

- undisturbed standing and fallen deadwood that will provide habitats for invertebrates
- additional semi-mature or mature trees that will provide continuity of the tree population
- newly planted trees, spaced evenly with open crowns or patches of regeneration with space to allow open-grown crowns to develop
- open-grown scrub covering 10% to 20% of the wood pasture
- flowering trees and scrub such as hawthorn, crab apple and wild pear to provide food and nectar sources for invertebrates
- well managed unimproved or semi-improved grassland or heathland, grazed by traditional breed cattle in wood-pasture and deer and traditional breed cattle in parkland
- well-maintained historic and archaeological features
- well-maintained historic designed landscape planting and features

Requirements

You must:

- graze or cut to maintain the area of closely grazed turf interspersed with taller tussocks
- keep all mature and veteran standing trees and all standing and fallen deadwood, provided that it is consistent with the National Tree Safety Group document Common sense risk management of trees: landowner summary - leave fallen dead wood uncut and in situ
- protect existing trees to prevent damage from livestock and wild animals - manage tree guards to prevent any damage to growing trees
- protect parkland features, such as fencing, historical structures, lakes and ponds
- plant additional trees or encourage regeneration where required
- carry out maintenance works and minor repairs on structural historic or archaeological features on a 'like for like' basis to retain the character of the feature in its local setting

It is likely you will not be allowed to:

- use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot tree or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds, invasive non-natives, nettles, rushes or bracken or apply any fertilisers or manures
- use supplementary feeding
- harrow or roll
- allow damage to existing trees or vegetation or remove deadwood from the site

Section 3

Priority Species Options

The following options are intended to enhance populations of priority species and their funding is supported by Severn Trent.

S1 - Anthrapod Banks

How much will be paid?

The grant will fund up to £2500 per ha for a 5-year agreement.

Where can (or cannot) the item be used?

Cultivated land or temporary grassland only.

Suitable for larger fields (20 ha and above) or in areas where soil erosion is a risk.

Can be located in the centre of fields or near the edges.

The applicant must ensure that the arthropod bank is not located on a site that will damage existing habitats (see www.Magic.gov.uk), archaeology or infrastructure.

Arthropod banks must remain in place for a minimum of 5 years.

How will the option enhance biodiversity?

This option provides raised grass areas which mimic the dense, tussocky grass cover of traditional hedgerows, providing a habitat for invertebrates and farmland birds to forage and nest in. Small mammals, bumblebees, spiders, insects and farmland birds which prefer to nest in open areas can be found on successful arthropod banks.

Requirements

Create or maintain an earth ridge, this should be free-draining. It needs to measure between 2m to 5m wide and about 0.4m high.

Leave gaps at each end of the ridge to allow access for machinery.

Establish or maintain a native grass mixture in year 1 of the agreement, with suggested species including fine-leaved grasses and tussock-forming varieties such as Fescues, Cock's-foot and Timothy.

Cut the established mixture several times as required in the first summer to control woody growth and annual weeds. In years 2-5, cut after 31st August to protect nesting birds and invertebrates; cut when the bank is dry but before insects look to find shelter over winter.

Do not spray with pesticides or fertilisers. Herbicides are permitted for spot treatment or wipe injurious weeds like stinging nettle or bracken, or invasive non-native species.

You should avoid application of insecticides within at least 6 meters of the bank as these will be particularly harmful to the beneficial predatory insects you are trying to encourage.

S2 - Creation of wet grassland for waders and wildfowl

How much will be paid

£406 per hectare

Where to use this option

It is available for whole or part parcels, only on parcels that have been in arable, fallow or temporary grass in the last 5 years and have a high potential for being restored to habitat for breeding waders.

How this option will benefit the environment

It will create wet grassland for breeding wading birds from arable or temporary grassland. Fields will have well-established swards, with wet areas throughout the winter and spring and into the early summer. Waders will be able to nest and, in most years, successfully fledge their young.

Requirements

You will probably need to:

- establish a suitable sward and manage it by grazing, mainly with cattle
- manage livestock during the breeding season to reduce the risk of them trampling nests
- provide wet features (such as foot drains, gutters and scrapes) for waders to feed (you will need to keep these areas wet into the early summer, usually by holding high ditch water levels)
- control and manage trees, scrub, hedges, rushes and undesirable species
- use little or no manure, fertiliser, pesticide or supplementary feed

It is likely you'll not be allowed to:

- plough, cultivate or reseed the grassland after successfully establishing it, unless agreed in writing with the NFC
- harrow and roll on historic features
- carry out activities that may disturb birds or damage nests.