

Soil Action Plan Advisory Forum Newsletter

Issue 10: February 2006

Actions

1. Could all AF members please let [Becca Taylor](#) know their availability for the weeks commencing 15th and 22nd May 2006, for the next AF meeting. Thank you to those that have already provided their availability.
2. Please send any information to be included in the next newsletter to [Becca Taylor](#) by **Thursday 23 March**. It is our intention to circulate the newsletter at the end of each month unless the volume of material is insufficient.

AWE (Awareness and Education)

1. There are a number of forthcoming CIWEM conferences that might be of interest to AF members:
 - Water Framework Directive – Environmental Standards, Monitoring and Reporting: 8 June 2006, London.
 - Water Framework Directive – Catchment Management: 18 July 2006, London.
 - Farming and Water: 22 November 2006, London.Further details can be obtained from Bob Earll: bob.earll@coastms.co.uk or 01531 890415.
2. Sharon Ellis presented information on developments of soil policy within England and the European Commission at a SNIFFER organised workshop in January. Full [details of the discussion](#) are now available.
3. Together with Hampshire County Council, NSRI are piloting soils education initiatives, including Soil-Net, at a number of Hampshire schools (both primary and secondary). The project will facilitate the development of effective tools and techniques to promote the inclusion of soil within current National Curriculum delivery. The project is due to report at the end of May and will feed-in to the development of Soil-Net.

HER (Biodiversity and Cultural Heritage)

1. A project has been let to determine the effect of differing agricultural and soil management techniques on earthworks and buried archaeological remains and to develop soil management techniques to better protect the archaeological resource. Recommendations for monitoring the effectiveness of these techniques will also be developed. The project is being carried out by Oxford Archaeology over a period of five years (due to report January 2010).



EVI (Evidence and Access to Information)

1. As previously reported the Environment Agency held a one-and-a-half-day workshop on “Indicators of soil quality in relation to its interaction with the environment, for the monitoring and assessment of soil quality in the UK” at the end of June 2005. The [final report](#) from this workshop has now been published, along with a [two-page summary](#).
2. NSRI with Exeter University are undertaking a scoping study to identify the various factors, other than water erosion, which cause agricultural soil loss e.g. wind erosion, tillage erosion and soil co-extracted with root vegetables. The relative importance of each of these soil loss factors, compared to water erosion, will also be assessed. The project is due to report end-April.
3. A project to describe the potential threats to organic soils in England and Wales and to estimate their likely magnitude, occurrence and impact is being overseen by the University of Leeds. The project will also determine the policy and management implications of these future threats/impacts. The project is due to report end-April.

BUI (Soils in the Built Environment/Planning)

1. During February, a project has been let to investigate the Fate of Surplus Soil at Development Sites. With the increasing cost and restrictions on disposal to landfill, it is becoming increasingly necessary for developers to find a cost-effective use for the excess soil generated during the excavation of foundations and other such activities. As part of our Built Environment workstream, it is important for the Soils Team to have evidence of the sustainability of current practices. The project will be undertaken by Land Research Associates and will be centred around a number of case studies of varying sizes which will be used to illustrate both good and bad practice in the construction sector.

SUS (Sustainable Soil Management)

1. Following interservice consultation on the EU Soil Thematic Strategy, we expect a further delay before this package is adopted by the Commission. We do not yet know the current schedule for publication, but this could be Summer 2006 at the earliest.
2. Sharon Ellis attended the NFU Annual Conference on 27th February to participate in a discussion session on making green ground. It was useful to get first-hand feedback on our approaches to soil protection and there are a number of issues to follow up.