

NYM / 2015 / m 0 8 5 / R3

Proposal to add surface dressing to length of track along Scheduled Monument in Wykeham Forest: Heritage Statement

The site is part of a Scheduled Monument known as 'The Moor Dikes and Cradlegrip prehistoric linear boundaries and other prehistoric remains in Wykeham Forest' – National Heritage List Entry 1017164 (Legacy SM number 33734). In the area of the proposed work the monument is part of the south Moor Dike and consists of a ditch which is flanked by two parallel earthen banks. The ditch is largely infilled, but the banks stand up to 1.5m high on either side. The banks are each about 3.5-6m wide and there is a gap of 3-4m between them over the infilled ditch.

NYM/NPA

- 6 FEB 2015

Assessment of Heritage Significance

The Scheduled Monument is an extensive prehistoric monument which lies within a much wider area of prehistoric remains in Wykeham Forest, which includes burial and ritual monuments, settlement and boundaries. This monument is a particularly important part of the surrounding prehistoric landscape because it preserves relationships between features of different dates within the prehistoric period, and so will hold evidence for the development of the prehistoric occupation of this area. In most areas of the monument there is good survival of earthworks.

The Moor Dikes group of features have historically been recognised and mapped as part of the landscape. The line of the South Moor Dike has been followed by a track since at least the middle of the nineteenth century and the track appears on the early Ordnance Survey map editions. This track follows the southern edge of the earthworks to the immediate east of the Great Moor Road, but further to the east in the area of the proposed works, the track runs along the line of the former ditch before crossing the head of Yedmandale across a small stone bridge. The current access track follows this historic route.

Assessment of impact

Current threat to the monument

The monument was put into the North York Moors NPA's Monument Management Scheme in 2013 because it was on the Heritage at Risk register. A management plan was prepared and a programme of work needed to address the risks to the monument was agreed with English Heritage. Vegetation management across many parts of the monument was subsequently organised and carried out on behalf of the NPA, and was funded by English Heritage through the Monument Management Scheme. This work enabled the monument to be removed from the Heritage at Risk register, although it was understood that the programme of work would continue to completion.

The management plan identified a particular issue with the South Moor Dike: the historic track along the dyke is becoming very disturbed and churned up because of its use by estate vehicles. As the condition of the track has worsened, vehicles are moving sideways across the width and are encroaching onto the edges of the earthwork banks. This is causing damage to the monument, both by clipping the earthworks and potentially by deep wheel ruts disturbing buried deposits within the ditch.

Work proposed

The current proposal forms part of the programme of work agreed with English Heritage in order to improve the condition of the monument. To prevent further

damage to the earthworks of the South Moor Dike, it is proposed to add a surface dressing of limestone gravel to a 165m length of the track where the earthworks are most vulnerable. This will create a more robust surface for vehicles which will be restricted to a 2m width to encourage them to keep to a defined route in the centre of the infilled ditch.

Impact of the work

The work is necessary to prevent further damage to the monument and preserve its significance, both in terms of the visual significance of the earthworks and the evidential value of the archaeological deposits. This will ensure the continued visibility and integrity of the earthworks. English Heritage has approved the proposal and the use of Monument Management Scheme funding for this purpose and Scheduled Monument Consent will not be required (all agreed works carried out under the NYMNPA's Monument Management Scheme are deemed to have consent).

Although a track surface will be introduced, any potential visual impact on the monument will be offset by the benefits of protecting the earthworks. Since the surface will only be visible from this stretch of track (it will not be visible from any other location as it will be hidden by the banks) there will be only a minimal visual impact on the setting and surrounding landscape.

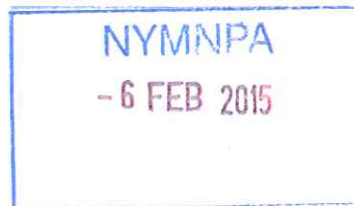
Mitigation Strategy

The proposed work involves minimum intrusion onto the monument while protecting its significance. There will be no excavation of material to form a foundation for the track and ground preparation will consist only of careful planning-off of loose/wet mud.

Vehicle movement on the monument will be minimised and restricted to the established tracks.

Materials chosen will be locally sourced limestone gravel from Wykeham Quarry and this will rapidly blend in to the local environment, having minimal impact on the monument and its setting.

The work will be supervised by a professional archaeologist to ensure that no archaeological deposits are disturbed.



**SCHEDULED MONUMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN – additional works for 2014-5
season**

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Monument Number: 1017164

Legacy monument number: 33734

Grid Reference (centred): NGR SE 96079 86875

Name: *The Moor Dikes and Cradlegrip prehistoric linear boundaries and other prehistoric remains in Wykeham Forest*

Works identified for this year included follow up bracken spraying, some limited tree removal along one length of dike and some deposition of hard core along the dike ditch which is used as a track to reduce disturbance caused by vehicles in the winter months. The issue of illegal vehicle activity is still unresolved and needs further thought and costs for fencing, but see below.

Bracken spraying.

This has been commissioned separately and is not covered in this document. - 6 FEB 2015

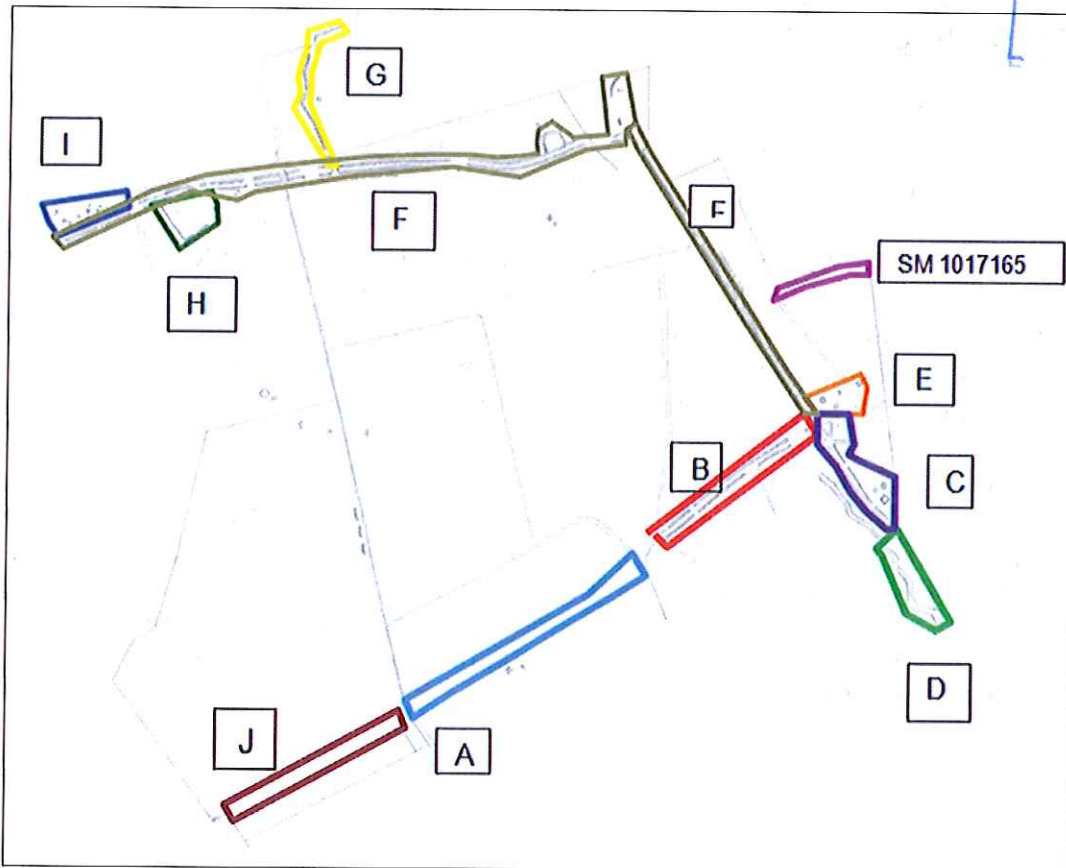


Figure 1. Areas referred to in text

Tree removal

Four trees (including one immature tree) are to be removed from the top of the earthwork banks in Area B where they are in danger of toppling. If they blow over or topple, they are likely to pull material from the earthwork and cause damage to the archaeology. Four trees should be felled at their base and the roots left to rot in situ (poisoning of the stump should be included if appropriate). The felled trees should be

removed from the earthworks without dragging across them, although they can be left or stored off the monument if desirable. **A quote is required to remove the four trees already identified.**

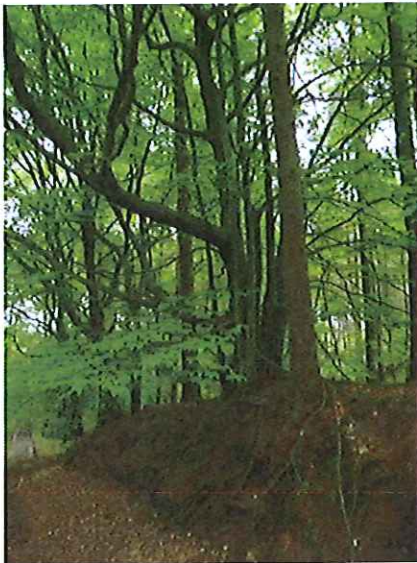


Plate 1. Trees positioned precariously on the earthwork should be felled at the base of the sump and removed



Protection of dike ditch

The ditch between the two earthworks in Area B is being used as a track. The track has become muddy and so it is proposed that hard core is added to the ruts to provide a firmer surface for vehicles to travel on. A quote is required to fill the ruts with hard core, preferably using a local source of stone. The track at this point is c165m long and hard core will be required for much of its length with only a few high spots that are well drained and require none. **A quote is required to lay hardcore along this track.** This work will be done under archaeological supervision, but this will be costed separately and a quotation is not required.

Vehicle access to the woods.

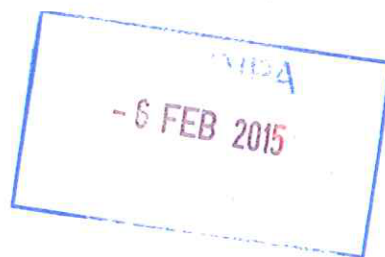
Illegal vehicle access is being gained into the woods. Earlier attempts to provide a gate from the Great Moor Road have failed because vehicles can still get around the gate into the woods due to a lack of fencing adjacent. Although works are unlikely to be funded this year, we are interested in exploring means of excluding vehicles from the woods which may be possible with the addition of fencing. **Indicative costs would be useful to do this.**

CHH

11.8.14

 Mags Waughman

From: Lee, Jenny
Sent: 11 December 2014 17:07
To: Caroline Hardie
Cc: Mags Waughman
Subject: RE: Wykeham Dikes, SM 1017164



Hello Caroline,

Thanks for the update,

I have just received confirmation from Keith that the works, because they are conducted under MMS, will have deemed consent and therefore SMC will not be required,

Best wishes,

Jenny

From: Caroline Hardie
Sent: 10 December 2014 10:52
To: Lee, Jenny
Cc: 'Mags Waughman'
Subject: Wykeham Dikes, SM 1017164

Hi Jenny

I was just having a chat with Mags about one of our MMS sites at Wykeham – that tricky set of linear mounds that go on for miles! We have a couple of years of bracken spraying behind us and are now looking at slightly more sensitive works where vehicles are undercutting some of the earthworks and trees on top of part of the earthworks are creating a risk from possible future wind blow. I went back through my files to see if I had consulted you about these proposed works and I can't find anything. So I attach a short version of the management plan for this year and have highlighted the sections which are for these more sensitive works.

You will see that we are proposing cutting down some trees which are precariously balanced on top of the earthworks and the concern is that if they topple they will pull up the archaeology. Between the two earthworks, there is a track used by estate 4 wheeled vehicles. Over time, as the track gets muddy, the vehicles move towards the edges of the ditch and start to undercut the earthworks – this is obviously damaging the archaeology but also further undercutting the trees on top and exposing their roots. So we want to put down some hard core where it is most muddy (actually this is for most of that section of track) so that the vehicles don't drift. Can you confirm that you are happy for this to be done under the usual terms of the MMS or do you think that SMC would be required?

Best wishes,
Caroline

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