

Sub type 13a

Scarps

Location

This landscape sub type runs along the western edge of the North Pennines and adjacent to the Yorkshire Dales National Park. A very small area of this type adjacent the Yorkshire Dales National Park meets the criteria for National Park designation and is being considered for designation in 2010/11.

Key Characteristics

- Horizontal outcrops of limestone and volcanic rock form distinct features
- Unimproved grassland dominates
- Steep slopes often filled with bracken and scrub
- Ghylls and gullies intersect the scar and moorland
- Improved pasture on lower slopes
- Small fields bounded by stone walls

Physical character

This landscape is found predominantly on Carboniferous limestone with exposures of horizontal limestone outcrops. The limestone scarp is found in a small area between Cumrew to Newbiggin in the north and more extensively from Melmerby to Helbeck in the south. Around Dufton and Knock the Cross Fell Inlier forms distinctive conical pike features against the scarp. These are unique to this part of Cumbria.

Land cover and land use

North of Cumrew the scarp slopes rise gently from the limestone foothills. Most of the slopes are covered with unimproved grassland and wet and dry heath. In parts there is a matrix of small fields enclosed by stone walls. Outside the enclosures, slopes are sometimes heath-like with scrub and bracken. The slopes are sharply incised by streams and rivers and gully or ghyll features

frequently break the scar and run down from the moorland top.

Woodland is generally scarce, but there are some areas of upland ash woodland around Brough. Small clumps of trees can also be found sheltering in ghylls or at the bottom of the slopes. There are some small areas of conifer plantations.

Rocky features are common including limestone pavements and scars and Whin Sill cliffs (eg High Cup Nick). At the southern extremity on some of the more inaccessible slopes there are remnants of ancient woodland.

There is virtually no settlement. A small area of the slopes above Warcop is part of an army training area, but the landscape still retains the open and undeveloped character of the rest of the sub type.

Ecology

The western scarp slopes of the Pennines are covered by large areas of limestone grassland, acid grassland, wet and dry heathland and bracken. Along the scarp edge there are exposures of both limestone and volcanic rock and screes and these, together with the associated areas of limestone grassland, support rare species such as alpine saxifrage and Teesdale violet. Species-rich springs and flushes are locally frequent on these steep slopes, as are areas of rush pasture. Small areas of peat bog are found in the northern areas.

Historic and cultural character

There is little modern settlement but there are some abandoned post-medieval farmsteads. The field system features intacks and parliamentary enclosure. There is evidence of coal and lead mining with surviving bell pits indicative of early coal mining on Stainmore.

Archaeological interest also includes relict prehistoric field systems and settlements.

Perceptual character

This landscape has an open, expansive and undeveloped character that gives a sense of remoteness. The open moorland and vast, uninterrupted skies add a sense of wildness. Changes to stormy and unsettled weather can bring a feeling of exposure and a greater sense of wildness and remoteness. Still, dry days can bring a feeling of tranquility in these undeveloped and natural feeling landscapes. Pockets of heather moorland and seasonal colour changes provide interest to the broad open moorland areas.

Sensitive characteristics or features

Steep limestone grassland slopes intersected by streams and ghylls and ghyll woodland and low lying wooded areas, and extensive areas of exposed geology are sensitive ecological areas that could be vulnerable to development. The tranquil character arising from the distinct lack of settlement and farms could be undermined by isolated developments. The open and expansive slopes are remote with a sense of wildness and character that is vulnerable to any forms of development.

Vision

The remote and diverse qualities of these upland landscapes will be conserved and enhanced. The heath and species rich grassland will be enhanced and sympathetic moorland management will be re-established. The remaining areas of semi-natural woodland will be conserved and enhanced, with ghyll side planting increased. Further coniferous planting on open moorland and slopes will be discouraged. Wetland areas will be conserved and enhanced. Traditional features such as patterns of stone walls, meadows and former ‘miner-farmer’ landscapes will be conserved. With regard to recreation and tourism, improved facilities for low key activities in selected locations will be provided offering good accessibility, protection of sensitive habitats and minimal intrusion

on the landscape. The open, unspoilt, uncluttered and wild qualities and characteristics of these landscapes will be maintained through resisting inappropriate and intrusive development; this could include vertical energy developments such as large wind turbines or pylons.

Changes in the Landscape

Over the next 10 – 20 years this landscape could be subject to the following changes or issues:

Managements Practices

- A fragile farming system subject to changing markets
- Over intensive grazing and agricultural improvement leading to loss of moorland vegetation to the detriment of wildlife.
- There could be further interest in afforestation if farming becomes more marginal and incentives are provided to support short rotation forestry.

Development

- Energy infrastructure developments and associated vertical structures such as, communication masts, pylons or large scale wind turbines could erode the open and remote character of the landscape.
- The further intensification of training at the Warcop Training Area could introduce incongruous features and threaten the remote, unspoilt character
- Small scale mining or quarrying has continued in a few places. Any further development could have major implications on landscape character particular if scarp slopes are affected.

Access and Recreation

- Public rights of way and areas of open access land provide a network of routes that enable quiet appreciation and enjoyment of the countryside. Ongoing maintenance is needed to support this network in the future.

Guidelines

Natural Features

- Encourage regeneration of suppressed heather through the active management of grouse moors including a reduction in stocking levels, control of bracken, phased cutting and controlled burning in

accordance with Natural England's Heather and Grass Burning Code.

- Maintain and enhance blanket bog through appropriate management including lowering stocking levels, ditch blocking and reviewing any moorland burning practices in accordance with Natural England and the Moorland Association's management plan template to prevent damage to underlying bog.
- Maintain and enhance areas of semi-natural grasslands and heath to enhance biological diversity including reduction in stocking levels.
- Restore allotment grasslands by ditch blocking, reducing grazing levels etc.
- Strongly discourage further agricultural improvement including ploughing, reseeding, application of fertiliser, liming or herbicide treatment.
- Maintain and enhance fell wetland including flushes, small tarns and bog pools. This may involve discouraging drainage schemes, preventing overgrazing or poaching by stock and controlling invasion by scrub.
- Protect ghylls or other deep valleys from stock to encourage the retention and expansion of tree cover and a diverse ground flora.
- Restore and reinforce remnant semi-natural woodland on scarp slopes.
- Improve the appearance of existing coniferous plantations including softening of geometric outlines, introduction of open space and increasing species diversity.
- Remove intrusive conifer blocks from open fell land as opportunities arise and resist new or significant extensions to coniferous plantations, especially in the moorland zone and on valley sides and scarps.
- Prevent infilling of minor gullies or sinkholes.
- Protect rocky outcrops, limestone pavement, scree and other rocky areas as open features by discouraging damage or removal and encouraging management of invading scrub.
- Manage and create species rich hay meadows. This may involve sensitively timed light grazing and late cutting to allow seeding, prevention of ploughing, cultivation, herbicide and fertiliser applications and re-seeding with an appropriate diverse mixture.
- Conserve and maintain historic structures such as field barns, farmhouses, mining structures and lime kilns. This may include protection from stock, removal of trees or scrub and carrying out structural repairs with archaeological advice.
- Conserve important spoil heaps and other earthworks.

Development

- Avoid development in remote, undeveloped, prominent and exposed areas that would degrade the landscape character. Particular developments that could cause harm include telecommunications masts, pylons, large scale wind turbines, and overhead transmission lines and telephone lines. Small scale wind turbines may be accommodated if visually and functionally related to and in proportion with existing used buildings.
- Resist major developments such as minerals or those involving permanent built structures including roads, embankments or dams that would erode the remote, undeveloped character.

Access and Recreation

- Improvements to the Pennine Way and other footpath or bridleway networks should be encouraged, including the laying of flags where necessary, better waymarking, improved gates and gaps and improved interpretation. All such work should use natural materials that harmonise with the landscape.
- Provision of sensitively designed small scale parking facilities for cars and buses in appropriate locations.
- Provide safety advice to those wishing to walk in remote areas, explore caves or old mines.
- Interpret the landscape, history and wildlife of the area to help promote its care and conservation.

Cultural Features

- Encourage joint measures for the sustainable management of common land.
- Encourage the conservation and repair of boundary walls to fields or large allotments where significant in historic or landscape terms (This applies mainly in I3A).
- The erection of fencing on open moorland is normally to be avoided.