

Committee(s):		Date(s):
Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee	For Discussion	27 June 2016
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	For Decision	18 July 2016
Subject: Management Work Plan for Small Tumulus Field		Public
Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath		For Decision
Report Author: Meg Game, Ecologist		

Summary

This report presents a detailed work plan for managing Small Tumulus Field, one of the ecologically most interesting of the Parliament Hill fields. Suggested long-term management includes creating and maintaining varied scrub habitat by rotational coppicing of selected bramble and tree saplings. Several potentially invasive native plants are present and these will be managed. The most troublesome is common hogweed; monthly mowing has not stopped it spreading, and an alternative approach will be tried.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that:

- The Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee be invited to submit their views on the management plan for this area of the Heath.
- The views of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee be conveyed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee.
- The Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee agree the proposals, set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

Main Report

Background

1. Management Work Plans review the history and ecology of specific parts of the Heath and detail the management required to maintain and improve the area concerned. This is the fifteenth such plan to be produced, and covers Small Tumulus Field, opposite the Men's Pond in Parliament Hill Fields.

Current Position

2. Small Tumulus Field is ecologically one of the most interesting of the fields in the Parliament Hill area, being important for birds, probably invertebrates, and flora to a lesser extent. It is flanked on two long sides by Hedges 1 and 2, and the bushy edges of these form unusually good scrub and 'woodland edge' habitat, where there is a gradation from trees to scrub to long grass. Such habitat provides the vegetation and vegetation structure required by many of our smaller birds for feeding, nesting and roosting. Patches of bramble within the Field add to the important structural variety.
3. Although not rich in flora, Small Tumulus Field contains a greater diversity of plants than many of the Parliament Hill Fields. The sward does include several invasive species, most of them native, such as creeping thistle and ragwort. These too can be ecologically important, e.g. providing nectar for bees and butterflies, but can dominate other vegetation if not managed. The most troublesome of these is common hogweed which, despite attempts to control it, is spreading quite rapidly.

Proposals

4. The plan details the tasks required to maintain the field, such as grass mowing and cutting back invasive plants. It also describes management which is needed to stop the valuable scrub habitats turning into woodland and to increase their structural diversity. This includes coppicing or removing tree saplings and several small trees, and cutting bramble on a long rotation.
5. Appendix 1 to this report presents the proposals in full. Figures 3 and 4 in the plan display a visual summary of the suggested work.

Implications

6. The City has a legal duty under the Hampstead Heath Act 1871 to maintain the natural aspect of the Heath. There is a reputational risk in not pro-actively managing the natural aspect of the Heath. Left unchecked the mosaic of diverse habitats for which the Heath is renowned would be lost.
7. Activities included within the management work plan will be undertaken using the Heath local risk budgets.
8. The proposals link to the theme in the Community Strategy to protect, promote and enhance our environment. They also link to the Open Spaces Department Plan through the Strategic Aim to 'adopt sustainable working practices, promote the variety of life (biodiversity) and protect the Open Spaces for the enjoyment of future generations', and the Improvement Objective to 'ensure that measures to promote sustainability and biodiversity are embedded in the Department's work'.
9. These works also fulfil Essential Actions in the Part 1 Management Plan, including to retain and enhance the Heath's habitats and natural resources to enable continued quiet enjoyment and appreciation of the natural world by its visitors.

Conclusion

10. A ten-year work plan is presented for Small Tumulus Field. The tasks required to maintain and enhance the area for ecology and enjoyment of the natural world will feed into the annual work programmes for the appropriate years. Management work plans are subject to review at the end of the 10-year period and sooner if unforeseen events occur.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Small Tumulus Field Management Work Plan

Meg Game
Ecologist, Open Spaces Department

T: 020 7332 3322

E: meg.game@cityoflondon.gov.uk