

In summary...

We appreciate the Downs are highly valued by local people and that these proposals may raise some concerns. Here we attempt to address some of the concerns we know about:

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

1. The Downs are agriculturally poor, nothing for cattle to eat
2. Cows are a traffic hazard
3. Fencing is unsightly
4. Our proposals would change the character of the Downs
5. The Downs haven't been grazed for decades - nature takes care of them
6. What right do the Trust have to interfere with the Downs?
7. Dog walking on the Downs will be difficult with cattle present

Our responses...

1. Our experience of rough grazing shows that traditional beef breeds would do well on these sites at certain times of the year. With the supplements provided by a Higher Level Stewardship agreement grazing could be a valuable addition to a Commoner's farm business
2. Cattle could be present for up to four months of year but we would put in measures to persuade them away e.g. watering points away from the roadside. If people slow down between grids this will enhance road safety
3. Any fencing will be erected, mindful of visual impact and we will listen to people's concerns. Cattle grids will reduce the visual impact of fencing
4. The overall appearance of the Downs would be relatively unchanged
5. Grazing historically shaped the Downs and has only ceased in the last 50 years. Grazing, complimented by small, controlled burns, would reinstate traditional management
6. As owners of the sites we have a responsibility to maintain them in good environmental condition for all to enjoy
7. The cattle would only be present for relatively short parts of the year. The Downs are large and cattle numbers proposed are small so problems would be easily avoided.

We don't anticipate any major changes to the way the Downs will look in the future or in the way they are used by locals, but we believe that by reintroducing traditional management in the form of grazing, the Downs will become the best they can be for wildlife and for people to enjoy.

Rosenannon and Tregonetha



These are our proposals. Is there anything we could change or add to enhance your enjoyment of the Downs?
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A proposal for the Downs

Rosenannon and Tregonetha Downs

Our solution...

Cornwall Wildlife Trust (the Trust) was founded nearly 50 years ago by local people passionate about nature conservation. Wildlife and habitat conservation remains the core purpose of the Trust, working with local communities to achieve it.

The lease of Rosenannon Downs by the Trust was started in 1999 and in 2009 the site was bequeathed to the Trust by the late Theresa Knowles. We purchased Tregonetha Downs in 2005. We got involved in both sites so that they could be protected indefinitely for the benefit of wildlife and people.

Both Downs are commons with a long history of grazing, furze and peat cutting, tin streaming and burning. We understand how important the sites are to the local community for recreation and the enjoyment of nature. The Trust works with the Commons Rights Holders on both sites to manage the Downs.

Problems on the Downs...

Both sites are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) due to their nationally important heath land habitats and rare flora. However, recent scientific monitoring of the two sites by Natural England indicates that the habitats they contain are in 'unfavourable condition'. This is due to:

- Yearly uncontrolled burns means that the delicate heathers and wildflowers have been overtaken by fast-growing bracken and purple moor grass
 - Without grazing the vegetation is thick and even. A more varied vegetation structure is better for many types of wildlife
- As a result of this:
- The quantity and variety of wildlife is less than would be expected for these sites
 - In some severely burnt areas there is little/no cover for ground dwelling birds such as skylark
 - The build up of dead grass enables the uncontrolled burns to cover large areas, putting property and the emergency services at risk



Ungrazed rank grass and bracken on Tregonetha



Grazed heathland on nearby Retire Common

We believe that by reintroducing summer grazing with cattle on the sites, better quality, more varied wildlife habitats could be established, leaving the overall character of the Downs virtually unchanged. In order to achieve this we propose the following:

At Rosenannon Downs:

- Fence the site boundary, concealing the fence in woodland and against hedges
- Construct cattle grids where the road enters and exits the site with adjoining gates for horses and pedestrians to avoid unsightly fencing

At Tregonetha Downs:

- Construct a fence around the boundary of the site, in most places concealed by the bank beside the road.
- Install cattle grids on the road to Kernick, again with adjoining gates, to enable this side of the Downs to be grazed as one and to reduce fencing

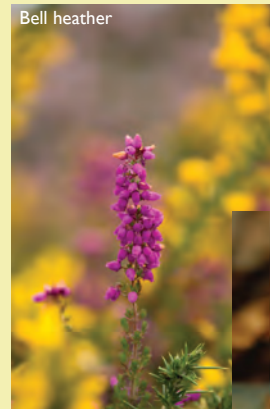
On both sites we propose to maintain safe public access by providing gates on existing routes.

WHAT	WHY	HOW
Create healthy beautiful heathlands	So they can be enjoyed by people and support more wildlife	Cattle grazing, scrub cutting and doing small controlled burns
Reduce the risk of large uncontrolled burns	So the habitats can recover and reduce risk to property and the burden on the emergency services	Grazing to remove grass in summer which is combustible in winter
Reduce the dominance of grass, scrub and bracken	Enable rare wildflowers and heathers to be more plentiful	Light grazing of the Downs in the summer months
Enter into Higher Level Stewardship agreements for the Downs	To fund ongoing management and distribute funds to those involved	Applying to Natural England with the support of the Common Rights Holders
Ensure sites are secure and accessible	So that grazing can take place and ensure enjoyment of the site	By installing fencing, cattle grids and gates, in keeping with the landscape

SEE INSIDE FOR AN ILLUSTRATION OF OUR PROPOSALS...

Our ideal scenario...

...would be for Commons Rights holders to graze the Downs as part of their farm businesses, hence benefitting the local economy. We would support the graziers in this activity and help ensure that the right cattle were selected to pose minimal risk to the public. Grazing would take place in the summer months, with low numbers of cattle, when the grass is most palatable.



Bell heather

SPECIES UNDER THREAT FROM BURNING:

- Common lizard
- Small pearl bordered fritillary
- Heathers
- Dormouse



Common lizard



Dormouse

Rosenannon Bog...

... is a Trust site which has been managed using light grazing and controlled burning. The site is now showing signs of recovery after many years of neglect. Many wildflowers such as Devil's bit scabious are plentiful.



Skylark (Notts Wildlife Trust)



Devil's bit scabious



Marsh fritillary

SPECIES WHICH COULD BENEFIT FROM GRAZING:

- Devil's bit scabious
- Pale dog violet
- Marsh fritillary
- Skylark



To find out more ...

See: www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/rosandreg for more information

- Proposed new fence
- Proposed cattle grid
- Proposed gate
- Proposed stile/kissing gate