



WILDING  
THE  
• OUTBACK •

MANAGEMENT PLAN  
& MONITORING RECORD

Alex Stevenson  
April to Dec 2021

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## Project Description

- To 'rewild' a 21 acre field, formally pasture, know as 'The Outback'.
- To enable the primariliy organic growth of trees, shurbs and plants with mechancial asistance only where strictly required. These will 'mimic' the 'disruptive' processes that would normally be casued by native animals but which enable the development of a range of habitat types.
- Through the process of rewilding to help address two major challenges of our time:
  - Climate change by enabling carbon sequestraion into the soil and;
  - Bio diversity loss.
- To connect the Outback via wildife corridors and sympatheitic management of the remaining areas of the Farm to exisitng local wildife habitats, and to form part of the nationwide Nature Recovery Network.

Figure 1: Project Area.



## Project Details

|                 |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Name of Project | Wilding the Outback |
| Name of Manager | Alex Stevenson      |

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Address           | Jordan's Farm, Lower Green, Wakes Colne,<br>Colchester CO62AZ |
| Grid reference    | 895, 298  |
| Parcel ID         | 4284  |
| Area (HA & Acres) | 8.53HA 21 Acres   |

Figure 2: Location Plan.



## Management & Maintenance Plan

This section sets out the aims of the project in year one (2021), followed by the management and maintenance aims and progress made in year one.

### Year One Aims:

2021 April - Dec

- To commence initial desktop and baseline survey work.
- To carry out site cleanup work.
- To enable the start of the restoration of natural processes.
- To carry out initial assisted planting.
- To begin enabling the development of wildlife corridors connecting the Outback with the wider landscape.

## Management and Maintenance Aims and Progress.

| Actions:  | Detailed explanation  |   |
|---|---|---|
| Desk Top Studies                                |   | Progress  |
| Existing Conditions Plan                        | A plan that identifies the existing features within the site and condition of flora   | Ongoing   |
| Historical Analysis Plan                        | Examine historical maps to learn more about the area previous land uses.  | Ongoing<br>Previous landowner approached  |
| Constraints & Opportunities Plan                | Examine the site and its surroundings to identify the constraints and opportunities for the project. For example:<br>Constraint: Existing utilities lines in the form of overhead electricity lines and an underground gas pipe that cross that site.<br>Opportunities: Existing but neglected ponds to its margins.  | Ongoing   |
| Layout Plan                                     | Using the information identified above to develop a plan of the field to enable a successful rewilding strategy.  | Ongoing   |
| Wildlife Corridor Plan. / Green Infrastructure. | The Outback does not exist in isolation. For biodiversity to successfully increase animals must be able to easily enter the site. This involves examining the opportunities for wildlife corridors within the ownership boundary of Jordan's Farm and sustainably managing other aspects of the farm.<br>In the future it may be possible to work with neighboring landowners to strengthen wildlife corridors from Jordan's Farm over adjacent land to wildlife habitats within the local area, thus forming part of the national Nature Recovery Network. | Ongoing   |
| Desktop & Base Line Surveys                     |   | Progress  |
| Carbon Soil Content Monitoring                  | Carbon sequestration from the atmosphere into the soil is a key aim of this project. Baseline readings to be taken.   | First readings to be taken early 2022   |
| Flora Survey                                    | Record the existing species within the site.  | Initial species recorded in informal survey   |
| Ornithological Survey                           | Record the existing species within and visiting the site.   | Initial species recorded in informal survey and first professional bird surveyor visited site in Dec 2021 |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| Soil Survey Microbe and Fungi Content                         | Soil lab to provide this service to be contacted for greater information.  | Lab contacted.  |
| Practical maintenance and enhancements to the Outback.        |  | Progress  |
| Field clean up: removing plastics and rubbish where possible. | Existing new tree planting and hedge planting to the perimeter of the field retains plastic tree guards and stakes which are now impacting on the health of the trees and shrubs. These must be removed.   | Completed.  |
| Hedge Trimming  | Where possible hedges will be allowed to grow out. However, there are some areas, for example next to overhead power cables where for maintenance reasons these will need to be maintained in the winter.  | Programmed for early 2022.  |
| Grass Cutting   | To prevent shrubs and trees growing over the route of the gas pipe and / or under power lines these areas will need to be cut in September.  | First cuts made in August 2021, under the powerlines and over the gas pipe. A route around the boundary of the field was cut, moving away from the hedge in areas where it is to be allowed to 'grow out' |
| Assisted Establishment (Tree Planting)                        | <p>Whilst it is intended to enable trees and shrubs to grow without planting, some trees will be planted in the winter of the first year to target specific species.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woodland for coppicing – to be planted over 6 years in the northeastern block of the site.</li> <li>• Goat and Grey Willow to establish a breeding ground for the Purple Emperor Butterfly, rare, but now prevalent approximately 7km away. Suitable habitat within the Outback would create another stepping stone to allow this butterfly to expand its range.</li> <li>• Introduce Yellow Rattle (<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>) as plug plants and seed. Yellow Rattle roots suppress the growth of grasses by making contact and drawing water and nutrients from them. This weakens the grass and enables the development of a more species rich meadow. The Outback is primarily a grass rich pasture. The the introduction of this native</li> </ul> | <p>8 goat and grey willows planted late summer as a trial.</p> <p>50 sq m of yellow rattle sown in marked area in late August. If successful flowers should appear in May 2022.</p>                       |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  | species will enable the development of biodiversity of species.  |   |
| Pond Establishment and Maintenance   | Around the edge of the Outback are two ponds. These are now in a poor state of repair. Work to excavate them, increase their capacity, retain water in the soil and enable the growth of water plants, thereby increasing biodiversity in the Outback. | FWAG / Natural England's Grant applied for the excavation of two ghost ponds on the S boundary. Agreement signed and initial site visits completed. Identified this ghost pond and hoping that this will be included in the scheme. Work on site scheduled for the NY 2022. |
| Hedge Layering   | The hedge along the Northern boundary would benefit from layering to strengthen the hedge and create a natural boundary which will have greater longevity.   | Application for grant to be submitted in 2022   |
| Practical maintenance and enhancements to land adjacent to Outback to create wildlife corridors. |  | Progress  |
| Hedge Maintenance  | Regeneration of hedge to Stable & Coot Fields.<br>This hedge row is now growing too high and is broken in parts. It will benefit from cutting back to grown level to allow regeneration whilst retaining established and young hedge row trees.        | Winter 2022   |
| Hedge Maintenance  | Enable the Southern hedge to Lane Field to grow out to create a wildlife corridor to Lane Road.  | Ongoing   |
| Hedge / Tree Planting  | Plant a new hedge / tree shelter belt to create a wildlife corridor to Lower Green road.   | Ongoing   |
| Coot Field Pond  | Enable the regrowth of trees and shrubs in the S/W corner of Coot Field to create a corridor to the existing established pond.   | Ongoing   |

## Administration & Communication

This section sets out the administration and communication aims and actions in 2021. These are essential for the practical and financial success of the project to enable the wilding of the Outback and to raise awareness in order to educate people about this type of initiative, about why it is important, and about our role as humans within the natural world.

## Year One Aims & Progress

| Administration<br>Actions:             | Detailed explanation  | Progress & Notes  |
|--|---|---|
| Business Strategy                      | Develop a business strategy to fund the project and ensure its viability.   | Guardianship scheme set up for individuals and business. First guardians signed up: 9 in the last 2 months of 2021.   |
| Website                                | Develop a website for Jordan's farm and Wilding the Outback   | Completed & ongoing   |
| Social Media:<br>Facebook<br>Instagram | Set up and develop social media sites for Jordans Farm and the wilding project.                                       | Completed & ongoing   |
| Wilding Walk & Talk                    | Develop a program and content for 'Walk and Talk' days to showcase, inform and share the project and its progression. | 4 successful walk and talks completed. The first part of the Colne's Big Green Week. Food and drink served. All went well and have been advised to charge. 2022 plan to charge a nominal sum from the spring onwards. |
| Newsletters                            | Quarterly newsletter  | Mail Chimp set up and first Winter 2021 Newsletter sent out.  |

## Monitoring Record: 2021

This section sets out the key ecological statics from year one. Greater detail will be found in the accompanying Appendices.

### Baseline Surveys

Baseline surveys analyze the existing conditions on the ground in 2021.

It is anticipated as the years pass there should be measurable improvements in biodiversity and carbon sequestration in the Outback. If improvements are not made, then adjustments will be made to the management and maintenance plan.

### Carbon Content of the Soil

To ensure that the scientific process of measuring the carbon content of the soil 'Wilding the Outback' followed The Soil Association guidelines to obtain the soil samples. Carbon content measuring will commence in 2022.

### Microbial Content of the Soil

Microbial Content of the soil measuring will commence in 2022.



Flora Survey 2021

| Latin name            | Common name         |            |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Trees                 |                     |            |
| Quercus robur         | Oak                 |            |
| Carpinus betulus      | Hornbeam            |            |
| Tillia Cordata        | Small Leaved Lime   |            |
| Malus sylvestris      | Crab Apple          |            |
| Malus domestica       | Apple               |            |
| Fraxinus excelsior    | Ash                 |            |
| Acer campestre        | Field Maple         |            |
| Prunus domestica      | Wild Plum           |            |
| Latin name            | Common name         |            |
| Shrubs                |                     |            |
| Rosa canina           | Dog Rose            |            |
| Prunus spinosa        | Blackthorn          |            |
| Hedera helix          | Common Ivy          |            |
| Crataegus monogyna    | Hawthorn            |            |
| Rubus fruticosus      | Blackberry          |            |
| Sambucus nigra        | Elder               |            |
| Latin name            | Common name         | Date ID'ed |
| Herbaceous            |                     |            |
| Achillea millefolium  | Yarrow              | May '21    |
| Anthriscus sylvestris | Cow Parsley         | May '21    |
| Centaurium erythraea  | Common Centaury     | July '21   |
| Glechoma hederacea    | Ground-ivy          | May '21    |
| Lamium purpureum      | Red Dead Nettle     | May '21    |
| Mentha arvensis       | Wild Mint           | July '21   |
| Myosotis sylvatica    | Wood Forget-me-mot  | May '21    |
| Ophrys apifera        | Bee Orchid          | June '21   |
| Plantago media        | Hoary Plantain      | May '21    |
| Plantago lanceolata   | Ribwort Plantain    | May '21    |
| Prunella Vulgaris     | Selfheal            | June '21   |
| Sanguisorba minor     | Salad Burnet        | May '21    |
| Senecio jacobaea      | Common Ragwort      | July'21    |
| Sonchus oleraceus     | Prickly Sow-Thistle | May '21    |
| Taraxacum officinale  | Dandelion           | May '21    |
| Trifolium repens      | White Clover        | June '21   |
| Veronica filiformis   | Slender Seedwell    | June '21   |
| Vicia sepium          | Bush Vetch          | May '21    |

## Fauna Survey 2021

| Latin name                                       | Common name                   | Date ID'ed |
|--|-------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Insects</b>                                   |                               |            |
| Coenonympha pamphilus                            | Small Heath Butterfly         | Summer     |
| Geotrupes spiniger                               | Tunneling Dung Beetle         | Autumn     |
| Maniola jurtina                                  | Meadow Brown Butterfly        | Summer     |
| Pieris brassicae                                 | Large White Butterfly         | Summer     |
| Polygonia c-album                                | Commar butterfly              | Summer     |
| Nymphalis polychloros                            | Large Tortoiseshell Butterfly | Summer     |
| Tyria jacobaeae                                  | Cinnabar moth                 | Summer     |
| Vanessa atalanta                                 | Red Admiral                   | Summer     |
| Vanessa cardui                                   | Painted Lady Butterfly        | Summer     |
| <b>Mammals</b>                                   |                               |            |
| <b>Birds</b>                                     |                               |            |
| Note the below spotted within the farm boundary, |                               |            |
| Badger   | Wagtails                      |            |
| Hare   | Green Woodpecker              |            |
| Rabbit   | Buzzard                       |            |
| Monk Jack Deer                                   | Woodcock                      |            |
| Roe Deer   | Pheasant                      |            |
| Vole   | Swifts                        |            |
| Hedgehog   | Greenfinch                    |            |
|  | Wren                          |            |
|  | Rooks                         |            |
|  | Skylark                       |            |
|  | Robin                         |            |
|  | Starling                      |            |
|  | Sparrow                       |            |
|  | Moorhen                       |            |
|  | Mallard                       |            |
|  | Barn Owl                      |            |
|  | Red Kite                      |            |
|  | Blue Tit                      |            |
|  | Coal Tit                      |            |
|  | Red Kite                      |            |

Bird Surveys, carried out by Glen Moore, commenced in December 2021. He visited the Outback twice and recorded the following species and numbers.

|                     | 10/12/21 | 14/12/21 |
|---------------------|----------|----------|
| <b>Blackbird</b>    | 6        | 9        |
| <b>Blue tit</b>     | 5        | 5        |
| <b>Buzzard</b>      | 1        |          |
| <b>Carrion crow</b> | 1        | 1        |

|                          |     |    |
|--------------------------|-----|----|
| Chaffinch                | 40  | 1  |
| Fieldfare                | 2   |    |
| Goldfinch                |     | 2  |
| Great-spotted woodpecker |     | 1  |
| Great tit                |     | 2  |
| Green woodpecker         | 1   | 1  |
| Greenfinch               | 3   |    |
| Jay                      |     | 1  |
| Kestrel                  | 1   | 1  |
| Linnet                   | 200 |    |
| Magpie                   | 1   |    |
| Meadow pipit             | 1   | 1  |
| Pheasant                 | 1   | 1  |
| Redwing                  | 1   |    |
| Robin                    | 1   | 4  |
| Skylark                  | 1   |    |
| Starling                 | 25  |    |
| Woodpigeon               | 26  | 12 |
| Wren                     | 1   | 2  |

## Rewilding Year 2021: Observations & Conclusions.

The existing flora of the field and the ornithological variety is better than originally thought. A greater variety of plants is generally found around the edge of the Outback, as would be expected as species that were confined to hedgerows move into the field.

Practical management has been harder given the lack of mechanical equipment to assist. In addition, much time was spent in the first year working on communication matters. However, cleaning up the site, getting the willows planted and a trial patch of yellow rattle sown has been very positive and has set the ball rolling. The deadline to apply for a grant to help layer a hedge was missed, given the short time scale between purchasing and the deadline. However, we are also delighted that we were able to initiate pond restoration earlier than expected.

Development of the supporting website and social media has progressed very well. The guardianship scheme has commenced, and the first people attracted to the project bode well for 2022. The Walk and Talks in the Autumn of '21 have really helped to spread the word and more are planned for 2022. The talks have also generated interest and contacts have been made who will hopefully be able to assist the long-term success of the project including Glen Moore who is carrying out the birds survey on a monthly basis and using his vast experience and knowledge.

Work on the Wilding project and other aspects of the farm has limited the time spent on the baseline and desktop studies needed to inform the project. I hope to progress these in 2022.

To conclude given the short space of time the project has been 'running', effectively since we purchased the farm in March 2021 and a lot of progress has been made. We look forward to 2022.

Compiled by A. Stevenson. Jordan's Farm, Lower Green, Wakes Colne, Essex CO6 2AZ

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