



Developing Management Options for Brittas Bay Dunes

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Background

- Historical decline in condition of the dunes and associated SAC
- WCC, Community and NPWS concerns – dune condition, litter, anti-social behaviour etc
- Status as the county's most popular coastal area
- Potential for enhanced management, enhanced community value and improved amenity
- AL appointed to investigate, recommend and specify a range of management options to assist with main problems



Why does Brittas Bay need management?



Importance – SAC designation



Community/amenity value



Landscape value



Ecosystem services



Intrinsic wildlife value



Personal value/people's stories



Decline in the sites condition, appearance and amenity value due to multiple factors affecting the value of the site

Special Area of Conservation – Brittas and Buckroney Dunes and Fen SAC

Annual vegetation of drift lines

Perennial vegetation of stony banks

Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*)

Embryonic shifting dunes

Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes)

Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)*

Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (*Calluno-Ulicetea*)*

Dunes with *Salix repens* ssp. *argentea* (*Salix arenariae*)

Humid dune slacks



Community/amenity value



Ecosystem services

Barrier to sea

Amenity value (as described)

High dunes shelter property

Aesthetic value

Pollinators – e.g. mining bees

Potential for more...



Your own personal story...how
you use the site

Your favourite dog walk

Your daily/weekly/yearly
swim

Childhood memories

Learning about nature



What are the main management issues?

- Erosion – by sea
- Erosion – by people
- Invasive non-native species
- Anti-social behaviour – litter, fires, vandalism etc.
- Dogs and dog walking
- Horses
- High volumes of people at peak periods (with varied activities and needs)



Erosion



Dune front receding –
loss of habitat &
stability – worsened by
paths



Paths increasing
severity of “blow outs”
– impacts on dune
height and stability



Invasive species

- Sea Buckthorn – completely displaces dune habitat – longer term may cause increase risk of erosion
- Other species – shade and and displace native plant communities and of lower value to other wildlife



Anti-social behaviour

e.g.

- Litter
- Fires
- Vandalism

and other behaviour – all impacts on other users, on habitats and wildlife and on site value



Dogs and dog walking



Faecal deposits –
impact on
habitats and
people



Littering of
waste bags



Impact on
ground nesting
birds



Erosion in dune
areas – dogs like
long grass!



Conflict with
visitors in rare
cases



Management – the most likely options...



Erosion control works



Removal of non-native plant species - esp. Sea Buckthorn and New Zealand Flax



Restoration of dune vegetation communities



Influencing visitor behaviour
- signage, “policing”, path closure, site clean up, events



Overall “re-branding” of the site - ***making it a special site and not just a beach***



Additional recommendations

Survey & monitoring programme – wildlife, habitats, visitors, impacts

Management/stakeholder group – takes account of neighbours, user groups and authorities to make good management decisions

Full site re-brand – local nature reserve or other special title to impart importance



Considerations

Establishment of a management group – right people, mechanism to manage the site

Need for establishment of volunteer resource – willing people, proper co-ordination

Need for greater resource input - €€€

Development of funding opportunities for management e.g. LIFEnature, Interreg, Leader etc?

Inclusion of other partners – NPWS, eNGOs, schools, others?



Timescale

1

Production of draft
detailed
management options
by end of the month

2

Review with council
staff

3

WCC to determine
steps thereafter

Thanks for listening

Any questions?