

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.

Clouts Wood (includes Clouts Wood, Markham Banks, Diocese Meadows, Church Hill Pastures and Kings Farm Wood). Work has continued through the past year on these sites. The Dexter cattle are a regular feature of social media posts as are pictures of the amazing wildlife found across the site.

Most people continue to use the site in a respectful manner but since the first lockdown incidents of unsociable and unacceptable use of the site have increased. In the past year a lot of effort has had to be directed towards the litter picking and the removal of large dens constructed throughout the woodland areas (a total of 7 sites have been removed). A meeting has taken place with the local PCSO and anyone concerned about illegal incidents on site should contact the police directly using the appropriate number.

Dogs are allowed off leads within Kings Farm Wood as part of a local agreement with the people of Wroughton to acknowledge the amazing contribution they made towards the purchase of the site. But incidents such as the disturbance to the cattle and sheep, large groups of dogs being walked by commercial concerns, dogs chasing wildlife and disturbance to ground or low nesting bird species have increased. We ask all dog walkers to keep their dogs on leads through the remainder of the site. New signs have been/are being erected to at entrances across the reserves reminding users.

Regular volunteer tasks and event such as bat and moth evenings are being held at the reserve through the Swindon Forest Meadows Project anyone interested in attending should contact Neil Pullen via reserves@wiltshirewildlife.org

Elsewhere in Wroughton with local volunteers, the Trust have been active

- At Common Farm removing and stacking large quantities of plastic tree guards in a way that they can be recycled
- Conducted reptile surveys
- Placed hedgehog footprint tunnels
- Conducted Water Voles surveys and confirming a large population of what is the fastest disappearing mammal in Britain
- Attending tree planting days

Restore the Ray Project-Blackhorse Farm

This project is due to be jointly funding by the Rivers and Wetland Community Days Fund from Wessex Water and Community Infrastructure Levy funding from local development.

The River Ray which runs through Blackhorse Farm in Wroughton was classified as 'Poor' under the 2019 WFD cycle, failing to meet Good Ecological Standard due to physical modification and point source pollution. This project aims to complete multiple river restoration and enhancement works to target these failings.

The Wiltshire Wildlife Trust completed an initial feasibility study for restoration opportunities across the site in March 2021. This study increased community engagement and informed our designs for the current phase of the project. Proposed interventions include:

- Introduction of up to 15 woody debris structures to introduce habitat, flow diversity and trap sediment, volunteer delivered.
- 60 metres of bank regrading, creating space for native marginal habitat.
- Construction of up to 5 ponds/wetland scrapes to improve habitat diversity and flood water storage.
- Creation of a gravel access point at an area of high use to allow the public and dogs to enjoy the river while reducing bank erosion and sediment ingress.

Locations for the proposed interventions are depicted in figures 1 and 2

Alongside the practical restoration aspects the Restore the Ray project seeks to increase community involvement with, and interest in, the site as a whole. Likewise, we are aiming to engage with pupils at the nearby Junior and Secondary schools to support their learning in natural river processes as part of Geography lessons, and wildlife conservation and ecology as part of Biology.

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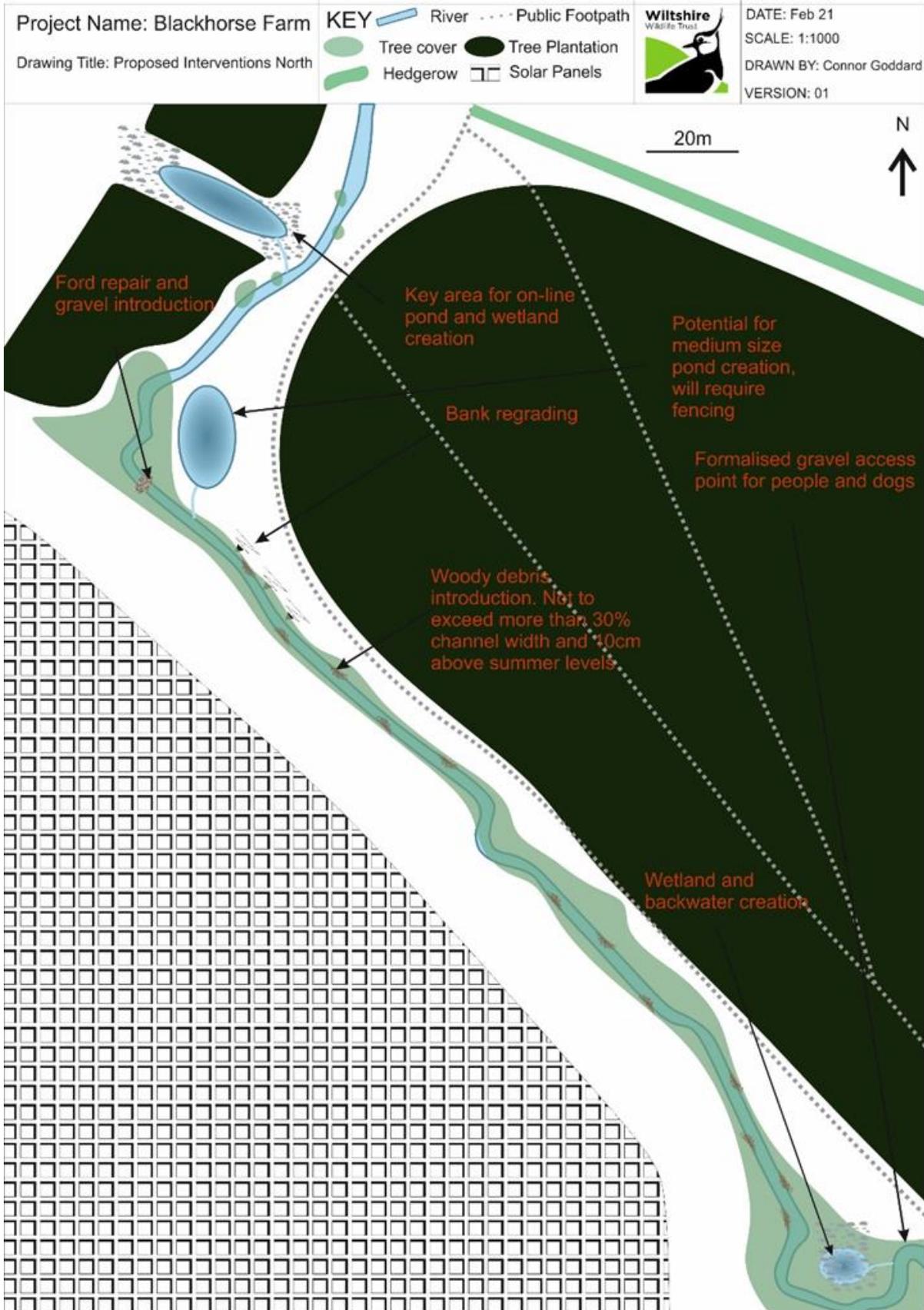


Figure 1 Depiction of proposed interventions in the northern portion of the Blackhorse Farm site

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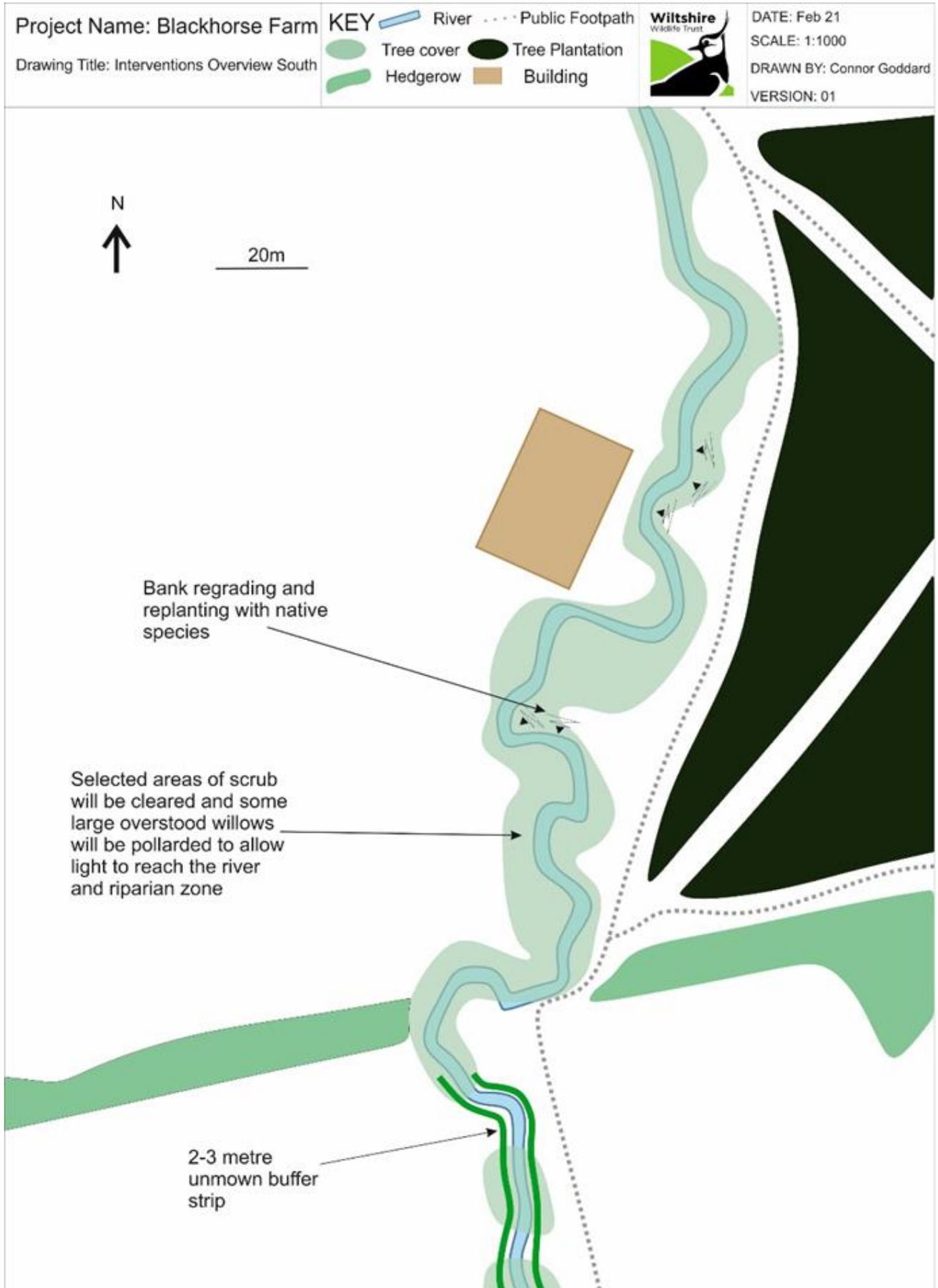


Figure 2 Depiction of the interventions in the southern portion of the Blackhorse Farm site