

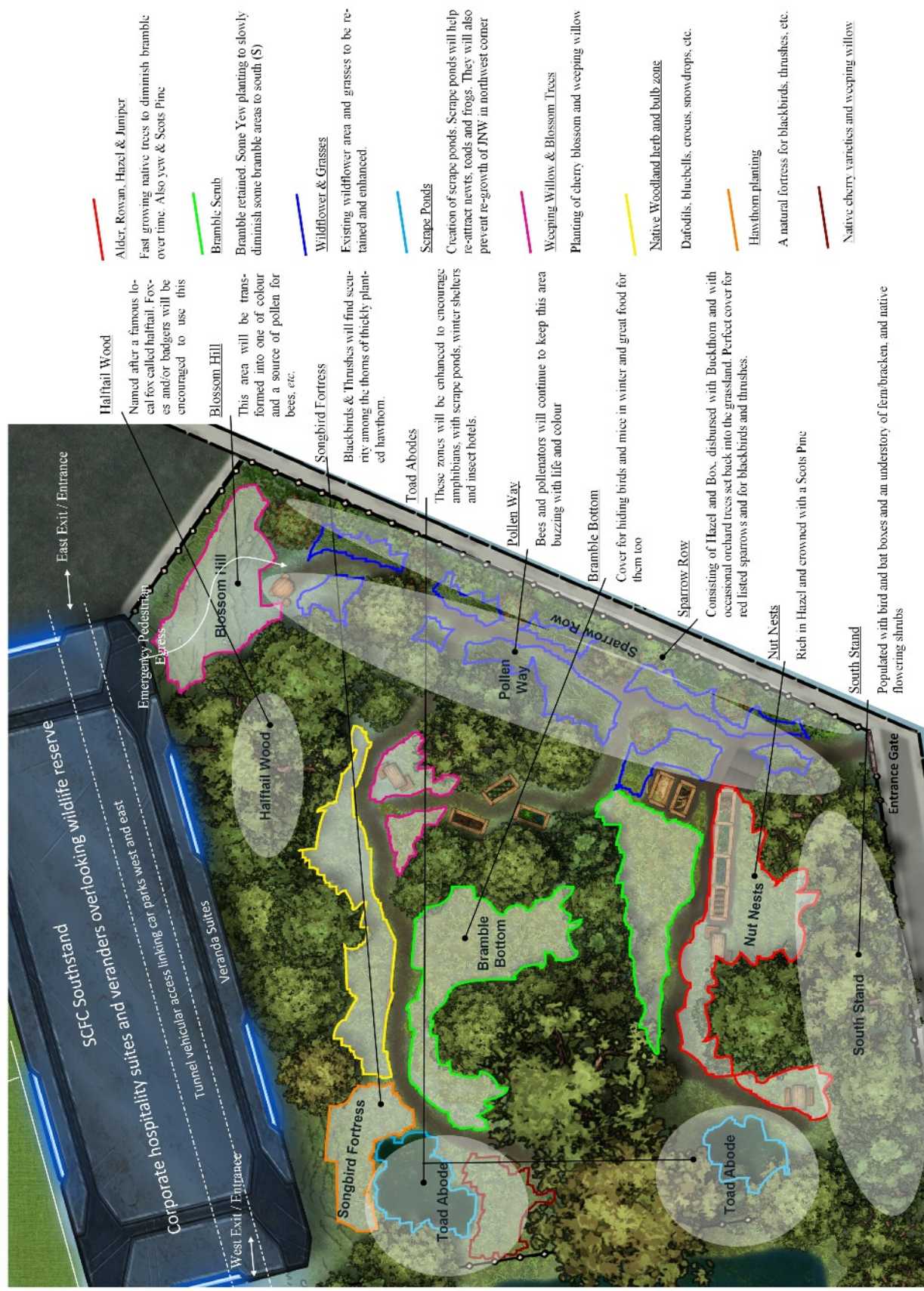
Edgeley Wildlife Reserve (EWR)
and
Local Wildlife Site Designation
according to
Government Guidance

Schematic Diagrams - page 2

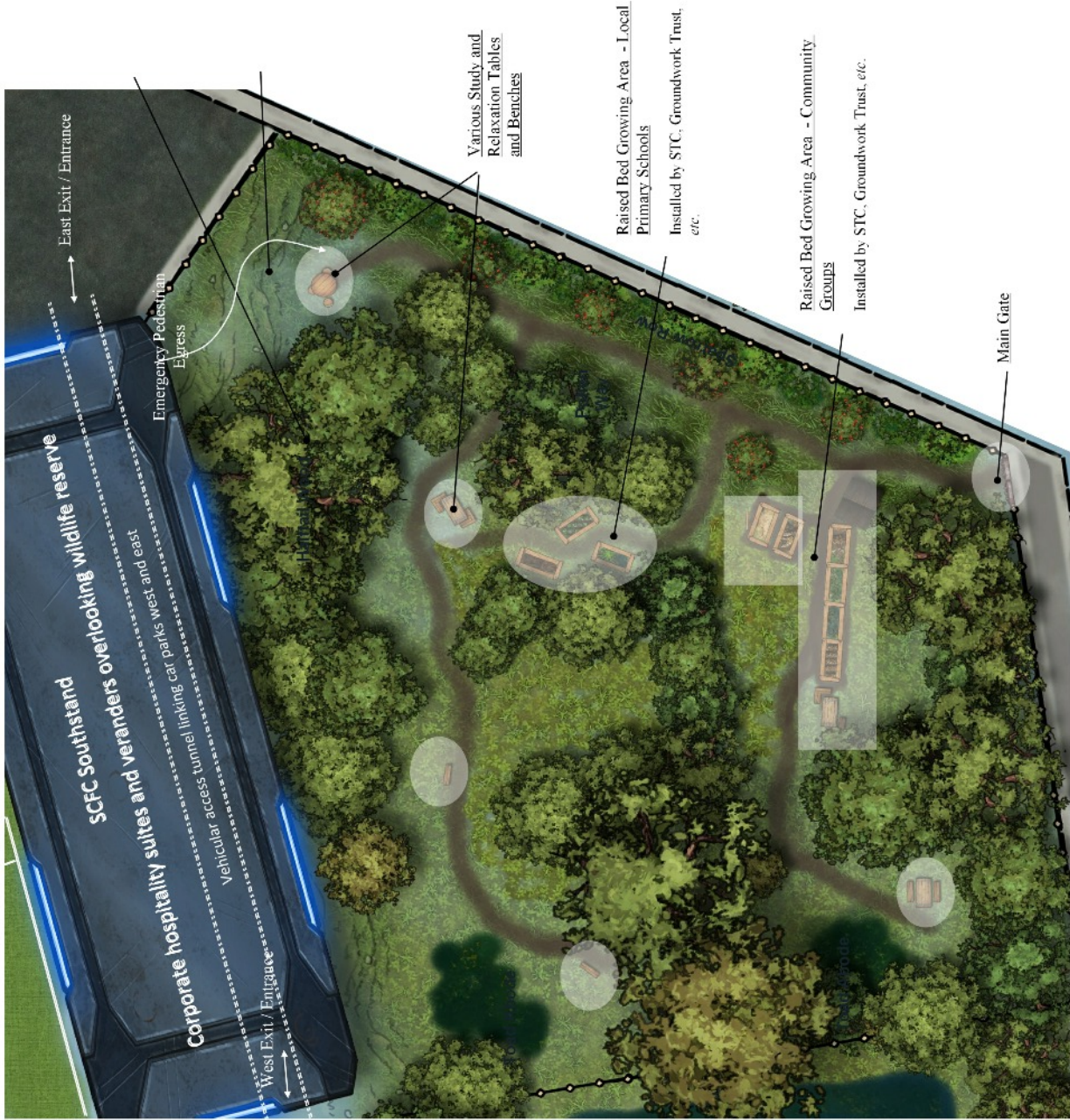
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NATURE & HABITAT



COMMUNITY & SCHOOLS





- Alder, Rowan, Hazel & Juniper
Fast growing native trees to diminish bramble over time. Also yew & Scots Pine
- Bramble Scrub
Bramble retained. Some Yew planting to slowly diminish some bramble areas to south (S)
- Wildflower & Grasses
Existing wildflower area and grasses to be retained and enhanced.
- Scrape Ponds
Creation of scrape ponds. Scrape ponds will help re-attract newts, toads and frogs. They will also prevent re-growth of JNW in north-west corner
- Weeping Willow & Blossom Trees
Planting of cherry blossom and weeping willow
- Native Woodland herb and bulb zone
Dafodils, bluebells, crocus, snowdrops, etc.
- Hawthorn planting
A natural fortress for blackbirds, thrushes, etc.
- Native cherry varieties and weeping willow

Government Guidance For Local Wildlife Sites

Locally designated 'Local Wildlife Sites' and 'Local Geological Sites' are areas of substantive nature conservation value and make an important contribution to ecological networks and nature's recovery. They can also provide wider benefits including public access (where agreed), climate mitigation and help to tackle air pollution. They can be in rural, urban or coastal locations, can vary considerably in size, and may comprise a number of separate sites.

National planning policy expects plans to identify and map these sites, and to include policies that not only secure their protection from harm or loss but also help to enhance them and their connection to wider ecological networks.

Local planning authorities can take a lead in establishing and maintaining partnerships and systems to identify, manage, enhance and safeguard local sites. The positive engagement and co-operation of land owners and their representative bodies can contribute significantly to the success of these partnerships.

All local sites partnerships need to use clear and locally defined site selection criteria with measurable thresholds. For example, where a particular habitat is especially scarce, it may be appropriate to adopt a lower threshold for selection than would be appropriate for other natural areas so that a suitable range of sites is protected. Selection criteria need to be developed with reference to the standard criteria in the following question, with all sites that meet the relevant criteria (informed by detailed ecological surveys and expertise) then being selected.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>

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Criteria For Local Wildlife Sites

The land/site (Edgeley Wildlife Reserve) meets ALL the criteria that government stipulates for the designation of Local Wildlife Sites:

1. Size or Extent

Larger sites are important for supporting viable populations of species, but smaller sites can be important as part of a larger habitat resource dispersed across the landscape. Smaller sites can be particularly valuable in areas lacking natural green space.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>

Edgeley is deprived of true natural green space of any significance. EWR remains Edgeley's and Edgeley community's only site of any meaningful size and state which can and already does sustain wildlife and native flora in a relatively secure space. EWR, perfectly located next to a reservoir and adjacent to the railway embankment which provides a green corridor (part of the Green Chain recognised by GMCA and SMBC), can be enhanced further to attract added species of wildlife.

2. Diversity

Sites should seek to reflect the diversity of wildlife, habitats, geological or geomorphological features that characterise the area.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>

EWR is constituted of Woodland, Grassland and scrub habitat. The site is predominantly populated by native species of trees, grasses, wildflowers and shrubs. A great majority of the flora existing within EWR is self-seeded.

Woodland

In spring, 2023, seventy-seven trees of various types were counted across the whole area of EWR. Only mature and young established trees were counted. Apart from the Scots Pine and the Yew, saplings or trees of less than 7ft in height (of which there are many) were not counted. The TEP survey counted a total of 280 trees in EWR. The wide variety of trees in EWR offer many species of wildlife a home and are important to people and culture in all sorts of ways. Ash, Bird Cherry, Elder, Hawthorn, Holly, Oak, Scots Pine, Silver Birch, Sweet Crab, Sycamore, Wild Cherry, Willow, and Yew were all recorded within EWR.

Grassland

On the eastern edge, parallel to the footpath and either side of where the spring fed rivulet runs underground, grassland offers tall grasses and a variety of pollen and nectar rich wildflowers at various times of the year. Sometimes full of colour and the buzzing of bees and hover flies. Grasslands are areas dominated by grass cover but they can also contain lots of other plants. Semi-natural grasslands are very

scarce and some wooded areas contain important pockets of semi-natural grasslands within glades, rides, wood-meadows and clearings.

The following plants have all been identified on EWR in the year 2023 and 2024. Many of them exist in the grassland habitat (mini-meadow) through which (the now underground) spring fed rivulet runs. Bindweed, Bluebells, Bracken, Bramble, Buddleia, Buttercup, Camomile, Cocksfoot, Coltsfoot, Common Plantain, Daffodils, Dandelion, Dock, False Oat Grass, Fern, Field Clover, Forget-Me-Nots, Foxglove, Gooseberry, Greater Willow herb, Hemp Agrimony, Ivy, Lesser Willow Herb, Nettle, Nipplewort, Ragwort, Raspberry, Red Shank, Sedge Grasses, Spear Thistle, Sticky Willy, Sweet White Clover, Sweet Yellow Clover, Thistle (various), Tufted Vetch, Welsh Poppy, Yorkshire Fog.

Scrub

A great deal of undergrowth (mainly brambles) which offers immense protection to insects, birds and mammals is situated central to the area.

"Brambles protect the nesting birds we love to see and hear, including thrushes, robins, long-tailed tits, finches and warblers. They also provide shelter for shy or threatened species found in quiet places, such as the woodcock, which hides at ground level, and dormice, which climb and nest among the stems.

Although blackberry plants swamp other species, they are a part of successional woodland growth, protecting saplings from grazing animals so they can grow up and succeed them. If you have enough land to grow woodland, this might be useful to know.

Bramble flowers are open, prolific and generous suppliers of pollen and nectar for insects – from bees, wasps and hover flies to beetles and butterflies. Meadow Brown, Speckled Wood, Comma, Silver-washed Fritillary, Gatekeeper, Ringlet and Small Skipper are among the butterflies I've seen amongst bramble.

The berries form an important food for creatures great and small – from foxes, badgers and small mammals like wood mice and rare dormice to birds and insects. A few days ago I noticed a horse delicately picking blackberries with its lips, and dogs do this too. The leaves are food for wildlife as well. Buff Arches, Peach Blossom and Fox moth (cuckoo food) caterpillars are amongst the many moth larvae that eat them, not to mention many fly and beetle larvae. You will see many spiders on brambles catching flies. I often wonder how they know to make their webs above the juiciest berries."

Rowena Millar / The Wildlife Trusts

3. Naturalness

The degree to which a site supports natural features, including rock exposures revealing underlying geology, or demonstrates active or past natural processes

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>

Running underground through the site is a spring fed rivulet which is essential to the reservoir and ultimately the wider water system.

4. Rare or Exceptional Feature

Sites should comprise habitats or geological or geomorphological features that are rare or exceptional in the area. The local loss of a rare species or habitat may result directly in the reduction in its wider geographical range. Geological sites are often unique, formed in environments and processes that no longer exist, and their loss removes part of our understanding of the geological history of an area.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>

The Edgeley area is deprived of natural habitats of any significance. EWR remains the most significant and secure area in Edgeley capable of sustaining wildlife to any meaningful degree. Self-established natural woodland, grassland and scrub (especially existing together) are rare in this compact urban district. Its location next to a gated reservoir is unique. Also, running underground through the site is a spring fed rivulet which is essential to the reservoir and ultimately the wider water system.

5. Fragility

Some habitats and geological features are more sensitive to change and are at greater risk of being lost or damaged due to the direct or indirect impacts of climate change, human activities or other influences

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>

The area that constitutes EWR is at risk of urban development. An immediate threat of plans to destroy it to replace it with a car park exist.

6. Typicalness

Areas that exemplify a type of habitat, geological feature, or a population of a species, that is characteristic of the natural components of the landscape in which they are found.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>

EWR is typical of an urban re-wilded and self-seeded site and also a surviving natural area but also exceeds expectations of such a recovery process virtue of a period being fenced and gated with limited access to footfall. It is an exemplary example of nature's recovery - a victory for the environment, a potential victory for wildlife and the green jewel of a community that has let nature have space.

7. Recorded History and Cultural Associations

Sites with links to land-use, industrial and cultural history, historic events, literary or other associations in art, and the history of natural environment research can reveal environmental

change over time, changes in the use of natural resources or changes in perception of the natural environment.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>

EWR is a perfect example of how nature can reclaim rich, secure and productive space in urban and industrial environments when allowed to do so. The progress of its re-wilded state can be tracked by historical records through an urban period ending fifty plus years ago back to a relatively rural existence prior. The Manchester Mercury (newspaper) in the C19th records the white sands springs and above mentioned rivulet as a potential asset for use by the textile (dying) industry at that time. The site was left to the people of Stockport by the Sykes family whom purchased it. The site exists within and as part of a Conservation Area which is configured around the land gifted to the people of Stockport by leading figures of the textile industry.

8. Connectivity Within the Landscape

Species may require habitat comprised of dispersed areas which are accessible and part of a functional network. Individual sites (both wildlife and geological) need to be considered in terms of the contribution they make to wider ecological networks.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>

The site is crawling with insects and serves as an important larder and link in the food chain for wildlife not just on site but on the neighbouring reservoir and Alexandra Park. A natural spring fed rivulet runs through EWR under the ground intrinsically linking this site with the reservoirs and thereafter the wider river system. The gated reservoir, which is a haven for aquatic life also offering its own important ecoservices to the community, is only divided from EWR by a fence.

The foxes whom have numerous dens on the site provide a great service in the ecology of the reservoirs helping to keep a natural balance. With so little natural wild habitat, urban foxes primarily scavenge for food but given the chance they will hunt for small mammals such as rats and mice, helping to keep rodent numbers under control. Not only do they assist in keeping local rat populations down but foxes will take the opportunity to seize Canada Goose eggs and young, keeping in check their rapidly breeding numbers.

9. Value for Appreciation of Nature and for Learning

Sites can provide opportunities for local educational use, enabling people of all ages to learn about, better understand, experience and enjoy local wildlife and geology. Sites with less intrinsic interest may be of nature conservation value for the opportunities they provide for the appreciation of nature. Sites may also provide opportunities for ecological or geological research.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>

Locally, EWR stands as a single well situated viable option in giving the people of Edgeley (as well as other nearby areas of Stockport) access to ecosystem services which will contribute toward human well-being

and social cohesion as well as stemming the decline of natural habitat and species abundance across the geographical spectrum.

Ecologists have established that EWR consists of woodland, scrub and grassland. These are three defined sub-systems, each of which are important for introducing and re-introducing people to nature. The sum of these sub-systems offer a range of beneficial contributions for and from nature. With enhancement, integral sub-systems such as these and EWR as a whole, provide the potential to offer the local community; educational, health, and respite services, as well as a rich variety of other general biodiversity services. A nature-based solution/ecosystem-based approach (as advised by CBD and committed to by UK government) would aim to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage EWR in its entirety. More of what a designated nature reserve at EWR can offer people is presented in EWRG Objection Document [Part 4: Community, Health & Education](#).

In the immediate locality of the planned development (i.e. Edgeley) there is a distinct lack of wildlife habitat of any reasonable size or condition. Evidently EWR is the only parcel of land in Edgeley that can be truly considered as offering the potential to enhance wildlife habitat on any meaningful scale. Edgeley is a deprived area. It is not only deprived economically but access to meaningfully sized spaces managed for nature at this current time, is zero. Edgeley is a local community. National government has committed to sharing all the benefits of the genetic resources of nature fairly, including with indigenous people and local communities.

Many individuals in Edgeley, including children, marginalised groups, and people with disabilities or health problems, have interests other than football. They also need gateways leading to social interaction and local more accessible opportunities to enjoy and benefit from the activities within natural habitat that a gated urban wildlife and nature reserves at EWR can provide. Such activities would include being involved in the protection, creation, restoration, enhancement and management of urban nature reserves as well as activities which such reserves can provide.

It is clear, particularly in urban environments, that people have lost touch with the cultural practices and learning that natural habitat can provide. There is a wealth of evidence to suggest that the negative impact of not having access to such activities locally within urban areas is detriment to health and wellbeing. EWR offers a potential opportunity to re-introduce such activities to generations of children and adults. EWR has the potential, with correct management and enhancement, to provide historically cultural biodiverse friendly and sustainable products and activities which can also lead to improvements in health and well-being in the community. The positive differences of activities pursued in a natural habitat setting are discussed in EWRG Objection Document [Part 4: Community, Health & Education](#).

With the added inclusion of community growing beds such as those provided by Seeding The Change (see [Part 7: Alternatives](#) and [Part 4: Community, Health & Education](#)) EWR holds potential value in meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit sharing. People and communities have cultural needs as well as economic needs. For example; picking wild fruit for pies and jam was once a widespread activity until relatively recently. With Edgeley lacking in similar areas, the size of EWR as it is now, offers opportunities for people local or near to Edgeley to practice such cultural needs and/or re-educate their children of what beneficial wild species exist. In regard to wild species; EWR also has the potential to serve as an educational base for the local community. Understanding this should be an incentive for the conservation and sustainable use of EWR after enhancement in order to thereafter provide an area which meets people's needs through sustainable use and benefit sharing.

More information and supporting documentation regarding this site/land can be found at
www.edgeleywildlifereserve.com