

NCA 33 Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill

Overview

The NCA is a transitional landscape around the dramatic upland core of the Bowland Fells, and it is included within the Upland and Upland Fringe Agricultural Landscape Type. The southern part of the NCA covers the moorland outliers of Pendle Hill, Beacon Fell and Longridge Fell. It is a diverse landscape dominated by undulating pasture, enclosed moor, broadleaved woodland, parkland and waterbodies. Fields at lower elevations are small to medium-sized, and are enclosed by hedgerows with large mature hedgerow trees. At higher elevations pasture is largely rough grazing and field patterns become more regular, bounded with stone walls. Agriculture is mainly dairy and livestock farming. Over half of this NCA is within the Forest of Bowland AONB. The rivers are a significant feature, with the River Ribble forming the north-east boundary of the NCA, as well as the main valley in the south, along with its tributary, the River Hodder. The River Lune marks the north-west boundary, along with the River Condor, and the west side is delimited by the Lancaster Canal. Many smaller rivers flow westwards into the River Wyre. The settlement pattern is dominated by small villages, hamlets and farmsteads, with Clitheroe and Longridge the only towns, both on the south side of the area. There are also several country houses in designed parkland. The NCA is important for communications, as it covers routes around the high land of the Bowland Fells and accesses routes through the Pennines between Lancashire and Yorkshire. Main roads include the A59, the A65 and A 682, whilst the M6 runs along the western edge of the NCA. Given the importance of hedgerows and hedgerow trees to the character of the area, the overall coverage of woodland is low, at only 7%, of which just under a quarter is ancient woodland. Deciduous woodland is found mainly on valley sides, with extensive areas of predominantly ancient, semi-natural woodland on the ridges, slopes and sides of the main river valleys. The woodlands on the northernmost side of the Fells are particularly important for their rich assemblage of mosses and lichens.

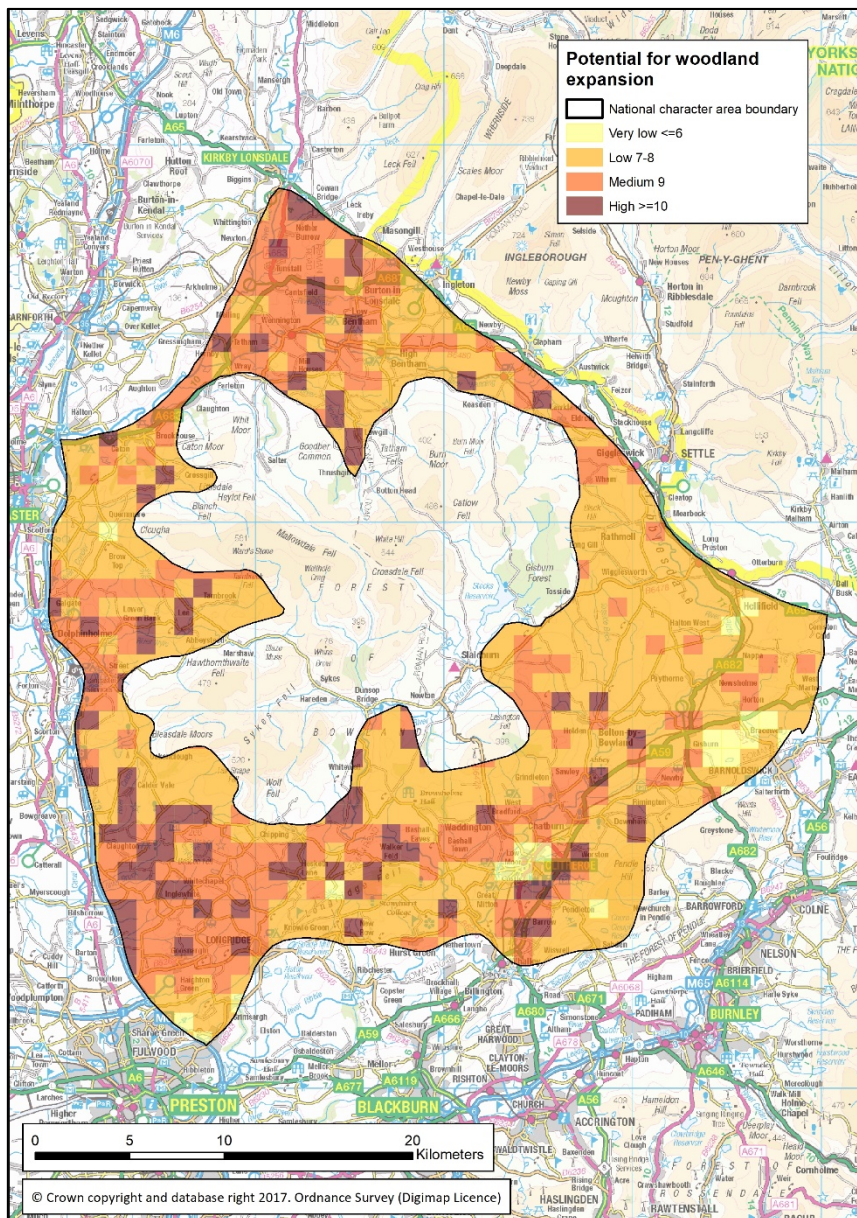
The Historic Environment Character

Archaeological evidence for human settlement within the NCA is not plentiful, but does include some earthwork monuments of national significance. There are two prehistoric defended enclosures on the north-west side of the Bowland Massif overlooking the Lune Valley, whilst on the south side, there is a Bronze Age stone circle and urnfield at Bleasdale and a burial cairn. Roman remains are concentrated in the Lune and Ribble Valleys, both used as key communication routes with forts at Over Burrow to the north, and at Ribchester, just outside the southern boundary of the NCA. There was a Roman pottery manufacturing site at Quernmore, also on the slopes above the Lune Valley. The settlement pattern of small villages had its origins in the later medieval period, and some developed out of vaccaries, or cattle farms. The fields around settlements and on valley bottoms are small to medium in size and probably originated as medieval closes for individual farm holdings. There is also some evidence of former common fields, in the form of enclosed strip fields. Common grazing land at higher elevations was enclosed from the late 18th century onwards and has a more regular pattern of larger fields. In the post medieval period, industry grew in importance, with a cottage-based textile industry, which later developed into a water-powered factory-based industry in Calder Vale, Oakenclough, Dolphinholme and Galgate. Lead-mining and lime burning along the Ribble Valley have also left significant

archaeological remains. Settlement expansion dating from the 19th and 20th centuries is generally restricted to the south and south-east (Clitheroe and Longridge). Modern development around village fringes gives a suburban character, with a mix of building materials and styles.

Opportunities for Woodland Expansion

The mapping of historic and natural environment attributes indicates that the opportunities for woodland expansion are low, though there are clusters of high potential around Longridge and on the north side of the Ribble Valley, as well as on the north side of the area around the valleys of the Rivers Lune and Wenning. These areas could absorb the expansion of existing woodland as well as new woodland belts that fit into the existing field patterns. The expansion of woodland belts is an opportunity highlighted by the NCA profile, though with the proviso that any planting respects the existing landscape character. The main opportunity highlighted by the profile, however, is the potential for new wet woodlands.



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