

County: Lancashire **Site Name:** White Moss

District: Ribble Valley

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981.

Local Planning Authority: Ribble Valley Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SD 792546 **Area:** 13.47 (ha) 33.28 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50 000 103 **1:10 000** SD 75 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1979 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985 **Date of Last Revision:** 1991

Other Information:

Boundary amended by extensions during the 1991 revision.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

White Moss is a watershed/valleyside mire situated 5g km south-west of Long Preston at an elevation of about 185 m AOD. Formerly more extensive, White Moss has been reduced in recent years through agricultural reclamation but is important as the best surviving example in Lancashire of this mire type.

The site lies in a peat-filled depression on boulder clay overlying limestone. The depth of peat is considerable in the centre the site but grades into the surrounding mineral soils. At the centre of the surface of the moss is very wet and slightly quaking, with *Sphagnum* moss accompanied by common and hare's-tail cotton grasses *Eriophorum angustifolium* and *vaginatum*, marsh cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris* and sedges, including common sedge *Carex nigra*, bottle sedge *C. rostrata* and white sedge *C. curta*. There are patches of cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccus* and bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* in more open areas and occasionally sundew *Drosera rotundifolia* and bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*. This gives way to firmer ground where purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* is intermixed with heather *Calluna vulgaris*, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and bog myrtle *Myrica gale*. Floating patches of *Sphagnum* and depressions in the surface of the moss reveal the location of former peat-cuttings.

Along the drier sides of the moss purple moor-grass, tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* and sedges become dominant and there are patches of willow scrub and occasional birch. A wide range of other plants of wet habitats are present here including sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*, angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, marsh marigold *Caltha palustris*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, marsh bedstraw *Galium palustre*, ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi* and various rushes.

The mossland is surrounded by agricultural grassland which occupies the margins of the peat body. Some of this has been included within the site for hydrological reasons.