

File ref:

County: Lincolnshire **Site name:** Tuetoes Hills

District: West Lindsey

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

Local Planning Authority: West Lindsey District Council

National Grid Reference: SE 844014 **Area:** 12.47 (ha) 30.8 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 112 **1: 10 000:** SE 80 SW

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

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 8.12.1999 **Date of Last Revision:** -

Other Information:

This is a new site managed by Forest Enterprise.

Reasons for Notification:

Tuetoes Hills support an important mosaic of dry acid grassland vegetation including an inland example of acid dune grassland dominated by sand sedge *Carex arenaria*. This type of vegetation, formerly characteristic of active inland dunes of the north Lincolnshire Coversands, is now rare in Lincolnshire and very restricted in its distribution nationally.

Description:

Located on the wind-blown cover sands of the lower Trent floodplain overlying Triassic Mercia Mudstones, Tuetoes Hills represents one of the few remaining localities supporting species-rich stands of lowland acid grassland typical of the Coversands of north-west Lincolnshire. The site is lightly-grazed by rabbits and is subject to periodic disturbance through harvesting of timber.

Large stands of acidic grassland with sand sedge *Carex arenaria* as the most abundant plant cover a prominent series of semi-fixed inland sand dunes, where sands are generally loose and free-draining. Associated with the coarse swards of *Carex arenaria* are a range of herbs which include wood sage *Teucrium scorodonia*, heath groundsel *Senecio sylvaticus*, sheeps fescue *Festuca ovina*, heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile*, sheep's sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, pill sedge *Carex pilulifera* and cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*. Where rabbit activity is less vigorous, this community becomes more luxuriant and diverse with field mouse-ear *Cerastium arvense*, changing forget-me-not *Myosotis discolor*, ladies bedstraw *Galium verum*, meadow saxifrage *Saxifraga granulata*, field speedwell *Veronica arvensis* and thyme-leaved sandwort *Arenaria serpyllifolia*. Heather *Calluna vulgaris* also becomes locally dominant and forms small but cont.....

Tuetoes Hills (cont...)

distinctive stands. In places regenerating young trees encroach into this *Carex arenaria* - dominated grassland.

Shorter, well-grazed turf consists of herb-rich parched acid grassland largely composed of *Festuca ovina*, *Galium saxatile*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris* and *Rumex acetosella* with less frequent amounts of *Carex arenaria*, common mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum* and lower plants such as the moss *Ceratodon purpureus* and lichen *Cladonia chlorophaea*. Areas of more open bare sand, where ground disturbance is greater, support a wider range of ephemeral herbs such as shepherd's cress *Teesdalia nudicularis*, lesser trefoil *Trifolium dubium*, little mouse-ear *Cerastium semidecandrum*, whitlow-grass *Erophila verna* and common stork's-bill *Erodium cicutarium*.

Peripheral areas of open broad-leaved woodland are dominated by pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and silver birch *Betula pendula*, with locally frequent sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and gorse *Ulex europaeus*. A very typical woodland ground flora is characterised by varying amounts of creeping soft-grass *Holcus mollis*, wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa*, bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, broad buckler fern *Dryopteris dilatata* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus*. Creeping willow *Salix repens*, a localised plant in Lincolnshire, can also be found along woodland edges. Stands of coniferous plantation consisting of mature Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris* also have a locally rich acid grassland flora.