

MATTERDALE VALLEY



MATTERDALE HABITAT SURVEY

SUPPORTED BY FOUW, LAKE DISTRICT FOUNDATION AND MATTERDALE
COMMUNITY



**Lake
District
Foundation**
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BACKGROUND

- Initial idea inspired by Professor Lois Mansfield
- Phase one habitat survey is a standardised system for classifying and mapping wildlife habitats in Britain
- Most recent phase one surveys of Cumbria done in the 1980's
- Change in land management over this time likely to mean there may be some significant changes in habitat
- It was decided to use Matterdale valley as a pilot for possible larger survey



Approximate Survey Area

- to the north of Ullswater in the old parish of Matterdale, to include Gowbarrow Fell; Little Mell Fell; Great Mell Fell; and the catchments of Aira Beck, Troutbeck and Mosedale Beck – Approx 80km²

INITIAL STEPS

- Steering group formed May 2022 consisting of members of Friends of Ullswater Way (FOUW) and Matterdale nature group
- Initially 40 people expressed an interest in being involved
- Initial funding from FOUW and Lake District Foundation used to purchase manuals and field guides etc
- In June 2022 Lois provided online training to a group of 18 volunteers followed by a full day training event, half a day in the classroom and half a day in the field hosted by Sam and Claire Beaumont

INITIAL STEPS continued

- Consultation with landowners initially by letter followed by a community meeting
- Assistance given by National Trust as large areas of National Trust land involved, and permission from Watermillock and Matterdale Commoners received
- Consent forms and risk assessments drafted
- Insurance for volunteers provided under FOUW

Initial surveys 2022

A number of surveys were completed including Great Mell Fell and locally owned land

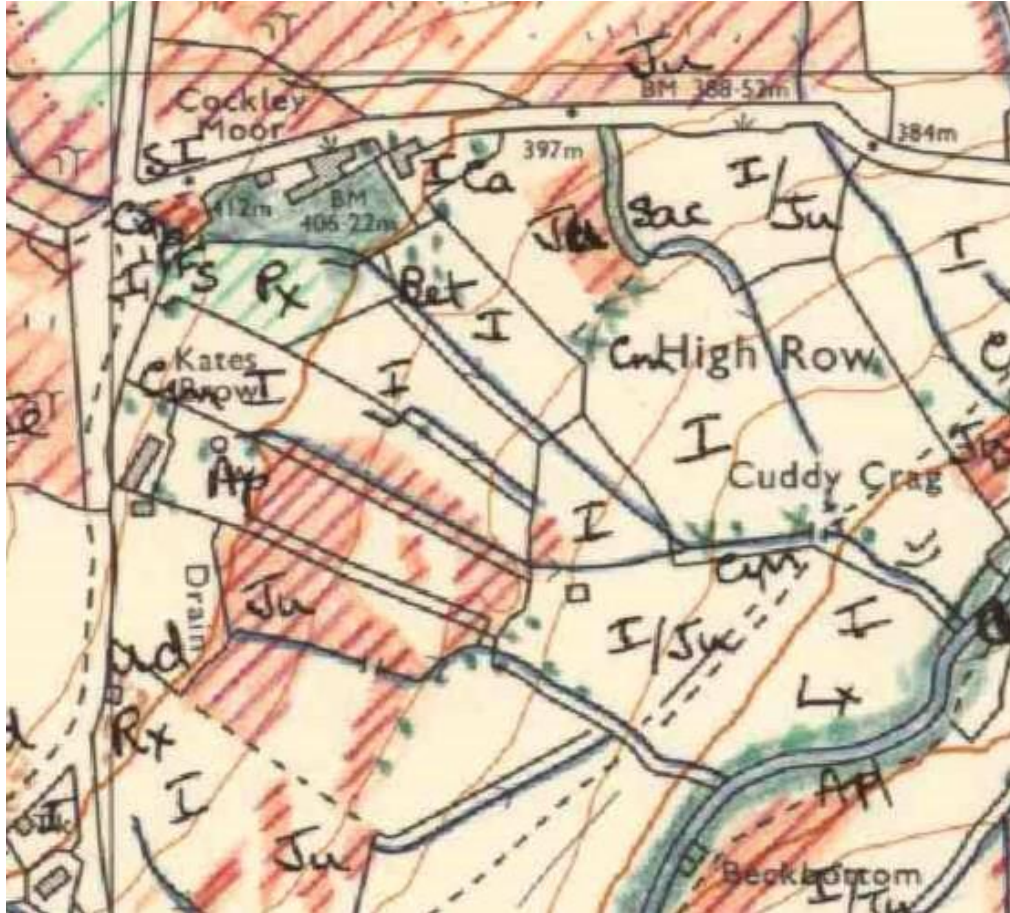
An intensive period of surveying was undertaken on Great Mell with helpful input from the National Trust

Previous survey of Great Mell Fell was available for comparison

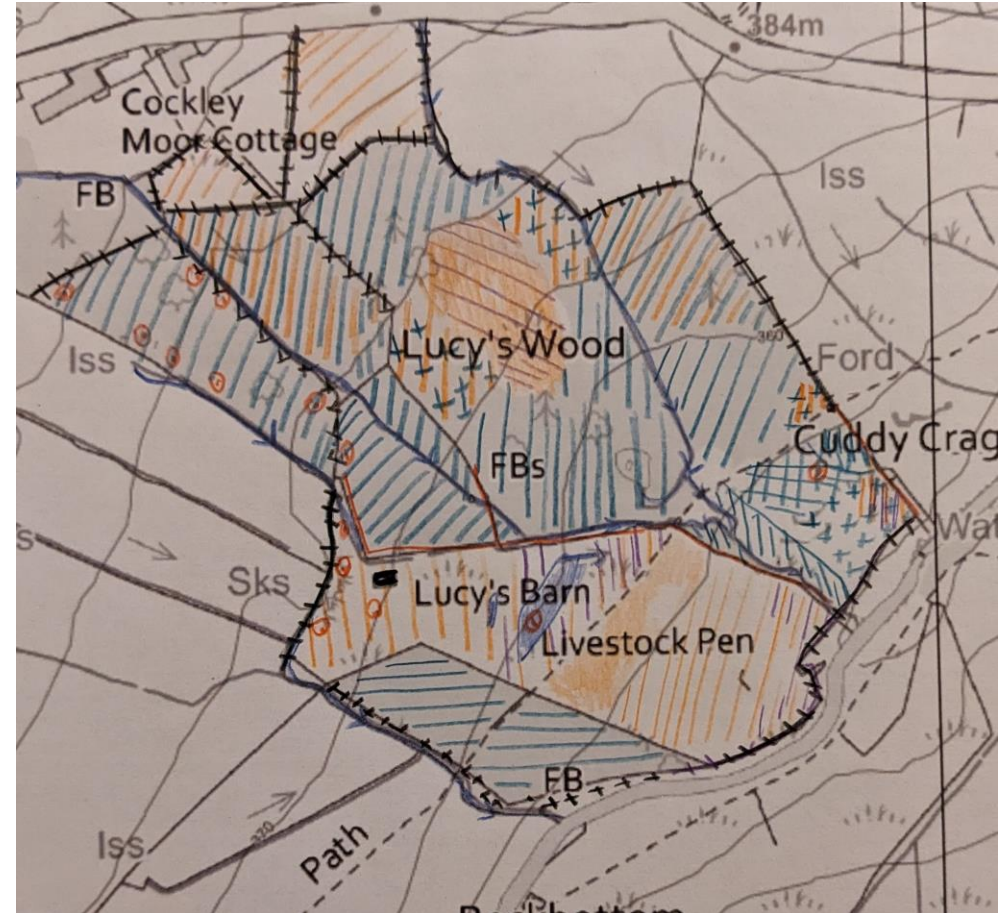
One large group survey was carried out to reinforce training

The following are some examples of completed surveys

Lucy's Wood



1980s Phase 1 survey map

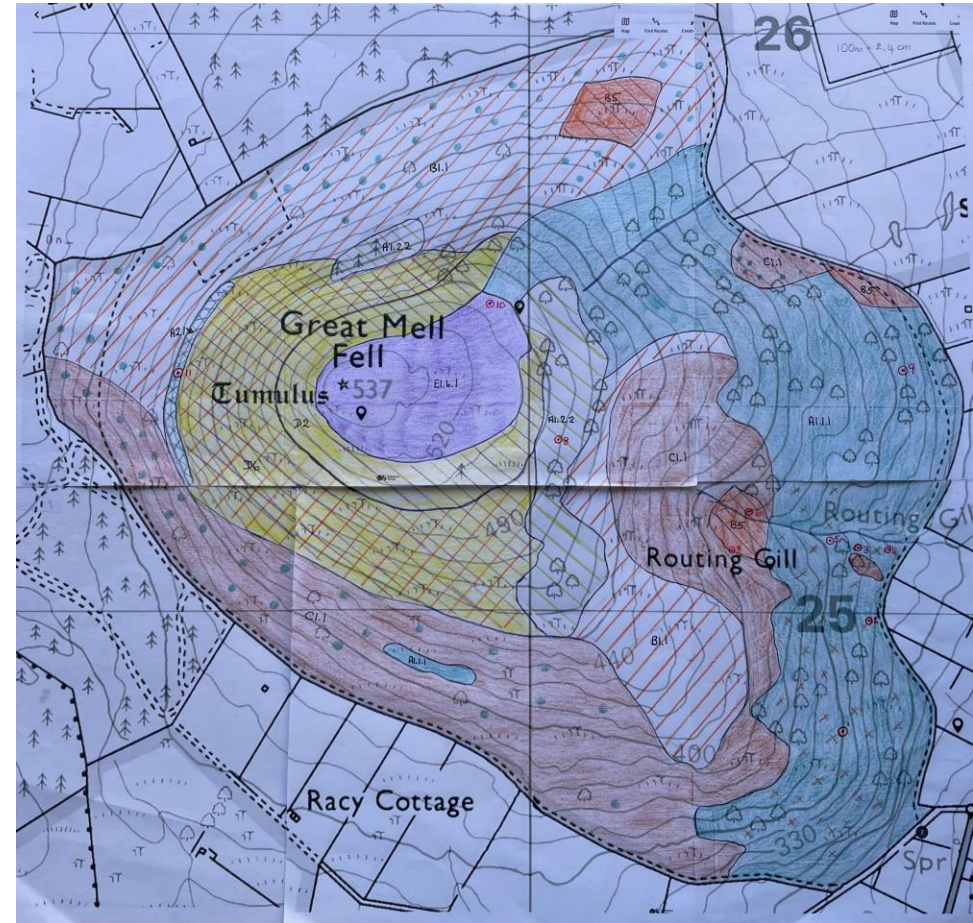


2022 group survey map

Great Mell Fell



1980s Phase 1 survey map



2022 Phase 1 survey map

POSITIVES

Lots of enthusiasm from volunteers
Valuable learning experience
Innovative project; no current data
Opportunity for community engagement
Opportunity to improve communication with landowners and users and general community
Some very positive support from local landowners

CHALLENGES

Literature out of print
Map licencing issues
Most volunteers no previous experience
Difficulty distinguishing between habitat type especially grassland
Short season
Original methodology paper and pen
How to use the data?

Further training



Grasses / rushes etc



Wild Flowers



Fungi



Lichens



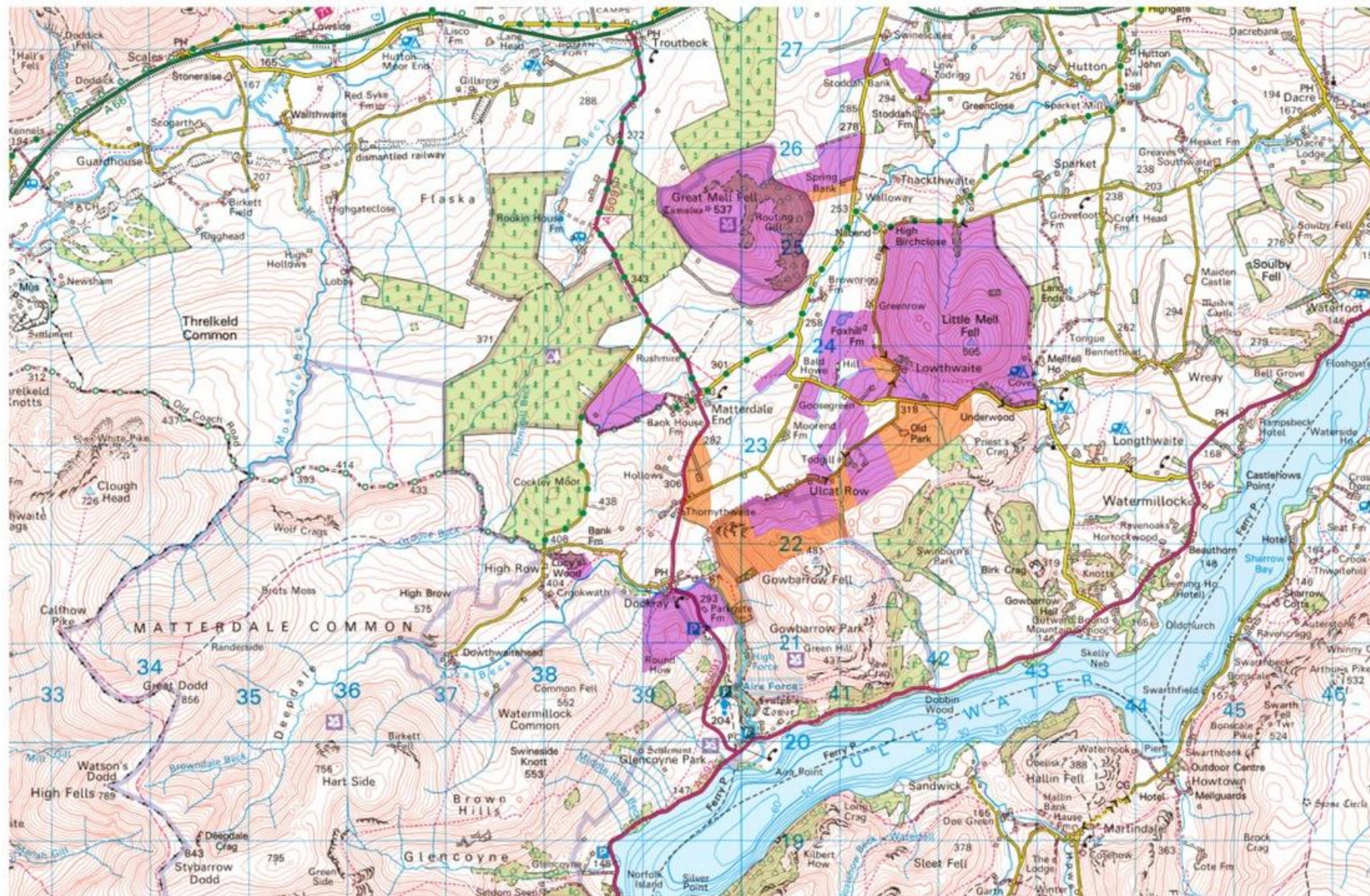
Mosses



Winter Trees

Moving forward to 2023

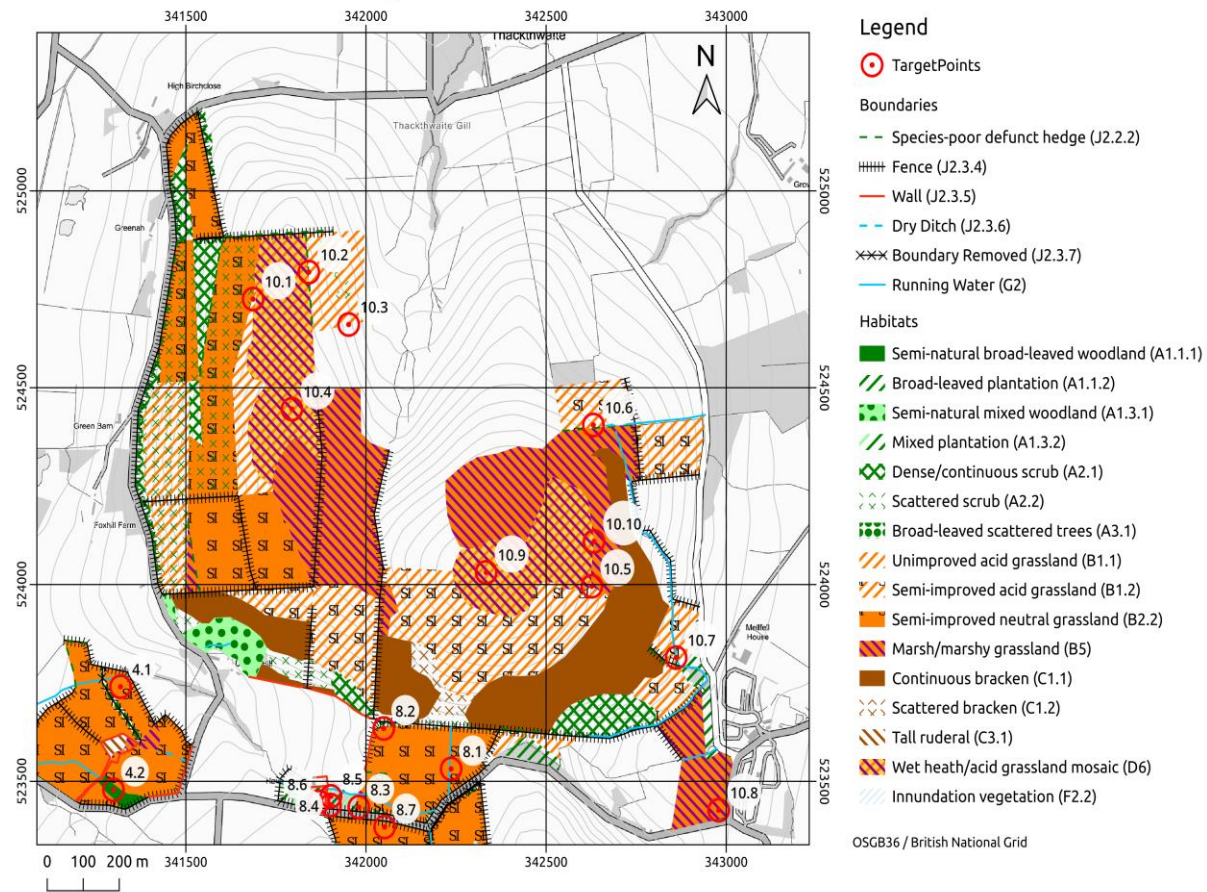
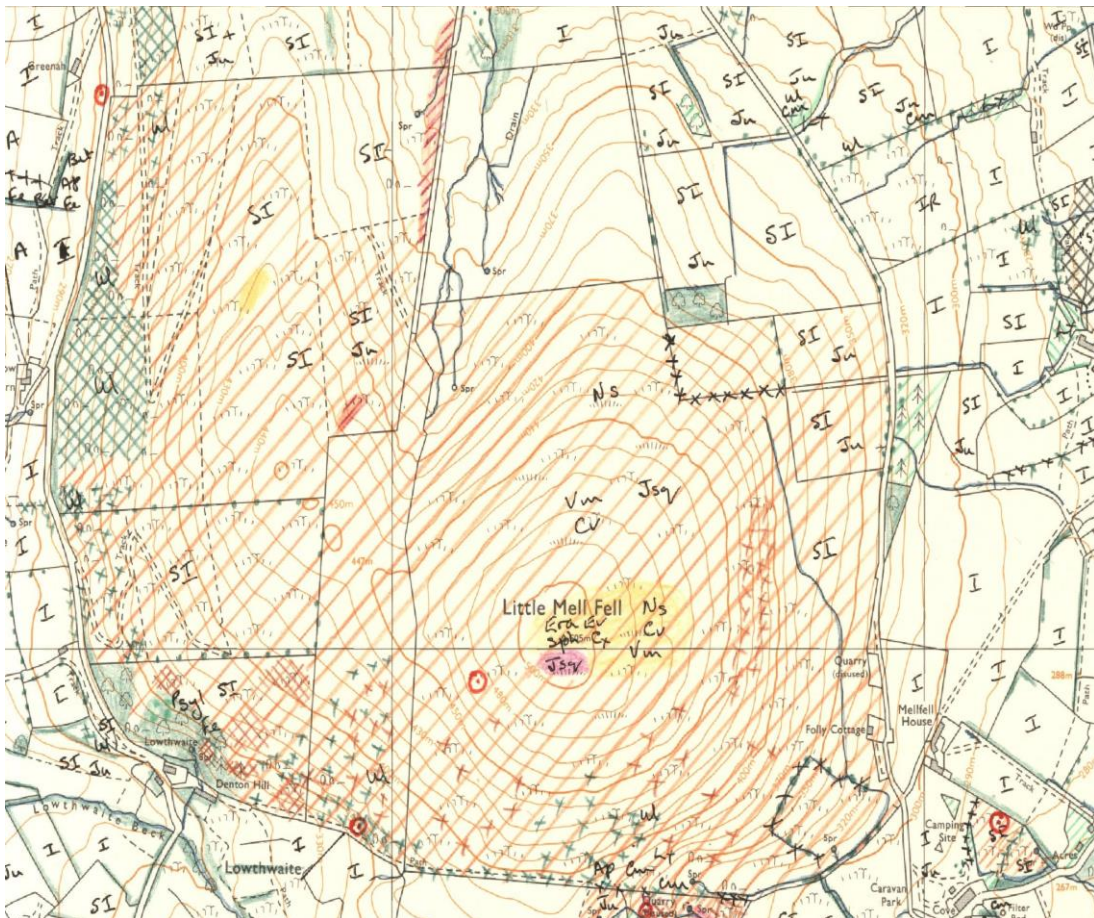
- Refresher day June 2023 with targeted area of fell - attended by Professor Mansfield
- Further approaches to landowners
- Large reference maps created to show areas with permission
- Further surveys completed including Little Mell Fell with 260 volunteer hours in total



Areas surveyed in 2022 and 2023

Priority survey targets for 2024

Map comparison 1980's hand drawn and digital - Little Mell Fell

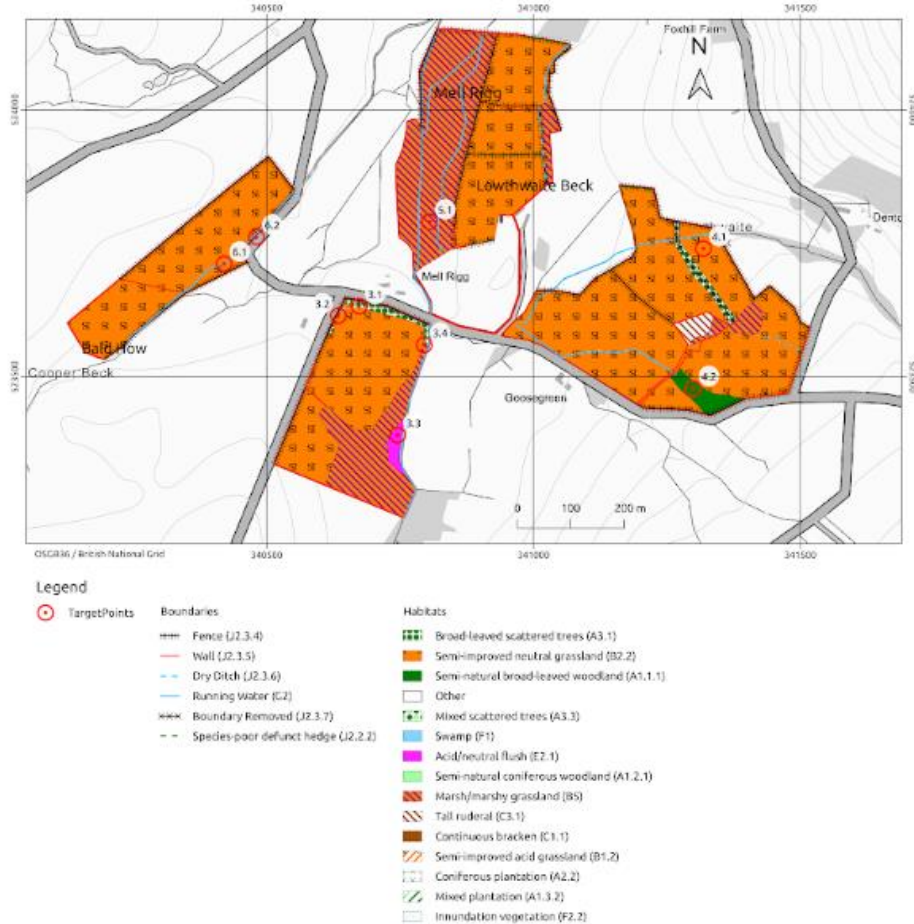


Comparison 2023 hand drawn and digital

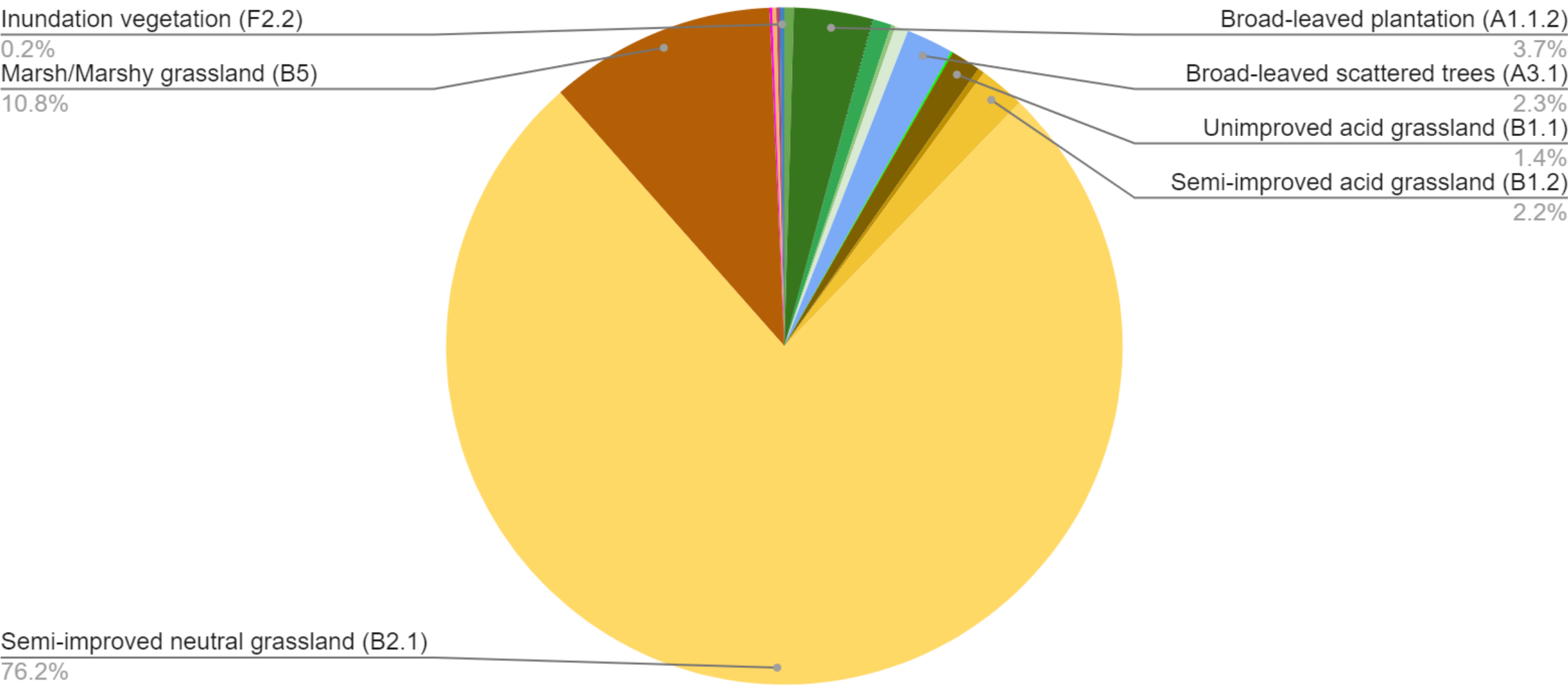
- Lowthwaite and Cooper Beck



Lowthwaite and Cooper Beck Habitat Survey



Habitats



Going forward – background work

- Explore how to use the data ; initial meeting with CBDC
- Digitisation of completed maps - QGIS
- Comparison of our surveys with 1980's maps
- Explore increased use of technology to improve accuracy
- Use of Google Earth for base maps during surveys
- More permissions from landowners
- Go back to landowners after surveys

Going forward – on the ground

- Continues to be an enthusiastic group keen to go
- More specialised training
- Need for more people with expertise to be involved to improve quality of data eg at our next training day
- Use technology e.g. OS Mapping to improve accuracy of boundaries
- Draw up survey programme for 2024 – limitations of weather / availability etc
- Arrange debrief after each session to get maps agreed/completed

Benefits

- Allows comparison with 1980s maps – what has happened?
- Gives 2020s base line for analysis in future – how do policies / changes affect the landscape?
- Species feedback to CBDC

ALSO

- An established group for those who want to learn more about habitats and nature
- Helping the community to understand and appreciate the landscape
- Improving communication between farmers/landowners and the wider community
- Involving people outside of the Matterdale Area
- A pilot for a wider area ? – passing on lessons learned



Thank you



Professor Lois Mansfield
Friends of Ullswater Way (FOUW)

Lake District Foundation

Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre – Stuart Colgate

Landowners and tenants

National Trust

All our volunteers and specialist trainers

Special thanks to Carla Pont for the work on digitising maps and producing statistics

Any
Questions??