

Beckford Nature Reserve

With the imminent arrival of spring, it is time for an update on progress made during the winter of 2008/09, and we are pleased to say that we have successfully reached our target for the approved maintenance plan.

Huntsmans have fulfilled their promise to create an opening with supporting stonework, enabling the installation of a disabled gate on Rabbit Lane. They have done a grand job, and although it looks a little raw at the moment, will look better when grasses, ivy, etc. have worked their magic. The disabled gate is on order, and will be similar to those recently installed on the right of way. The Voluntary Cotswold Wardens have agreed to install this free of charge, for which we are very grateful.

We have had three very successful working parties during the winter. The alders in front of the hide were coppiced to improve the view over the lake, and a barrier was constructed from the brash to encourage nesting wildlife, and make safe access to the edge of the lake. About a dozen hazel and rowan saplings were planted around the Reserve and, when mature, these will provide a useful food source for birds and small mammals. Sterling work was carried out to remove some of the sycamore saplings, as these are great colonizers and their spread should be discouraged.

A barrier was constructed at the gate nearest the hide, behind the post and rail fence to improve safety. More woodchips were laid on the paths, and work was carried out to tidy up the stones at the new entrance. The Trustees were concerned to hear that there had been reports of two people slipping down the slope from the upper Court Farm Lane entrance, and in view of this it was decided to bring forward the installation of some more steps. These have been constructed from materials obtained on the site. Many thanks to all those who have taken part in these working parties – and a big ‘thank you’ to Jane and Mark from the Stabling for the very welcome refreshments provided afterwards.

It is regrettable that, following advice from Natural England, a warning sign has had to be placed at the base of the SSSI quarry face to advise visitors of its instability after the recent frosts. It is hoped that a more fitting sign will be installed by Natural England when they have carried out their work. They still have not given us a date.

Another bench has been donated to the Reserve, and has been placed on the north side of the lake to take full advantage of the fantastic summer we are going to have! Two very nice bird boxes have been installed as a memorial to Pete Cosh, and we hope to see tenants for these in the coming months.

We would like to remind visitors to the Reserve that with the approach of spring and the nesting season, dogs should be kept closely under control to avoid disturbance to wildlife. Some complaints have been received regarding dogs running wild in gardens adjoining the Reserve, and this we would actively discourage.

We hope you all have an enjoyable spring and summer.

Our details, including accounts and trustees report may be found, free of charge, at <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk> or for those without internet access, by contacting any of the trustees.