

# AFAN MINERAL RAILWAY

Reference No: NPTSINC017

Ward: Cymmer

Grid ref at centre: SS8352795655

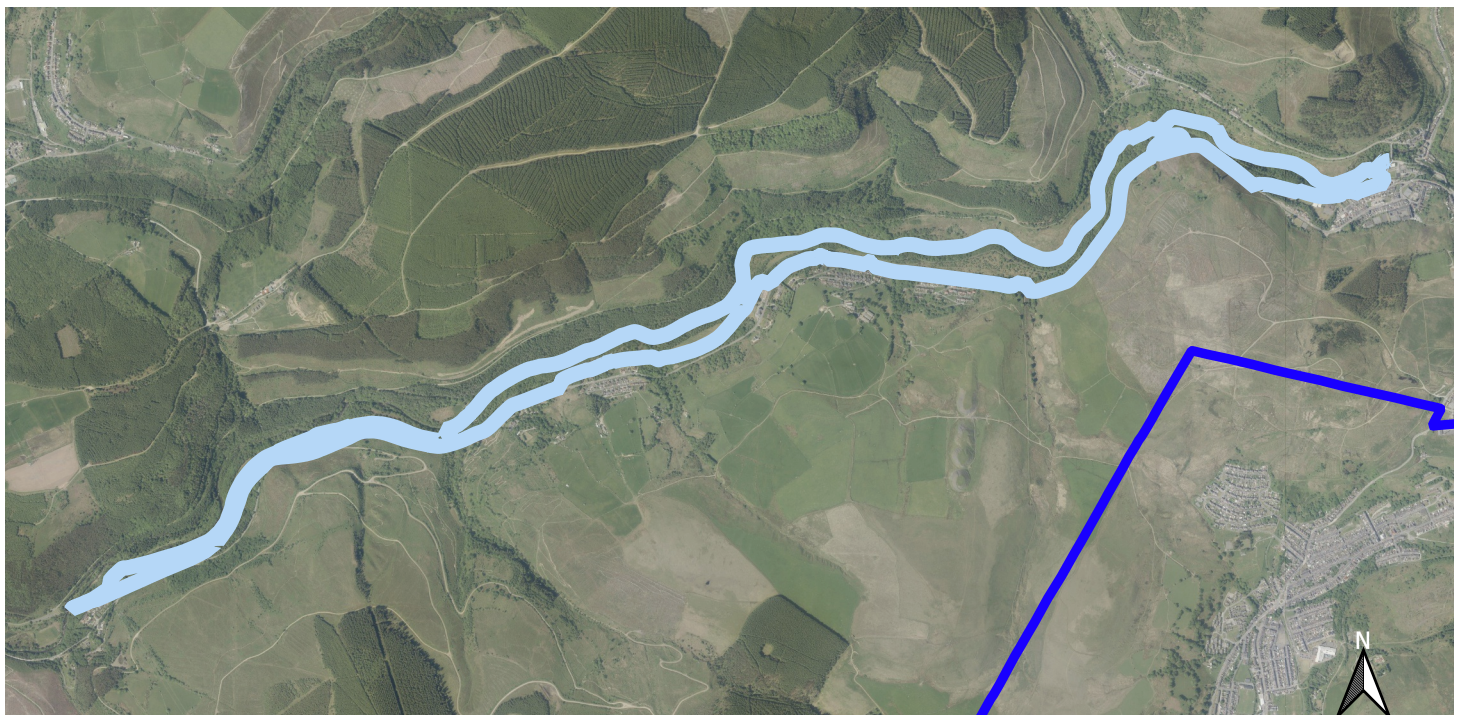
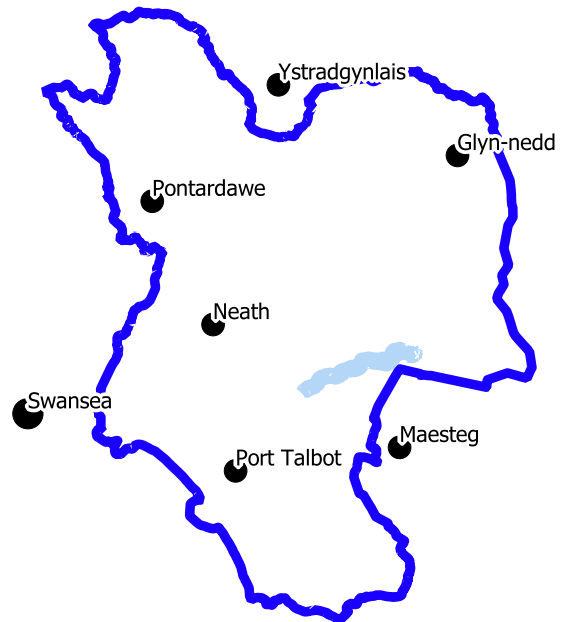
Area (ha): 58.02

Reason for selection:

H1:3 native woodland

H14:3 open mosaic habitats on  
previous developed land

S5 Invertebrates



Ordnance Survey Licence

© Crown Copyright and database right 2020. Ordnance Survey 100023392

© Hawlfraint a hawilau cronfa ddata'r Goron 2020. Rhid Trwydded yr Arolwg Ordnans 100023392

**SITE OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION**

# AFAN MINERAL RAILWAY

## Site Description:

A linear site running along the middle section of the Afan Valley between Cymmer at 182m asl and Pontrhydyfen at 64m asl. The underlying geology is that of the South Wales Upper Coal Measures Formation, the valley bottom holding glaciofluvial deposits and till. The principal habitat is riparian woodland, a large proportion of which is included on the Ancient Woodland Inventory. Additional habitats include a mosaic of grassland, heath, Bracken slopes and spoil elements in a valley which also holds considerable industrial heritage. Public access extends along the entire site by means of a tarmac cycle track along a dismantled railway line. Other than management along the cycle track verges, intervention elsewhere appears to be limited. In 2017 an intensive invertebrate study was done by the Colliery Spoil Biodiversity Initiative finding 169 invertebrate species with at least 7 species of conservation importance. The presence of habitat specialists indicate that colliery spoil habitats of Cwm Blaenpelenna are mimicking more natural habitats. Recorded taxa include 260 vascular plants, 132 bryophytes, 169 invertebrates, 32 birds, 19 lichens, 8 fungi, 2 mammals, plus 1 each of amphibian and reptile.

## Qualifying features

H1:3 Native woodland  
H5:1 Lowland meadows 19/8  
H7:1 Lowland dry acid grassland 10/7  
H9:3 Purple moor-grass and rush pastures 14/12  
H14:3 OMPDL a25/20 b8  
S5 Invertebrates - Small pearl-bordered fritillary, Dingy skipper

## Important species

S7: Otter, Barn Owl, Red Kite, House Sparrow, Lesser Redpoll, Nightjar, Song Thrush, Spotted Flycatcher, Small pearl-bordered fritillary, Dingy skipper. NS: Inclined Distichium. Local: Dark Brocade, Map-winged Swift, Red-necked Footman  
Local Interest: Bell Heather, Bilberry, Bluebell, Carnation Sedge, Eared Willow, English Stonecrop, Fragrant Agrimony, Goldenrod, Heath Bedstraw, Heather, Ivy-leaved Crowfoot, Lesser Bulrush, Lesser Skullcap, Pale Willowherb, Purple Moor-grass, Round-leaved Crowfoot, Rustyback, Sand Sedge, Scaly Male-ferns, Sharp-flowered Rush, Silver Hair-grass, Small Cudweed, Small Toadflax, Trailing St John's-wort, Twiggy Spurge, Water-purslane, Western Gorse. Alpine Thread-moss, Broadleaf Grimmia, Narrow Mushroom-headed Liverwort, Park Yoke-moss, Starry Thyme-moss, Verdigris Tufa-moss, Wall Feather-moss, Western Earwort.

## Management Recommendations

Scrub encroachment and natural succession are the major threats on coal spoil. Since 2017 a small group of volunteers have been managing the site including scrub management and scything in the meadows, removal of Himalayan balsam. The management should focus on removing INNS, maintaining the meadows and clear spoil areas.

Last surveyed: 2017 Surveyor: CSBI/AEV Author: BS

To be read in conjunction with Wildlife Sites Guidance Wales (WBP 2008) and the NPT amendments. This area has been designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. This does not formally protect the site or place any restrictions upon the landowner. Neath Port Talbot Council's Countryside & Wildlife Team will endeavour to support and encourage activities that maintain and enhance the biodiversity interest of the land; where funding is available, funds may be provided to facilitate these activities. The information given is used to ensure that nature conservation is taken into account in planning decisions. The designation itself does not confer any rights of access to the site and places no restriction on the management of the land.

