

Powys Moorland Partnership

Lead organisation:
Ireland Moor Conservation Ltd

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Grant Award: £600,000

Location: Powys

A large landscape scale project to encourage moorland restoration through bottom-up collaborative action driven by communities living and working on and around the moors. It seeks to realise multiple benefits including public health, skills sharing and education. Key stakeholders including landowners, farmers, and communities have created a vibrant moorland environment to boost biodiversity, delivering economic and social benefits. The project aim was to create an exciting strategic initiative in Powys and realise the full potential of nearly 20,000 acres of moorland stretching from the Llan Valley in the South to Beguildy common in the North. This area is enjoyed by local communities as well as tourists.

The project was built around four main aims; to promote moorland biodiversity, to better manage heather habitats, to balance moorland recreation with natural resources and wildlife and to engage with local communities.

The decline in the moorland biodiversity was due to a combination of factors and through a series of moorland management practices and new conversations with the surrounding community, the aim was to reverse that decline through a collaborative approach.



The project put a management plan in place to restore the health of the landscape. Red grouse are a key indicator species on the heather moorland and are in fact the only wild indigenous bird to live there 12 months of the year. Not only can the condition of the moorland be restored to improve the breeding opportunity for ground nesting birds, brown hares and multiple invertebrates, but it also aimed to deliver ecosystem services including carbon sequestration, water retention and flood risk alleviation.

Typically the vegetation on these moorlands comprises a mosaic of dwarf shrubs such as ling, bilberry, crowberry, and bell heather interspersed with bracken, common sedge and gorse. In the wetter areas cross-leaved heath, purple moor-grass, bog asphodel, cotton grass and the insectivorous sundew can be found with an under storey of mosses, often including carpets of sphagnum species.

The Powys moors are used extensively by walkers, horse riders, dog walkers, motorbike riders, 4X4 vehicles and the project are running a programme of talks to educate each group so that their recreation is not at the expense of the wildlife or damaging the landscape. By implementing innovative tools to better explain Open Access to encourage people to use the land responsibly particularly during the spring bird breeding season.

A key principle of the project is to achieve a workable and long-term balance between nature and people, through a collaboration of all interested parties, engaging with & generating participation from multiple local stakeholders so that everything from bird life to tourism has an opportunity to thrive.

The Powys Moorland Partnership aligns to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015) seeking to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. Bird recording, arts & music, wellbeing workshops, citizen science, and traditional skills of the uplands are some of the activities that the project attracts to help people understand some of the challenges that our landscapes face. Working with mental health charity MIND, the project is taking groups out onto the various moorlands to help improve the wellbeing of people who don't normally get out into this beautiful landscape.

As the project comes to a close PMP have been reflecting on their project and how the collaboration and the landscape can be supported for the future ensuring long term sustainability.

Building Collaborations & Partnerships:

Facilitating the Powys Moorland partnership bringing landowners and graziers together to achieve multiple goals

Habitat Restoration: Upland heath restoration and bracken management programme, helping to restore major areas of the 24,600 ha sites.

Training & Job Creation: 2 full time wardens employed to manage the diversity on the moor

Natural Flood Risk Management: Pond & Swale creation for ground nesting birds on the hills

Training & Job Creation: Provision of training courses to support sustainable management of the uplands

Sustainable Grazing: Native Carneddau pony grazing across the hill to improve biodiversity

Educational Programmes: Connecting local school children with moorland keepers, graziers, storytellers and historians

Community Engagement: Working with mental health charity MIND, taking groups for walks around the moorlands

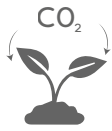
Community Engagement: Implementing tools to better explain Open Access, to encourage responsible use of the land

Habitat Restoration: Creating a mosaic of heather habitats, ffridd, ponds & swales to improve resilience across the moor

Habitat Restoration: Sensitive rotational cutting and burning to help regenerate heather, reduce bracken growth and reduce fire risk

Knowledge Transfer & Innovation (KT&I): Started a wader protection scheme and seasonal bird counts to survey biodiversity, monitor success and share best practice

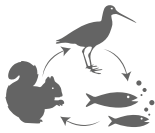
Community Engagement: Running recreational activities and a programme of talks to educate various groups of land users



Carbon Sequestration – supported by upland heath restoration, a bracken management programme, pond and swale creation and sustainable pony grazing.



Climate Change Adaptation – supported by upland heath restoration, a bracken management programme, pond and swale creation and sustainable pony grazing.



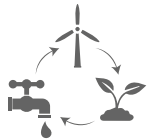
Enhanced Biodiversity – supported by upland heath restoration, a bracken management programme, pond and swale creation, sustainable pony grazing, creating a mosaic of heather, rotational cutting and burning and a wader protection scheme to monitor the diversity.



Ecosystem Resilience – supported by upland heath restoration, a bracken management programme, pond and swale creation, sustainable pony grazing, creating a mosaic of heather, rotational cutting and burning and a wader protection scheme.



Reduced Flood Risk – supported by natural flood risk management, pond and swale creation and slowing the flow.



Soil, Air & Water Quality – supported by upland heath restoration, sustainable grazing and pond & swale creation.



Health & Wellbeing – supported by training courses, educational programmes, collaboration with mental health charities, implementing tools to explain open access, running recreational activities and a programme to educate groups of land users.



Community Cohesion – supported by upland heath restoration, employing wardens, training courses, seasonal bird counts, educational programmes, collaboration with mental health charities, implementing tools to explain open access, running recreational activities and a programme to educate groups of land users.



Rural Skills & Heritage – supported by upland heath restoration, employing wardens, training courses, engaging with local stakeholders, educational programmes and running recreational activities.



Development of Skills Capacity & Expertise – supported by employing wardens, training courses, engaging with local stakeholders, educational programmes, implementing tools to explain open access and running a programme to educate groups of land users.

Get Involved - If you would like to get involved with the Powys Moorland Partnership or have some ideas to contribute, please contact Catherine on urmyc.sdnalroomsywop@tcatnoc