

Realising the Natural Capital of Welsh Peatlands

Lead organisation:

Snowdonia National Park Authority

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Grant Award: £ 924,956

Location: Pan Wales

A project, taking collaborative action with stakeholders, including communities, to transform and improve peatlands across Wales. Improvements include ecological stability and long-term sustainable management of peatlands. It is hoped to deliver the project on spatial (e.g. catchments) and sectoral (e.g. protected sites) scales, as well as developing the expertise and capacity of partners to deliver peatland restoration.

This project will help deliver the 2020 target to bring peatlands into sustainable management. Coordinated action will deliver multiple environmental benefits through collaboration with existing mechanisms together with capital works covering the current 'difficult to do' sectors of peatland restoration, leading to longer term sustainable management supported through Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES). Other critical activities will lead to more coordinated and coherent approaches covering external funding, training, education, PES procurement, monitoring and research activities relevant to Welsh peatlands.

On behalf of the Welsh Peatland Action Group, the project is led by Snowdonia National Park Authority, in partnership with Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, IUCN UK Peatland Programme, Montgomeryshire Wildlife

Trust, the National Trust, Natural Resources Wales, and Swansea University. The crux of this project is to secure sustainable management of our peatland resource across Wales, thereby maintaining or setting habitats on the path to good favourable condition; to identify the benefits of building resilience to these ecosystems and deliver a range of critical ecosystem services.

The project provides a strong opportunity to extend on progress with erosion restoration, focussing on re-vegetation, hydrological manipulation to prevent persistent drainage along erosion features, bracken control and visitor management.

This pan Wales project, focus on tackling some of the most 'difficult-to-do' areas of peatland restoration, including:

- **Sustainable management of lowland peatlands**
- **Sustainable management of *Molinia* dominated upland peatlands**
- **Peat soil erosion**
- **Peatland drainage**
- **Sustainable management of heather dominated blanket mire**
- **Afforested peat**
- **Peat heavily modified by agriculture**



Working with Snowdonia Society volunteers - Dan Struthers Photography copyright

Snowdonia National Park holds around 30% of Wales' peatlands, with over 25,000 hectares of peat, and an estimated 17 million tonnes of carbon. The vast majority of these habitats are a globally rare type of peatland: 'blanket bogs' (upland peatlands 'blanketing' the hillsides).

Some 3500 hectares of these peatland habitats are found between the Carneddau peaks in the north of Snowdonia, with large blanket bogs on the slopes of Llwytmor and Foel-Grach. Historically, these peatlands have been heavily grazed which, when combined with the natural drainage off the mountains, has led to significant erosion and loss of carbon. Large peat 'haggs' – bare, cliff like formations that expose the underlying peat soil – have formed on the blanket bogs, draining the peat and triggering a huge release of greenhouse gases.

Nowadays, the mountain landscapes of the Carneddau are grazed at much lower levels, with protections in place for delicate montane habitats and, of course, the iconic Carneddau ponies.

To reverse the effects of erosion work will be undertaken to re-vegetate vulnerable areas, slow the flow of water and restore the peatland. The work will greatly reduce the greenhouse gas losses as well as improving water storage in the surrounding peatland.

Knowledge Transfer & Innovation (KT&I):

Development of a Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) strategy and a research platform for peatlands that enables better coordination of research efforts

Peatland Restoration: Identified over 40 peatland sites across Wales and prepared and validated Peatland Code projects available for investment and restoration

Training & Job Creation: Created jobs and implemented a best practice training programme for peatland practitioners

Knowledge Transfer & Innovation (KT&I):

Development of the peatland Code

Building Collaborations & Partnerships:

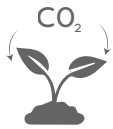
Peatland action group established and successful partnership with IUCN

Habitat Restoration: Peatland restoration action focussing on the core 'difficult-to-do' areas of lowland peatlands

Educational Programme: Engagement activities have been delivered with school pupils, students and the general public

Community Engagement: Development of engagement and interpretation tools

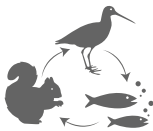
Training & Job Creation: Development of training and delivery of a standards charter for peatland restoration



Carbon Sequestration – supported by upland & lowland peatland restoration and identification of peatland sites to be brought into favourable condition, locking in carbon and reducing loss.



Climate Change Adaptation – supported by developing a PES strategy, preparing 10 Peatland Code projects, establishing the peatland action group, lowland peatland restoration and identification of peatland sites to ensure resilience.



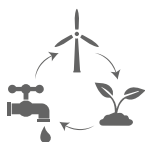
Enhanced Biodiversity – supported by establishing the peatland action group to share best practice, upland & lowland peatland restoration and identification of peatland sites across Wales.



Ecosystem Resilience – supported by developing a PES strategy, preparing 10 Peatland Code projects, establishing the peatland action group, lowland peatland restoration and identification of peatland sites to ensure resilience.



Reduced Flood Risk – supported by identifying locations where peatlands could play a role in sustainable flood risk management schemes. Through the PES strategy, upland & lowland peatland restoration and identification of peatland sites across Wales.



Soil, Air & Water Quality – supported by developing a PES strategy, preparing 10 Peatland Code projects for investment developing the Peatland Code, establishing the peatland action group, upland & lowland peatland restoration and identification of peatland sites.



Health & Wellbeing - supported by engagement activities with local schools and the general public. Engaging people with nature through open access peatland sites.



Community Cohesion - supported by job creation, engagement activities with local schools and the general public and development of engagement tools.



Development of Skills Capacity & Expertise - supported by developing a PES strategy and job creation. Sharing best practice and innovation through the peatland action groups.

Get Involved – The Snowdonia National Park Authority have many volunteering opportunities and will provide any training and equipment required for the role.

 www.snowdonia.gov.wales/looking-after/projects/peatland-restoration-in-snowdonia