

South West Peatland Partnership

The importance of a collaborative approach in achieving large-scale peatland restoration in the UK's South West

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Overview

Large scale peatland restoration simply isn't possible without collaboration between many stakeholders. When starting a new site, all impacted parties need to be considered and collaborated with to ensure the most positive outcome.

Land Owners

For the most part across the UK's South West, peatland restoration does not take place on land that is owned by the organisation carrying out the restoration. For the South West Peatland Partnership (SWPP), we work with the Duchy of Cornwall, National Trust, National Park Authorities and South West Water among others to gain access to land and ensure we are carrying out work at appropriate times and places i.e. avoiding live firing, mitigating against unexploded ordnance, and considering livestock where necessary.

Land Users

Land users are often a wider group than land owners ranging from members of the public using footpaths and access land, to Commoners who graze livestock on Dartmoor. Although Commoners do not own the land, they have the right to graze their livestock and so it is important to discuss any locations we are restoring with them. Sometimes the way in which restoration is carried out means that an area's grazing might be impacted temporarily or may be fenced to protect it from deer which requires agreement with Commoners. Likewise where our restoration projects are likely to be seen by members of the public out walking we will include signage with information about the restoration occurring so they aren't alarmed by the presence of diggers on the moor.



Figure 1: Signage at the edge of the restoration site flagging the presence of machinery to land users

Research

A large number of our stakeholders have a highly environmental focus, with research ongoing into the impact of restoration on biodiversity, the historic environment, and the carbon impact of degraded and restored peatlands.

SWPP partnered with both the University of Exeter and the University of Plymouth as part of our work to carry out further research and make sure that we fully understand the impact of peatland restoration in both the short and long term. We also work with individual research contractors in specialised fields e.g. looking into the historical uses of the landscapes and tin streaming.



Figure 2: University researchers surveying with the South West Peatland Partnership

Finance

For any project to begin it must secure funding. For peatland restoration in the UK the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme is aimed at improving carbon sequestration and storage through peatland restoration. This provides a percentage of the SWPP's funding, with additional funding from other partner organisations including South West Water, the Environment Agency, National Trust, Duchy of Cornwall and Cornwall Council.

Regulatory

The SWPP is in part motivated by the Water Industry Nature Enhancement Programme (WINEP) requirements for South West Water. Part of SWW's regulatory requirements from the Environment Agency include improving the water quality of the catchment, with the aim that following peatland restoration, dissolved organic carbon in water reduces which in turn means fewer chemicals are needed to treat drinking water.



Figure 3: The SWPP hosted the Art and Energy Collective for an educational field trip to learn about Sphagnum Mosses

Employees

Our employees are hosted by 4 partner organisations: South West Water, National Trust, Dartmoor National Park Authority and Exmoor National Park Authority.



Figure 4: The South West Peatland Partnership team

Conclusion

Collaboration between stakeholders for large scale, holistic landscape recovery is the only way to successfully consider the historic environment, wildlife, water, land users and economy of a site. With the size of the sites worked on and the variety of interest in the land, there's too much to be represented by a single organisation. From access to funding to knowledge sharing, staff hosting to land ownership, all of our partner organisations, whose logos are featured below, have different contributions to make to work together for effective results.

