



Peatland Programme

‘Investing in Peatlands: Delivering Multiple Benefits’

Conference

20 – 22 June 2011

University of Stirling

**Conference outputs from
workshops and plenary discussion**

Conference: key suggestions for actions

The IUCN Conference 'Investing in Peatlands - Delivering Multiple Benefits' on 20-22 June 2011 was attended by over 140 delegates with representatives from science, policy and land management.

The conference presentations and posters can be downloaded from <http://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/resources>.

The conference held five workshops on key peatland issues which provided input to the IUCN UK Commission of Inquiry on Peatlands and the wider IUCN UK Peatland Programme. The workshops identified key messages which were discussed in the plenum session.

Main actions

1. National peatland accounting
 - GHG and C benefits
 - Other service benefits
 - Meeting biodiversity targets, state and status
 - Agri-environment measures and impacts
2. Interdisciplinary research to:
 - Provide solutions for effective peatland management
 - Develop the evidence base
3. Establish a UK Peatland Hub
 - A one stop shop for information
 - Knowledge exchange
4. Establish and maintain long-term restoration projects
 - Support and promotion of good peatland projects
 - Support long term monitoring on restoration sites
5. Clear government signals
 - Reflect international commitments to protect and restore peatlands with high level national peatland goals and timescales and a coordinated programme for delivery
6. Joined up approach between agencies
 - Opportunities for delivery of landscape scale projects through catchment management planning
 - Recognise peatland role across wider public body duties e.g. climate change adaptation/mitigation, biodiversity

7. Partnerships

- Business, industry, land managers, NGOs, communities
- Connect end-beneficiaries with those delivering services
- Collaboration across public bodies, private sector, NGOs, and industry to share experience, promote good practice, and provide advice and training
- Take forward innovative new market and funding opportunities

8. Holistic approach

- Ecosystem health rather than simply maximising individual services

9. Highlight peatland benefits to society

- Market and non market values
- Showcase peatlands in education and national media

Peatland Restoration Funding Workshop

Chairs: Paul Leadbitter, Project Manager, North Pennines AONB Partnership & Alison Connelly, Head of Marketing, RSPB Scotland

Three themes were discussed:

1) How do we better engage/include PEOPLE with peatland conservation?

- Clear messages and arguments are needed
- Tell interesting stories about peatlands
- Tackle people's fears and prejudices about peatlands
- Sell 'special places' concept, engagement can be remote, not physical!
- Get it on TV and in film – Springwatch visit to a peatland next year?
- Professional Marketers – develop a peatland 'brand' – use positive language
- Use social media – connect/communicate in new ways

Conclusion: There is a need for a clear and exciting peatland story marketed professionally to include wilderness, iconic species and history which is distributed by media, TV and social media.

2) How do we engage/involve the private sector in peatland conservation?

- There is a need for clear messages and define what's in it for them
- Try and tickle the CSR funny bone
- To develop peatland carbon markets
- How can they sell our message for us?
- We don't only need money

Conclusion: To engage with the private sector there is a need to go with a well thought out message and plan about the importance of peatlands and how that relates to the private sector.

3) How does policy development relate to funding peatland conservation?

- A national water company policy consensus is important
- Development of flooding and biodiversity policy can fund peatlands
- Stress the long term multiple benefits of peatlands to decision makers
- Direct agreements with farmers

Conclusion: Policies being developed which provide funding to land managers must promote and reward peatland conservation over the long term.

Peatland Carbon Markets Workshop

Chair: Stuart Brooks, Chief Executive, John Muir Trust

Context from the morning presentations: Development of a carbon market for peat could provide the opportunity to fund restoration and conservation measures for peatlands at an appropriate scale.

The workshop supported the assertion that carbon markets could be exploited to the advantage of peatland conservation.

Key Points came out of the workshop:

- That development of a market for selling peatland ecosystem services provides the opportunity to lever in new resources (from business) to support peatland restoration on a large scale. Important given the potential contraction of public funds.
- Carbon trading already has an established mechanism and support processes, focused on woodland. Much can be learned from this. However a peatland specific scheme is required to help establish standards and provide some regulation. An independent and respected organisation is needed to help establish and manage this scheme in the UK. There is a potential role for the IUCN UK. The scheme should not be limited to trading of carbon and should be flexible enough to accommodate other ecosystem services such as water quality.
- Verification could be done via established voluntary carbon trading mechanisms.
- There is already a demand for buyers and sellers and brokers are beginning to put the two together.
- The Commission of Inquiry has demonstrated some consensus towards development of a peatland specific scheme.
- Pilot projects could run in parallel to development and promotion of the scheme. Carbon (or other services) could be sold 'in advance' to help support up front costs.

Peatland Water Services Workshop

Chairs: Chris Dean, Programme Manager, Moors for the Future Partnership & David Mount, Upland Hydrology Group Coordinator, Moors for the Future Partnership

Members of the workshop aimed to identify and start to scope out ways in which we could push forward the contribution which land management in the uplands could contribute to improved water quality.

1) Possible actions

- Communicate the case for peatlands to policy makers, to local people and to local authorities. Raise awareness at community level so that the wider population are motivated to put more pressure on funders / regulators.
- Engage with wider constituency, e.g. through corporate volunteering

- Set up catchment wide demonstration projects. Don't look at peatlands in isolation, put in wider context, at a landscape / catchment scale.
- Carry out hard-nosed cost-benefit analysis required to convince politicians of the value of Ecosystem services.
- Identify the constraints which mean different water companies negotiate different outcomes with OFWAT. Influence water company approaches to the next AMP round. Scottish Water have agreed to provide funding for sustainable land mgmt. where this can be shown to benefit their customers (issue here in terms of compliance with state aid).
- Use Water Framework Directive as a driver (e.g. for better water quality even when this is not to be used as drinking water). First round of RBMPs didn't say much about peat, cycle 2 of RBMP (to start 2015) is opportunity to say more.
- Support the establishment of a system for paying for ecosystem services
- CAP reform, agri-environmental schemes: ensure good peatland mgmt. is part of cross-compliance / single farm payment regime
- Capitalise on Water Safeguard zones / Drinking water protection zones
- Implement catchment sensitive farming approach for a whole group of landowners within a single catchment
- Implement pollution priority catchments in upland areas, and work to develop mechanism which means 'General Binding Rules' are enforced (Scotland)
- Use new duty on public bodies in Scotland to report on biodiversity every three years as lever.
- Levy on companies (esp. e.g. wind farms) given permission to carry out developments on / adjacent to peatlands to be used to fund improvements related to water bodies
- Bring UNFCCC GHG accounting mechanism into play, since this requires us to take account of fluvial flux of carbon from peatlands.
- Influence spatial planning system so that it takes peatland conservation needs into account to greater extent.
- Think about cross-border (e.g. Northern Ireland / Republic of Ireland) cross-ownership / cross-regional / cross-watershed opportunities
- Build on Pitt Review / Scottish govt. requirement that natural processes should be harnessed so they can contribute to flood risk mgmt. (this might apply more in terms of lowland peats – e.g. Somerset Levels – than it does in the uplands).
- Chase up commitment to peatlands restoration made by SNP in lead up to the election in May 2011.

2) Possible Funding mechanisms

- Sponsorship by private users of water (e.g. distilleries)
- Water company resources
- Aim to shift money (e.g. from BAP priority work) rather than raise new money, given financial straits the country is in.
- HLF landscape partnership schemes
- Don't forget small scale local charities, since all restoration work is by its nature local
- Involvement of others – joint working

CAP Reform/Payments for Ecosystem Services Workshop

Chairs: Pat Thompson, Uplands Policy Officer RSPB & Vicky Swales, Head of Land Use Policy, RSPB

The IUCN Peatland Inquiry process has highlighted the need for public support for farmers, crofters and land managers to secure the sustainable management and restoration of peatlands. Most of the benefits arising from peatlands and their management are not recognised by market mechanisms – they constitute non-market or public benefits. These benefits accrue to society as a whole but the individuals producing them are not rewarded for doing so. In the absence of a market to reward and incentivise the delivery of these benefits, they tend to be underprovided. There is a case therefore for public intervention to secure the provision of essential benefits and growing interest in creating markets for such benefits, where feasible.

1) CAP Reform

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is a major source of public funding in the UK (c. £3.5 billion/year) and has a significant influence on farm business decisions and land management. The workshop supported the view that CAP reform is needed to better support and target the management and restoration of peatlands. Key points arising are:

- A much greater proportion of the CAP budget should be targeted to deliver public goods from agriculture such as carbon storage, the maintenance of biodiversity and landscapes and maintaining water quality. This can be achieved through both Pillars of the CAP. However, a greater shift of resources from Pillar I to Pillar II is desirable.
- Pillar I represents the largest share of the CAP budget, distributed through the Single Farm Payment (SFP). Upland areas, where semi-natural vegetation and peatlands dominate and which make a significant contribution to public goods delivery, tend to receive the lowest levels of SFP support. A greater proportion of basic support – area payments - must be targeted to the uplands to help underpin the viability of farming and crofting in these areas. Securing the management of common land and common grazings is a key issue.
- Farmers in receipt of the SFP must comply with a range of conditions under a system known as cross compliance. There is scope to review and strengthen cross compliance requirements in order to protect our peatland resource. In order to be effective, these requirements must be adequately enforced.
- There is further potential to target Pillar I support towards those farms delivering public benefits. Options currently under discussion at EU level include a mandatory 'greening' component of direct payments (with priority given to actions addressing climate and environment goals) and an additional income support to farmers in areas with 'specific natural constraints' as a complement to Pillar II support. The extent to which such options could be used to support farmers in the UK uplands managing peatland habitats needs to be explored.
- The UK share of Pillar II EU rural development funding is the lowest of all EU Member States, due to historic spending patterns. Securing an increased share of

EU rural development funds in the UK, through the process of CAP reform negotiations, is necessary in order to respond to a wide range of environmental issues including climate change, declines in biodiversity and water pollution. Increased levels of funding would enable a greater level of resource to be directed at peatland management and restoration.

- Within Rural Development Programmes, agri-environment schemes are a key mechanism for supporting peatland management and restoration. Different schemes operate in the four countries of the UK. As well as overcoming funding constraints, a number of issues have been identified which, if addressed, could help to improve peatland management and restoration:
 - Complex administration and application procedures – these can be off-putting to potential applicants and limit uptake of measures which could benefit peatlands
 - Prescriptions and payment rates – schemes need appropriate prescriptions and adequate payment rates designed to support peatland management and restoration
 - Targeting – funding needs to be targeted at priority areas for peatland management and restoration to maximise the benefits
 - Lack of support for collaborative action – greater support for collaboration between farmers and land managers e.g. additional payments and facilitation of joint agreements could help to deliver landscape scale peatland restoration
 - Length of agreements – most agri-environment agreements are for 5 years but longer term agreements e.g. 10-20 years could help to secure greater commitment to peatland management
 - Lack of monitoring – there is insufficient monitoring of schemes to understand their benefits and impacts; this needs to improve to demonstrate value for public money and to help improve scheme prescriptions.
- There is a need for more information and advisory support for farmers, crofters and land managers, linked to support payments, to help them deliver desired outcomes.

2) Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES)

In the face of various constraints relating to CAP funding and measures, there is growing interest in Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) and the potential to develop schemes that incentivise the provision of non-market benefits. In particular, PES are seen as a way of better targeting payments to areas where they can maximise the provision of a wide range of services in places where they are most needed and can be most efficiently delivered. A key element of PES is that *'the users/beneficiaries of a service compensate the providers'*¹ and that any transactions are voluntary. Whilst many PES schemes are funded from the public purse (agri-environment schemes are a form of PES), there is a growing number of PES schemes financed by the private sector, particularly in relation to water management and quality.

Key points arising from the workshop are:

¹ Defra (2010) Payments for Ecosystem Services: A Short Introduction

- The EU Biodiversity Strategy and future Green Infrastructure Communication could help to open up funding for PES from different parts of the EU budget.
- Private markets are likely to be slow to develop and there may be more scope in places such as the Lake District (where beneficiaries can more easily see what is being provided) than remote rural areas such as Caithness and Sutherland. National Parks may have a role to play in this regard.
- Funds to pay for ecosystem services could be maximised if existing resources were pooled across Government Departments, agencies and the private sector. There needs to be a way to bring potential funding partners together and agreement sought on desired outcomes.
- Support is needed from Government to help develop carbon markets.
- Many landowners are interested in producing certain benefits/services from land i.e. food, timber or game for sporting interests and may be less interested in the wider benefits and services that land management can provide. A key challenge is how to engage with and interest such landowners in delivering wider ecosystem services and ensure their efforts are rewarded.

UK Peatland Hub Workshop

Chair: Mark Reed, University of Aberdeen, RELU/LWEC & Aletta Bonn, IUCN UK Peatland Programme

For more information about the proposed Hub, see separate briefing note. Key points that emerged from the workshop follow.

1) Key Deliverables

- The majority of key deliverables that were proposed were endorsed by the group
 - There was most enthusiasm for the knowledge exchange and communication functions of the Hub
 - There was disagreement over the extent to which the Hub should actively facilitate and foster new research, or simply create an environment in which new collaborations can emerge between researchers and members of the policy and practitioner communities
 - There was some disagreement over whether the Hub should link demonstration sites
 - There was a lack of support for the Hub acting as a data repository (this should be hosted elsewhere)
- It was recognised that the Hub would need to prioritise different functions in each of the devolved administration to avoid overlapping with existing initiatives e.g. Scottish Environment Web Portal or SEPA's new online resource library

- It was noted that the workshop had no land management interests represented, and it was suggested that local authorities should be engaged in the development of the Hub

2) Risks

In addition to the risks listed in the proposal associated with the Hub, the following risks were suggested if the Hub were **not** established:

- Loss of existing capacity and networks (IUCN UK Peatland Programme funding is until June 2012)
- Considerable waste of resources through inadequate restoration practice, double funding of research, not disseminating research
- Possible lack of funding for restoration (external funders need evidence of restoration effects, demonstration sites)
- Lost opportunity to reach new audiences
- Inaction by policy-makers due to disparate voices from scientific community
- Inconsistencies in decision-making at different administrative levels

The following suggestions were made to mitigate risks:

- Hub must assume facilitation not leadership role
- Engage with right external audience, including sceptical audiences, engage as early as possible
- Be realistic about what Hub can/cannot do
- Develop communication strategy – tailored to different audiences e.g. including those without internet
- Become cost-neutral by demonstrating value to participants who fund in future – include business and local authorities

3) Funding Opportunities

The following options were proposed by the workshop facilitators for discussion:

- A. LWEC funded, if sufficient funding partners support it
- B. KE funding from Research Councils (e.g. ESRC/NERC)
- C. Umbrella of multiple funding initiatives/regional activities e.g. flow country hub
- D. Membership subscription
- E. Matched funding through EU bids etc

It was deemed that the Hub would be unlikely to attract Research Council investment for all parts of the hub, but all options should be kept open, perhaps focussing on membership as a later option, once the value of the Hub has been demonstrated to the community through initial funding phase. In addition to this, the following suggestions were made:

- Consider following the BTO Garden Bird Watch model - £10/year subscription pays for them to do their analysis
- Investigate the possibility of tapping into Scottish Government Main Research Provider's KE budgets

- Direct funding from devolved administrations?
- HLF funding
- Commercial partners?
- Peatland component of forthcoming DEFRA call for UK KE network between demonstrator projects?
- Staff secondment/exchange e.g. for year/18 months a shot
- Explore charitable trusts
- Establish a business plan for a peatland hub
 - Costs/benefits (see below)
 - Funding options
 - Communication plan
 - Links to other initiatives

4) Costs and Benefits of a Peatland Hub (to agencies, peatland practitioners and researchers)

Costs:

- Stakeholder fatigue if the Hub imposes additional meetings
- If information isn't balanced and consistent in quality, may waste people's time
- Will cost money to set up and maintain but worth it if better information available
- Bias towards peatlands due to Hub when other systems may provide better policy options but not communicating their story so well

Benefits:

- Reduce stakeholder fatigue by reducing number of meetings needed
- Save people time if well structured/maintained/up-to-date/accessible
- Value for money delivered via fit-for-purpose regulation
- Added value to each component by bringing it all together: whole greater than sum of parts
- Reach a wider audience re: value of peatlands
- Become trusted source of information – reduce time searching/using poor info
- Clearer voice from science
- Peatland community almost there – easy to set up and example other systems could follow

The next step for the UK Peat Hub is to develop a business plan, including communication and funding strategy was suggested. A first meeting of the short-term working group, chaired by Susan Davies, SNH, is envisaged for end of August/ early September 2011.