



The Moorland Association



# **Blanket Bog Restoration – shared challenge; shared outcomes.**

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# What is the Outcomes Approach?



## Upland outcomes national framework - DEFRA January 2014

- This framework sets out how partnerships should work together to prioritise the outcomes from upland areas.
- Includes environmental, social and economic benefits.
- Identifies the key resources such as:
  - wildlife
  - drinking water supply
  - carbon storage and
  - flood protection
- Adopts the ecosystem approach, which puts people at the heart of the environment – values local skills and knowledge in determining the priorities at the local scale



# Development of the Outcomes Approach on Blanket Bog



- Discussions around the country over an initial pilot approach 2014
  - Outcomes Pilots - March 2014
  - Learning from existing examples – Dartmoor Farming Futures
- Meetings around the English Uplands - how might an outcomes approach work on deep peat? Best Practice Burning Group 'Bogathon' June 2014
- Advice and feedback to Defra's Upland Stakeholder Forum
- A shared Strategy for the Restoration of Blanket Bog in England – adopted June 2015
- Burning Group becomes Uplands Management Group to deliver Strategy-Focus on techniques for establishment of Sphagnum – Report 2015
- Q and A meetings on moorland for moor managers and keepers 2016
- Restoration guidance for land managers introduced September 2017



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# An Outcomes Approach on Deep Peat: “Bogathon”

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# An Outcomes Approach on Deep Peat - Bogathon



## Identifying and agreeing the components on the ground –what do you want to achieve:

Improve the health and functionality of deep peat (greater than 0.4 metres in depth) on moorland in England so that it:

- delivers good water quality including associated biodiversity and drinking water
- keeps stored carbon locked up and locks up more through peat creation
- supports characteristic blanket bog plant communities
- supports sustainable agricultural grazing
- supports sustainable grouse shooting

# Outcomes



**A viable grouse shoot**



**Thriving upland bird populations**



**High water quality and flood alleviation**



**Landscape and access enjoyment**



**Functioning blanket bog and moorland habitats in favourable condition**



**Carbon storage and sequestration**



**Wildfire mitigation**



**Sustainable upland sheep farming**

# What good looks like..

- ❑ High water table – peat surface wet and bouncy
- ❑ Pools in hollows
- ❑ *Sphagnum* abundant
- ❑ No bare peat



- ❑ Diverse blanket bog vegetation (more than 6 indicator species)
- ❑ Dry and wet loving species
- ❑ High cover of *Sphagnum* with abundant hummock forming species
- ❑ Low cover of heather and graminoids



- ❑ Diverse vegetation structure
- ❑ Vegetation growing at different heights
- ❑ Hummocks and hollows in the surface topography

- ❑ Heather and *Sphagnum* growing in balance without dominance by a single species

## 1 Agree the status of the peat and vegetation - what are we looking at?



## **2 Determine if the peat is meeting objectives: ie a resilient ecosystem delivering the required outcomes**





# An Outcomes Approach on Deep Peat - Bogathon



3 Agree what is needed to deliver outcomes and what actions are required?



# The Blanket Bog Restoration Strategy - an outcomes approach



The outcomes approach allows us to deliver the Blanket Bog Restoration Strategy

Based on informed voluntary action by land managers

Engage land managers so that restoration decisions and actions are built into day to day management

Trust, understanding and collaboration are key

# The Blanket Bog Restoration Strategy - an outcomes approach

The overarching vision for the strategy is to:

- Maintain and restore blanket bog
- Recognise the essential role land managers play and that inspiring and fully engaging people in delivering multiple outcomes will be key to achieving success
- Restoring and enhancing the range of ecosystem benefits relevant for each site
- Build and support sustainable businesses in the uplands which have adapted to work in harmony with the requirements of well-functioning blanket bog
- The first step is to gain consensus around what the suite of outcomes should be and then, working back from there, what the necessary actions are and the timescales are by which these will be achieved.

# The Blanket Bog Restoration Strategy - an outcomes approach

## What is needed to make this happen?

- Improved understanding and consensus over what vegetation composition and structure is required to deliver carbon, water, biodiversity, grouse and sheep outcomes
- Re-vegetation and stabilisation of bare peat
- Re-wetting of dry peat to raise water tables to support an increase in mosses, particularly Sphagnum. Better plant identification skills.
- Better informed use of existing management tools to ensure delivery of the above objectives and innovation to broaden the tools available in the tool box – techniques in Sphagnum report.
- A simple and repeatable monitoring programme that can be applied widely to show direction of change and assess success



## Next Steps



Continued programme of engagement with land managers to improve understanding about how blanket bog restoration fits in with wider development:

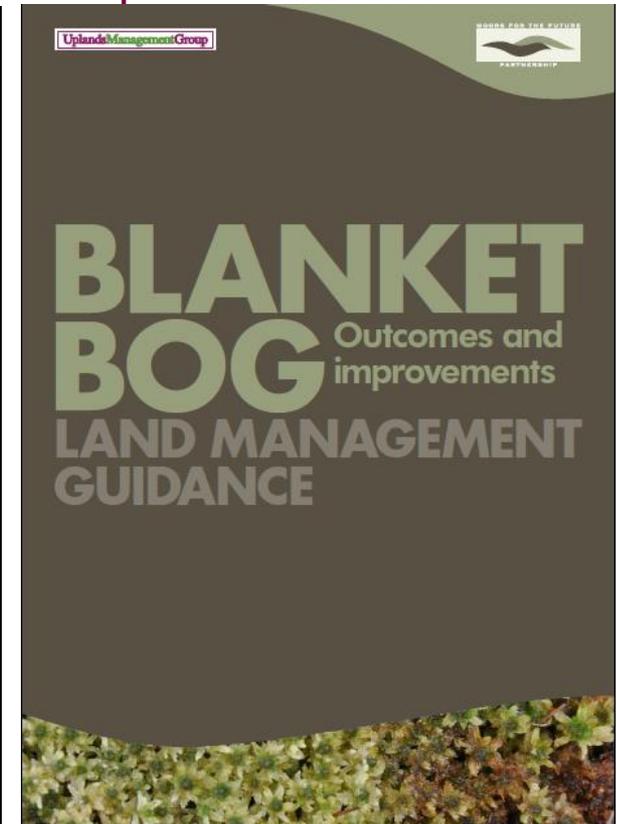
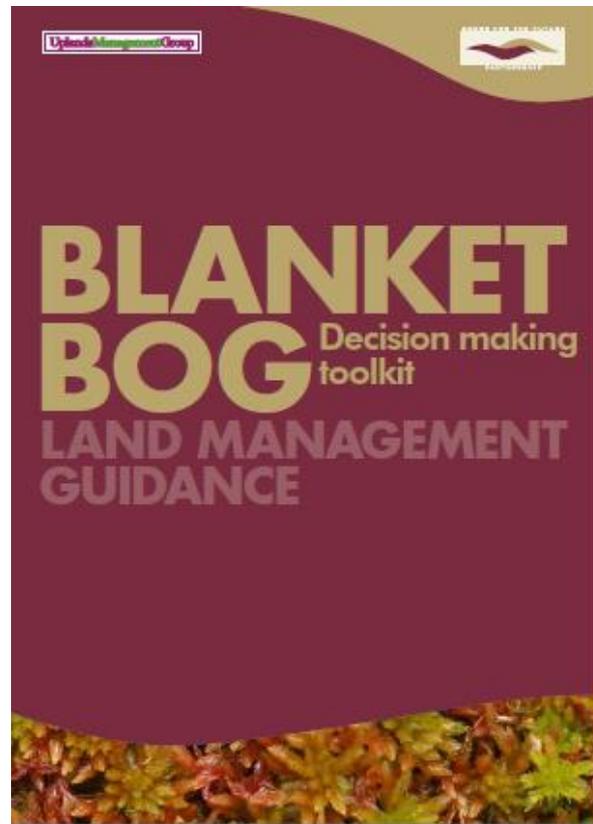
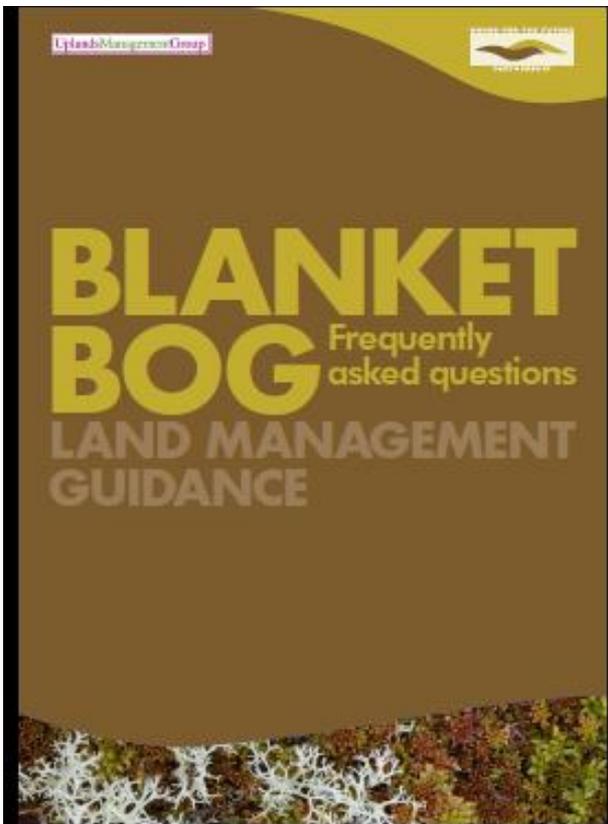
- Countryside Stewardship
- Long-term management plans including all those with an interest in the land
- Outcomes from other habitats

Support and guidance

Develop monitoring techniques and share results

Flexibility to change if not working

Produced by Uplands Management Group for DEFRA's Upland Stakeholder Forum. Enormous thanks to Moors for the Future for staff and print resources





Win-Win-Win. Good for grouse, good for grazing, good for the environment.

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