

Pumlumon Project

Project Summary

Feb 2011

The Pumlumon Project is a multifunctional, landscape-scale conservation project covering 40,000ha of the Cambrian Mountain Range located in the Welsh counties of Montgomeryshire and Ceredigion. As such, it is hosted by the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust and the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales (WTSWW). The project is a flagship of the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts' (RSWT) Living Landscape initiative which seeks to demonstrate how taking progressive approaches to managing ecosystems on a landscape-scale can deliver a sustainable future for both people and the ecosystems they inhabit.

Climate change directly impacts upon the functioning of these ecosystems, affecting species distribution and range, the timing of seasonal events and habitat character. Addressing climate change issues and maintaining healthy ecosystems so they provide goods and services essential for human well-being is now a key challenge for society. Understanding the on-going impacts of climate change on ecosystems is an essential prerequisite to addressing this challenge. Since 2008, the Pumlumon Project model has been a blueprint for delivering climate change mitigation and adaptation via the ecosystems approach through partnerships with local landholders, the Welsh Assembly Government, government agencies (i.e. Environment Agency, Forestry Commission) and community groups.

Over the past two years, a suite of pilot projects have been delivered including over 50ha of flood water management through 7km of grip (ditch) blocking, and 16ha of habitat restoration through cattle grazing; feeding into a successful direct marketing beef box scheme. These projects have been vital for demonstrating to local farmers the new land management techniques and financial opportunities essential to the ecosystems model, whilst also generating confidence in us to deliver on our word. A 6.4 mile audio/e-trail has also been produced alongside the land management works detailing the natural and human history of the Pumlumon Project area and how the project is enhancing biodiversity and therefore visitor interest. A number of these projects are supplying hard data to academic institutions, particularly with regards to peat-land management for carbon and water. Most of the research is being undertaken on behalf of the government who along with public and private institutions are beginning to recognize the potential of the ecosystems model to deliver new products for emerging markets. The Welsh Assembly Government in particular is in the process of establishing a Natural Environment Framework (NEF) which is based on the principle of maintaining and enhancing Wales' natural capital by supporting ecosystems and the services they produce.

Over the next ten years, the Pumlumon Project will continue to champion the 'ecosystems' approach to land management, delivering the goods (e.g. food and fibre) and services (e.g. flood water management, carbon safeguards and water quality) upon which people depend. By 2020, this will translate into over 5000ha of land under positive management for biodiversity, carbon safeguards, flood water, and water quality, all feeding into the developing markets for the sale of natural capital and value-added products.