

Marches Mosses BogLIFE Project – future-proofing Britain’s 3rd largest raised bog



(LIFE 15NAT/UK/000786) - Fenn’s, Whixall & Bettisfield Mosses and Wem Moss National Nature Reserves

The Project

- The Marches Mosses BogLIFE Project, Natural England’s largest European-funded LIFE project of its kind to date, has just begun. From this October, Britain’s third largest lowland raised bog, which includes Fenn’s, Whixall & Bettisfield Mosses and Wem Moss National Nature Reserves, near Whitchurch and Wrexham, will see a step change in its rate of restoration back to being one of Europe’s finest wildlife sites. The ambitious 75% EU-funded €7million package of improvements will be delivered over the next five years in a partnership led by Natural England, together with Natural Resources Wales and Shropshire Wildlife Trust.



Drainage for commercial peat cutting, agriculture, transport and forestry



Irregular topography after cutting giving too dry and too wet areas after “first-fix” restoration

Challenges



Loss of lagg communities followed by peat shrinkage which, combined with climate change, leads to flooding of the bog edge and public concern



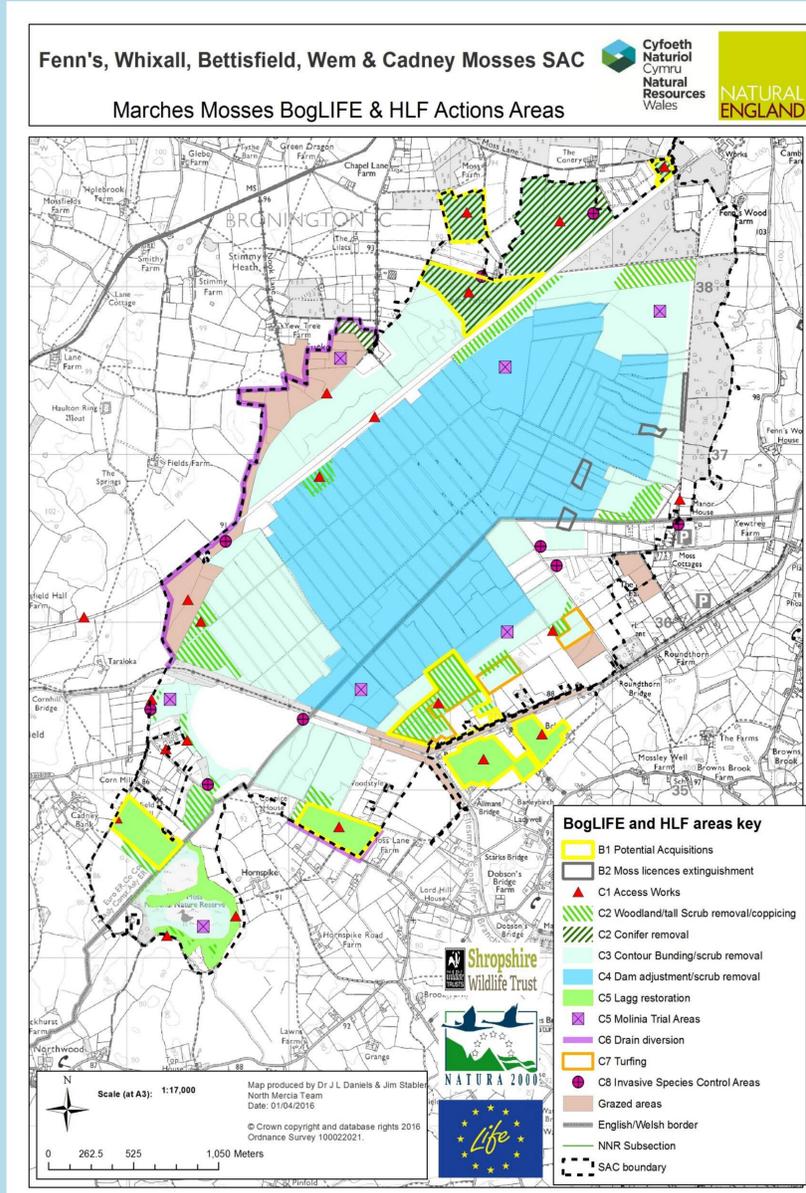
Neglect and afforestation
Properties and scrapyard on deep peat



Mineral-rich lagg streams, canalised within the bog, must be kept open



Low excess precipitation and high aerial Nitrogen pollution leading to excessive growth of higher plants like *Molinia*



Project outcomes

- Restoring 660 ha of peatland to active raised bog within the SAC and 23ha of non-SAC land.
- Tackling long-standing inappropriate land uses such as removing the scrapyards, forests and unviable farming.
- Core team of 6.1 FTE’s including new staff and 6 x 1yr trainees.
- Engagement - 10,000 visitors annually on-site, 100,000 offsite.
- Air pollution - the project will trial a Site Nitrogen Action Plan and control of dominating nitrophiles.

Project Actions

- A: Preparatory Actions**
- B: Land purchase for restoration to bog habitat**
- C: Concrete conservation actions**
 - C1 Conservation access and infrastructure works.
 - C2 Removal of plantation/woodland to reduce interception, evapo-transpiration, shading and tree seed sources.
 - C3 Raising water levels by bunding peripheral and sloping areas.
 - C4 Raising water levels by a “second fix” of adding and adjusting dams on central restored areas where mire formation has started.
 - C5 Air and water pollution experimental remedial works and lagg restoration.
 - C6 Restoration of water quality by diverting the Bronington Manor Drain and World’s End Drains back to the edge of the bog.
 - C7 Turf removal from fields and reseeded with mire species and protective mulches. Use turf to seal pollutants into cleared scrapyards hard-standing.
 - C8 Control invasive alien species.
- D: Monitoring the impact of the project actions**
- E: Public awareness and dissemination of results**
- F: Overall project operation and monitoring**

The BogLIFE team so far-

Project Manager: Robert Duff
Project Officers: Joan Daniels, Pete Bowyer.
Estate Workers: Andrew and Paul Huxley

