

Peatland Restoration in Northern Ireland

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Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
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www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Peatland extent in Northern Ireland



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Peatland threats and pressures

- Drainage
 - Agriculture
 - Reclamation
 - Overgrazing
 - Undergrazing
 - Burning/flailing
 - Peat-cutting
 - Horticulture
 - Fuel
 - Afforestation
 - Development - windfarms
 - Nutrient enrichment (air and water)
 - Climate change
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Northern Ireland peatland policy development

- Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands Order (1985)
 - Created peatland ASSIs
- EU Habitats Directive (1992)
 - Created peatland SACs
- Conserving Peatland in Northern Ireland (1993)
 - This document sought further site designation
- Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy (2002 - present)
 - Response to CBD
- Draft NI Assembly Programme for Government (2017)
 - Designated land under favourable management
 - c12% peatland so designated

However, no NI Executive or Assembly since January 2017

Current DAERA policy initiatives

- DAERA formed in 2016 from DARD and NIEA
- ‘Going for Growth’ sustainable prosperity statement
- Sustainable Agriculture Land Management Strategy (2018)
- Agricultural ammonia emissions
 - Exceedance of critical loads throughout NI
 - Decline in *Sphagnum* and increase in algae on peatlands
 - DAERA Ammonia Action Plan being developed
- Knowledge Advisory Service (2018)
 - “one stop shop” for farmers re: productivity, environmental sustainability and resilience

Northern Ireland environmental grants

- Rural Development Programme 2014-2020
 - Environmental Farming Scheme (2017-2020)
 - Safeguarding designated sites and priority habitats
 - Site Specific Management Plans
 - Tranche 2
 - Group Scheme
- DAERA NIEA Environment Fund 2016-present

Other initiatives with a peatland component

- NI Wildfire Stakeholders Group
- INTERREG V
 - Wetland designated sites
 - Mapping
 - Management Plans
 - Management works
- SCAMP
 - Garron Plateau
- HLF projects
 - Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership Scheme
 - Heart of Ancient Ulster Landscape Partnership Scheme

UK Peatland Strategy goals

- A. Conserve and enhance through restoration, the best and most readily recoverable peatlands** - EFS target 50000ha, SAC management plans
- B. Restore degraded areas to functioning peatland ecosystems –** INTERREG, SCAMP, HLF, planning
- C. Applying land uses that are compatible with healthy Peatlands** - Sustainable Agriculture Land Management Strategy. Ammonia strategy, developing agricultural policy
- D. Adapting management of drained peatlands under intensive productive use** - Sustainable Agriculture Land Management Strategy, developing agricultural policy
- E. Establish a formal framework to stimulate appropriate funding support, share experience, encourage best land management practice –** HLF projects





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