



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

# Peat perspectives – the next chapter for policy

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# NE Peat Pilots

- Designed to inform the development of the England Peat Strategy
- 5 pilots across the country – including Greater Manchester pilot
- They demonstrate the extent of the shared knowledge and understanding that will be required to facilitate well-integrated and aligned environmental outcomes, to achieve healthy well-functioning peat-forming semi-natural habitats and the sustainable management of all upland and lowland peat soils.

# Selected key findings

## English Uplands

- Differing objectives for land use across stakeholders and owners are an overriding issue for the initiation of restoration projects.
- There is limited value in funding peatland restoration techniques without obtaining assurances over a site's long term management, post restoration.
- Need to account for different forms of tenancy agreements when considering how all active parties can support the need to enhance peatland habitats and provide increased public benefits.
- It can be difficult and resource intensive to evidence the benefits of peatland restoration and this can require technical expertise over a wide range of specialisms.

## Arable farmland

- Realising change at an individual farm holding level is largely inefficient and unlikely to afford sufficient rates of change to land management practices.
- A new landscape scale approach to water management is required.
- Peat mapping is required to ensure that future public investment is directed to locations where it will achieve the greatest rates of GHG emissions reduction and soil protection.
- Land owners and managers need to be supported with expertise and economic incentive to realise new and innovative forms of land use.

# England Peat Strategy

- To be published later this year.
- Stakeholder engagement and roundtables over summer
- Ambition: **We want all our peatland to meet the needs of wildlife, people and the planet.**
- Explored a range of targets and dates
  - based on feedback we are amending them
  - but I cannot preannounce what will be in the Strategy.
- Our approach: **Restore, Reduce and Protect**

# Restore

Full restoration achieves many of our natural capital outcomes. We should look to restore peat where it is cost-effective to do so

- The Nature for Climate Fund will kickstart a programme of restoration over the next 5 years
- It will provide vital investment in this Parliament, in advance of the Environmental Land Management Scheme's (ELM's) introduction from 2024.



# Reduce

Where it is not cost-effective to fully restore peat, we should embed changes to management practices to reduce damage to peat and the concomitant carbon emissions

## Lowland Agricultural Peat Task Force

- Determine the solutions for getting drained agricultural peatland on to a more sustainable
- Exploring innovative solutions including paludiculture



# Protect

We will phase out the most damaging remaining practices that harm peat. This may potentially be through regulation and we will consult on these aspects separately.



# Peat restoration funding opportunities

- Nature for Climate Fund – aims to fund 35,000 ha of peat restoration over 5 years
- Green Recovery Challenge Fund
- Nature Recovery Fund
- Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (IRF)

# IRF

- Support the development of natural environment projects that can generate revenue from ecosystem services and attract repayable investment.
- £10 million programme, from 2021 for 3 years.
- Will provide grants which project developers can use to build capacity and procure the specialist support and advice they need to develop their natural environment projects to an investable level.
- We are keen to work with project developers, investors and advisors as we develop the fund over the coming months to ensure the approach meets your needs.
- To be involved and inform us of your preferred level of engagement please complete the short survey which should not take more than 5 minutes. <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/HQ3ZFQ/>
- Deadline for completing survey 30 September – but don't worry you can still use the survey to register your interest after that date.

# Environmental Land Management scheme

- Cornerstone of our new agricultural policy.
- Founded on the principle of “public money for public goods”
- Intended to provide a powerful vehicle for achieving the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan and commitment to net zero emissions by 2050, while supporting our rural economy.
- Farmers and other land managers may enter into agreements to be paid for delivering a range of public goods.
- Working closely with a range of environmental and agricultural stakeholders to collaboratively design the new scheme so that it is fit for purpose.
- Running a programme of tests and trials, the priorities for which are the building blocks we will need for the National Pilot.
- The new scheme will be launched in England in 2024. It will be tested and refined through a National Pilot, which will begin in 2021.

# ELM Current Scheme Design & Plans

## Tier 1

Will encourage environmentally-sustainable farming and forestry on individual farms.

We might pay for:

- Nutrient management (including manure management)
- Integrated pest management
- Livestock management
- Soil management
- Field margins (buffer strips)
- Field cover (cover crops)
- Water storage/efficient water use
- Grassland management

# ELM Current Scheme Design & Plans

## Tier 2

Will support land managers to achieve locally-targeted environmental goals, which may rely on collaboration between land managers.

We might pay for:

- Tree, shrub and/or hedge planting and maintenance
- Habitat creation/restoration/ management
- Instream/river and overland flow attenuation and diversion (natural flood management)
- Management of rare or important wildlife species
- Rights of way, navigation and recreation infrastructure
- Education infrastructure, events and services
- Protect and enhance valued landscape and historical features (such as archaeological sites, historic buildings and stone walls)

# ELM Current Scheme Design & Plans

## Tier 3

Will focus on ambitious projects looking at big environmental challenges, like carbon net zero.

We might pay for:

- Forest and woodland creation / restoration / improvement
- Peatland restoration
- Creation / restoration of coastal habitats such as wetlands and salt marsh

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