

Cumbria Peat Partnership Annual Report April 24 - March 25



Report produced by Cumbria Wildlife Trust on behalf of Cumbria Peat Partnership

Contents

- 1. Cumbria Peat Partnership..... 2
- 2. Achievements..... 3
 - Surveys..... 5
 - Restoration..... 7
 - Monitoring..... 9
 - Engagement..... 10
- 3. Successes and challenges 11
- 4. Next steps 11
- 5. Acknowledgements..... 12

1. Cumbria Peat Partnership

The Cumbria Peat Partnership (CPP) is a group of stakeholders with an interest in peatland habitats in Cumbria. The CPP, established in 2013, aims to share knowledge, develop best practice and actively support the restoration of all peat habitats in Cumbria. Cumbria Wildlife Trust is the secretariat for the CPP and employs a peatland team who deliver a programme of peatland work on its behalf.

Representatives from the following stakeholder organisations form the membership of the partnership:

- Cumbria Wildlife Trust (CWT)
- Environment Agency (EA)
- Natural England (NE)
- The Forestry Commission (FC)
- The National Trust (NT)
- United Utilities (UU)
- Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA)
- Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA)
- National Farmers Union (NFU)
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- Moorland Association (MA)
- Fix the Fells (FtF)

Collaborative working within the CPP is key to its success, with many of the peat projects delivered through strong partnerships. Similarly, the achievements of individual peat partnerships can be amplified when working together by securing resources, collaborative projects, sharing skills and advocating for peatlands.

Cumbria Peat Partnership is part of the Great North Bog Coalition – a coalition of 6 ‘delivery partnerships’ working to restore the peatlands of the northern English uplands (the Great North Bog). The protected landscapes of the Great North Bog represent around 92% of the upland peat in England.

Cumbria Peat Partnership is also part of the Northern Lowland Peatland Coalition, working in partnership with Lancashire Peat Partnership to restore lowland raised bogs. The coalition area holds the largest remaining extent of this priority habitat in England, with Cumbria alone containing around 45% of what remains in England.

In 2024/25 the partnership held two in-person full partnership meetings, as well as a smaller meeting focussing on peatland finance options, for landowning partners. The partners also attended a site visit to the Wythburn Valley. Cumbria Wildlife Trust hosted a student placement, who spent time with variety of partners within the CPP.

In 2024/25 the CPP revised its targets to the following; by 2035 the Cumbria Peat Partnership will have:

- An additional 5000 hectares of peatland recovering and in favourable management.
- Identified all significant bodies of peat in Cumbria and prioritised them for survey.

2. Achievements

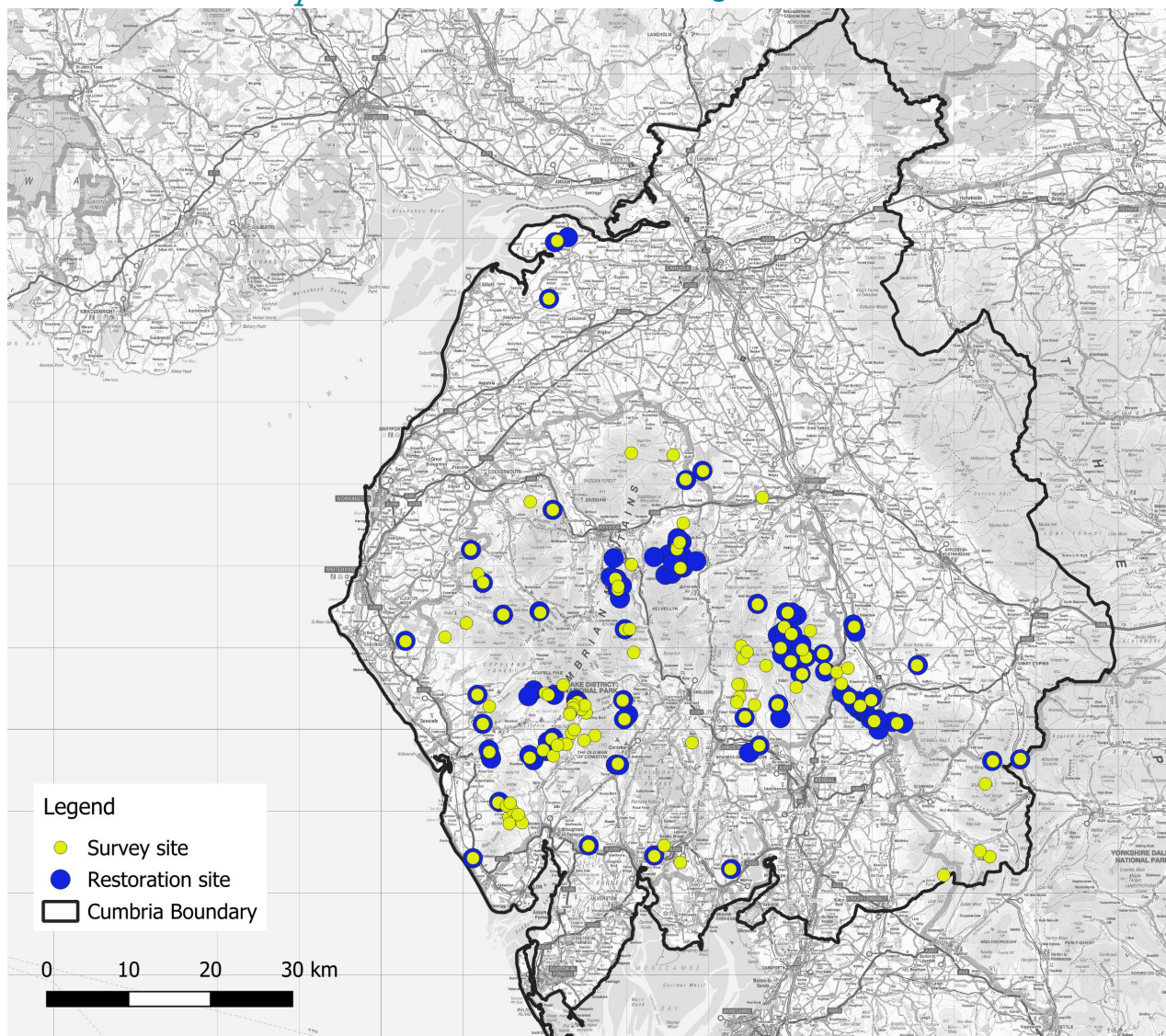
Since 2013 a total of 12,070ha peatland has been surveyed and 5075ha has undergone restoration work*. During 2024/25, 2033.5ha was surveyed and 1631.8ha underwent restoration works.

It is important to note that even when a site has undergone restoration work, this is just the first step towards the recovery of the ecosystem. Further interventions may be required in future, including further phases of restoration work. Appropriate management is also key to the long-term success of a project.

Projects worked on in 2024/25 included:

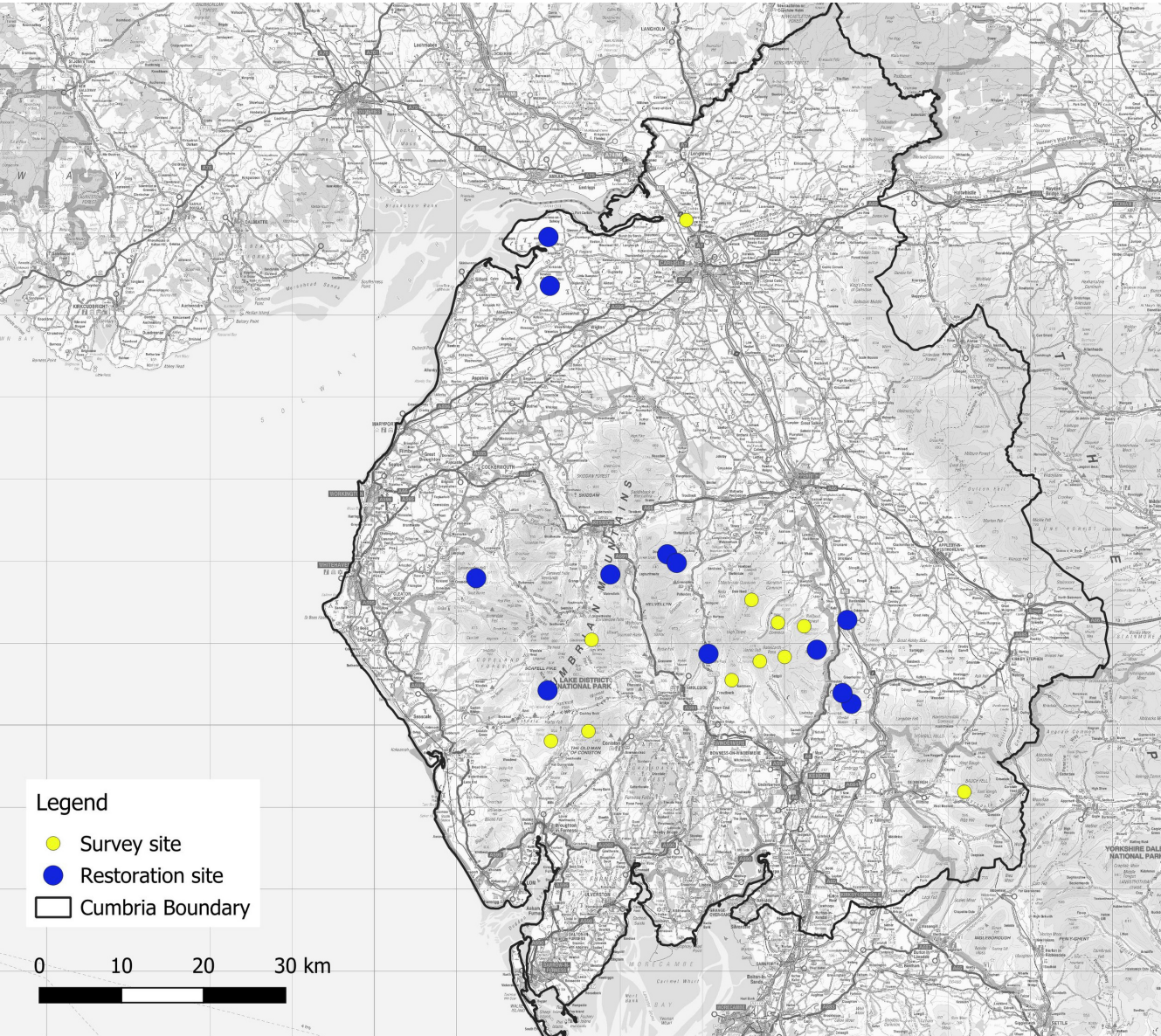
- Great North Bog West - Upland Restoration Project
- Northern Lowland Peatland Coalition - Lowland Peatland Restoration Project
- Haweswater Peatland Project
- Cumbria Connects
- Upper Duddon Landscape Recovery Project
- Eastern Fells Landscape Recovery Project

Locations of surveys and restoration since 2013



* There is no consensus on how best to report the area of peat restoration. In this report the area that has undergone restoration is calculated by applying a 30m buffer to all features restored within a site.

Locations of surveys and restoration in 2024/25



Reprofiled hags and rewetted blanket bog on Matterdale Common

Surveys

Eleven areas were surveyed in 2024/25, covering 2033.5ha. The details and next steps are outlined in the table below.

Site	Size (ha)	Project	Funder	Delivery Organisation	Next steps
Bampton Common	503	Haweswater Peat Project	United Utilities	CWT	Planned to be delivered through Eastern Fells Landscape Recovery Project
Mardale Common	401	Haweswater Peat Project	United Utilities	CWT	Planned to be delivered through Eastern Fells Landscape Recovery Project
Little Mosdale	141	Haweswater Peat Project	United Utilities	CWT	Planned to be delivered through Eastern Fells Landscape Recovery Project
Long Green Head	39		PA2	CWT	To be delivered through GNB(W) Restoration 2 extension
Rosgill and Ralfland	306	Cumbria Connects Endangered Landscape Project	Cumbria Connects Endangered Landscape Project	CWT	To be entered into a CS scheme
Sadgill	56	Eastern Fells Landscape Recovery Project	DEFRA	CWT	To be delivered through the Environment Agency's Kent Catchment Project
Seathwaite Tarn	13		United Utilities via South Cumbria Rivers Trust	CWT	To be scheduled in the restoration pipeline

Upper Duddon Phase 2	185	Upper Duddon Landscape Recovery Project	DEFRA	CWT	To be delivered through the Upper Duddon Landscape Recovery Project
Wild Garsdale	79		FIPL	CWT	To be scheduled in the restoration pipeline
Langstrath Common	302	Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme	DEFRA	CWT	To be scheduled in the restoration pipeline
Harker Moss	8.5			CWT	



Members of CWT's peat team measuring peat depths

Restoration

In 2024/25, 1631.8ha of restoration work was completed across thirteen sites with the following interventions:

- 50,119m of hags, gullies, and grips reprofiled
- 28,758m of bunds created
- 17,337m of grips and gullies blocked with peat, timber, or stone dams
- 0.2ha of bare peat revegetated
- 11ha of trees cleared
- 16ha of lowland peat cell bunded

Site	Size (ha)	Project	Funder	Delivery Organisation	Protected Landscape
Armboth Phase 3	268	Great North Bog (West) Upland Restoration	Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NfCPGS)	CWT	Lake District National Park
Bretherdale Common	74	Great North Bog (West) Upland Restoration	Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NfCPGS)	CWT	Lake District National Park
Eskdale	471	Great North Bog (West) Upland Restoration	Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NfCPGS)	CWT	Lake District National Park
Hardendale Common	28	Great North Bog (West) Upland Restoration	Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NfCPGS)	CWT	None
Matterdale Common	166	Great North Bog (West) Upland Restoration	Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NfCPGS)	CWT	Lake District National Park
Roundthwaite Common	33.5	Great North Bog (West) Upland Restoration	Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NfCPGS)	CWT	Lake District National Park
Sherry Gill	152	Great North Bog (West) Upland Restoration	Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NfCPGS)	CWT	Lake District National Park

Watermillock Common	184	Great North Bog (West) Upland Restoration	Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NfCPGS)	CWT	Lake District National Park
Whiteoak Moss	33	Great North Bog (West) Upland Restoration	Section 106 and Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NfCPGS)	CWT	Lake District National Park
Rogersceugh	214	Lowland Peatland Coalition	Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NfCPGS)	CWT	Solway Coast National Landscape
Ravens Edge to Caudale Moor	0.125	Fix the Fells	Fix the Fells and Starling Bank	Fix the Fells	Lake District National Park
Wedholme Flow	6		NE	NE	Solway Coast National Landscape
Higher Jackson Ground	1.8		Lake District Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme	CWT	Lake District National Park



A digger reprofiling a hag

Monitoring

Long-term monitoring has been set up for 17 sites including vegetation quadrats, fixed point photography and 'Eyes on the Bog' kit (dipwells, rust rods and surface level rods). Thirty volunteers are working with the CWT peatland team to collect the Eyes on the Bog data, contributing to the UK-wide citizen science peatland monitoring programme.

In partnership with Ozawa Wildlife, CWT has developed a survey technique for volunteers to use to monitor restoration success on sites that have undergone restoration works. This will hopefully lead to a better understanding of how sites are faring once restored and highlight sites that might need follow up works.



Above - a volunteer installing a dipwell

Below - volunteers checking Eyes on the Bog equipment



Engagement

During 2024/5 the CPP delivered a broad range of engagement activities:

- Eyes on the Bog knowledge share with Fix the Fells
- Mountain and Hill Skills and EOTB training for volunteers
- A-level biology and geography lesson on peatlands – Kendal College
- Women in the Mountains conference – workshop
- Knowledge sharing – NT Rangers
- Nichols Moss Film
- National Trust GNB(W) film
- Cumbria Connects Autumn Gathering – talk
- DEFRA Lowland Peatland Forum – talk
- Peatland Rescue – online talk
- Worked in partnership with the Field Studies Council to deliver a field visit to Matterdale Common for Oxford University MSc Students.

As part of the partnership project with Ozawa Wildlife, funded by the Lake District Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme, we delivered a two day peatland restoration training course to local environmental contractors. This course gave them an insight into the skills required to carry out peatland works and also covered elements of health and safety and the paperwork requirements. Some of those who took part in this training have gone on to carry out restoration works for us.



Local contractors attending our peatland restoration training

3. Successes and challenges

The CPP secured £635,320 of funding for peatland scoping and restoration projects in 2024/25. A total of 2033.5ha was surveyed and 1630ha of peatland underwent restoration works bringing the total area surveyed to 12,070ha and the area of restoration to 5073ha. The Haweswater Peatland Project and a number of other projects and smaller contracts, allowed us to continue to fully scope out a pipeline of sites that are ready to be delivered in the coming years. We are grateful to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for providing core funding for staff via the Great North Bog, and to Westmorland and Furness Council for support through the Climate and Nature Partnership Fund.

The challenges identified in last year's annual report still remain; uncertainties around long term funding beyond the end of March 2026 are still an issue, due to the end of the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme. The ongoing funding for the core peatland team will be critical to the long-term success of Cumbria Peat Partnership; without retention of dedicated, experienced staff to survey, design, oversee and monitor restoration projects, delivery will stall. Similarly, long term certainty about peatland delivery is needed for local contractors in order that they can invest in developing their businesses as a critical part of the peatland sector. Development of future funding including blended finance options will be key to the ongoing delivery of our peatland programme.

Issues around stakeholder engagement, particularly with commoners and tenants, and the need to consider the historic environment still remains and ongoing work is required to ensure that there is sufficient funding and time built into projects to ensure that these elements don't impact upon the success of restoration projects.

The results of the Haweswater Peat Project, which included the re-survey of sites that had previously had restoration works, highlighted that successful restoration is not something that can always be achieved through one phase of restoration works. Many sites will need further intervention and restoration works in future years to ensure they continue their trajectory towards a fully functioning bog. This project also highlighted the impact that grazing animals can have upon the success of restoration and the need to consider not only livestock numbers but also populations of wild herbivores when designing restoration projects.

The overall success of peatland restoration work can be impacted by external pressures such as poor management or extreme weather events. Most projects are only funded up to the restoration stage; by extending funding to include return visits to sites and monitoring of peatland condition, the long-term success of projects could be greatly improved.

4. Next steps

Surveys and restoration projects are scheduled and funded for the full 2025/26 season, and many of these follow on from work that has taken place in the last few years.

The CPP is currently planning the peatland programme for 2026/27 and beyond; as outlined above the development of blended funding will be key to delivery. The new CPP targets align with those of the Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and we will ensure that we are working to achieve the priorities of the LNRS wherever possible.

5. Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the many project partners, organisations and individuals who have supported our peatland programme.

We are hugely grateful to the funders who have supported our project work and provided core funding over the last year. Thanks to Natural England, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Westmorland and Furness Council, United Utilities, Cumbria Connect Endangered Landscape Project, Lowther Estates and DEFRA. The peatland team is part of Cumbria Wildlife Trust and we are grateful to their members for their support.

We are grateful to the landowners, tenants and commoner's associations who have supported our work. We worked with a range of local specialist peatland contractors including Terra Firma Environmental Ltd, OpenSpace Cumbria Ltd, Field and Fell Environmental Ltd, TM Lindsay Ltd, Ecosulis Ltd, Environmental Land Management Solutions Ltd, Barker and Bland Ltd and Ozawa Wildlife.

Thanks to our peatland volunteers who are playing a vital role in assessing bog health and measuring the success of restoration. Finally, thanks to Cumbria Wildlife Trust's Peat Team, which during the period was: Susie Webb, Gemma Jennings, Heidi Buck, Tom Lemmey, Sean Prokopiw, Mel Sugden, Sandra Moran, Grace Fuller and Carenza Curwen.

Cumbria Peat Partnership

