

Cumbria Peat Partnership Annual Report April 25 - March 26



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

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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)
- University of Cumbria (UoC)

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 jointly 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.

In 2025/26 the partnership held two in-person full partnership meetings. The partners also attended a site visit to Bowness Common, where restoration works had recently been completed.

The CPP has the following targets; 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

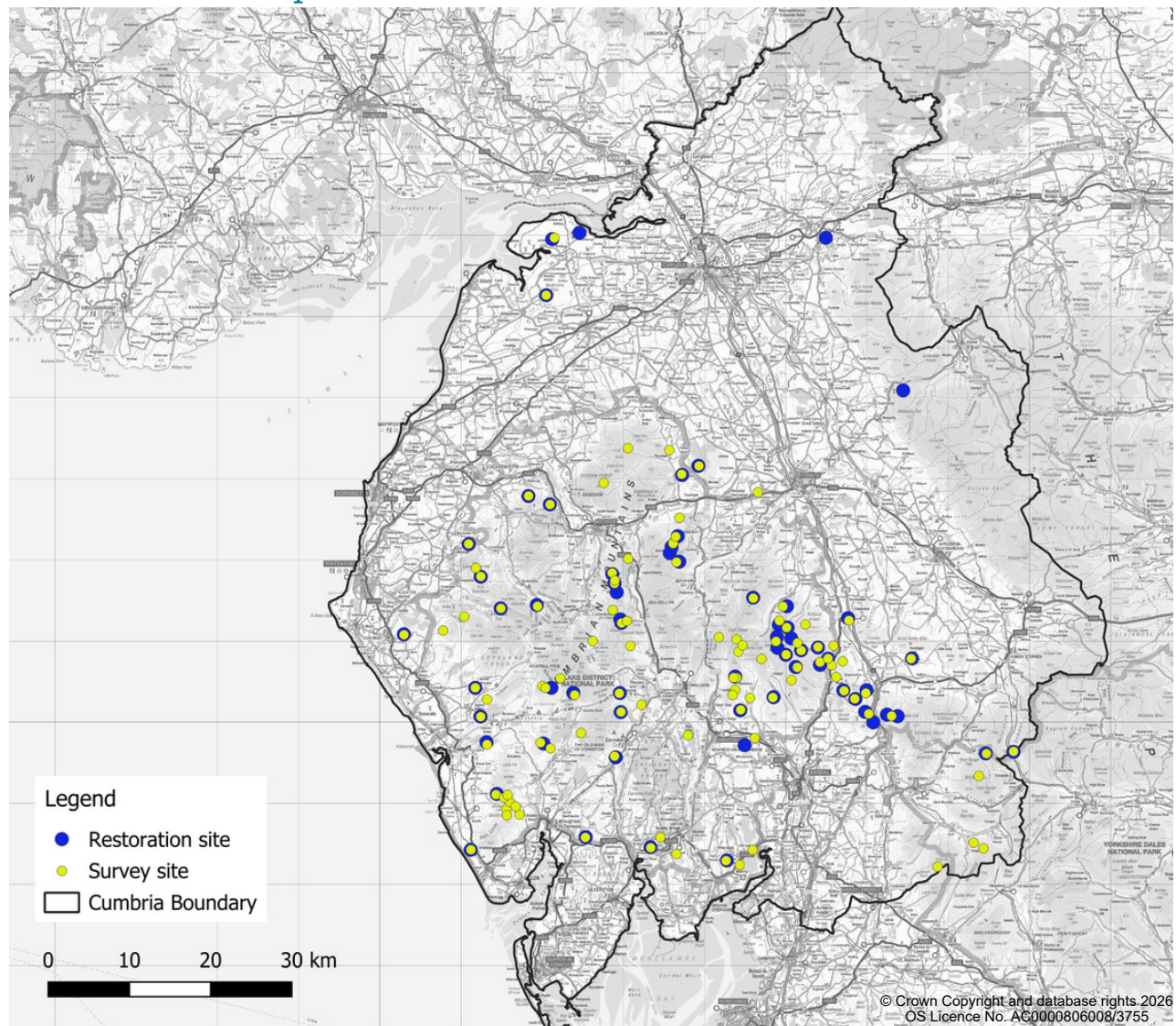
Since 2013 a total of 13,114ha peatland has been surveyed and 5763ha has undergone restoration work*. During 2025/26, 1044ha was surveyed and 690ha underwent restoration works.

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 2025/26 included:

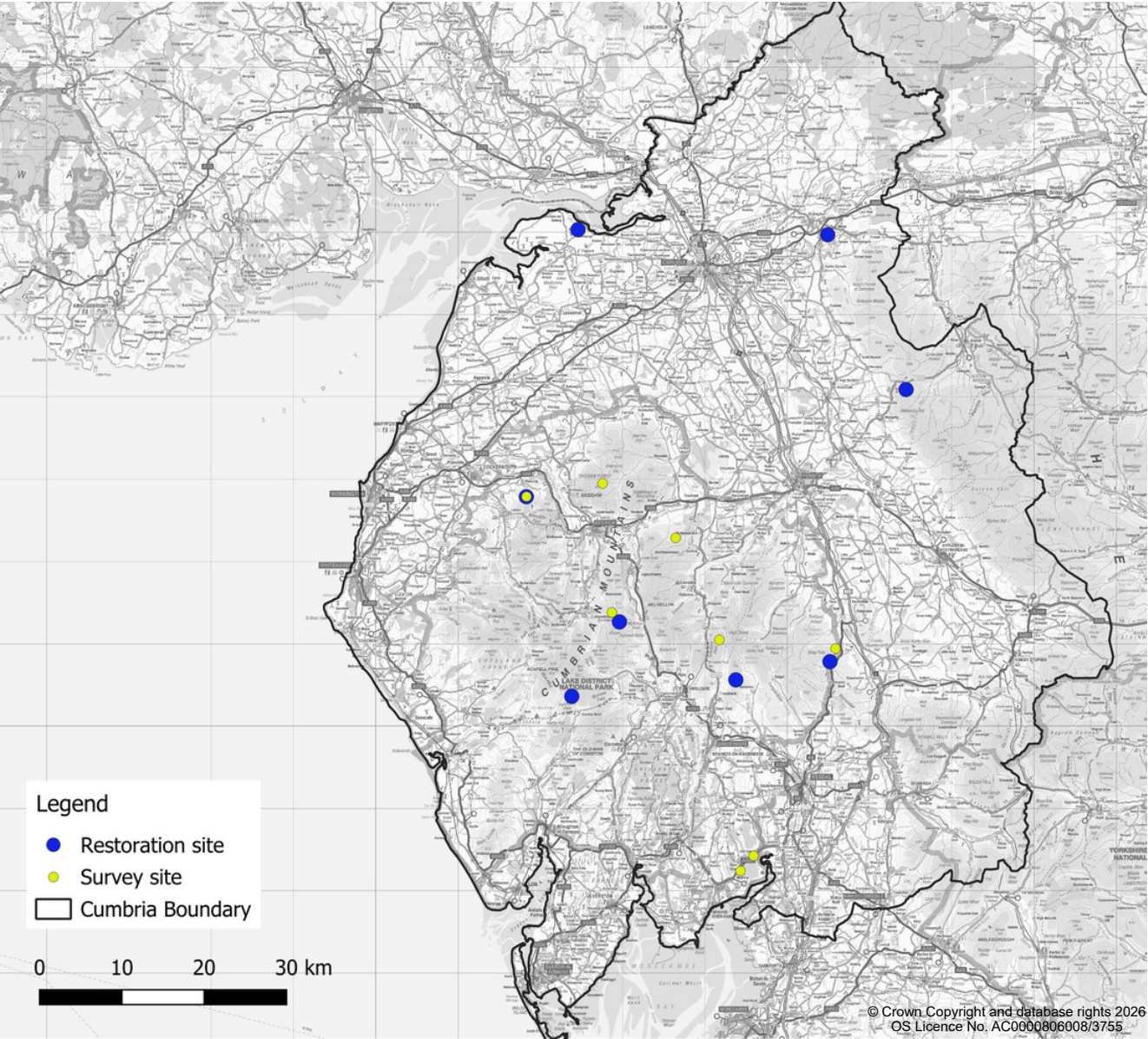
- Great North Bog West - Upland Restoration Project
- Cumbria Connects
- Upper Duddon Landscape Recovery Project
- Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience Project
- National Lottery Heritage Fund Flagship Peatlands Project

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 2025/26



A blocked grip at Wythop Moss

Surveys

Eleven areas were surveyed in 2025/26, covering 1044ha. The details and next steps are outlined in the table below.

Site	Size (ha)	Project	Funder	Delivery Organisation	Next steps
Wythop Moss	105	Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience Project	DEFRA - Flood and Coastal National Innovation Programme	CWT	Restoration delivered 25/26
Matterdale Common (fenced areas)	10	Resilient Glenderamackin Landscape Recovery Project	DEFRA	CWT	Included within the Resilient Glenderamackin Landscape Recovery Project's scope of works.
Skiddaw	436	Ongoing CWT nature reserve management	CWT	CWT	Restoration planned for 26/27 funded by Biffa Award.
Long Fell	281	Cumbria Connect Endangered Landscape Project	Cumbria Connect Endangered Landscape Project	CWT	Included within the Penrith to Kendal Landscape Recovery Project's scope of works.
Foulshaw Fields	6.2	Ongoing CWT nature reserve management	CWT	CWT	Funding sought for restoration works
Mason's Field	1.8	Ongoing CWT nature reserve management	CWT	CWT	Funding sought for restoration works
Hayeswater Sites	129	National Trust Looking Bogwards to go Forwards project	Starling Bank	CWT	Funded through NfCPGS GNB(W) extension. Works to be completed 26/27

Watendlath	75	National Trust Looking Bogwards to go Forwards project	Starling Bank	CWT	N/A
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CWT team members highlighting the reality of peatland surveying.

Restoration

In 2025/26, 690ha of restoration work was completed across seven sites with the following interventions:

- 19,198m of hags, gullies, and grips reprofiled
- 25,604m of bunds created
- 18,864m of grips and gullies blocked with peat, timber, or stone dams
- 0.34ha of bare peat revegetated
- 68 peat pipes blocked
- 27ha of scrub and dense heather mulched

Site		Size (ha)	Project	Funder	Delivery Organisation	Protected Landscape
Long Head	Green	41	Great North Bog (West) Upland Restoration	Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NfCPGS)	CWT	Lake District National Park
Upper Duddon	Phase 1	72	Great North Bog (West) Upland Restoration	Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NfCPGS)	CWT	Lake District National Park
Wasdale Beck		32	Great North Bog (West) Upland Restoration	Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NfCPGS)	CWT	Lake District National Park
Westhead Farm		383	Great North Bog (West) Upland Restoration	Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NfCPGS)	CWT	Lake District National Park
Wythop Moss		138	Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience Project	DEFRA - Flood and Coastal National Innovation Programme	CWT	Lake District National Park
Brampton Fell Moss		10	N/A	N/A	NE	N/A
Glasson Moss		14	N/A	Solway Coast National Landscape	NE	Solway Coast National Landscape



An arc bund holding back water



A digger working behind a pool created by a bund.

Monitoring

Long-term monitoring has been set up for 29 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 at 17 of these sites, contributing to the UK-wide citizen science peatland monitoring programme.



Volunteers collecting Eyes on the Bog data.

Engagement

During 2025/6 the CPP delivered a broad range of engagement activities:

- Bog Film Festival – series of peatland films and a panel discussion
- Volunteer and members conference talks
- EOTB training for volunteers
- A-level biology and geography lesson on peatlands – Kendal College
- Friends of Ullswater Way – talk
- Knowledge sharing event with Natural England and Environment Agency around catchment scale Natural Flood Management – walk and talk.
- Knowledge sharing event with Westmorland and Furness Council and Cumberland Council around Natural Flood Management and peatlands– walk and talk.

During 2025/26 we successfully applied to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for development phase funding for our Flagship Peatlands project, which along with some restoration work aims to tackling the lack of public understanding of, and engagement with, peatland habitats. Throughout the development phase we will be developing and trailing a variety of different ways to engage a whole suite of different sections of society with peatlands and their plight. Including; school groups, volunteers, citizen scientists, young people, interest groups, commoners, partnership organisations and the general public. We hope that this funding will help us broaden our work programme to include more longer-term public engagement.



Showing the restoration works completed at Matterdale Common

3. Successes and challenges

The CPP secured £1,043,737 of funding for peatland scoping, restoration projects and engagement in 2025/26. A total of 1044ha was surveyed and 690ha underwent restoration works bringing the total area surveyed to 13,114ha and the area of restoration to 5763ha. We continue to be 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 both the Second Home Environment Fund and the Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience Project. The DEFRA funded Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NfCPGS) continues to be our main funder of restoration works and has also allowed us to continue our long-term monitoring on sites that have undergone restoration.

Whilst another year of NfCPGS has been confirmed and is providing further funding for this current financial year, the continued uncertainty and late-stage announcements regarding funding extensions, continues to cause problems for long term planning for both capital funding as well as the ongoing funding for the core peatland team. However, the funding landscape is changing and diversifying; Landscape Recovery Projects are starting to be secured and move into delivery, and where peatland works have been included this is now being delivered; Natural Flood Management projects, such as the project delivered at Wythop Moss, may offer alternative sources of funding and other DEFRA funds focussed on wider nature recovery within Protected Landscapes may also offer opportunities.

As mentioned above, our success in securing the development stage funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for our Flagship Peatlands project will allow us to expand our activities beyond our core objectives and raise awareness, understanding and enjoyment of peatland habitats. It will also allow us to carry out more extensive stakeholder engagement for certain sites and provide frameworks for these activities in the future.

Without increased certainty around longer term funding streams retention of the 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. This is vital to ensure the Cumbria Peat Partnership meets its targets.

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 26-27 season, and many of these follow on from work that has taken place in the last few years and the CPP is currently planning the peatland programme for 2027/28 and beyond.

The 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 where ever possible. We also continue to deliver towards the target within the Lake District National Park Plan of 2,500ha of peatland restored within the LDNP over the lifetime of the plan.

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 Estate, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience Project 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, Field and Fell Environmental Ltd, TM Lindsay Ltd and Environmental Land Management Solutions Ltd.

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, Tom Lemmey, Mel Sugden, Sandra Moran, Grace Fuller and Heidi Buck.

Cumbria Peat Partnership

