



C5

Stakeholder Workshop Report

Sphagnum planting

26.03.2018

Pennine PeatLIFE delivery partners



Pennine PeatLIFE is funded by



Date: 13:00-15:30, 26.03.2018

Location: Valance Lodge, Teesdale, County Durham

Topic: *Sphagnum* planting and Pennine PeatLIFE restoration

Attendees: 36 staff from the Environment Agency (see Appendix 1)

1. Aims

- Facilitate discussion around peatland restoration and *Sphagnum* reintroduction techniques
- Plant areas of bare and eroding peat with *Sphagnum*
- Raise awareness of peatland restoration and its potential for use in Environment Agency work such as natural flood management

2. Overview

Alistair Lockett, Senior Field Officer at the North Pennines AONB Partnership, gave an overview of the Pennine PeatLIFE project, the North Pennines AONB Partnership's peatland restoration work and a brief history of the Partnership's plans for Valance Lodge in Teesdale, County Durham.

The group then walked up from the quarry track and received a demonstration on how to plant the *Sphagnum* plugs before making a start on planting. A hole was made using a plastic dibber provided (figure 1) and *Sphagnum* was pushed into the hole so that the *Sphagnum* 'heads' or capitula sit either level to the ground or just below it (figure 2).



Figure 1. A plastic dibber and a roll of 20 *Sphagnum* plugs



Figure 2. A single *Sphagnum* planted in amongst common cottongrass



Figure 3. Environment Agency staff planting *Sphagnum* on Valance Lodge.



Figure 4. Environment Agency staff using a dibber to plant *Sphagnum*.

Sphagnum was planted into areas of degraded peatland with patches of bare peat in amongst cottongrass plants, shown by figure 5.



Figure 5. Area of eroding peat that was targeted with *Sphagnum* planting.

Alistair then walked everybody off the moor and back to the cars through a heavily damaged area of bare peat which was to be restored through the PPL project in winter 2018/2019, sparking further discussion around restoration techniques.

3. Press coverage

There was no press coverage of this event.

4. Outcomes

Over 4000 *Sphagnum* plugs were planted in an hour, contributing to the restoration of the site. Whilst planting was carried out, discussions were had around *Sphagnum* reintroduction, its benefits and wider peatland restoration techniques. This event raised the profile of the NPAP restoration programme and made Environment Agency staff aware of current peatland restoration techniques and applications. This encourages them to consider its potential for natural flood management and incorporate some of the techniques discussed into future projects/funding schemes. The event was an effective networking exercise, valuable connections were made which have led to useful knowledge exchanges or collaborations on future sites across the North Pennines. Although the Environment Agency is not directly a landowner, it is a powerful body with the potential to influence leaders and landowners and shape policy, which is crucial to peatland restoration becoming incorporated into land management practices and schemes on a national scale. It is also an important potential funding source so highlighting the value and success of peatland restoration will lead to further peatlands being restored.



Figure 6. Environment Agency and North Pennines AONB Partnership staff following the event.

Appendix 1.

Attendees

North East Environment Agency staff:

Leila Huntington
Jenny McCarthy
Andrea Emsley
Joe Toman
Jim Heslop
Tristan Drought
Tara Duncan
Alex Haley
Roz Watson
Phil Marshall
James Carradice
Mark Manley
Kate Robinson
Kane Davison
Jack Hugill
Phil Taylor
Anna Caygill
Richard Robinson
Kirsty Hardy
Mark Paterson
Emma Klonowski
Chris Hood
Catherine Marshall
Louise Blair
Sam Bainbridge
Dan Moss
Tom Gore
Celia Jonquet-Burns
Jonathan Kellagher
Kevin Cunningham
Joe Allan
Taryn Al-Mashgari
Simon Wilson
Kevin Rich

North Pennines AONB Partnership:

Paul Leadbitter
Sylvia Cleasby
Alistair Lockett
Christopher Watt