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Stakeholder Workshop Report

Ulster Wildlife Trust/DAERA/UFU visit to Yorkshire

9-10/07/19

Peninme PeatLIFE delivery partners



Peninme PeatLIFE is funded by



Date: 9-10/07/19

Location: Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Skipton Office & Stake Moss/Fleet Moss site visit

Topic: Educational/Public Awareness

Attendees:

DAERA: 5 Senior staff

UWT: Jennifer Fulton (CEO) and Prof Jim McAdam

UFU: Victor Chestnut (Vice President) and a colleague,

NETHERGILL ASSOCIATES: Chris Clarke (Nethergill farm),

PENNINE PEATLIFE: Jenny Sharman (Project Officer), Chris Miller (Project Officer) Tim Thom from (Peat Programme Manager)

BISHOPDALE LANDOWNERS: Rob Brown (Stake Moss moor) and Rob Fawcett (New House moor)

Itinerary: See Appendix 1

1. Aims

Ireland is looking to introduce its own Peatland Strategy and the stakeholders listed were on a fact-finding mission to understand the needs and benefits of peatland restoration. Our main aim was to facilitate this request by:

- Providing the Irish visitors with all the facts they needed to better understand the need, benefits and techniques of peatland restoration
- Providing a thought-provoking discussion on alternative methods of land management that may provide a win-win for both farmer and the environment
- Providing an honest appraisal of the challenges faced, the pit-falls and potential solutions at a government and practitioner level

2. Overview

Ireland is looking to introduce its own Peatland Strategy and the stakeholders listed were on a fact-finding mission to understand the needs and benefits of peatland restoration. The Ulster Wildlife Trust (UWT) headed the group and were accompanied by senior members of DAERA, and representatives from the Ulster Farmer's Union (UFU) who were there to understand the implications of peatland restoration on their community.

The Pennine PeatLIFE (PPL) team in conjunction with Yorkshire Peat Partnership (YPP) prepared presentations and site visits to provide the visitors with all the information they would need for their mission.

At YPP's offices in Skipton, Tim Thom carried out a presentation to the group by way of an introduction on the need for peatland restoration, the techniques used, and their impacts.

This was followed up by a thought-provoking presentation on farming on peatlands by businessman and farmer, Chris Clark, from Nethergill Associates. This was of particular interest to the farmers in the audience.



Figure 1. PPL Officer, Jenny Sharman explaining aspects of the work on Stake Moss to the Irish participants

There followed a site visit to the PPL restoration site of Stake Moss in Bishopdale where PPL restoration officers carried out a guided tour, showing the rapid impact of restoration on the hydrology of the area. Meeting them on site were landowners Rob Brown and Rob Fawcett (a grouse manger and sheep farmer respectively). Both land managers spoke about the value of restoration to their businesses and were able to answer any concerns held by the group.

Following their visit to Stake Moss, the participants were taken to Nethergill farm for further discussions on alternatives to sheep farming in the uplands. This provoked a great deal of discussion and food for thought.

Finally, the group were taken to the PPL site of Fleet Moss, a severely degraded peatland at the head of the Wharfedale catchment. Here the group were shocked to see the damage that can result through a lack of early intervention and the subsequent costs and challenges of restoration.

It was a highly successful visit with the guests leaving fully inspired and armed with the knowledge they need to begin instigating their own peatland programme.



Figure 2. *Representatives from the Ulster Wildlife Trust, DAERA, Ulster Farmer's Union and Pennine PeatLIFE on Fleet Moss.*

3. Press coverage

A press release was drawn up and sent out by Lyndon Marquis (see Appendix 2).

4. Outcomes

This event was of great importance to the Ulster Wildlife Trust in particular who have been lobbying their government and farmers on the need for peatland restoration in Ireland. The increased awareness and understanding gained by the group following their visit will no doubt be instrumental in helping to shape Ireland's peatland strategy.

Appendix 1.

Itinerary

9th July

1. 14:00 Arrive Leeds/Bradford airport
2. 15:30-16.00ish Arrive Skipton Office or Herriot's
3. 16:00ish-16.30 Refreshments
4. 16:30-17:00 Presentation on YPP restoration projects
5. 17:00-17:30 Peatland Restoration a farmer's views (Chris Clark, Nethergill)
6. 17.30-18.00 Use of technology in restoration planning
7. 18.00 – 18:30ish Q&A
8. 18:45 check in at accommodation
9. 7.00ish Dinner at Herriot's (Jennifer to book) & informal discussions

10th July

10. 08.30-9.00 check out and transfer minibus to Skipton Office
11. 9.00-9.50 Travel in 4WD vehicles to Bishopdale site (Stake Moss)
12. 9.50-11.50 looking at various stages of restoration and further discussion with landowner.
10. 11.50-12.10 Travel to Fleet Moss in 4WD vehicles
11. 12.10-12.45 lunch on site (Tim to organise packed lunch)
11. 12.45-2.00 Fleet Moss site visit to look at a "before" site
12. 2.00-3.00 Travel back to Skipton in 4WD vehicles to collect minibus.
13. 3.59 Train from Skipton to Manchester airport

Appendix 2. Press Release

Sharing best practice across the Irish Sea

Ulster conservationists and farmers visited peatland restoration sites in Yorkshire on 9th and 10th July.

Ulster Wildlife Trust, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), and Ulster Farmers Union have visited peatland sites in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The sites are being restored by Pennine PeatLIFE, with the work funded by the EU LIFE Programme and led by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

Peatland restoration is a comparatively new science – it has a ten year history in North Yorkshire. In Northern Ireland peatland restoration has been initiated through the EU Interreg Programme and a longer term plan is being considered to make a positive contribution to greenhouses gases, flood alleviation and biodiversity. Our guests visited peatland sites in Bishopdale and Langstrothdale to get a first-hand look at restoration works. They met with landowner, Rob Brown, and farmers, Chris Clarke and Martin Valance, to hear how they have benefited from peatland restoration.

Peatlands are the most iconic of Yorkshire's landscapes, but 80% of them have been damaged, many severely so. What should be wet, green and wild is instead dry and cracked. Damaged peatlands not only pose a threat for wildlife, they also contribute to large-scale flooding and global climate change.

Fortunately, as severely damaged as much of Yorkshire's peatlands are, it is not too late to save them. Yorkshire Peat Partnership (YPP), an umbrella organisation led by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, has already restored over 27,000 hectares of peatlands in the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors to their former glory. Peatland Restoration Officers are working on site, revegetating bare peat and blocking drainage channels to help make the dry and cracked landscape green and wet once more.

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Peat Programme Manager, Dr Tim Thom said:

"Over the last 10 years, we've put in a supreme effort to get almost half of Yorkshire's peatlands into restoration management. That people are travelling this far to see what we've done feels like a testament to our hard work and innovation. I hope we've inspired our guests to restore their own peatlands."

Dr Sara McGuckin, Head of Natural Science at the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, said:

"This has been a great opportunity to see evidence-based peatland restoration in practice, building nature's capacity to deal with a range of environmental challenges."

Ulster Farmers Union deputy president Victor Chestnutt said:

“It was very interesting to see the restoration work being undertaken through the Pennine PeatLIFE project. The landowners are providing an important public service.”

Jennifer Fulton, CEO of Ulster Wildlife said:

“With climate change and biodiversity loss, it is important that everyone works together to address the environmental challenges we face now and into the future. Upland farmers and landowners have an important role to play for wider society in carbon sequestration, biodiversity and natural flood management whilst also producing food. This is the direction of travel for future agricultural policy included in the 25 Year Plan to improve the environment”.

Ends

Notes to editors

About Pennine PeatLIFE