



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Peat perspectives – the next chapter for policy

Judith Stuart

Soils and Peat Policy Team

Contents

- Peat Pilots
- England Peat Strategy
- Peat restoration funding opportunities
- Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme

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

EPS@defra.gov.uk