

Yorkshire Peat Partnership Annual Report

April 2019 – March 2020



CONTENTS

1 Yorkshire Peat Partnership

1.1 What is Yorkshire Peat Partnership?..... 4

1.2 Why are we needed? 4

2 Our work

2.1 Our work on the ground since 2009..... 5

2.2 Our work on the ground 2019/2020 5

2.3 Our work in numbers 2019/2020 6

2.4 Funding 8

2.5 England Peatland Strategy pilot..... 10

3 Next steps 11

4 Acknowledgements 12



HEADLINES

This is a report on the peatland restoration work completed in Yorkshire between November 2019 and March 2020.

Landscape-scale Action

The Yorkshire Peat Partnership completed a remarkable 31,526 ha* of peat restoration work by the end of March 2020 which is 33% of the estimated 94,760 ha* of blanket bog in Yorkshire.

Key highlights included:

- ✓ **Securing £448,233** to cover core costs (e.g. staff, vehicles, equipment and office costs)
- ✓ **Securing £2,463,621** of capital funds to carry out direct peatland restoration
- ✓ Completing surveys of **4,325 ha** (14 sites) of the estimated **94,760 ha** of peatland units (300 sites covering estimated **63,663 ha** of actual peaty soils) in Yorkshire
- ✓ Completing **2 archaeological assessments** of potential restoration sites
- ✓ Carrying out **Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) surveys** of over 1,600 ha of peatland in Yorkshire and under contract elsewhere
- ✓ Completing restoration plans for **7,711 ha** of peat units (20 sites)

Completed restoration works on 3,113 ha of peat units (7 sites) in Yorkshire by:

- ✓ blocking **82.9 km** of eroding grips and gullies
- ✓ Re-profiling and re-vegetating **73.8 km** of grips and gully edges and hags
- ✓ Re-vegetating **33 ha** of bare peat, mineral soil & micro-erosion
- ✓ Planting **85,596 cotton grass plugs** in bare peat
- ✓ Planting **126,500 sphagnum plugs**
- ✓ Re-establishing sphagnum in **38 ha** of existing degraded blanket bog vegetation

*this is defined as upland management units containing peat. The total restoration work figure is lower than the 32,343 ha reported in our 2019 report as one site was double-counted in that compiling that figure.

1 YORKSHIRE PEAT PARTNERSHIP

1.1 What is Yorkshire Peat Partnership?

Yorkshire Peat Partnership began in 2009, as an umbrella organisation led by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, to try to coordinate the restoration of the badly degraded blanket bog of northern Yorkshire. Since then, we have become the primary organisation coordinating the delivery of upland peatland restoration across the Yorkshire Dales National Park, the North York Moors National Park, Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and northern parts of the South Pennines. We are also delivering peatland restoration in parts of Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and work with other organisations on restoration sites across the North of England. We work closely with landowners, agents, gamekeepers, farmers and contractors to help restore Yorkshire's internationally important blanket bog.



1.2 Why are we needed?

Blanket bog is (in England) an upland peatland habitat, occurring from around 200m upwards, generally on flat or gently sloping ground where drainage is poor. Few plants are adapted to the acidic, infertile conditions found on the deepest peat and sphagnum mosses and cottongrasses predominate.

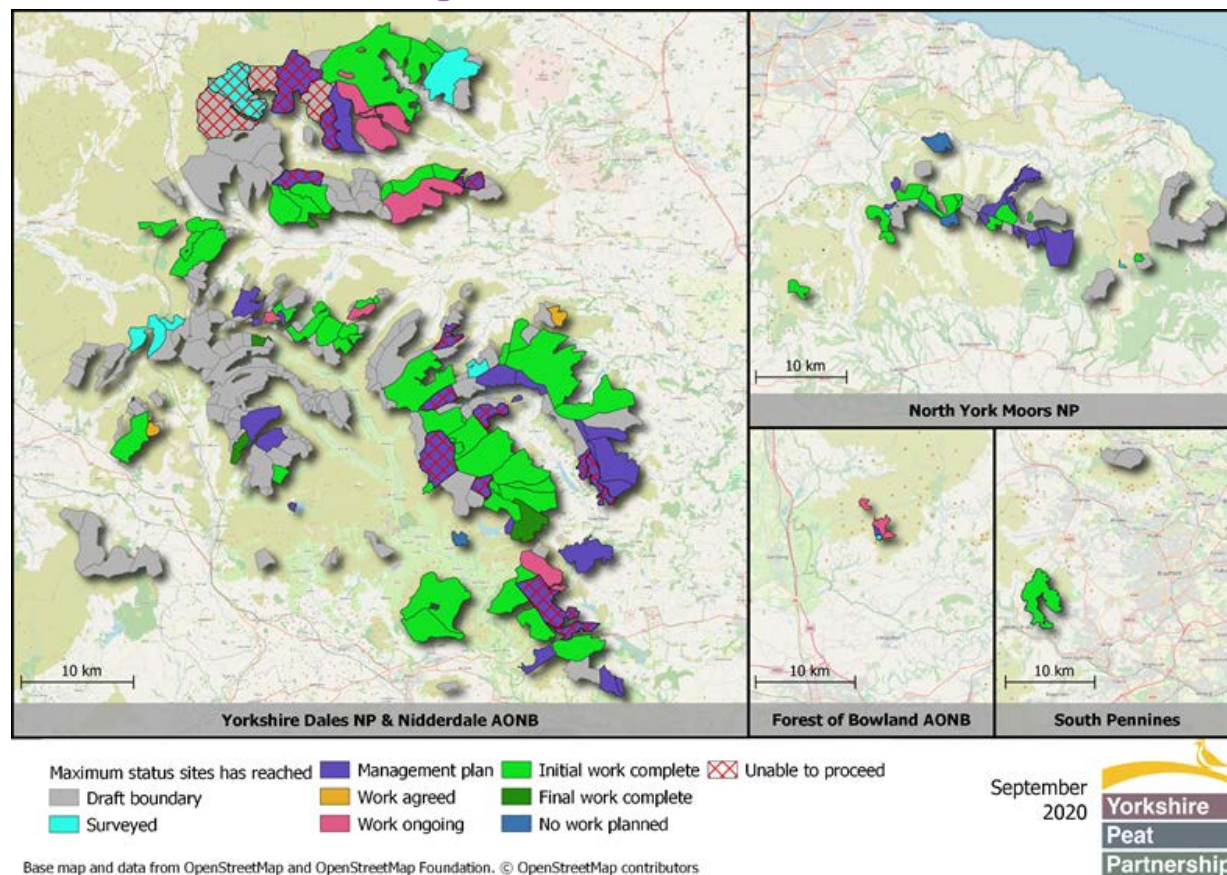
The UK has 13% of the world's blanket bog, and we estimate Yorkshire holds around 94,760 ha - around 24% of England's total resource – storing over 38 million tonnes of carbon. In addition to locking up millennia of carbon, healthy blanket bog helps to slow the flow of water from the uplands into rivers and streams, filters our drinking water and provides habitat for some amazing wildlife. Formed over thousands of years, it has taken just six decades to devastate Yorkshire's peatlands.

Most damage occurred between the 1950s and 1980s, when the government incentivised landowners to drain the land for “agricultural improvement”. Drainage channels – known as grips – were dug across vast tracts of blanket bog, which still criss-cross the landscape today. 80% of our blanket bog has been damaged in this way, leaving our peatlands brown and broken. We, along with our partners and funders, aim to restore this amazing habitat to fully functioning blanket bog that benefits both people and wildlife.

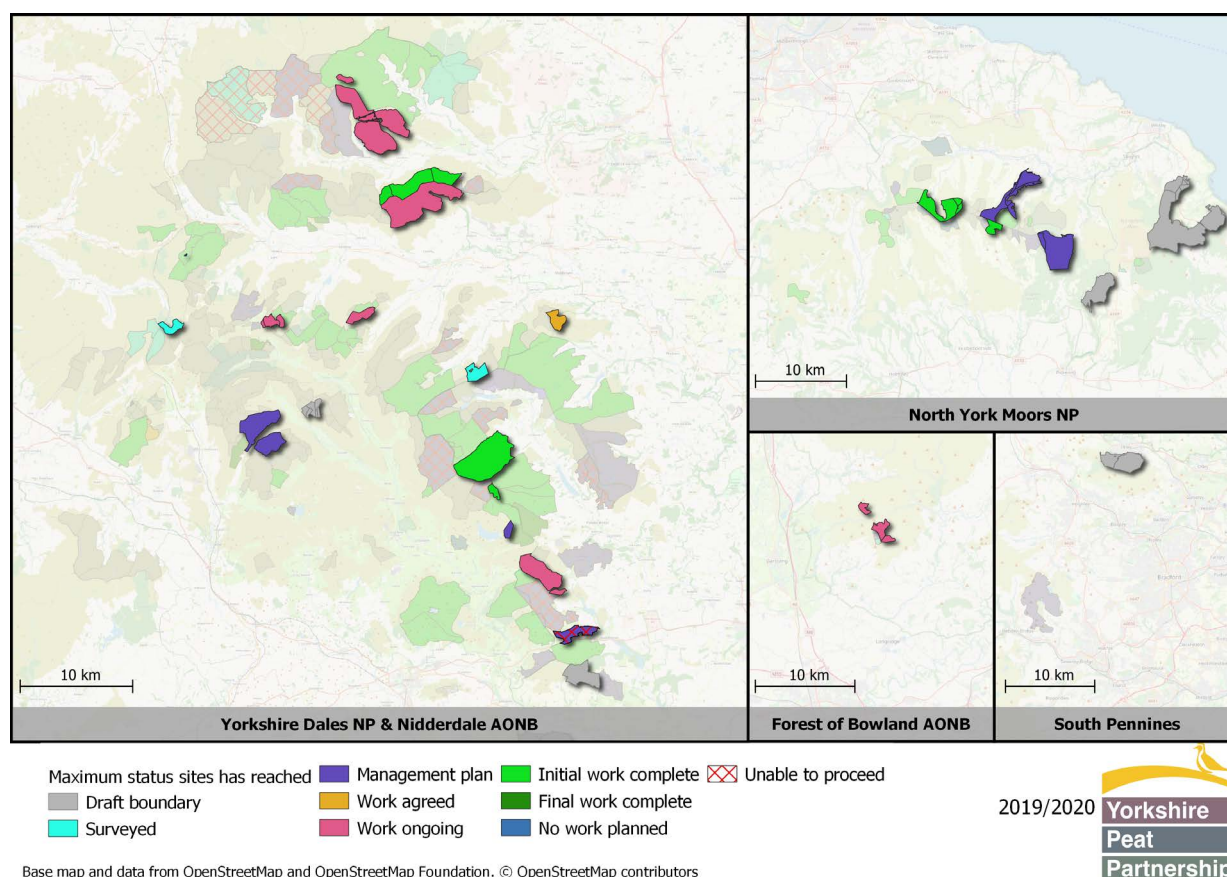
Yorkshire Peat Partnership is managed by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust in partnership with Yorkshire Water, Natural England, North York Moors National Park Authority, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and the Environment Agency with support from the Moorland Association, National Trust, Nidderdale AONB, and the National Farmers Union.

2 OUR WORK

2.1 Our work on the ground since 2009



2.2 Our work on the ground 2019/2020



2.3 Our work in numbers 2019/2020

Field surveys (ha)	3,755
Aerial surveys (ha)	1,600
Restoration works completed (ha)	3,113
Restoration plans completed (ha)	7,032
Stone sediment traps installed	1,393
Coir logs installed in dams	13,578
Coir log dams installed	555
Timber dams installed	1,659
Coir log bunds installed	12,392
Heather bunds installed	2,219
Timber baffles installed	1
Stone baffles installed	22
Gullies and grips blocked (m)	82,903
Gullies and hags reprofiled (m)	73,879
Bare peat/mineral soil/micro-erosion revegetated (ha)	33
Gullies and hags reprofiled and revegetated (ha)	8
Sphagnum plugs planted	126,500
Cottongrass plugs planted	85,596
Crowberry plugs planted	53,096
Existing vegetation inoculated with sphagnum (ha)	38

19/20 completed work (new sites not previously reported on)

Yorkshire Dales NP **834ha**

Harkerside – 243 ha

Summer Lodge Moor – 123 ha

Whitaside – 468 ha

Nidderdale AONB **1,323ha**

Steane Moor – 1,323 ha

North York Moors NP **880ha**

Rosedale Moor (Middle Head) – 175 ha

Westerdale Common – 705 ha

Total: 3,112

Sites with works ongoing but not yet complete and therefore not reported on yet

Yorkshire Dales NP **1,761ha**

Fleet Moss – 327 ha

Oughtershaw – 15 ha

Bolton Castle Estate – 1,372 ha

Bleaberry Moor – 47 ha

Nidderdale AONB **653ha**

Humberstone – 653ha

Total: 2,414 ha

Sites where YPP are re-visiting (but will have already been reported)

Yorkshire Dales

Grimwith – 489 ha

West Arkengarthdale – 66 ha

Shaking Moss (Mossdale) – 2.5 ha

Total: 557.5 ha

2.4 Funding

Core revenue funding

Organisation	Amount £		
	2009-18/19	19/20	TOTAL
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust – legacies	84,557	-	84,557
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust – fund-raising	30,971	76,255	107,226
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust – consultancy	77,753	22,960	100,713
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust – in kind overheads	135,677	-	135,677
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority	300,100	-	300,100
North York Moors National Park Authority	93,146	-	93,146
Nidderdale AONB	1,000	-	1,000
North Pennines AONB	10,000	-	10,000
Environment Agency – direct	279,379	35,000	314,379
Environment Agency – via Pennine PeatLIFE	280,000	-	280,000
Natural England	588,845	-	588,845
DEFRA Peatland Fund – via YWT	33,333	33,333	66,666
DEFRA England Peat Strategy Pilot		45,083	45,083
Higher Level Scheme	248,864	-	248,864
Countryside Stewardship	63,567	90,664	154,231
Yorkshire Water – contracts	337,014	68,060	405,074
Yorkshire Water – via Pennine PeatLIFE	19,673	76,878	96,551
Peter de Haan Conservation Trust	100,000	-	100,000
TOTAL	£2,683,546	£448,233	3,131,779
Average per annum	£268,355	-	£284,707
Loans – Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority	£2,107,341	-	-
Loans – The Wildlife Trusts	£1,500,000		-

Capital funding

Organisation	Amount £		
	2009-18/19	19/20	TOTAL
Environment Agency – Water Framework Directive	643,410	-	643,410
Natural England – Water Framework Directive	166,239	-	166,239
Higher Level Scheme (administered by Natural England through individual land manager agreements)	11,155,831	261,991	11,417,822
Countryside Stewardship Scheme (administered by Natural England and Rural Payments Agency through individual land manager agreements)	49,492	126,637	176,219
Yorkshire Water – contracts	2,279,335	210,173	2,489,508
Yorkshire Water – via Pennine PeatLIFE	235,817	559,000	794,817
DEFRA Peatland Fund	316,030	1,305,820	1,621,850
TOTAL	14,846,154	2,463,621	17,309,865
Average per annum	1,484,615	205,302	1,442,480

2.5 England Peatland Strategy Pilot – North York Moors National Park

We were commissioned by Natural England as part of DEFRA's national Peat Pilots programme to evaluate different forms of peatland restoration management in relation to resilience to increasing climate stress and the potential ecosystem services and public benefits this may provide.

A key consideration was how to restore hydrological function to peatlands that have not been extensively drained but are still degraded and considered both deep and shallow peat.

Two moors in the North York Moors National Park were chosen as case studies for the North York Moors England Peat Strategy Pilot - Glaisdale Moor and Wheeldale Moor. Detailed surveys of the moors were carried out in January and February 2020 by a team of Restoration Officers from Yorkshire Peat Partnership as part of the Pilot project itself with additional information provided for Glaisdale Moor from a survey carried out in 2019 as an assessment for a Countryside Stewardship application.

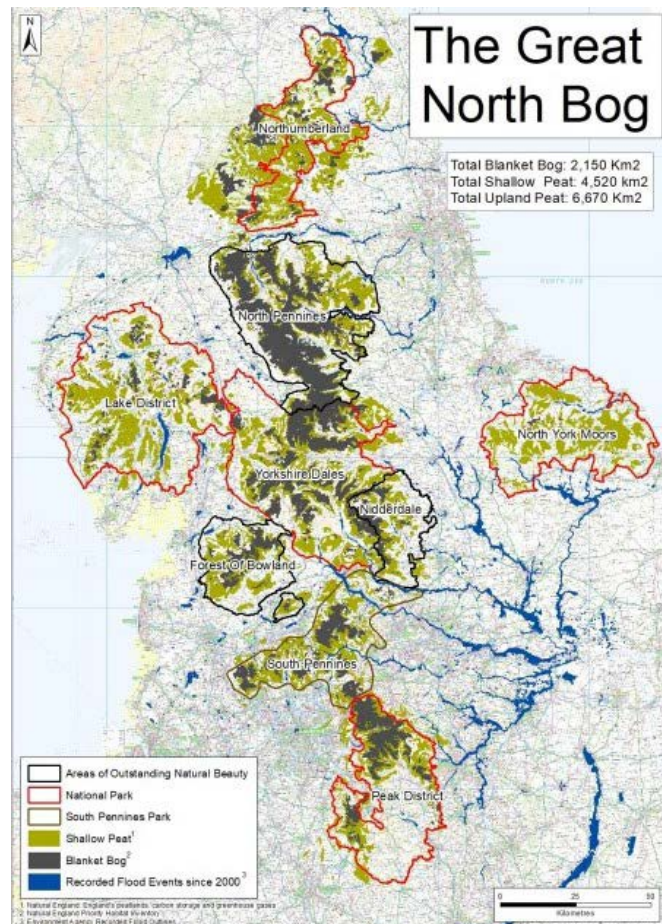
The pilot was a significant undertaking – across over 1,100 staff hours we surveyed 2,815 ha, collected 2,040 peat depth measurements, and produced four restoration plans.

Activity	Total Duration (hrs)
Advocacy meetings	5.5
DigiBog development	135.75
Earth observation	145
Field survey	386
Management Group meetings	4
Post survey mapping	80.5
Pre-survey mapping	26
Project initiation	42.5
Project Management	17
Reporting	174
Research	21.5
Restoration plan write up	89.5
Steering Group Meetings	8
Works monitoring	19
Works tendering	3
Total	1157.25

3 NEXT STEPS

In less fraught years, this report would have been issued in the spring of 2020 and next steps would have seen us looking forward to the 2020/2021 restoration season. As things stand, we are now looking forward to the 2021/2022 restoration season, in which we have funding of just over £2 million to spend on peatland restoration. Some of that funding will, importantly, allow us to return to sites we have already worked on and look at where and how we might build on what's already been achieved.

Yorkshire Water's AMP7 programme, with match funding from the Environment Agency, will not only enable restoration work, but also fund development of further sites so that they are shovel-ready as restoration funding becomes available. A generous grant from Garfield Weston Foundation will allow us to return to the most degraded blanket bog in Yorkshire to revisit our restoration work there and ensure that it will continue to hold water and peat sediment on the moor. A wide reaching Countryside Stewardship programme will see us working with individual landowners across the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors. As one of the delivery bodies for the Pennine PeatLIFE programme, we will be continuing restoration work in the Yorkshire Dales and Forest of Bowland and also co-hosting the IUCN UK Peatland Programme Annual Conference in autumn. Our budget for 2021/2022 is just over £2 million.



We have funding in place to develop the Great North Bog. This is an ambitious, grand-scale peatland restoration initiative being developed by the North Pennines AONB Partnership, Yorkshire Peat Partnership and the Moors for the Future Partnership. The Great North Bog is a landscape-scale approach to upland peatland restoration and conservation across nearly 7,000 square kilometres of peatland soils in the Protected Landscapes of northern England, currently storing 400 million tonnes of carbon. The programme aims to develop a working partnership to deliver a 20-year funding, restoration and conservation plan to make a significant contribution to the UK's climate and carbon sequestration targets.

We are seeking funding for our research and development work on improving our restoration techniques, especially in finding in new, effective ways to establish vegetation on very exposed areas of bare peat and in reducing our reliance on coir.

We look forward to the publication of Defra's England Peatland Strategy and working with them to see it implemented.

4 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The success of Yorkshire Peat Partnership is the result of the hard work of by a huge range of partners and could not have happened without them. Landowners, their agents, gamekeepers, farmers and tenants have helped YPP deliver the restoration work on their land, often helping practically but also providing advocacy support and helping to unlock funding.

None of the work could have taken place without our major funders supporting both the capital work but also the hugely important core funds that enable YPP to function. We are hugely grateful to Natural England, the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, the North York Moors National Park Authority, Peter de Haan Conservation Trust & Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. Huge thanks also go to the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and The Wildlife Trusts who provided the bridging loan to enable us to unlock HLS funds.

We would also like to thank our other Steering Group members (Moorland Association, National Farmers Union, National Trust and Nidderdale AONB Partnership for supporting and guiding our work.

A special mention goes to Yorkshire Wildlife Trust for hosting the Yorkshire Peat Partnership and providing all the essential back-up services (especially Peter Batchelor and his finance team and Tracey Davison-Franks in HR) we couldn't have done without. The impact and cost of hosting YPP should not be under-estimated.

Last but not least none of this could have happened without the support of our hugely dedicated, hard-working staff team (Roz Bardon, Mark Brown, Pete Christopherson, Matt Cross, Dom Hinchley, Astrid Hanlon, Les Hughes, Ceri Katz, Tessa Levens, Ollie Mackrill, Lyndon Marquis, Chris Miller, Chris Osborne, Jenny Sharman, Lizzie Slingsby, Jackie Smith, Matt Snelling, Rosie Snowden, Tim Thom, Beth Thomas, Kay Waites, Laura Watson) who have come and gone over the years but remain the heart, soul and spirit of Yorkshire Peat Partnership.

And thanks too to our Funding and Engagement team colleagues, Jennifer Few, Clea Grady, Sally Henderson, Hetti Lawrence, Katie Mapp and Lindsey Pilsworth for your tremendous hard work and support during the Give Peat a Chance appeal – you really made us feel a part of something special.