



Yorkshire
Wildlife Trust

Yorkshire Peat Partnership Annual Report

April 2020 – March 2021



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HEADLINES

This is a report on the peatland restoration work completed in Yorkshire between November 2020 and March 2021.

Landscape-scale Action

Yorkshire Peat Partnership completed a remarkable 36,574 ha* of peat restoration work by the end of March 2021 which is 38% of the estimated 95,796 ha* of blanket bog in Yorkshire.

Key highlights included:

- ✓ Securing **£508,524** to cover core costs (e.g. staff, vehicles, equipment and office costs)
- ✓ Securing **£3,618,530** of capital funds to carry out direct peatland restoration
- ✓ Completing surveys of **6,855 ha** of the estimated **95,796 ha** of peatland units (covering an estimated **63,821 ha** of actual peaty soils) in Yorkshire
- ✓ Completing **3 archaeological assessments** of potential restoration sites
- ✓ Carrying out Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) surveys of over **886 ha** of peatland in Yorkshire and under contract elsewhere
- ✓ Completing restoration plans for **5,871 ha** of peat units

Completed restoration works on 5,048 ha of peat units in Yorkshire by:

- ✓ blocking **156.4 km** of eroding grips and gullies
- ✓ Re-profiling and re-vegetating **129.8 km** of grips and gully edges and hags
- ✓ Re-vegetating **22 ha** of bare peat, mineral soil & micro-erosion
- ✓ Planting **173,080** cotton grass plugs in bare peat
- ✓ Planting **76,177** sphagnum plugs
- ✓ Re-establishing sphagnum in **20 ha** of existing degraded blanket bog vegetation

*this is defined as upland management units containing peat.

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.

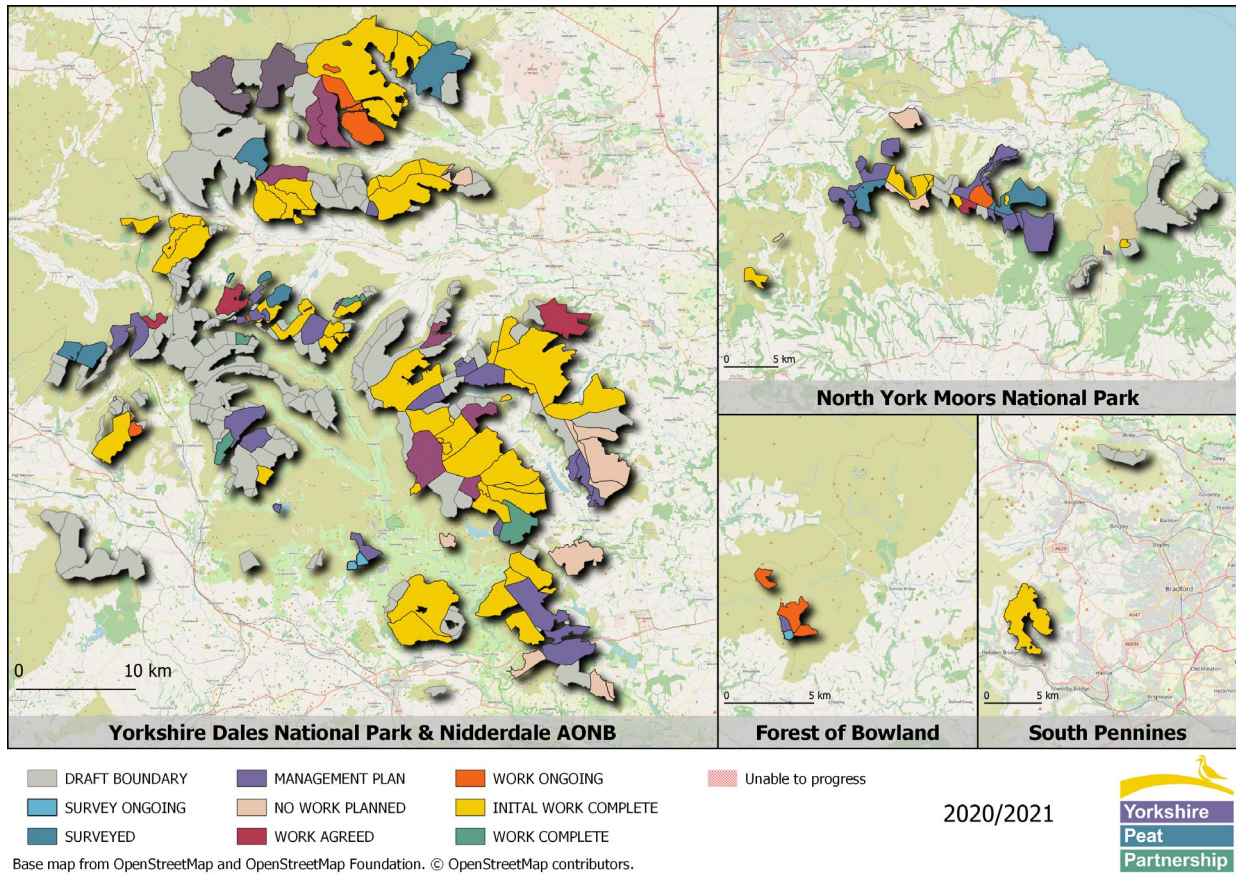
The UK has 13% of the world's blanket bog, and we estimate Yorkshire holds around 95,796 ha - around 26% of England's total resource – storing over 47,000,000 tonnes of carbon. In addition to locking up millennia of carbon, healthy blanket bog helps to slow the flow of water from the uplands into rivers 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.

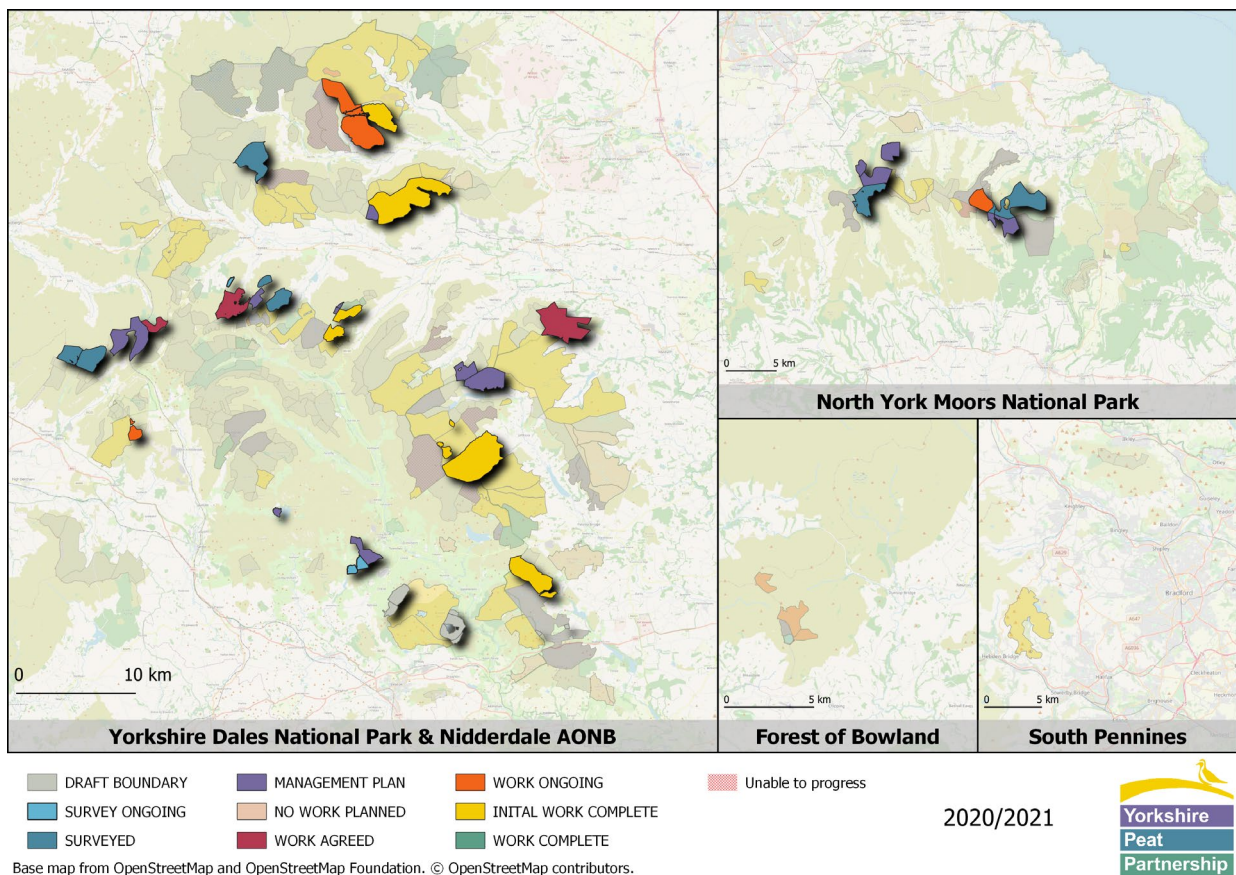
Yorkshire Peat Partnership is managed by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust in partnership with Yorkshire Water, Natural England, North York Moors National Park Authority, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and the Environment Agency with support from the Moorland Association, National Trust, Nidderdale AONB,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

2 OUR WORK

2.1 Our work on the ground since 2009



2.2 Our work on the ground 2020/2021



2.3 Our work in numbers 2020/2021

Field surveys (ha)	6,885
Aerial surveys (ha)	886
Restoration works completed	5,048
Restoration plans completed (ha)	5,871
Stone sediment traps installed	2,878
Coir log dams installed	633
Timber dams installed	2,181
Coir log bunds installed	3,423
Heather bunds installed	1,893
Timber baffles installed	531
Stone baffles installed	334
Gullies and grips blocked (m)	156,398
Gullies and hags reprofiled (m)	129,837
Bare peat/ mineral soil/ micro-erosion revegetated (ha)	22
Gullies and hags revegetated (ha)	11
Sphagnum plugs planted	76,177
Cottongrass plugs planted	173,080
Crowberry plugs planted	132,574
Existing vegetation inoculated with sphagnum	20
Existing vegetation inoculated with sphagnum (ha)	38

2.4 Funding

Core revenue funding			
Organisation	Amount £		
	2009-19/20	20/21	TOTAL
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust – legacies	84,557	-	84,557
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust – fund-raising	107,226	89,524	196,750
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust – consultancy	100,713	16,530	117,243
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	314,379	95,000	409,379
Environment Agency – via Pennine PeatLIFE	225,000	-	225,000
Natural England	588,845	-	588,845
DEFRA Peatland Fund – via YWT	66,666	33,333	99,999
DEFRA England Peat Strategy Pilot	45,083	-	45,083
Higher Level Scheme	248,864	-	248,864
Countryside Stewardship	154,231	90,977	245,208
Yorkshire Water – contracts	405,074	61,258	466,322
Yorkshire Water – via Pennine PeatLIFE	143,771	-	143,771
Peter de Haan Conservation Trust	100,000	-	100,000
EU-LIFE – via Pennine PeatLIFE	-	121,902	121,902
TOTAL	3,124,332	508,524	3,632,856
Average per annum	£284,030	-	£302,738
Loans – Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority	£2,107,341	-	-
Loans – The Wildlife Trusts	£1,500,000	-	-

Capital funding

Organisation	Amount £		
	2009-19/20	20/21	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)	11,417,822	77,076	11,494,898
Countryside Stewardship Scheme (administered by Natural England and Rural Payments Agency through individual land manager agreements)	176,219	573,551	749,770
Yorkshire Water – contracts	2,489,508	149,709	2,639,217
Yorkshire Water – via Pennine PeatLIFE	756,229	-	756,229
EU-LIFE – via Pennine PeatLIFE	38,588	799,341	837,929
DEFRA Peatland Fund	1,621,850	2,018,853	3,640,703
TOTAL	17,309,865	3,618,530	20,928,395
Average per annum	1,573,624	-	1,744,032

3 NEXT STEPS

In July, a raft of new projects designed to help the UK tackle the climate and nature emergency was announced by The Wildlife Trusts. The projects, which will help the UK achieve its ambition of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050, are possible thanks to almost £2 million in funding raised by players of People’s Postcode Lottery. The 12 schemes, which focus on employing nature-based solutions to increase carbon storage while restoring habitats on land and at sea, include some of our work with the Great North Bog. We are working with Cumbria, Durham, Lancashire and Northumberland Wildlife Trusts to bring over 4,000 hectares of upland peatland under restoration management, with estimated annual savings of at least 8,590 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per hectare, per year. The funding will allow us collectively to develop up to 15 new restoration plans to take advantage of “shovel-ready” project-funding as it becomes available – see Nature for Climate below. It will also enable us to explore marketing peatland restoration to private investors, and to conduct long-term monitoring over 20 years with techniques and equipment developed by the IUCN UK Peatland Programme and University of Manchester.

We received £4.8 million from Natural England’s Nature for Climate fund. Combined with match funding from Yorkshire Water and a private landowner, it will enable a £6.5 million leap forward in peatland



restoration in the northern uplands. This means that, along with the North Pennines AONB Partnership and University of Manchester, we can deliver a major restoration and monitoring programme across 3,510 ha of peatland in the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors National Parks and the Nidderdale and North Pennines Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Funding from Innovate UK’s Knowledge Transfer Programme and VP plc will allow us to find an answer to one of our recurring issues. We struggle with sloping, bare peat facing into the prevailing wind; whatever we do to revegetate it, southwest facing bare peat is scoured by the wind and requires multiple interventions. Working with the University of Manchester, we hope to find techniques and materials that will help us address this challenge and consolidate the integrity of our restoration work on these sites.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund funded ‘Tees-Swale: naturally connected’ programme was launched in February; two of the most outstanding landscapes in the English uplands are set to be connected, restored and enhanced in one of the most significant nature programmes to be funded in the UK. We will be leading all of the programme’s peatland restoration work in Swaledale.



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 Yorkshire Peat Partnership and providing all the essential back-up services (especially Darren Tiffney 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 underestimated.

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, Aaron de Raat, Jenny Sharman, Lizzie Slingsby, Jackie Smith, Matt Snelling, Rosie Snowden, Elizabeth Sullivan, 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.