



Yorkshire
Wildlife Trust

Yorkshire Peat Partnership Annual Report

2025 – 2026



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INTRODUCTION

Since 2009, we have become the primary body coordinating upland peatland restoration across the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors National Parks and Nidderdale National Landscape. We work closely with landowners, agents, gamekeepers, farmers and contractors to help restore Yorkshire’s internationally important blanket bog.

YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE ABOUT US ON OUR



1 WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED SO FAR?

This year's report has been compiled differently to those of previous years. Historically, we have calculated the area of peat from the Cranfield Soil Map, which was the best source available for our first report. This year, we have calculated the area of peat using Natural England's England Peat Map EPM), which has changed our reporting in two ways:

1. The area of peat in our operational area is very much bigger than in previous reports as we now have access to a more accurate data source.

2. The figure for the area of peatland on which we have previously worked has reduced. The EPM has given us a clearer picture of those areas, within a given site boundary, that we have not surveyed so, by combining that with survey data, we are now able to report more accurately.

Furthermore, we are now able to report on the amount of CO₂ held within the peat with more confidence.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2025/2026 INCLUDED



Delivering **4,617 ha** of restoration work



Securing **£1,740,460** to cover core costs (e.g. staff, vehicles, equipment and office costs) and **£1,289,922** of capital funds to carry out direct peatland restoration, all in a challenging year for funding



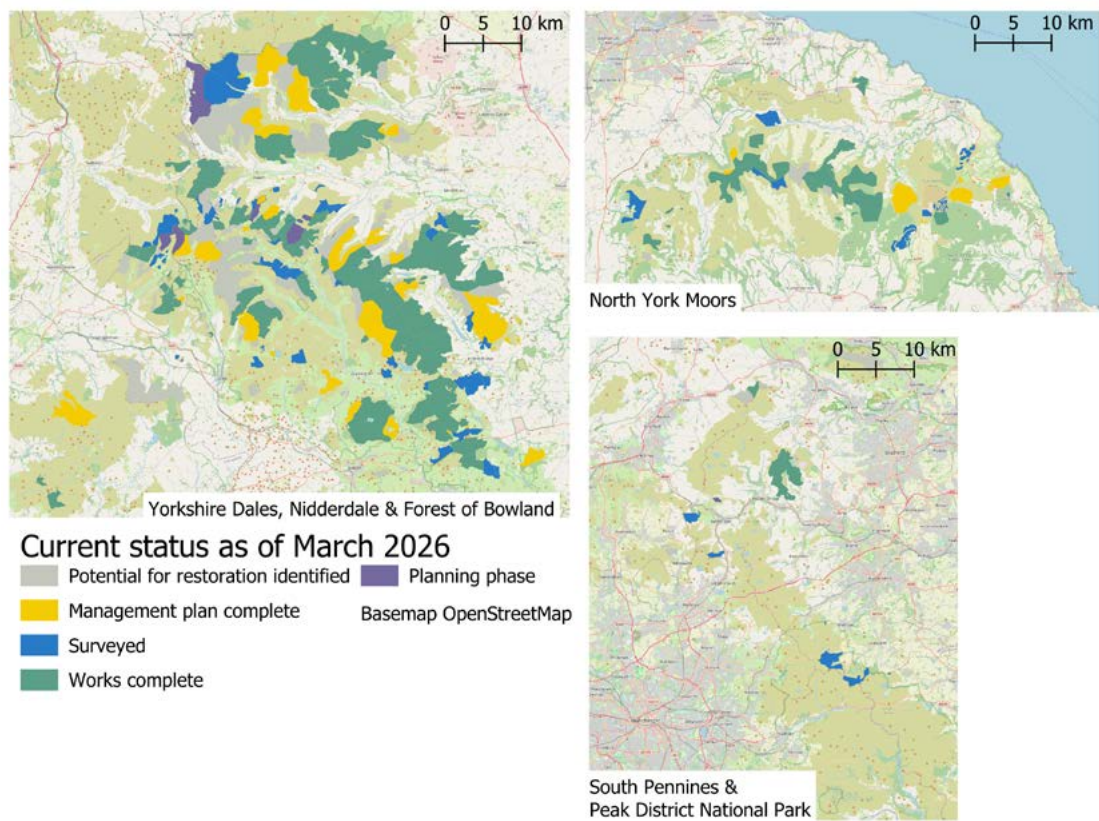
Completing foot surveys of **6,771 ha** of upland peatland

We have now brought a total of 48,826 ha into restoration management. This is helping to keep 77,962,956 tonnes of CO₂ locked in the ground.

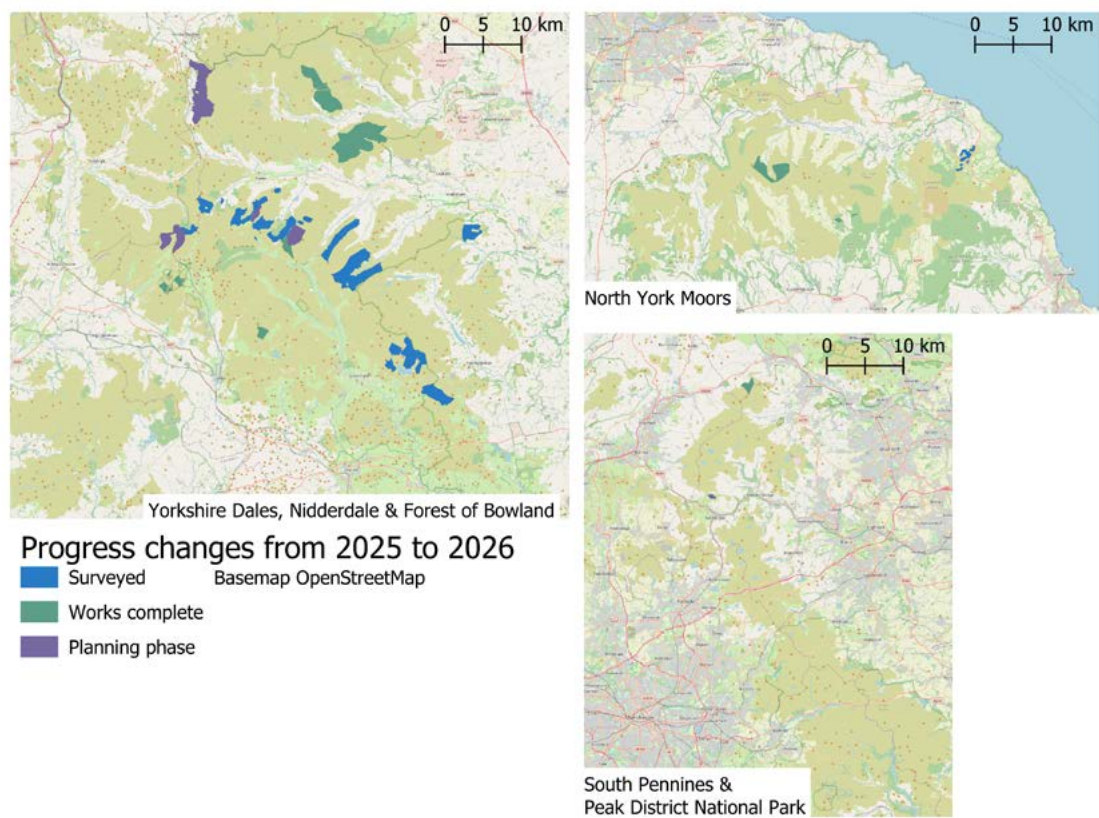


2 WHAT DID WE ACHIEVE IN 25/26 RESTORATION SEASON?

2.1 Our work on the ground since 2009



2.2 Our work on the ground in 2025/2026



2.3 Our work in numbers 2025/2026

Areas covered by walkover surveys

REGION	PREVIOUS AREA (HA)	NEW AREA 2025 (HA)	TOTAL AREA (HA)
Forest of Bowland National Landscape	1,844	0	1,844
Nidderdale National Landscape	18,335	989	19,324
North Pennines National Landscape	74	443	517
North York Moors National Park	13,222	210	13,432
South Pennines	2,028	0	2,028
Yorkshire Dales National Park	40,672	5,128	45,800
Other	2,108	0	2,108
Totals	78,282	6,771	85,053

Work on the ground

REGION	TOTAL AREA 2026 (HA)	2026 REPEAT AREA (HA)	NEW AREA 2026 (HA)	TOTAL AREA PREVIOUS YEARS	TOTAL AREA TO DATE
Forest of Bowland National Landscape	0	0	0	390	390
Nidderdale National Landscape	0	0	0	13,453	13,453
North Pennines National Landscape	0	0	0	3	3
North York Moors National Park	722	670	52	6,788	6,840
South Pennines	154	0	154	1,300	1,454
Yorkshire Dales National Park	3,732	3,732	0	25,964	25,964
Other	9	9	0	723	723
Grand Total	4,617	4,411	206	48,621	48,826

Carbon in the ground

REGION	TOTAL AREA 2026 (TONNES OF CO ₂)	2026 REPEAT AREA (TONNES OF CO ₂)	NEW AREA 2026 (TONNES OF CO ₂)	TOTAL AREA PREVIOUS YEARS (TONNES OF CO ₂)	TOTAL AREA TO DATE (TONNES OF CO ₂)
Forest of Bowland National Landscape	0	0	0	1,270,111	1,270,111
Nidderdale National Landscape	0	0	0	20,951,823	20,951,823
North Pennines National Landscape	0	0	0	8,491	8,491
North York Moors National Park	621,263	582,536	38,727	7,990,442	8,029,169
South Pennines	222,601	0	222,601	2,267,617	2,490,218
Yorkshire Dales National Park	7,111,240	7,111,240	0	43,783,171	43,783,171
Other	14,628	14,628	0	1,429,974	1,429,974
Totals	7,969,732	7,708,404	261,328	77,701,628	77,962,956

2.4 Funding

Yorkshire Peat Partnership is not-for-profit; all of our funding goes into covering our overheads, research and development, monitoring or capital restoration works.

Core revenue funding

Organisation	Amount £							TOTAL
	2009-19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust – legacies, fundraising, individual donations and consultancy	428,173	106,054	53,556	27,051	11,794	14,051	28,971	669,650
Morgan Sindall donation to Nature for Climate					200,000	-	-	200,000
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust – corporate donations					7,800		62,466	70,266
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust – Postcode Lottery Nature Based solutions fund	-	-	188,843	-		-	-	188,843
VP PLC donation to Peatfix project	-	-	24,000	-	24,000	-	-	48,000
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority	300,100	-	-	£5,000		-	-	305,100
North York Moors National Park Authority	93,146	-	-	-		-	25,000	118,146
Nidderdale NL	1,000	-	-	-		10,127	-	11,127
North Pennines NL	10,000	-	-	-		-	-	10,000
Environment Agency FCRM	314,379	95,000	14,348	14,250	13,180	14,250	20,957	486,364
Environment Agency – direct						5,000	10,000	15,000
Environment Agency – via Pennine PeatLIFE	225,000	-	95,000	-		-	-	320,000
Environment Agency – Great North Bog Development	-	-	59,833	-		-	-	59,833
Natural England	588,845	-	-	-	23,961			612,806
Natural England- Species Recovery Programme						48,096	-	48,096
DEFRA Peatland Fund – via YWT	66,666	33,333	13,703	-		-	-	113,702
DEFRA England Peat Strategy Pilot	45,083	-	-	-		-	-	45,083
DEFRA training grant							5,000	5,000
Higher Level Stewardship scheme	248,864	-	-	-		-	-	248,864
Countryside Stewardship (PA2s & CoW) & SFI	154,231	90,977	97,227	73,536	63,774	23,846	38,843	542,434
Other contracts						116,380	3,437	119,817
Landscape Recovery – Ure Dales						254,578	395,796	650,374

Core revenue funding (continued)

Organisation	Amount £							TOTAL
	2009-19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	
Yorkshire Water – via Pennine PeatLIFE	143,771	-	-	-		-	-	143,771
Yorkshire Water- Biodiversity Enhancement Programme							27947	27,947
Yorkshire Water- Performance Commitment							11275	11,275
Peter de Haan Conservation Trust – via YWT	100,000	-	-	-		-	-	100,000
EU-LIFE – via Pennine PeatLIFE	-	121,902	119,630	70,025		-	-	311,557
Natural England- Nature for Climate Fund	-	-	90,820	147,657	194,685	661,601	537,046	1,631,809
Nature for Climate Fund- University of Manchester						84,353	-	84,353
Nature for Climate Fund - National Trust						64,789	-	64,789
Nature for Climate Fund – Moor to Restore	-	-	-	44,363	4,736	-	-	49,099
Esmée Fairbairn – via YWT	-	-	110,000	176,000	58,000	121,000	123,329	588,329
YDNPA FiPL					6,288	-	96,754	103,042
Nidderdale FiPL	-	-	-	9598	87900	40616	9991	148,105
Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected (Heritage Lottery Fund via NPAP)	-	-	-	23,640	20,638	40,500	25,125	109,903
Bradford MDC-WYCA Climate Community Grant					26,000	6,900	-	32,900
Groundwork contribution to New to Nature Trainee					18,238	-	-	18,238
Peat Practitioners training course					14,115	43,845	48,243	106,203
"Fundraising Events Income YPP Training"							2,533	2,533
IUCN UK Peatland Programme						4,500	500	5,000
NYC UK Shared Prosperity Fund						44,754	-	44,754
Yorkshire Policy Innovation Programme							32,268	32,268
Bradford 2025							11,268	11,268
Garfield Weston Foundation				15,000			-	15,000
TOTAL	3,124,332	508,524	1,061,621	785,044	926,045	1,706,299	1,740,460	9,852,324
Loans – Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority	2,107,341	-	-					-
Loans – The Wildlife Trusts	1,500,000	-	-					-

Capital funding

Organisation								TOTAL
	2009-19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	
Environment Agency	643,410	-	80,652	6,583	138,750	80,750	178,180	1,128,325
Natural England – Water Framework Directive	166,239	-	-	-	-	-	-	166,239
Natural England Nature for Climate Fund	-	-	219,600	2,045,597	2,586,536	868,151	766,000	6,485,884
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	1,250,563	73,536	222,937	18,269		2,315,075
Yorkshire Water – AMP	2,489,508	149,709	415,585	789,532	719,619	328,662	230,000	5,122,615
Yorkshire Water – via Pennine PeatLIFE	756,229	-	-	-	-	-	-	756,229
EU-LIFE – via Pennine PeatLIFE	38,588	799,341	140,437	19,736	-	-	-	998,102
DEFRA Peatland Fund-via YWT	1,621,850	1,811,373	98,106	-	-	-	-	3,531,329
Nidderdale FiPL	-	-	-	6,495		-	-	6,495
Yorkshire Dales FiPL	-	-	-		63,392	214,168	-	277,560
Ingleborough NNR							107,742	107,742
Garfield Weston Foundation	-	-	-	297,000			-	297,000
TOTAL	17,309,865	3,411,050	2,204,943	3,238,479	3,731,234	1,510,000	1,281,922	32,687,493

2.5 Monitoring

We currently have two monitoring programmes, which we could not manage without our amazing volunteers:

Eyes on the Bog collects data on peat condition over a long time, gradually building a picture of how the peat is changing.

EYES ON THE BOG	
Records	223
Sites	34
Plots	181

Nature for Climate collects data on changes in the water table and vegetation community on our restoration sites, starting pre-restoration and then continuing for as long as we can fund it.

NATURE FOR CLIMATE MONITORING	
Dipwell records	10,416
Vegetation cover records	2,156
Vegetation species records	1,432

2.6 Training

We currently have two training courses building capacity in the sector, with more to come in 26/27

LANTRA accredited Peatland Restoration Practitioner Course is designed to get new entrants to the sector up to speed, it provides an overview of the full life-cycle of a blanket bog restoration project, including practical survey and mapping skills.

48 TRAINED

Peatland Pathways aims to inspire young people to enter green jobs in the peatland restoration sector.

53 TRAINED

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES ON OUR



2.7 Engagement

Our engagement programme has sought to introduce people of all ages and from all walks of life to Yorkshire's amazing peatlands, through citizen science, site visits, community events and the arts. A highlight was our involvement with Bradford City of Culture 2025, through the Wild Upland Wonderland schools engagement project. Other projects included New Kids on the Bog, ACE Bogs 2, Ground Nest Fest 3 and Sphagnum Pioneers.

Over 2025/2026, we engaged with around 2,100 people.



3 2026/2027

Through funding from Natural England's Species Recovery Programme, we will start a 3-year project to survey upland peatlands across Yorkshire, Lancashire and Northumberland for five rare and tiny spider species: *Erigone psychrophile*, *Erigone welchi*, *Hilaira nubigena*, *Maro Lepidus* and *Semljicola caliginosus*. There are no recent records of these species, and little is known about them; Great North Bugs will seek to understand more of their ecology and assess how they respond to peatland restoration. Better understanding the needs of invertebrates or what their presence tells us about the bog will help us understand if our restoration is working and is creating healthy bogs that will be more resilient under climate change.

We will have two exhibitions generated from our engagement work. One, entitled Slow Storytelling, will be at Nethergill Farm from 11th April to 9th October. This is the finale of Our ACE Bogs 2 project and will feature artwork generated by the 6 artists and the communities involved in the project. The second, Peat. Plants. People., can be viewed at Leeds City Museum from 19th May to 13th December and explores Yorkshire's most overlooked habitat through the eyes of artists, community organisations and specimens from Leeds City Museum's Natural Sciences collection. See our exhibitions page for more information.

The imminent end of the Nature for Funding Peatland Grant Scheme, coupled with inadequate peatland provision within either ELMs or LRS, presents a worrying funding gap for upland restoration. A dedicated funding vehicle is crucial. If we are to maintain the momentum achieved since 2020. Along with the other members of the Great North Bog, we will continue to advocate for such a vehicle.

There has been no commercial peat extraction in Yorkshire since 2006, but all peat comes from somewhere and peat everywhere is important. On the UK mainland, peat is still extracted for bagged compost in Somerset and in Dumfries and Galloway. Along with other partners in the peatland sector, we continue to lobby Government to enact legislation to end the use of peat in horticulture.

SEE OUR

FOR MORE INFORMATION.

4 FEATURE – NATURE FOR CLIMATE MONITORING

Between 2022 and 2025, we collected a large multi-site dataset across the Yorkshire Dales National Park, The Nidderdale National Landscape, the North York Moors National Park and the North Pennines National Landscape as part of the Nature for Climate (NfC) scheme, a national peatland restoration programme aimed at improving carbon storage and ecosystem health in degraded blanket bogs. To date, the dataset included 688 vegetation surveys and 47,212 manual dipwell measurements of water table depth, providing detailed information on biodiversity and hydrological conditions across sites. In addition, we collected 870 peat depth measurements, 2,007 dissolved organic carbon (DOC) samples, 458 peat core analyses, and 333 sediment samples to characterise peat structure, carbon dynamics, and longer-term ecosystem condition.

To assess recovery, we analysed changes in each site over time using simple statistical methods to identify whether key ecological indicators were improving, declining, or remaining stable. We combined five main measures to create an overall recovery score: plant diversity, water table conditions, and the condition of active, fen, and degraded peatland communities. The method considered both the direction and size of changes, giving greater importance to strong and reliable improvements. Scores were adjusted based on how much confidence could be placed in the trends, particularly where fewer survey years were available. Each site was then given a recovery score classified as improving (> 20), stable/mixed (0 to 20), or declining (< 0). An additional rule was used to identify cases where increases in diversity were linked to worsening degraded conditions rather than true ecological recovery.

Preliminary results show that recovery across the restored peatland sites is highly variable, with scores ranging from -35 to 32. Some sites are showing clear signs of improvement, while others remain degraded despite restoration efforts. The strongest recovery was observed at sites 1–7, where scores were consistently high and peatland condition was classified as improving. These sites had a history of pressures including grazing, drainage, and in some cases burning, but active restoration appears to have helped reverse some of the damage. This highlights that restoration, particularly measures that restore wetter peat conditions and

improve peatland function, can deliver strong recovery even on previously degraded bogs.

However, restoration does not erase the impacts of past damage. Sites 21–28 showed the lowest recovery scores and remained classified as degrading, despite restoration taking place. These sites were linked to multiple historical and present pressures, including grazing, drainage, and burning, suggesting that severe or repeated disturbance can leave a lasting legacy. Altered peat structure, reduced water retention, and degraded vegetation communities may continue to slow recovery long after management changes are introduced.

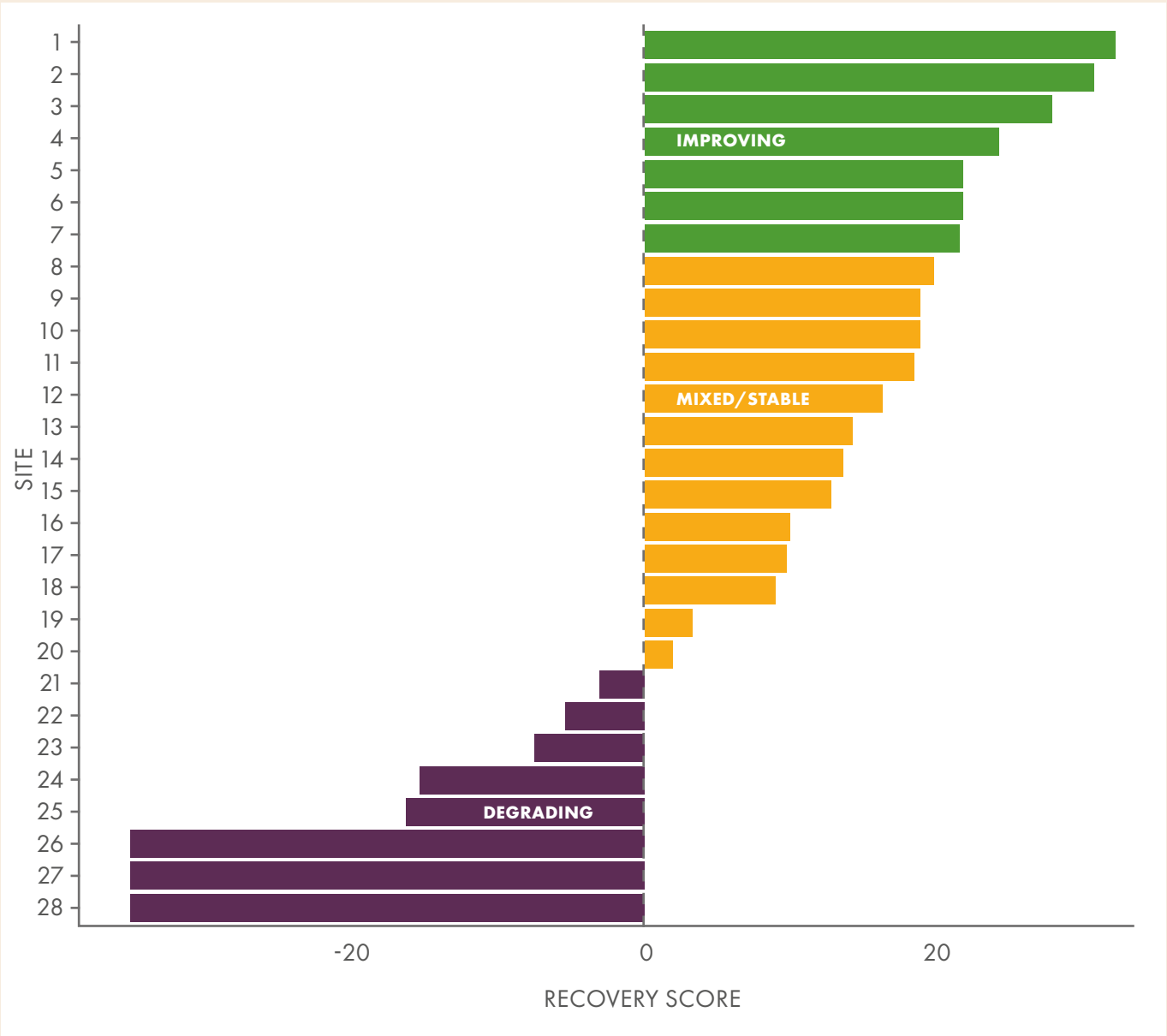
Sites with intermediate scores (8–20) showed a more stable recovery pathway, with peatlands classified as mixed/stable. These sites demonstrate that restoration can halt decline and support gradual improvement, although recovery may be slower where previous impacts remain.

Overall, the results show that peatland recovery is not determined by restoration alone. Instead, recovery depends strongly on the type, intensity, and legacy of past disturbance. Sites with less severe damage can respond quickly, while heavily impacted peatlands may require longer-term intervention and monitoring before meaningful recovery becomes visible.



Peatland recovery score

Scores based on diversity indexes, key species abundance and water table depths from collected between 2022 and 2025.)



Monitoring is ongoing, with the project now in its fifth year. Water table data from automatic loggers and rainfall records are currently being processed, which will help improve understanding of hydrological controls on recovery. Future work will also integrate additional parameters to better assess the effectiveness of different drain-blocking techniques and refine restoration practice.

It's important to understand that this is 3 to 4 years' worth of monitoring so it mainly captures the state of the peatland rather than the long-term impact of restoration itself. We are starting to see small changes, but restoration is a very slow process. However, it is critical that we have these data, so we have a basis for comparison in 10 years' time. It is crucial that funding continues for this level of monitoring.

5 THANK YOU

Yorkshire Peat Partnership's success is the result of the collaboration and hard work of a huge range of partners and could not have happened without them. Landowners, their agents, gamekeepers, farmers and tenants have helped 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 funders supporting both the capital work but also the hugely important core funds that enable Yorkshire Peat Partnership to function – see [funding table](#).

We would also like to thank our Steering Group members for supporting and guiding our work.

Last but not least none of this could have happened without the support of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's hugely dedicated, hard-working peat team (Shanti Adamson, Roz Bardon, Joe Bodycote, Katie Bolton, Mark Brown, Josh Burge, Lucy Cardy, Pete Christopherson, Matt Cross, Aaron de Raat, Emily East, Amy Fairclough, Liberty Firby-Fisk, Millie German, Rhiannon Green, Sam Halliday, Joseph Haywood, Dom Hinchley, Astrid Hanlon, Les Hughes, Zach Jennings, Ceri Katz, Emma Knowles, Lucy Lee, Megan Lee, Samantha Lewsey, Tessa Levens, Alexandra Manojlovic, Emma Mackenzie, Ollie Mackrill, Lyndon Marquis, Jessica McMaster, Chris Miller, Gautier Nicoli, Chris Osborne, Manon Pue, Sophie Pyne, Jenny Sharman, Ellen Shields, Lizzie Slingsby, Jackie Smith, Matt Snelling, Rosie Snowden, Emily Stewart-Rayner, Elizabeth Sullivan, Kane Szuman, Tim Thom, Beth Thomas, Kay Waites, Jamie Wharton, Laura Watson, Jo Welch) who have come and gone over the years but remain the heart, soul and spirit of Yorkshire Peat Partnership.

