

CARBON MANAGEMENT FOR MOORLAND MANAGERS

Keep Carbon on the Hill

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Scotland's moorlands, our heaths and bogs, contain a huge store of carbon in their soils. Most of this is as peat. Exactly how much carbon is stored is difficult to calculate, but one estimate is that it amounts to 3 billion tonnes, which is the equivalent of about 170 years of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions, at current rates.
- 1.2 When released into the atmosphere carbon, mostly as carbon dioxide, contributes to global warming.
- 1.3 Carbon compounds in water result in the peaty colour, which has to be removed from domestic water supplies using expensive filters and chemicals.
- 1.4 It therefore makes sense to keep as much carbon in the ground as possible. In addition, managing vegetation and soils to allow even more carbon to be stored, reduces the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and helps to prevent global warming.

2 The aim of good management

- 2.1 The overall aim is to **'keep carbon on the hill'**.
- 2.2 To do this we need to:
 - stop the loss of carbon that has already been stored in the soil and peat, and
 - encourage vegetation that will capture more carbon from the atmosphere and store it in the soil (this process is known as sequestration).
- 2.3 This can be achieved through a number of simple practices, many of which are already undertaken by moorland managers for other reasons.
 - Block drains/grips in deep peat;
 - Do not clear out old drains in peat, or cut new ones;
 - Manage grazing to avoid poaching;
 - To avoid damage to peat, burn only in accordance with the Muirburn Code, avoiding areas rich in bog moss or where bare peat is exposed;
 - Encourage bare ground/peat to revegetate; and
 - Consider options for expanding existing or creating new, woodland.
- 2.4 Many of these activities are supported by the SRDP and specialist advice is available from a number of agencies, NGOs and specialist consultancies.

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3 And finally...

- 3.1 The great thing about carbon management is that it can fit in with other management objectives.
- 3.2 Whether management priorities are for: grouse, deer, livestock, wildlife – or any combination of these – there are always things that can be done to help **keep carbon on the hill.**

4 Task Group Members

Andrew	Coupar	Scottish Natural Heritage (Chairman)
Steve	Redpath	Macaulay Institute / ACES
Adam	Smith	Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust
Robert	Balfour	Association of Deer Management Groups
Richard	Luxmoore	National Trust for Scotland
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