

**Scotland's Moorland Forum**  
**Dewars Centre, Perth – 31 October 2014**

**Agenda Item 2.3 National Peatland Plan**

Proposals for a National Peatland Plan have been considered for several years. The IUCN Peatland Programme Commission of Inquiry in 2010/11 brought further focus on the potential benefits.

The Plan gets specific reference in:

'Low Carbon Scotland - Meeting the emissions reduction targets 2013 - 2027  
The Second Report on Policies and Proposals' (aka RPP2) – June 2013

"We are working with Scottish Natural Heritage to develop a **Peatland Plan**. The Plan will encourage partnerships with private land interests as well as action based on land designated for protection or land that is owned or managed by public bodies or environmental NGOs."

The Report goes on to say

"...if the restoration rate were increased to 21,000 hectares per annum, which would be technically feasible, abatement of 0.5MtCO<sub>2</sub> per year could be achieved by 2027." This would be a significant contribution to Scotland's Greenhouse Gas accounts.

In autumn 2013 SNH produced a rough draft Plan which was subsequently informed, revised, refined etc by a Stakeholder Group comprising representatives from:

- Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Forestry Commission Scotland
- IUCN Peatland Programme
- James Hutton Institute
- Loch Lomond and Trossachs NPA
- Moorland Forum
- National Farmers' Union (Scotland)
- Scottish Crofting Foundation
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Scottish Government
- Scottish Land & Estates
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Renewables
- Scottish Wildlife Trust
- South Lanarkshire Council

The Principal aim of the draft Plan is:

- To manage, protect and restore peatlands to maintain their ecosystem functions and their natural biodiversity.

The supporting aims are to:

- Restore peatland ecosystem functions and biodiversity and monitor the benefits to help inform future decisions
- Enhance ecosystem resilience to climate change
- Ensure peatland values are reflected in the support given to those who manage peatlands
- Secure greater peatland restoration capabilities and understanding of these amongst land managers, developers, advisers and the public
- Demonstrate and communicate the wider public benefits of peatland restoration and healthy peatland landscapes.

All which need to be supported by relevant research.

The public consultation on the draft Plan was finally launched on 6 June 2014 (while we enjoyed ourselves at Mar Lodge), closing on 12 September.

There were 40 responses to the consultation from a broad spectrum of interests and including private individuals, representative bodies and other organisations.

The responses covered a wide range of topics, some obvious and predictable, others perhaps less so. They included:

- “No loss” – what does that mean?
- Targets - some want specific targets, others don't?
- Delivery – who, how, how funded etc
- Culture – several respondents felt the culture importance of our peatlands was underplayed
- Therapeutic use – very important in many countries, but has never really gained attention in the UK

What next?

- SNH to revise the draft Plan to reflect consultation responses
- Circulate revised draft to Stakeholder Group
- Meeting of Stakeholder Group mid-December. Discussions to include
  - Revised draft
  - Governance
- Publish final/current Plan by March
- ‘Delivery’ by the ‘Scottish Peatland Group’, supported and informed by a Peatland Research Group

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