

Brief for the Blanket Bog Restoration Monitoring Task & Finish Group

Issue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In support of the implementation of the ‘Strategy for the restoration of Blanket Bog in England’ the Uplands Management Group (UMG) established two Task & Finish Groups that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Used site visits to gather the best information (practitioner evidence) available about the different techniques that could be used by land managers to enhance the functionality of deep peat, and then b. Produced guidance for practitioners¹. <i>(All documents are available from www.uplandsmanagement.co.uk)</i> 2. The next stage is to consider the impact of the guidance on the condition of upland blanket bogs (peat depth 40cm or more) and to achieve this some form of monitoring is required. 3. Natural England has a responsibility for the condition of upland blanket bogs, especially where the bogs are within the boundaries of protected sites. Natural England (NE) does not have the resources to carry out detailed scientific monitoring of all blanket bogs on a regular basis and therefore it is proposed to develop a monitoring protocol that can be carried out by practitioners. This approach will have the dual benefits of adding to the data available to NE and ensure that all practitioners are provided with feedback about the impact of their management work. 4. The practitioner guidance has become a key tool to create long term vegetation management plans to restore blanket bog. It is Government policy to have these plans in place for all areas of blanket bog within Special Protection Areas by the end of June 2019. 5. Long-term vegetation management plans have monitoring and review built into them, but there is no consensus over what needs to be monitored or how to capture progress towards restoration. 6. If the proposed monitoring work produces standalone results the effort will have little benefit beyond the practitioners and the individual site condition. Sharing results across multiple sites will inform ‘what works’ and allow for faster improvements and adjustments to management to be made.
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¹ In this brief, practitioner refers to anyone who owns, manages or has an input into the management of peatland, regardless of their management objectives.

	<p>7. The aim should be for all ‘broad and shallow’ monitoring undertaken by practitioners to be complementary to more detailed, resource-heavy, scientific monitoring on a few sites that Natural England and others may carry out, so that the overall knowledge about the English blanket bog resource is enhanced.</p> <p>8. This brief establishes an Upland Monitoring Task & Finish Group to develop this concept.</p>
Objectives	<p><i>Note: this work is viewed as being the first step of an iterative process that may lead to the development of a monitoring system for upland blanket bogs that can be carried out by practitioners.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Review the options for developing a monitoring system for upland blanket bogs that can be carried out by practitioners. 2 Consider how this proposed system could enhance the information available from other sources, including scientific monitoring carried out by, or on behalf of, Natural England. 3 Make recommendations to the UMG about the next step, or steps, in the process.
Task Group Output	<p>The Task Group will produce a written report to the UMG that provides recommendations for further action.</p>
Method	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Establish a small T&F Group. 2 By interviewing a cross-sector range of people, the members of the T&F Group will establish the answers to four main questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 What blanket bog features need to be monitored? 2.2 What is already being monitored, and with what equipment/techniques? 2.3 What monitoring are practitioners willing and able to carry out? 2.4 What platform can all the data be stored and shared on to be most useful? 3 Additional questions are likely to emerge as part of the interview process. 4 People to interview will be identified by members of the T&F Group. Interviews may take place face to face or remotely. 5 Not everyone interviewed will be able to answer every question.

	6	The T&F Group may wish to involve a small number of estates to test the practicality of any practitioner monitoring protocol that is proposed.	
Timescale	Start	1 st August 2018	
	Interviews	October & November 2018	
	Finish	14 th January 2019	
Target dates	Date	Details	
	30 Sep 18	Group formed and brief confirmed.	
	31 Oct 18	Programme of work agreed.	
	20 Nov 18	Update report presented at the UMG meeting.	
Task Group Chairman	Amanda	Anderson	Moorland Association
Members	Simon	Thorp	The Heather Trust
	Dave	Key	Natural England
	Emma	Taylor	Northumberland NPA
	<i>TBC</i>		Gamekeeper/Farmer/Ranger
Method of working	<p>As much use as possible will be made of remote working facilities, using telephone conferences, e-mail correspondence etc.</p> <p>The Group should produce short notes from each meeting or discussion.</p> <p>The UMG Chairman and Secretary should be copy addressees on all correspondence.</p>		
Comments	An initial action will be for the Chairman to review this brief with the members of the T&F Group. Any recommendations for amendment should be agreed with the UMG Chairman & Secretary.		