



National
Trust

Working for the next generation in the High Peak

Our plan to tackle the climate
and nature crisis



Ten years ago...

...we set out a 50-year vision explaining how we were going to protect and make the most of the land we look after in the High Peak. Our vision was and still is to manage the land for people, nature and climate for the benefit of everyone.

Since then we have achieved a lot, but there is more work to do.

We know more about the reality of the climate and nature crisis than we did a decade ago. What we thought was important then, we now know is critical to the future of our planet.

The nature and climate crisis is amongst the biggest challenges facing society today and will impact future generations if we don't act now. How we manage our land calls for bold transformational change. With that in mind we are stepping up our plans.

© NT IMAGES ANDREW BUTLER



© NT IMAGES TREVOR RAY HART

The nature and climate emergencies will put some of the basics, on life-support within decades. What we do here in the High Peak has a direct part to play in building future generations' ability to cope.

Land in the High Peak offers solutions to the climate and nature crisis.

Kinder Scout, Edale and the Derwent Valley, with their remote bogs, rock formations, hill farms and villages are a big part of the soul of the Peak District National Park.

These special places quietly supply millions of people in the towns and cities around us with life's necessities, like drinking water. The moors and wooded ravines and gorges help to protect us from flooding. Not only that, in good condition, the peatlands here can store and absorb vast quantities of carbon.

Above all, these habitats are home to precious wildlife, and are loved by local communities and millions of visitors each year.

The nature and climate emergencies will put some of these basics of life, on life-support within decades. What we do here in the High Peak has a direct part to play in building future generations' ability to cope. This document sets out how we are stepping up our plans to address both the nature and climate crisis, and what the High Peak might look like. It also highlights ways we can work together to make it happen.

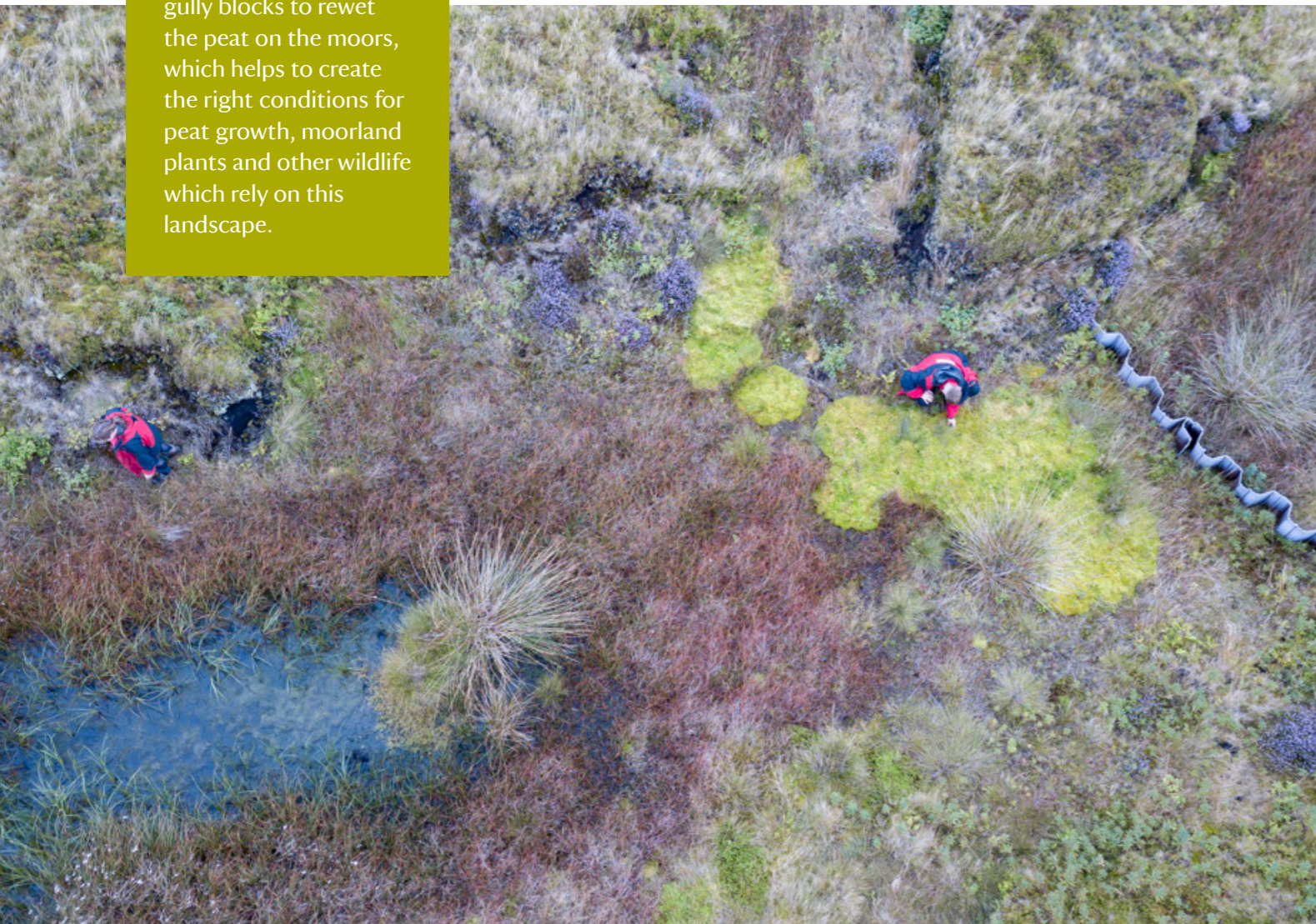
What have we achieved so far?

Peat and moorland restoration to lock in carbon, improve water quality, reduce flooding and improve biodiversity. As part of our blanket bog restoration programme we have planted over 220 hectares of sphagnum moss. This plant helps to capture carbon and creates new layers of peat as it grows. It also holds 20 times its own weight in water. We have created over 10,000 gully blocks to rewet the peat on the moors, which helps to create the right conditions for peat growth, moorland plants and other wildlife which rely on this landscape.



© NT IMAGES TREVOR RAY HART

Creating and developing woodland. We are increasing tree cover. Over 250,000 trees have been planted to create new clough woodland and we are mapping where other land is suited to wooded habitat restoration.



Encouraging and protecting wildlife. The work we are doing is helping to create habitats for a wider range of plants, animals, insects and birds. A range of raptors have nested in the area in recent years, and we are working with partners to protect and encourage more of them here.



© NT IMAGES TIM MELLING

Creating partnerships to look after the landscape. We cannot look after this vast area by ourselves. We are building long-lasting, valuable partnerships with our tenants, businesses and charities to help us make this happen.

Ensuring this wild and wonderful place can be enjoyed by people. Our teams work hard to maintain access routes to some of the most iconic places in the Peak District, as well as the hidden gems of the High Peak.

How our plans are stepping up

Working across the whole landscape, from moor-top to valley bottom. We started out with a focus on the moors. But people, nature, climate and the historic environment matter everywhere, so our focus will extend from the highest peak right down to farmland on the hillside and in the valleys. We are doing more restoration work on the moors. We are learning from farmers already making changes, and we will work with tenants and graziers who want to do more to put nature at the heart of their farming practices while running profitable and resilient businesses, producing great food.

Building on our success and doing more. We have planted and restored hundreds of hectares of woodland, moorland, and blanket bog. But it is only a fraction of what is needed. We will build on our success, to step up the pace and finish the job.

Ensuring we are managing the land for people, nature and climate. We will consider what land management practices best deliver for our plans and work with partners and tenants to deliver them. A healthy natural environment is the support system upon which food production, clean water, wildlife, climate and our health depend.

Creating opportunities for people living and working here. When we started out, we said providing some of the basics of life for millions of people ought to be a good basis for making a living from the land here. Markets and policymakers now think so, too. We will make sure delivering our plan is converted into meaningful and viable livelihoods.

How the High Peak estate might look in 40 years' time

Unmistakable features of the High Peak such as walls, hedges, holloways, historic peat cuttings farmsteads and barns will still contribute to the character of the landscape. They tell an ongoing story of evolving habitats, changing climate and a succession of different human needs and uses.



This is what this area looks like now

You will see...

1 People enjoying themselves
People feel welcome to enjoy the landscape in different ways, from paragliding to picnicking. Most just come for a walk and to soak up the view, taking advantage of a robust, well-maintained network of paths.

2 Fully restored peatland
Rewetted deep peat is covered in sphagnum mosses and cotton grass, with patches of flowering bog rosemary and bog asphodel. There are also occasional small trees.

3 A softer edge to the moors
Higher up the valley sides the varied, wooded habitat gives way to wider expanses of open moorland where dwarf shrubs like heather, crowberry, cowberry and bilberry begin to dominate. In drier areas there are patches of scrub and scattered trees.

4 Abundant bird and insect life
In summer, birds like curlew, dunlin, golden plover, and snipe nest, and golden-ringed dragonflies and black darters skim over the glittering bog pools. People come here to marvel at the soaring raptors.

5 People staying overnight
After arriving by renewably powered transport, people stay for a while. There are lots of options from camping, to bunk barns, to holiday cottages. It's good business for locals, and people can immerse themselves in the Peak District National Park.



This image has been enhanced to illustrate the changes we would expect to see in the landscape.

6 A thriving 'green' rural economy

Skilled and enterprising local people are making a good living, delivering the benefits the landscape has to offer. There are business opportunities and jobs creating and maintaining wildlife habitats, farming in ways that capture carbon and store water, and providing good food, experiences, and places to stay for visitors.

7 Pristine rivers

The rivers meander along the valley bottoms, with pools, riffles and falls carrying pristine water, tinted slightly brown by the peat from the moors above. Birds like dippers are frequent, as are grey wagtails and common sandpipers in summer.

8 A mosaic of grassland, scrub, and trees

Grasslands vary; they are tall and thick in places. There are also expanses of more tightly grazed grass with plant and fungal diversity. Dwarf shrubs such as flowering heather and bilberry occur in patches. There is scattered scrub of hawthorn, blackthorn, and holly with clusters of oak, rowan, birch, and cherry trees.

9 Much more tree cover

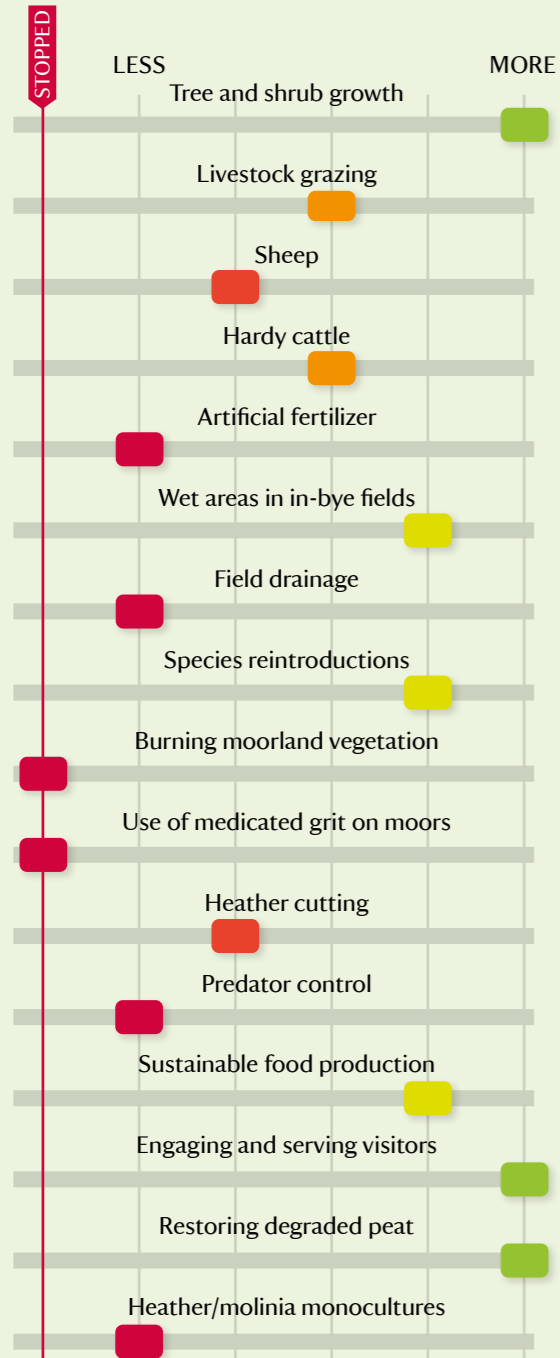
Ranging from woods to copses, to hedgerows, to scattered field trees; there are more trees. Especially on the valley sides, the open wooded habitats here support birds like whinchat, ring ouzel, redstart, and tree pipit. There are denser patches of closed canopy mixed woodland in steeper, more sheltered places.

10 Nature-rich farmland

There is no longer a dividing line between production land and land for nature. All the land is rich in nature and helps to produce great food. The land around the farmsteads is a mixture of grassland and woods, combined with scattered trees and grassy mosaics, especially on the moorland fringes. Land is grazed extensively, mainly by large herbivores, generally cattle. Land by the rivers and streams is often allowed to be wet, and all of it is species rich in different ways.

Shifting the balance

This shows the changes we expect to happen. They will not happen all at once. In fact, much of what we will achieve will be about a shift in emphasis over several years and across different land management practices.



Of course, what we choose to do on a piece of land will depend on the specifics of place, practicality, and timing. But always, our judgement call will come down to: 'how does this deliver for people, nature, and climate'.

© NT IMAGES PAUL HARRIS



How will we make this happen?

Landscapes have always changed shape, and function, from one phase of history to the next. There are big forces of change in the land economy, in wider society and in the climate, that will drive us forward whatever we do. And we don't imagine every detail of our plan will be realised exactly as we picture it now. But we know the type of changes described here are the shape of things to come.

We will seek positive outcomes for people, nature and climate. Where we see an opening, we will create opportunities, build business models, invest, raise funds, support, advise, work directly; whatever it takes to make it happen.

Learning and doing

The work we have done to restore the moors, create and develop woodland and manage the land for people to enjoy means we have learnt a lot already. We will be led and guided by nature and we will learn more from our partners and tenant farmers too as we move forward.

A good example is how we will manage the risk from fire as we transition to a wetter, more mixed, and ultimately a much less flammable landscape. We know there are risks on the way. So, we will need to try out different ways to cut and graze the fuel load to help see us through.



© NT IMAGES PETER FARMER / FDA DESIGN

We will seek positive outcomes for people, nature and climate.



© NT IMAGE

Finding common cause, and developing lasting partnerships

There is a lot to be getting on with here. And it is going to take the work, skills, insights, detailed knowledge, and entrepreneurship of a whole community of farmers, contractors, other local businesses, residents and visitors to make it a reality.

We will be developing partnerships we have already made and building new ones too.

We know many people share an interest in making sure our spectacular, life affirming and life-giving landscape here in the High Peak remains alive and relevant for everyone, for ever. If you share that view, we would like to work with you to make it happen.

Be part of the plan

The places we look after in the Peak District are for everyone, for ever. We want you to benefit from all it has to offer whether you work here, live here or come here to walk, climb, cycle, bird watch, picnic or enjoy the scenery. The same is true if you have never been here.

We want you to be part of the plan to care for the High Peak. Whether that is by looking after the landscape and following the countryside code when you visit, working alongside us as a volunteer or helping us to deliver projects as a local business or partner organisation. You can help make our plans a reality.

© NT IMAGES PAUL HARRIS



© NT IMAGES TREVOR RAY HART



© NT IMAGES JAMES DOBSON

Contact us to get involved: peakdistrict@nationaltrust.org.uk
Volunteer with us: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/volunteer



National
Trust

Keep up to date with our work

[Nationaltrust.org.uk/Protecting-the-high-peak](https://nationaltrust.org.uk/Protecting-the-high-peak)



@peakdistrictnt

Printed on 100% recycled paper

© National Trust 2022

The National Trust is a registered charity no. 205846