



The Sundew

Cumbria BogLIFE project newsletter

Welcome to the South Solway Mosses edition of *The Sundew* - keeping you in touch with the work of the Cumbria BogLIFE project in your area. In this edition you can read about the current restoration work happening at Wedholme Flow. We also have news on some exciting developments taking place at Glasson Moss.

A birds Eye View....



Do you recognise this "bird's eye view?" You can find out where it is further on!

Bringing Cumbria's Raised Bogs to LIFE



Sphagnum Moss – the peat bog builder © Rob Grange

Project Site Locations



Restoration works at Wedholme Flow

Last winter we “re-wetted” 48ha of land on the western side of Wedholme Flow. This process involved building peat bunds (small dams), by digging down through the top layers of dried out peat to reach the “good” peat below the surface. Undamaged peat holds water, which means these bunds keep a layer of water on top of the bog. However, this winter we are tackling a slightly different problem.

Restoring the flow...

Most bog restoration work involves raising the water table and rewetting dried out peat.

However, Wedholme flow has a unique problem – some parts of it are *too* wet.

The most damaged part of the bog is in the centre where peat was extracted on an industrial scale. Here there are large hollows and almost no gradient. This means that it is very difficult for water, which enters the bog as rainfall, to drain away. Sphagnum mosses and other bog vegetation cannot grow in the open water, except around the edges. To solve this problem, we have put in drains which will allow this excess water to run off the bog and enable the vegetation to re-colonise.



Wedholme Flow – the centre looks more like a lake that a lowland raised bog! © Natural England

However, we won't be getting rid of all the water! The deeper areas of water have formed pools which are now important for breeding birds such as lapwing and redshank. We will retain the pools as habitat for these birds.

Getting the water levels right

As well as this work, a further 80ha of bund creation is taking place. The bunds will hold a slick of water on the bog surface, keeping it wet, but not too wet!

Once this is complete, we will be re-vegetating the bare peat with a mixture of *Sphagnum* mosses, grasses and heather. We spread this mulch mix spread as a “living carpet” across the bog.

Monitoring the Moss

An important part of the BogLIFE project is the monitoring work. This allows us to measure changes, and to see if all the restoration is actually working in the way we want it to.

One very simple but effective way of doing this is through photography.

At Wedholme Flow, we have been carrying out fixed point photography. This is where we take photos from fixed spots across the site, over a period of time. This gives us a visual record of how the bog is changing in response to the restoration. You can see for yourself some of the changes so far.



2007



2017



2007



2017

Glasson Moss

Glasson Moss SSSI is one of the four Lowland Raised Bogs on the Solway Plain that make up the South Solway Mosses. If you are visiting in February or March this year, you might be interested to know what the digger activity is all about! Emma Austin tells us what's going on here...

Restoring the peat

In the area around Cottage and Glendale Caravan Park and the access track, there is a damaged zone of peat stretching at least 250 metres onto the open bog.

This is dried out peat which has lost its protective skin of bog mosses as a result of old domestic peat cuttings and active drains. The dry conditions means that scrub has been able to take hold, drying the bog further.

Natural England has been working with the owners of the caravan park, to create a restoration plan.

The aim is to raise the water table just enough to allow the *Sphagnum* bog mosses to grow again, much like you see in our other restoration projects such as Wedholme Flow.



Aerial photo showing the old peat cuttings area on Glasson Moss, where the restoration work will take place. Glendale Caravan Park can be seen to the right.

Dam building and ditch blocking

Local contractor Open Space are carrying out the work, and will use the deeper clay-like 'putty peat' on the site to create a series of dams to block the ditches and hold rainwater on the bog. The bog mosses that grow will form our future peat, capture carbon, and help provide habitat for the specialised plant and animal communities associated with a healthy bog and its wetland edges.

Creating willow tit habitat

This area of Glasson Moss is also critical as it is one of the few remaining refuges for Willow Tit, one of the UKs most rapidly declining resident birds (down 79% between 1995 and 2010). As part of the restoration project, we are aiming to create more suitable willow tit habitat, as part of a wider project to provide greater habitat connectivity for this species on the Solway. Details on how you can help us monitor Willow Tit in the local area are on the back page.



Enjoying a birds eye view...

Other exciting developments have already taken place at Glasson Moss. A five meter high viewing tower was installed over the summer, with funds from the HLF Solway Wetlands Partnership.



Photo © Alasdair Brock/Natural England

Amazing bird's eye views can now be enjoyed from here. And to help people explore the bog by foot, an extra 850 meters of boardwalk has been installed, connecting the existing boardwalks in the north and south of the Mosses.

Put your birding skills to good use!

Willow Tit Colour Ringing Project

The Willow Tit is one of the most rapidly declining woodland birds in the UK (79% decline between 1995 to 2010).

In Cumbria very few remain, inhabiting wet, dense woodland thickets surrounding the South Solway Mosses. In order to study their movements and to try to halt further decline a project has been set up to colour ring as many birds as possible.



So far two birds, an adult and a juvenile have been trapped by trained and licensed bird-ringers under a permit granted by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO).

Both birds have a metal ring on the left leg and two colour rings on right.

We're really interested in any sightings of Willow Tits, with or without colour rings. They are thought to be fairly sedentary and are most likely to be found in the woodland fringes of Glasson Moss and Bowness Common and at Bowness on Solway Nature Reserve.

Please send any sightings to colin.auld@naturalengland.org.uk or tel 07787 323684.



Visiting Wedholme Flow

The reserve is part of the South Solway Mosses, and is open access so you can visit at any time! Wedholme Flow can be found near the villages of Newton Arlosh and Kirkbride. If you wish to arrange a guided walk, please get in touch.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cumbria-s-national-nature-reserves/cumbrias-national-nature-reserves>

Interested in seeing our other BogLIFE sites?

Roudsea Woods and Mosses NNR : Near Haverthwaite. Permissive access (a free permit) is required to visit this very special reserve, which Natural England leases from the Holker Estate. Find out more in the [reserve leaflet](http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5794526008442880) <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5794526008442880>

Bolton Fell Moss

There is no public access at present to Bolton Fell Moss at present. Access with Natural England staff is possible for accompanied groups and during advertised community events. If you would like to arrange a group visit, please get in touch.

We want your views!

We are conducting research in to how people connect their local bogs. It would be great if you could help us. All you need to do is follow this link and you will be taken to the survey. It should take around 10 minutes to complete and will help us evaluate the impact of our work in the area. Thank you!

<http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CV520/>

Contact Us:

- Keeley Spate, Communications Officer
- Phone: 02080 262189
- Email: cumbria.boglife@naturalengland.org.uk
-  www.facebook.com/cumbriasnrs
-  @NECumbria
- www.gov.uk/government/publications/cumbrian-bogs-life-project

LIFE+ This project is being generously supported by the European Union's LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity Programme, which is the funding instrument for the environment. Funding is awarded to best practice, innovative demonstration projects that contribute to the objectives of **Natura 2000** - a network of the very best areas for wildlife across Europe.

