



The Sundew

Cumbria BogLIFE project newsletter

Welcome to the South Solway Mosses edition of *The Sundew*. In this issue:

- We have now completed all planned restoration works – find out what we have achieved and how it is looking.
- The cultural history of peat bogs – what do bogs mean to you? Are they still important to the local community? And how can you help us research this subject?

Bringing Cumbria's Raised Bogs to LIFE



Bog Rosemary with its pink, bell shaped flowers, is a relative of Heather and a bog specialist.

© Natural England



The yellow spikes of Bog Asphodel can be seen during July and August. This plant was valued in the past as a substitute for saffron, being used to dye hair and cloth, producing a pale yellow colour. It was also used in traditional medicine to treat hernias, coughs and ulcers – luckily we have more reliable treatments now!

© Natural England

Project Site Locations

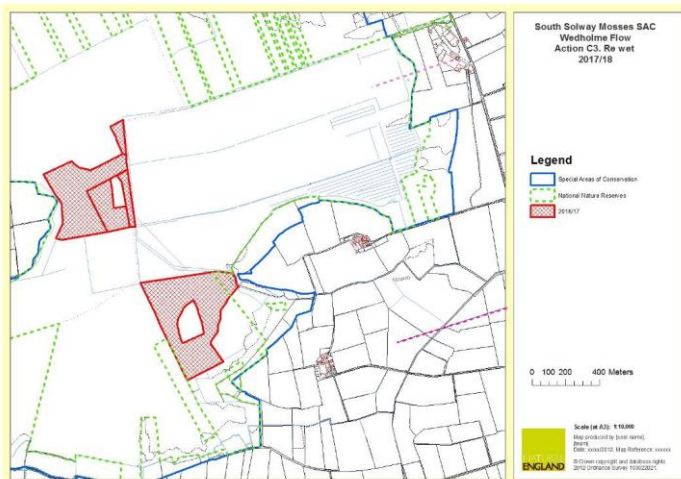


Restoration works complete!

Major restoration works funded through the LIFE project have now been completed. This is a huge milestone for the Cumbria BogLIFE project and a turning point in the future of Wedholme Flow. Here is what we have achieved on the site:

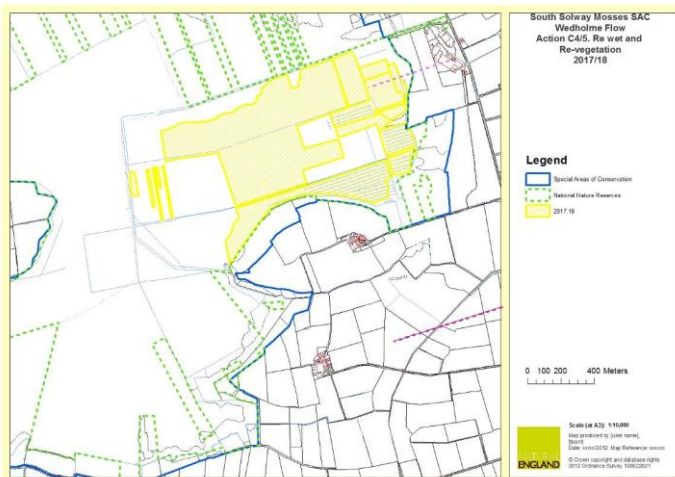
In total, the BogLIFE project has restored **125ha** of degraded bog at Wedholme Flow. This happened in two stages.

The first phase of the restoration works took place in January – March 2017, carrying out ground works across 42ha in order to restore the water table on areas of vegetated peat.



Map showing the where the first 42ha of restoration works took place

The second phase started in December 2017 and was completed in March 2018. This involved ground works to restore the water table followed by the re-vegetation of 83ha bare peat.



Map showing the 83ha area where ground work took place to restore the watertable before it was re-vegetated

Keeping water on the bog.

Raising the water table was achieved by filling in drains that were originally put in to remove water and dry out the bog. We also created bunds that help to hold a skim of water on the bog surface.



Before the works – An area of bare peat with drains moving the water off Wedholme Flow.

Bringing back the plants

To re-vegetate the bare peat, we harvested sphagnum mosses along with heather and grasses from donor sites. This mix was then spread across the bare peat. The grasses are finely chopped to create a “mulch” which will protect the sphagnum from the elements, giving it a chance to grow.



One of the bunds holding water on the bog surface, which has recently been re-vegetated with the sphagnum/heather/grass mix.

What next?

All this work is really just the start of a long process of restoration. We have put the right conditions in place, now we have to be patient and wait and see how the bog responds. By continuing to monitor water levels and vegetation, we will be able to see if it's going the right way!

Peat Bogs – what do they mean to you?

Bogs have been valued for centuries for the resources they provide, including on the South Solway Mosses. However, now that times have changed and many of the traditional practises have died out, do people still value their local bogs?

In November, Cumbria BogLIFE co-hosted the History and Heritage of Cumbrian Bogs - a two day mini conference held at Burgh-by-Sands, exploring the fascinating but often overlooked subject of the social history of bogs.



© Natural England

The audience enjoys one of the many fascinating talks at the History and Heritage Conference.

It was clear from the presentations given that peat bogs have been highly valued throughout history by the communities surrounding them for the resources they provide. Peat has been cut domestically for fuel and animal bedding for centuries, and more recently has been milled to supply peat to the horticultural industry, providing jobs as well as a medium for growing plants in. However, times have changed, and now that the South Solway Mosses are no longer exploited for peat, do they still have value to the local community? And is there value in the work we are doing to restore them?



Domestic peat cutting c.1906

These are questions that Cumbria BogLIFE are trying to answer, and we are looking for people to help us.

If you would like to take part in this research, there are a number of different ways in which you can participate. The quickest and easiest way is by completing our online questionnaire which can be found by following this link: <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CV52O/>

If you want to get a bit more involved, you can also join us on a photowalk event we are holding at Wedholme Flow. This will be a social walk with a bit of a twist! We will provide everyone with a camera before heading out to capture images of what you value most (and least!) about the landscape. This will be followed by tea and cake to discuss your photos. See the back of the newsletter for more details about the event, and feel free to get in touch if you would like more information! (Details on back page)



© Natural England

*Enjoying the South Solway Mosses, past to present...
Fingland School visit to look at the peat works (top) and a guided walk at Wedholme Flow (below)*

Events at Wedholme Flow



National Bog Day – Wedholme Bog Trot

Sunday 22nd July 10.30am – 12.30pm

Pull on your wellies and join us on National Bog Day for a boggy exploration! We will show you how we are bringing the bog back to life with our recent restoration work, and we will also take a look for the wonderful specialist bog wildlife that lives here.

Free event – just meet us at Wedholme Flow NNR carpark (approx. 2 miles south of Kirkbride, off the Wigton to Kirkbride Road)

Children and dogs on leads welcome.

Due to ground conditions this walk is unsuitable for pushchairs or wheelchairs.

Photowalk on Wedholme

Exploring the cultural value of the South Solway Mosses

Thursday 9th August 10am – 1pm (approx.)

This is a social walk around Wedholme with a twist! We will arm you with a camera and you will take photos of whatever inspires you along the way. Afterwards we will head off for a cup of tea and cake so we can discuss your photos and what they mean to you.

Free event but due to limited cameras, booking is needed. For more information and booking, phone Keeley Spate on 07881 255343 or email:

keeley.spate@naturalengland.org.uk

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.

Did you know...?

Because Cumbria BogLIFE is a funded project, we can offer walks, talks and educational events to community groups and schools **free of charge**. Contact us to find out more.

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.

Contact Us:

- Keeley Spate, Communications Officer
- Phone: 07881 255343
- Email: cumbria.boglife@naturalengland.org.uk
-  www.facebook.com/cumbriasnnrs
-  [@NECumbria](https://twitter.com/NECumbria)
- www.gov.uk/government/publications/cumbrian-bogs-life-project

