



**Peatland
ACTION**

Peatland ACTION

Annual review 2025-26



**Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba**

Foreword



I am proud to say 2025–26 has been another strong year of progress for peatland restoration in Scotland, with the Peatland ACTION Partnership delivering 15,448 hectares (ha) against the Scottish Government’s Programme for Government 2025–26 commitment to restore 12,000ha. This represents a significant step forward in scaling up activity and demonstrates clear progress against the Scottish Government’s Climate Change Plan (CCP) 2026–2040 commitment to restore 400,000ha of peatland.

Restoring Scotland’s peatlands is essential to tackling the climate and nature crises. Peatland restoration creates quality jobs and economic opportunities in rural areas, supporting our landscapes and communities to be more resilient to the growing impacts of climate change. Healthy peatlands store carbon, support biodiversity, improve water quality, and help build resilience to flooding and wildfire. The importance of this work has never been clearer.

The CCP establishes peatland restoration as a core element of Scotland’s pathway to Net Zero, requiring sustained increases in delivery and a focus on restoring the most degraded and highest-emitting sites. Meeting this ambition requires not only restoring more hectares, but doing so consistently, efficiently, supported by strong evidence, skills, and investment.

Through Peatland ACTION’s engagement with farmers, crofters, land managers, and industry we are ensuring that those most closely connected to Scotland’s land can participate in and benefit from restoration activity. We are continuing to create economic opportunities through skills development, training, and high-quality green jobs.

The publication of the Peatland ACTION Five Year Partnership Plan 2025–2030 in December 2025 represents a significant milestone for the programme. It provides the delivery framework for Scotland’s peatland commitments within the CCP.

Through its themes of Further, Fairer and Better, the Plan sets out how we will accelerate the pace and scale of restoration, support a just transition, and improve how projects are developed and delivered. It highlights our strategic approach to scaling up peatland restoration in Scotland – focused on building a strong project pipeline, increasing funding certainty, unlocking private investment, and embedding consistent standards across the sector.

This report reflects progress made in the first year of the Plan, providing an early indication of delivery against Scotland’s long-term restoration ambition.

The Scottish Spending Review 2026 allocates at least £110 million investment in peatland restoration over the next four years. This includes £28m of funding for 2026–27. Through continued investment, strong partnerships, and a continued focus on quality and impact, Scotland is well placed to accelerate progress towards its Net Zero commitments while delivering lasting benefits for communities and nature.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andy Kerr". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Andy Kerr
Director General NetZero, Scottish Government



Peatland ACTION is funded by Scottish Government to implement its commitment to restore Scotland’s degraded peatlands. It provides support, advice and funding and is delivered in partnership with NatureScot, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Forestry and Land Scotland, Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority and Scottish Water.

Peatland ACTION

The Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan for Net Zero sets out a commitment to support the restoration of 400,000 hectares (ha) of peatland by 2040. This commitment is supported through funding of the Peatland ACTION programme.

Peatland ACTION provides funding and support to land managers to develop peatland restoration projects. So far, over 105,000 hectares of previously damaged peatland habitat have benefited directly from restoration activities.

The Five Year Peatland ACTION Partnership Plan 2025-2030

The Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan 2026-2040 includes an ambition to increase peatland restoration by 10% each year to 2030 and maintain levels after that, leading to the restoration of more than 400,000 hectares by 2040. Within this, the Scottish Government will look to increase the proportion of the most highly degraded and emitting peat that is restored. Peatland ACTION Five Year Partnership Plan 2025-2030 is a roadmap to restoring more of our peatlands, with commitments to the themes of Further, Fairer and Better.



Further: Expand peatland restoration in Scotland



The Scottish Budget 2025–26 included £35.5 million towards peatland restoration, a 32% increase from 2024–25. This demonstrated significant confidence in the peatland restoration sector, and recognised the wide range of environmental, social, and economic benefits that restored peatland can deliver in responding to the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. With this funding, the Peatland ACTION Partnership aimed to restore at least 12,000 hectares – an increase from the previous year’s baseline of 10,000 hectares.

As a result, in 2025–26 the Peatland ACTION Partnership contributed to the delivery of 15,448ha of peatland restoration. This total was made up of the following contributions from partners:

The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) delivered 15 projects, resulting in 1900ha of restoration in the Park, including within the priority river catchments of the Dee and the Spey. The Revere Partnership delivered a further phase of restoration at Delnadamp Estate across two sites, leveraging in private investment, and tackling degraded peatlands at a landscape scale. Private investment amounted to £328,000, allowing approximately 10% more work to be done.

Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) continued to implement forest-to-bog restoration across Scotland’s National Forest and Land, putting 1821ha on the road to recovery, including conversion of over 30 formerly commercial, afforested sites, and open hill restoration on three sites. Landscape-scale rewetting continued including at sites in the Flow Country, Torrachilty, West Argyll, Lochaber and the Kilpatrick Hills. This work is transforming damaged, carbon-emitting bogs into active sinks which store carbon and aid Scotland’s net-zero ambitions. The restoration has also supported rural employment by providing opportunities for locally based contractors and improved biodiversity and water quality.





Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority (LL&TNPA) delivered 954ha of restoration, including 20ha of Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS) funded work. Projects included work at Glenfalloch, where recent research showed an increase of greenshank numbers following restoration, highlighting the biodiversity benefits of peatland restoration. Eight projects were completed, seven in drinking water catchments, one in the Great Trossachs Forest National Nature Reserve (NNR), and another in the Ben Lomond National Memorial Landscape.

NatureScot's grant programme supported 67 projects and delivered 10,352ha of peatland restoration. The projects included areas of highly degraded peat such as the privately-owned Glen Dye Moor in Aberdeenshire as part of a landscape-wide nature restoration project; National Nature Reserves like Blawhorn Moss in West Lothian to provide community

and biodiversity benefits; and croft land in Shetland and Lewis, where work will improve conditions for livestock, and provide business diversification opportunities for crofters.

Scottish Water restored 421ha in total. This included 50ha at Loch Katrine as part of a 400ha decade-long drinking water catchment restoration. They also worked at Backwater Reservoir, where 338ha of peatland was restored to reduce dissolved organic matter entering the water, improving water quality and biodiversity.

As part of ongoing involvement in the [Shared Island Initiative Peatland Programme \(SIIPP\)](#), Peatland ACTION received an additional £650,000 of funding which supported almost 300 hectares of peatland restoration in Shetland by Scottish Water. Colleagues across the Partnership also took part in a range of knowledge exchange events and an event at the Scottish Parliament, led by the Irish Consulate.



Fairer: Supporting a just transition through restoration



Peatland ACTION ran several projects to help grow the workforce for both today and tomorrow's needs. This also helped create local jobs and made sure rural communities benefit from healthier peatlands.

A new Peatland Training Fund was launched, allowing over 100 people to build new skills. The Peatland Internship Programme supported six organisations to take on full time interns for up to six months, increasing capacity in the sector and giving interns a clear route into employment.

Through the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) programme Peatland ACTION delivered training to 786 pupils from 17 high schools across the north of

Scotland, teaching them about peatland restoration and the range of careers available in the sector.

Week-long, site-based and hands-on training schemes helped 39 machine operators learn peatland restoration techniques, strengthening skills in rural areas. These innovative projects took place on common grazings in Lewis, on croft land in North Uist and on a forest-to-bog site within a windfarm development in collaboration with SSE Renewables.

FLS has worked with contractors and suppliers to support long-term delivery capacity in the peatland restoration sector. This has brought benefits to local rural areas through workforce development as a core part of contracts. FLS contractors and suppliers have supported school engagement activities, career discussions with secondary pupils, and hosted international and cross-sector knowledge exchange visits. FLS have also facilitated accredited training such as National Proficiency Tests Council qualifications, and practical training in techniques such as drain blocking and wave damming.

Peatland ACTION promoted the many benefits of peatland restoration to a wide range of audiences through events, case studies, workshops, site visits, social media and weekly blogs. It worked with the





Moredun Research Institute to showcase research which found that peatland restoration is not linked to increased liver fluke risk, which will help dispel farmers' worries about grazing on restored peatlands. It produced five new films showcasing the business benefits for farmers and contractors, such as more effective hydro schemes and opportunities to expand their workforce. Peatland ACTION supported events such as the NFU Scotland and Scottish Land & Estate conferences, and the Royal Highland Show, to promote these benefits. And a webinar delivered through the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) showcased the opportunities and benefits to around 450 surveyors and land agents.

The Cairngorms Peatland Restoration Developers' Group was launched, with the aim of communicating key programme information, sharing lessons learned, and collaborating on project innovation and monitoring on the ground.

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority used the Green Jobs for Nature video series to highlight the need for significant increases in the number of local, trained practitioners to design, survey and deliver peatland restoration work.

Scottish Water offered significant practical experience in hydrological engineering, erosion control and site monitoring to contractors during Loch Katrine and Backwater Reservoir works. Through the Hydro Nation study this helped build intelligence and understanding of peatland-land-woodland-water interactions in a changing climate.

Better: Improve how we work and solve technical challenges

The Peatland ACTION Five Year Partnership Plan prioritises actions that simplify processes, increase funding certainty, and build a long-term pipeline of investible restoration projects. As part of delivering this, and following on from a successful pilot in 2024, NatureScot launched the Project Development Support Scheme (PDSS). This incentivises large-scale peatland restoration in Scotland by supporting agents to develop multiple and multi-year restoration projects to submit in one application.

Peatland ACTION also piloted a Carbon Contracts scheme with the Scottish Government which allows prospective Peatland Code project owners to sell a portion of any carbon credits to the Scottish Government at an agreed price. Building on this, the pilot is now moving into the next phase as we continue to explore alternative finance approaches.

Because the techniques for peatland restoration have been evolving so quickly over the last decade, it's now important to make sure that everyone involved in the industry understands and delivers work using the best and most up-to-date practices and frameworks. To address this, we have been working with stakeholders to create Scotland's Peatland Standard. This aims to improve efficiency and effectiveness by encouraging innovation, matching actions to local circumstances, and ensuring a consistency of approach in decision-making.

In addition, Peatland ACTION facilitates a contractors and agents liaison group that meets quarterly to receive updates and provide a forum to resolve issues affecting operational delivery.

Monitoring is also key to maintaining standards and providing evidence of the benefits of restoration. Several hydrological surveys have been funded as part of the Peatland ACTION Monitoring Strategy. 'Bog breathing' reports have been published to inform our understanding of the changes to peatland condition following restoration; we have worked with academic organisations to support a network of flux towers which provide data on greenhouse gas emissions from peatlands before and after restoration. In addition to the overall Peatland ACTION Monitoring Strategy, each Partner has written its own Monitoring Plan to ensure that the specific priorities of each organisation are taken into account.





Other highlights from across the Partnership include:

- Cairngorms National Park Authority has been improving systems and processes for administering funding, managing projects, restoration design, GIS, evaluating outcomes, and benchmarking costs.
- Forestry and Land Scotland continued to build relationships with contractors to ensure optimal methods and techniques are used for forest-to-bog restoration work, sharing best practice for site planning such as tree removal, site access and operating specialist machinery. Forestry and Land Scotland is carrying out monitoring to assess the effectiveness of works and help improve the restoration process. Close collaboration with NatureScot is ongoing to develop the Restoration Monitoring Network for forest-to-bog.
- Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority implemented internal improvements in its planning and efficiency processes, including simpler funding agreements with landowners. It has started developing two collaborative restoration projects with Forestry and Land Scotland. It made monitoring site visits to two 10-year-old projects. For the first time in the Park, a peatland project combined Sitka spruce scrub removal with re-wetting over an area of 245ha.
- Scottish Water worked with Scotland's Environment and Economy Leaders Group to establish landscape-scale partnerships to focus public investment in nature and river catchments. Its research work at Loch Katrine is helping to build evidence of the impact of peatland restoration on water quality and carbon capture.



Delivering the Five Year Peatland ACTION Partnership Plan: Looking ahead

The Scottish Government has committed £28 million towards peatland restoration in 2026–27. This will support delivery of around 10,000 hectares of restoration by Peatland ACTION in 2026–27, helping realise the associated benefits of healthy peatlands for the people of Scotland. The funding will also be used to design a pipeline of new projects, with the aim of designing over 12,000ha of projects that can be progressed in 2028–29.

We will develop a new Skills Plan to support the workforce expansion required to deliver the long-term Climate Change Plan peatland targets. As part of this it will invite applications for further internship funding. The Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) programme will continue, as will direct on-the-ground training for contractors and designers.

We will consult on Scotland's Peatland Standard and publish it in late 2026. After that, we will also revise the Technical Compendium to ensure alignment with Scotland's Peatland Standard.

As part of the commitment to exploring ways to generate a greater contribution from private finance, a review of the Carbon Contracts pilot will be undertaken, with a re-launch of the scheme in 2027–28. It will also continue to work with Peatland Code to make application more straightforward, to support take-up from landowners.

Through engagement with our stakeholders, Peatland ACTION will promote the benefits of peatland restoration, celebrate its successes and dispel myths. This will include creating new case studies and delivering celebratory events.

As part of its contribution to delivering a just transition, it will be working with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the necessary support is in place to allow crofters, common grazings and tenant farmers to engage in and benefit from peatland restoration. Scotland is viewed as a world leader in peatland restoration, and Peatland ACTION continues to seek opportunities to share its knowledge and experience. As a member of the Shared Island Initiative Peatland Programme, it will create new opportunities to collaborate and share best practices with international partners working in similar fields.

Other Partner-specific Actions:

- Cairngorms National Park Authority will develop a five-year programme plan (2027–32) that aligns with both the Peatland ACTION Partnership Five



Year Plan themes and the National Park Partnership Plan (2027–32) targets. To meet goals set out in the programme plan, it will be revising the funding priorities and application processes. It will launch the Cairngorms Peatland ACTION Monitoring Strategy, focusing on monitoring restoration in high altitude sites.

- Forestry and Land Scotland will continue to deliver open land peatland and forest-to-bog restoration, converting unproductive areas of commercial forest into thriving bog habitats. It will continue to work closely with Scottish Forestry on guidance supporting the deforestation of land for forest-to-bog restoration.
- Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority is looking to expand the team to help engage more landowners, increase the number of future projects in the pipeline, investigate the wider peatland resource in the Park and develop more multi-year funding agreements.
- NatureScot will consult on the National Peatland Monitoring Framework and Implementation Plan to ensure it has the evidence to demonstrate the impact of peatland restoration. It will also publish a report summarising the benefits of peatland restoration and identifying gaps in knowledge and then use the Peatland ACTION Monitoring Strategy to prioritise filling them.

Peatland ACTION partners



Forestry and
Land Scotland
Coilltearachd agus
Fearann Alba



NatureScot
NàdarAlba



Cairngorms
National Park Authority
Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a'
Mhonaidh Ruaidh



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Peatland ACTION is a national programme to restore peatlands across Scotland. It is led and funded by Scottish Government and delivered in partnership with NatureScot, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Forestry and Land Scotland, Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority, and Scottish Water.

NatureScot

NatureScot is Scotland's nature agency. It works to improve our natural environment in Scotland and inspire everyone to care more about it, so that all nature in Scotland - our biodiversity, geodiversity and the natural elements of our landscapes and seascapes - is maintained, enhanced and brings us benefits. In addition to funding peatland restoration through Peatland ACTION, NatureScot Peatland ACTION teams provide a range of support to the Partnership as a whole.

Cairngorms National Park Authority

The Cairngorms National Park Authority provides leadership for the Cairngorms National Park, tackling the big issues in the National Park in a collaborative way, based on the aims as set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. The Cairngorms Peatland ACTION Programme provides funding and technical support for peatland restoration projects that deliver quality outcomes and provide multiple benefits at a scale that makes a difference within the National Park boundaries.

Forestry and Land Scotland

Forestry and Land Scotland looks after national forests and land to enhance biodiversity, support tourism and increase access to the green spaces that help improve Scotland's physical and mental health and well-being. It also provides vital timber supplies to support the rural economy. It aims to manage peatlands in an optimal way to maximize the benefits they can provide. To achieve this, it works with other organisations, contractors, and people to help deliver peatland restoration on Scotland's forests and land.

Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority

Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park is Scotland's oldest National Park covering 720 sq. miles. The Park and those who live, work within and visit the Park are facing unprecedented challenges of the climate emergency and nature loss. The National Park Authority provides leadership and facilitates collaboration to tackle the twin crises and achieve a more positive, sustainable future for us all. The National Park's Peatland ACTION work is a crucial part of stopping the decline and restoring nature in the National Park. This work is fundamental in helping achieve the vision for the future of the National Park, as outlined in our National Park Partnership Plan: 'by 2045 the National Park is a thriving place that is nature positive and carbon negative'.

Scottish Water

Scottish Water delivers water and waste water services to 2.62 million households and 159,219 business premises, and supports a flourishing Scotland. Its focus is on delivering an excellent service, providing great value for money, and reducing our effect on the environment, going beyond net zero emissions. Scottish Water carries out peatland restoration on its land through Peatland ACTION to help improve water quality and achieve Scotland's Net Zero targets.

Visit our web pages for more information www.nature.scot/peatlandaction

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