

# Sustainable Uplands

Learning to manage future change



Newsletter Spring/Summer 2007

## The Project

Natural and social scientists have teamed up with locals and policy makers to develop ways of anticipating and monitoring future change in UK uplands. Building on local knowledge and experience, our research team is combining knowledge from local people with the latest science. The result will be a choice of options for the future that could not have been developed by any group alone.

This Newsletter summarises what we've done over the last year, since the completion of our Scoping Study at the end of 2005, and explains what we'll do in 2007.

## At a glance...

- We have combined information from interviews with local people and published articles to improve understanding of the likely changes that will take place in UK uplands
- We are currently working to understand the reasons behind the decisions and actions of land managers, and better predict how they may respond to future change
- We have analysed relationships among Peak District stakeholders, identifying key communicators as well as "outsider" groups who may wish to be more involved in discussions about what happens to the land
- The methods we have developed in this project are being used in an 8M Euro EU-funded land degradation project. We have attracted over £0.5M additional funding from other sources to extend our work

## Carbon offsetting could help fund moorland restoration



- Our models show that the Peak District National Park is releasing carbon from its soils into the atmosphere. This is likely to be exacerbated by future climate change, and since the majority of UK carbon is stored in peats, this could fuel further climate change
- However, if we could restore damaged and eroding peats to pristine condition, we could save an amount of carbon equivalent to 2% of car traffic in England and Wales every year. The easiest way to do this is blocking drainage ditches created in the 1950s to improve land for agriculture. But the costs are still prohibitive
- We have now shown that it is possible to finance this through the sale of carbon credits, and in the long-term, possibly even provide a new revenue stream for uplands. In addition to the climate benefits, this would restore biodiversity and function to degraded ecosystems, reduce accidental fire risk, prevent the sedimentation of salmon spawning beds, save water companies millions in removing colour from the water, and reducing the chance of flash flooding downstream



## In the Press

- The **Farmer's Guardian** and **Yorkshire Post** covered our work on carbon offsetting for peatland restoration in March 2007
- In February 2006, our project launch was covered by **Rural Focus**
- Our results are feeding into the book, "Drivers of Upland Change", published by Routledge in 2008, presenting natural and social science research investigating change in UK uplands
- Articles about our work have also been published in 6 international journals, and a chapter in the Global Environment Centre's forthcoming book, "Assessment on Peatlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change"
- Our results have been presented at 13 national and international conferences
- For more information and to download project publications, visit our website

## How can I get involved?

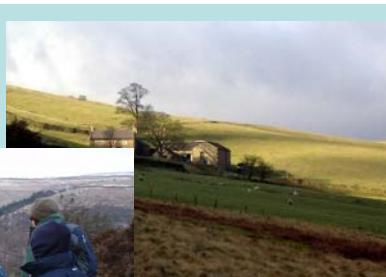
Sign up for our newsletter or send us feedback via email at:

[sustainableuplands@env.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:sustainableuplands@env.leeds.ac.uk)

## Why we need your views

*"Researchers need to talk to practitioners when they're developing research proposals, otherwise you get people just doing research because it interests them or whatever, when they could be answering a far more important question if they only knew what people wanted answering."*

Conservation Practitioner, Peak District



*"I've spent thirty years managing land and I've seen all these*

*things come and go. So when you tell me as a very sincere young man with a great deal of credentials, that your prescription is right, you just listen to me: the guy who gave me 100% grant aid...to plough heather moorland also believed he was right because heather moorland was "waste". "Why keep heather moorland? Why not grow Sitka Spruce on it?" They weren't all liars and cheats and thieves and incompetents. That was not the case. And they all look at you in absolute amazement."*

Grouse Moor Manager, Peak District



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