The British uplands: opportunities and threats for policy and research priorities. Workshop held on 17 March in the Research Beehive, Newcastle University.

This workshop, jointly organised by the British Ecological Society and Newcastle University, aimed to capture the diverse range of views regarding the future of the uplands. The key policy and research priorities will be identified from the workshop and will help to guide future work by British Ecological Society (BES) in this important area.

The key aims were to:

1) Facilitate an evidence-based discussion on the future of the British uplands in what can be a contentious policy and management topic;
2) Establish the viewpoints of important stakeholders regarding the future of the uplands post-Brexit;
3) Identify the top policy and research questions by collecting data through facilitated discussion and to determine where there is consensus; and
4) Use the workshop data to guide future BES policy work in the British uplands (potentially a first publication immediately post-workshop), and to consider a future event.

During the morning we heard from Paul Brannen, Labour MEP for North East England and the party’s EU spokesperson on agriculture, forestry & rural development. He presented his views on the future of the British uplands post-Brexit and the potential challenges. Paul highlighted the threat we face from climate change and spoke of the important role upland woodlands play in capturing carbon and how they can be used to create novel products. He also called for the farming and environmental communities to work together. Willingness for cooperation and integration between the different upland stakeholders was a common theme throughout the day.

Next Julia Aglionby from the Uplands Alliance spoke on finding common ground between upland stakeholders and again recognising the need of working together, which is exactly what the Upland Alliance, as a coalition of the willing aims to achieve. Julia identified that support for uplands needs to be outcome based and that public money should be used to deliver and enhance outcomes for the public’s benefit.

A lively question and answer session followed on from the presentations of Paul Brannen and Julia Aglionby. Immediately a key issue for the future of the uplands is the debate of trees versus food production, particularly sheep in the uplands. However, as working better together in the future was also identified, the speakers suggested that stakeholders should focus more on what we know does work in order to move forward, so that people do not get ‘bogged’ down by the conflicts and disagreements.
After the coffee break Des Thompson from Scottish Natural Heritage and Emma Goodyer from the IUCN Peatland Programme presented on the opportunities, threats and ambitions for the uplands and peatlands. While we do have good evidence for some of the ecological changes the uplands have undergone – for example the decline in UK upland bird species - and we should use this to help shape a vision for the uplands, we still need to recognise the limits of our knowledge. In addition, we need to be careful not to let the hearsay of distorted public opinion dominate an upland vision. Emma followed on from Des and reminded everyone that upland and lowland systems remain connected and should not be thought of in silos. She went on to discuss the importance of restoring peatlands based on sound evidence and through effective policy. And all because “... a broken bog is of no use to anyone.”

Following on, we heard from two Welsh government representatives, Caryn Le Roux and Carol Driver on the future of natural resources and agriculture policy in Wales. Caryn started with a run through of the recently reformed environmental legislation in Wales, which includes a commitment to integrate natural resource management to ensure ecosystems are maintain and managed to enhance their resilience. Carol highlighted the risks to the economic state of upland farming in Wales and under different Brexit scenarios. Apart from horticulture, most farming activities in Wales, under the different models, have a predicted outlook of negative income.

Our final presentation of the morning came from Robin Milton of the NFU on upland farming as the key to the social, cultural, environmental and economic future of upland landscapes. Robin talked of needing a stable policy platform and called for farmers to be engaged with and involved in the policy decision making process since they are experts in delivering the policy implementation mechanisms. Robin also touched on the number of upland land-use conflicts but mentioned that there are a number of projects working to find a commonality in purpose, compromising and developing a consensus for their area of the uplands.

After lunch we had a facilitated discussion based on the top issues identified by attendees during the morning. Attendees joined a group to discuss how issues and opportunities for the uplands related to one of the following climate change, biodiversity, payment for ecosystem services or subsidies. This discussion and information from each group is going to be collated and analysed to produce a report of the outcomes from the afternoon’s discussion. As highlighted throughout the day, these discussions were the first step and did not intend to solve the issues facing the uplands. However, the outcomes from the workshop should help to inform the focus of the BES’s upland policy work. Workshop attendees were thanked for their contributions and for helping to drive this process.

The presentations from the day are available the bottom of this summary and the organisers will be in touch with the participants once the workshop report is produced.
The British uplands: opportunities and threats for policy and research priorities.

17th March 2017

Venue: Research Beehive in Newcastle University
Welcome and Introductions

Overview of the workshop and introduction to the BES
Our vision:  
a world inspired, informed and influenced by ecology

Our mission: 
to generate, communicate and promote ecological knowledge and solutions
Policy at the BES

As the voice of the UK’s ecological community, we present the scientific evidence, rather than campaigning on particular issues. We:

- Inform policy
- Synthesise science
- Support members
Synthesising science and informing policy

• Focus on making the best ecological science available to decision-makers

• Ecological science does not provide all the answers – values, local knowledge

• Future of the British uplands identified as a priority issue
Paul Brannen MEP

Member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) and Labour's EU spokesperson on agriculture, forestry & rural development will present his views (no powerpoint presentation) on the future of the British uplands post-Brexit and the potential challenges
Julia Aglionby, the Uplands Alliance

The Uplands Alliance: Exploring Common Ground and Supporting Outcomes from the Uplands
If You want to go fast, Go Alone

If You want to go far, Go Together
England’s Uplands

12% of England is uplands

Average LFA Farmer is 58 and has 26 beef cows and 340 breeding ewes.

Government payment to upland farmers is less than £30 per visit per year.

25% of breeding cows and 11% of breeding sheep are farmed in the Uplands.

2% of the money from the BPS goes to upland farmers, that’s £150 million.

9% of our upland SSSIs are in favourable or recovering condition.

6% of farm businesses consist purely of lowland and moorland.

12% from specific agri-environment schemes, 4% from diversification, and 85% from farming.

96% of moorland is common land.

2350ha of limestone pavement in England.

1000ha of traditional hay meadow in upland areas; some contain more than 120 plant species.

1.5% of global blanket bog is found in English uplands.

12 species of birds living in the uplands are now on the red list.

There are 500km of national trails in National Parks.

39% of upland peat bogs are in good ecological condition.

There are over 70 million visits to upland National Parks each year.

4% of open access land is in the Uplands.

200 million tonnes of carbon are stored in England’s uplands.

56% of upland farms are tenanted compared with 45% of lowland farms.

86% of upland land is managed as driven grouse moors.

Jargon Buster

Uplands here defined as SDA, Severely Disadvantaged Area, plus Moorland, LFA, Less Favoured Area, AONB, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, BPS, Basic Payments Scheme, SSSI, Special Site of Scientific Interest.

28 out of our 38 dragonfly species live in upland bogs.

Designed for the Uplands Alliance by James Weir 2016.
THE UPLANDS ALLIANCE
A Network For The Future Of England's Uplands

THE UPLANDS ALLIANCE
A Network For The Future Of England's Uplands

in collaboration with:

THE UPLANDS ALLIANCE
A Network For The Future Of England's Uplands

under the umbrella of:

THE UPLANDS ALLIANCE
A Network For The Future Of England's Uplands
Outcomes from London Workshop

The uplands are of high value for the public benefits they provide society

Public money should be focused on delivering and enhancing these public benefits
Looking Forward: Enabling the Uplands to provide Health, Well-being & Environmental Stewardship

What are we seeking from...

England's Uplands

Key Sectors

Health & Well Being

Environment

Public Benefits

Food & Good Nutrition
Mental Well-being
The Green Gym
Air Quality
Water Quality
Flood Management
Carbon Storage
Biodiversity & Ecosystems
Landscape
Historic & Cultural Assets

THE UPLANDS ALLIANCE
A Network For The Future Of England's Uplands
Attributes of Successful Management

Good Communication
Respectful Attitudes
Transparent Administration
Payments Reflect Input
Clarity on Rights
Agreed Outcomes
Fair Negotiations
Established Networks

THE UPLANDS ALLIANCE
A Network For The Future Of England's Uplands
Looking Forward we need to....

find Common Ground

Communicate better

Champion the Uplands
A Large Tent to Shape our Future Policies

- No 10 / Treasury
  - DEFRA
  - DoH
  - DCLG
  - DoT
  - Local Government

- NGOs
  - Environmental NGOs
  - Recreation NGOs
  - Health NGOs
  - Social & Community NGOs

- Business Interests
  - Farming and Landowning
  - Transport Infrastructure
  - Housing
  - Water

- Wider Society
  - Social Media Campaigns
  - Community Groups
  - Religious Organisations

THE UPLANDS ALLIANCE
A Network For The Future Of England’s Uplands
Uplands Alliance

Contact us at:
www.uplandsalliance.wordpress.com

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uplandsalliance@gmail.com
Des Thompson, Scottish Natural Heritage & Emma Goodyer, IUCN Peatland Programme

Uplands and peatlands - opportunities, threats and realising ambition
Uplands and peatlands: opportunities, threats and realising ambition

Des Thompson, SNH & Emma Goodyer, IUCN Peatland Programme
Major upland projects...

Flow Country
Langholm Moor
Abernethy
Geltsdale
Lake Vyrnwy
Mar Lodge Estate
Creag Meagaidh
Carrifran
Galloway Forest

Knapdale Forest beavers
Sea eagle reintroductions
Black grouse recovery
Hen harriers LIFE and HufH

Learnt a lot… still learning!

Photo: http://www.carrifran.org.uk/
It started with...

- End of World War II - economy exhausted
- 1947 - Cmd. 7122: England and Wales; Cmd. 7325: Scotland – the national strategy for nature conservation
- 29 April 1948 - Herbert Morrison “a Nature Conservation Board…”
- 23 March 1949 - the Nature Conservancy – proposed nature reserves and SSSIs
  - 1973 – Nature Conservancy Council
  - 1977 – NCR published
  - 1981 – Wildlife and Countryside Act
  - 1991 -> ... Agencies, SPAs, SACs, NPs in Scotland, growth of NGOs (RSPB, GWCT, Wildlife Trusts, NFU) ... CBD and 2020 Aichi targets... BREXIT
Cluttered and difficult!
Changes:

‘68-72
‘88-91
‘08-11

40 years…

Scores of papers, chapters, reports
Of all habitats, the uplands’ birds suffered greatest range declines in breeding season.

Median % range changes, from the Atlas, since:

- 68-72  - 10.5%
- 88-91  - 5.3%

Least to greatest range contractions:
Wetlands > woodlands > farmland > coast > uplands
“Tell me, Thompson, what do we know about the uplands?”

Well, Ma'am…

First of all, nice to see you’re still influencing matters!

Acknowledged international importance of what we have

Landscapes, habitats and species well described, understood and cared for... SACs, SPAs, SSSIs, NPs, GCRs, NNRs.

Ecosystems better understood, evidence from monitoring growing.

Reintroductions and restoration activities increasing.

Improving links between agencies, NGOs and researchers…
“God, you’re a bore… my people tell me differently…”

They tell me, you…

Still use jargon and terms few understand

Preside over massive losses of important habitats

Still cannot tell me if the uplands are in good health

Argue with all and sundry over raptors, burning, importance of grazing, deer impacts

Shy away from imaginative approaches to reviving nature

Whimper over little Government (my Government!) support for conservation

Thompson, you’re utterly hopeless!
Well, let’s see what’s going on

- Haggling over what should go where – no shared vision
- The ‘squeezed middle’…trees, sheep, cattle, deer, grouse, wind turbines, housing?? arable??
- Disconnect between urban and rural areas… flooding brought this to forefront
- Climate change…need to act now for the future
- Biodiversity targets…tough and some not being met… negativity
- Conflicts… raptor persecution and burning ..simmering
- BREXIT…
- Austerity…stifling innovative work when it is most needed
- Some brilliant on-the-ground work…not getting through
No shortage of puffing...
Fifty years of habitat change – homogenisation!
The ambition...

State of nature – stock take and drivers… evidence

Action on the ground – what is possible?

Connecting nature – to itself and people

Vision - whose and what?

Opportunities – BREXIT arguably offers greatest opportunity for change since 1945

Public benefits will drive significant change

Elephants in the room – predation, perceptions and privilege
IUCN UK Peatland Programme

Emma Goodyer
Manager, IUCN UK Peatland Programme  emma.goodyer@iucn.org.uk
Choose sound science. Choose effective policy. Choose promoting landscape partnerships, delivering peatland restoration on the ground. Choose flexibility in peatland funding. And innovation in restoration techniques. Choose international collaboration. Choose avoiding the costly consequences of ecosystem degradation. Choose #PeatFree compost. Choose upland habitats, functioning to their full potential, delivering benefits to all. And all because…

Trainspotting 2 (TriStar Pictures)
...a broken bog is of no use to anyone.
SCOTLAND'S PEATLANDS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESTORATION

It is estimated that 70% of blanket bog and 90% of raised bog habitats have been converted by coastal and peatland management. With the crucial role these habitats play in mitigating Scottish's carbon footprint and providing vital services, it is becoming an increasingly priority to restore the canopy positions. Restoration aims to reverse historical damage to improve the resilience of our peatlands to harm of the multiple benefits they deliver.

FACTFILE

- Land area: Scotland = 7,858,703 ha
- 22% of Scotland's surface
- 22% of Scotland's land in peat

Scottish peatlands store more than 65% of Scotland's peatlands

The Glasgow Climate Action Plan aims to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2050. Scottish restoration can play a vital role in achieving this target.

The Law on Restoration adopted in 2011 commits to 1,000 ha of peatland restoration a year in Scotland every year, totaling up to 10 hectares per year.

70% of wetlands develop waterlogging from upland areas after peatlands are restored. Right of Way for the protection of peatlands has been extended to adjacent land.

KEY

- Peat restoration
- Designated areas
- Protection
- Restoration
- Peatland regeneration

Integrated actions, due to the interdependencies of wetlands, peatlands, and coastal habitats, a large number of statutory designated conservation sites, wetland restoration groups, and other stakeholders are involved in the restoration process.

However, as seen from the map, some designated sites only cover a small portion of Scottish peatlands and are in need of restoration.

This requires a coordinated effort in terms of assessing funding for capital restoration works and ensuring that long-term trends are monitored.
Caryn Le Roux and Carol Driver, Welsh Government

Future Natural Resources and Agriculture Policy in Wales
Future Natural Resources and Agricultural Policy in Wales
British Ecological Society event, Newcastle University
17th March

Supporting the Uplands after Brexit: Challenges and Opportunities

Caryn Le Roux
Natural Resources Policy Senior Advisor
Welsh Government
Caryn.LeRoux@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Carol Driver
CAP Replacement Lead
Welsh Government
Carol.driver@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Overview

• The Policy Context – Natural Resources Policy
• Uplands in Wales – the challenges and opportunities
• Developing future policy for the uplands
UN Framework

• Commission on Sustainable Development
• Convention on Biological Diversity
• Framework Convention on Climate Change

• Overall aim of holding the increase in global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius and pursuing efforts to limit the increase to 1.5 degree Celsius.

• ‘A strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way’
Reforming Environmental legislation

- Commitment to integrated natural resource management

- Draws on the approach put in place by the
  - Water Framework Directive and

- Building on the creation of NRW (Natural Resources Wales)
Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol (Cymru) 2015
2015 dech 2

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
2015 enawr 2

Environment (Wales) Bill
[DRAFT]

CONTENTS

PART I
SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

1 Overview of this Part[001]
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4 Principles of sustainable management of natural resources[004]
   General duties of public bodies
5 Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty[025]
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   Information on which to base action
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   National natural resources policy
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10 Area statements
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11 Duty to provide information or other assistance[012]
12 Collaboration directions[014]
   Land management agreements
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16 Power to suspend legislative requirements[023]
17 Environmental legislation[020]
18 Power of Natural Resources Body for Wales to conduct experimental schemes etc.[024]

DRAFT 5 December 2014
Management of Natural Resources

Evidence shows the capacity of our natural resources to continue to provide the services on which we depend is diminishing.
The objective is to manage our natural resources in a way and at a rate that can maintain and enhance the resilience of our ecosystems whilst meeting the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Three key elements of the statutory framework:

- State of Natural Resource Report (SoNaRR)
- The national Natural Resources Policy (NRP)
- Area Statements

Will provide evidence of the opportunities to drive green growth, tackle major challenges and improve the resilience and well-being of Wales’ communities.
Welsh Ministers must:

- set out what the Welsh Ministers consider to be the key priorities, risks and opportunities for the sustainable management of natural resources in relation to Wales (Including what should be done in relation to climate change and biodiversity);

- Set out general and specific policies for contributing to achieving SMNR

- Have regard to the evidence presented in SoNaRR

- And...take reasonable steps to implement and encourage others to take steps to implement the NRP.
Key challenges we need to tackle collectively

- Safeguarding and increasing our carbon stores
- Maintaining our productive capacity
- Reducing the risk of flooding
- Improving health
- Improving the quality and connectivity of our habitats
- Retaining the distinctiveness of our places and historic landscapes
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Improving the quality and maintaining the availability of water
- Opportunities to secure ecosystems recovery to support resilience
• Taking a place-based approach
• Delivering nature-based solutions to improve our social, ecological and economic resilience
• Increasing renewable energy and resource efficiency and fostering innovation
Opportunities - example

Increasing renewable energy and resource efficiency and fostering innovation

• Resilient ecosystems are crucial for supporting long term green and blue growth
• supporting Wales’ fisheries, forestry, agriculture and tourism sectors which underpin our aims for successful, sustainable rural communities
• Directly supports decarbonisation through circular economy and resources efficiency and innovation
• Circular economy could significantly reduce the impact on our natural resources while providing opportunities for jobs
• key role to play in reducing energy poverty in Wales
• Responds to decline in biodiversity
• Central to the Welsh Government’s commitment to support the development of more renewable energy projects
Table 4.1 Ecosystems and Resilience Table. * These land uses are of major importance for the provisioning services they provide. Note that the comments in this table relate to their underlying ecosystem resilience rather than their resilience for social or economic values, although these aspects are likely to be linked as described in subsequent chapters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEA Broad Habitat (section reference)</th>
<th>Ecosystem</th>
<th>Practical habitat unit</th>
<th>Diversity</th>
<th>Extent</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Connectivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mountain, Moorland and Heathland (3.6)</td>
<td>Uplands (includes wetland, grassland, heathland and mountain habitats managed as continuous units)</td>
<td>Naturally high, including a wide range of habitats and topographic variation that have generally been maintained</td>
<td>Well defined by altitude and topography. Losses unlikely, except high montane to climate, and through intensification at margins.</td>
<td>Issues including over or under grazing, N deposition, drainage.</td>
<td>Naturally good because of physical parameters – but affected by condition.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain, Moorland and Heathland (3.6)</td>
<td>Ffridd*</td>
<td>Distinctive high diversity and mixtures of habitats but vulnerable to land-use and climate changes.</td>
<td>Impacts from intensification and inappropriate tree planting.</td>
<td>Varied, reflecting high diversity of component habitats.</td>
<td>High connectivity – involves many habitats and provides link between upland lowland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain, Moorland and Heathland (3.6)</td>
<td>Lowland heathland</td>
<td>Natural range of diversity has been moderately well maintained.</td>
<td>Much historical loss, significant reduction, losses continuing.</td>
<td>Issues with N deposition, grazing levels.</td>
<td>Rather clustered resource – reasonable in patch concentrations, poor elsewhere.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Ffridd - the upland fringe that encompasses land occurring between the intensively managed lowlands and the open moor.
The economic state of Upland Farming in Wales

Farm Business Survey 2015/16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dairy</th>
<th>Cattle and Sheep (LFA)</th>
<th>Cattle and Sheep (Lowland)</th>
<th>All Farm Types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total farm business income (includes A-D)</td>
<td>32,800</td>
<td>21,900</td>
<td>16,300</td>
<td>22,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A - Income from agriculture (not including subsidies)</td>
<td>15,700</td>
<td>-3,800</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>-600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - Income from P1 subsidies</td>
<td>14,700</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>12,700</td>
<td>16,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - Income from P2 subsidies</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>5,900</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>4,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D - Income from diversification</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>2,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total subsidies (B+C)</td>
<td>16,100</td>
<td>22,900</td>
<td>13,800</td>
<td>20,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of income from subsidies</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>105%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

£46 million lost on farming “only” activity in LFA last year
The economic state of Upland Farming in Wales

Post Brexit implications:
Lamb Trade – hard facts

95% of our production leaves Wales.

40% of our production goes to the EU

WTO tariffs equate to 40-50%

FTA with rest of World?

Current EU prices for Red Meat
+60-70%

Liam Fox MP International Trade Secretary
“Britain is going to be open for business like never before.......the world’s brightest beacon and champion of open trade”

24th Sept 2016
Farming Income outlooks – post Brexit

Source: Wageningen study for NFU 2016
Agricultural producer support (Source: OECD)

- Funding under greater scrutiny
- CAP style hand outs will go
- No Two Pillar system
- Public money for Public goods
Public vs Private financing opportunities of natural resource management

- Welsh Language
- Historic Environment
- Landscape
- Biodiversity
- Public

- Woodland planting
- Carbon sink protection
- Tourism
- Flood Defence
- Recreational Activities
- Clean Water
- Energy production
- Private
Targeted Interventions

Streamside corridors

Blocking of peat land drains

Re-introduction of cattle grazing
Broading the Delivery partnership

Pontbren
Glastir Commons
Wye and Usk foundation
Cambrian Mountains Project
Collaborative action to support landscape-scale projects that improves our natural resources in a way that delivers benefits to farm businesses and rural communities.
Supporting the Uplands after Brexit: Challenges and Opportunities

Questions?

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