

## CMA Conference 2024

4-6 November – YHA Okehampton, Devon



## Field trip topics and learning outcomes

### 1. East Dartmoor Landscape Recovery Area (EDLRA)

*A collaborative approach to scaling nature conservation*



Topics to be covered during the site visit:

- An overview of the **East Dartmoor** project and how it plans to create a connected and resilient landscape.
- Scaling nature conservation through diverse partnerships and long-term agreements.
- Species Recovery – protecting rare and threatened species
- Valuing Natural Capital – can private finance and natural capital markets help fund this large-scale conservation project in East Dartmoor?
- Land management planning and biological monitoring for 20+ years.

#### Site visits:

- Parke Estate – Project overview, river restoration (weir project) and site access planning.
- Yarner Woods – Managing water within woodlands for biodiversity and Natural Flood Management. Using large woody debris to slow the flow.
- Bovey Valley Woods – Ancient woodland restoration (PAWS) and building landscape resilience.
- Trendlebere Down – Collaborative management of the commons to meet shared objectives and aid species recovery.

#### Learning outcomes via verbal information:

- An overview of DEFRA's Landscape Recovery scheme
- An overview of Landscape Recovery on Dartmoor
- An increased understanding of the EDLRA project objectives and how they will be achieved through long-term collaborative agreements.
- The opportunities and challenges afforded to a large-scale collaborative project that includes 30 landowners, 3000ha of land, 6 commons and 9 partner organisations.
- Techniques for creating and restoring priority habitats - including ancient woodland, wood pasture, species-rich wetland grasslands, woodland improvement, river realignment, upland commons management and natural flood management.
- An introduction to 'blended finance' – private and public funds for nature conservation.
- Innovative approaches to biological monitoring – Biological metrics, flagship species, and the use of remote sensing to detect landscape change.

## 2. Plymouth Natural Grid

### ***Nature-based solutions to climate change in an urban environment & Carbon Sequestration through land-use change***



Photographs: ©Chris Parkes Photography

#### Topics to be covered during the morning walk:

- Partnership working: Plymouth City Council & National Trust – Plymouth Natural Grid
- Carbon sequestration through nature-based solutions: Plymouth Natural Grid Nature Returns
- Derriford Community Park – Forder Valley Link Road mitigation
- Managing public access / sustainable transport links – Seaton Valley LNR
- Carbon sequestration through nature-based solutions in the urban environment – Seaton Valley LNR / Bircham Valley LNR (wood pasture, natural flood management, hedge planting, semi-natural grassland).
- Derriford Community Park – activities and projects

Learning outcomes via verbal information:

- Partnership working between local authorities and the third sector: Successes, challenges and opportunities.
- An overview of the Plymouth Natural Grid Nature Returns project, funded by DEFRA via Natural England.
- How the Forder Valley Link Road development enabled the development of Derriford Community Park
- Access pressure in urban LNRs
- How carbon sequestration nature-based solutions are established and monitored in the urban environment
- The benefits of community parks and green hubs to urban communities

Topics covered during the afternoon walk at Wembury (NT) – woodland and wood pasture:

- Previous land-use
- Process of change to Community Forest planting
- Issues transpiring from land-use change
- Work to date
- Timescale for completion

Learning outcomes via verbal information:

- Partnership working between local authorities and the third sector: successes, challenges and opportunities
- Overview of Community Forest from NT perspective
- Community interaction and communications regarding land-use change
- Carbon sequestration benefits of woodland/wood pasture

### 3. Black a Tor Copse NNR:

*The Highs and Lows of Dartmoor*



7.5m (12km) walk from Meldon Old Quarry via Black-a-Tor Copse NNR, High Willhays, and Yes Tor, including 400m of ascent! A minibus will take us to the start of the walk and we will return to the YHA by foot.

Topics to be covered during the walk:-

- Partnership working - Meldon Old Quarry
- Permissive Path Agreement - Meldon Quarry

- Wild Camping
- Management of an NNR - Black-a-Tor Copse
- Military Access
- Off Road Cycle Routes
- Commoners and the Management of the Dartmoor Commons

Learning outcomes via verbal information

- Ability to identify and discuss the key issues associated with balancing recreation and conservation objectives in a complex environmental setting.
- Further understanding of working with stakeholders to reduce or remove conflicts in a multi-use landscape.
- Learning about the impacts associated with the closure of a popular permissive path
- Identification of specific aspects of the Ranger's role in managing countryside issues
- Greater understanding of the workings of Dartmoor
- Increased understanding of Ranger Service challenges and opportunities in a SW upland NP context.

#### 4. Dartmoor military training area

##### *Integrating Military Training in Protected Landscapes*



The MOD is responsible for one of the largest and most designated estates across the UK with approximately 1% of the UK under its management. Using Okehampton Camp and the wilds of Dartmoor Training Area as a backdrop this field visit will cover the following topics:

- Integrating military training in the Dartmoor landscape including:
  - Environmental and ecological management and enhancement
  - Managing designated and non-designated heritage assets
  - Managing military live firing, agriculture and public access
  - Working in Partnerships (e.g. Duchy of Cornwall, Dartmoor National Park Authority) and the Dartmoor Steering Group
  - Maintaining a sustainable estate – future-proofing military training in protected landscapes
  - The Ten Tors Challenge

Learning Outcomes via verbal information:

- Understanding military requirements across protected landscapes via briefs and access to the Dartmoor Training Area. Note this may include observing live military training.
- Understanding of Integrated Management Plans which enable military activity and training areas to remain sustainable
- Demonstration of positive partnership working through the Dartmoor Steering Group, project delivery and funding
- The management of mass recreational events
- Understanding the challenges of Cross-Government drivers on a large-scale estate

This field visit will be based from Okehampton Training Centre but access on to the training area is likely to be to over rough tracks and wet terrain. It will not be appropriate for anyone with limited mobility.

#### 4. Great Gnat's Head – NT Upper Plym Estate

##### ***Peatland Restoration in a challenging setting***



9km (total) walk across undulating and boggy terrain from Peat Cot car park (roughly 2 miles southeast of Princetown) to the peatland restoration site at Great Gnat's Head, and back again. Roughly an hour walk out and back each way, with 2-3 hours on site.

Topics to be covered during the site visit:

- Peatland restoration – how and why
- Designations – historic and environmental
- Grazing issues – commoners rights and access
- Partnership working
- Past land use – peat cuttings and bomb craters!
- Big machinery – argocats and helicopters
- Peat and carbon
- Peatland ecology

Learning outcomes via verbal (and visual) information:

- An understanding of the various methods employed in peatland restoration to raise the water table and to reduce erosion (and loss) of peat

- An understanding of the potential conflicts (grazing, access, designations, historic environment) involved when planning peatland restoration on the high moor
- A chance to see the effects of restoration works from last winter, and (hopefully) to see restoration works taking place while on site
- How peatland restoration reduces the loss of carbon from the peat
- How a peatland restoration site is managed in line with CDM regulations
- How we monitor the success of peatland restoration works in the southwest
- An understanding of the specific equipment and plant that is used in peatland restoration
- How peatland partnerships work to deliver large-scale transformative restoration work at pace
- The importance of good waterproofs and a positive attitude!

Full waterproofs and wellies (or good waterproof hiking boots and gaiters) and good outdoor hiking layering are essential. Sadly this trip is unsuitable for those with limited mobility.