Wester Moss

Joining up nature across central Scotland

Location

Stirling

EcoCo Management Zone

Inner Forth

Lead Partner

Butterfly Conservation

Site Description

Wester Moss is a rare remnant raised bog, one of our most threatened habitats. Notified as a SSSI, it is one of the last remaining patches of a bog which would once have covered much of the floor of the Forth valley. It holds populations of rare and endangered species such as bog rosemary and the large heath butterfly. Modified and partially drained, it has been drying out, losing its value and becoming invaded with trees and scrub.

What are we going to do?

The site is owned by Stirling Council, and managed by Butterfly Conservation which, supported by Stirling Council ranger service, is working to restore the site by repairing the damage which has been done to it over the years. This includes installing plastic dams to block drainage ditches, and also creating a bund which will raise the water table, allowing the rare bog species to increase in number. Invasive trees and scrub, which are further drying out the surface of the bog, will be removed. Its SSSI status is currently Unfavourable Recovering.

What will this achieve?

This work will restore hydrological connectivity across the moss, improving its ecological condition and coherence. By re-wetting the disturbed habitats, a higher water table will be created, benefiting a range of rare bog species and reducing the density of invasive scrub and trees. In time, a more sustainable, natural habitat will be restored, contributing to overall **ecological coherence** for the management zone.

Links

http://butterfly-conservation.org
http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink
www.ecocolife.org.uk

What is ecological coherence?

The project has adopted an adapted version of a definition proposed by R. Catchpole (2013).

At the scale of the whole network, coherence is achieved when: the full range of variation in valued features is represented; replication of specific features occurs at different sites over a wide geographic area; dispersal, migration and genetic exchange of individuals is possible between relevant sites; all critical areas for rare, highly threatened and endemic species are included; and the network is resilient to disturbance or damage caused by natural and anthropogenic factors.

In order to determine ecological coherence for the project sites the main measurable parameters being considered are; patch size, biological diversity, habitat structural and functional connectivity, ecological functionality and presence of endangered, rare or endemic species.

In essence this can be summarised for habitats as '**more, bigger, better, and better connected**'.

Learn more at "Ecological Coherence Definitions in Policy and Practice - Final Report". R. Catchpole, Aspen International. Contract report to Scottish Natural Heritage, No. 41102