

GMA RESTORATION AND AFTER-USE POLICY FOR PEAT BOGS

Peatlands are an important ecological, archaeological and scientific resource. The GMA values the unique nature of peatland habitats and the importance of such habitats in the UK and Ireland. The GMA recognises the need to take this into account is designing and implementing restoration and after-use schemes.

Only a small proportion of the total area of peatland in the UK and Ireland is subject to peat extraction, and that extraction is carried out on sites that have already been harvested. Nevertheless, restoration and after-use of sites following the completion of working has an important role to play in securing the future of peatland habitats.

The GMA is committed to developing and implementing restoration and after-care schemes that are:

- Appropriate in the context of the site itself and the surrounding area.
- Sensitive to any relevant conservation designations.
- Contributing to achieving local, national and international habitat targets.
- Deliverable within a realistic timescale and sustainable in the long term.
- Sensitive to the socio-economic value of sites to the local, often rural, population.
- Available for study by relevant researchers and professionals.
- Accessible in a controlled way by the public, where appropriate.

Often restoration of lowland peat extraction sites will be to a condition that may allow the re-establishment of raised bog habitat in the medium to long term. This will not, however, necessarily be the possible or even desirable in every case. The GMA recognises that peat workings can be restored to a number of important habitat types in addition to raised bog. In many instances a matrix of habitats will be created within a single site including fen, reed bed, open water and appropriate types of woodland.

It is of particular importance to the GMA that restoration delivers an after-use that is economically and environmentally sustainable in the long term. Schemes that require pump drainage in perpetuity, for example, cannot be considered sustainable. In order to secure their long-term future restored peatland sites must be considered a valuable resource in their own right.

GMA members will work with Government, the relevant planning authorities, statutory conservation organisations and key NGOs to achieve these objectives.

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