

A Vision for the Eastern Moors

To promote the Estate as a shining example of best practice in achieving National Park purposes and duty, namely:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Estate.
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Estate by the public.
- In pursuit of these purposes, to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities.

Conservation

Aim:

To optimise wildlife habitats and species, cultural heritage and landscape beauty.

Natural Environment

Objectives:

- Meet and surpass “favourable condition” (as defined by Natural England) for the Site of Special Scientific Interest, which covers most of the Estate. The short-term target is for all of the SSSI to at least meet “unfavourable, recovering” condition by 2010. (We have moved from 42.5% in 2000 to 99% in September 2007).
- Identify and implement management to contribute to UK, Regional and Peak District BAP targets.



- Conserve, manage and where possible enhance populations of key bird species and mammals, including red deer, water vole and adder (pictured above).

- Reduce grazing to sustainable levels, using the appropriate number and best type of grazing animals for the particular habitats. This has been achieved on Big Moor and Leash Fen and significant reductions are to be implemented on Clod Hall Moor in the near future.
- Maintain agricultural management as a key tool for delivering conservation objectives, utilising and supporting local farming and other business enterprises to achieve conservation and recreation objectives.
- Birch removal from core heather moorland areas and adjoining wetland habitats where there are clear benefits. Leash Fen and significant areas of Clod Hall Moor and Ramsley Moor have been felled and need to be kept clear, amounting to approximately 380 ha in total.
- Long-term management of core woodland areas as diverse, native broad-leaf dominated woodlands.
- Allow natural succession to take place in a transitional zone between core moorland and core woodland areas.
- Hydrologically restore wetland habitats by blocking drains and creating scrapes (small pools) where appropriate. A significant number of drains have been blocked on Leash Fen, where annual maintenance of dams is now required. Further drain blocking is required to a lesser extent on Topley Moss and Lucas Moss (Big Moor). This amounts to approximately 6,500m of drains in total.
- Manage dry heath by cutting where possible or burning if necessary on a long-term rotation (c20 years), maintaining some areas of older heather which are never cut nor burnt.
- Return dry molinia (purple moor grass) areas to mixed heather moorland, without using chemicals. (We are currently undertaking a trial project on Big Moor and if successful would hope to repeat this on at least 3 other areas, amounting to approximately 40ha). There are 3 main reasons/techniques for controlling molinia:
 1. retaining some areas of tussocky Molinia which are likely to have some wildlife value eg for voles, owls and raptors;
 2. restoring dwarf-shrub component to some areas to create heath-grass mosaic; and
 3. enhancing some areas for breeding waders through experimental mowing and scrape provision. Managing the Molinia may also manipulate grazing pressure on other vegetation, where appropriate.
- Control bracken except in areas where wildlife habitats would be harmed, erosion would result or where it forms an important landscape feature. We aerial spray the edges of bracken where it is encroaching into heather. This is required on Big Moor, Ramsley Moor and Topley Moor, amounting to approximately 22ha.

- Manage in-bye land for maximum biodiversity, including the creation/enhancement of more hay meadows, flower-rich pastures and possibly fodder crops for birds.
- Use the Estate as a test-bed for new and innovative approaches to moorland management, where appropriate.
- Review opportunities to encourage colonisation, or introduction, of locally extinct species and species which might be expected to colonise due to climate change.
- Implement the existing Countryside Stewardship agreements on Big Moor, Totley Moor, Ramsley Moor and Leash Fen, which end between 2010 and 2013.

Cultural Heritage

Objectives:

- A Phase 1 archaeological survey of the whole Estate is required. More detailed Phase 2 surveys are also desired for specific features or clusters. (Estimated cost: £25,000). This should result in a series of management objectives for the archaeological resource of the estate.
- Birch clearance from Scheduled areas.
- Restoration of enclosures and intakes where appropriate.
- Continued consultation both in house (and with statutory bodies such as EH when appropriate) regarding management works (such as burning, flailing, heather cutting and scrape creation).



Scrape creation on Eastern Moors

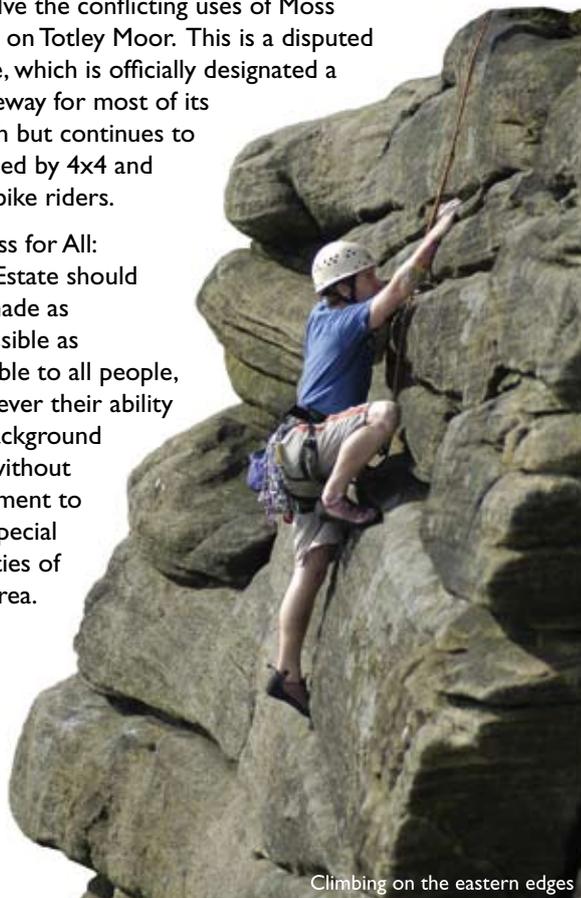
Recreation/Visitor engagement

Aim:

To raise the public profile, understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Estate.

Objectives:

- Improve visitor engagement, interpretation, greater use for educational visits, events and guided walks, in particular to improve understanding of moorlands and the National Park.
- Continue to promote opportunities for recreation. The Estate is almost all designated as open country under the Countryside & Rights of Way (CROW) Act and the Edges (Curbar, Froggatt and Birchen) are extremely popular for climbing and bouldering. Such access must be maintained and where possible, improved.
- Investigate the designation of further public bridleways on the Estate. There are a number of concession horse routes on the Estate which may benefit from formalisation but these should be protected from potential misuse by trail bikes and 4x4s.
- Resolve the conflicting uses of Moss Road on Totley Moor. This is a disputed route, which is officially designated a bridleway for most of its length but continues to be used by 4x4 and trail bike riders.
- Access for All: The Estate should be made as accessible as possible to all people, whatever their ability or background but without detriment to the special qualities of the area.



Climbing on the eastern edges

Buildings

The two groups of buildings on the estate, Warren Lodge and Barbrook Cottage, are both occupied by staff on service tenancies and used as work bases by estate staff.

The Property Service undertakes the maintenance of these properties, drawing on the estate budget.

The criteria for managing these properties are:

- Providing adequate residential accommodation for staff on the estate
- Providing safe workplaces
- Maintaining the properties in ways that reduce the environmental impact.

When either post becomes vacant the need for service tenancies will be reviewed.

Other Objectives

- Engage stakeholders (visitors, local communities and others) fully and properly in management decisions affecting the Estate as well as volunteers in practical work and survey and monitoring.
- Reach out to all sectors of the community, including those who don't currently benefit from use of the Estate.
- Actively demonstrate and promote good practice in environmentally sustainable land management.
- Barbrook and Ramsley decommissioned reservoirs are likely to come into the Authority's ownership in 2007/8 and their restoration as wet moorland habitats will need to be maintained and enhanced where possible.

There is also a need to develop and consider objectives for:

- Parking and traffic management
- Supporting the local economy
- Commercial use
- Educational use

(All of these need to be weighed against the primary objectives of the conservation of the ecology, landscape and cultural heritage of the Estate).

Criteria for management

- We seek to work in partnership with our neighbours, including the National Trust and Sheffield City Council through an area management approach to the wider eastern Peak District moors. We would want any land management partner on the Estate to work with us to further this wider partnership approach.
- All of the above are working objectives which would need to be agreed and set out in a new estate management plan, by all partners and stakeholders.
- We would like to ensure that all the moors continue to be managed under agri-environment schemes.
- We have a current policy of no blood sports on the Estate.
- There are currently 3 Authority field staff (1 warden, 1 shepherd and 1 warden/shepherd) and half a land agent's post directly employed in managing the Estate. Their posts should be protected under any new partnership arrangement.



Estate Warden Andrew Carson repairs a wall

For further information

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