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Farming with Nature 2021

Event Report

for Participants and Stakeholders

August 2021

Centre for National Parks & Protected Areas

University of Cumbria

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Foreword

We were delighted so many of you were able to join us at the end of May 2021 for our Farming with Nature Conference and Panel Discussion. The events were organised by the Centre for National Parks and Protected Areas (CNPPA) at the University of Cumbria with the support of the Food Farming and Countryside Commission. The driver was to explore two of the recommendations from Defra's *Landscapes Review* (The Glover Report); that our national landscapes should form the backbone of nature recovery networks and that national landscapes should have a central place in forthcoming Environmental Land Management schemes.

We all know that 70% of England is farmed and in many National Parks and AONBs the figure is even higher. This is why how we farm is so critical to addressing the biodiversity crisis as well as to securing these distinctive cultural landscapes, the communities that live in and visit them and the production of high quality food. It is by no means an easy task but where there is a will, and the appropriate support from the state and the market, there is surely a way. This was amply demonstrated by our inspiring speakers both on the evening panel, the plenary speakers and the lightning presenters. Furthermore, the active participation of all attendees at the conference workshops provided substantial insight into the opportunities and challenges ahead and we have picked out the key themes for this report.

We would like to thank all the speakers, the session chairs, Defra and in particular the Chairs for the evening and main events; Beccy Speight and Elaine King; for making the event a success.

Julia Aglionby; Professor in Practice

Tania Lemmey; CNPPA Development Officer

Hannah Field; Food, Farming and Countryside Commission Cumbria Inquiry Co-ordinator

Introduction

Farming with Nature 2021 comprised two online events: a panel discussion on the evening of 25th May; followed by a daytime conference on 26th May. The conference was intended specifically for stakeholders in farming and nature recovery in England's protected landscapes, whilst the panel discussion was also promoted to interested members of the public.

The panel discussion was chaired by Beccy Speight, CEO of RSPB, and included five panellists. The conference was chaired by Dr Elaine King, CEO of the Chilterns Conservation Board, with Keynote Speaker Dame Fiona Reynolds, a Commissioner of the FFCC, Master of Emmanuel College Cambridge and contributor to the *Landscapes Review* (2019). Workshops were chaired by Jake Fiennes, Head of Conservation at Holkham Estate and Kevin Bishop, CEO of Dartmoor National Park Authority. Youth Ambassadors, Lightning Presenters and further speakers contributed to the conference.

Julian Glover's *Landscapes Review* (2019) was a significant motivator for the Farming with Nature 2021 events, particularly its Proposals 4 and 5, which were:

'Proposal 4: National landscapes should form the backbone of Nature Recovery Networks – joining things up within and beyond their boundaries'.

'Proposal 5: A central place for national landscapes in new Environmental Land Management Schemes'.

The Farming with Nature 2021 events sought to bring a wide range of stakeholders such as farmers, employees in protected landscapes, academic researchers, biodiversity recovery experts and interested members of public together to share understanding and inform future actions.

Interactive elements included: Zoom polls and Zoom chat, Zoom Q&A to the speakers, online breakout rooms and use of Google Documents to compile feedback from small group discussions.

Recordings of the Farming with Nature conference, workshops and panel discussion can be viewed on the CNPPA's YouTube channel.

This report seeks to present the main themes discussed at the events, as a resource for all to use.



Participant Statistics

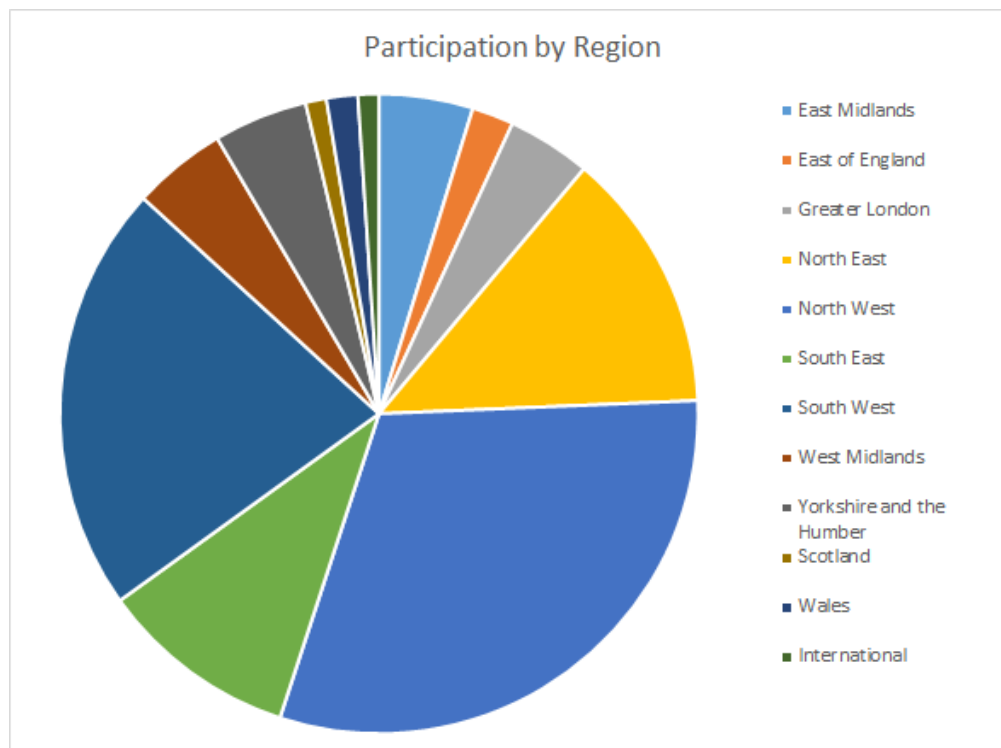
Attendance data

Session	Attended	Reserved a place
Evening Panel Discussion	132	301
Conference Main Session	178	189
Conference Workshop 1	59	N/A
Conference Workshop 2	95	N/A

At the Evening Panel Discussion, 23% of the audience were farmers, and the same proportion were conservation staff, with a wide range of other groups in attendance. The participation figures below refer to the Conference.

Participation by Region

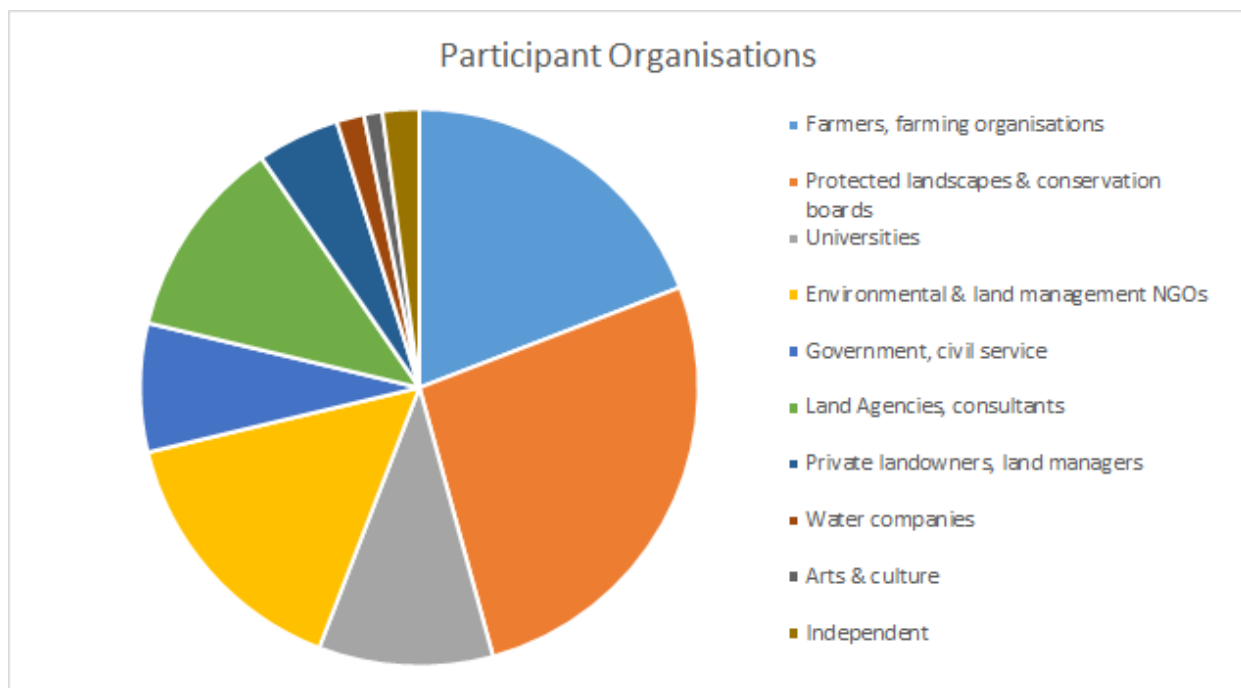
Regional representation was a strength of the online conference. Hosted at the University of Cumbria, the conference attracted greatest participation from the North West of England (31%), followed by the South West (22%), North East (13%), South East (10%). The conference arose from the recommendations of the Landscapes Review which focused on England. Participation from other UK home nations and internationally was small, but this report may be of interest to stakeholders in farming with nature beyond England.





Participation by Organisation

Participants indicated their organisation when booking. The largest group (26%) came from the staff of protected landscapes or related conservation boards; followed by farmers and farming organisations (19% of participants); environmental or land management NGOs (15%); land agencies and land consultants (12%) and universities (10%). The remainder included Defra, Natural England and local government, private landowners and a small number of delegates from utility companies, the arts and culture sector relating to the environment, plus independent participants.



Evening Discussion Themes

Professor Julia Aglionby introduced the evening and panelists, outlining how the event was motivated by certain recommendations made in the *Landscapes Review*.

The panel, chaired by Beccy Speight, featured John Atkinson, Farmer and Chair of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust; Caroline Cotterell, Director of Resilient Landscapes and Seas at Natural England; Helen Radmore, Farmer and Junior Vice-Chair of the Tenant Farmers Association; and Tim Farron, MP and Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Hill Farming. Also joining the panel was Dan Raven-Ellison, whose film 'UK National Parks in 100 seconds' was shown before the discussion.

Beccy Speight introduced the discussion, describing the current climate crisis and biodiversity decline and emphasising that our National Landscapes are currently not on a different trajectory. Beccy Speight outlined key policy targets, legal commitments, agri-environment funding changes that pose opportunities for improving the state of nature in National Landscapes. She highlighted farming-led nature recovery, acknowledging the leadership of farmers who already practice nature-friendly farming and asking what farmers need to make more of this happen. Beccy Speight then posed questions to the panel, taking input from the audience in attendance online.

Questions from the audience included:

- What is the panel's view on the balance between creating new National Parks and getting enhanced funding to support nature recovery and support sustainable farming?
- What is special about National Parks and AONBs?
- Do panelists agree that upland farmers would be better off financially if they cut their inputs and reduced stocking intensities to levels in line with the carrying capacity of the land?
- What is the panel's opinion in resolving the divide between farmers and conservationists and creating change which works for both parties?

Themes in the discussion included:

- The picture of land use within National Parks and other National Landscapes, and their potential to deliver more for people, nature and climate.
- The Government's '30 by 30' commitment: to protect 30% of land for nature by 2030.
- Further upcoming incentives and strategies which may support this in National Landscapes, including local nature recovery strategies.
- The levels of uncertainty and complexity in the current changing policy and funding context, and the ensuing need for trusted local advice, collective working and scaling up from local- to large- scale farming-led nature recovery.



- Farmers as the ‘players on the ground’ who are essential to delivering nature recovery strategy.
- Frustration in a lack of full consultation with farmers in nature recovery policies.
- The challenges of media portrayal of farmers, public attitudes to farming and of farming livestock in countryside popular with visitors.
- The need to find common ground; for farmers and conservationists to meet and understand one another; to get outdoor and look at the land together; and to recognise that many farmers have long been engaged in nature recovery work and that changes in farming and nature conservation require realistic timeframes.
- The extent of a perceived divide between conservationists and farmers.
- The obstacles of tenancies with regards to implementing nature-friendly farming: short tenancies and farmers dependent upon multiple landlords.
- The need to make the most of the protected landscapes which already exist, including nature recovery and improving equitable visitor access to high quality nature-rich environments.
- The outdoor access and educational needs of children, and the serious pressures of the pandemic on outdoor education services in and around National Landscapes
- Recognising the needs of people who live in and want to move to National Landscapes, and the challenges posed by second-home ownership.
- The potential for National Landscapes to be centres of innovation, and the opportunity they present to bring people together focused on a special place, to enact a shared purpose.
- Rewarding farmers for a range of public goods including food and nature.
- Rewarding farmers for continued good environmental practice and not just for improvements, particularly a concern that some past funding has incentivised letting nature-friendly practises lapse in order to gain funding for subsequent restoration.
- Linking food consumers to the nature-friendly practices of farmers; including direct contact between consumers and farmers in National Landscapes.
- The importance of farming practices for soil and water quality.
- The ability of small, family farms to pay attention to detail, including regarding nature conservation.
- Ecosystem and farm business benefits of native breeds, low inputs and sustainable stocking levels.
- Promoting sustainable livestock farming with an understanding of food production and nature.

To conclude the evening, the following question was posed to the online audience: ‘How do you think we can encourage nature to thrive on farms in our National Landscapes?’. The most popular answers were: (i) increase payments for stewardship and ELM; and (ii) provide paid-for advice to farmers. These priorities highlighted the importance of supporting farmers through the transformational needed required for nature recovery.

A recording of the Farming with Nature Panel Discussion may be viewed on the CNPPA’s YouTube channel.

Conference Schedule

09 00 **Welcome by Dr Elaine King** - CEO Chilterns AONB

09 10 **Keynote Speech by Dame Fiona Reynolds** - a Commissioner of the FFCC, Master of Emmanuel College Cambridge and member of the Landscapes Review.

09 25 **Response to Keynote Speech by Richard Leafe** - CEO Lake District National Park Authority

09 40 **Youth Ambassadors** in conversation with Dr Elaine King

10 00 **Proposal 4: Nature Recovery Networks**

Jake Fiennes - Head of Conservation, Holkham Estate and

Emma Browning - Cornwall AONB Partnership Manager

10 20 **Proposal 5: Environmental Land Management**

Kevin Bishop - CEO Dartmoor National Park Authority and

Dr Ruth Little - University of Sheffield

10 40 Break

10 50 **Choice of two workshops** with active participation. These include:

- **Lightning Presentations** on farming with nature in practice
- **Small group discussions**
- **Action planning**

12 00 Break

12 10 **Feedback by workshop chairs:** Jake Fiennes and Kevin Bishop

12 20 **Update from Defra by Sion McGeever** - Defra Deputy Director, Landscapes, Peat and Soils

12 30 **Response to Defra by Robin Milton** - Chair of UK National Parks and the Exmoor National Park Authority

12 35 **Questions** for Defra from delegates

12 50 **Summary and close** of the conference by Dr Elaine King

Full conference programme available online at: farmingwithnature.co.uk

Conference Speakers and Presentations

Conference Main Session

Dr Elaine King chaired the conference, encouraging those attending to consider: (i) how farming can support the recovery of nature in our AONBs and national parks, (ii) how Defra Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes may enable this, and (iii) how to build a shared purpose and understanding between stakeholders including farmers, national landscapes and government.

Dr King set out an ambition for regenerative farming practices to become the norm, particularly in our national landscapes, emphasising its relevance to nature restoration, food quality, public goods, health and wellbeing of the nation and economic prosperity.

Dame Fiona Reynolds, Keynote Speaker, outlined some key farm reforms of the past 40 years and the central role of farming in creating the special qualities and leading to the designation of our national landscapes. Dame Fiona acknowledged the serious loss of biodiversity in England and the role of certain policies and incentives in this. She identified the opportunities arising from more than 20% of England being designated protected landscapes: the knowledge, relationships and management plans already established within them signalling their capacity to lead the way in farming with nature, noting the importance of government policy and funding to underpin this. Dame Fiona encouraged abandoning divisions between rewilding and farming, to 'put farmers centre-stage in nature recovery'. This was truly a moment to seize.

Richard Leafe, CEO of the Lake District National Park Authority, responded to the keynote speech with agreement, emphasising that national landscapes are now well placed to lead nature recovery through farming, particularly with the announcement of the new Farming in Protected Landscapes Scheme which forms part of the (post-Brexit) agricultural transition. He set out the National Parks' ambitions to facilitate farmer-led nature recovery which would simultaneously sequester significant amounts of carbon, and to facilitate private investment to support this.

Dr King held a conversation with Youth Ambassadors: Thomas Vickers, Hill and Upland Farmer; Kelsey Ann Williamson of Kelsann Rare Breeds; and Georgia Hunter of Piper Hole Goat Farm; all of whom spoke of their experiences, ambitions and challenges in farming with nature.

Emma Browning, Cornwall AONB Partnership Manager, gave a presentation on a pilot local Nature Recovery Strategy developed with Cornwall Council. This utilised a partnership network across a unique AONB which is subdivided into 12 geographically separate sections, over 73% of which is farmed. This presentation demonstrated how an AONB can facilitate a nature recovery network through linking many partners and projects and attracting funding.

Dr Ruth Little, of the University of Sheffield, gave a presentation on implementing ELM. Dr Little detailed her team's research on farmer co-design of environmental land management schemes and engaging harder-to-reach stakeholders. She described the three components of ELM, as it stands: these being the Sustainable Farming Incentive, Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery. By interviewing farmers, the research identified opportunities and risks in the path to implementing ELM, as well as the specific support farmers would like from Defra, and from local advisors.

Sion McGeever, Defra Deputy Director of Landscapes, Access, Peatlands and Soil, provided an update. He set out that the commitment to protect 30% of our land for nature by 2030 meant that such land should contribute to reversing biodiversity loss. He identified that farmers, land managers, protected landscapes and environmental NGOs will have central roles and Defra must provide the policy and funding context to facilitate this. On Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL), he explained that FiPL was designed with specific attention to upland farmers, local expertise and to setting people up for the future (for ELM). He stressed the importance of a collaborative approach to deliver nature recovery.

Robin Milton, Chair of UK National Parks, farmer and CEO of Exmoor National Park, responded with his reflections, agreeing with importance of collaboration. He noted the significant policy changes afoot, and warned of the pitfalls of unintended consequences, indecision and undervaluing nature. He also advised Defra to celebrate successes, make ELM straightforward to access, and recognise realities for farmers who do not own the land to ensure achievements live up to the ambitions of ELM.

Workshop 1: Farming's contribution to Nature Recovery Networks in our National Landscapes.

Presentations were given by Chris Davis of Natural England; Tim Youngs of Blackdown Hills AONB, Lee Schofield of RSPB Haweswater; and Chris Woodley-Stewart of the North Pennines AONB Partnership.

These presentations included Nature Recovery Network strategy and story mapping to move from vision to delivery. Case studies of ecosystem restoration integrated with farming were presented, with examples of collaborative working across sectors and peer-to-peer learning among farmers.

Workshop 2: Making a success of Environmental Land Management and Farming in Protected Landscapes.

Presentations were given by Jennifer Dodsworth of the University of Aberdeen; Andrew Herbert of the Lake District National Park Authority; Joanne Leigh, Farm Environment Advisor with FWAG South West; David Attwell, Dartmoor Land Management Advisor; and Andrew Holland, Broads Wet Grassland Advisor with the RSPB.

These presentations highlighted several Defra test and trial ELM pilot projects in National Landscapes and on common land. They also gave insight into the role of farm advisors and of research in new agri-environment



schemes, with case studies from across England including Dartmoor, the Broads, Wensleydale, the Cotswolds and the Solway Coast.

Abstracts for the workshop presentations are included in Appendix 2, and biographies of conference speakers may be accessed online at: farmingwithnature.co.uk.

Conference Workshop Outcomes

Workshop 1: Farming's contribution to Nature Recovery Networks in our National Landscapes

Participants were randomly allocated to small discussion groups to identify actions and barriers to nature recovery through farming in National Landscapes, adding notes to a shared document during the conference. The notes were reviewed at University of Cumbria to identify themes, key actions and barriers.

Actions:

Four themes were strongly apparent across the action points, as follows:

- 1. Communication and networks**
- 2. Training, education and advice**
- 3. Evidence and mapping**
- 4. Local interpretation**

Many action points included all four themes in some way. Funding was also mentioned to support the action points.

Types of actions proposed are grouped against the first three themes and local interpretation appears on all of them. Actions are ordered with the most frequently mentioned first in each list.

Communication and networks

- Set up farmer clusters to enable peer communication on how to deliver nature recovery within farm businesses and exchange knowledge and experience.
- Develop local structures for knowledge exchange.
- Facilitate co-design and relationship-building between all stakeholders. Examples: protected landscapes and NGOs act as facilitators to bring people together and develop shared vision; involve farmers in creating communication resources.
- Promote best practice, celebrate achievements, foster pride and amplify voices of farmers who champion nature recovery.
- Contact all farmers and seek to connect those who are not already engaged in nature recovery.
- Inform wider society with regards to food production and environment, particularly the role of livestock management and the costs associated with nature-friendly farming.
- Provide clarity around ELM.



- Better communicate national plans with local interpretation, including how non-designated areas can fit in.
- Look beyond farms to other land management types and large land holdings to link up nature recovery.
- Explore new 'commoning' possibilities.

Training, education and advice

- Provide more and earlier support to farmers for nature recovery.
- Recruit and upskill trusted, open-minded, listening advisors to guide action on the ground. Advisors need understanding of nature recovery, farm business, current farming practice, local and national policy. Advice should start early, be specific to the land holding, involve time to help develop farm planning and be ongoing.
- Provide training in agro ecology / regenerative farming and make it accessible to farmers and paid. Specifically, provide training in mapping natural capital on an individual holding, to inform farm planning.
- Increase supporting services and land offered to new entrants and young starters in farming.
- Provide better initial education and training opportunities in farming and environmental management. Include nature recovery, ELM and commoning in courses and apprenticeships.
- Pay farmers for their consultation time.

Evidence, mapping and data.

- Develop and communicate the evidence base for different outcomes at a local level. Collect and track data to compare approaches and help find the best approach for each farm.
- Support the collection of baseline data for individual holdings to inform farm strategy.
- Support mapping and visualisations with local evidence.
- Re-evaluate how habitats are monitored, and the data used and shared.



Barriers:

The following barriers to nature recovery through farming in protected landscapes were identified. These are listed in no particular order.

- 'Preaching to the converted': tendency to reach farmers already engaged in nature recovery. Difficulty knowing how to engage farmers who have chosen intensive methods in horticulture, pig and poultry sectors for example.
- Risk of communication materials seeming patronising.
- Conflicting advice: advice with different priorities needs reconciling.
- Traditional sources of advice are 'safe places' for farmers; may be barriers to change.
- 'Tidy Farm' mind-set of some landowners, farmers, public: nature-rich areas may be viewed as untidy.
- An uncoordinated approach: neighbouring land holdings may need support to work collaboratively.
- Lack of trust: time needed to build trust and respect between stakeholders; negative and blameful language can disengage.
- A lack of resourcing for change: money, time (ongoing support), staff (availability of skilled facilitators).
- Human disconnect from the natural world.
- Public misunderstanding of role of livestock in nature recovery.
- Lack of clarity around ELM
- Farming tradition and long timescales for farming businesses mean change is slow
- A belief or reality that 'farmers in the red can't be green'.

Workshop 2: Making a success of ELM and 'Farming in Protected Landscapes'

Participants were randomly allocated to small discussion groups to identify actions and barriers to in relation to making a success of forthcoming Environmental Land Management Schemes, particularly in protected landscapes, adding notes to a shared document during the conference. The notes were reviewed at University of Cumbria to identify themes, key actions and barriers to success.

Actions:

Major themes in the action points arising were:

- 1. Farmers' peer networks**
- 2. Effective advisory services**
- 3. Access to and engagement with ELM**
- 4. Role of protected landscapes in ELM**
- 5. Knowledge transfer**

Knowledge transfer arose recurrently in association with all of first four themes. Notably this was identified as a multi-directional process: peer-to-peer; advisory; grassroots informing policy delivery; all stakeholders listening. Also, the need for mechanisms for knowledge transfer were very prominent whether that be online or not, in a 'hub and spoke' advisory format, place-based networks, educational courses. Types of actions are grouped against the first four themes.

Farmers' peer networks

- Facilitate 'fellow farmer' peer-to-peer knowledge exchange to share information and support farmers to work with neighbours. Provide skilled facilitation, especially to support initial development of farmer-led groups.
- Incorporate farmer knowledge to deliver ELM outcomes. Engage with farmer networks to assess what barriers to participation ELM might be. Engage trusted sources of information and then speak up to the higher levels.
- Develop a place focus such as a valley or landscape scale approach, for better results via working together: either grassroots led or via a large landowner or NGO. Example: peatland restoration across the Southwest Peatland Partnership.
- Improve communications by targeting for different audiences; making evidence more accessible to farmers and others; use of hub and spoke means of communicating so others can learn and share.

Effective advisory services

- Fund advice, facilitation and convening roles so land managers are supported to collaborate and get ready for ELM and carry out natural capital audits on their holdings.
- Help people collaborate, differently to traditional 'adviser' structure – see section above.
- Recruit advisors from within the local farming community. Farmers would like to see greater knowledge of local challenges, and passion about local places from advisors.
- Maintain continuity of advisors to maintain trust.
- Advice should be local and farm specific.
- Improve communications from farm advisors to farmers.
- Build coordinated advice delivery within national landscapes but also with organisations like FWAG, Rivers Trust, Farmer Networks and private environmental consultants.
- Consider 'hard-to-reach' land managers.

Access to and engagement with ELM

- Support farmers and build trust in ELM by providing sufficient timely detail to inform farm planning, including detail on eligibility, enrolment and continuity of funding.
- Make sure information is accessible, simple and easy to see by collating in one place, summarising. Provide simple and clear guidance on how to fill out forms, make it easy for farmers who want to improve their land. Give other options to access the information, not all online.
- Start building relationships now for involvement in upcoming schemes as it takes time to build the trust. Include social events. Seek to nurture ELM 'bottom up' not impose it.
- Support / clarify support for maintaining public goods under ELM.
- Business viability takes priority so tackle this directly with economic information about ELM and knowledge transfer of the economic case for environmentally beneficial methods e.g. 'less is more' stocking.
- Support existing organic farmers.
- Provide lots of small grants.
- Provide proper rewards to farmers for ELM.
- Start with headline actions and move on to additional voluntary actions farmers can take.
- Flexible options to 'do the right thing for the environment'
- Create local mechanisms of delivery.
- Support commons and commons governance with ELM
- Connect college curriculum to policy frameworks e.g. ELM.
- Support educational access for farmers.
- Continue the work of the 'Test and Trials' and share the learning.



- Public education about role of farmers in ELM. Focus on importance of soils

Role of protected landscapes in ELM

- Clarify the role of National Landscapes within ELM
- Build coordinated advice delivery within national landscapes but also with organisations like FWAG, Rivers Trust, Farmer Networks and private environmental consultants.
- Facilitate more integration between stakeholders. National landscape organisation can help communicate the needs of different groups including farmers.
- National landscape organisations can work as facilitator of management plans with local networks of farmers.
- Keeping visual records (e.g. films, photos) of the difference land managers are making so that this can be shared and generate support. Need to improve the publicity - engaging with communities, educating the public (e.g. littering, countryside code)
- Protected landscapes could take a role in attracting and distributing funds from a variety of sources including business and philanthropic to underpin local community and reduce impact of BPS removal, support transition to ELM.
- All stakeholders listening to farmers and taking account of what is said.
- Where advisors associated with National Landscapes have built trust with farmers these advisers should be integrated into new system, not 'reinventing the wheel'

Barriers:

The following barriers to making a success of ELM in protected landscapes were identified.

Lack of detail on ELM/transition to ELM

- Lack of detail in ELM preventing farmers making plans
- Lack of detail on trusted advice, practical support, support with monitoring and evaluation, and lack of appeal/excitement, will lead to lack of buy-in from farmers.
- Farmers being unsure whether to join certain schemes or lottery funded projects due to risk of dual funding and ineligibility for ELM: information not available.
- Consequences of loss of BPS could be moves to intensive farming, people leaving farming and farms acquired for development.
- Interim phase until start of ELM is important but unclear

Concerns on structure of ELM

- Overly prescriptive schemes: need flexibility.
- New entrants can't access various schemes
- Timescale of ELM is unrealistic: need to think long term for nature recovery and farming businesses.
- Food production and environmental protection being seen as separate things
- Funding not ambitious enough for large scale nature recovery

Communication and stakeholders

- Bureaucracy and excessive information
- Digital exclusion: computer literacy and access
- The narrative that farmers do not want change is not helpful: change the narrative.
- Right of veto for some parties within commons stewardship scheme governance can make conversations difficult, need support within ELM
- Relationship building needs time and expertise which must be funded
- Some network organisations work better than others, some commons organisations can get a bit political
- Local management plan timescales can be too long.
- Some large landowners including NGOs, public bodies not seen to be leading by example in environmental land management.
- Who should advise: are there enough qualified and trusted advisors?
- Trust, communication and including all stakeholders
- Knowledge exchange between farmers across different regions is difficult

Conclusions

The range of participants in terms of geographical region of England and role type was a strength of the conference, as a vehicle for developing stakeholder relationships and exchanging knowledge. Initiatives to include young adults through Youth Ambassador roles and student tickets were generally successful. Overall, attendance at the conference exceeded the target and an extra tranche of tickets were released to accommodate demand.

Concluding comments from speakers included these ideas:

- **Nature and farming are interdependent:** nature is required to support sustainable food production and regenerative agriculture supports nature recovery.
- There is a need for foresight, and learning from **past mistakes in policy** which contributed to nature loss, and for **urgency** in now **valuing nature properly** in agricultural schemes.
- **Flexibility** is required in applying ELM to different landscapes and farms, recognising place identity and the special qualities of different protected landscapes.
- **Security** of funding and **reducing uncertainty** around scheme details is very important for farming businesses and farmer wellbeing.
- **Avoiding polarisation** of the debate around farming and nature in the media would be very helpful. **Collaboration is key** and the conference has identified a strong **shared sense of purpose**.

From Workshop 1, in summary, there was a great deal of enthusiasm for regenerative farming and connecting people to share knowledge and best practices. Funding and how to interpret the schemes and advise locally, including at a farm level, were concerns, but barriers identified were nearly all specific issues of communication and trust.

Actions to develop Nature Recovery Networks in farmed landscapes should prioritise **communication**, including **sharing achievements** and building **farmer networks; training, education** and bespoke **advice**; gathering and sharing **evidence** and **supporting farm baseline ecological mapping** and planning. Throughout these actions **local interpretation** is key.

From Workshop 2, overall, there was the sense that many farmers/land managers are very keen to do everything they can in delivering schemes and farming practices in ways which look after the environment but lack of detail on ELM, accessibility of information and economic concerns are obstacles to changing farming systems.

Actions to facilitate ELM should prioritise facilitating **farmers' peer networks**, providing **effective, local advisory services**, ensuring **timely, accessible information is provided**, involving **farmers in co-development** and making the schemes **flexible enough** to accommodate diverse farms and landscapes. **Protected landscapes** can help bring farmers and other stakeholders together, advise, and represent local needs. Improving **knowledge transfer** should be a key theme.



Appendix 1: Resources

Event Resources

Centre for National Parks and Protected Areas, University of Cumbria	https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/research/centres/centre-for-national-parks-and-protected-areas/
Conference Recordings on CNPPA YouTube	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCn9QOelbirhMfNjB1vaPs9g
Defra Environmental land management schemes: overview, 2021	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-land-management-schemes-overview
Defra Nature Recovery Network policy, 2020	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-recovery-network/nature-recovery-network
Farming with Nature 2021 event website	http://farmingwithnature.co.uk/
Food, Farming and Countryside Commission	https://ffcc.co.uk/
Landscapes Review, 2019	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review

Presenters' Organisations & Projects

Agri-Environmental Governance Post-Brexit: research into co-design of new Environmental Land Management system	https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/geography/research/projects/agri-environmental-governance-post-brexit
Blackdown Hills AONB	https://blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/
Chilterns AONB	https://www.chilternsaonb.org/
Contracts 2.0	https://www.project-contracts20.eu/
Cornwall AONB	https://www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/
Dartmoor Hill Farm Project	https://www.dartmoorhillfarmproject.co.uk/
Dartmoor National Park	https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group Southwest	https://www.fwagsw.org.uk/
Holkham Estate	https://www.holkham.co.uk/
Institute for Sustainable Food, University of Sheffield	https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/sustainable-food
Lake District National Park	https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/
Minchinhampton and Rodborough Commons	https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/minchinhampton-and-rodborough-commons
Natural England	https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england
RSPB Landscape Scale Conservation – The Broads	https://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/conservation/landscape-scale-conservation/sites/the-broads/
Tees-Swale Naturally Connected	https://www.northpennines.org.uk/what_we_do/tees-swale-naturally-connected/
UK National Parks	https://www.nationalparks.uk/
Wild Haweswater	https://wildhaweswater.co.uk/

Appendix 2: Presentation Abstracts

Landscapes, Farming and the Nature Recovery Network

The Nature Recovery Network (NRN) is a major commitment in the government's 25 Year Environment Plan and a key part of Defra's forthcoming strategy for nature. The NRN will be a national network of wildlife-rich places, helping us deal with three of the biggest challenges we face: biodiversity loss, climate change and wellbeing. The need is to expand, improve and connect these places across our towns, cities and countryside. To do this, Defra and Natural England are bringing together partners, legislation and funding. This session explores the vital role of our national landscapes, landowners and land managers in its delivery.

Presented by: Chris Davis, Nature Recovery Network Partnership Manager, Natural England

Together for Nature – A Delivery Ambition for National Landscapes with Natural England, land managers, partners and communities.

We have co-created a StoryMap, outlining how National Parks, AONBs and the National Nature Reserve Partnership can help to create a network of natural spaces across the country, forming the foundation of the Nature Recovery Network. To move from vision to delivery, we will deploy innovative partnership approaches, to coordinate and deliver the necessary levels of habitat creation and restoration. Close working with the stewards of the land, building on trusted relationships, are crucial. We seek to show that by working together we can recover nature, build climate resilience and engage with a wide range of people.

Presented by: Tim Youngs, Manager, Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Haweswater – Sustainable Hill Farming and Ecosystem Restoration

At Haweswater in the Lake District National Park, RSPB is working in partnership with landowner United Utilities to trial and demonstrate land management approaches which integrate the best of sustainable hill farming with ecosystem restoration. The partnership has already delivered an ambitious programme of river, meadow, bog, woodland and heath restoration. Together with changes to grazing, these interventions have put the landscape into recovery, bringing benefits to water, wildlife, employment and the local economy. The work has been underpinned by agri-environment agreements and could inform how future schemes could be designed and implemented to yield a broad range of public goods.

Presented by: Lee Schofield, Senior Site Manager, RSPB Haweswater

Tees Swale: Naturally Connected – A Nature Recovery Network focused on Farming

Tees Swale 'naturally connected' puts farming at the heart of nature recovery and nature recovery at the heart of farming. The North Pennines AONB Partnership and Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority are working with 300 farmers across 850km² restoring peatland and hay meadows, creating woodland and scrub, managing rushes, creating new wader habitat and improving watercourses. The programme promotes peer-to-peer learning and collaboration - across farm holdings and between sectors. With a focus on conserving, enhancing, expanding and connecting habitats, we're building a nature recovery network together, focused on farming. The work is primarily supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Presented by: Chris Woodley-Stewart, Director, North Pennines AONB & UNESCO Global Geopark



Learning from the Cumbria Pioneer ELM Test

The Cumbria Pioneer ELM Test has engaged farmers and other stakeholders in testing potential approaches to co-creation of land management plans and area plans for public goods delivery through ELM in two test areas: the Upper Derwent catchment in the Lake District National Park; and the Waver Wampool catchment, including parts of the Solway Coast AONB.

Key learning points include: farmers valued being engaged early in co-design; facilitated group conversations amongst farmers and specialists resulted in better understanding of differing perspectives and knowledge; Farmers want trusted and specialist advice to successfully deliver public goods as part of farm businesses.

Presented by: Andrew Herbert, Lead Strategy Adviser: Farming, Nature, and Landscape, Lake District National Park Authority

Test and Trial – Minchinhampton and Rodborough Commons

3% of the land area of England is registered common land and the majority is in a National Park or AONB. This study of Minchinhampton and Rodborough Commons is part of a national DEFRA Test and Trial looking at mapping public goods, commons management plans and a commons toolkit.

Minchinhampton and Rodborough are internationally important for their limestone grassland and home to one of the largest populations of the rare Duke of Burgundy butterfly in the country. Grazing cattle and the succession of graziers rights, rare habitat management and intense recreational use of the Common all need to be considered with a wide range of stakeholders when looking at how ELM could deliver public goods on the Common.

Presented by: Joanne Leigh, Farm Environment Advisor, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West

The Postridge Cluster – Practical Co-design

The Postbridge Cluster comprises of ten upland livestock farms which coalesce around the river Dart on the high moor of Dartmoor. Since 2019 they have been exploring if future land management can be co-designed and delivered through collaboration. This has highlighted a range of opportunities, and challenges which the group has encountered in progressing their ideas from trust to facilitation. The focus has been on the in-by land but the group has also explored strands of the Dartmoor Test and Trial including the role of blended finance and payments by results models.

Presented by: David Attwell, Dartmoor Land Management Advisor

Contracts 2.0: Lessons from RBAPS for farmers' perceptions of environmental heritage in National Landscapes

Contracts 2.0 is a 4-year European research project working over 13 countries to explore ways that agri-environmental contracts can be better for farmers and for nature. In the UK, we are looking at the ways in which more collaborative approaches and results-based contracts might deliver innovative landscape-scale environmental benefits through contracts which support and enhance the capacity of farmers' sustainable traditional practices whilst recognising local knowledge of land. In a recent study undertaken in collaboration with the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Natural England, we asked farmers in the Wensleydale RBAPS pilot about their perceptions of the key support mechanisms, barriers and management practices within the scheme. There were interesting findings regarding the continued and enhanced delivery of environmental heritage assets, such as long existing biodiverse meadows and hay barns, which highlight the unique, vital role of national landscapes in enhancing natural beauty and nature recovery.

Presented by: Jennifer Dodsworth, Research Assistant, School of Geography, University of Aberdeen

Broads National Park – Connecting grazing marshes with wildlife in mind: agri-environment opportunities

A dedicated RSPB wet grassland advisor is successfully working with farmers, landowners and their graziers across 3000+ha of grazing marsh landscape, giving support and advice, to turn around the fortunes of both breeding waders and wintering wildfowl in the Broads National Park as part of its Water, Mills and Marshes project. The adviser sees working with farmers and their neighbours as a positive and instrumental way forward to help connect well managed grazing marshes at a landscape scale, using agri-environment schemes to pay farmers for the additional management required.

Presented by: Andrew Holland, Broads Wet Grassland Adviser, RSPB