ACRES Peatland SCORECARD

Farmer name:
Field number:
Business ID:
Surveyor:
Survey date:

Which of the following best describes the plot?

☐ Wet heath ☐ Dry heath ☐ Blanket bog ☐ Raised bog ☐ Mosaic of heath & bog ☐ Mosaic of heath & grassland

Total Score: (A+B+C) /100

A Ecological integrity

Total score A: *(sum of A1 to A3)* /60

A1 What **positive indicators** are present in the field?

Tick all positive indicators present below.
Note all positive indicators present as you walk through the plot.

Low: 0-2 **0** | Moderate: 3-5 **5** | High: 6+ **10**

Positive indicators:

Moss layer:
- ☐ Branched mosses
- ☐ Non-crustose bushy lichens
- ☐ Sphagnum mosses
- ☐ Liverworts

Grass/herb layer:
- ☐ Bog asphodel
- ☐ Bog bean
- ☐ Bog cotton
- ☐ Lousewort
- ☐ Sundews
- ☐ White-beaked sedge
- ☐ Black bog rush

Shrub layer:
- ☐ Bell heather
- ☐ Cross-leaved heath
- ☐ Ling heather
- ☐ Bilberry
- ☐ Bog myrtle
- ☐ Western Gorse

A2 What is the combined **cover of all positive mosses, liverworts & lichens** *(listed above)* throughout the field?

Cover is the proportion of the field taken up by all positive mosses, liverworts & lichens indicators present.

Low: ≤10% cover across the field	0
Moderate: 10-30% cover across the field	10
High: 30% cover across the field	20

A3 What is the **vegetation structure?**

Over-grazed: Vegetation height is uniformly low. Little or no heather present on wet heaths. Often lacking moss and dwarf shrub layer.	-15
Moderate (over-grazed): Significant areas (>25%) of the plot have low uniform vegetation, although not throughout.	10
Good: Sward in good condition; abundant grass and sedge-like vegetation on blanket bog with hummock, hollow, and pool complexes. On heath, all stages of heather/shrub growth present, mostly >30cm. Mix of bog and/or heath vegetation at various heights throughout. Well-structured vegetation with all three layers (moss, sedge/herb, and shrub) well represented.	30
Moderate (under-grazed): Significant areas (>25%) of the plot have rank vegetation although not throughout.	15
Under-grazed: Rank sward. Purple moor-grass/mat-grass and rank senescent heather dominating. Litter cover high, thatch forming in large continuous patches. Poorly developed ground layer.	-10

B Hydrological integrity (carbon capture)

Total score B: /20

B1 Surface hydrology and artificial drainage features:

Significantly altered bog/heath hydrology: Frequent widespread free-flowing drains on plot with notable effect on surrounding vegetation of bog/heath. >20% of plot affected.	-30
Moderately altered bog/heath hydrology: Free flowing drains in plot with notable effect on surrounding vegetation of bog/heath. <20% of plot affected.	-15
Slightly altered bog/heath hydrology: Drains present in plot although are somewhat impeded and little effect on surrounding bog/heath.	0
Moderately intact bog/heath hydrology: Bog/heath surface largely intact, although some evidence of historic disturbance (cutting, drainage, erosion channels) across any part of plot. Vegetation and hydrology largely recovered/stabilised.	10
Intact bog/heath hydrology: Intact bog/heath surface, no evidence of past drainage or disturbance across plot.	20

C Threats & future prospects

Total score C: *(sum of C1 to C5)* /20

C1 Is there any **evidence of damaging activities** to habitat, vegetation, or archaeology?

High: Damage occurring across a large area (≥21%) or of a serious nature if confined.	-30
Moderate: Damage occurring across a moderate area (≥6-20%) or of a moderate nature if confined.	-20
Low: Damage occurring across a small area (≤5%) or of a minor nature if confined.	-10
None: No damaging activities.	0

Damaging activities:
(tick relevant damage & describe in comments)

- ☐ Damage from supplementary feeding
- ☐ Damage to archaeological features
- ☐ Inappropriate herbicide use
- ☐ Boundary damage
- ☐ Removal of mature scrub/trees
- ☐ Quarrying
- ☐ Burning
- ☐ Dumping
- ☐ Other *(please specify)*:

C2 What is the level of **risk to the quality of natural water bodies** within, adjacent to and down-stream of the field due to pressures relating to flow, sediment, nutrients or other pollutants?

The source - pathway - receptor model should inform the assessment (see guidance).

High:	-25	Moderate:	-15	Low:	-5	None:	0

C3 What is the extent of **bare soil & erosion**?

High: Excessive areas of bare soil within the body of the field. Bare soil may also be extending out significantly from the main feed sites and/or water troughs, where poaching evident. Significant rutting and soil disturbance caused by vehicle/tractor access.	-20
Moderate: Bare soil mainly along regularly used stock routes or congregation areas, with minor soil loss occurring at a few points. Bare soil may extend a short distance beyond the main feed site and/or water points. Minor rutting and soil disturbance caused by occasional vehicle/tractor access may be present.	-10
Low: Bare soil more or less restricted to regular stock paths, 'pinch' points & small congregation areas. No soil loss.	10

C4a Are **non-native invasive species present**?

Present:	-10	Absent:	0

C4b What is the cover of **non-native invasive species**?

High: Abundant. Some forming dense clumps, many seedlings.	-20
Moderate: Frequent. Some flowering, many seedlings present.	-10
Low: Scattered. Plants mostly small and not flowering.	-5
None: None present.	0

Non-native invasive species: *(tick if present)*

- ☐ Rhododendron
- ☐ Cotoneaster
- ☐ Japanese Knotweed
- ☐ Giant Hogweed
- ☐ Self-sown conifers
- ☐ Himalayan balsam
- ☐ Himalayan knotweed
- ☐ Himalayan honeysuckle
- ☐ Other *(please specify)*:

C5 Is there any evidence of **damage due to turbary activity**?

High: Active peat cutting and associated works >10% of the field affected. High proportion of bare peat due to peat extraction. Sausage machine cutting taking place in any part of the field (regardless of the extent).	-30
Moderate: Active peat cutting (mechanical cutting from face-bank, hand cutting, milling etc.) and associated works <10% of the field affected.	-10
Low: No evidence of peat cutting during the most recent season. Vertical face of bank has no bucket marks and has clear signs of weathering. Spreadlands revegetating.	10

C6 What is the **cover of bracken**? *(refer to CP team if 'moderate' or 'high')*

High: Very dense stands of bracken covering over half or more of the field, forming closed canopy.	☐
Moderate: Bracken forming dense stands covering parts of the field; mostly forming closed canopy.	☐
Low: Bracken absent or some scattered fronds and none forming closed canopy. Can include some isolated small patches or some larger patches on steep slopes.	☐

C7 What is the extent of **spreading immature scrub**? *(refer to CP team if 'Moderate' or 'High')*

High: Gorse dominated scrub occurring throughout the site or concentrated in large areas.	☐
Moderate: Small areas of gorse dominated scrub occur occasionally throughout the site.	☐
Low: Little or no scrub present.	☐

Common management recommendations to pick from:

- ☐ Continue current management of this high quality peatland.
- ☐ Control the occurrence and spread of invasive species. Consult with CP team regarding solutions.
- ☐ Control the occurrence and spread of encroaching scrub, supporting actions are available.
- ☐ Consider using supporting actions to slow or impede the flow of drains.
- ☐ Consider raising watertable to restore peatland, supporting actions are available.
- ☐ Use stock to graze field more evenly.
- ☐ Improve stock management. You may wish to avail of supporting actions e.g. Fencing / drinking facilities.
- ☐ Move feeders / troughs regularly and keep away from drains and rivers.
- ☐ No management advice.
- ☐ Other management advice:

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