

LANCASHIRE PEAT PARTNERSHIP – COMMUNICATIONS PLAN – March 2015

Introduction

Part of the remit of the Lancashire Peat Project project officer role (Oct 2014 – March 2015) was 'Communications and reporting', and specifically 'to develop and implement a communication plan of work'. This plan analyses the types of information and audiences relevant to the work, sets out a matrix of how these audiences can be reached for the purposes suggested, sets out the progress made to date with next steps suggested and then looks at how this plan can be evaluated.

Firstly, however, the plan sets out a suite of **key messages** which can be used in press releases, requests for information, web page updates and summaries given within the partnership organisations.

Key messages

Global importance of peatland

Peatland (or 'blanket bog' as the habitat is known in the uplands) is of international importance for its biodiversity and carbon storage. Whilst peatlands only cover 3% of the world's land area, and thus are rarer in extent than tropical rainforests, they contain nearly 30% of all carbon stored on land. The peatlands of England contain more carbon than the forests of Europe.

A healthy, functioning blanket bog is extremely important in providing various ecosystem or natural services for society, which can include:

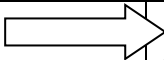

- **reductions in downstream flood risk and siltation**
- **reduction in wildfire risk on moorlands**
- **improvements in water quality**
- **reducing carbon loss and promoting sequestration of atmospheric carbon**
- **biodiversity improvements**
- **improvements in landscape quality and natural beauty**

Information, messages and audiences

The types of information which the LPP may wish to communicate has been split three ways, into news items, general updates and knowledge transfer. News items are time specific and ad hoc, general updates can either be produced to a schedule or can be linked to developments. Knowledge transfer refers to technical reports either produced on behalf of the partnership or by other related organisations. These need to have a location which is both accessible and stable. In terms of audiences, this plan identified four main audience groups: the general public, interested parties, other peat partnerships and Lancashire Peat Partnership members. Further audience types can easily be added to the matrix in the future.

Communication matrix

The matrix below sets out what is seen to be the most appropriate communication route for each audience type, depending on the type of information to be conveyed.

Activity  Audiences 	NEWS ITEMS	GENERAL UPDATES	KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER
GENERAL PUBLIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press release • Web page updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web page updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports available on the web page
INTERESTED PARTIES (eg land managers) & OTHER PEAT PARTNERSHIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press release • Twitter feed • Web page updates • Email (where known) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter feed • Web page updates • Email (where known) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports available on the web page • Offer of presentations to group meetings • Site visits
LANCASHIRE PEAT PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct email • Group meetings – can be called for specific items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct email • Web page updates • Meeting updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation at meetings • Reports available on the web pages • Site visits

Progress to date:

- Development and maintenance of an up to date email distribution list of the LPP membership, enabling efficient information transfer relating to meeting times, minutes & updates
- Development and maintenance of a Lancashire Peat Partnership web presence, within the Forest of Bowland AONB web site here: <http://www.forestofbowland.com/lancashirepeatpartnership> The AONB team have full control of content management, so this page can be updated at any time.
- Direct email updates are being used to keep partnership members informed of news items (in particular progress with funding bids) and general updates
- Offer of presentations to other parties (eg Catchment Partnerships) on the Priority Peat work in Lancashire have been made.
- Members of the LPP have good relationships with local press, and have been successful in having press releases being picked up for local news articles.

Next steps:

- A search on Twitter has found that the other main peat partnerships are active [Yorkshire Peat Partnership (@ypp_peat), Moors for the Future (@moorsforfuture), the North Pennines AONB (@NorthPennAONB)], as well as partners such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, Ribble Rivers Trust, and others such as some of the moorland contractors, various funders and the IUCN. It is suggested, therefore, that it would be a worthwhile time investment for the LPP to become active on Twitter, in order to continue to engage with others through this medium.
- Funding Update – it is likely that the next development within the Partnership will be the funding decision in relation to the LIFE+ bid. It will be very important to ensure that communication about the outcome of the bid is swift, accurate and that any national coverage is relevant to Lancashire.
- Further funding opportunities – these will be communicated as News items as and when they arise, as they are often time limited in nature. The objective in the PO circulating these opportunities to the Partnership is to ensure full use is made of any opportunities which may arise, in the light of the information available through the Priority Peat reports.

Evaluation:

It is proposed that this plan will be evaluated at the meetings of the Partnership. Statistics in relation to the number of times the web page is visited and the number of report downloads take place will be available, together with the number and type of requests for information and Twitter feed activity (tweets, retweets, followers etc).

S Robinson, March 2015

LPP funded by:

