

Strategic Plan 2021 - 2030

2. To preserve wild land or restore land to a wilder state with thriving natural habitats and abundant wildlife – by carrying out habitat restoration and introducing native species that are locally absent, within existing constraints, whether environmental, economic or social.

2.1. Habitats will be restored in the Cambrian Wildwood area from ecologically degraded pasture and conifer plantation to native woodland, heather moorland, blanket bog and other habitats. Other sites will be preserved or restored as appropriate. Landscape considerations are paramount to provide a feeling of wildness: artefacts such as fencing will be removed where feasible.

Current status:

Habitat restoration at Blwch Corog:

Native woodland – preserving existing ancient woodland; expansion of tree cover through natural regeneration and tree planting; restoring conifer plantation to native species.

Blanket bog – 11km of drainage ditches blocked.

Upland heathland – horses and cattle introduced.

Most internal fencing removed on volunteer work days.

Plans:

Continue grazing by large herbivores and continue no fence tree planting a few hundred trees each winter.

Continue restoring larch plantation to native species by thinning, ring-barking and high pruning.

Complete removal of internal fencing when planted trees established.

Acquisition of conifer plantation – restore to native woodland, bog and heathland as commercial trees are harvested, using natural regeneration.

2.2. Species will colonise the Cambrian Wildwood area due to habitat improvements or be reintroduced following IUCN guidelines. Wild large herbivores, or domestic breeds close to their wild ancestors, will graze the project area. Horse, cattle, bison, roe deer, red deer, moose will be considered at appropriate stages. Other mammals will be introduced when feasible, with initial focus on water vole, and pine marten in conjunction with a programme for restoring red squirrel. In the longer term, we will look at the feasibility of wild cat. Wild boar is likely to migrate to the area in the long term. Large carnivore species are beyond the scope of our projects. Bird species are expected to recolonise naturally, and some species may be considered for reintroduction.

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Current status:

Large herbivores:

Breeding herd of Konik horses introduced and present year round.

Additional summer grazing with Highland cattle to reduce molinia.

Baseline mammal survey completed, recording following mammals:

Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)

European badger (*Meles meles*)

European otter (*Lutra lutra*)

Hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*)

Wood mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*)

Bank vole (*Myodes glareolus*)

Short-tailed field vole (*Microtus agrestis*)

Mole (*Talpa europaea*)

Grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)

Bat species Microchiroptera group, probable pipistrelle species *Pipistrellus sp*

Additional mammal observations:

Pine marten introduced to locality by VWT and observed at Bwlch Corog: impact on grey squirrel is variable and not currently reliable.

Roe deer.

Brown hare.

Birds: from an initial list of 1 species in 2017, now have records of 23 species.

Highlights include red grouse, snipe, curlew, hen harrier, grasshopper warbler, short-eared owl.

Baseline invertebrate survey completed, with some nationally and locally rare species present.

Pollen analysis of soil cores to show presence of plant species over time going back 7,000 years has been completed. One out of the two reports has been received.

Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) and Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) reintroduced to site, about 200 trees.

Plans:

Large herbivores: continue with current strategy of year round herd of horses and summer presence of cattle and review in the light of experience and developments. Monitor impact of numbers and species of herbivores on vegetation.



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Plans:

Water Vole: research feasibility for water vole; if necessary establish working group to address presence of American mink in Dyfi catchment.

Red squirrel: establish working group with members of Mid Wales Red Squirrel Partnership, Wildwood Trust, Wales Squirrel Forum, with goal of restoring red squirrel to locality.

Beaver: continue communication with Welsh Beaver Project.

Birds: Black grouse reintroduction to neighbouring property currently being coordinated by Mick Green. We are partners supporting the proposals.

Continue to improve habitats for moorland birds through current management.

Welsh black bee: two naturalistic hives donated by Cornelia Horl. Possibility of sourcing colonies from Steve Watson or Paul Cross at Bangor University.

A few hundred trees of various species to be planted annually using 'no fence planting' techniques. To continue indefinitely until no longer required.