



Blacka Moor – Who decides?

The lost opportunities – A4I 27 June 2013

Dr Mark Fisher m.n.fisher@leeds.ac.uk

The lost opportunities

- Natural Areas Programme of English Nature in the mid 90s
- National Parks Review Panel proposal from 1991, and Wild by Design in the National Parks of England and Wales, 1997
- Vital uplands, a 2060 vision for England's upland environment

Publicly owned land in National Parks **could have played a significant role through the public's will and ability to forgo commercial exploitation, in realising these opportunities**

Natural Areas Programme

Biodiversity and Conservation 4, 929–937 (1995)

Conflicting priorities in site management in England

E.T. IDLE

*English Nature**, Northminster House, Peterborough PE1 1UA, UK

Received 19 September 1994; revised and accepted 22 March 1995

The Natural Areas programme being developed by English Nature provides a mechanism whereby people may be involved in characterising the wildlife of 'their' area and in identifying targets for its maintenance and enhancement.

“...a mechanism whereby people may be involved

The second question is, Who decides what the objectives for natural areas should be and the contribution nature reserves and special sites make to them? As was expressed several times at the Ecologists and Ethical Judgements Symposium at INTECOL 1994 people must be involved, and not just in legitimising objectives which ecologists and conservationists have decided.

...not just in legitimising objectives which ecologists and conservationists have decided”

Natural Areas Programme

The Dark Peak Natural Area Profile

Peak District and Derbyshire Team

1997

4.4 Semi-natural woodland

Objectives

- Reverse the decline and fragmentation of native woodland cover allowing woodland strongholds in cloughs and steeper valley sides to extend and link, and to form mosaics breaking up the moorland edges at the expense of species-poor acid grassland, bracken and degraded heath.
- Restore natural woodland sequences from valley floor to the limit of tree cover in some locations.
- Reinststate natural ecological processes in all semi-natural woodland types to increase stand diversity, age structure, species composition and populations of key species, aided in the short-term by appropriate conservation management.
- Encourage the development of appropriate scrub transitions on woodland edges to provide habitat for key bird and invertebrate species.

“Restore natural woodland sequences from valley floor to the limit of tree cover in some locations”

Has it happened?

The Edwards Report and Wild by Design

FIT FOR THE FUTURE

A statement by the Government on
policies for the National Parks

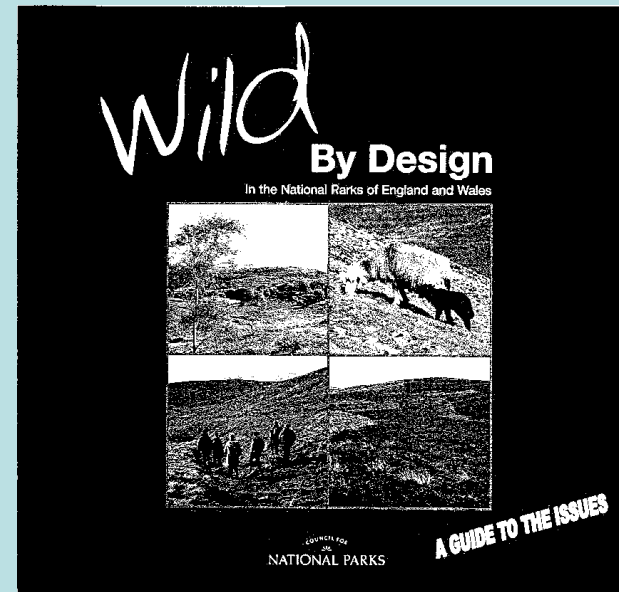
Department of the Environment
Welsh Office

January 1992

A number of experimental schemes on a limited scale should be set up in the National Parks, where farming is withdrawn entirely and the natural succession of vegetation is allowed to take its course.

5.6 Whilst the Government believes the future of the National Parks is closely tied to the future of farming, some of the wilder or more remote areas of the Parks may offer opportunities for experimenting with the voluntary withdrawal of farming operations and allowing the growth and development of natural vegetation. The National Park authorities are well placed to consider the scope for and location of such areas and, in conjunction with the countryside agencies, could set up some experimental schemes the results of which might be of value to a wider audience.

Government endorses Recommendation 6.3 of the Edwards Report, 1991, to set up experimental schemes in National Parks where **farming is withdrawn**



Promoting areas where ecological processes can be paramount

The real challenge is to have the courage and commitment to leave minimal intervention areas on a much larger scale (landscapes of thousands of hectares) and over much longer time periods (hundreds of years).

Council for NPs sets a challenge in Wild by Design, 1997

Government puts duty on National Parks to consult

Circular 12/96
(Department of the Environment)



Circular from the
Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 3EB

11 September 1996

Environment Act 1995, Part III National Parks

Consultation with national and local interests

25. In formulating policies for the administration and management of the Parks, the National Park Authorities must have in mind the wide range of interests which can be affected by their decisions. These interests include those of people who live and work in the Parks, those whose living is derived from the resources of the Parks, and those who visit the Parks.

29. The Government also emphasises the importance of ensuring that the views of local people are fully considered. All National Park Authorities should make formal arrangements to ensure that local people as well as local voluntary groups and recognised user interests in the Parks, have a proper and regular opportunity to make known their views. Paragraph 16 of

“...views of local people are fully considered”

PDNP responds to Edwards report and Wild by Design in 2000



Has it happened?

6.4 **ACTIONS:**

Produce and implement management action plans, recognising distinctive assets and issues, for specific areas of opportunity or concern including...

- ▼ wilder areas: to consider whether areas of the National Park should be allowed to “revert to nature”

Blacka Moor was not grazed from 1933 to 2007, except for 2 years in the early 1980s

Ditching the Vital Uplands Vision – work of 100s trashed



How might the uplands look in 2060?



The Top 10 changes for a better uplands (not in any order of priority)

Changes on the ground by 2060

4 More, and better managed, woodlands

There has been a substantial increase in woodland cover, and more existing woods have been brought into management. Trees and woodlands now cover up to 25 per cent of the uplands. This includes the full spectrum of woodland types – single trees, grazed wood pasture and parkland, high altitude scrub, native woodland and plantations. Often this is located along stream and gully sides, on former bracken-covered land and in mosaics with other habitats.

Large working mixed and conifer forests are well integrated with other land uses. The future of 2010's remnant native woods is much more certain as grazing levels allow more natural regeneration. Improved connectivity between woods is helping woodland plants and animals adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Farming given a veto over Vision

Natural England Board

Meeting: 30
Date: 30 May 2012

- The speech that Chair delivered to the NFU AGM recognised that the way in which we were perceived to have gone about developing the Uplands Vision stood in the way of our credibility with key stakeholders. Vital Uplands' will no longer be the road map for our work in the Uplands and has been removed from our website.

Blacka Moor – a chronology of local people being ignored

1933

- Blacka Moor was gifted to the City Council by the Graves Trust:

"be allowed to remain in its present natural state, with such pathways to be provided in accord with the character of the Estate as will make the moor accessible to all who desire to visit it for health-giving exercise and pleasure"

(Sheffield Daily Telegraph February 28 1933)

1996

– **Blacka Moor included in the Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) Special Protection Area**

1999

- Blacka Moor designated a Unit of the Eastern Peak District Moors SSSI in spite of local representations that it cut across the covenant for public recreation

2000

- **Countryside Stewardship Scheme agreement, 1 October**

2001

- **Sheffield Wildlife Trust given licence to manage Blacka Moor, April**

2003

- Sheffield Wildlife Trust receive Single Farm Payment for the moorland of Blacka Moor

2005

– Sheffield City Council seeks to change the Graves Trust so that Blacka Moor can be leased to Sheffield Wildlife Trust, March

- **Petition with 761 signatures against cattle grazing on Blacka Moor, 5 October**

2006

– Public consultation on Blacka Moor by Icarus starts, 15 March

– Blacka Moor leased to Sheffield Wildlife Trust for 30 years, June

- Last public consultation meeting on Blacka Moor by Icarus, 9 October

– Icarus recommendations from consultation process, 11 November

2007

–The Star, Sheffield, reports that HIGHLAND cattle will be introduced to Blacka Moor, 9 February

– **Sheffield Wildlife Trust letter to Reserve Advisory Group: recommendations agreed from the public consultation would be ignored, 12th February**

2012

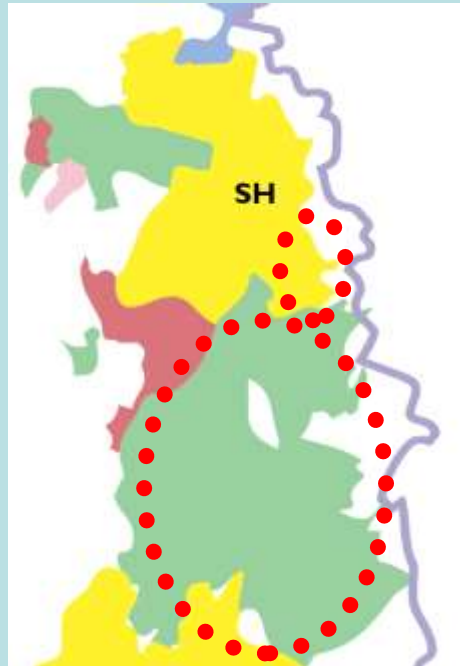
– **Blacka Moor included in the Dark Peak Nature Improvement Area from 1 April**

2013 – **Higher Level Stewardship agreement on Blacka Moor for £184,321 to Sheffield Wildlife Trust, 1 March**

The NEO-LIBERALISATION of nature conservation

Is Blacka Moor owned by Sheffield Wildlife Trust?
Are the Eastern Moors owned by RSPB/National Trust?

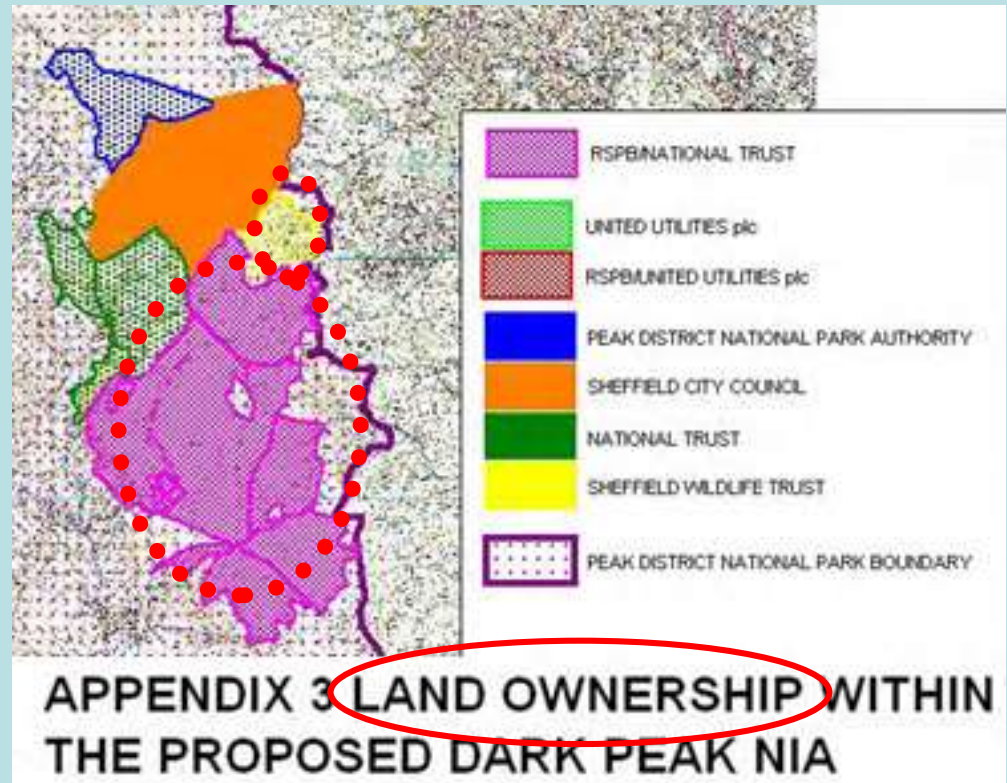
PDNP Management Plan 2006-2011



Major Landholders

- National Trust
- National Trust (Covenanted)
- Peak District National Park Authority
- Other Major Landholders

SH Sheffield City Council



Publicly-owned Sheffield Moors are next!

The lost opportunities

Who is not here?

Who owns many 1,000s of hectares of land on OUR behalf?

Who continues to shrug off responsibility for publicly owned land?