

Farming in Protected Landscapes



- Supports **NATURE** recovery
- Mitigates the impacts of **CLIMATE** change
- Opportunities for **PEOPLE** to enjoy, discover and understand the landscape and its cultural heritage
- Protects or improves the quality/character of the **PLACE**

CASE STUDIES

Five Wells Farm, Taddington

Building for nature conservation

An ambitious project requiring significant investment in infrastructure from FiPL and the farmer. FiPL is supporting habitat management directly through a grant for a new hay barn for the storage of late-cut, flower-rich hay from 100 hectares of grassland, including 11 hectares of SSSI. Long-term, hay can continue to be made from this large area of priority habitat.

A regionally rare limekiln – the best in the Peak District of the ‘pyekiln’ type – has been restored by volunteers from Derbyshire Drystone Walling Association, under the supervision of volunteer archaeologists.

A new permissive path takes people through the historic lead mining landscape, crossing a flower-rich hillside, hay meadows and rocky outcrops. It complements an existing permissive path allowing access to a scheduled cairn.

The farmer has restored two ponds and planted 200 trees to create a new wildlife corridor.

The interlinking projects were designed to conserve and enhance existing habitats and cultural heritage features on the farm, alongside making these accessible for people. Successive agri-environment schemes could expand this – the ambition is to transfer it to Countryside Stewardship.

- Biodiversity boost from 100 hectares of grasslands cut late for flower-rich hay; 97% of hay meadows have been lost since the 1950s.
- 200 trees planted as a wildlife corridor will sequester carbon in the future.
- 20 volunteers recorded and restored a regionally rare limekiln.
- New access to botanically important sites and features of cultural heritage interest.



Flower-rich hay meadow at Five Wells Farm

Grant value:
£64,473



Alsop Moor limekiln © Richard Knisely-Marpole

Signings Farm, Windmill

Rare breed grazing to restore an SSSI

This farm had dropped out of Higher Level Stewardship and with the land designated SSSI, but in unfavourable condition, FiPL was critical to bring benefits back for flower-rich grasslands and breeding sites for upland waders, such as curlew.

The FiPL advisor worked with the farmer to sort out how the SSSI is managed (with Natural England) and organise revenue payments to see the farm through to returning to Countryside Stewardship.

Now, the farmer has mobile cattle handling facilities to control how the SSSI is grazed by rare breed cattle to help restore vegetation and soil condition. The regime uses no fertiliser and adds no muck to the fields.

Two dewponds have been de-silted and restored and are now habitat for great crested newts – a protected species that prefer clean ponds for breeding.

- There are 54 SSSIs in the National Park, designated to protect important wildlife sites, so it's vital these are restored.
- Healthy hay meadow plants are good for biodiversity and their roots hold carbon in the soil.
- Dewponds are a traditional feature of the White Peak landscape where surface water is scarce due to the limestone geology.



John Elliott's rare breed Dexter cattle at Signings Farm are helping to restore an SSSI

Grant value:
£25,494



De-silting the dewpond at Signings Farm

Grant value:
£17,205



Upper White Farm, Sheen

Supporting wildlife in the landscape

FiPL's support on this smallholding has created a 200 metres long woody corridor, 10 to 15 metres wide, to establish thick hedgerows with native species that provide habitat connectivity in the wider landscape. Restoring hedgerows gives nesting and foraging opportunities for birds and mammals.

Improved livestock drinking areas are facilitating a regenerative grazing system. Hedgerows and boundaries have been restored/created along with providing water troughs and hardstanding to prevent poaching and reduce sediments running into the River Dove. This allows rotational grazing with a five-week rest period for each land parcel. It gives herbs chance to flower and seed during the summer and has benefits for livestock, such as reduced parasite burdens.

The project ties in with the Dove Catchment Partnership Vision "to make the Dove catchment a great place for people and wildlife." It adjoins holdings with active FiPL agreements, bolstering a landscape-scale approach to nature recovery, and contributes at catchment scale to those immediately downstream.

- Increased habitat diversity and new woody corridors support more wildlife.
- Trees, hedgerows and low input, regenerative grasslands increase carbon capture.
- The woodland corridor and hedgerows improves the landscape tapestry.

Hope Valley Climate Action & Hope Valley Farmers

Collaborating to plant hedges

This collaboration has brought together environmental activists, farmers, a national woodland charity and an industrial cement producer to plant hedges at eight farms in the Hope Valley.

The FiPL money has attracted match funding from the Woodland Trust, Lloyds Bank and Breedon Cement. Local voluntary environmental group – Hope Valley Climate Action – is leading the project which is co-ordinated and delivered through the local Defra-funded farmer cluster.

The project is growing with a second agreement looking to map potential for hedge enhancement and creation in the Hope Valley, develop a targeted and prioritised plan for delivery, and assess the contribution this will make to carbon sequestration and storage.

They want more farmers and landowners to see the benefits of planting more hedges and trees throughout the Peak District.

- Hedgerows of diverse plant species are great habitat and act as corridors for wildlife. More than half of hedgerows have been lost since the 1950s.
- Replacing fences with hedges locally contributes to national efforts towards Net Zero in 2050.
- Environmental volunteers are working with eight farming families to plant hedges.
- Hedges help define field boundaries and add character and biodiversity to the landscape.



A new hedge being planted by volunteers in the Hope Valley

Grant value:
£54,155



NEW TECHNOLOGY IN USE



Eye in the sky

The Eastern Moors Partnership – National Trust and RSPB – are using a thermal drone, paid for by FiPL, to map vegetation and track deer on the Eastern Moors. It is improving how they monitor and look after the mosaic of moorland habitats. The area is managed for nature and cultural heritage conservation, as well as recreation. The drone was used during a recent wildfire to capture footage of fire behaviour to better understand how cutting and rewetting performs as part of the nature recovery role in fire mitigation.

Collaring cattle control

In a first for the Peak District, digital collars on cattle are in use at RSPB Coombes Valley controlling where cattle wander and graze, to create a transition between woodland and grassland. Warning sounds and electrical pulses emitted by the collars tell the animals where they can and can't go, preventing local overgrazing and keeping cattle off areas that need protecting.



Making light work of pumping water

Solar powered water pumps at Under Whittle Farm, Sheen, deliver benefits to water quality, to wetland habitats, and to livestock care by enabling water to be pumped to troughs for drinking from instead of streams.



SUPPORTING FARM DIVERSIFICATION

Sales at the farm gate

At Home Farm, Hassop, a milk vending machine supports direct sales of organic milk from the holding, which is in Countryside Stewardship.



Overnight stays and crafts

At Barkerfields Farm, Bakewell, support for a pop-up campsite and shepherd's hut, plus a pottery kiln, enables the business to interpret the Peak District landscape through clay modelling for schoolchildren and interest groups.



Barn repairs open up opportunities for farm visits

At Higher Plainsteads Farm, Charlesworth, a grant for repairs to a barn means it can host more and better educational visits and craft courses, including visits from community and special needs groups.

WHAT WE'VE ACHIEVED SINCE JULY 2021

£1.65 million already spent

supporting farming and the landscape in the Peak District National Park

517 enquiries

from farmers and land managers

242 projects approved

simultaneously supporting FiPL and National Park Management Plan priorities

362 farmers/land managers involved

in individual or collaborative agreements

WHAT ARE PEAK DISTRICT FARMERS SAYING?

John Elliott, Signings Farm, says:

“ It feels good to get the support we need to bring the land back into better condition. There's nothing finer than hearing curlew when I'm out and about dealing with the cattle.

Tom Mills, Bubnell Cliff Farm, says:

“ As a farmer and a LAP member it has been great to see so many diverse and wonderful projects supported through the FiPL grant scheme. It's a farmer-led scheme, which is really important to the farming community of the Peak District, so it has been great to see the positive feedback about how simple the process has been and how it has helped support farmers and land managers throughout the National Park to implement sustainable farming practices, increase biodiversity and support rural enterprise.

OBSERVATIONS FROM OUR FIPL TEAM

- “ It's fantastic to see farmers embracing change on their farms. One farmer told me how he is enjoying seeing runners making use of the new permissive path he installed – he's happy to be sharing the place and knowing that others are appreciating the landscape is a positive thing.
- “ Working with farmers through FIPL enables us to plug some of the gaps that exist in national schemes and so help farmers get what they need to deliver the benefits they achieve for us all – that's wins for nature, cultural heritage, climate change, people and place.