

***After Life:* How Successful Have
We Been – Observations on
Scottish Lowland Peatland
Restoration Projects**

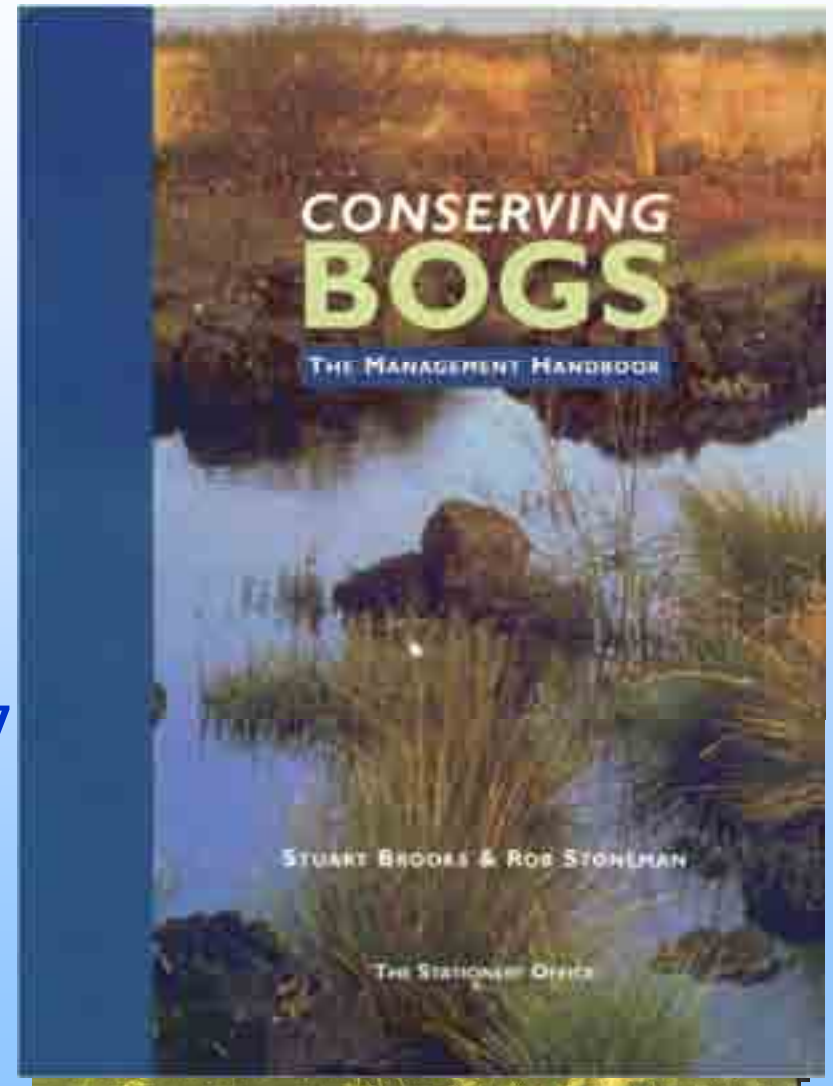
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Outline

- Significant milestones
- Success criteria
- Approaches to restoration
- Case studies
- Conclusions

Important Milestones

- The Flow Country
- UK Peatland Campaign launched 1990 - establishment of Peat Campaign Consortium
- 1st Life Project – 1995-97
 - Land cover survey
 - International conference
 - Publication of handbook



Important Milestones

- Peatland Biodiversity Programme 1999
 - 24 workshops in 15 countries
 - 758 people attended over 3 years
- 2nd Life Project – 2001-04
 - Conservation management on 11 SACs representing over 45% of the primary active resource









Approaches to Restoration

- Based on limited understanding of the key ecological and hydrological principles
- Focus on surface repair—water on and trees off
- Doing something is better than nothing
- Large scale restoration on cut-over sites
- Mid 1990s first attempts at restoration from commercial forestry

Restoration: Forestry

- Start conditions crucial to assessing restoration viability and timescale
- Harvesting method important factor
 - Balance between commercial viability & low impact intervention
 - Minimise surface disruption
 - Minimise residual brash
 - Aftercare



No Restoration Objectives

Restoration – Standard Techniques



Standard Techniques – Post Harvest



Standard Techniques – Post Harvest



Sky-lining - Restoration



Sky-lining – Post Harvest





Sky-lining – 1 Year On



Sky-lining – 3 Years On

An aerial photograph showing a large, open field of low-lying vegetation, likely heath or scrub, following a forest harvest. The vegetation is a mix of brown and green, indicating regrowth. In the background, a dense line of trees marks the edge of the harvested area. The sky is overcast with grey clouds. The image is framed by a dark blue border.

10 Years After Harvesting



Restoration: Hydrology

- Fundamental to site integrity & success
- Slow down and retain as much water as possible
- Quality of peat is crucial—cracked, oxidised = no peat
dams
- Expensive alternative is plastic – not on afforested
areas



Hydrological Management – Plastic Dams

People





Summary

- Objective for restoration should be to reverse negative trends
- Success measured over long timescales
- Aftercare is usually required – especially on forestry sites
- But we can still be optimistic....?