# Farmers at heart of groundbreaking nature recovery

A farmer and his dogs on Hill Gill Farm. Credit: Natural England

£5.7million of National Lottery funding will help reverse the decline of some of Britain’s most important natural landscapes in the north of England.

The Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected project’s collaborative approach will bring together farmers, landowners, conservation organisations, communities, volunteers and partner organisations. Its aim is to boost biodiversity, mitigate climate change and enhance people's wellbeing.

Over five years, the "ambitious and forward-thinking" Tees-Swale project will improve over 829km² of treasured upland landscapes across Upper Teesdale in the North Pennines and Upper Swaledale in the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Dr Ruth Starr-Keddle carrying out a meadow survey in Upper Swaledale, Yorkshire Dales National Park. Credit: North Pennines AONB Partnership

The landscapes include blanket bog – an important habitat and carbon store – and a large percentage of the UK's remaining uplands hay meadows, home to wading birds including lapwing, redshank, snipe and curlew.

The programme will support farming methods which value and work in harmony with nature. It will also restore threatened natural heritage, connect priority habitats and help to reverse the decline in biodiversity, through:

- restoration of hay meadows
- restoration of peatland
- looking after the rivers
- creation of wetland and woodland

## Sharing learning and ideas

Key to the Tees-Swale project will be sharing learning and ideas between farmers and conservation organisations. It aims to work with all 300 farmers in the area over the five years of the scheme.

> "Never before has the need to aid nature's recovery, particularly in the face of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, been more urgent."
>
> *René Olivieri, Chair of The National Lottery Heritage Fund*

Schools and community groups, including from nearby urban areas, will be able to explore the dales, taking part in activities to help them better understand and appreciate the wildlife, landscapes and lives of the people who live and work there – and boost their own wellbeing too.

View in Swaledale. Credit: Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

René Olivieri, Chair of The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: "Never before has the need to aid nature's recovery, particularly in the face of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, been more urgent.

"Ambitious and forward-thinking programmes like this align firmly with our key priorities in ensuring that our National Lottery funding supports bigger, better-connected and more resilient habitats for nature, as well as conservation at a landscape scale that will increase people's understanding of the cultural value of the nature around them."

## Investment in nature

The £5.7m grant is one of the largest National Lottery Heritage Fund grants awarded to a nature project in our 25-year history. It goes towards total project funding of £8.5m.

- Tees-Swale is being led by the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.

**efyd mewn ...**

**jects in Wales**

**Environmental sustainability good practice guidance**