New partnership to preserve England’s iconic



Walkers admire the view in one of England's commons Foundation for Common Land

A new partnership to support the uplands in four of England’s most iconic landscapes is on its way to unlocking a £2.3million National Lottery grant.

The Our Common Cause: Our Upland Commons project will enhance and protect upland commons in the National Parks of Dartmoor, Yorkshire Dales, Lake District and the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), where hill farming commoners have collectively grazed the land for centuries.

Commons make up just 3% of English land, and the uplands provide 70% of our water. They are brimming with wildlife and ancient monuments, and all have public access. But these benefits are under threat. Changes in farming systems, economics, climate, and reducing opportunities for people to connect with the countryside put commons at risk.

[quote=Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive of HLF]“The centuries-old heritage of commoning is little-known, but contributes to the upkeep and enjoyment of some of England’s most valued landscapes."[/quote]

The project, run by the Foundation for Common Land, brings together partners including the Wildlife Trusts, Natural England, the National Trust, RSPB, the National Farmers’ Union, Commoners Federations and Council, Open Spaces Society, Duchy of Cornwall, South West Water and our National Parks and AONBs.

All these organisations will work together to empower hill farmers and owners of commons to better manage the land for the general public. The project will build management skills, undertake conservation and train volunteers to survey the wildlife of commons.

Training and apprenticeship opportunities will be developed to enable young people to gain the skills necessary to be the next generation of commoners. In addition, young people will participate in learning and conservation through the John Muir Award.

Our Common Cause: Our Upland Commons has been granted initial funding of £409,200, allowing it to progress its plans. The full grant of £2.3m will become available pending more detailed proposals.

Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive of HLF, said: “The centuries-old heritage of commoning is little-known, but contributes to the upkeep and enjoyment of some of England’s most valued landscapes. We’re pleased to be able to support the Foundation for Common Land and its partners with this National Lottery funding and in so doing ensure this part of our heritage is maintained and cared for by generations to come.”



View of Callanders Pass in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park

Preserving the UK’s National Parks with National Lottery funding