

## G7 conference one year on: 26 ways Cornwall has been made greener

The first year of the 5-year G7 Legacy Project for Nature Recovery ends in June 2022 and funding has been secured for more exciting new projects and to progress the ambition of Natural England, Cornwall Wildlife Trust and other partners to continue transforming Cornwall.

The G7 Legacy Project is about reconnecting habitats and ecosystems throughout mid-Cornwall, conserving and even reintroducing rare species, while improving water quality and capturing carbon.

Environment Secretary, George Eustice, said:

The delivery of 26 projects to boost nature recovery across Cornwall is a fitting legacy of our G7 presidency.

We have already improved access to green spaces at Woodland Valley Farm and restored habitats for rare species at Goss Moor. In the next year, Cornwall will continue to lead the way in supporting nature with projects including the restoration of woodland and tackling invasive species.

Projects vary wildly in scope but each has the common theme of improving a location in Cornwall, ranging from a few square feet to thousands of hectares. Highlights include:

- Imerys, which extracts China clay from the ground and has 10,000 acres of land within Cornwall, has recovered acid grassland, improved and restored rare heathland areas and introduced conservation grazing. Habitat creation and nature recovery continues into year 2.
- Better access to nature for all including wheelchair users at Woodland Valley Farm where a boardwalk made of recyclables allows viewing of the Cornwall Beaver Project. Beavers were released here 5 years ago, the first in Cornwall for over 400 years.
- The Marsh Fritillary butterfly was once widespread in Britain and Ireland. Now it is threatened, not only in the UK but across Europe. Improvements have been made to Luxulyan Valley, Molinnis nature reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest that will also benefit the endangered willow tit.

Habitat creation and nature recovery will continue at land owned by Imerys, where invasive gorse has been removed and the area reseeded

Wesley Smyth, Area Manager of Natural England, said:

The G7 conference was an ambitious event so it is only right that the legacy be equally ambitious and create a lasting legacy for Cornwall.

The variety of projects means there is something for everyone, from investing in people like apprentices to advisors, investing in better access to nature through improved nature trails and car parks to investing in recovery and habitat recreation to bring vulnerable species back from the brink.

The legacy project is now entering its second year and will continue developing mid- and long-term projects as well as creating new ones like:

- Restoring 6.5 hectares as part of the Bokiddick wet woodland restoration scheme by connecting a stream to the floodplain plus repairing a 1 kilometre trail upstream of the Luxulyan Valley.
- Improving access and management of invasive species at Par Sands with Cornwall Council.
- Carrying out baseline surveys to check the status of blue carbon sources like seagrass, algae and other underwater plants.

The G7 Legacy Project is also one of Natural England's Nature Recovery Projects which deliver nature recovery at a landscape scale helping to tackle biodiversity loss, climate change and improve public health and wellbeing.

Transforming 10,000 hectares of land under the G7 Legacy Project will see 440,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide captured as well as improvements to water quality and reduced flood risk. Ultimately, the project ambition is to see more than 21,000 hectares of land regenerated for nature in mid-Cornwall.

## **Natural England**

- Natural England is a non-departmental public body, set up under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, and is the government's statutory adviser for the natural environment in England.
- Natural England plays a key role in delivering the government's environmental priorities, including the 25 Year Environment Plan. Its general purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of present and future generations.

## **Cornwall Wildlife Trust**

- Cornwall Wildlife Trust is one of 46 [Wildlife Trusts](#) working across the UK.
- With the invaluable support of our volunteers, members and corporate supporters we manage over 50 [nature reserves](#), including an island for wildlife and people in Cornwall.
- We also work with other organisations and landowners to protect and connect wildlife sites across the county and inspire local communities and young people to care for wildlife where they live.

## **The G7 Legacy Project for Nature Recovery**

The G7 Legacy Project for Nature Recovery is expected to take five years to complete depending on future funding and will contribute to the UK's target to legally protect and improve 30% of land for nature by 2030.

Natural England, Cornwall Wildlife Trust and Defra in partnership with others are aiming for the G7LPNR to deliver a lasting legacy for nature and people by:

- Restoring land through nature recovery and recreating scarce habitats through sustainable farming. Natural regeneration will be used to create scrub and woodland communities; scarce habitats such as heathland and wetland will be created, as well as the development of meadows and pasture, and the restoration of peat mires in the River Fal headwaters.
- Providing opportunities to reintroduce lost species and improving resilience for key species including dormice, Marsh Fritillary butterflies, and willow tit.
- Sequestering approx. 440,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide through forest growth and wetland restoration, including peat habitats, improved soil condition and the recovery of marine blue carbon habitats.
- Improving water quality, encouraging fish diversity and abundance, and reducing flood peaks to reduce downstream flooding.
- Improving access to green space and green social prescribing so people across the county can enjoy the wellbeing benefits of contact with nature.
- To enable transformation at this scale, the programme will employ skilled staff, develop a green jobs apprenticeship scheme and involve extensive community engagement to kickstart the development of nature's recovery in Cornwall.

For more including a summary of all the projects delivered so far see [G7 Legacy Project for Nature Recovery](#)

## **Nature Recovery Projects in England**

The other nature recovery project areas include:

- The Somerset Wetlands – the largest of the projects, which includes the new super National Nature Reserve, will enhance nature recovery across 60,000 hectares through habitat creation and investing in strategic solutions that make the wetlands more sustainable and the landscape more resilient to climate change.
- Purple Horizons, Walsall – extending across 10,000 hectares on the fringes of the West Midlands conurbation, Purple Horizons is restoring and connecting fragmented nationally and internationally important heathlands to create a mosaic of heathland-wetland-woodland-grassland, vital for the recovery and long-term resilience of the area's reptiles, birds and pollinators.
- Cambridge Nature Network, Cambridgeshire – covering 9,200 in and around the City of Cambridge, linking the inner city to rural countryside across a range of priority habitats and landscapes including chalk

grassland, fenlands and ancient woodlands.

- Wye Valley, Peak District – covering 10,000 hectares, the project is conducting pioneering investigations on how an investment model can be created to generate funding for habitat restoration and creation, providing multiple nature recovery benefits.
- Wendling Beck, Norfolk – the Wendling Partnership has come together to embark on an ambitious and inspiring nature restoration project linking initiatives around the Upper River Wensum and 10,000 hectares in the surrounding farmed countryside of mid-Norfolk.