

# Dartmoor Mires Project 2010 – 2015

Protecting and enhancing peatland habitats on Dartmoor.

## What is Dartmoor Mires Project?

Blanket mire on Dartmoor's high moorlands is globally important for its biodiversity, contains substantial carbon in associated deep peat and is the principle source for water to much of Devon. However, many high quality mires are threatened by erosion of the deep peat lying beneath them. This results in vegetation loss and lowering of the water table with associated impacts on water supplies and carbon stores. The Dartmoor Mires Project partnership has been formed to protect and enhance the remaining resource. In partnership with the commoners who graze and manage potential restoration areas, the project will pilot techniques to implement practical intervention to halt or reduce erosion, with some restoration to improve quality of habitat.

## The benefits of the Dartmoor Mires Project

- **Biodiversity:** Dartmoor's blanket mires are internationally designated, and support important plant communities, and wildlife including dunlin.
- **Water:** The health of the mire ecosystem is reflected in the supply and quality of water.
- **Carbon:** Dartmoor's deep peat is a store for 10 megatonnes of carbon – the equivalent of one year of CO<sub>2</sub> output from the industry in the UK. Mires in good condition continue to sequester more, helping to mitigate against climate change.

## How will it be delivered?

Through a public-private partnership, South West Water has secured £3.8m funding for substantial 5 year programmes of work on Exmoor and Dartmoor, under its *Mires on the Moors Project*. Approximately £1.1m has been identified, supported by contributions from other partners, for a pilot project on Dartmoor to establish suitable techniques and methods, and gather evidence of their effects to inform further work in future.

## Who are the partners?

Dartmoor National Park Authority (lead partner for delivery), South West Water, the Duchy of Cornwall (the landowner), Dartmoor Commoners Council, Natural England and the Environment Agency form the Project Board.

A wider group of partners including the MOD, Forest of Dartmoor Commoners Association RSPB, English Heritage, and the Dartmoor Access Forum also contribute advice and expertise to the project, help develop site proposals and to implement work through the Project Advisory Group. Further organisations are in regular communication.

As well as these partners both Exeter and Plymouth Universities are collaborating with the project on research to further understanding of both mires and associated restoration.