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# Wemyss & March Estates Case Study



Wemyss & March Estates' ambition is to ensure all the peatland at its Megget Estate in the Scottish Borders is in good condition. Working with Tweed Forum's Peatland ACTION team it is well on the way to achieving that, with three phases of restoration work complete and two more planned.

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Restoring  
Scotland's Peatlands  
Ath-stèidheachadh  
Talamh Mònach  
na h-Alba

Peatland ACTION is funded by the Scottish Government and delivered in partnership with NatureScot and other agencies.

## Vital statistics

**Landowner: Wemyss & March Estates**  
**Factor: Martin Andrews**

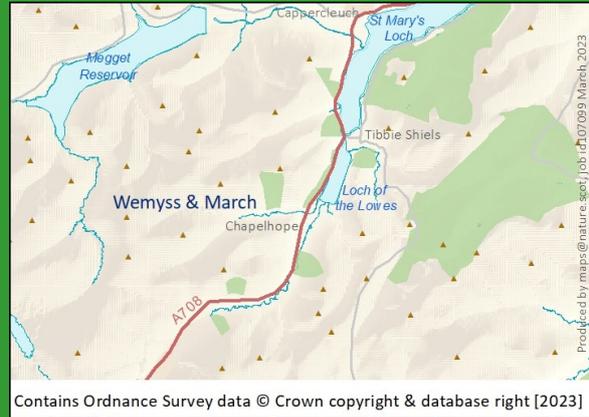
**Lead organisation: Tweed Forum**  
**Project officer Rachel Coyle**

**Location:**  
Megget Estate, Scottish Borders (Part of Wemyss & March Estates)

**Grid reference: NT230 190**

**When: 2017-ongoing**

**Area of project:**  
516ha by March 2023



### **Key restoration techniques carried out:**

Hagg reprofiling: 84,419m  
Ditch blocking and reprofiling : 8,738m  
Peat dams: 707  
Peat bunds: 1,439m

## Summary

**Megget Estate, part of Wemyss & March Estates, covers over 8,000ha of land in the Scottish Borders, managed for sheep and grouse. While a fair proportion of the 5,000ha of peatland on the Estate is still in relatively good shape, the Estate's ambition is to have it all in good condition, seeing the many benefits that are apparent from the first three phases of work.**

Restoration work has already taken place on over 500ha of peatland there, through a combination of reprofiling, revegetating, ditch blocking and bunding. The next two phases have now been planned for 2023-4, thanks to the close working relationship that has developed between the Estate and Tweed Forum's Peatland ACTION team.

## The project

Restoration work started with a trial project on just 42ha of peatland in 2017. Its success was

the trigger for more phases of work of ever increasing ambition, with a total of 516ha of restoration work completed by early 2023.

The Tweed Forum Peatland ACTION team have supported Wemyss & March Estates Factor Martin Andrew all the way, not only with the on-the-ground peat depth and hydrological surveys needed before the application goes in, but also with project design, monitoring, and crucially, with making the initial application. Martin commented:

**Tweed Forum are very experienced and extremely helpful. Not only in doing the peat surveys but also in filling in all the forms and dealing with all the administration and contract management that goes with that.'**

It can take up to 18 months from initial planning to on-the-ground delivery and it's

*The remote and exposed project site made conditions challenging.*  
©Swift Films/NatureScot



testament to the commitment of the Estate that with phases 4 and 5 now planned, they are looking further ahead to deliver still more.

Work on the ground has concentrated on reprofiling and revegetating eroded peat hags and gullies, and blocking hill drains. All the work was done using peat and peatland vegetation from the site itself, minimising the carbon footprint of the work by removing the need to move additional materials onto this remote site.

The isolated and exposed nature of the site has meant that the contractors have sometimes been working in extremely challenging conditions, but by using up to four low ground pressure excavators at a time they were able to shorten the length of time required on site to complete the project.

### Challenges and benefits

Martin Andrews highlighted that one of the challenges with large scale projects like this is

cash flow, as the work must be paid for up front and reimbursed. However he commented:

**'The grant flow from NatureScot was very quick, so cash management was not a major problem, but it is something you've got to factor in.'**

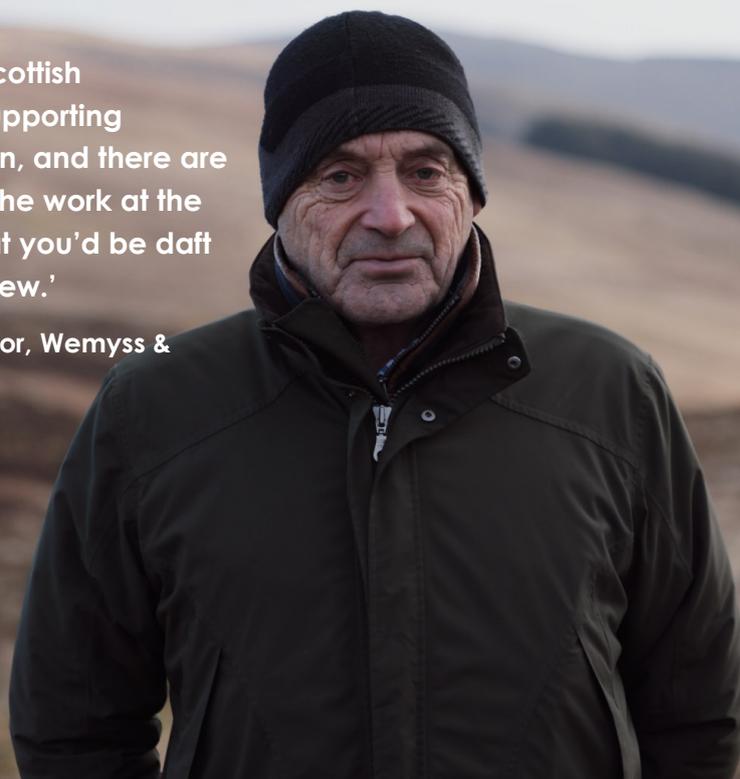
Because the work has taken place over a number of years Martin Andrews says he has already been able to see some of the benefits from the restoration done in the first phases. Biodiversity has risen, as the higher water table has improved peatland



Reprofiling a gully. ©Swift Films/NatureScot

**'The fact that the Scottish Government are supporting peatland restoration, and there are 100% grants to do the work at the moment, mean that you'd be daft not to do it in my view.'**

**Martin Andrews, Factor, Wemyss & March Estates**



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Rachel Coyle of Tweed Forum and Martin Andrews of Wemyss & March Estates. Working together has been key to success. ©Swift Films/NatureScot

vegetation which has led to an increase in invertebrates—and as a result better food sources for the local birdlife.

Water quality and water flow regulation were also high priorities for the Estate, as the peatland sits in the catchment for the Yarrow river. Over the last 20 years they have worked with Tweed Forum to look at the best ways to improve and protect the health of the river, and peatland restoration has been part of that solution. The work should help reduce incidences of flooding downstream, holding

water back and reducing the speed of run-off. This should increase the resilience of the fish populations in the Tweed catchment.

Finally the Estate is looking to gain carbon credits through the Peatland Code from the restoration scheme, which will support with longer term finance.

**'We've been really pleased with the project. We've had very good support from NatureScot and Peatland ACTION. It's been a challenging project but really worthwhile.'**

## Get in touch

We want to build on our restoration efforts to create a healthier peatland landscape for people and nature.

We offer funding for suitable restoration projects across Scotland.

We have officers who can help develop your project and complete applications.

We fund up to 100% of the capital costs for work.

We fund much of the pre-application work, for example, peat depth surveys and feasibility studies.

Please visit our web pages for more information:

[www.nature.scot/peatlandaction](http://www.nature.scot/peatlandaction)

To contact the Peatland ACTION team with details of any potential projects, please email: [peatlandaction@nature.scot](mailto:peatlandaction@nature.scot)



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