

# Duchal Moor

## Case Study

Duchal Moor is a multi-year project on a tenanted farm near Glasgow that aims to put nearly 800ha of upland blanket bog on the road to recovery. The land is owned by Inverclyde Council, and the peatland restoration work forms a key part of its plans to achieve net zero by 2045.

*Duchal Moor after restoration work on Phase One was completed.*  
©Peatland ACTION/Swift Films



## Vital statistics

**Owner:** Inverclyde Council

**Location:**

Duchal Moor, Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

**Grid ref:** NS293 674

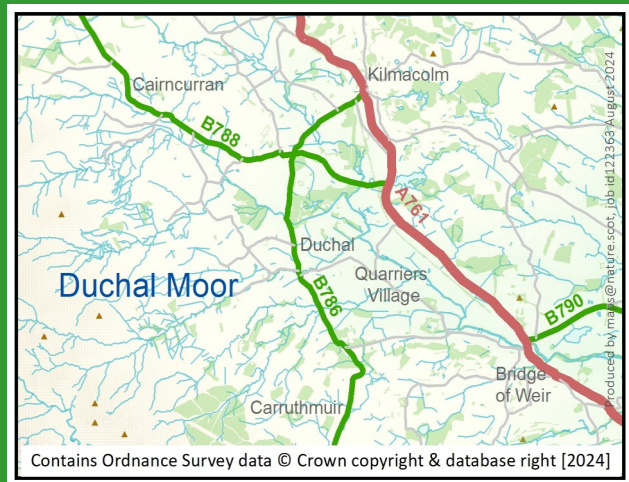
**When:** Three phases between 2024 and 2026

**Area of projects:**

788ha

**Key restoration techniques carried out:**

Drain blocking and zippering  
Peat dams  
Timber dams



Drain and gully reprofiling  
Gully bunding  
Hag reprofiling

## Summary

Inverclyde Council has completed the first phase of a three-year project to restore almost 800ha of peatland at Duchal Moor. The project is one of the largest ever undertaken by a local authority in Scotland. It forms part of the Council's strategy to reach its Net Zero target by 2045. The restoration work will also help them to mitigate flood risk in more built up areas further down the catchment.

## The project

Duchal Moor was once part of a large grouse shooting estate, but is now a tenanted farm owned by Inverclyde Council.

The local authority sees peatland restoration on its land as a key part of its strategy to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2045.

Working with Glasgow Clyde Valley Green

Network's Peatland ACTION Officer, Guilia Spilotros, the council surveyed three of its farms to decide where best to carry out peatland restoration work. Duchal Moor, by far the largest, was chosen as the best candidate, partly because of the significant levels of peat erosion there. The site was criss-crossed by a huge network of land drains that had dried out the peat, making it increasingly prone to erosion.

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**'Much of the upland countryside area of Inverclyde is peatland and restoring it can work wonders for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.'**

*Inverclyde Council Convener of Environment and Regeneration, Councillor Michael McCormick*

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The council was awarded £768,705 of funding from NatureScot Peatland ACTION to carry out the restoration work over three phases. It





supported Inverclyde Council throughout Phase One of the project, not just with funding, but with expert advice and guidance from Guilia, and will continue to do so for Phases Two and Three. While the local authority has 'in-house' technical and construction knowledge, it says Guilia's experience and understanding of the peatland restoration process has proved invaluable in delivering the project so far.

Before the project began the site was surveyed for peat depth, hydrology, and any archaeological features that would need to be taken into account. In the 1920s, when still a grouse moor, a unique, 7-mile 'railway' was built to transport shooting parties into the heart of the moor. Vestiges of the line still exist, and it was important as part of the work plan to ensure the contractors were aware of this so that it wasn't damaged by the heavy machinery.

Phase One of the actual restoration work was done at Duchal Moor from January 2024. Over seven weeks an average of five excavators



worked on the peatland, eventually blocking over 13.5km of artificial drains and 167m of gullies, and reprofiling 32m of peat hags to slow the flow of the water off the hills and prevent further erosion.

Phase Two is due to take place in 2024-25, with Phase Three scheduled for 2025-26. Once this has all been done almost 800ha of damaged peatlands will be on the road to recovery. This is one of the largest peatland restoration projects yet undertaken by a local authority in Scotland, and as a result Inverclyde Council won the COSLA Excellence Award in 2024.

### The benefits

Hardridge, the tenanted farm on the moor, covers 1608ha in all, and is mainly grazed with sheep at a stocking density of around 0.8 per ha. The tenant, Ian Duff, says he is fairly optimistic about the effect of the restoration work, which he believes will lead to fewer lambs being lost in the drains and gullies,







*Water is already begin to pool on the surface now that restoration work has been done. ©Peatland ACTION/Swift Films*

and provide easier access for quad bikes during gathering operations.

The contractors, McGowan Environmental Engineering, started working in peatland restoration a number of years ago, with just a few small-scale projects. Now they say they work in the sector for eight or nine months every year, providing jobs for 18-19 people to keep up with the ever-increasing demand. They anticipate that this project alone will take over 750 machine days to complete, for example.

## Successful outcomes

While a key reason for Inverclyde Council undertaking this work was helping it reach its climate change goals, it sees the work as bringing important additional benefits to people in the area. Healthier peatlands will increase the



*NatureScot Peatland ACTION also funded interpretation panels to help explain the reasons for the work at Duchal Moor. ©Michael Holcombe/ Inverclyde Council*

biodiversity of the site, help to slow the flow of water off the hills, reducing flooding downstream, and make the moor, part of the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park, a more attractive and vibrant place for local communities and visitors to enjoy.

## 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 capital costs for work.

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

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

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