

PROTECTED LANDSCAPES PARTNERSHIP

“ The Protected Landscapes Partnership is a collaboration in England between National Landscapes Association, National Parks England, National Trails UK and Natural England. Our aim is simple: to build on our pre-existing collective activity in order to do more for our cherished, protected landscapes together than we would be able to do apart.

The partnership was born from recommendations in the independent Landscapes Review (2019), led by Julian Glover. This recognised the dedication and effectiveness of local efforts in protected landscapes and recommended establishing a more formal forum for collaboration to amplify these efforts.

To galvanise early efforts, Defra has provided over £2.5m across the 2022-2025 financial years. This is divided between two workstreams; one focused around nature recovery and one around equity, diversity and inclusion. Partners have developed a business plan, making decisions on how this funding will be used, and on which partner will lead on which elements of the work. Some of these projects are described in this newsletter, and we'll spotlight others in future issues. There will shortly be a Protected Landscapes Partnership website too, allowing much greater transparency and awareness of the work partners are delivering.

As we mark the 75th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, the importance of our shared mission has never been greater. There's a lot to be done, from creating nature-rich habitats to combat the climate crisis and reverse wildlife decline to ensuring our landscapes are accessible to everyone. By working in partnership we can achieve better outcomes and make a bigger impact.

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Dr Tony Juniper CBE, Chair, Natural England
Julian Gray, Chair, National Trails UK
Philip Hygate, Chair, National Landscapes Association
Vanessa Rowlands, Chair, National Parks England

PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

Although partners have collaborated for years, the new resources and funding through the Protected Landscape Partnership will allow us all to work smarter and achieve more at a faster pace, addressing the pressing issues we face. The core roles, hosted by different partner organisations, are in place and are focused on advancing the shared goals of Nature Recovery & Climate Leadership, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), and Green Finance.







Thanks to PLP funding, several key initiatives are already underway. The Big Chalk programme, led by the National Landscapes Association, is making significant progress, the Coastal Wildbelt project, spearheaded by National Trails UK and National Parks England, is rapidly developing, and crucial work on the equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) workstream has begun.



CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

A programme of work, led by National Parks England and supported by the National Landscapes Association, recognises that land use is a significant component of all carbon baselines in protected landscapes and so tracking reductions through nature recovery investments is vital to meeting net zero targets and milestones. Ensuring the adoption of a consistent methodology for carbon accounting in nature recovery projects is essential. This data and methodology will place the PLP in the best possible position to leverage Green Finance funding.

The Climate Leadership Protected Landscapes Partnership delivery is well underway, delivering on the following outputs:

-  **Increased collaboration and co-ordination across organisations on climate leadership**
-  **Develop a common approach to monitoring and reporting on Net Zero targets for protected landscapes**
-  **Develop a communications and engagement plan for National Park contribution to net zero and undertake best practice sharing**
-  **Develop a National Trails pilot project to assess the carbon footprint of people using the National Trails**
-  **A synthesis report produced for carbon baseline assessment**
-  **A high-level adaptation plan / story map produced for protected landscapes**

For more information contact deborah.brookes@nationalparksengland.org.uk or chris.fairbrother@southdowns.gov.uk (Strategy Lead - Climate Change and Net Zero, South Downs National Park Authority)



COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

This first newsletter serves as an introduction to the Protected Landscape Partnership and just some of the work currently being undertaken by colleagues. You will receive monthly updates with more detailed insights into all aspects of the work being done from current workstreams to plans for the future.

We aim to share knowledge, support members and colleagues, and accelerate our collective ambitions in nature conservation, climate action, and inclusivity.

If you have any questions about the Protected Landscape Partnership's work, please reach out.

Along with regular site visits, where we can meet face-to-face, online Q&A sessions to foster open dialogue and strengthen our collaborative efforts are being planned. Look out for more information on these in August's newsletter.



June's PLP Big Chalk site visit to Pewsey Down in North Wessex Downs National Landscape

BIG CHALK

Led by Dave Hoccom, Big Chalk is an ambitious initiative that connects nature conservation efforts across 19% of England's land, including 26 Local Nature Recovery Strategy zones. This programme showcases how large-scale landscape connectivity can enhance ecological resilience and enable wildlife to adapt to climate change. By identifying strategic habitat linkages between protected landscapes, Big Chalk brings the principles of the Making Space for Nature report to life, creating bigger, better, and more connected spaces for nature.

The chalk and limestone landscapes of southern England, with their grasslands, woodlands, mosaic habitats, chalk streams, and aquifer-fed wetlands, are not only culturally important but also globally significant for wildlife. These landscapes are key to protecting 30% of land for biodiversity and halting species decline by 2030. Thriving chalk and limestone areas also protect historic heritage, ensure water supplies, store carbon, conserve natural beauty, and enhance people's health and wellbeing.

Using the adjacent National Landscapes of the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs as case studies, Dave and colleagues working across partner organisations modelled how protected landscapes contribute to the UK's 30 by 30 biodiversity goal. The analysis highlighted the opportunities and potential trade-offs in protecting nature and delivering ecosystem services, including sustainable food production. We demonstrated how strategic conservation initiatives can align with grassroots, participatory approaches, connecting landscapes at a scale beyond traditional land-use planning frameworks and contributing to a Nature Recovery Network for England. The importance of scale in monitoring nature's recovery was also explored.

For more information on Big Chalk, contact david.hoccom@national-landscapes.org.uk



COASTAL WILDBELT

Through funding from the Protected Landscape Partnership, this once in a generation opportunity to develop a new national initiative for people and nature along our dynamic coastline has begun. Currently in its scoping year, the Coastal Wildbelt project identifies the opportunities and challenges that come with our new Coastal Margin designation, which is part of the King Charles III England Coast Path.

This year, work is being developed on proof of concept through in-depth case studies in the South West and North Yorkshire, building the evidence for the value added through a national initiative, identifying long-term funding and advocacy strategies, determining what 'good' governance looks like and bringing internal and external stakeholders along on this exciting journey.

So far, Coastal Wildbelt project officer, Kate Jury, has been up and down the country visiting stretches of England's incredible coastline, discussing what is happening and where, and is working hard to bring this initiative to life. The current vision focuses on 'better access and nature, for people along our dynamic coast', which will be tested and challenged through the scoping year.

If you're working on a project near the coast and want to reach out, or find out more about Coastal Wildbelt, contact kate@nationaltrails.uk



Illustration of the Coastal Wildbelt project, created at April's workshop held at Camley Street Nature Reserve in London. Design by Katie Chappell

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Saskia Luqmani, the Protected Landscape Partnership's EDI Lead, is spearheading an inspiring initiative to make our protected landscapes more inclusive for everyone—staff, visitors, and volunteers. Collaborating with all four partners and industry experts in equity, diversity, and inclusion, Saskia aims to transform the approach to inclusivity.

Through a partnership with Dhalech Associates, the Protected Landscapes Partnership has rolled out a series of engaging online and in-person workshops titled "Inclusive Landscapes: Making Space for Everyone?" and the Language of Access programme both led by National Trails UK. These workshops have created vibrant networking opportunities across the protected landscapes community.

By working with both internal and external partners, the Protected Landscapes Partnership is also striving for greater consistency in how protected landscapes communicate the "Language of Access." This effort has unveiled some of the remarkable work already happening in our landscapes. However, a recurring challenge has been the need for stronger networks, enhanced collaboration, and more opportunities for shared learning.

The Protected Landscapes Partnership is uniquely positioned to tackle this challenge. By fostering better partnerships and collaboration, it is helping partners avoid working in isolation or reinventing the wheel. This initiative is all about building a more connected, inclusive, and effective community dedicated to our protected landscapes.

If you have been working on a project about people that you would like to share or discuss, and would like to be connected with others in the protected landscapes family, please contact Saskia Luqmani, EDI Lead, saskia.luqmani@naturalengland.org.uk

EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH

Our evidence and research colleagues have been hard at work, collaborating with colleagues across our protected landscapes to understand their data and evidence needs better. Some of you will have received an evidence questionnaire and the E&R team received insightful 70 insightful responses that will help them structure future work. The responses highlighted the current challenges and needs related to data and evidence.

"The feedback has been invaluable and will guide our work for the coming year. Two significant barriers emerged: limited access to relevant data, especially when tailored to protected landscape boundaries, and a lack of capacity for data and evidence-related tasks.

"To address these challenges, we are launching several initiatives. One key initiative is our new evidence request tool, designed to provide immediate analyst support. This tool allows anyone working in a protected landscape to request assistance with tasks such as cutting datasets to specific boundaries, signposting to relevant data, conducting spatial analyses, or reviewing evidence.

"We are excited to trial this tool and encourage feedback to help us improve. While our resources are limited, we have outlined criteria on the request tool to help prioritise requests. The insights gained from these requests will help us better understand common needs and develop solutions to recurring issues.

"The full report on the questionnaire results, which will be available on the PLP website this summer. We look forward to supporting your evidence needs and enhancing our collective work across protected landscapes." **Harriet & Leo.**

If you have any evidence and research requests contact harriet.knafler@naturalengland.org.uk or leonora.fisher@naturalengland.org.uk

A SPOTLIGHT ON...

Nature recovery and evidence work across the partners is being delivered by three Nature Recovery Coordinators that sit within National Landscapes Association (Bruce Winney), National Parks England (Kate Lacey) and National Trails UK (Hannah Brightley), the Nature Recovery Lead (Tom Johnstone) and the Evidence Coordinators (Harriet Knafler & Leo Fisher).

The group meets up fortnightly to share learnings around 30x30, Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSS) and the Targets and Outcomes Framework, and to identify opportunities for all four PLP member organisations to collaborate further.

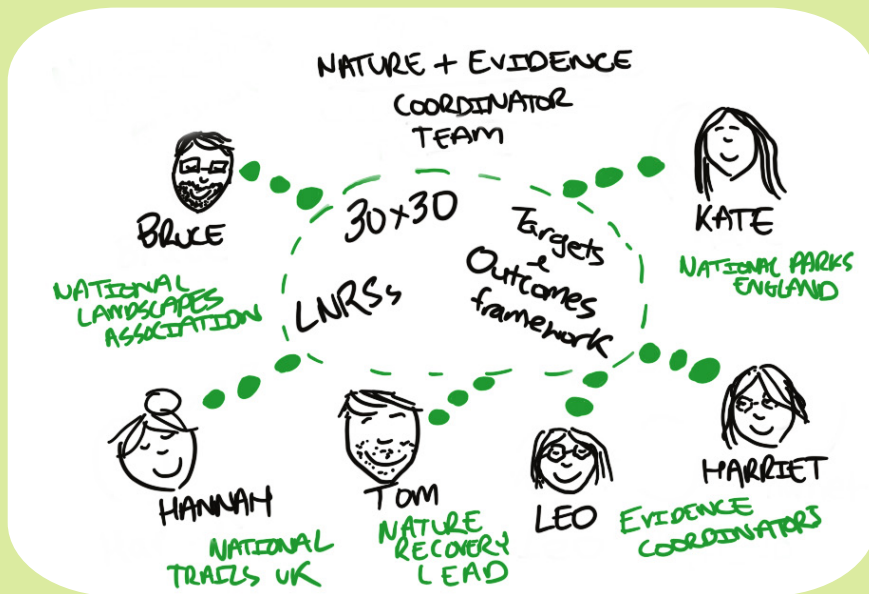


Illustration by Hannah Brightley

SEEDS BEING SOWN

Throughout 2024, some colleagues have had the chance to get together on induction days at the South West Coast Path, Arnside and Silverdale National Landscape, South Downs National Park and Natural England’s offices in Nottingham. There have also been opportunities to meet up at EDI sessions held throughout the country and at various other site visits, workshops and conferences. These have been integral to us all understanding how the Protected Landscape Partnership functions and how colleagues across all member organisations can all work together better to achieve our shared objectives. As collaboration is at the heart of this work, it has been invaluable to meet one another - in person and online - to discuss potential projects and find out more about each individual partner’s work.

Following on from the induction days, more dates will be going in the diary for us to meet and work together. Protected Landscape Partnership core staff will be attending the National Landscape Association conference in July and the National Parks England conference in November, and in December there are plans to stage a Protected Landscape Partnership event to coincide with the 75th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

We want to take this opportunity to thank everyone throughout the individual landscapes who have given up their time to welcome colleagues onto their patch and also to everyone who has taken part in Teams meetings, attended workshops, joined steering groups and shared knowledge. The challenge ahead for us all is huge. Nature is in dire crisis and people need connection to green and blue spaces now more than ever. Individually, everyone is doing so much to preserve and enhance our protected spaces, but we all know there’s always more that can be done. By facilitating closer working relationships and opportunities, the PLP aims to be able to amplify, elevate and assist current projects, while also creating ways for us to work together to help both nature and people.



KEY CONTACTS

MADELEINE LUNDHOLM - PLP PARTNERSHIP MANAGER (Hosted by Natural England)

Madeleine, originally from Sweden, moved to the UK in 2016 after spending her early career in Western Australia working across a range of sectors; in academia researching and tutoring, with eNGOs in engagement and campaigning, and in the private sector at a tree nursery working with the owners to explore sustainability measures on their two farms.

Madeleine spent five years with a prominent London-based social housing architect leading their community engagement and social value workstreams. She helped build the studio's reputation for sensitive and innovative co-design engagement methods and started a range of delivery partnerships with organisations such as Make Space for Girls and London Wildlife Trust, alongside research partnerships across the industry and academia.

In early 2022, Madeleine joined Natural England as Senior Advisor for Partnership and Strategic Plans for Places, before moving into her current role with the Working for England's protected landscapes blends the two purposes that drive her; nature restoration and access to nature – it's a dream role.

Madeleine is now based on Portland, Dorset, where she spends most of her time outdoors walking with her trusted, four-legged companion, or can be found climbing, swimming, or running. She never goes anywhere without a book and cannot function without coffee.

madeleine.lundholm@naturalengland.org.uk



SASKIA LUQMANI - PLP EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION LEAD (Hosted by Natural England)

With a rich background in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and over a decade of experience volunteering for local conservation groups, Saskia combines her passion for the outdoors with her expertise in fostering inclusive cultures.

In her current role, Saskia collaborates with colleagues across National Landscapes, National Parks, National Trails and Natural England. She leads and supports shared projects focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion within our protected landscapes.

Saskia's dedication to making the outdoors more inclusive and welcoming, stems from her own experiences as an 'outsider' in natural spaces. Beyond her professional role, she volunteers for The Conservation Volunteers and leads countryside walks for diverse groups of Londoners, ensuring everyone can enjoy the beauty of our landscapes.

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KAYE JEMMESON - PLP COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER (Hosted by National Trails UK)

Over the past decade, Kaye has blended her passion for nature and the outdoors with 25 years of experience in the communications sector, elevating the profile of protected landscapes. From her role as Communications Lead at the North Pennines National Landscape to creating the award-winning Lake District Kind campaign for the Lake District National Park, her work has made a significant impact.

Kaye's first real taste of the outdoors only came in her 20s when she was introduced to the wonder of the Lakes. Her own experience and background fires a fierce belief that everyone should have the chance to explore and enjoy our incredible landscapes.

A communications all-rounder with skills in feature writing, digital content creation, event management, media liaison and campaign planning, the former journalist considers herself a storyteller above all else. Outside of work, County Durham-born Kaye currently lives in Devon and can often be found exploring her current patch in the South West with her beloved rescue terrier, Jacques.

kaye@nationaltrails.uk



DAVE HOCOM - BIG CHALK LEAD (National Landscapes Association)

Before taking on this role, Dave worked for the RSPB in strategic, policy and operational roles for over twenty years, having started his career at BirdLife International. Living where Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire meet, he's recently come to know the Chilterns National Landscape. A keen walker, he has explored this wonderful chalk landscape on foot and has enjoyed visiting England's National Landscapes and National Parks with family and friends over many years.

He loves big ideas which can help tackle the nature and climate crises, of which Big Chalk is a brilliant example. The ambition to amplify existing chalk and limestone conservation and access initiatives to create a super network for nature's recovery is much-needed. It echoes Dave's time in the Cambridgeshire, Norfolk & Suffolk Fens, where he worked collaboratively with a diverse range of partners to energise and facilitate landscape-scale restoration.

david.hoccom@national-landscapes.org.uk

KATE JURY - COASTAL WILDBELT PROJECT OFFICER (National Trails UK)

Enthusiastic, inspiring, and a passionate project manager and communicator, Kate joins the Protected Landscapes Partnership with extensive experience of strategic project development, behaviour change delivery and community engagement. With her adaptable communication style and dynamic, flexible approach to work, Kate has shaped successful environmental projects across the globe; dipping her toes into the fields of climate smart agriculture, water sanitation, active travel, youth voice and engagement, participatory design and most recently heading up the new strategy for footpaths and open access land at the Ramblers.

Passionate about the benefits of nature-based activities, she's usually found outside of work foraging, getting lost whilst cycling, rambling in the hills, or jumping in (often very cold) bodies of water.

kate@nationaltrails.uk



KEY CONTACTS

TOM JOHNSTONE - NATURE RECOVERY LEAD (Hosted by Natural England)

Tom has spent his personal and professional life in the outdoors; biking, swimming, camping, and exploring building a deep connection with wildlife and the natural environment.

After 15 years facilitating experiences for others, he moved sideways to refocus on developing policy and practices that shifts the dial on nature recovery, nature connection, nature-based solutions, and nature rights in protected landscapes. Tom's practice sees humans as part of nature and believes the current crises gives everyone an opportunity to leverage change at a scale accessible to them, meaning the challenges faced are within people's ability to address if everyone works together.

In his new role he hopes to bring experience from his time in the Welsh Designated (Protected) Landscapes Partnership and listen to the needs of the National Parks, National Landscapes and National Trails to add value, build networks, and help everyone do more, better with greater impact.

tom.johnstone@naturalengland.org.uk



HANNAH BRIGHTLEY - NATURE RECOVERY COORDINATOR (National Trails UK)

After spending most of her life in New Zealand, Hannah is excited to take on this new role and is looking for opportunities to deliver more for nature along the National Trail corridors. This currently involves launching the National Trails' Nature Corridors map to showcase projects that are happening across the network, developing a Nature Recovery Toolkit and advocating through the Local Nature Recovery Strategies and working towards that all-important 30 by 30 target.

After spending time living in Spain, Hannah is now making her home in Stirling and counts herself extremely fortunate to have Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park and the West Highland Way on her doorstep.

hannah@nationaltrails.uk



BRUCE WINNEY - NATURE RECOVERY COORDINATOR (National Landscapes Association)

Bruce's work, amongst other things, includes supporting individual National Landscape teams, with their Nature Recovery Plans and Targets & Outcomes Framework offers. Amplifying their voices when working with Defra and Natural England, currently focusing on Local Nature Recovery Strategies and 30 by 30.

Many of you may know Bruce through his work with the National Landscapes Association and he is looking forward to developing this role within the Protected Landscapes Partnership.

bruce.winney@national-landscapes.org.uk



KATE LACEY - NATURE RECOVERY COORDINATOR (National Parks England)

Kate's role includes documenting nature recovery work in National Parks and supporting the individual National Parks through the Directors of Conservation and Ecologists' group.

Currently, she is working on building case studies to showcase the suite of nature recovery achievements within the National Parks and highlighting the valuable role that they have when it comes to national nature recovery targets. She also aims to exhibit the potential for nature recovery within the National Parks through updating NPE's Delivery Plan for Nature Recovery.

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HARRIET KNAFLER - EVIDENCE COORDINATOR (Hosted by Natural England)

Alongside her colleague, Leo, Harriet, is one of the Protected Landscape Partnership's Evidence Coordinators. Her role is supporting the team and each individual protected landscape to access and use the best evidence possible. Harriet will be looking at local data consistency, cataloguing useful evidence, and supporting interpretation of the data provided via the Targets and Outcomes Framework. Harriet lives in Sheffield and loves being able to pop out to the glorious Peak District for a walk, cycle, picnic or swim. When not exploring the Peaks, Harriet can also be found growing veg at the city farm or singing with her choir.

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LEONORA FISHER - EVIDENCE COORDINATOR (Hosted by Natural England)

Leonora - also known as Leo - works alongside Harriet as an Evidence Coordinator. Her role, among others, is to support colleagues throughout all the individual protected landscapes with immediate evidence needs by conducting in-depth, data analysis. She will also be looking at improving access to data by cataloguing useful national datasets. Based in beautiful Bristol, Leo enjoys being outside and making the most of the many protected landscapes near to her vibrant home city. When not walking, Leo loves embracing the elements and regularly goes wild swimming. And like her fellow data colleague, she also enjoys growing veg in her local community garden plot.

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KEY CONTACTS

KERENZA MCCLARNAN - ARTS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER (National Landscapes Association)

Kerenza took on the role with the National Landscapes Association earlier this year to oversee and deliver the ambitious national programme of new commissions called Nature Calling, which will take place in National Landscapes from May to October, 2025.

Kerenza has an extensive background in delivering large scale, art public art projects with partners such as Liverpool Capital of Culture, Channel 4 and more recently with Manchester International Festival. Kerenza has spent much of her career working within what is often referred to as socially engaged practice, developing projects in collaboration with artists and communities often in outdoor or site-specific locations. Kerenza has a background in permaculture and organic growing and has an interest in medicinal herbs and plants for everyday health and skincare. She currently lives in Manchester.

kerenza.mcclarnan@national-landscapes.org.uk



MELANIE PEDDLE - COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER (National Landscapes Association)

Prior to joining The National Landscapes Association, Melanie spent much of her working life with The National Lottery Good Causes, in a variety of roles spanning governance, stakeholder management, policy and public affairs. She had an early career in traffic and transport and holds a master's degree in transport planning.

Melanie lives on the edge of Epping Forest. She is passionate about walking and active travel, and the benefits of getting out in the great outdoors.

melanie.peddle@national-landscapes.org.uk

DEB BROOKES - PROGRAMMES AND PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER (National Parks England)

Deb is delighted to be supporting the Protected Landscapes Partnership work at a national and strategic level for National Parks and working closely with partners to drive even more collaboration and support additional delivery for people and for nature. She has been working with National Parks England for 18-months and when not working, she is an avid road and gravel cyclist and hiker.

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POLLY MARTIN - CEO, NATIONAL TRAILS UK

Polly brings a wealth of experience from politics and heritage to her debut CEO role. An Art Historian by training, Polly took a sideways step into politics in 2013.

She has since combined her love of politics and passion for natural and built heritage into a successful career in advocacy. She is especially passionate about people's access to our shared natural and built heritage, and is often to be found running or walking the National Trails in her spare time

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HAZEL MCDOWALL - PRINCIPLE LANDSCAPE OFFICER NATURAL ENGLAND

Hazel has worked in a variety of roles with Countryside Commission, Countryside Agency and Natural England. The golden thread linking her work together is leading projects and policy development for Protected Landscapes in England. She has also been involved in delivering nature recovery in landscape scale projects, writing National Character Area Profiles, strategic planning, developing the targeting of agri-environment schemes and setting up facilitators to work with farmer groups.

Her recent work includes developing Management Plan Guidance for Protected Landscapes in England, providing the Secretariat for the Natural England Landscape Advisory Panel and working together with National Parks England, National Trails UK and the National Association for AONBs to establish the Protected Landscapes Partnership. Outside of work, she can often be spotted walking her two springer spaniels, Woody and Buzz, in her local woodland nature reserve.

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