

Bring back bogs

Wetlands and Peatland at the heart of the EU Nature Restoration Plan



Scohaboy Bog, Co. Tipperary. Photo: Gearoid O'Foighill

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Irish Rural Link
Nasc Tuaithe na hÉireann



Community
Wetlands Forum






UNITED NATIONS DECADE ON
**ECOSYSTEM
RESTORATION**
2021-2030

Ireland's Environment – An Integrated Assessment 2020, EPA

“The outlook is not optimistic unless we accelerate the implementation of solutions across all sectors and society”

"Our planet is broken," the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, has warned.

| POLICY AREA | CURRENT ASSESSMENT | OUTLOOK |
|--|---|--|
| Nature  |  Overall, current assessment is very poor. Deteriorating trends dominate, especially for protected habitats, with 85% of EU protected habitats having an unfavourable status. The picture for EU protected species is mixed, but 15% are in decline, with freshwater species most at risk. Agricultural practices are a key pressure. Habitat changes point towards a deteriorating trend in overall biodiversity. Some species, such as the curlew and some freshwater species, are under threat; measures are needed to halt their decline. |  Largely not on track to meet policy objectives. The outlook for biodiversity is challenging unless there are fundamental changes. Climate change adds to the challenge. Transformative change is needed to achieve the vision in the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021. |

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Science

Humans waging 'suicidal war' on nature - UN chief Antonio Guterres

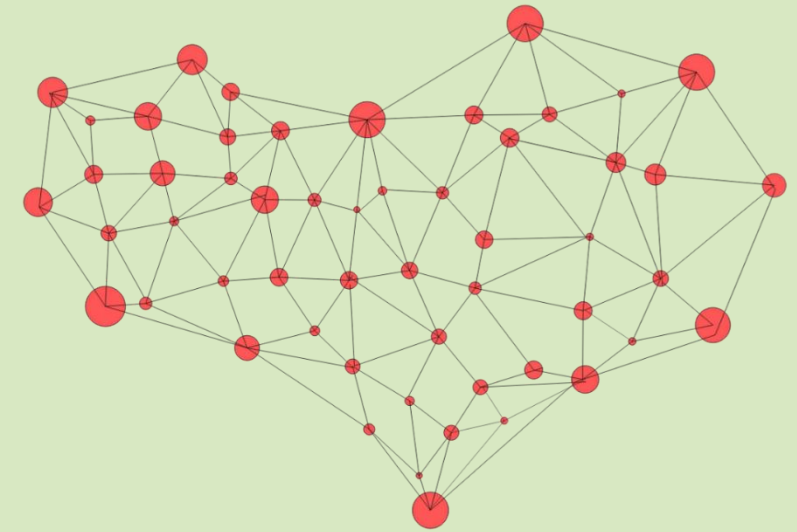
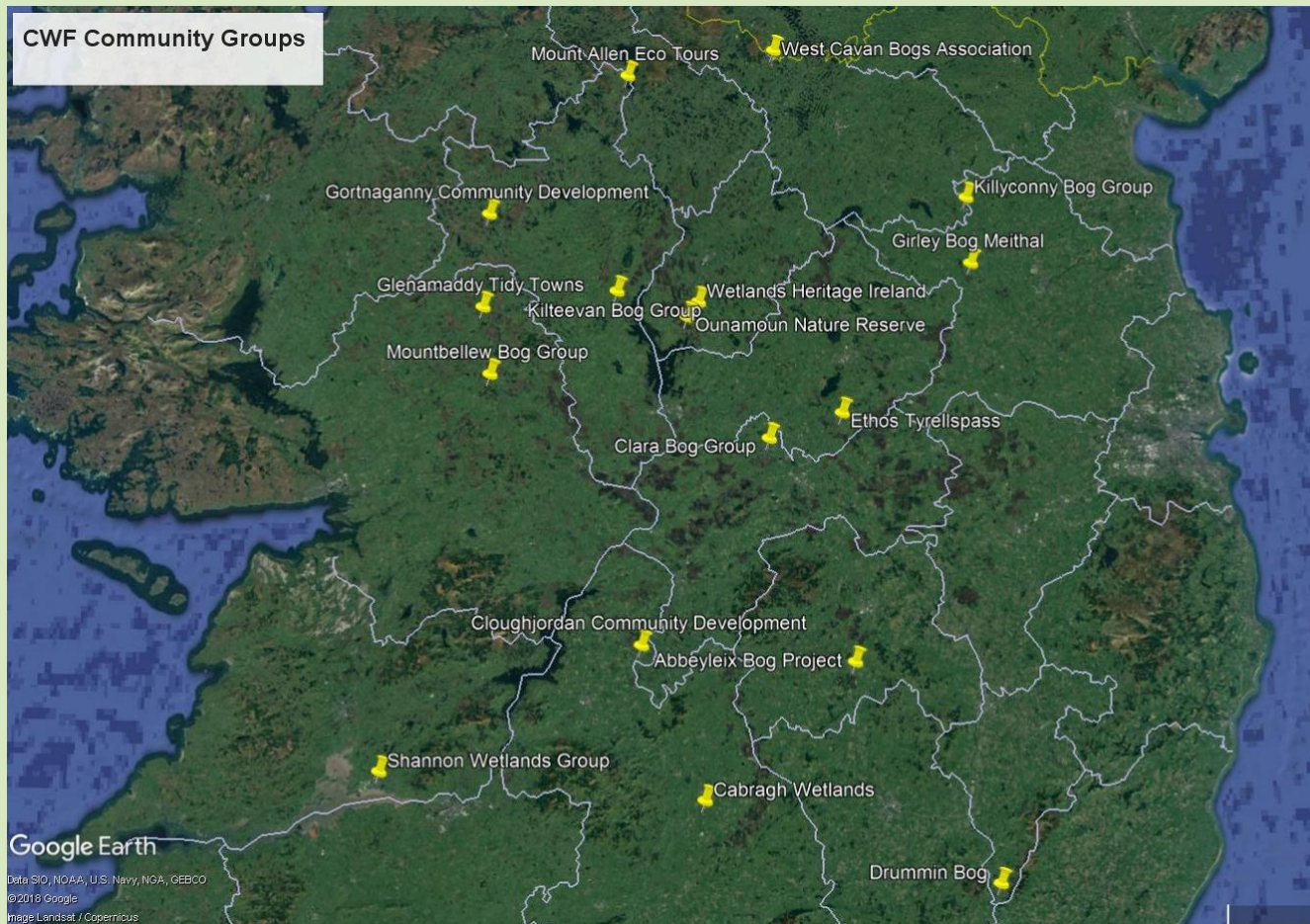
Bad news for bogs too...

- Active raised bogs (Annex I priority habitat) overall ‘bad’ conservation status, deteriorating trend
- Blanket bogs overall ‘unfavourable to bad’, deteriorating trend (DCHG, 2019).

A good news story...



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Main objective

Provide a platform for community-led wetland conservation groups based on the principles of community development:

Empowerment; Participation; Inclusion, Equality of opportunity & anti-discrimination; self-determination; Partnership

Vision, Mission, Values of the CWF

COMMUNITY WETLANDS FORUM

Strategic Plan 2017-2020



Inspiring communities to enjoy, protect and enhance their wetlands for generations to come

Vision

A society where wetlands are valued by local communities and community engagement is valued as a means of protecting and managing wetlands for present and future generations.

Mission

To support the protection, management and wise use of Ireland's wetlands for sustainable communities, by providing a network for community wetland groups to share knowledge, ideas, research and best practice.

Values

- Promoting the wise use of wetlands and appreciation of the ecosystem services they provide
- Fostering well-being for individuals and communities
- Adherence to community development principles of empowerment; participation; self-determination; inclusion; equality of opportunity; and partnership
- Conservation and care for the environment in all our activities.



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Sharing knowledge, experiences, best practice



The Abbeyleix Bog Project – 2000-2020



"It's an amazing timeline if you look at what has happened in the last 20 years with the Abbeyleix Bog Project. The passion today is still the same as 20 years ago, even though the dynamics of the people changes all the time. The only constant is change"
Chris Uys, Abbeyleix Bog Project



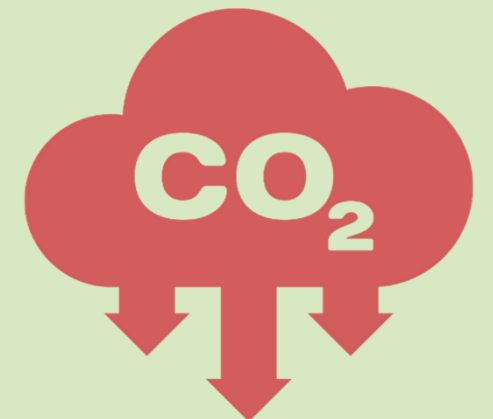
Restoration of Abbeyleix Bog 2009-2020

Best practice – multi-stakeholder, community-based collaboration between:

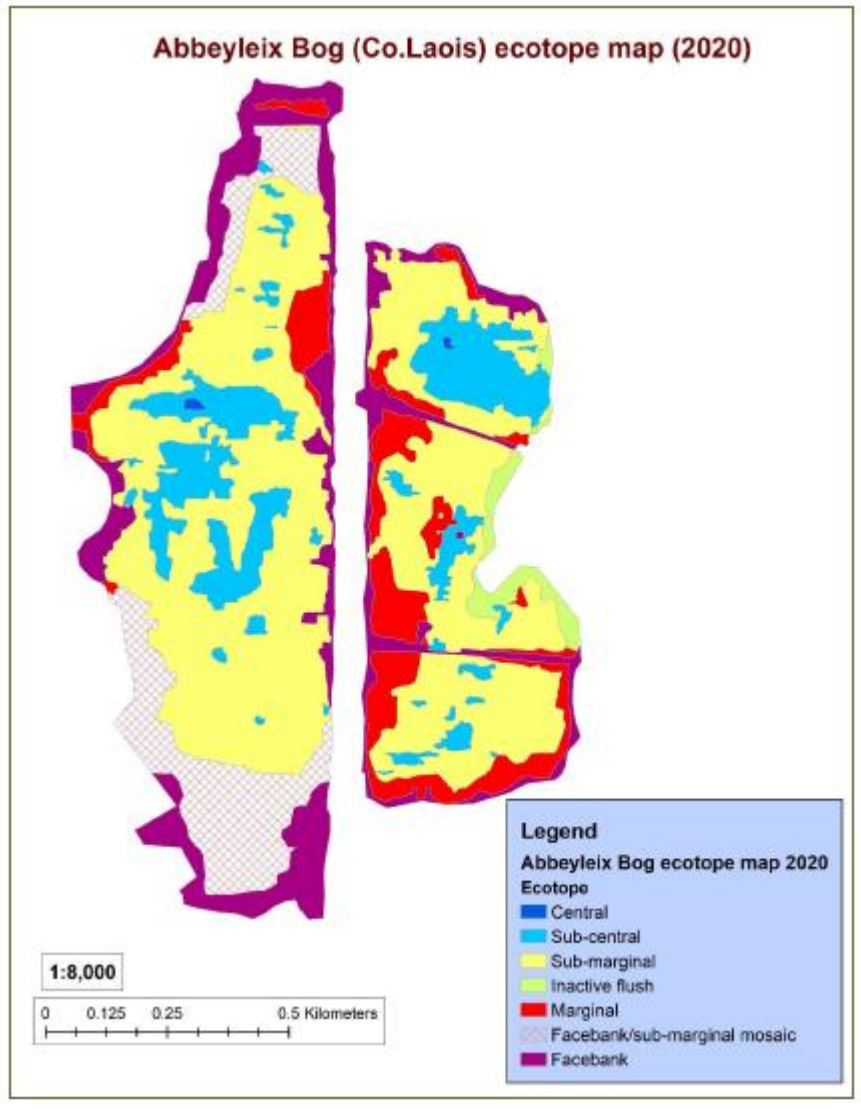
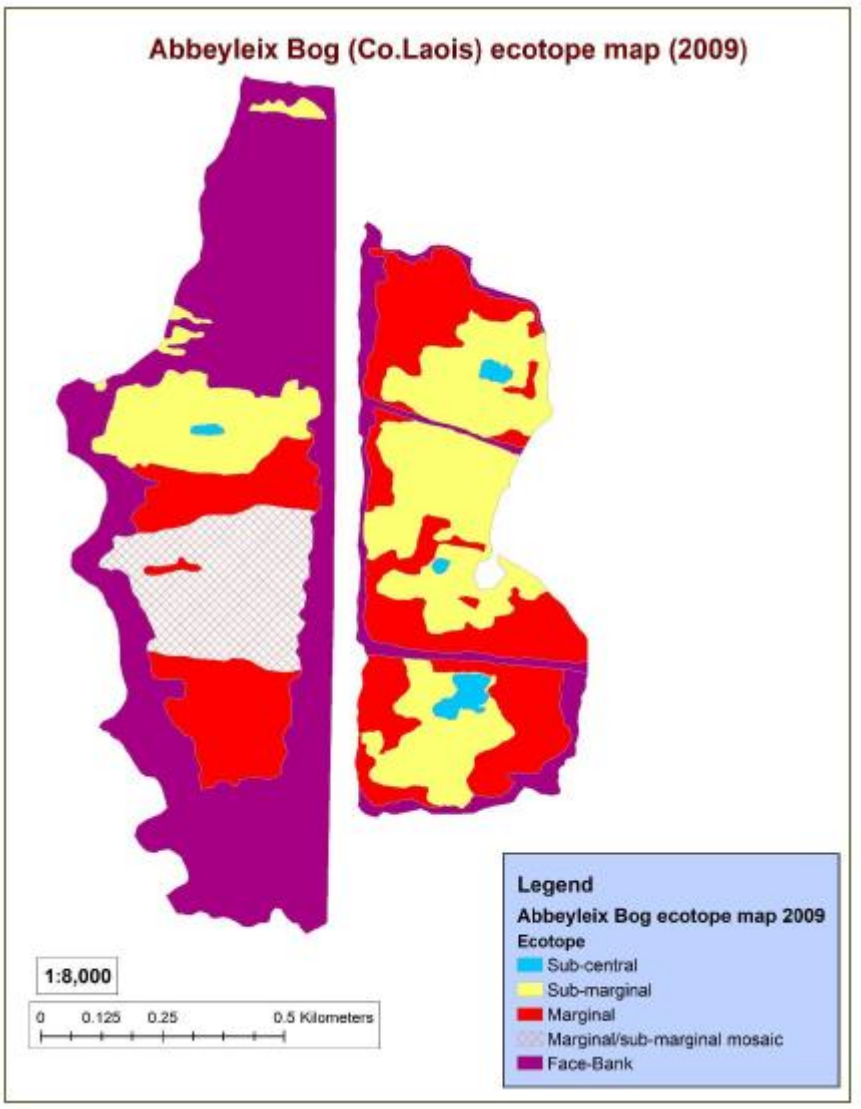
Peatland scientists + Community group + State agency + Semi-state body + Local Authority funding =

| Ecological aim | Implementation | Results |
|---|--|--|
| -Restoration of Active Raised Bog, priority EU habitat -Increase carbon storage capacity | -Drain blocking carried out with NWPS & Bord na Móna funding -Ecotope baseline survey (Fernandez, 2009) with funding raised by the ABP - Ecotope Surveying by ecologists Fernandez & Crowley (2020) funded by state agency and local authority | -Increase in area of Active Raised Bog -Increase in the extent of the most carbon sink effective ecotopes. -Direct CO ₂ emissions from high bog estimated to have fallen from 443.3 tonnes per year in 2009 to 209.9 tonnes per year in 2020. |

Fernandez & Crowley, 2020



Abbeyleix bog ecotope maps showing increase in central & sub-central ecotopes 2009-2020



The other side of the story...

Laois Walks Festival



Entente Floral 2017 - Biodiversity Winners



Abbeyleix Fire Brigade Emergency



Laois Youth Dance Ensemble



Family Fun Day



Bat Walk



NATIONAL
HERITAGE
WEEK 2017
19-27 AUG



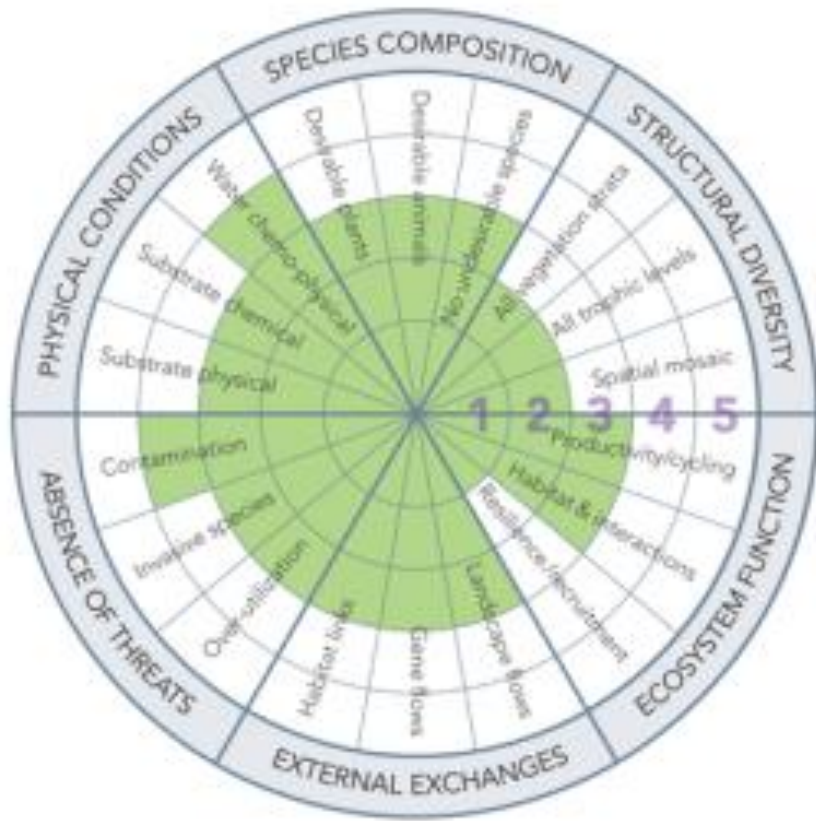
Abbeyleix
Bog Project



The Pine Marten of Abbeyleix Bog

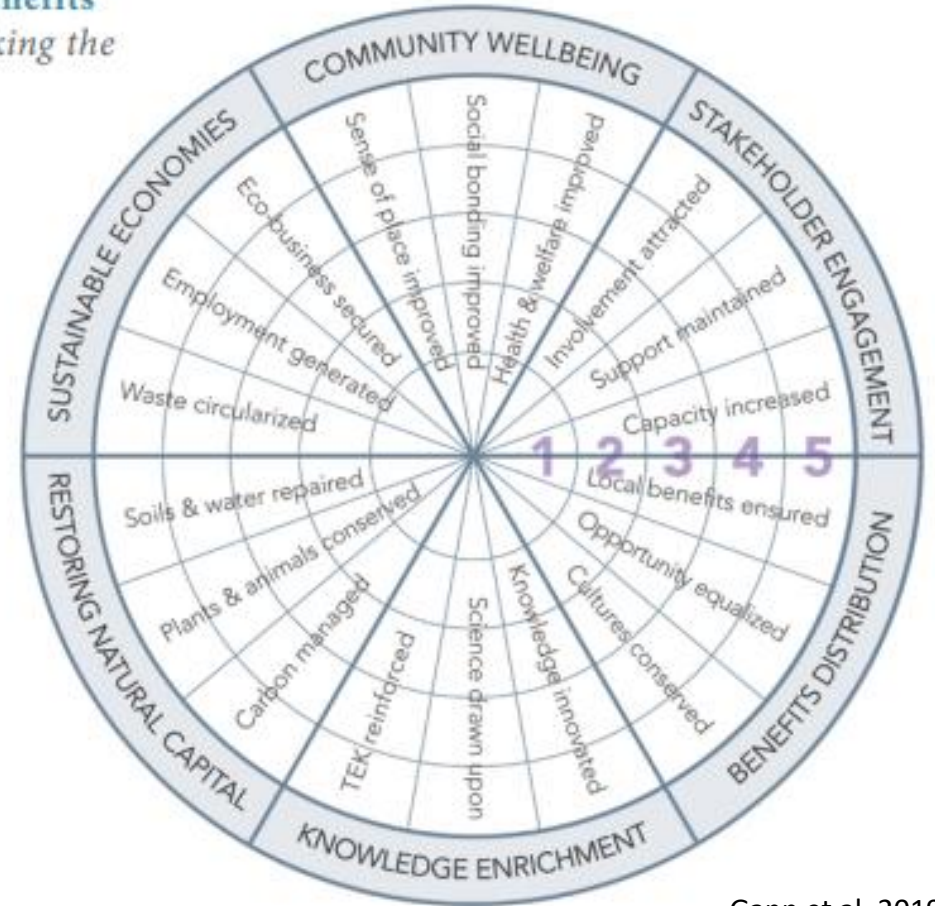


SER Principles for the Practice of Ecological Restoration



Baseline

Example of a **Social Benefits Wheel** to assist in tracking the degree to which an ecological restoration project or program is attaining its social development targets and goals. See Principle 1.



Gann et al, 2019

Changes in governance from top-down to more community-based, multi-stakeholder approaches involving state, market, and civil society can result in an increase in the potential and actual supply regulating, cultural and habitat ecosystem services

Van Busselet al, 2020

CWF members

- Cabragh Wetlands Trust
- Cloughjordan Community Development Committee (Schohaboy Bog)
- Creative Rathangan Meitheal
- Drummin Bog Project
- ETHOS (Cloncrow Bog)
- West Cavan Bogs Association
- Girley Bog Meitheal
- Killyconny Bog Group
- Kiltievan Tidy Towns
- Shannon Community Wetlands
- Wetlands Heritage Ireland (Corlea Bog)
- Clara Bog
- Ounamon Nature Reserve
- Meath Westmeath Peatland Group



Inspiring communities to enjoy, manage and protect their wetlands for the present and future generations



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“Collaboration is the solution; communities are ready, they just need the right support structures and advice and to be seen as equal partners and joint decision makers.”

Chris Uys, CWF Development Officer, 2019

“We have to escape the life of commodity and replace it with the life of community. What’s going to be required is a conversion of consciousness. I call it plant consciousness”

Richard Powers, 2020



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Fernandez, F. and Crowley, W. 2020. [Abbeyleix Bog 2020 ecotope survey report.](#) Abbeyleix Bog Project/Ecology and Environmental Consultants Ireland Ltd.

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Van Bussel, L.G., De Haan, N., Remme, R.P., Lof, M.E. and De Groot, R., 2020. Community-based governance: Implications for ecosystem service supply in Berg en Dal, the Netherlands. *Ecological Indicators*, 117, p.106510. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolind.2020.106510>