

Breathing LIFE into Blanket Bog

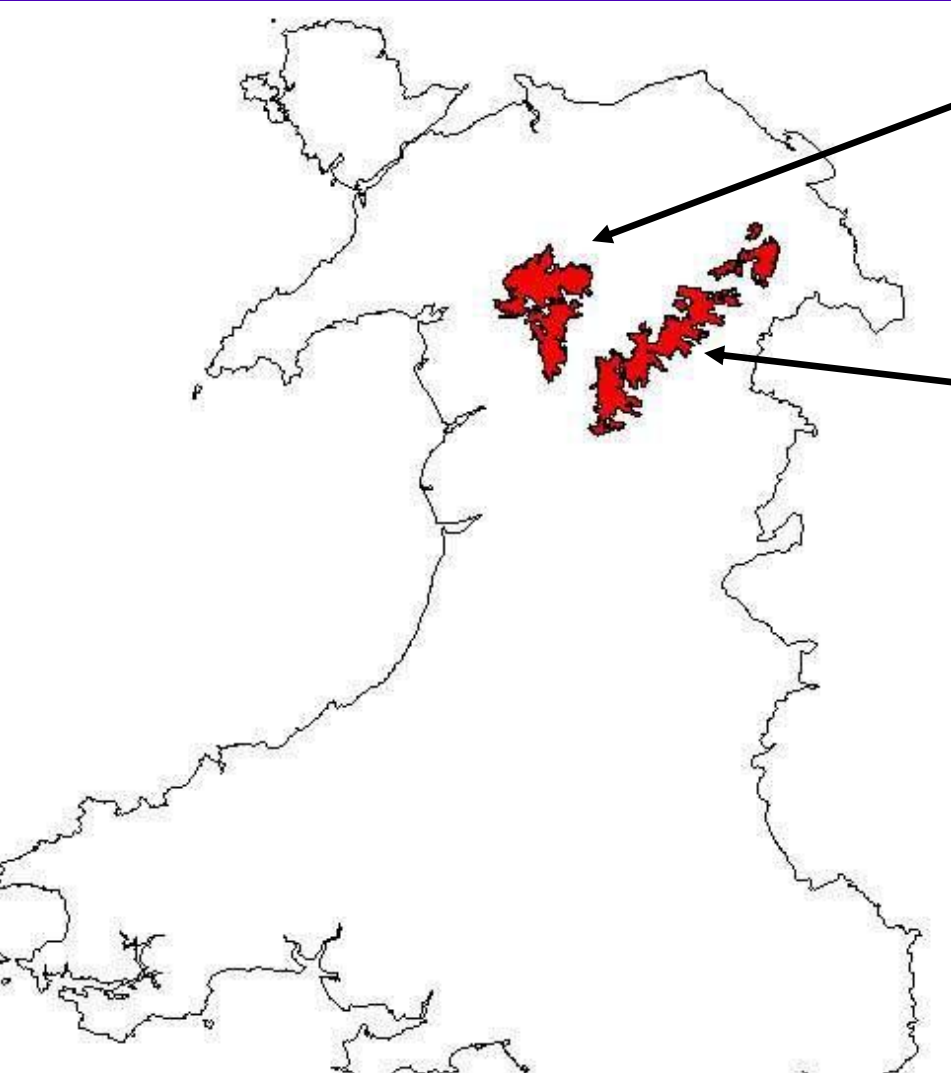
Lake Vyrnwy to Aberdeen

Mike Morris and Trystan Edwards





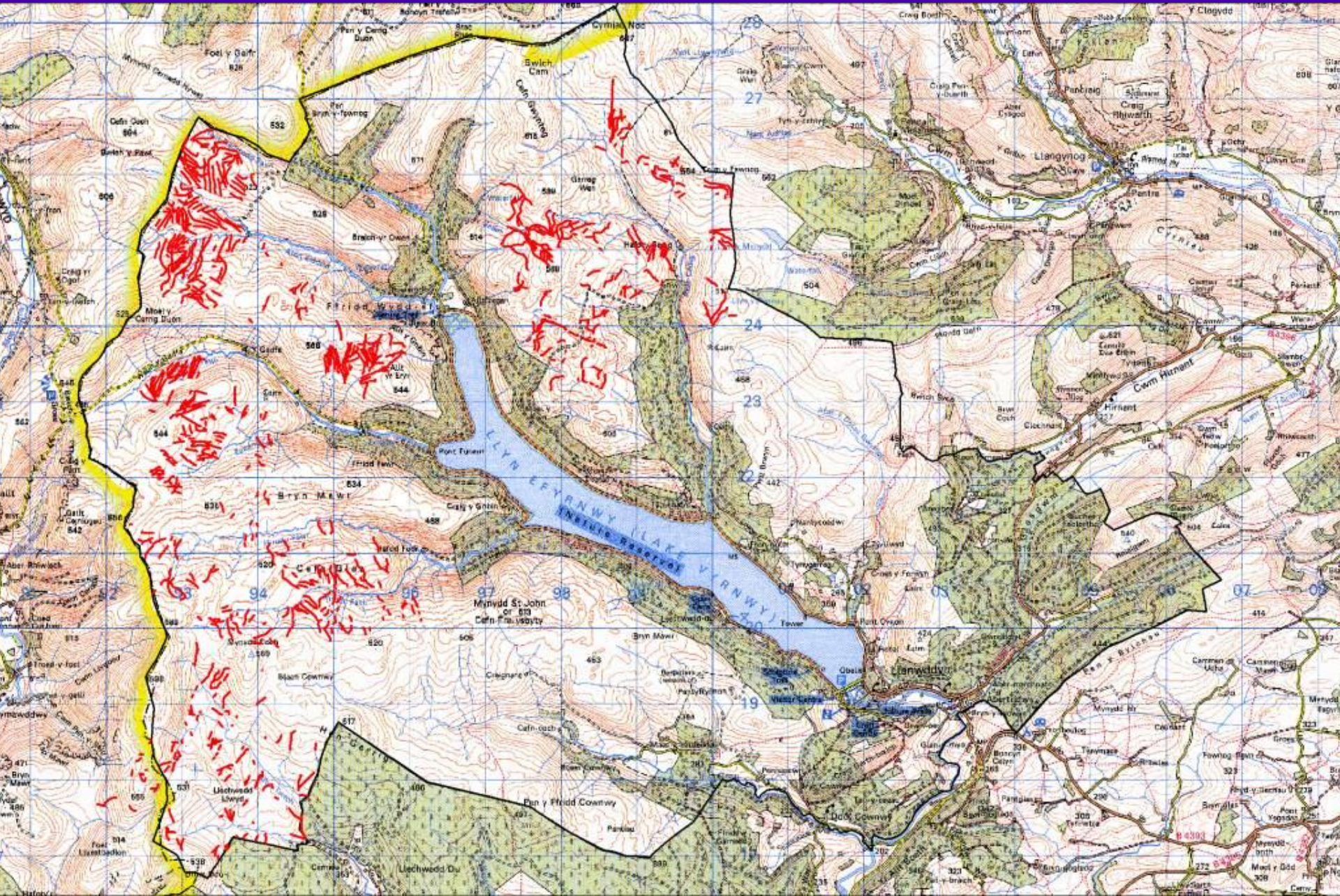
Two main areas of work:



**Migneint–Arenig–Dduallt
SAC (FCW Penaran)**

**Berwyn and South Clwyd
Mountains SAC (RSPB
Lake Vyrnwy)**

Block moorland drains







April 2007



May 2010



Original target = 110km (68 miles)

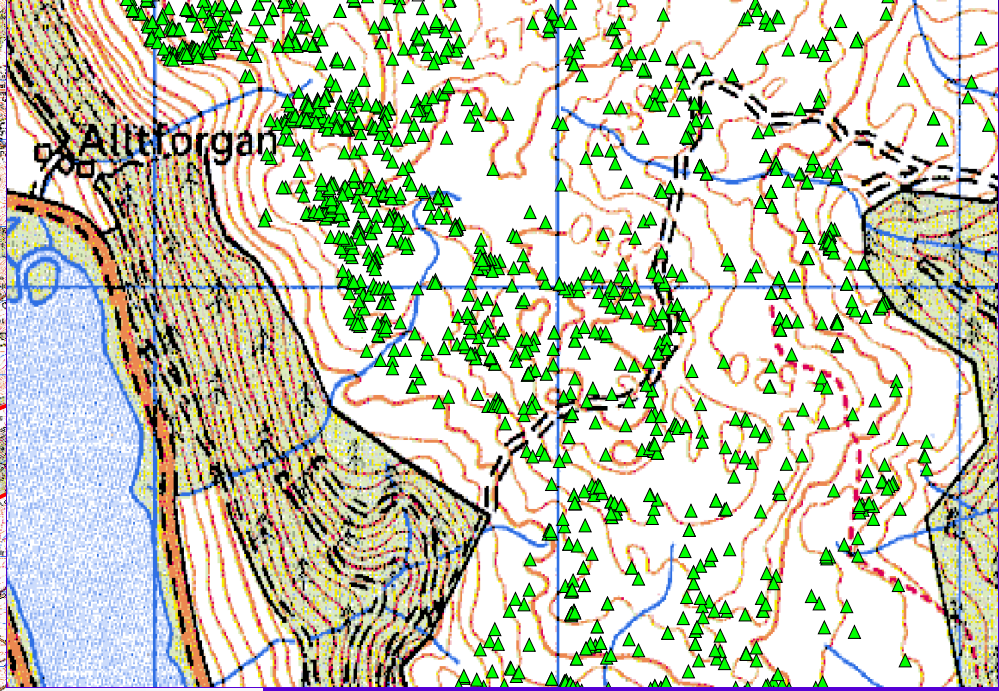
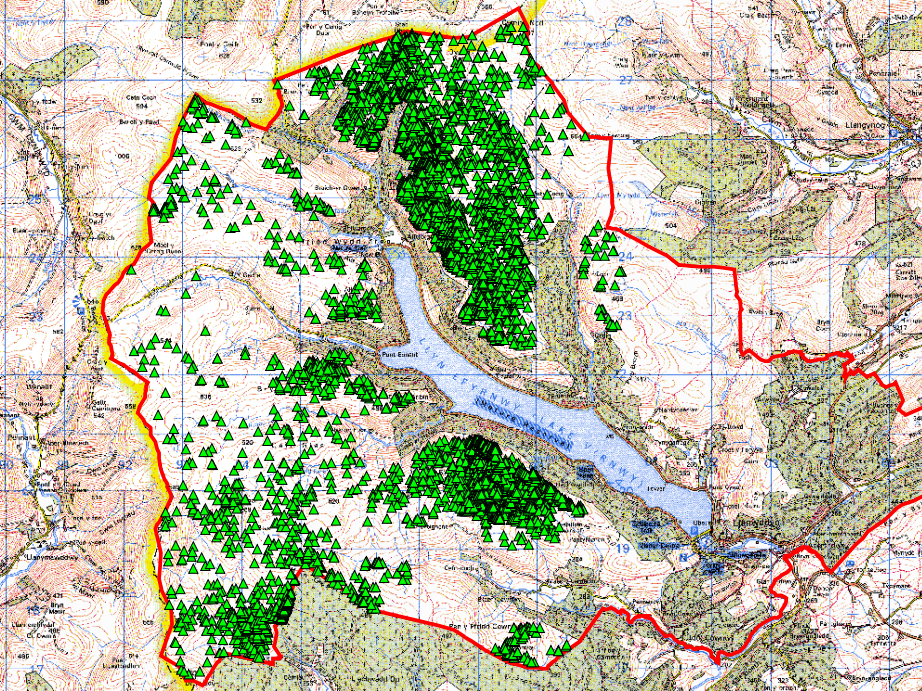
Final length = 485km (301 miles)

**That's Lake Vyrnwy to Aberdeen
as the hen harrier flies!**



Restoration of afforested blanket bog





**11,479 trees
across 5,400 ha**





**1,115 children
from 45 schools**





LIFE active blanket bog in

Wales

Project Update March/April 2010

STAFF: Mike Morris (LIFE Project Manager), Fiona Walker (LIFE Project Assistant), Jude Lane (LIFE Advisory Officer), Gary Slaytor (LIFE Public Engagement Officer), Lorraine Wilson (LIFE Research Biologist), Jan Evans and Naomi Perks (LIFE Field Teachers)

Practical

The project's fourth winter of practical work has now finished. Despite the snow, the ditch blocking made great progress with the contractors managing to block over 16 km on the Lake Vyrnwy reserve. This brings the project total to over 84 km, leaving just 6 km to block in our final winter to meet our 90 km target.

The Aliens left us at the end of March but not before they had done a fantastic job removing 3,746 trees from a massive 3,235 hectares at Lake Vyrnwy. The final total now stands at 11,294 trees from 5,847 ha - 4,447 ha over the project's target.

There has also been an exciting development at Penaran; nine Carneddau mountain ponies have been released there after spending the winter at Ynys-Hir. They are now happily exploring their new home where they will live all year round.

Visits

Mike Clarke and Katie-Jo Luxton visited the project in March, they spent the day with Mike who showed them the work we have been doing up on the blanket bog.

Mike attended the SCaMP conference in Manchester.

Community

We have given a number of talks throughout April. Jude gave a talk to St Asaph Archaeological Society. Jude, Lucinda and Chris gave a talk to Kinnerley WI and Fiona and Jan gave a talk to St Chad's Church group. Gary and Fiona have also taken 24 people up onto the moor during three guided walks.

Advisory

The project's 2010 newsletter has now been published and sent out to all landowners and tenants on the Berwyn and South Clwyd mountains SAC and Migneint-Arenig-Dduallt SAC. Letters have also been sent out inviting these same landowners and tenants to come and see the ditch blocking work at Lake Vyrnwy.

The project information signs at Lake Vyrnwy and Llyn Celyn have been updated.

Science and Monitoring

The hydrological monitoring has continued as usual. The final set of quarterly water samples has been taken and sent to the University of Leeds for analysis.

Education

Our education team have been hard at work. In March, we had 106 students from five schools and colleges visit the project at Lake Vyrnwy. Jan and Fiona made an outreach visit to Ellesmere College where they talked to 50 students.

General

Both the internal and external steering group meetings have taken place at Lake Vyrnwy.

Mike has been tendering for next year's ditch blocking contracts.



For more information, Tel. 01691 870937 or contact us via www.blanketbogwales.org



harddwch Y GORS

Darganfod harddwch y gors gyda
LIFE Gorgors Fyw Cymru

Discover why bog is great with the
LIFE Active Blanket Bog in Wales

BOG, glorious BOG

Monitor impacts of work



- Water
- Vegetation
- Parasites
- Livestock





**Demonstration
and advocacy**



Demonstration Day





Target

101,000m of drain blocked

900ha non-native species

230ha forestry clearance

104 community events

**Year 6 classes in area
visiting the project**

Media releases

Achieved totals

485,096m of drain blocked

5,733ha non-native species

230ha forestry clearance

**106 community events
to 2,479 people**

**30 outreach visits to 795
children
45 visits by schools for 1,115
children**

**50 press articles, 9 radio interviews,
6 TV appearances**



Peter Jones, CCW peatland ecologist, and Prof Andy Baird at the Cors Fochno peat bog near Borth, Ceredigion

Maybe they want us to start growing rice

by ANDREW FORGRAVE
Rural Affairs Editor

Flooded mountains will become paddyfields fear

MAJOR projects to reverse decades of lands drainage will get under way in north Wales this spring.

Reflooding the vast Migneint range, blocking drainage ditches, is aimed at preventing downstream deluges in the Conwy valley.

It is also part of landowner the National Trust's contribution towards mitigating the effects of climate change by increasing carbon storage in the Welsh uplands.

The Migneint – the second largest area of blanket bog in North Wales after Berwyn – is the main source of water for the Conwy valley, which in recent years has been beset by winter floods.

Land managers hope to trap more

water in the Migneint by sealing up drainage ditches, or "grips", dug by post-war sheep farmers to improve grazing.

Trystan Edwards, the trust's farm and countryside adviser, said: "We'll be using brush bales from conifer clearance sites on the Ysbyty estate to seal the drains and encourage their silting up.

"It's too early to say what the overall impact will be but it is likely to have a significant effect on down-stream flooding problems in the Conwy valley."

Initial trials will assess the project's impact on wildlife and vegetation – the Migneint is an important site for hen

harrier breeding and Sphagnum mosses.

If positive, reflooding work will be extended to neighbouring areas and to other parts of Wales.

It is being backed by the Rhaglen Tir Eryri management scheme. The Trust will also be seeking support from the 51 tenant farmers on its 20,000-acre Ysbyty estate.

Mr Edwards added: "It's not all bad news for them. Some grips are a real menace to livestock: over time they have deepened and, when covered by a thin layer of heath, sheep can easily fall to their deaths."

But not all sheep graziers are happy at the prospect of seeing 60 years of

land reclamation reversed.

Last year North Wales Police investigated reports from the Countryside Council for Wales that drainage work was being carried out on the Migneint-Arenig-Dduallt SSSI without consent.

Bryn Williams, vice-chairman of the Migneint Graziers Association, said he was unaware of the plans.

He said: "I imagine many of our members would be against such a scheme.

"I'm all in favour of efforts to prevent flooding in the Conwy and other valleys, but this sounds a bit extreme.

"Even if just few ditches are blocked, it will make the whole area wetter, making it more difficult for livestock

and increasing fluke problems.

"Maybe they want us to start growing rice."

The Migneint project comes on the heels of a related scheme on common land between Conwy and Capel Curig.

In late 2004, 22 members of the Abergwynnregyn & Llanfairfechan Grazing Association signed an agreement to stop grazing 2,800ha of the mountain during the winter months.

It is hoped the scheme will improve upland habitats and reduce valley flooding.