

Moorland Fires - Introduction

Most people imagine that the moorland areas of Britain are wild landscapes criss-crossed by a few lonely paths. They would be surprised to find that moorlands are heavily managed and that there are a range of careers involved in moorland management.

This is an increasingly important area for the future. Over the course of the next century climate changes may have dramatic effects on this fragile and important landscape and decisions made in the next decade will be key in allowing us to manage these changes.



Who are the people making the decisions? What are the issues? And how could your students get involved with moorland management as a career choice?

Fire!

These resources look at the management of one major hazard in moorland areas – fire!

You may be surprised to learn that setting moors on fire is a way of managing heather growth and land managers do it deliberately.

As heather grows older it becomes woody and isn't such a nutritious food for grouse, which like to graze on the green shoots. Burning the heather, at the right time of the year when the ground is damp, doesn't kill the plant but encourages the growth of new green shoots.



However, if fires happen at the wrong time of year when the ground is dry the consequences could be disastrous. Whole areas can be severely burnt and even the peat the plants grow on can catch fire, causing massive environmental damage.

Effective management of the burning can not only produce more productive land for the farmer but it can potentially reduce the damage from natural and deliberate fires. This is a complex issue. Experts decide how to manipulate the fire regime of the British uplands to both maximise the ecological benefits of fire and manage the threat of wildfires. They work out future fire management plans and set both strategic and local-level policies for fire risk management.

Let's meet the experts as we work through a real Fire in the Peak District.

