



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

EU Regional Workshop: Rewetting peat soils – why and how?

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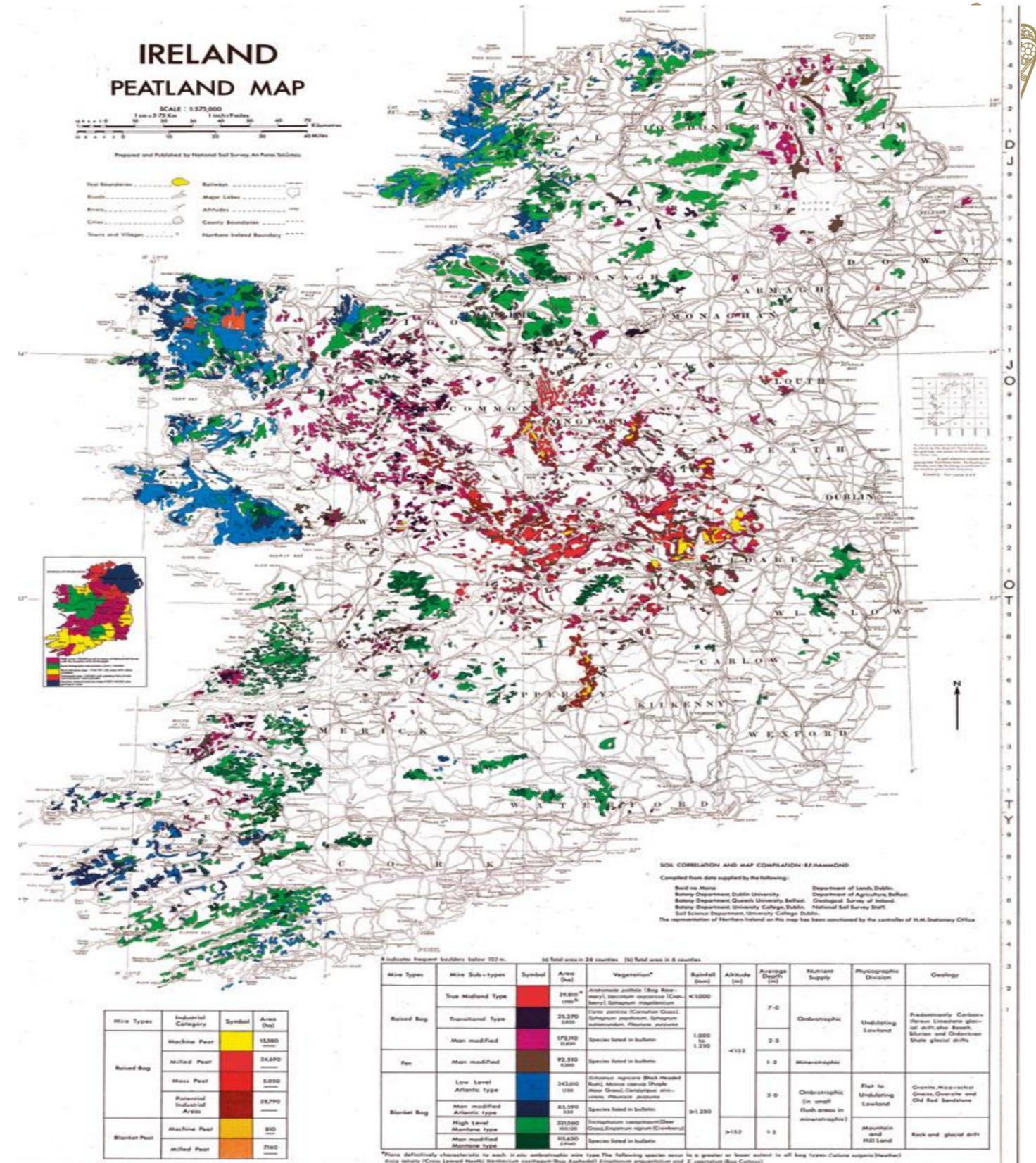
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Overview

- Peatsoils cover circa 21% of the national land area
- 330,000ha of organic soils under agricultural management
- 422,000ha of commonage covered by Commonage Framework Plans (CFPs)
- 18,000ha of rehabilitated cutaway peatlands
- Ambitious targets by semi-state company Bord Na Mona to rewet/rehabilitate up to 33,000ha of industrial cutaway bogs



National Targets



Ambitious targets for :

- Rewetting of 80,000ha of organic soils under **agricultural management** contained within our national Climate Action Plan 2021
- Rehabilitating 65,000 hectares of peatlands across numerous landowners and projects





Supports and Incentives

Currently we are in the information gathering stage of this process

To inform future policy in this area, there are a number of activities currently under way:

Research and Demonstration

- RePeat mapping study
- FarmPEAT EIP
- Farm Carbon EIP
- Pearl Mussel Project EIP
- Peatlands & People LIFE
- Wild Atlantic Nature LIFE

Incentivising Behaviour Change

Draft CAP Strategic Plan

Agri-Environmental Climate Measure (AECM):

- Reduced Management of Organic Soils
- Co-operation Project

But also:

Areas of Natural Constraints (ANC)

AECM Training

Knowledge Transfer Groups

Continuous Professional Development for
Advisors

RePeat Project

With circa 330,000ha of organic soils under agricultural management this area represents a significant source of national GHG emissions

This DAFM/EPA funded research study will be led by researchers from TCD and NUIG, and will provide a broad range of benefits, including:

- The increased accuracy of peatland maps at a field scale level
- The precise identification of agricultural land-use and intensity on former peatlands
- Provide detailed information to policy makers with a view of providing better on-farm management options to farmers to help reduce GHG emissions





FarmPEAT EIP

- Locally led results based pilot programme for farmers with raised bogs
- Incentivises the delivery of enhanced environmental outcomes
- Focus on peatlands but also on-farm habitats, hedgerows, field boundaries and watercourses

Farm Carbon EIP

- Two year project looking at reducing emissions from agricultural peatlands
- Quantifying the environmental benefits of rewetting
- Developing a methodology for an **Irish Wetland Code** to verify carbon offsets
- Inform policy options at a national level

Other relevant activities:

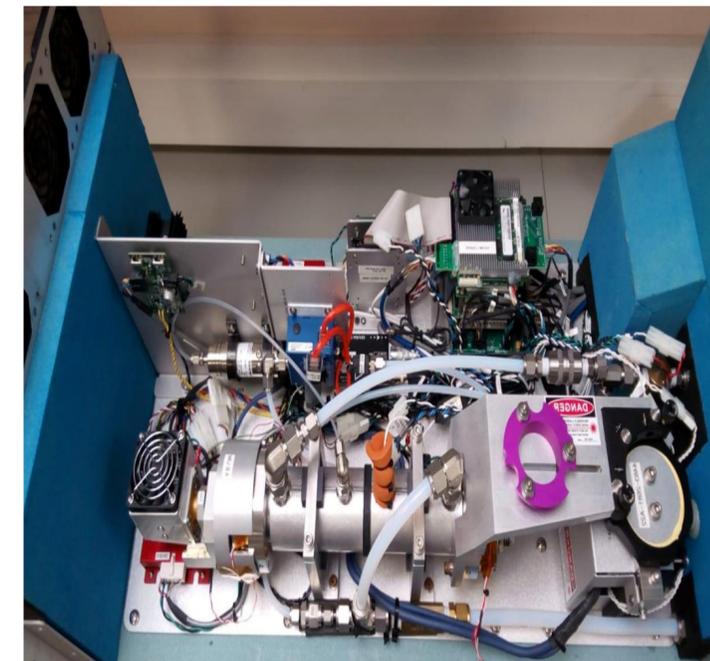


- Carbon Farming Working Group established to examine the establishment of an enabling framework to reward farmers/landowners for sequestration/emission avoidance activities
- National Soil Survey Pilot programme- refine soil maps and provide land management advice to farmers
- Establishment of Signpost Farm Network- research and demonstration of best practice land management activities
- Irish Soil Moisture Monitoring Network (ISMON) will monitor soil moisture conditions in real time to give a greater understanding of the impact of moisture on soil processes and potentially emissions also.
- Farm Environmental Study (FES) will provide participants with an inventory of habitats on the farm and suggest how these habitats may be best managed for biodiversity, soil protection etc

NASCO- National Agricultural and Carbon Observatory



- Funded through DAFM and managed by Teagasc
- Located on benchmark sites including agricultural grasslands, mineral soils and peatlands
- This technology has the ability to monitor carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane emission fluxes
- Ireland will have the highest density of flux tower installations per hectare in Europe once this infrastructure is established
- Will provide data in real-time on how on-farm management decisions impact the emission and sequestration profile of a range of farming systems



Conclusions



- Ambitious but achievable targets for the rewetting of organic soils under agricultural management
- Current efforts focused not only on gathering baseline field data but also on how to influence behavioural change amongst landowners
- Farmers & landowners need to understand why policy objectives are moving in a certain way- accurate data will aid this process
- Long term emission flux data has widespread benefits and is now a prerequisite for future agricultural policy formation.
- There are opportunities for farmers, such as Carbon Farming & Natural Capital Accounting, to financially benefit from increased data collection and rewetting activities

Questions?

