



Relu Newsletter

October 2013 Contents:

1. Peatland Code could help restore iconic landscapes
 2. Global Food Security provides new Insight on soil
 3. Payment for Ecosystem Services presents new opportunities
 4. PES prospectus offers good prospects
 5. Upstream Thinking on River Fowey
 6. Animal health isn't just a natural science problem
 7. Locating and measuring our natural resources
 8. Climate Change Impact information at your fingertips
 9. Synergies between agriculture and water utilities
 10. Inter-professional working: the challenges and the rewards
 11. Research centre will focus on poultry welfare
 12. New food security research on world's important crops
 13. How do people value nature?
 14. Macronutrients research takes inspiration from sports technology
 15. Flash flooding winner premiered
 16. Proposals invited on environmental data for new business solutions
 17. Uncertainty takes centre stage at LWEC conference
 18. LWEC championship role
 19. Interdisciplinary champion gains Edinburgh chair
- Book now for World Forum on Natural Capital

1 Peatland Code could help restore iconic landscapes

The [Peatland Code](#) could provide a once-in-a-generation opportunity to restore a million hectares of some of the UK's most beautiful and iconic landscapes. It sets down rules for peatland restoration projects to ensure they deliver new restoration that benefits the climate, whilst helping to protect wildlife and water resources. The draft Code has been developed through research funding from Defra as one of its Payment for Ecosystem Service Pilots, with additional funding from Natural England to develop metrics for measuring the greenhouse gas emission reduction benefits of restoration.

Initial consultation, outlines of the Code and underpinning research was funded by the Natural Environment Research Council's Valuing Nature Network, which built on original research by the Rural Economy and Land Use programme. The pilot phase will focus on further developing the infrastructure for the Code.

2 Global Food Security provides new Insight on soil

The Global Food Security Programme has launched a new series of publications called GFS Insight, aimed at providing the findings from the latest food security research to practitioners and policy-makers. The first Insight is entitled 'The importance of soils for ensuring food security' and can be accessed on the [GFS website](#).

3 Payment for Ecosystem Services presents new opportunities

Policymakers and businesses are becoming more aware of the importance of ecosystem services and the opportunities and challenges they present. For some business sectors, such as those that require very high quality water, Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) can reduce costs. For policymakers, PES may prove to be a useful tool for better natural resource conservation. The latest developments and thinking about PES are outlined in the first policy and practice note in the [Living With Environmental Change partnership's](#) new series, with recommendations for the future. LWEC programmes wishing to feature their research in future policy and practice notes should contact anne.liddon@ncl.ac.uk.

4 PES prospectus offers good prospects

[An internship funded by NERC and managed by the Environmental Sustainability Knowledge Transfer Network](#) could help potential investors and landowners to get Payment for Ecosystem Services initiatives off the ground. A prospectus will be launched, giving information about how a PES scheme could work, what factors need to be considered in deciding on site suitability, and how land managers can decide if participation is right for them. A [synopsis](#) has been launched online to invite feedback and comments.

5 Upstream Thinking on the River Fowey

The Upstream Thinking pilot Payment for Ecosystem Services project, funded by South West Water, paid for capital investments on farms via an auction, with the aim of improving water quality in the River Fowey. [A report on the initiative is now available](#) with guidance for future initiatives on all the practicalities of running this kind of project.

6 Animal health isn't just a natural science problem

["The Regulation of Animal Health and Welfare: Science, Law and Policy"](#) by John McEldowney, Wyn Grant and Graham Medley, is now available, published by Routledge. This new book draws extensively on research carried out by Relu's [Governance of Livestock Disease](#) project. It underlines the importance of interdisciplinarity in understanding animal disease and the role played by policymakers and regulators.

7 Locating and measuring our natural resources

As landscapes begin to be managed more and more for a range of ecosystem services, planners and decision-makers need increasing amounts of information about what natural resources exist across the UK. There are tools available that can help to provide this information and the [second policy and practice note](#) in the Living With Environmental Change partnership's new series provides pointers on how to access and use these.

8 Climate Change Impact information at your fingertips

The Living With Environmental Change partnership has now published the second in their series of Climate Change Impact Report Cards. This latest is on water and is available for download from the [LWEC website](#). It looks at the effect of climate change on fresh water, including rainfall, floods and droughts. The report card is intended to help people understand the scale of possible change and to help inform decisions about the way that water is managed.

9 Synergies between agriculture and water utilities

Increases in population, food production, standards of living, and urbanisation are putting more pressure on global water resources. Climate change will exacerbate the problem and its impacts are expected to be reflected in the pattern of water availability through increased likelihood of drought and flooding. One of the priorities that emerged from workshops run by NERC's Water Security Knowledge Exchange Programme was the need to "identify synergies between agricultural water users and water utilities around the management of water (eg reservoir storage)." [A newly published report](#) commissioned by the Water Security Knowledge Exchange Programme addresses this priority.

10 Inter-professional working: the challenges and the rewards

Delivering advice to land managers has become an increasingly complex business, involving a range of different professions. Land agents have to work with vets, agronomists, ecologists and business advisers, with each drawing upon their own networks of specialists. It's not always easy, and some advisers will find themselves better prepared than others. [Number 3](#) in the Living With Environmental Change partnership's new policy and practice note series draws on research from the [landbridge](#) initiative to explore the issues and provide some pointers for successful inter-professional working. To join the landbridge network email landbridge@ncl.ac.uk and receive regular updates.

11 Research centre will focus on poultry welfare The [National Avian Research Facility](#), a national centre for poultry health and welfare, has been opened at the University of Edinburgh. It will provide a resource for both UK and international researchers studying chicken health and disease. The £14m facility, supported by BBSRC, the University of Edinburgh, Roslin Foundation and the Wellcome Trust, is classed as a national capability, due to its strategic importance for UK research.

12 New food security research on world's important crops

BBSRC, in conjunction with the Scottish Government, has awarded £3m in research funding to four projects to improve food security for some of the world's most valuable crops. The funding is the first round of awards from BBSRC's [Horticulture and Potato Initiative](#) which supports high-quality, industrially relevant research projects on edible crops.

13 How do people value nature?

People generally understand that different species are part of an intricate web of life but struggle to identify what functions species might have. This was the finding of the [Wessex-BESS](#) social science team from a series of four exploratory workshops on cultural ecosystem services and the importance of biodiversity for individual identity, wellbeing, heritage, and habitat. For more up to date news about the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service Sustainability programme (BESS) subscribe to their new BESS-Connect newsletter by submitting your email address on the front page of the [BESS website](#).

14 Macronutrients science takes inspiration from sports technology

Have you ever wondered how tv coverage of sports events manages to whizz around the pitch to give you the best view of the game? Professor Phil Ineson at York is developing a new system for the Macronutrients Cycles Programme that uses similar technology to gather information about greenhouse gas emissions from different types of land use. [Skygas](#) uses posts and pulleys to drop containers down onto land or water to a predetermined computer programme. It is then possible to monitor uptake and release of gases much more systematically over time and space.

15 Flash flooding winner premiered

In the future, frequent heavy downpours are likely to lead to costly flash flooding unless action is taken to lessen surface water run-off. This is one of the key messages of a short film produced by LWEC and launched at the Tyneside Cinema in Newcastle. The film, "[Flood Force: finding solutions in good company](#)", is the result of a winning idea submitted to the Living With Environmental Change Short Film Competition by Northumbrian Water and Newcastle University.

16 Proposals invited on environmental data for new business solutions

The Natural Environment Research Council and the Technology Strategy Board (TSB) are to invest up to £4m in feasibility studies which use environmental data to develop new solutions to business problems. Proposals are being sought for solutions and services that offer commercial benefits, limit business risks and increase resilience. The call is open to companies of any size, with project consortia including data providers, universities and other eligible research establishments. Applicants must register their interest by 6 November 2013. Information will be found on the funding pages of the [TSB website](#).

17 Uncertainty takes centre stage at LWEC conference

The [Living With Environmental Change](#) annual conference "Decision-making in the twilight of uncertainty" takes place on 19th November at the Lakeside Conference Centre, Aston University, Birmingham. Email lweccoffice@lweec.org.uk for more information.

18 LWEC championship role

The Living With Environmental Change partnership's Director, Professor Andrew Watkinson, has completed his term of office. Dan Osborn will be taking on the role of interim Champion for the partnerships, supported by Mary Barkham as the Research Councils UK Theme Leader for LWEC.

19 Interdisciplinary champion gains Edinburgh chair

Catherine Lyall who was Deputy Director for both the [ESRC Innogen Centre](#) (2007-2012) and the [ESRC Genomics Forum](#) (2012-2013), and who has championed interdisciplinary research, is now Professor of Science and Public Policy at the University of Edinburgh.

20 Book now for World Forum on Natural Capital

The [World Forum on Natural Capital](#) will be the world's first major global conference devoted to natural capital and will bring together business and sustainability leaders from around the world to help identify clear courses of action to address opportunities and risks. The inaugural event will take place at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre on 21-22 November 2013.