



A Guide to Good Practice

Management Planning

On Upland and Moorland
Commons

Summary

The Federation of Yorkshire Commoners and Moorland Graziers aims:

1. To be a representative voice to support and protect the commons
2. To support better collaboration amongst commoners
3. To ensure that hill farming on common land is a worthwhile and viable activity
4. To promote positive management of the environment by commoners
5. To improve public understanding of the commons
6. To these ends, to engage with all interested parties to put forward the case of the commoners in a vigorous and constructive manner.

The Federation has prepared a series of 'Guides to Good Practice' which are intended to help commoners to deal with selected key issues. The Guides aim to share experience from different commons and to help commoners understand how others approach key issues.

Guides to Good Practice have been prepared for the following issues:

Vegetation Management

Management Planning

Agri-environment Schemes

Marketing

Each 'Guide to Good Practice' generally consists of a 2 page summary together with the main guide.

It is intended that the Guides will be updated on a regular basis, as new information is gathered and new policies or advice are introduced. Please contact the administrator of the Federation with any comments or suggestions.

The other Guides are available from:

Miss M Gibson, Administrator, Federation of Yorkshire Commoners and Moorland Graziers, 2 Woodland Dell, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, HX7 6NJ

This is the summary of a guide which is intended to provide a useful source of advice and information to members of the Federation of Yorkshire Commoners and Moorland Graziers, and others, on the process of management planning for commons. It is intended to assist commoners and graziers in the preparation of a Management Plan for their common.

1. Management planning provides a means of identifying the issues affecting the commons, and a means of dealing with competing issues through setting achievable targets. The recent Commons Bill sought to encourage management planning as part of sustainable agricultural management because of the benefits that having a Management Plan can bring to the common.
2. The Bill enables the establishment of a Commons Associations. This provides a new opportunity to bring people with an interest in the common together to discuss how it is managed and to facilitate the sustainable management of the common at a local level. Commons Associations should establish a Management Committee to coordinate a management planning initiative. The Association should take the leadership of this committee, but it should bring together other interested parties to facilitate the preparation of the Management Plan.
3. A collaborative approach should be adopted so that all interested parties have an opportunity to participate from the outset. Agreement on the management objectives and prescriptions will be needed and collaboration will give legitimacy to the plan. The landlord or their agent may wish to

participate as they will usually reserve shooting and burning rights over the common.

4. The Management Committee will decide what information is required and who will be responsible for gathering it but Commons Associations may need some professional support to prepare the plan. The principle landowner or manager can provide assistance in some cases (e.g. National Trust or National Park Authority). English Nature may assist where conservation is an important interest and English Heritage may help where archaeology is present.
5. There may be single-issue management plans in place for many commons such as SSSI management plans prepared by English Nature. Management Plans must be compatible with these, whilst identifying and addressing other issues affecting the common. Similarly, many commons will be subject to management agreements and Management Plans should recognise the commitments made under such agreements.
6. Management plans usually begin with a survey / information gathering exercise which brings together the information relating to the site from all the relevant sources such as commoners and graziers, landowners, shooting tenants, English Nature (to be Natural England from 2007) etc.
7. Analysis and evaluation of the survey information describes how the survey information has been evaluated and what obligations and constraints have been taken into account when reaching decisions. The process should be rational and objective.
8. The management objectives set out what the site managers want to achieve in the form of a list of objectives which are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timetabled and which take into account legal constraints and obligations. The objectives are used to decide on prescriptions / proposals which detail the methods by which the objectives are to be achieved. The proposals may be presented in the form of a five year work programme.

9. Monitoring and review are an essential part of the management planning process, and this information is fed back into the process. Adjustments may be made to the policy objectives where necessary.
10. Management Plans should be comprehensive, practical to implement, with clear work programmes and achievable targets.
11. The Federation of Commoners and Moorland Graziers can advise on how to proceed and arrange to bring people together for discussions.

The full guide is available from: The Administrator, Federation of Yorkshire Commoners and Moorland Graziers, 2 Woodland Dell, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, HX7 6NJ.