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Date: 5 August 2014
Our ref: O IF 0814 0001
Your ref:



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Dear Paul

Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) Wildfire Group position on prescribed burning

Thank you for your letter dated 23 July to our Chairman, Andrew Sells, setting out the Chief Fire Officer's Association Wildlife Group position on prescribed burning and for offering to act as a point of contact for future consultation exercises. This marks an important step in our working together, as it increases our understanding of the terminology being used and should help strengthen our evidence base.

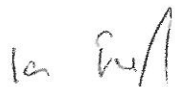
As you are aware, the review of upland evidence was published in May 2013. The review programme considered five priority topics, each focused on a series of questions which were evaluated against the scientific evidence. The review reports you cite: *Restoration of Blanket Bog* (NEER003) and *The effects of managed burning on upland peatland biodiversity, carbon and water* (NEER004) were both part of that programme.

Other relevant information, including social and economic factors, current working practices and geographic scale were not considered as part of the review of upland evidence. Since the publication, Natural England has continued to work with stakeholders and partners with expertise in these areas. Our aim is to combine these relevant factors together with consideration of the conclusions from the review programme to update the way we deliver in the uplands. These discussions have emphasised the need for any approach to take account of wildfire risk management and also to consider the full range of techniques that may be available to manage vegetation biomass. The discussions have also agreed that one of the priority outcomes is to achieve better functioning peatlands. If that can be achieved, it should provide more resilient habitats. Clearly this is a major challenge and may take decades to achieve. Consideration of wildfire should be a key component of a more strategic approach to the restoration of peatlands.

The meeting with the Moorland Association at Abbeystead in June was part of a series of visits to ensure that our Chairman was familiar with the key issues. It was therefore helpful that your colleague was able to attend so that we could hear his views directly.

I have already passed on your contact details to the project team so they can be included in the stakeholder group and will suggest the team make contact with you to allow this discussion to continue. They will be particularly interested in your views on the importance of prescribed burning and also your understanding of other techniques for managing vegetation biomass.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Fugler'.

Ian Fugler
Director, Access, Engagement and the Uplands