

Senedd Cymru  
Y Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, Amgylchedd a  
Materion Gwledig  
Bioamrywiaeth ac Ailwylltio  
CCERA(5) BR 02  
Ymateb gan O'r Mynydd i'r Môr

Welsh Parliament  
Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs  
Committee  
Biodiversity and Rewilding  
CCERA(5) BR 02  
Evidence from Summit to Sea

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### Summary of the Summit to Sea projects response:

- The Summit to Sea project is currently in a co-design phase, involving all those with an interest in designing a locally appropriate set of interventions, building on current good practice and developing a collaborative, strategic and integrated approach to nature recovery, ecological integrity and resilience.
- A number of emergent themes from this process are beginning to form
- The Summit to Sea project is starting to develop a much more sophisticated, nuanced rhetoric built through a co-production approach with stakeholders. This conversation is still developing with the community and stakeholders, therefore it is not possible for Summit to Sea itself to give a position.
- The aim is that the response developing in the area will provide a framing of terminology far more appropriate to a human ecological system where production, livelihoods, heritage and culture are all so closely sown together. In short, a framing where humans are clearly seen as part of the ecological system, and in part their actions have helped create diversity and ecological resilience, but also where negative ecological behaviours and actions along with the reasons for them happening, are more clearly recognised.
- Summit to Sea is particularly interested in the economic aspect of changes in natural resource use and what a nature-based economy could look like. The intention is that this will help develop further dialogue in the area with nature-based business, entrepreneurs, purchasers, organisations and others. This is already developing a much wider discussion around nature-based economies than the usual focuses on food, farming, forestry and tourism (though these are obviously clearly a very important part).
- Summit to Sea awaits the outcome of the consultation into future land management to ensure the project can both feed into and be supported by future policy.

## About the project

**Project Name:** O'r Mynydd i'r Môr – Summit to Sea (to be confirmed during co-design process)

**Project Hosts:** RSPB Cymru

**Current project partners:** RSPB Cymru, Coed Cadw/Woodland Trust, Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, Whale & Dolphin Conservation, MCS, Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau SAC

**Funders:** Endangered Landscapes Programme (£158,000 for two years, June 2020 – June 2022)

### Project Funding Objectives:

1. Local communities and wider public have had meaningful input into the vision and objectives, informing, shaping, and learning about the potential for nature-based activities which align with local culture and values.
2. Habitats are mapped and a strategy is developed to increase connectivity between wildlife rich ecosystems and ecologically positive interventions. Supporting new and existing links between terrestrial and marine towards continued ecological enhancement through engagement of relevant owners/stewards and resource users.
3. Nature-based enterprises are identified, along with opportunities to network and further develop nature based supply chains.
4. The local partnership to deliver the full project is identified / established including agreement on effective governance mechanisms for collaborative decision-making, collective visioning and benefit/revenue sharing.
5. Potential project interventions are locally driven and in support of national policy. Interventions engage public sector bodies where appropriate.
6. A cross sectoral monitoring and evaluation plan developed for the project, with experts from NGOs, government and academic institutions.
7. A funding proposal, if appropriate, for the full project is prepared, along with supporting documentation, and submitted to the ELP.

### Project Overview

The Summit to Sea overarching aim is to work towards how the project can co-design with local stakeholders, landowners and sea users a nature-rich area from the top of Pumlumon, down through wooded valleys to the Dyfi Estuary and out into Cardigan Bay. This will build on linking existing habitats by enhancing and restoring these, whilst delivering a co-managed marine area to improve the management for marine habitat restoration and link this, through coastal and transitional habitats, to the land area.

This phase will develop a plan through a co-design process, aiming to expand the restoration of natural and naturalised processes across this area through peat bog, river, marine and woodland restoration. Natural patterns and distributions of species will be encouraged as the habitat changes and native species will expand their range. The project aims to deliver significant ecosystem services across the catchment. Flood risk to downstream communities will be reduced through interventions developed with local

stakeholders and likely to include peat bog restoration and native woodland, riparian copses and scrub creation. Carbon sequestration and water quality will improve significantly, and recreational users (local and visitor alike) will benefit in terms of health and wellbeing.

### **Brief summary of the Summit to Sea project to date**

Having launched officially in August 2018, after a period of early development, the project was led by Rewilding Britain from 2018 until they departed the project in October 2019 following feedback from the community. From October 2019 until June 2020 the project went through a re-setting which resulted in a new planning phase, which started in June 2020. At this point RSPB Cymru became the hosts of the project.

This new development phase of the project is being funded by a new grant from the Endangered Landscapes Programme. The application for this phase was written with consultation from former project partners, Ecodyfi, Coetir Anian and a number of other local stakeholders including the COPA group.

### **Current Project Team**

With RSPB Cymru as project hosts the Summit to Sea team now consists of a full time Project Development Officer, supported by RSPB Cymru staff. The project also works with a number of contractors, including a communications consultant from the project area, strategic advice and guidance from Steve Evison from Nearly Wild based outside Welshpool, Gwenno Edwards who specialises in co-design processes and online facilitation and translators.

### **The Process – Co-design**

This is the process currently being undertaken in the planning phase, involving all those with an interest in designing a locally appropriate set of interventions, building on current good practice and developing a collaborative, strategic and integrated approach to nature recovery, ecological integrity and resilience. This method is being used to ensure we have a wide range of people able to contribute creatively to the designing of solutions which they help form and deliver. We aren't using this term to describe engagement, we're actually using this in the true sense of the word, going beyond consultation, using co-design to build and strengthen equal networks between people who are effected by and who are trying to create solutions. One of the main principles of co-design is that people are experts in their own experience, and therefore are central to the design process.

### **Progress to date**

- The project held online talks in September (one in Welsh, one in English) now available on the project's website ([www.summit2sea.wales/about](http://www.summit2sea.wales/about)) to ensure stakeholders informed of the progress and process
- A questionnaire on natural resource use in mid Wales has already completed by over 100 people, 75% of whom are based in the area.
- First project workshop focusing on vision asking the question: **How Can This Land And Seascape Do More For Us And Nature In The Future**. This workshop was supported by 15 volunteer facilitators, many of whom were from the area. Over 50

took part in this event and the emerging themes are outlined below. This workshop was held in Welsh with simultaneous translation. It also built on the example of previous local People's Assemblies, (e.g. Land and food production co-hosted by Extinction Rebellion, Ben Lake MP, and Elin Jones MS in June, which the Project Development Officer was involved with as one of the breakout room facilitators).

- Emergent themes (from workshop, questionnaire and 1:1 meetings:
  - Connecting people to nature
  - Developing the nature-based economy: e.g. offering more support and opportunities for nature based business creation and development, economic opportunities around food production, improving local supply chains, introduce aquaculture
  - Improving accessibility and inclusion
  - Biodiversity enhancement: e.g. mixed woodland expansion, connectivity across land holdings
  - Supporting nature friendly farming and fishing
  - Reducing pollution
  - Exploring the impact of the land on marine environments

### **Next Steps...**

To build on the workshop held on 30<sup>th</sup> September, through further workshops with key stakeholders, including discussing with the COPA membership a specific workshop to explore ideas. Working with other local organisations to reach out to a wider range of the local community.

Once a clear vision and criteria for delivery of this vision are in place, the process will then begin exploring specific 'interventions' with stakeholders which can be developed to form a large strategic landscape scale approach to tackling biodiversity loss.

### **Independent Evaluation**

An independent evaluation of the earlier stages of the project (up to June 2020), looking at governance, management and partnership working has been undertaken and will be published in late November. This review will be publicly available through the projects website. It is hoped that by making this report public the lessons this project has learnt, can be shared with other organisations and projects, for the wider benefit of the se

## Response to Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee

Wilding is a very broad term which has gained public interest, engaging those in urban areas. However, the complexities and nuances are often lost. The Summit to Sea project started using the 'wilding' language, but this is now being reframed and has now started to develop a much more sophisticated, nuanced rhetoric built through a co-production approach with stakeholders. This conversation is still developing with the community and stakeholders, therefore it is not possible for Summit to Sea itself to give a position. In fact, the aim is that the response developing in the area will provide a framing of terminology far more appropriate to a human ecological system where production, livelihoods, heritage and culture are all so closely sown together. In short, a framing where humans are clearly seen as part of the ecological system, and in part their actions have helped create diversity and ecological resilience, but also where negative ecological behaviours and actions along with the reasons for them happening, are more clearly recognised.

This project is particularly interested in the economic aspect of changes in natural resource use and what a nature-based economy could look like. There is a lot of talk about green economics and nature-based business, however, **practical** understanding of who those businesses are, how they are defined and how that element of the economy can practically be strengthened is weak.

There are a lot of strategic studies but very little which works and can be easily applied and understood at the business level. We have started conversations with many organisations who work with different parts of this grouping of business (it is much broader than a sector) and important local initiatives such as the Cambrian Mountains Initiative. We have also been working closely with Nearly Wild who have been developing very a practical categorisation approach to nature based business and business relationships with nature, as well as a lot of work with individual businesses (mainly in Powys to date supported by Arwain funding), to better understand practical opportunities which build on what exists. The intention is that this will help develop further dialogue in the area with nature-based business, entrepreneurs, purchasers, organisations and others. This is already developing a much wider discussion around nature-based economies than the usual focuses on food, farming, forestry and tourism (though these are obviously clearly a very important part).

Summit to Sea awaits the outcome of the consultation into future land management to ensure the project can both feed into and be supported by future policy. Innovation and new ways of working emerging from the co-design process, will be key to this.

Rewilding is a term that is emotive but means something to many people (even if it is something different to each of them), and has captured public interest. A discussion needs to take place about the meaning of rewilding and its nuances, building in social culture, the relationship of past, present and future, and properly involving local communities. This forms part of the conversation the Summit to Sea project is currently holding as part of the co-design process.