

Soils Policy Team  
Defra  
Area 3C, Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London SW1P 3JR



11 March 2011

Dear Sir or Madam

**Re: Consultation on reducing the horticultural use of peat in England**

The English National Park Authorities Association (ENPAA) exists to support the policy making process by co-ordinating the views of the ten English National Park Authorities. It is governed by the Chairs of the ten Authorities. Our response represents the collective view of officers who are working within the policies established by the National Park Authorities (NPAs).

ENPAA welcomes the Defra consultation on reducing the horticultural use of peat in England. The consultation document rightly highlights the high importance of England's peatlands in terms of climate change, biodiversity and cultural heritage and clearly sets out the damage caused by peat extraction for horticultural use.

Peatlands are important habitats within England's National Parks. Approximately 119 Mt of carbon is stored in the 449,000 ha of peatland found in English National Parks. National Park Authorities and their partners are undertaking considerable work to maintain and, where needed, restore these peatlands to lock in the carbon store and ensure the continuity of this valuable habitat.

Although there is no longer any commercial peat extraction taking place within English National Parks, ENPAA strongly supports the move to bring a complete end to the horticultural use of peat. From a national perspective all peatlands should be afforded protection from commercial extraction for horticultural use, both to protect biodiversity and particularly to reduce carbon loss for climate change mitigation. Because of the urgency of these issues, we suggest that the current proposals for amateur gardening markets to be peat-free by 2020 and the professional sector to be peat-free by 2030 are not sufficiently ambitious. ENPAA would support a faster pace of change. It will also be important to ensure that there are no unintended side effects of this policy, such as peat being imported to the UK from overseas peatlands which are internationally important and often in pristine condition.

We are happy for this response to be made publicly available and would be happy to discuss any of the points we make further with officials if that would be helpful.

Yours faithfully

Iain Mann  
ENPAA Climate Change Project Officer

**English National Park Authorities Association**

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