



Press release

RWE launches pioneering peatland study to unite biodiversity with sustainable power generation

- **Pioneering research aims to unlock new approaches to peatland restoration**
- **A first-of-its-kind collaboration between RWE and the University of the Highlands and Islands to bridge science and industry**
- **Supporting net zero while protecting Scotland's globally important peatlands and biodiversity**

Swindon, 23 July 2026

RWE has launched an innovative new peatland research project aimed at improving how peat is managed and restored during renewable energy developments.

The initiative reflects RWE's commitment to protecting and enhancing the natural environment. The responsible development of renewable energy goes hand in hand with safeguarding habitats, supporting biodiversity and meeting robust environmental standards. In addition to complying with environmental legislation and planning requirements, RWE continually invests in innovation, research and best practice to deliver lasting environmental benefits.

The two-year initiative brings together expertise from industry and academia through a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) with the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). Jointly funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the project will investigate how excavated peat can be managed to support peatland restoration, helping to inform future renewable energy projects across the UK.

Based in Inverness over two years, specialist Heather Johnstone has joined RWE as KTP Associate: Peatland Management and Restoration Officer. Working closely with Professor Roxane Andersen from the Environmental Research Institute at UHI, Heather will bridge the gap between scientific research and practical application in the field. Heather previously worked as a Research Assistant in Peatland Scientist at the Environmental Research Institute, working on and around the Flow Country UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Knowledge Transfer Partnerships have been helping organisations transfer expertise between academia and industry for more than 50 years. RWE's successful application marks the company's first KTP and reflects a growing recognition of the importance of peatland management in the transition to net zero and a secure UK power system.

The project will focus on a significant gap in current academic research: understanding whether peat excavated during infrastructure projects can be successfully integrated within the peatland habitat restoration operations, maintaining its environmental value.

Heather Johnstone, KTP Associate: Peatland Management and Restoration Officer said:

"I'm excited to start my new role as a KTP Associate: Peatland Management and Restoration Officer with RWE and UHI. I will be looking at how we can best manage the peat excavated for wind farm construction.

Scotland's peatlands are critical environmental assets, which store carbon, provide and protect unique ecosystems, and reduce flood risks, so I'm looking forward to playing a role in protecting and restoring them."

Peatlands play a vital role in supporting biodiversity and tackling climate change. Peat forms very slowly, taking thousands of years to build up. Although peatlands cover only around three per cent of the Earth's surface, they store approximately 30% of terrestrial carbon. In Scotland, peatlands cover approximately a quarter of the land area, but it is estimated that 75% of them are considered degraded or damaged.

Healthy peatlands also provide habitats for rare and specialised species, help regulate water flows and reduce flood risk, while supporting drinking water supplies. Around 72 per cent of the UK's reservoirs are fed by peaty catchments, providing water to more than 28 million people.

The findings from the study could help shape future approaches to renewable energy development by identifying practical methods for reducing waste and restoring peatlands affected by construction activities.

Kristen Liptrot, Biodiversity & Ecology Manager for RWE commented: "It's vital that renewable energy projects are developed in a way that protects and enhances the natural environment. This partnership reflects RWE's commitment to innovation and to finding practical solutions that support both climate goals and the long-term health of Scotland's internationally important peatlands."

RWE's presence across Scotland provides opportunities to trial innovative approaches at operational sites and development projects, with initial work taking place at locations in Caithness.

The project has already attracted interest from stakeholders across the sector and has the potential to influence peatland management practices beyond the UK. As an international renewable energy company, RWE believes the knowledge generated through this work could





inform approaches in other countries where peatlands are an important environmental consideration.

Preliminary findings from the study are expected to be shared after the first year of the project, Heather will lead the publication of a final report at the conclusion of the partnership.

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Pictures of Camster II onshore wind farm for media use (credit: RWE) are available at the [RWE Media Centre](#)

RWE

RWE is leading the way to a modern energy world. With its investment and growth strategy, RWE is contributing significantly to the success of the energy transition and the decarbonisation of the energy system. Around 20,000 employees work for the company in over 20 countries worldwide. RWE is one of the leading companies in the field of renewable energy. RWE is investing billions of euros in expanding its generation portfolio, in particular in offshore and onshore wind, solar energy and batteries. It is perfectly complemented by its global energy trading business. Thanks to its integrated portfolio of renewables, battery storage and flexible generation, as well as its broad project pipeline of possible new builds, RWE is well positioned to address the growing global demand for electricity, particularly driven by further electrification and artificial intelligence. RWE is decarbonising its business in line with the 1.5-degree reduction pathway and will phase out coal by 2030. RWE will be net zero by 2040. Fully in line with the company's purpose - Our energy for a sustainable life.

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