

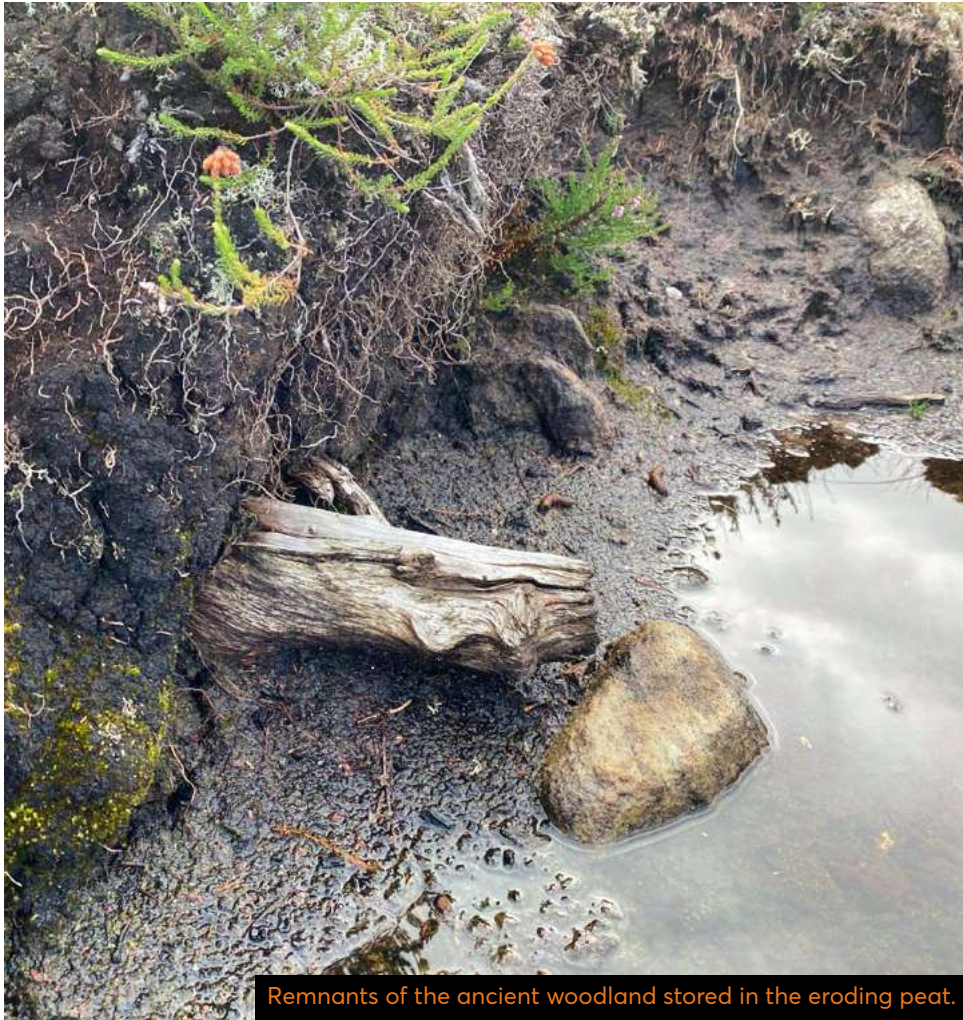


# Far Ralia

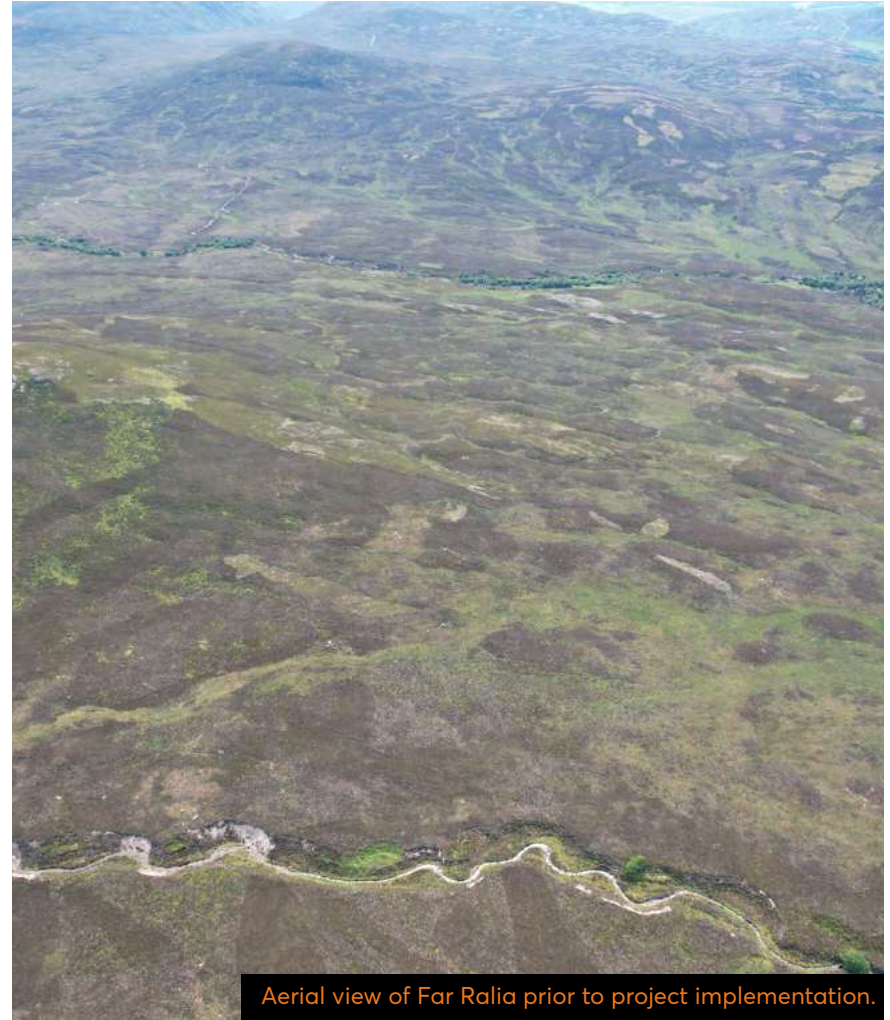
## Case Study

Far Ralia is a 1477-hectare estate situated in the Cairngorms National Park. Previously a sporting estate, Far Ralia was acquired by abrdn in September 2021 as part of the fund's net zero strategy to offset the residual carbon footprint of the portfolio after reductions. It represents one of the largest afforestation and peatland restoration projects in the UK.





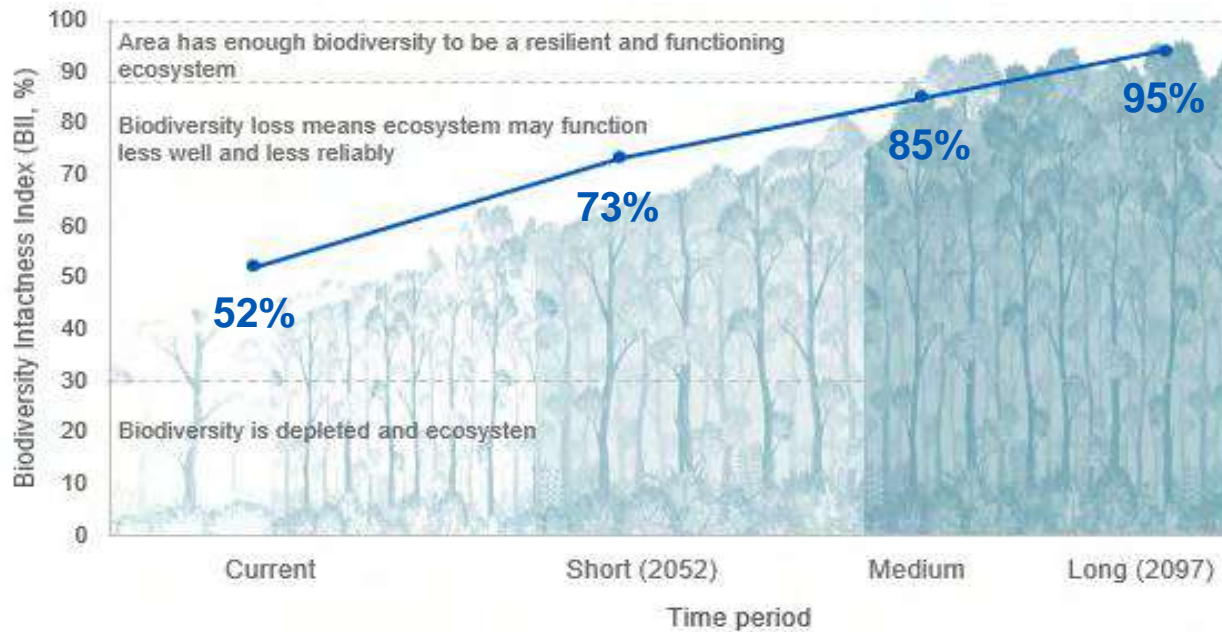
Remnants of the ancient woodland stored in the eroding peat.



Aerial view of Far Ralia prior to project implementation.

**akre** partnered with abrdn to design and deliver an ambitious ecological restoration project. A comprehensive review of Far Ralia was carried out in the form of a Natural Capital Baseline Survey. This included peatland surveys, habitat and breeding-bird surveys. Outputs were modelled in adherence to the UK government's Woodland Carbon Code methodology.

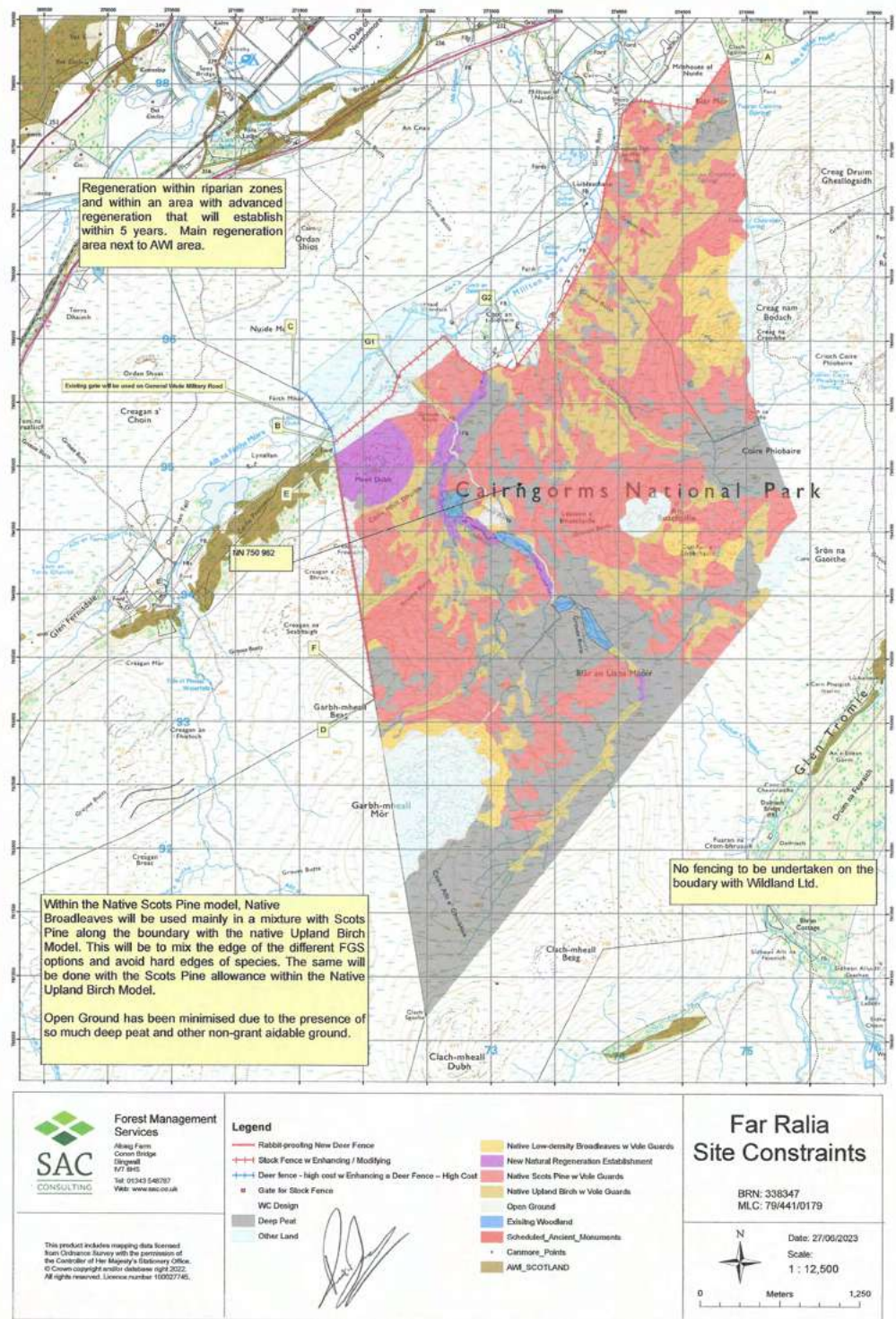
## Far Ralia's Result: Biodiversity Intactness Index (%)



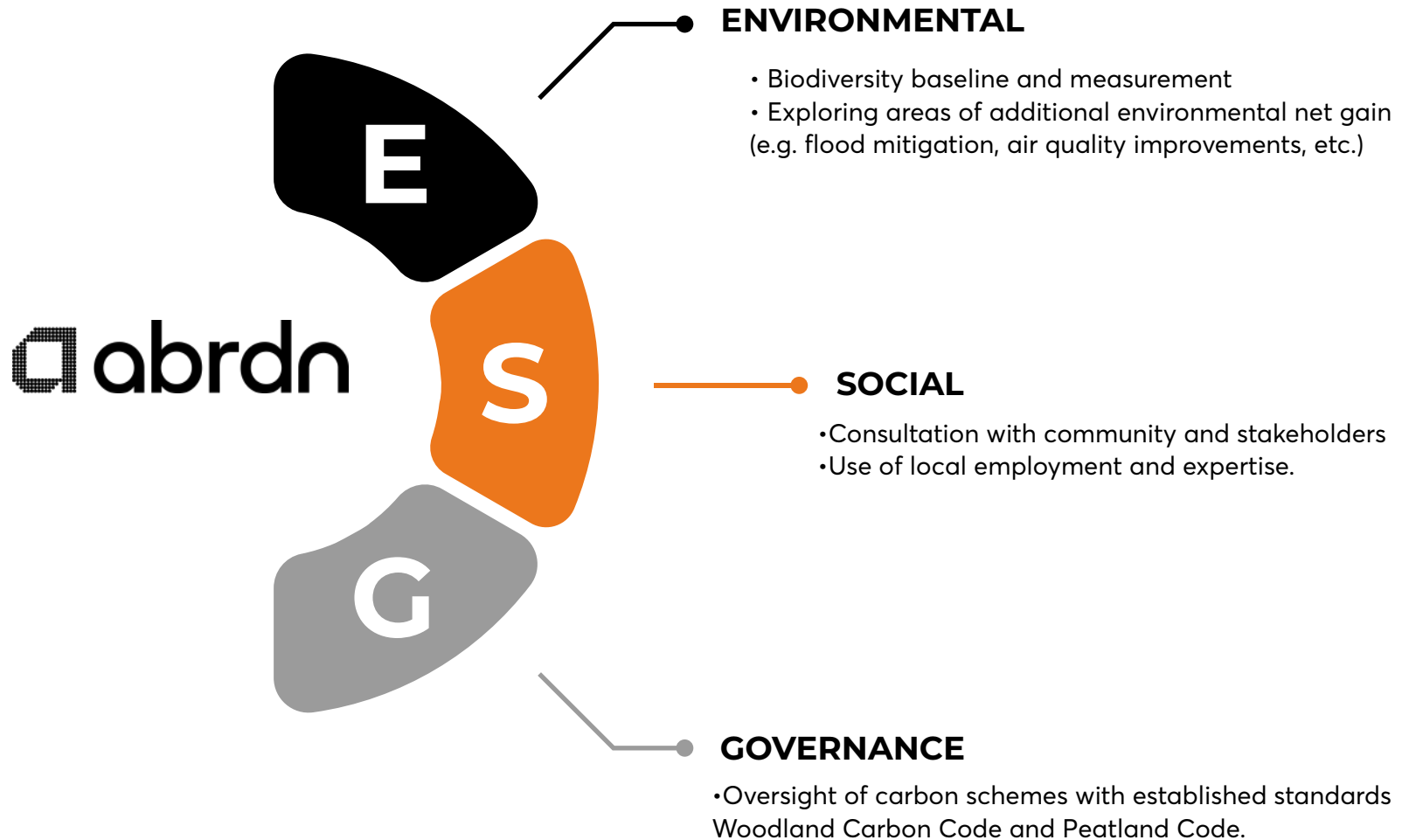
BII	Interpreting BII values
100%	Biodiversity intact
> 90%	The area has enough biodiversity to be a resilient and functioning ecosystem
< 90%	Biodiversity loss means ecosystems may function less well and less reliably
< 30%	The area's biodiversity has been depleted and the ecosystem could be at risk of collapse

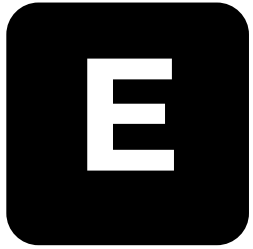
**akre** partnered with the Natural History Museum (NHM) to measure Far Ralia's biodiversity using the Biodiversity Intactness Index (BII) that helps establish a baseline and also understand, monitor, and communicate biodiversity changes and track progress. The BII uses nearly 5 million data points from over 48 000 sites in more than 100 countries and represents a taxonomically diverse set of 58 000 plant, animal, and fungal species. Far Ralia's BII, currently stands at just below 52. However, with planned planting and regeneration, it is expected to recover to over 95 in the long term.

Thousands of data points gathered during these surveys shaped the design of the native woodland creation project. The project aims to restore more than 850 ha of woodland by encouraging natural regeneration and planting 1.2 million trees. In addition 150 ha of degraded peatland will be restored. Focusing on native broad-leaved trees and Scots Pine, the woodland creation element of the project will improve amenity, enhance biodiversity, mitigate flooding and improve air quality.



# Far Ralia ESG Action Plan





## ENVIRONMENTAL

850 ha of native woodland will be created and 150 ha of peatland will be restored.

**akre** grew the trees used for this landscape-scale woodland creation project at its tree nursery in Fife, the world's first carbon negative tree nursery, from seed collected on the hill at Far Ralia.

**akre** trees are produced sustainably in an off-grid controlled environment that results in superior root networks and higher establishment rates.



The akre and abrdn team on a tree planting day at Far Ralia.





# The world's first carbon negative tree nursery.

Modular, scalable and controlled propagation environment

totally off grid





10x more efficient



4x less compost

6x higher establishment rates



## SOCIAL

Community engagement is essential to deploy a landscape-scale restoration project like Far Ralia.

A two-day consultation at Newtonmore Town Hall was held to harness local knowledge and opinions which were then fed into the final project design.

A tree planting day with the Newtonmore School was hosted to engage future generations in the Far Ralia project.



Newtonmore Town Hall Community Engagement Event.

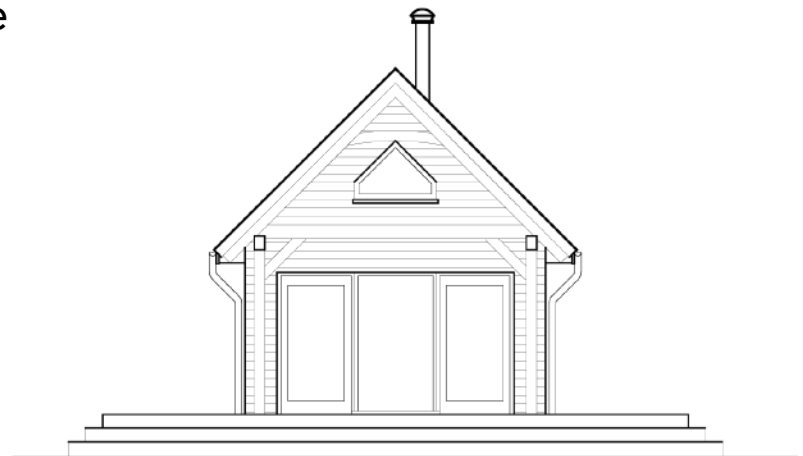
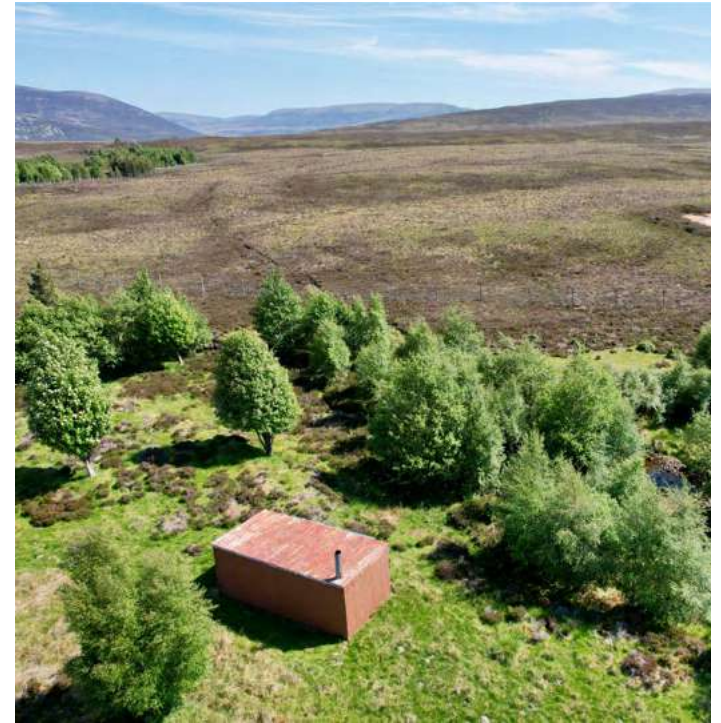


Newtonmore School tree planting day with akre team.

**akre** has designed a carbon negative bothy on behalf of abrdn in the heart of the Far Ralia project. The bothy will be used a logistics hub for the first couple of years of the project, after which it will be opened to the public.

Both the embodied carbon and carbon sequestered in the materials used to construct the bothy have been modelled by Peter Smith at Roderick James Architects to ensure that the build is net carbon negative.

Far Ralia's bothy was named Malcolm's Bothy after the forester Malcolm Young who has been integral to the design of the woodland creation project. Having overcome significant mental health challenges, Malcolm has inspired akre and abrdn to raise awareness for men's mental health.





## GOVERNANCE

Outputs are modelled using the UK government's Woodland Carbon Code and Peatland Carbon Code methodology and calculator.

Key stakeholders, including the Peatland Action team at Cairngorms National Park and the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) have been involved throughout the implementation of the project.


Biodiversity net gain will be monitored by a team of ecologists using leading science-based approaches.



akre conducting a site visit with Peatland Action and CNPA.



06 The dawn flight of the Golden Eagle at Far Ralia caught on akre's trap camera.

An aerial photograph of a vast, open landscape, likely a peatland or woodland restoration site. The terrain is a mix of dark brown and green, with a winding stream or path cutting through the center. In the background, rolling hills are visible under a sky filled with large, white and grey clouds. The sun is shining from the upper right, creating a lens flare effect across the scene.

It is estimated that Far Ralia will deliver up to 195,000 tonnes of claimable carbon to 2060. It represents one of the largest native woodland and degraded peatland restoration projects in the UK and sets a precedent on how committed and tangible action can provide innovative solutions on the pathway to net zero, whilst also reversing biodiversity decline.



**Renwick Drysdale**

Managing Director

✉ [info@akre.co.uk](mailto:info@akre.co.uk)

☎ +44 (0) 1592 725 557

🌐 [akre.co.uk](http://akre.co.uk)

