

CAMBRIAN MOUNTAINS TO THE COAST: DEVELOPING A SHARED VISION FOR OUR LAND AND SEA

What and why?

The Cambrian Mountains Initiative and the Summit to Sea project wish to support a stronger local economy, communities, and nature. With this in common, along with their overlap in geographical areas, they decided to collaborate on this piece of work.

As part of their work to plan for future activity, the Cambrian Mountains Initiative and the Summit to Sea project wanted to develop a vision for the future of our land and sea that is shared by farmers and other natural resource managers. Nature can sometimes get lost when considering community and economic regeneration, and both Summit to Sea and Cambrian Mountains Initiative wanted to place this at the heart of this report, while not losing sight of the other two elements.

This report explores:

- What is the relationship between business and nature currently?
- What are businesses' aspirations for the future?
- Will they benefit nature directly or indirectly if implemented?
- How can the initiatives support business development that will have positive benefits for nature, community, and the economy?

How?

Cambrian Mountains Initiative and Summit to Sea appointed Nearly Wild to carry out the research, which ran from June to November 2021. This team included several locally based interviewers, with the research including:

- Building up a base list of over 100 businesses working with the natural resources.
- Individual one to one discussion with 50 of these businesses (aiming for a spread across the area, business type and size).
- A face to face meeting with 25 farmers and an online meeting with 4 tourism businesses.
- Collaborative working with Summit to Sea and Cambrian Mountains Initiative including analysis of the findings.

Summary of findings

This research focussed on businesses that have a relationship with natural resources where that relationship is fundamental to their commercial activity. These were businesses that have a *direct* relationship with natural resources through using them or harvesting them, and businesses that have an *indirect* relationship but where the natural resources are still core to the business model.

The research explored how the people managing these businesses see and understand the relationship between their business and nature, how this intersects with the community and landscape the business operates in, and what opportunities and challenges they see for the future of their business and its relationship with nature.

This research found that each business could provide many examples of the ways in which they are benefiting nature and there is appetite to do more. Through working with businesses based within the landscape and marine environment, Cambrian Mountains Initiative and Summit to Sea could harness the energy and activity of the individuals who run these businesses, for mutual benefit. Many of these businesses plan for a long-term future because they represent people's livelihoods (often across past and future generations), so they offer a long-term vehicle for delivering benefits for community, the local economy, nature, and climate.

The team believe that there is an appetite amongst these businesses to work collaboratively, with one another, and with Cambrian Mountains Initiative and Summit to Sea, to further develop the ideas that emerged during this work. This would support the common ground that exists: to nurture local communities, to have productive landscape, to enable nature recovery and to play a positive role in tackling climate change.

These research findings have been developed into a series of project concepts that reflect what was heard through the interviews and workshops.

PROPOSED PROJECT CONCEPTS

THE PROJECT THEME	SOLUTION/PROJECT CONCEPT	OUTCOMES/IMPACT
Natural resource manager-inclusive research	<p>Farmer / land manager led 'priority topic' research which incorporates their local knowledge.</p> <p>Partnerships and collaborations with technical experts and resources.</p> <p>Work with Welsh Government to provide knowledge-based input to development of funding mechanisms and policy.</p>	<p>Land managers begin to influence agri-environment policy, and feel valued and involved in decision making processes.</p> <p>Land managers are part of the ownership of data relating to their holdings.</p> <p>There is a growing body of data for the priority topics for land managers, which can then be shared for wider benefit.</p>
Landscape-scale nature improvements	<p>Identification of suitable collaboration areas, e.g. a catchment, or an existing collaborative group of farmers.</p> <p>A project to tackle a self-identified, locally important nature priority (recognising the need for long-term, multi-year support).</p> <p>An opportunity for trialling more innovative and potentially risky solutions.</p>	<p>Land owners/managers are instrumental in bringing about nature improvements, whilst also maintaining robust commercial operations.</p> <p>Measurable positive changes to a particular nature priority.</p> <p>Valuable learning about suitable new approaches for nature improvement.</p>
Supporting businesses to be part of the carbon solution	<p>Support farmers and land managers to deliver carbon solutions (reduction and capture).</p> <p>Investigate the potential for developing local supply chains and a stronger local circular economy.</p> <p>Take an active role in carbon solutions knowledge gain and transfer in the local area through supporting research, trials and information dissemination.</p> <p>Investigate how Cambrian Mountains Initiative and Summit to Sea could play a more direct role in carbon solutions, e.g. the potential for a brokerage role; a mechanism to bring supporters (individuals or business) and landowners/managers to combine resources and work together towards multiple outcomes including nature recovery and carbon sequestration.</p>	<p>A growing body of evidence and knowledge about the role of grazing and pasture in carbon sequestration, relevant to the local area.</p> <p>Landowners and managers are partners in gaining this knowledge.</p> <p>Locally-based carbon solutions are found which work for farmers and land managers and local communities, as well as wider society by contributing to tackling climate change.</p>
Productivity in many dimensions	<p>Build an active network and collaboration of local producers to promote and realise the development of local supply chains.</p> <p>Provide a support mechanism for trials of new ways of working, scaling up and learning.</p>	<p>Buyers (individual and larger scale) can readily find local produce.</p> <p>The area becomes known for its nature-based, 'nature positive' economy.</p> <p>Trials are leading to effective solutions for businesses, nature and climate.</p>

THE PROJECT THEME	SOLUTION/PROJECT CONCEPT	OUTCOMES/IMPACT
Build and promote the narrative	<p>Involve businesses in building and maintaining an evidence base, as a source for accurate messaging.</p> <p>Cambrian Mountains Initiative and Summit to Sea are pro-active in creating messaging and building a new narrative.</p> <p>Provide a means for businesses to take their voices into debates and decision-making; identify effective channels.</p>	<p>Key stakeholders and more of the public understand nuances around land management, nature, food production etc.</p> <p>Problem-solving at a grass-roots level reaches and influences more widely, with businesses' knowledge valued.</p> <p>There is accurate information available in the public arena.</p> <p>Businesses feel that they have a voice and present responses and solutions to relevant bodies, media outlets and agencies.</p> <p>The project is seen as a 'go to' source for information.</p>
'Environmentally friendly' equipment, materials & practices	<p>Identifying products/supply chains where a collaborative approach could help, e.g. collective buying, sourcing advice, setting up a trial.</p> <p>Facilitate shared learning between businesses about what works.</p> <p>Use the learning from this to contribute to the narrative being developed and disseminate about how local businesses benefit nature.</p>	<p>New solutions which enable businesses to operate in a way which is positive for nature and the environment are found, learning shared and adopted more widely across the area. Whilst also delivering commercial benefit.</p> <p>Measurable benefits to local nature and the environment.</p> <p>Supporting businesses to adapt to the effects of climate change and enabling them to contribute to mitigations.</p>

What Next

This research has been integral in informing both the Summit to Sea co-design process and the Cambrian Mountains Initiative forward planning. To read this report in full please visit the projects' websites. For more information on the work of these projects, please contact:

info@summit2sea.wales

mynyddoeddcambrianmountains@gmail.com

Diolch

Thank you to all those who gave their time to this research.

