

THE COMMITMENT TO RESPONSIBLE PEAT USE



scotch whisky
association



What is the Commitment to Responsible Peat Use?

The CRPU is a peer-reviewed outline of our ambition to achieve a sustainable future for peat use in the Scotch Whisky industry. The SWA developed the Commitment following consultation with third party peat suppliers, important supply chain partners and leading NGOs, identifying three areas of action for our peat use: responsible extraction, optimising the malting process, and restoration and stewardship. All three areas must be addressed to realise our commitment to be responsible users of peat and ensure a more sustainable future for the industry.

Scotland's Peatlands

20% of Scotland's landmass storing 1600 million tonnes of carbon but 80% of Scotland's peatlands are degraded.



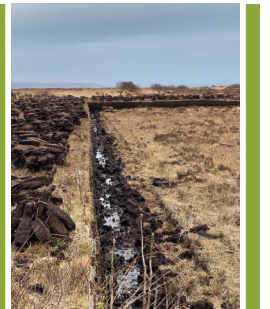
What We're Doing

Responsible Extraction

The Scottish government's [National Planning Framework 4 \(NPF4\)](#) introduced new protections for Scotland's peatlands, meaning that development proposals for new commercial extraction sites and extensions to existing extraction sites are subject to increased conditions before consent is granted by local authorities. The SWA welcomes these increased protections, and we're intent on doing all we can to support the ongoing regulation of peat extraction and to take the initiative to not only meet our obligations as peat users as outlined in government policy but to exceed them.

Restoring the Land

The Scottish government has invested £250m to restore 250,000 hectares of degraded peatland by 2030.



Through the CRPU, we are introducing some new expectations for member-owned extraction sites. These include; regularly reviewing their methods to ensure that we're employing practises that cause minimal harm to peat bogs, sharing progress updates on their legally required restoration plans to help us build a timeline of industry progress, making these plans easily accessible to the public, and hosting a site visit every two years for interested members to share good practise and key learnings. We will always strive to ensure the highest standards of care are applied to our members' extraction sites as set out in best practice guidance and outlined in their site-specific restoration plans.



We also intend to work with third parties across the peat supply chain to minimise our overall impact through the development of a best practise framework for the extraction of peat for use in the Scotch Whisky industry. This industry-specific framework will be published in 2025.

Importantly, this framework will not act as a substitute for existing guidance. Instead, the Framework for Best Practise in Peat Extraction will supplement authoritative best practise guidance already offered by existing environmental bodies. The framework will provide additional perspective specific to the Scotch Whisky industry and will be a required commitment for our members to adopt. It is also a strategic objective of the SWA to ensure further adoption of the framework by third-parties outside of the Association and across the wider peat supply chain. The SWA will seek the input of vital supply chain partners in the development of this framework to ensure that it accurately accounts for the variety of extraction sites used by the Scotch Whisky industry. We will also confer with leading NGOs and seek third party consultancy support where appropriate.

Optimising the Malting Process

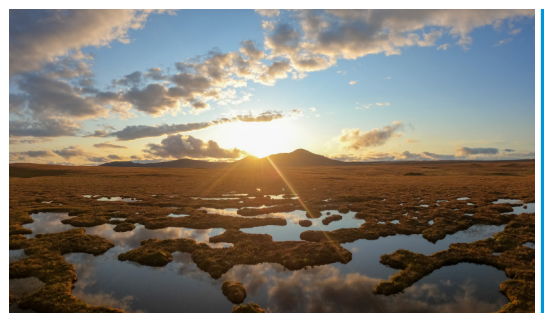
In whisky production, peat is used during the malting process to impart the iconic smoky flavour of many well-known brands. To ensure maximum efficiency in use, the SWA are working closely with the [Scotch Whisky Research Institute \(SWRI\)](#) and the [Maltsters Association of Great Britain \(MAGB\)](#) to support ongoing research to increase our understanding of how flavour is imparted by the peat, what chemical compounds are behind the flavour, and how the kilning process can be improved to ensure that the maximum flavour can be extracted whilst minimising use.

In time this research will present opportunities to increase our efficiency and reduce extraction requirements. Looking ahead, the SWA will continue to facilitate dialogue between those driving the research on peat, maltsters and whisky distillers to ensure that the use of peat in the malting process is led by science and as efficient as possible.



Peatland Restoration and Stewardship

The SWA is committed to promoting restoration efforts throughout the Scotch Whisky industry by strengthening the relationships between our member companies and the bodies spearheading environmental conservation. We'll drive an increase in peatland restoration undertaken by our membership and we're determined to do more to coordinate, communicate, and expand the wide breadth of restoration work and stewardship already carried out by distilleries across Scotland. The SWA has now also committed to increasing its own monetary support towards peatland restoration to align with individual members who are already actively engaging in peatland restoration projects.



The SWA is developing a schedule of events held online and in-person which will bring members into contact with leading NGOs and government bodies to share good practice and further the cause of peatland restoration. This programme will include visits to restoration projects outwith those overseen by our members to increase interaction between distillers and external organisations. Supplementary to this programme will be the development of a toolkit for peatland restoration outlining available support and funding created by the SWA with advice from consulting peatland experts which will be accessible via our Peatland Forum on our members-only Hub. The toolkit will be geared towards helping smaller distillers that have an interest in engaging in peatland restoration.

Using Peat in Whisky

During the malting process, small amounts of peat are burned: the smoke rising to flavour the barley kernels and give that much-loved smoky character to the finished whisky. Current Scotch Whisky production guidelines state that Scotch can only be made from three ingredients – cereals, water and yeast. The addition of any flavouring or compounds that would seek to replicate the flavours that peated malt brings to Whisky is therefore not legal under current guidelines.



How will we stay accountable?

The SWA's Peat Supply Chain Working Group will regularly review the CRPU in order to guarantee that we continue to reflect best practice in peatland protection. In doing so, we'll seek to engage with NGOs, government bodies and our members. Reviews of the CRPU will be conducted annually or following any significant change in policy, legislation, and the peat supply chain. An annual report on the industry's work towards addressing the priorities of the commitment will also be produced to inform of ongoing success and areas of concern.

If you would like to read the full Commitment to Responsible Peat Use document, you can find it at:

scotch-whisky.co/CRPU-long

For more information on the CRPU, please contact info@swa.org.uk

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