



Project contact:

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About SWEEP

The South West Partnership for Environment & Economic Prosperity (SWEEP) is a partnership of three research institutions; University of Exeter, Plymouth University and Plymouth Marine Laboratory.

Funded by the Natural Environment Research Council, SWEEP will bring experts and stakeholders together to solve some of the key challenges faced when working with natural resources. Through the application of science, SWEEP will help ensure the region's natural capital is protected for future generations.

NERC SCIENCE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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Profs. Brett Day and Charles Tyler, and Impact Fellows Sara Zonneveld and Michela Faccioli from the University of Exeter are working with Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities to develop new ways of maximising the Parks' natural assets. These natural assets include landscapes, cultural heritage and wildlife. Each year, National Parks make tough decisions around how to deploy their limited resources, and must balance this against their aims to enrich experiences for visitors, boost the rural economy and ensure the protection of the Parks' special qualities.

This project will initially focus on assisting the Parks in developing natural capital accounts - a way of calculating the total value of the natural resources and services (including habitat condition, wildlife, soil, carbon, water and cultural heritage assets). These accounts will then inform the Park's future Natural Capital Investment Plans, which set out the potential return on investment for any enhancement, maintenance and restoration projects they plan. For example peat land or hay meadow protection, or maintaining public rights of way.

Using the newly gathered information, this project will go on to work with the Parks to develop a post-Brexit agri-environment strategy, providing guidance on the design of local schemes to ensure investments are environmentally effective and economically efficient.

Another particular need of the Parks is to examine the likely impacts of planned local population growth on the recreational services they provide. The team is assisting by modelling the pressures an increasing population will place on the access network, provision of facilities (such as car parks, information, toilets), management of anti-social behaviour, and particularly on the landscape, heritage and wildlife. In addition, the project is exploring alternative economic models for generating income to fund recreation management, conservation work and path repairs.

