

What causes the formation of pipes within peat?

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Natural pipes are common features of peatlands. In UK test sites they have been observed to transport around 13 % of streamflow but over 20% of aquatic carbon to the stream. It has also been shown that piping is more common under particular land management conditions. When pipe networks grow they may degrade the peatland by rapidly expanding and collapsing to form gullies. However, it is still not clear what the key mechanisms are for pipe initiation and growth. There may be several causal mechanisms and it would be useful to determine the relative roles of these processes. This PhD would tackle these issues through field measurements and experimentation. There could also be some scope for modelling if appropriate.

