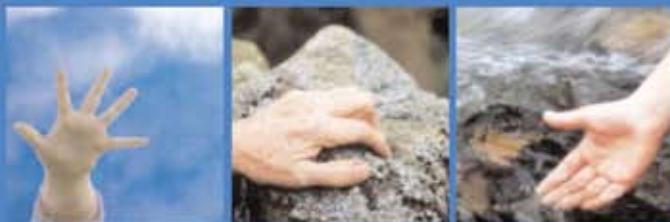


Partnership Review Special



southern uplands partnership
living land, living community

Spring 2007

7 UP



The SUP is coming on seven. It was established at a time when "sustainable development" was a relatively rare phrase, when EU Objective 2 funding was about to arrive, when farmers were still being paid by headage, when there were still fears of widespread upland coniferous afforestation, when social enterprise was hardly mentioned and when Scotland was just getting used to its own Government.

Since then, windfarms have arrived, community planning has been introduced, local rural partnerships have been established, new access legislation has been passed, agricultural support has changed dramatically, foot and mouth disease has come and gone and climate change has shot up the agenda.

In just seven years much has changed, yet many problems remain. The population continues to age as young people

move away with low wages and rising house prices making it hard for them to stay. Farms continue to struggle financially. The "value-added" to local products within the south of Scotland is still low and is often vulnerable. Pressure for new housing threatens to overwhelm small communities and damage unique landscapes. There are many opportunities for Southern Scotland to grasp – including biomass, food, recreation, arts and crafts, tourism based on these and on our rich natural and cultural heritage. The need for sustainable rural development is widely accepted yet examples of good practice are still scarce.

The SUP hopes to continue to play a role in addressing these issues in the coming years.

Pip Tabor, Project Manager.

Foreword: Seven Years of the Southern Uplands Partnership

The South of Scotland has notoriously lacked both profile and voice. The quality and diversity of its landscapes, wildlife and cultural heritage, savoured by a lucky few, remain largely unknown to most Scots and visitors alike. Many of its communities, whatever their other advantages, were always difficult to access. More recently, suffering from declines in their traditional land-based and manufacturing industries, they have not always received the attention bestowed upon others similarly afflicted elsewhere in the country.

What region could be in greater need of effective advocacy to highlight its assets and dilemmas and of imaginative initiatives to find ways of converting the former into solutions to the latter? And what area has greater potential to be a model of sustainable development in a predominantly rural part of a highly urbanised post-industrial nation? These were the challenges that in the mid-1990s inspired a number of individuals and organisations to get together to establish the Southern Uplands Partnership. It is fair to say that not all had exactly the same aspirations. For some the emphasis was on social and economic regeneration. For others it lay on improved care of the environment. Some were looking primarily for more strategic vision; others wanted above all to see more practical on-the-ground projects to generate jobs and enhance the quality of local people's lives. But all had the well-being of the area and its inhabitants at heart.

Seven years on, how far have the Partnership's original ambitions been achieved? Inevitably, there have been some disappointments. The South of Scotland can still be seen as the poor relation of the Highlands and Islands in terms of image and of political attention. Despite considerable successes in forging a greater sense of common identity across the region (not all of them of course the work of the Partnership), it has not (for example) managed to secure a separate programme in the latest round of European Structural Funding. But it was probably never realistic to expect a small-scale initiative like the Partnership to transform in less than a decade attitudes moulded over centuries and to a degree embedded in the intractable facts of geography.

More importantly, any such shortfalls are far outweighed by the astonishing amount that has been achieved so quickly and by such a small team. The number of projects and initiatives launched, and in many cases completed, has been remarkable. So too has been their sheer variety. On the one hand the team has run large-scale capital programmes like the South Scotland Countryside Trails, which have substantially enhanced the region's tourism assets. On the other it has mounted a host of one-off events on issues such as bracken management, the potential of woodfuel and the lessons learnt from the 2001 outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease. Studies have been undertaken into subjects as diverse as nature-based tourism, green labelling, use of the Southern Uplands Way and mountain hares.

Increasingly, other organisations are recognising the value of the services that the Partnership can offer. As well as hosting long-running projects designed to conserve and boost species such as red squirrels and black grouse, it has been commissioned to explore further the potential for a community-



Loch Trool and Fell of Eschoncan

Photo: © sw-images-scotland

supported Biosphere Reserve in the Galloway Hills. It has organised seminars on CAP reform on behalf of the Scottish Executive and has been encouraged by bodies on both sides of the border to investigate the scope for creating access links from Scotland into the Northumberland National Park.

These achievements have been widely acknowledged and applauded. This recognition has been reflected, for instance, in the long-term funding committed by the Carnegie UK Trust to the Communities on the Edge project. Similarly the Partnership was recently selected as a case study in a review of the changing funding needs of the voluntary and community sector because it was regarded as "exemplary in its field". The study's conclusions describe as "very impressive" the work undertaken by the Partnership since its creation.

Especially satisfying has been the extent to which the projects implemented have managed to link the broader sustainable development agenda with local needs and ambitions. Current work in increasing awareness of opportunities in energy conservation and domestic and community-scale renewables provides an excellent example, as in the past have studies into nature-based tourism and the potential for more locally-sourced school food. In this fundamental respect the Partnership really has lived up to those high initial expectations.

It is all the more concerning, therefore, that the Partnership is now facing serious uncertainties over its future funding. After this length of time, it is understandable for some of its long-term supporters to want to take stock of the return on their investment. In an era of tightening public sector budgets, they can quite properly ask whether their current level of contribution is justified. But surely, on the strength of the record described above, any fair-minded assessment could only conclude that the modest amount of money spent on running the Partnership has provided one of the best pay-backs to be found in any such venture – or indeed anywhere.

John Tompson, Director, Scottish Natural Heritage

Glasgow University and the Crichton Campus, Dumfries



Photo: © Crichton University Campus

The proposed withdrawal of Glasgow University from the Crichton Campus in Dumfries feels like a slap in the face. Here Dr. Mary-Ann Smyth, former director of SUP, rural consultant, and new trustee of the Crichton Foundation, makes some personal comments about the Crichton Campus.

History

The Crichton is a leafy park scattered with beautiful Victorian buildings of rich red sandstone at the western edge of Dumfries, near the hospital. It's a peaceful green place, with open views and curving tree-lined drives leading to a church, a hall, a farm, a laundry, and dozens of large, red, individually unique institutional mansions. This 150 year old model estate, originally planned as a university campus, operated for a century as an excellent psychiatric hospital because the existing universities did not want a southern rival.

For a long time, people had argued why Dumfries needed a university. A university attracts bright minds, creates jobs, and generates new enterprise. It trains people to think in new ways, to question and debate, to look at both sides of an argument, to disprove faulty theories and to seek for new ideas. University education, once only available for the few, now gives half the population the tools they need in today's economy.

Was Dumfries being left behind? In the 1960s, when Scotland last considered a new university, Dumfries came second, and the new university was created on the outskirts of Stirling. By the 1990s, many Dumfries and Galloway students were attending Glasgow university but had unusually high drop-out rates. City life doesn't necessarily suit country people. By then, the University of the Highlands and Islands Project had begun, and was attracting significant funding from the Scottish government. UHI Millennium Institute (as it became known) aimed to be rural, be scattered across the Highlands, and to offer relevant courses to people in the Highlands and Islands – music, Gaelic, tourism, environment, business, science, technology and culture – 'the Liberal Arts'. The strategy seems to have worked, and over the last fifteen years the Highlands has become a thriving economy with new tourist, environmental and cultural enterprises and a booming young population.

When asylums went out of fashion, parts of the Crichton estate began to fall into disuse – so when it was announced in 1996 that local efforts had resulted in first Glasgow University, and then Paisley and Bell agreeing to create an educational outpost at the Crichton, I, like many others, was

delighted.

Generous public and private donations built striking glassy extensions to modernize the old buildings; installed classrooms, laboratories, computer networks and libraries, and provided art and book collections.

The students at the Crichton were non-conventional. Compared with other universities, the Crichton educates more locals, more women returning to the market place; and more young people who have overcome difficulties, or who are the first in their family to attend university. This is exactly what is required for a rural region rich in older people, and with lower than average wages. Dumfries and Galloway needs to provide local education for people who would find it difficult to travel to the city. Dumfries and Galloway needs to encourage people in mid-life to find the self-belief to apply for better jobs or start new enterprises. And Dumfries and Galloway needs to attract and retain more younger people.

The Campus Today

The Crichton campus now has about 1000 undergraduate students, most of whom are doing Glasgow University courses. Student numbers are increasing – yet only 88 of Glasgow's places are fully funded by the SFC (Scottish Funding Council). The Glasgow courses are high quality, and produce good graduates in environmental studies, Scottish studies, social work, tourism – all via a 'Liberal Arts' approach. Many graduates find local employment; the confidence of a degree helps others become self-employed. In 2006, the environment department developed a popular new course, Environmental Sustainability.

Liberal Arts is itself an exciting idea, one that I hadn't come across before. It is the recreation of a Scottish Enlightenment concept – an education via both debate (reason and argument) and science (critical thinking). Subject areas include creative writing, environment, health, humanities (contemporary culture, philosophy, psychology, power), and Scottish studies. This sort of integrated education makes the "silo mentality" of the twentieth century seem old fashioned.

Glasgow University has about 50 first rate academic staff, about 20 post graduates, and a new Centre for Research into Regional Development. People who attended their short courses have been rurally successful: they have gone on to write books and plays for Radio 4 and created award winning poetry.

Alongside Glasgow, various other educational institutes offer education at the Crichton. The University of Paisley offers courses in business and management (60 students); Bell College in nursing, and Open University provides potential for various long-distance possibilities. Dumfries and Galloway College is about to build itself a new home next door (vocational courses for 5000 students) adjacent to the Scottish Agricultural College's experimental dairy farm. The hospital has become a training hospital. Some of the buildings have become a business park. Together, this campus is an exciting place for integrated learning.

If Glasgow University withdraws – what next?

Glasgow University announced in February 2007 that it wishes to withdraw from the Crichton. If Glasgow University's courses for creative thinkers are withdrawn, there would be a gap, even a brain drain. Glasgow's courses encourage local historians, artists, tourism developers, countryside experts, writers, community activists, and rural entrepreneurs. Removal of these courses could wipe out the unique strengths that a rural campus can have over an urban one.

Their reasons for Glasgow's withdrawal have been much debated in the press (£800,000 per year loss, because insufficient fully funded student places had been allocated by the Scottish Funding Council). What is galling is the apparent high level of funding for the Highlands, by comparison. This is an issue which has long interested the SUP. Figures from the Crichton Development Company illustrate the disparity.

Compared with the Highlands and Islands, per capital, Dumfries and Galloway has:

- *half the number of students*
- *one sixth of the higher education capital investment (£15 per head instead of £85 per head)*
- *one seventh of the number of fully funded higher education places (1.2 per 1000, compared with 8 per 1000 population in the Highlands and Islands)*
- *one eighth of the recurrent funding for higher education (£4.81 as opposed to £38)*

It's not that I think the Highlands gets given too much, its merely that I would like a similar level of funding in southern Scotland. I understand that it is cheaper to educate people in cities – but Dumfries and Galloway is not a city economy; less than 1% of our population commute to a city. This region needs higher education to suit a rural economy.

I believe it's time for a proper basis to the Crichton campus. The Scottish Funding Council should increase the number of fully funded higher education places available at Dumfries. People at Dumfries should decide the balance of these places, whether for courses accredited by Glasgow or Paisley or Bell, or any other university, according to applications and need.

The Southern Uplands Partnership has always argued that the rural south of Scotland has special needs because the opportunities here are different from those in the central belt. I agree. Southern Scotland needs people who can become self employed or start their own businesses. Southern Scotland needs people who can add value to farm products, fish products, and timber. Southern Scotland needs people who can think laterally to succeed with new opportunities in renewable energy, tourism, the service industry, writing, arts and crafts. Southern Scotland needs people to work in the countryside to create new jobs, and make the area more economic. Southern Scotland needs incoming people to feel enthusiastically welcomed so that they can take up some of these opportunities, whatever their age. It is these sort of needs that need to be addressed by a university campus at

Dumfries.

I think the Crichton should play to its regional strengths. I think it should provide technical and useful courses for people looking for new skills, and creative courses to help people blossom. It would be profitable to provide short interesting courses to appeal to intellectuals and older people, not necessary linked to a degree. I also think we, as a region, should be developing even more research into subjects we are good at, especially wood fuel, renewable energy, carbon management (in bogs, forests and soils), rural networking, food, and rural regeneration through the development of theme towns. These are the sorts of areas that Glasgow University has begun developing at the Crichton.

If Glasgow leaves, I think the Crichton Campus will need to find an alternative way to provide this education. Whether this would mean inviting a different university to Dumfries, or developing more home-grown initiatives, remains to be seen. Perhaps a hybrid would be the best option – an institute founded and funded from Dumfries, but with connections to other universities.

We also need to understand (and to teach Scottish Enterprise) how arts and crafts (including writing, singing and performing) can make a region sparkle with energy despite having apparently low income.

In the US, this is called 'the buzz' – it can't be measured using economic statistics, yet it is the catalyst of future prosperity. It is what drives California, New York, and even Edinburgh's festivals. It is an invisible creative force, and it is powerfully attractive.

We know Dumfries and Galloway has the buzz, but stifling a good hive is not the usual way to help bees make honey.

Mary-Ann Smyth
mas@craigfarm.co.uk

Where and what are the Southern Uplands?



Cairnholy chambered cairn and standing stones



Moffat Hills looking across Annan Water

The Southern Uplands are the hills stretching from coast to coast across Southern Scotland. The northern boundary is roughly the Southern Upland Fault (which runs from Girvan to Dunbar), and the southern boundary is the border with England. This is a large area of 3 million acres, representing about one sixth of Scotland's land area.

In many ways, the Southern Uplands share the same characteristics as other Scottish uplands and highlands. There is a sparse population, high levels of self employment, and declining traditional industries. The Southern Uplands differs from other areas by having pockets of severe economic disadvantage (in ex-mining and ex-textiles towns), and other areas of comparative prosperity. Unlike the Highlands, the Southern Uplands has comparatively few large estates, and more owner-occupation of family farms. Many hill farms were replaced, especially in the west, by conifer afforestation.



Mountain biking, Innerleithen

Photos: © sw-images-scotland.co.uk

Why a Southern Uplands Partnership?

In 1998 consultation was undertaken by RSK ERA Ltd to establish whether there was the need for a rural initiative to work across southern Scotland. Five main issues were raised that a new organisation could work to address.

- Many good ideas and initiatives were flourishing in isolation, help was needed to encourage cross fertilisation.
- There was insufficient interaction between agencies, land managers, environmental NGOs and community representatives.
- More efficient use of resources was required to achieve maximum leverage of funds from public and private sectors.
- Much Scottish land use policy and land reform was biased towards the Highlands situation and not appropriate for the Southern Uplands.
- Sustainable land use and rural development decisions needed to be made by local people and they needed a voice.

What was agreed?

It was decided that the Southern Uplands Partnership (SUP) would be constituted as a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. SUP would have a democratic basis but no statutory powers. The role would be unique because,

unlike other local partnerships, SUP would work across local authority boundaries. The emphasis would be on rural and uplands land use, with a focus on the sustainable needs of rural people and businesses.

Membership would be open to any individuals, groups and businesses that had an interest in the Southern Uplands.

Initially SUP was intended to be primarily a strategic organisation. While its strategy would have no statutory effect, it would be a tool to inform policy decision making by agencies and authorities with statutory powers.

Nine years on

Since 1998 and the RSK ERA report things have grown and evolved for SUP. Starting with one member of staff, Project Manager Pip Tabor, the Partnership expanded rapidly and currently has 12 full time and two part-time posts filled. Additionally it contracts out specialist work each year. For the past two years SUP has generated more than £0.5m p.a. of project funding, delivering a wide range of projects across the Scottish Borders, South Lanarkshire, Dumfries & Galloway and into the Ayrshires.

While SUP continues to contribute strategic input it has become increasingly involved in project delivery. Considerable expertise in drawing together partnership projects, fundraising and cross border working have been developed. This was not envisaged at the start, but by bringing groups and individuals together to discuss issues, many project ideas have been generated. Frequently the other partners in the group were unwilling, or unable, to take on fundraising or project management. In some cases progress could not be

made unless the lead was taken by an “objective partner” like SUP. Often there was no opportunity for a commercial – or on occasions even nominal – management fee, which made the project unattractive to other organisations. SUP followed a policy of becoming involved if it was felt a positive outcome could be delivered. SUPs belief in cross border working – and willingness to take on the onerous administration which resulted from multiple grant application forms – meant that a number of projects were delivered that would not have been taken forward otherwise. These include some of the projects covered in this newsletter.

Projects large and small

The range of projects where SUP has led or played an active role is wide in terms of scope, scale and geography. Some are high value, such as South of Scotland Countryside Trails, a £700,000 project delivering multi use trails. Others are long running, for example Red Squirrels in South Scotland, now in its 7th year. There are unique projects such as Communities on the Edge, plus rural employment and training reviews, bracken control seminars, mountain hare surveys, investigations into adding value to local produce and much, much more.

While projects have taken up an increasing amount of time over the last five years, input at a strategic level has remained an important part of SUPs work. This is generally unpaid, time consuming and demanding, but has always been seen as an important part of SUPs remit. Strategic work has included running seminars on CAP reform for SEERAD and WWFN (2003), coordinating responses to the RDR consultation on behalf of Dumfries & Galloway Leader+ LAG (2005), and both formulating a response to the RDP on behalf of SUP and encouraging others to become involved in the debate (2006).

Involving people and groups and agencies

The SUP is also a membership organisation with members paying an annual subscription.

SUP currently has an impressive 120 group members. These range from Community Councils and local initiatives to businesses, Voluntary Organisations, charities and agencies from right across the region. There are also a loyal number of individual and life members who support the Partnership by annual or one-off subscription – an increasingly important part of SUP core funding. Every effort is made to keep membership costs for individuals down so that people who are keen to be

involved are able to do so. This is however a battle as costs of communicating with members continue to rise, something we aim to offset to some extent by moving from a printed newsletter to an email version later in 2007. Increased access to the world wide web has made the SUP website an important means of getting messages out to members and others. Reports on work undertaken, consultations and forthcoming events are on the web and free for anyone to access.

Impact

While it is possible to record projects delivered and input to strategies, it is very difficult to quantify the real impact that SUP has had. There are the projects undertaken that would not have been delivered without SUP to coordinate them. And the cross border projects with a massive administrative burden that others would have shied away from. Plus conservation activities that have brought together interests that can often be difficult to get round a table. Also development work that has raised issues that have then been taken up by large agencies. These would be difficult to put a value on, even if there was time to do it.

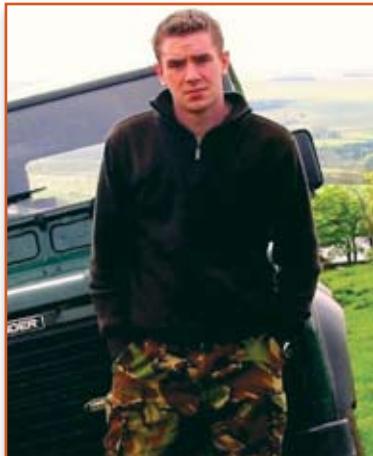
Fortunately SUP has recently been part of a survey of selected charities undertaken by a consortium of major funders including the Carnegie UK Trust. This has given us some objective – and positive – feedback on the work we do. The study found SUP to be a strategic organisation which works with groups, organisations and partnerships and adds value to other organisations by drawing communities into partnerships projects. It identified that SUPs work had demonstrated success in impacting upon organisations and policy makers and had played an important role in facilitating debate even if it was often frustrated by bureaucratic constraints.

Are you interested?

If you are interested in what SUP does, or in partnership projects or becoming hands on in the governance of the charity, we would be pleased to hear from you. New members are always welcome, as are groups who would like to work with us on a partnership project. Our Board is made up of Directors who stand for a period of three years. We are always interested in attracting new, suitably skilled Board members, particularly those with business management, fund raising and marketing expertise and the time to input to the development of SUP.



Black Grouse Project



Project Officer Thomas Adamson

these counts have shown a continued decline of the male population. Findings of the latest UK black grouse survey in 2005 showed a decline of 29% in Scotland with the most severe decline recorded in the south east with a decline of 69%.

The black grouse population in Scotland has been in decline over the past 100 years or so. There was a temporary reprieve during the 1950s-70s when large areas of the uplands were commercially planted with conifers. This provided a temporary increase in habitat for black grouse but once these trees grew and the canopy closed the habitat was lost and the decline continued.

To date the project has produced management plans for some of the key landholdings within the project area with other plans to be produced for other key landholdings. Two black grouse events have been held. The first event was a well attended management day, held in June 2006 where the main issues affecting the species (habitat and predators) were discussed, followed by a visit to look at ideal black grouse habitat and predator control methods.

The second event was an evening event held in January of 2007, Hugo Straker of the Game Conservancy Trust and Dr Murray Grant of RSPB each gave a presentation about the ecology, threats and management techniques relating to black grouse. Following the presentations, there was a lively debate covering a range of issues although much of it centred on predation and raptors in particular.

The raptor issue is always one that will be raised and debated. It is known that goshawk numbers are increasing and there are concerns that black grouse may have entered a "protected species predation trap" where the best breeding efforts in the current climate cannot keep up with predation by protected raptor species. Populations of many raptors have not yet reached their 'proposed' carrying capacity so while the black grouse are decreasing many of its predators will continue to increase. The basic facts are that crow and

Thomas Adamson, the Southern Uplands Partnerships Black Grouse Project Officer, has been in post since September 2005. Good progress has been made, with lek counts being carried out in the spring of 2006 identifying the current local population (the 'lek' is the display of the black grouse, in which the males display to attract the attention of the females (greyhen) for mating). Unfortunately

raptor numbers are increasing and black grouse numbers are decreasing. Much of the existing data is observational and anecdotal requiring scientific analysis of the significance of these relationships. We are encouraging more research to be commissioned so that answers can be found before this spectacular bird disappears from the area..

The project has recently secured funding to carry out heather burning in some key areas to provide the mosaic effect which black grouse and other moorland birds require on moorland. This burning is a useful management tool to maintain a rich biodiversity in the uplands.

Black grouse are known to be killed by flying into unmarked fences and we are keen to ensure as many potential risk fences are marked as possible. The project has also recently secured funding from LEADER and SNH to mark 20 kms of potentially hazardous fences within the project area.

The next step for the project is to produce further management plans and conduct the 2007 lek counts to get the latest information on current local black grouse populations. By conducting these counts it allows us to have more of an understanding of black grouse ecology and which management prescriptions are working or failing. Within south-eastern Scotland black grouse are now largely associated with the edge of moors managed for red grouse shooting. They benefit from the habitat work and predator control conducted as an essential part of red grouse management.

If anyone is aware of the location of any black grouse leks and is able to count them in the spring (Between 15th March – 15th May) these numbers would provide useful information if passed on to the Black Grouse Conservation Officer (contact details below). We are also looking for feather samples as part of an international genetic study of black grouse. Findings to date have shown that the South-east Scotland population is more closely linked to the North Pennines population than to the population further North. Please contact the project officer if you have any feather samples or might be able to get some.



We are currently exploring the possibility of growing the current black grouse project into an exciting larger upland restoration project, that will not only benefit black grouse but also many other upland species through the creation and restoration of upland habitats.

Thomas Adamson, Black Grouse Conservation Officer
Tel: 01750 725157 **Mobile:** 07917892648
e-mail: tom@sup.org.uk

Red Squirrels in South Scotland

Red Squirrels in South Scotland (RSSS) was launched in 2000. Prior to this, two voluntary groups were in place – Red Alert South West Scotland and Borders Squirrel Management Group. These groups were successful in securing funding for two Red Squirrel Conservation Officers to be employed under the Southern Uplands Partnership. These posts are now filled by Richard Wales and Ann-Marie McMaster cover the Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway respectively. Both voluntary groups remain in existence and continue to provide support to Red Squirrels in South Scotland.

The project, now in its seventh year, has been successful in achieving numerous goals. Raising awareness of red squirrel issues was a big part of Phase I and indeed continues to be part of the Conservation Officer's job. Public awareness and enthusiasm is vital for public support and involvement in conserving red squirrels in south Scotland and indeed people are encouraged to assist with squirrel monitoring. Casual sightings are recorded and added to a cumulative distribution map. This shows red squirrel locations but more recently it has become a useful tool for highlighting grey squirrel incursion routes into south Scotland. Members of the public can support the project in others ways from building feeder boxes to holding a donation box.

Work on red squirrel habitat was a significant part of Phase



Photo: © Cheryl Easton

I of the project. All woodlands in south Scotland over 200 hectares in size were assessed to ascertain their suitability for long term red squirrel conservation. Various criteria were considered – red squirrel presence, defenceability against grey squirrel

incursion, tree species present, age of trees and landowner support. In total 23 red squirrel Priority Woodlands have been identified in south Scotland. It is hoped that through effective management these Priority Woodlands will provide a safe haven for red squirrels in south Scotland. During Phase II of the project Guidance Documents were written for each of the Priority Woodlands detailing best practice for woodland management to favour red squirrels. Monitoring Priority Woodland management and red squirrel populations are both ongoing processes.

Red Squirrels in South Scotland works closely with Ayrshire Red Squirrel Group and the northern England group, Save our Squirrels, to facilitate the positive management of large areas of northern England and southern Scotland for red squirrels. Ongoing co-ordinated effort between the groups is necessary to secure a future for red squirrels. Actions taken and lessons learned by Red Squirrels in South Scotland will have implications for red squirrel conservation and grey squirrel control not only in the remainder of Scotland but also in mainland Europe, as grey squirrels have been released in Italy.



Richard Wales

Funding applications are necessary every two to three years and currently proposals are being written to secure monies for Phase IV of the project. Red Squirrels in South Scotland is currently supported by Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland, Heritage Lottery Fund, Scottish Executive, Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime and a large number of charitable trusts. Without these funders work would not be possible. It is vital that the project continues, and in so doing, increases the survival chances of the red squirrel in southern Scotland – and the United Kingdom as a whole.

Grey squirrel sightings are increasing with the dispersal of grey

squirrels north from England and south from Ayrshire, south Lanarkshire and the Lothians. Grey squirrels threaten red squirrel survival by competing for the same food and habitat and also by spreading a disease known as Squirrelpox virus. Grey squirrels do not suffer from the disease but it is fatal to red squirrels, resulting in a painful death within 15 days. Grey squirrel sightings are recorded and where appropriate, training in grey squirrel trapping and despatch is provided. Traps and blood testing kits are also available for use. Grey squirrel control and blood testing is vital to reduce the threat to red squirrels and to monitor the spread of disease-carrying grey squirrels. The necessity for grey squirrel control has led Scottish Natural Heritage to provide funding for 2 Grey Squirrel Control Officers to be employed by the Southern Uplands Partnership. The Officers efforts are currently centred on the Newcastleton/Langholm/Lockerbie area in which grey squirrels have tested positive for the virus. Good progress is being made – both in terms of the number of grey squirrels being controlled and the number of landowners agreeing to carry out control.



Ann-Marie McMaster

In September 2006 Shona Munro was appointed as the Red Squirrel Conservation Officer for Ayrshire. This two year post was created to consolidate the huge amount of work being undertaken by the voluntary Ayrshire Red Squirrel Group which is a registered charity seeking ways to sustain Ayrshire's population of Red Squirrels. www.ayrshireredsquirrels.org.uk

The Ayrshire Red Squirrel Conservation Officer (RSCO) post is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage and the South Ayrshire Council. With the Southern Upland Partnership employing the RSCO Ayrshire as well as the Red Squirrel Conservation Officers in Dumfries and Galloway and the Borders the three projects communicate regularly to share information and expertise. The Ayrshire project, however, runs separately to those of Red Squirrels South Scotland with both the Borders and Dumfries and Galloway projects completing their third year.



Shona Munro

The drive to protect red squirrels in Ayrshire involves working closely with landowners, foresters, gamekeepers, school children, volunteers and the wider public to ensure a continued healthy population of red squirrels in Ayrshire. Shona and the Ayrshire Red Squirrel Group can be found at various events throughout Ayrshire as well as in schools raising public awareness through guided walks, local talks and education work. Updating records of both red and grey sightings through survey work is an important area of the groups' work as is speaking to local land owners and land managers to encourage grey squirrel control and squirrelpox testing.

If you would like to report sightings of red or grey squirrels, or to become involved as a volunteer in the Red Squirrels in South Scotland or the Ayrshire Red Squirrel Group project please contact us.

Anne Marie McMaster in Dumfries & Galloway – 01387 711804

Richard Wales in Scottish Borders – 01750 23446

Shona Munro in Ayrshire – 01292 520929

Working with Landowners

The 2006 AGM brought Richard Wakeford, head of SEERAD, to join us at Lockerbie Manor Hotel. He explained the policy makers view was that diversification would be key to a sustainable rural economy and a strong natural environment. Increasingly many farm businesses will need to look to activities such as tourism, environmental services and adding value to produce to remain viable. He suggested that SUP should work in this area.



Photo: © sw-images-scotland.co.uk

Having undertaken a study to look at red meat production and value-adding in Dumfries & Galloway in 2005/6 we were aware that ideas that looked simple – for example selling meat produced in the region to local schools – might not be as straightforward as they appeared. However we were determined to explore the possibilities. (The full report on the red meat study can be found on our website – www.sup.org.uk – on the Publications page, titled Local Food, Local Plates).

Working with Castle Creavie Consultants we are now delivering a project that will work with farmers, or members of farming families, to develop an idea for a diversified enterprise. The programme includes workshops, study tours, group meetings and one-to-one consultancy on the farm. SNH decided to support the project in Dumfries & Galloway as a pilot with the potential to be rolled out if it proved successful.

At the suggestion of SNH it was agreed that the project would be delivered across the three National Scenic Areas (NSAs) in Dumfries & Galloway. This gives the project a great start as the NSAs have a development officer, Anna Johnston, who has been working there for some time and who is able to assist with contacts and introductions. This is a great help. It also means that we are working in areas with existing Landscape Management Plans. While there are three distinct NSAs they do have some features in common – first the beauty of their landscapes which have resulted in the NSA designations, also their coastal location and hilly backdrops.

The project is at the start up stage at the time of writing, but it is hoped that it will help develop business ideas for up to 20 new enterprises by the spring of 2008. Alongside this there the intention to develop a toolkit that other businesses or organisations can use, allowing them to benefit from the findings of the project. An important part of this effort is to make sure that we link up to work going on elsewhere, through Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Agricultural College, the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group and others. As our project is very much the starting point for new enterprises those taking the business plans forward will be keen to link to these organisations as their ideas develop.

Who's Who at SUP

Convenor - Sir Michael Strang Steel

A farmer and landowner for 24 years and a keen forester, Sir Michael served as Forestry Commissioner for 11 years and is a member of Deer Commission for Scotland. He is currently Chairman of Scottish Forestry Trust and Royal Scottish Forestry Society Trust Co. Cashel and also Trustee of Borders Foundation for Rural Sustainability. He has planted native woodlands through Borders Forest Trust on various Philiphaugh Estate properties and has embarked on a nature-based tourism project for salmon viewing using under-water cameras as well as opening access routes on the Estate.

Wilma Finlay - Director

Wilma has lived in Galloway for 12 years, during this time she has helped her husband David to diversify the family livestock farm into dairy processing and tourism. Their business, Cream o' Galloway, is now 10 years old and now employs 16 full time permanent staff with an additional 30 seasonal staff. Wilma is also involved in her local community's charitable company - the Gatehouse Development Initiative.

Ogilvie Jackson - Director

Ogilvie was born in Selkirk and brought up on Wardlaw, the family hill-sheep farm in the Ettrick Valley. Since 1974 Ogilvy and his wife Daphne have been running the farm of Cossarhill at the head of the Ettrick Valley. In recent years he has been actively trying to improve the infrastructure of the valley, lobbying for better roads and telecommunications (mobile phone services and broadband). For the last 20 years he has been sitting on the local branch of the NFU as a committee member.

John Moorhouse - Director

John spent his early career in the oil industry as a senior executive for Shell UK Ltd. His own company, 2025, organises seminars designed to stimulate future thinking. John is Convenor of Gordon Cook Conversations that bring together small groups of tomorrow's leaders to develop scenarios of the future. His many activities include roles as a Trustee of the Big Issue Foundation, a Council Member of the Chest, Heart and Stroke Association Scotland, a board member of Columba 1400, a Trustee of The Columba 1400 Foundation and of The Crichton Foundation, Dumfries. Married to Sue, and with four grown-up children he now lives Galloway.

Councillor Eileen Logan, South Lanarkshire Council - Director

Eileen has been representing the rural area of South Lanarkshire as an elected member for over 23 years. She served as Provost under Clydesdale District Council and since reorganisation has held the Chair of South Lanarkshire Council's Finance and IT Services Committee, the South Lanarkshire Rural Partnership also representing South Lanarkshire Council on the local Tourist Board. Due to her background and experience Eileen leads on all rural issues from a South Lanarkshire Council perspective and having deep rooted commitment to raising the profile of rural development issues. She is a strong supporter of partnership and cross-boundary working.

Joan Mitchell - Director

Joan has a long standing interest and commitment to rural development, livestock farming, upland ecology and tourism in Dumfries & Galloway. She is the partner in a family upland farm and has an academic background in upland ecology. Joan has had various roles in public life associated with these themes and is an elected councillor for Cree Ward, Chair of Dumfries & Galloway Council, Chair of Planning & Environment Committee, past Chair of Dumfries & Galloway Tourist Board, member of South of Scotland Forestry Advisory Forum, member of South Scotland European programme Monitoring Committee and a former member of EU Committee of the Regions.

Charles Smith-Maxwell - Director

Charles Smith-Maxwells background is in farming, in particular fish farming. He came to the Borders in 1977, moving to Yarrowford in 1980. The trout farm at Philiphaugh Mill was built and operated by his company from 1980 until 2001 when it was sold to a Norwegian company, Pan Fish. He was an original member of the company Scot Trout which was created by a group of like-minded fish farmers to market their production more effectively. Agriculture, rural diversification and creating long term viable businesses are some of his key interests.

Simon Thorp - Director

Simon Thorp has been the Director of The Heather Trust since May 2002. Prior to this, he gained extensive experience as a chartered surveyor working in rural management, which included work on private estates, a period with SNH and working for a firm of chartered surveyors. The range of experience includes upland habitat management, hill farm business management, farm tenancies, farm buildings and sporting management. Simon is based in Dumfries from where The Heather Trust promotes an integrated approach to moorland management in all parts of the UK and has links to all the main organisations with interests in the uplands.

Robert Hall - Director

Robert Hall grew up in the Southern Uplands on the Dumfriesshire hill sheep and beef cattle farm which he now runs. Sustainable agriculture, natural history and field sports are amongst his main interests. After graduating he was involved with sheep research and wool advisory work in the Falkland Islands and he now market Falklands wool. Married with two children, Robert is extremely keen that the Southern Uplands are physically and financially sustainable for its people and future generations. He is a Glencairn Community Trust trustee.

Veronica Davidson - Director

Veronica Davidson grew up in the Ettrick Valley in the Scottish Borders on a hill sheep farm run by her father. She kept a close tie with the farm returning every year to help with the lambing. Following a career as an event organiser and then radio producer she chose to return to the Borders so that her daughter could also enjoy a country upbringing. Veronica is a councillor with Scottish Borders Council where she continues to push for a greater input to and awareness

of the needs and potential of the rural areas to ensure that they have a sustainable future as a place to both live and work.

Michael Williams - Director

Michael Williams is farmer from East Lothian and member of SNH's East Areas Board. Michael is also a former Chair of FWAG in Scotland and a keen supporter of renewable energy. He is active in a number of charities. Michael has been the nominated representative of SNH on the SUP Board. He is now off the SNH Board and we are awaiting a new nominee.



Photo: © sw-images-scotland.co.uk

Lowther Hills under a spectacular sky

Former Staff

Where are they now?

Robin Fuller

'So what's your job?' I was often asked during my time with the Southern Uplands Partnership, 'I'm a red squirrel conservation officer' was my reply. 'Oh' was usually the response! To many people it seemed like a very odd job to be doing, but once I explained about the national decline in red squirrel numbers, the important role southern Scotland plays in their survival, and all the activities I was involved in, most people became envious of my 'strange' job! I'm now the Recreation Ranger for Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) in Ae Forest District, and spend most of my time engaging with communities and users to ensure they are getting the most out of our forests. Of course, I often see my old furry friends (in fact I think they're following me!), and continue to raise awareness of the 'Red Squirrels in South Scotland' project through events and school visits. I wouldn't be where I am today without the local knowledge and experience I

gained during my 2 years with the SUP. It seemed like a natural move when I joined FCS, but I think I have the red squirrels to thank. Oh, and the SUP of course!



Robin Fuller

Sarah Oakley

Arriving in Galashiels on my first day as Red Squirrel Conservation Officer in August 2000, it soon became clear that the Red Squirrels in South Scotland project really was a new project – with no office space, no computer and no phone, I wondered just what I had signed up for. But this feeling was short lived, as I met with a steady stream of landowners, foresters and conservation organisations united in their support of red squirrel conservation through the Borders Squirrel Management Group, and keen to help get this project off the ground. With their backing, and the support of the people of the Scottish Borders, over the three years I was Red Squirrel Conservation Officer, the project went from strength to strength, gaining momentum and recognition.

The project gave me the chance to use my initiative and work for a cause I felt passionately about – and working for the SUP



Sarah Oakley

gave me a uniquely independent position from which to tackle all the issues affecting the future of red squirrels in the Borders.

In 2003 I became the first Community & Environment Ranger for Forestry Commission Scotland in the Scottish Borders, moving two miles down the road and into the Civil Service. A broader remit has allowed me to expand my work into projects ranging from health to butterfly conservation, but working with

local communities and in partnership with organisations like the SUP is still the cornerstone of my work. I couldn't do the job I do today without the foundation of the experience I gained with the SUP – whilst staff turnover in a small organisation is always difficult to manage, I feel that all the SUP's ex-employees are still working for them, just under different names.

Zoe Smolka

In August 2002 I was coming to the end of a three month Internship with the Resource Management Team in Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, and had begun to search for wildlife conservation work for my return to Scotland. I was delighted to be offered a post with Red Squirrels In South Scotland, a Southern Uplands Partnership project, as Conservation Officer for Dumfries & Galloway. Working in partnership with public bodies, land managers, voluntary organisations and local communities brought many opportunities to promote red squirrel conservation in south Scotland. Some of my personal highlights were:

- With support from Forestry Commission Scotland, undertaking a detailed analysis of the current and proposed management of Forest of Ae and the implications for long-term red squirrel conservation.
- Contributing to a new interactive nature trail at Eskrigg Nature Reserve, Lockerbie.
- Managing to avoid wearing a red squirrel costume (something which I have not achieved in my current post with SNH!).



Zoe Smolka

Elly Hamilton

My history with the Southern Uplands Partnership (SUP) and the Red Squirrels in South Scotland (RSSS) project began in 2001 whilst studying for my undergraduate degree. I contacted Sarah Oakley, who was Red Squirrel Conservation Officer (RSCO) for the Borders, to find out more information about red squirrels as we had to choose and study a Scottish species for an Ecology module. After completing my degree I decided to undertake an MSc and came into contact with the RSSS project and SUP again as the obvious choice for my thesis was the red squirrel. Sarah supervised me during this time and between us we even managed to conquer the statistics – just!

After completing my MSc, I worked for a while in the Scottish Borders in the Community Development field which brought me into regular contact with Pip and the SUP. In early 2003 I collated the Renewable Energy newsletter for SUP and then



Elly Hamilton

Working on an SUP project for two years gave me some extremely valuable experience and helped me to develop contacts with many people who live and work in Dumfries & Galloway. This has helped enormously in my current job, Scottish Natural Heritage Area Officer for Annandale & Eskdale.

took over from Sarah in May as RSCO for the Scottish Borders remaining with the project until late 2006. A house purchase in Perthshire meant that commuting to the Borders just wasn't an option and so I reluctantly bade farewell to the project which has been a large part of my life for what seems to be forever!

I really enjoyed my time with SUP and feel that it was the ideal place to begin my working life in conservation. I found the links to partners and the various bodies involved with conservation

a key personal benefit and it was great to work within an organisation small enough to be personal but big enough to make a difference.

I am still doing a little consultancy work for SUP, fundraising for Phase IV of RSSS, and casting my eye around potential jobs in Perthshire.

Update! - Elly has just been appointed Major Events Coordinator for SWT.

Tshering Sherpa

On receiving a postgraduate degree on Environmental Sustainability from the Edinburgh University, I worked with the Southern Uplands Partnership and the Rural Resource Centre of the Scottish Borders Rural Partnership on my first placement as a Scottish Network International Associate of the British Council. My main remit involved working with community groups and individuals in the Borders to promote sustainable energy use. The one year of work provided me with a myriad of experiences giving me valuable insights into the workings of charities & community groups, partnership working, the world of renewable energy, government funding and much useful knowledge and practical skills. In addition to the professional experience, my time in the Borders was

also equally enriching through the wonderful people I worked with and met and the culture and art I was introduced to.

I've now moved on to my second placement with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) at their corporate Headquarter in Stirling where I'm working on a six months contract looking at the organisation's internal environmental policy. I'm working with a colleague on ways to reduce the impacts of SEPA's business related travel and formulating a tool which will allow the staff to calculate and measure their carbon emissions. I'm also coordinating the publication of a book based on an international conference for environmental economists organised by SEPA.

Communities on the Edge (COTE)

The COTE project aims to help local communities secure and create local jobs that help them meet their needs in an environmentally sensitive way, over the long term.

Since the early 1900's the bond between large private estates and local communities has gradually weakened. Many rural communities now need new enterprises to help provide a

posts attracted local people and all have been filled by job-shares.

In Langholm, Annette Paterson and Elinor Predota are working with Buccleuch Estates and the local community on a range of projects including a composting and market



Langholm Animators: Annette Paterson and Elinor Predota

better local balance in terms of the services available and their population's age structure. More sustainable local trading can also contribute to making communities more resilient to external pressures such as global affairs, property markets and fuel price fluctuations.

Large private estates have many resources, some of which are under-used. Natural resources can be used to support jobs but it is wise to avoid degrading these resources in the process. Value added social enterprises - sustainable enterprises - are those which not only have a positive effect on the local community, by reinvesting profit, but ensure that they avoid environmental degradation. Social enterprises need to be nurtured and sustainability characteristics must be consciously identified, advocated and built in.

The Communities on the Edge (COTE) project started working with three estate businesses and three communities back in 2004 to explore these issues and to identify new opportunities. David Niven was the lone Project Officer for the first two years, but his efforts and enthusiasm attracted the attention of the Carnegie UK Trust who are now investing in the project as part of their Rural Action Research programme. This new investment has allowed the project to create three new posts – one for each community. The posts were filled last autumn and the new team of Animators are now making a significant difference on the ground. All three

gardening initiative and the possible creation of a local produce market.

In Douglas John Gold, Sarah Peters and Helen Gavin are working with local people and Douglas & Angus Estates on building an ecologically sound community sports facility and on a community growing project.

The Yetholm post is currently being re-recruited.

The original project had a very complex funding arrangement with 11 different funders providing support (including Scottish Borders LEADER+, Dumfries & Galloway LEADER+, South Lanarkshire LEADER+, the Rural Challenge Fund, three Local Enterprise Companies and Buccleuch, Roxburgh and Douglas& Angus Estates). This funding is scheduled to finish at the end of July 2007 and we hope that the project will continue with a more streamlined form of support into the future.

Groups of local people know what they need and are their own local experts when it comes to understanding the likely effects of any proposal. Helping local people to develop ideas that balance the present and future aims of providing jobs, meeting community needs and acting in harmony with the environment gives a great basis upon which to engage with other partners.

Renewables

One of SUPs first areas of interest around renewable energy was 'community benefit', the money offered by developers to communities who find themselves close to wind farms. The sums being given varied enormously from place to place. We were concerned at the lack of guidance given to communities on what they could expect and we held a lively event at which community representatives, wind farm developers and agencies exchanged ideas. As wind farm applications increased local authorities became increasingly involved in the issue and now some useful guidance and policy has been developed.

SUPs interest switched from large scale wind farm development to small scale renewable technologies of all types, the sort of systems that could be used by a community group or householder. With the Energy Agency, Solway Heritage and Browne House at the Crichton Campus SUP arranged a Small Scale Renewables Energy Fair. Overcrowding at the event made it clear that there was real interest from members of the public - even if there was not necessarily the infrastructure to support it. A second fair was held in partnership in the Borders, which was as successful as the first, if not even more so. Clearly people want to do the right thing in terms of the environment – and save money on electricity, gas and oil. As yet, getting the right kit, fuel supply and installer can be difficult and time consuming – but there is no doubt that things are getting easier all the time. This is an area where we expect to be involved in the future.

In 2001 John Clegg undertook a survey of small woods in the Southern Uplands. There were over 31,000 woods of less than 10ha covering a total of around 49,000ha., most was unmanaged and therefore of limited economic value. Now, a few years on, biomass looks increasingly attractive and we are working to develop a pilot programme for farms wanting to set up wood fuelled systems. We see this as a way of increasing skills, developing potential new sustainable enterprise (based on developing supply chains

for local wood fuel) and reducing use of oil and/or gas. There is a clear role in this for machinery rings and interest has been shown from a wide range of partners. We believe that the timing is now right for this, as funding to support such initiatives is starting to trickle through and new posts to support biofuel are being created. We hope a project may be developed along these lines later this year

An exciting development for SUP is that we have been funded to do some feasibility work on shared office accommodation for rural organizations, community groups and small business start ups. We feel that there is real scope for this, our research backs this view up and it is something that SUP could deliver using its management skills and wide range of contacts. Not only does this idea have the potential to fulfill a need for good quality, affordable office space, it also has advantages for partnership working. More than that, our plans include using the building to demonstrate integrated small scale renewable energy technologies – so that people interested in using these technologies can actually see what they look like and hear from us how well (or not!) they work. We hope to have a building made from local materials, in particular local roundwood timber, that will

allow the building to be carbon neutral. Feasibility work and a business plan are being developed thanks to the Scottish Centre for Regeneration and the Big Lottery. There is a lot of work to do, but if we can get the building up and running it will be a step in the right direction – away from grant funding – and towards a sustainable future for SUP.



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Nature Based Tourism

A few years ago nature based tourism (nbt) was a new term. Now it is part of the language for us – and certainly for those who work in VisitScotland, SNH and many rural businesses. SUP has long been convinced that nature based tourism is one of the areas where there is significant scope for environmental, economic and social benefits to be delivered hand in hand.



The Southern Uplands has an unrivalled environment, and as yet one which is largely undiscovered by those who live outside it. As people in built up areas become ever more interested in getting into open space to enjoy what we have in abundance there is opportunity for businesses to benefit. Some of these will be well established service areas, such as accommodation providers and catering establishments, but there are also opportunities for communities and farming families.



Trail riding is one area where SUP has done a good deal of work to promote the potential of services for riders wanting to enjoy the

growing number of multi use trails we have to offer. As lead partner for South of Scotland Countryside Trails which delivered 350kms of trail development in the Borders and Dumfries & Galloway we are keen to see the network continue to develop. To this end we ran a well attended seminar for business people and we have published an advice note for those looking into this area of enterprise (available as a download from our website). Angela Patterson has now been appointed by British Horse Society Scotland to develop trail riding and she is working with business groups across the south.

The Southern Upland Way is another asset that we feel could do more for the rural economy of the Southern Uplands and we have been involved in a number of initiatives linked to the route over the last five years. With SNH and local authority and business stakeholders we have been seeking to ensure that the Way delivers more in terms of visitor numbers and visitor spend in the area. However to lever in funds to put in place a dedicated development officer we needed the statistics to back this up. SUP coordinated a major survey delivered by the Crichton Rural Tourism unit, then worked to maintain awareness until, finally, funding was in place to employ a Route Development Officer. Tabitha Mudaliar (tel. 01387 260095) is now doing great work to promote the route and to encourage businesses along the Way to work together to generate more visits. Even better, counters put

in for the survey have continued to be monitored and numbers of users on the Way are up, especially in the west where numbers have increased by 46% between 2004/5 and 2005/6!

There are many excellent attractions in the countryside and many more potential ones. SUP mapped these in the Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, South Lanarkshire and the Ayrshires

between 2003 and 2006. By working together it is possible for attractions to bring more visitors to their own business and those of their neighbours. This is known as clustering, and a number of businesses have shown how well it can work – the Red Kite Trail in the Glenkens, the award winning B&B providers at Colvend and Clifftop Discovery Tours in Berwickshire are just three of the successful groups which have got together. Further opportunities are being explored by SUP now through the farm diversification projects based in the Dumfries & Galloway National Scenic Areas and there is great potential if the Biosphere Reserve in the south west goes forward. More information on clusters can be found in the guide "Nature Based Tourism Clusters – Collaborative Marketing for Rural Attractions" on the SUP website. The website has now a "mini web" on nature based tourism.

Cross border involvement is not limited to local authorities in Scotland. SUP has been involved in sharing ideas in Cumbria. We are also working to develop cross border projects with Northumberland National Park. At present this involves an audit of routes from the Cheviot Hills into the National Park, but there is scope to do much more. One possibility would be a project based around hill forts, there are a number in the National Park, but as many – and arguably even better – examples in the Borders which could be linked as part of a cross border archaeology trail.



Landscape scale projects are becoming

increasingly attractive ways of linking nature, history, community and "sense of place". In the future there is scope to see something of sort in the south of Scotland. There are exciting proposals being developed by the Forestry Commission for the Galloway Forest Park and other south of Scotland forests. We have been commissioned to undertake community consultation into the idea of a Biosphere Reserve in the south west. We are also exploring the idea of a Southern Uplands Eco Museum which could draw together and market a number of attractions under a single banner.

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Dumfries & Galloway and Scottish Borders Councils and Enterprise Companies look to the future.

The South of Scotland Alliance (SOSA) comprises of Dumfries & Galloway Council, Scottish Borders Council, Scottish Enterprise Dumfries & Galloway and Scottish Enterprise Borders. The SOSA Competitiveness Strategy 2007 – 13 makes interesting reading, identifying the issues facing the regions and the priorities set by SOSA to tackle them.

South of Scotland - A Rural Economy

RURAL ECONOMY	SCOTTISH BORDERS	DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY
Declining population base	Population increase of 4% 91 to 2001 and 1% forecast to 2018	Population static to 2001 and forecast to decline by 15% to 2018
Reducing workforce	Working age population to decline by 5% to 2018	Working age population to decline by 15% to 2018
Older population	Above working age +3% compared to Scotland	Above working age +4% compared to Scotland
Ageing population	Above working age to increase +8% above Scotland	Above working age to increase +9% above Scotland
Low economic output	GVA is 69% below Scottish average	GVA is 78% below Scottish average
Over-reliance on certain key sectors	3 times as many people employed in primary industries than Scotland	3 times as many people employed in primary industries than Scotland
Higher reliance on rational industry	Manufacturing employment 4% above national average	Manufacturing employment 5% above national average
Small businesses dominate market	Over 30% of jobs are in companies employing 10 or less	Over 25% of jobs are in companies employing 10 or less
Different employment patterns	3% less FT jobs and 3% more PT jobs than Scotland as a whole	3% less FT jobs and 2% more PT jobs than Scotland as a whole
Higher employment rates	Employment rate 4% above national average	Employment rate 3% above national average
Low levels of knowledge economy employment	Employment in finance and business services less than half Scottish average	Employment in finance and business services less than half Scottish average
Low skills base	% of population with degree at Scottish average and 3% more having no qualifications	% of population with degree 3% less than Scotland with 6% more having no qualifications
Different gender	Female employment	Female employment

South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy - South of Scotland Alliance

The priorities set by SOSA are based on issues facing the regions as well as national and European policies.

- Retain and attract more people of working age.
- Grow a knowledge economy in the South of Scotland
- Increase the demand for learning and skills development amongst the workforce and wider community.
- Maximise the benefits of connections to city regions and other economic centres including mainland Europe.
- Realise the full potential of the indigenous business sectors and maximise the contribution to Scotland's priority industries and in particular the food, tourism, textiles and renewable industries. Improve micro-business support and growth potential.
- Build a distinctive high quality sustainable place to live, work and visit and enjoy.
- Develop the coastal and land based assets of the South of Scotland.

The full report can be accessed on the SUP website as a PDF. Visit the Publications page of our site – www.sup.org.uk

South Lanarkshire's Rural Strategy 2007-13

Since 2001 significant progress and change has taken place in South Lanarkshire to warrant a comprehensive review of the rural strategy. South Lanarkshire Council reports that these include the:

- Introduction of Community Planning legislation and the creation of the Community Planning Partnership
- Creation of the South Lanarkshire Rural Partnership (SLRP) to address strategic issues in the rural area as one of the 7 themed community planning partnerships
- Introduction of annual Rural Community conferences
- Successful bid by the SLP to develop and deliver the LEADER + programme in South Lanarkshire.

The SLP has had many successes since it was reshaped in 2001, and has attracted a significant national profile to rural South Lanarkshire through flagship projects. These include:

Catch IT, the mobile training and information unit which assists underemployed / unemployed rural residents back into the workplace through the provision of computer courses

The community bus scheme, established in conjunction with The Rural Development Trust and partners, and aimed at improving access to transport for local community groups

The GuidLife, an electronic portal and website which aims to improve access in the area and promote the online community

The Social Capital Fund, which develops the capacity and capability of local rural community organisations through establishing joint working relationships and common initiatives

Communities on the Edge, a joint project with neighbouring LEADER + areas, Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders, to encourage new, small scale enterprises that add value to natural resources. (NB this is a SUP led project).

The Renewable Energy Fund, which secures money from renewable energy developments within the rural area and assists affected communities to improve the quality of life and economic prosperity in their local area

The Network Support Fund which piloted 4 locally led plans to test ways of involving local people in community planning.

The SLP has provided an effective mechanism for the delivery of interventions in rural South Lanarkshire. The partnership process is operating well and, at the strategic level, SLP

is gaining a strong brand identity. In the next phase of its development it will need to build on its success and operate as the key mechanism for the integrated development of rural South Lanarkshire through Stronger Together, the Community Planning Partnership's key strategic document. In this sense it needs to provide a strategic framework for a number of community activities and be the key mechanism for implementing Working Towards Sustainable Rural Communities in rural South Lanarkshire.

Delivering the new rural strategy however, depends on the energy and enthusiasm of the individual partners. Project identification at the grass roots level needs to be encouraged as part of an integrated approach to the implementation of community planning across rural South Lanarkshire. Equally, it is important to ensure that the role of the SLP is not confined solely to securing new rural funding streams. Rather it should encourage a more structured approach to rural development based on the principles of community planning. The policy context shows that there is now an opportunity for concerted action to tackle the key economic, social, environmental and cultural needs of the area and the SLP is committed to providing a practical focus for improving co-operation and integration of effort. This also includes lobbying at a national level to ensure the voice of rural South Lanarkshire is heard.

Finally, the SLP must ensure that all policies and strategies which are developed at a local and national level take account of the differing needs of the rural community.



Hermitage Castle reflected in Hermitage Water

Photo: © sw-images-scotland.co.uk

SUP Project work not been covered elsewhere in this newsletter.

On going and under development - Eco Museum/Archaeology and cultural heritage. Research is being put into the potential for a Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership project around this theme which may become combined with the Upland Restoration project.

Newsletters and Website. After the Spring 2007 newsletter the SUP newsletter will be circulated electronically. Those interested in receiving a copy can register via the world wide web by visiting the SUP website. The website becomes an ever more important means of communicating with members and others interested in the Southern Uplands. Work continues to make the site interesting and easy to use. Project reports and publications are now added to the site as a matter of course to make them as accessible as possible. A recent addition is the Give Now button, enabling anyone to make a donation to SUP, safe in the knowledge that their card details will be secure.

Completed

New Rural Apprenticeships. A Borders/South Lanarkshire project to commission a study into existing provision for

skills training in the light of forthcoming changes to rural development support and CAP reform.

Local procurement of Food. Study completed, report published on the sup website and circulated to members of Scottish Enterprise Dumfries & Galloway Planning to Succeed farming groups.

Nature-based tourism. SUP met with VisitScotland executives in September to discuss the role of NBT in their strategy for south of Scotland. NBT has now been mainstreamed as part of VisitScotland strategy.

Southern Upland Way A Development Officer post has now been filled and as a result SUP coordination is no longer required.

South of Scotland Countryside Trails. Project value £700,000, original project completed. A further feasibility study on an Annandale Link to the South of Scotland Countryside Trails has been completed but the route has turned out to be problematic due to an unstable slope.

Southern Upland Way 21 Celebration of the 21st Birthday of the route, SUW21 website established and various marketing initiatives. The Scottish Communities Foundation is working on plan to run a challenge event on a part of the SUW in 2007.

Red Squirrels in South Scotland Phase 2.

SUW User Survey. Detailed user survey completed by Crichton Tourism Research Centre and circulated. Summary report circulated to 940 businesses along the route and fliers now going out to those requesting them.

Nature-based tourism. An audit of NBT resource of South Lanarkshire and South and East Ayrshire and to examine five potential working “clusters” (one in each local authority) extended to look at an additional five clusters completed May 2005. Very positive workshop took place in Ayrshire.

RDR consultation. Response drafted on behalf of Dumfries & Galloway Leader+ LAG. Completed May 2005

Mountain Hares. Study into the current status of the species in the Southern Uplands completed May 2005.

The Southern Uplands – South of Scotland, Coast to Coast Booklet. Booklet completed and circulated across the south of Scotland, including circulation to schools, libraries, tourist enterprises and agencies.

Equestrian Tourism. Market research contract completed and seminar took place in November 2004 chaired by Ian Stark. Advisory pamphlet produced and also available.

Woodfuel. Very successful trip to Kielder Village heating scheme on the 22nd September and Community Benefit event held at Tweed Horizons in November 2004.

Bracken. A two day bracken management seminar took place in Northumberland in July (13th and 14th) organised by the International Bracken Group. The SUP was promoted at this event.

CAP Reform seminars. Held on behalf of SEERAD and WWFN. These took place Nov/Dec 2003.

Jobs study. Results published 2001.

Food Seminars. Seminars held in Castle Douglas, Dumfries and Carfraemill.

Environmental Education. Lecture at Bowhill, Buccleuch Estates. Text published 2000.

Integrated Rural Development Conference, Held in October 2001.

Foot and Mouth ‘Lessons Learnt’. Seminar held in Dumfries Sept 2002.

Green labelling. Report finalised and published on website.

Environment and Tourism Recovery Grant Scheme. Work commissioned.

Bracken Management booklet. Originally published April 2001, reprinted February 2003.

South Scotland Environmental Resource Centre. There are ongoing developments in both Borders and D&G where separate ERC projects are being developed.

We work with a very wide range of funders and partners on these and other projects, including: Awards for All, BFRS, Big Lottery, Borders College, Borders Forest Trust, British Horse Society Scotland, Buccleuch Estates, Carnegie UK Trust, Creetown Initiative, Crichton Campus, Development Trust Association Scotland, Douglas & Angus Estate, Dumfries & Galloway Council, East Ayrshire Woodland, Energy Agency, Forest Enterprise, Forestry Commission Scotland, Forward Scotland, FWAG, Glasgow University, Hugh Fraser Foundation, International Bracken Group, Landfill Tax, Lantra, Leader +, Local Enterprise Companies, NFU Scotland, Northumberland National Park Authority, Reforesting Scotland, Roxburgh Estates, RSPB, Rural Challenge Fund, Scottish Biomass Support Scheme, Scottish Borders Council, Scottish Community Diet Project, Scottish Enterprise Dumfries & Galloway, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Power, SEPA, SERAD, Solway Heritage, South Lanarkshire Council, South of Scotland European Partnership, VisitScotland, World Wide Fund for Nature

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Southern Uplands Partnership website. The header includes the URL 'www.sup.org.uk' and a logo for 'southern uplands partnership doing more, doing community'. The main content area features a large image of a landscape and several text blocks and links related to the partnership's work in the Southern Uplands.

For more information, news, publications, reports and links visit our web site
www.sup.org.uk

Help Us - How to get involved with SUP Project

We hope that reading the newsletter has given you a taste of what we do, and that you might like to get involved.

There are a number of ways that you can do this, and support at any level is very welcome.

Memberships

Anyone who is interested in the future of the Southern Uplands is invited to join the Partnership. Individuals, groups, agencies and businesses are all welcome. We aim to keep our subscriptions as low as possible to enable everyone to become a member. A membership form can be found on the back of this newsletter.

Donations

We have now got the facility to accept donations online. Anyone visiting our site – www.sup.org.uk - can click on the Donate Now button and gift money to SUP. This is done via a secure service provided by the Charities Aid Foundation, so you can be sure that your credit card details are safe.



Photo: © sw-images-scotland.co.uk

Your group can't donate but supports what SUP does?

We know that there are some small community groups and Community Councils which are not in a position to subscribe. For these groups we offer a complimentary membership. This allows us to add to the number of groups who back the type of work we do, and it allows them to stay involved with SUP. If they find that they can subscribe later, or make a small donation, this is much appreciated.

Professional help as In-Kind support

If you have professional skills that could benefit the partnership – generally, or through one of our projects – we would be very pleased to hear from you. Not only would your input be a great help, but we can put a value on your time and use it to match fund grant monies. (Grant givers do not usually provide 100% funding, they give a percentage of the costs of a project. The balance of the funding needs to be found elsewhere and in-kind services, your time given free of charge, can count towards this).

Hands on assistance with projects and information

It costs you nothing – but is really valuable to us. For example, phoning in with sightings of red or grey squirrels to help us build up valuable statistics, or emailing to tell us about exciting projects elsewhere that we can share information with others via the SUP website.

Legacies, gifts of land or shares

In the event that you would like to consider any of these options and would like to discuss them with our Project Manager or a member of the Board please contact Pip Tabor in the first instance on 01750 725154.

Please don't forget about Gift Aid!

If you decide to become a member, or make any sort of monetary donation, please remember Gift Aid. If you are a UK taxpayer, Gift Aid offers a simple way to increase the value of your gift to charity by allowing the charity to reclaim the tax on your gift. In practice, this means that if you give SUP £10 using Gift Aid, that gift is worth £12.82 to us. It's easy to do and it makes a big difference – just tick the box on the membership or donation form!

Southern Uplands Partnership staff:

Pip Tabor	Project Manager
Flora McDowall	Project Officer
Richard Wales	Red Squirrel Conservation Officer, Borders
Ann-Marie McMaster	Red Squirrel Conservation Officer, Dumfries and Galloway
Shona Munro	Ayrshire Squirrel Group Conservation Officer
Brian Gibson	Squirrelpox Monitoring
Graham Roy	Squirrelpox Monitoring
Tom Adamson	Black Grouse Project Officer
David Niven	Communities on the Edge Co-ordinator
Elinor Predota	COTE Project Officer, Langholm
Annette Paterson	COTE Project Officer, Langholm
John Gold	COTE Project Officer, Douglas
Sarah Peters	COTE Project Officer, Douglas
Helen Gavin	COTE Project Officer, Douglas
Vacant	COTE Project Officer, Yetholm
Melody Barton	Accounts

Membership

The Southern Uplands Partnership is a membership organisation and depends on subscriptions for a significant part of its core funding. Members elect the Directors, receive regular newsletters and play a major role in determining priorities.

If you are not a member, please consider becoming one. If you sign and return the Gift Aid declaration it allows us to get extra support from the Inland Revenue.

To apply for membership either use the form below or visit www.sup.org.uk and complete the form on-line.

Membership Category please tick box: Individual member Group member

Subscription Category Rate please tick box:

Individual waged per year £10 Individual unwaged per year £5 Individual life £200

Group(voluntary group/community council) per year £40 Group (National/corporate body) per year £100

If you would like to pay by standing order please contact the office for the necessary form.

Please make cheques payable to the SOUTHERN UPLANDS PARTNERSHIP.

Name

Address

..... Postcode

Telephone email

GIFT AID You can increase the value of your subscription or donation (by 28p in every pound) if you pay income or capital gains tax in the UK. By signing and dating below, you will enable the Southern Uplands Partnership to claim back the tax on your subscription or donation under the Gift Aid Scheme.

Return to: The Southern Uplands Partnership, Freepost SCO5012, Studio 2, Lindean Mill, Galashiels TD1 0BR

Signature Date

My interests are (please tick up to 3 of the following):

conservation/environment
 buildings
 agriculture/land use
 land reform
 employment

archaeology
 sustainability
 water/fish
 renewable power
 local arts and crafts

forestry/woodlands
 communities
 economics
 access
 ornithology

equestrian
 local foods
 housing
 tourism
 rural transport

The Southern Uplands Partnership

The Southern Uplands Partnership was established as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status in 1999, with the aim of promoting sustainable land-use in the Southern Uplands of Scotland and thereby keeping people living and working here.

Company No 200827 Charity SC029475

The Southern Uplands Partnership
Studio 2, Lindean Mill, Galashiels TD1 3PE Tel: 01750 725154
e-mail: pptabor@sup.org.uk

