

Southern Upland NEWS

Newsletter of the Southern Uplands Partnership

Eighth Edition: Spring 2002



South of Scotland Alliance launched

WE ARE DELIGHTED that the local politicians in south Scotland have decided to catch up with thinking in the SUP. We note with interest the stated objectives of the new Alliance which include that of raising the profile and image of South Scotland. We fully endorse this approach and support wholeheartedly the increasing links being made between the Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway. For too long the south has been divided.

"We have wasted energy competing amongst ourselves for resources, whether this be European funding, Government support or tourists or in making the dubious claim of being the poorest, most scattered, fastest declining or most rapidly aging part of Scotland! Meanwhile other parts of Scotland such as the Highlands and Islands have worked together to promote their needs and, as a result of a unified voice, have attracted considerable financial support for their cause" says Richard Williamson Vice-Convenor of SUP.

The Southern Uplands Partnership has been working for the last two years at grass roots level to try to encourage more "joined-up" working and thinking across a number of land-use issues and we believe we have made considerable progress. We look forward to working with the Alliance to further develop these links to the benefit of all.

CALL FOR ONE-STOP-SHOP

Reading through this newsletter makes me realise just how much is happening across the Southern Uplands and how great the contrast is with 12 months ago. Recovery is underway but the scars of FMD are not far below the surface. Many businesses are still struggling in the wake of the disaster and many will need sometime yet to fully recover.

South Scotland has been offered a range of support mechanisms over and above those previously available and new sources of grant seem to be announced almost daily. It is a challenge to know which is best for any particular purpose and how these funds relate. Anyone applying for support will know that each fund source has slightly different qualifying criteria and has different match funding rules. It can be a nightmare. There is a danger that this plethora of schemes will result in real confusion. The frustration that this can bring to people already burdened with paperwork and striving to keep a business afloat is unhelpful to say the least.

Never has it been more important to be able to access advice and information from one common source. The SUP calls on those who can help, to do all they can to simplify procedures and work for a fully integrated approach.

Barbara Kelly – Convenor

RURAL PARTNERSHIP NEWS

The Scottish Borders Rural partnership is about to take on three new members of staff. Funded from a range of sources including European Objective 2, the posts are for a Fieldworker manager, an Issues Fieldworker and an Environmental Fieldworker. The latter two will join the existing 6 staff members working directly with rural communities. The task of the Environmental Field Worker is to encourage communities to adopt environmentally friendly projects – whether it be developing areas for wildlife, creating new path networks or reducing waste and recycling.

PARTNER NEWS TWEED FORUM

HELP SECURE THE FUTURE WELL BEING OF TWEED

In May, last year, Tweed Forum launched a catchment management planning initiative for the river Tweed, which recognises its importance as a major environmental and economic resource. The initiative was launched in response to the increasing pressures and demands on Tweed; the river's recent designation as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the forthcoming transposition of the Water Framework Directive into Law.

The overall aim of the project is to conserve, enhance, and where appropriate, restore the river environment, through effective land and resource planning across the Tweed catchment. At the heart of the project, is a recognition that you cannot divorce the health and quality of our rivers from the activities that are carried out on the land.

At the beginning of this year, Tweed Forum went out to public consultation to give everyone the opportunity to voice their views on what they feel are the important and critical issues that need to be addressed. A formal consultation document and questionnaire is available from the project officer or from the project web site at www.tweedforum.com. In addition, a number of workshops will be held throughout the catchment to give you the opportunity to voice and discuss your views.

If you would like to find out more about the project or become further involved then please contact the project officer at the address below. Alternatively, you can visit the project web site at www.tweedforum.com.

Kate Seal Tweed Forum, South Court Drygrange, Melrose, Roxburghshire TD6 9DJ. Tel: 01896 849723



Tweed Forum is a non-profit making company limited by guarantee with charitable status and registered as an Environmental Body under the Landfill Tax regulations. It was formed in 1991 as a collection of some 28 organisations with an interest in the future well being of Tweed. Its aim is "to promote the wise and sustainable use of the Tweed catchment through holistic and integrated management and planning"

SUP PROJECT NEWS

GREEN LABELLING

The SUP is working to commission a feasibility study into a local scheme which would allow rural businesses to label their product as "green" – whether it be farming and food production, bed and breakfast, fencing or forestry. A national scheme is being developed but is some way off and we are keen to see something start now if it is possible to come up with an appropriate set of criteria that can be easily applied and understood.

More news on this next time.

The South Scotland Environmental Resource Centre

Thanks to funding from SNH, Alison Coultts of SEPA is currently developing a business plan for the proposal which will set out what is achievable over the next three years.

Funding is of course the big headache and the project will have to work within resource constraints. However the concept has attracted widespread support and we are confident that there will be an Environmental Resource Centre established soon.

Thanks to Zoe Capernaros for her suggestion of SSINFONATA.

Red Squirrels in South Scotland

RED SQUIRRELS IN SOUTH SCOTLAND continues to raise the profile of this priority species across the region. The two project officers have been invited to contribute to the Scottish Squirrel Strategy. Work is now being co-ordinated across the border into Cumbria and Northumberland and our local expertise has also been called upon to advise new squirrel conservation groups being established across Scotland.

We have identified priority woodlands across the Borders and Dumfries and Galloway where there is the best chance of maintaining red squirrel populations in the long term. Work is currently concentrating on putting in place long-term forest management guidance to ensure future forestry plans are sensitive to the needs of the red squirrel. The importance of this approach is underlined by the fact that sightings of grey squirrels in the Dumfries and Galloway region have increased dramatically over the last 6 months, particularly in and around Annandale and Upper Nithsdale.

As a result, the Red Squirrels in South Scotland project is running a number of trapping training events this year. The emphasis will be on practical techniques involved in trapping greys and how to test for parapox virus. Please note that attendance at these events is by invite only, so if you are interested, please contact either Sarah Oakley (Borders: 01750 23446) or Robin Fuller (Dumfries and Galloway: 01387 860442).

Red squirrels are often killed on roads and the project has identified "accident black-spots" where warning signs have recently been put up.



CROSS BORDER ACCESS

The Tweed Trails Feasibility Study has now been completed and a revised application for European funding will be made shortly. All being well the project will commence in July and will result in £0.5million being spent on multi-use paths in the Borders and in Dumfries & Galloway over the next three years. Part of this project involves the construction of a new bridge over the Tweed at Cardrona. A recent meeting of the local community expressed strong support for a multi-use bridge across the river to allow access between Innerleithen, Cardrona and Peebles along the old railway track thus avoiding the road. A sub-group will now work with the project to secure the necessary approvals and funding.

Merking the Way

By the end of March all thirteen kists will be in place along the Southern Upland Way and an invitation is issued to everyone to take to the hills and try to discover them. The lucky (or observant) people who do so can look inside the kists and pick out a waymerk. These are tokens, minted in lead or copper by John Behm of the Scottish Borders Sculptors' Collective. The 'heads' side of each shows a pattern of ancient earthworks. The 'tails' side is different in every kist. They depict some aspect of the secret heritage of its hiding place.

At the launch held in March, a cairn will be built out of boots and shoes donated by supporters in return for a waymerk. The cairn will be built above St Marys Loch and will be removed later in the year. To find out about the background to this sculpture project which draws on local archaeology, history, and the natural environment, have a look at the Waymerks website: www.waymerks.org.uk

PROMOTING THE WAY

www.southernuplandway.com

was launched on 1st March in Moffat. This innovative project has been supported by Scottish Enterprise and we congratulate Paul Collins and Andrew Case for sticking to their guns and making their vision a reality.

Visit the site to find out more.



Fiona Armstrong launches southernuplandway.com website in Moffat

STILL ON THE EDGE

The Biodiversity on the Edge project – targeting the declining black grouse population in the southern Uplands was rejected a second time by the Heritage Lottery Fund but they have invited us to reapply under new guidelines and the partners are now working on this new approach.

Business Plan. The Partnership has been working hard on the production of a business plan which is now complete and which will form the basis of future applications for grant aid. We are now working on a manifesto which will set out our views on key issues faced by the uplands of South Scotland. A draft of this will be sent out to members in the near future and we hope you will contribute your views to the debate.

The Small Woods project is on hold pending the national review of the Woodland Grant Scheme. We hope that this will start moving forward again soon. In the meantime we are holding a meeting in April to explore the concept of landscape-scale **Wildwood** development – which is already being pursued in England and Wales. Contact the office if you would like further details.

The Partnership will shortly be hosting a meeting of all those with an interest in heather moor regeneration in the southern uplands to set out the priorities for a new regeneration project.

The SUP is also hosting a meeting of the Rural Partnership Chairpersons and Coordinators from South Scotland and North England in April. The meeting will allow ideas and experiences to be shared with the aim of improving the development and dissemination of best practice.

Business Links The SUP is working with Scottish Business in the Community and other Rural Partnerships to establish links between big businesses and local community initiatives. We hope that these links will bring benefits in terms of skill sharing, mentoring and project support.

SNIPPETS

We have been sent a very useful booklet produced by the Countryside Alliance on "Making the most of your game".

It covers the law relating to dealing in and selling game with some useful ideas on how to market this often under utilised resource.

Call 020 7840 9235
or visit www.foresite-cfs.org.uk

The potential for products produced in mountain areas to benefit from perceived high quality was stressed at a recent conference on "Mountain Quality" in France. The public associate upland areas with a high quality environment and may be willing to pay a premium for such products. Good marketing and co-operative initiatives between farmers, processors and retailers were seen to be the key.



The peregrine falcons of the UK are about to be surveyed by the British Trust for Ornithology as part of an ongoing study into the links between habitat, numbers of this species and their prey. The survey should have taken place last year but was stopped by the outbreak of FMD.

INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT TO BE REVIEWED BY RURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The Scottish Parliament's Rural Development Committee has formally launched an inquiry into Integrated Rural Development (IRD). The aim of the inquiry is to assess the factors that make for successful IRD and to identify the barriers that militate against development.

The Committee intends to review:

- the provision of funding for programmes designed to contribute to integrated rural development;
- the factors which assist communities to play an active and effective role in their sustainable development;
- the barriers that may exist to achieving integrated rural development and the best means of removing these barriers;
- the impact which the review of European Union policies in relation to traditional rural activities might have on the future development of policies in this area;
- how communities can become more involved in the development of IRD policies.

Moffat Country Fair

The Fair ran for the first time in August 2001 as a direct result of the foot and mouth crisis; the local agricultural show having been cancelled.

This year it will take place on **Saturday 25th May** from **10am - 5pm**
at Moffat Showfield, Holm Road, Moffat

Attractions this year will include:

Craft Marquee, Food Festival, Cooking Demo's, Falconry displays, Fashion Show, Fly-fishing clinics and demo's, Gun-dog displays and Scottish Gamekeepers Association run open gun-dog scurry,

Tractor driving competition, Trade stands, Display and 'Country Run' of vintage machinery, Laser clay shooting, Live music, Childrens' sports and other activities, Evening dance with 'Twister'.

Evening Ceilidh on Friday 24th May

Entrance to fair - Adults £3, Children & OAPs £1, Free parking.

Trade and all other enquiries to:
Sue Coulthard (Secretary), 25 Etrick Drive, Moffat, DG10 9LA. Tel: (01683) 221634

TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENT RECOVERY GRANT SCHEME

The Tourism and Environment Recovery Grant Scheme is a short term, premium rate grant for farmers affected by foot and mouth disease in Dumfries & Galloway and parts of the Borders. Jointly funded by Scottish Natural Heritage, Dumfries & Galloway Council, Scottish Enterprise Dumfries & Galloway, the Scottish Executive, Scottish Borders Council and Scottish Enterprise Borders, its principal aims are to:

provide funding for practical projects that benefit the natural and cultural heritage of an area (tree planting for landscape enhancement, small scale habitat works (linked to Local Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species);

raise awareness amongst farmers of the importance of their land as a natural and cultural heritage resource, which could be of value to local tourism;

provide opportunities to carry out practical works that aid farm diversification (eg access provision, and projects which might create linkages between existing natural heritage features on and between farms).

Fliers for the scheme were sent to all 1217 culled or part culled farms within Dumfries and Galloway and the Borders. Up to the time of closure of the scheme on 28th September 263 applications had been returned (245 from farmers in Dumfries & Galloway and 18 from the Borders).

The confirmed funding available for the scheme amounts to £710,000 which has supported funding for 157 applicants.

Most schemes included hedge and tree planting, wildlife corridors and pond creation. 20 had access elements. Most of the applicants were using local contractors and locally purchased materials to carry out the works. Around a third of the applicants surveyed were retaining full or part-time staff to complete work.

The SUP has been asked to manage the monitoring of the grant scheme in the Borders on behalf of SNH, Scottish Borders Council and Scottish Enterprise Borders. This work will be carried out by FWAG.

£ £ £ £ Funding News £ £ £ £

LEADER +

The Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway have had their “expressions of interest” accepted by the Scottish Executive and had amounts allocated to them – a total of £3.4M over 5 years. Both approaches will seek to add value to the local natural and cultural heritage. Both areas are now working to develop local strategies which will determine how these funds will be spent. This is an exciting new source of funding for projects which seek to add value to our upland resource and the SUP is assisting in the development of a strategy setting out what these funds will be used for. We understand that South Lanarkshire have also been successful in their “expression of interest”.

CARNEGIE UK TRUST

The SUP was unsuccessful in getting core funding support from the Carnegie UK Trust, but we have been advised that applications from “local village initiatives” are sought by the Trust. Visit their website at www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk.

on the soapbox *Jamie Carruthers*

The WGS and Land Management Contracts . . .

. . . where is the joined-up thinking?

“I am concerned that Scottish Ministers are missing a unique opportunity to develop a grant scheme that is not only tailored to the priorities of the new Scottish Forestry Strategy, but also dovetailed into proposed new grant schemes for agriculture and the environment.

I suggest that under a Land Management Contract, a menu of options could be provided from which land managers could “pick and mix” those areas of support which they wanted to meet their specific circumstances. This menu might include:

- Support for the net costs of non-timber outputs
- Support for the net costs of improving semi-natural woodlands and developing Forest Habitat Networks
- Support for the costs of increasing the diversity of the farmed landscape
- Support for the costs of improving riparian habitat
- Support for income foregone by not clear felling at the optimum time
- Support for the cost of improving the setting of urban areas
- Support for the cost of providing recreation opportunities near towns
- Support for the costs of greater consultation with communities in the development of forest plans
- Support for the costs of preparing detailed long term plans and for application for certification under UKWAS
- Recognition of the value of timber as a carbon sink
- Advice on best silvicultural practice to grow quality timber

Options 1-7 and option 10 are clearly providing environmental benefits to society as a whole. The full cost of the provision of these benefits should be met out of public funds – there should be no question that this support mechanism should be “making a contribution” to these costs.

Options 8, 9 and 11 support the efforts being made to grow quality timber and help to bring economic benefits to the rural economy. To be added to this is the support that is given to training and marketing initiatives and the provision of infrastructure – all of which increase the competitiveness of the industry.

The allocation of resources to support forestry would therefore have three strands – (1) support to individual land managers to compensate them fully for the provision of environmental benefits; (2) support to individual land managers to encourage the growing of quality timber and promote the competitiveness of the industry; and (3) support for the industry as a whole to improve its competitiveness. By allocating resources separately to these three elements we would achieve two things – we would be able to demonstrate a very clear and transparent correlation between the money spent and the benefits achieved; and we would be able to vary the allocation of resources between the three elements, according to the effect we wanted to achieve. For example, if we thought that land managers actually needed no incentive to produce quality timber, then you could divert all the resources allocated to elements (2) and (3) to supporting the provision of environmental benefits.

This scheme of things would also translate into an agricultural support mechanism. Support for agriculture would be separated into (1) support to individual land managers to compensate them fully for the provision of environmental benefits; (2) support to individual land managers to encourage the production of quality food and maintain employment; and (3) support for the agricultural industry as a whole to remove market imperfections and provide training and infrastructure.

You will see that elements (1) in both cases are identical – so why not have a single support mechanism that converts public money into environmental benefits? A wetland area in the middle of a farm producing food commercially is no different to a wetland area in the middle of a wood producing timber commercially. Both provide the same environmental benefits so why have two different grant support schemes?

It is therefore my belief that the current review of the grant support mechanisms for both forestry and agriculture provide far too good an opportunity to be missed. If a fuller review takes more time than the very short timescale that has been set, then so be it. We want the mechanisms that are eventually put in place to remain for many years – so why not spend a little time now getting it right? “

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

Could I remind you all that subscriptions to the SUP are annual and provide us with valuable financial income. They also allow us to demonstrate broad-based support for the Partnership. If you have already subscribed for this year - many thanks. If not - would you like to do so? The last AGM agreed that a life membership of £100 should be offered to individuals - offering excellent value and saving us significant admin!

Increasing our membership is also vital - so if you know of someone who ought to be a member - why not encourage them to join too? Please use the application form below.

Please note that the 2002 AGM will take place in Moffat on 12th June at 6.30pm. Details will follow.

Many thanks for your support.

Membership category please tick box Individual member Group member

<i>Subscription category</i>	<i>Rate</i>
Individual waged per year	£10
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If you would like to pay by standing order please contact this office for the necessary form.
Please make cheques payable to the Southern Uplands Partnership

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The Southern Uplands Partnership

*A partnership of all those who want to see people
living and working sustainably in the Southern Uplands.*

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SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE



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Did You Know? . . . It is estimated that every £10 spent with a local food initiative is worth £25 to the local area compared to just £14 if the same money is spent in a supermarket.