

Southern Upland NEWS

Newsletter of the Southern Uplands Partnership

#10 Autumn 2002



The Southern Uplands – A Shared Agenda

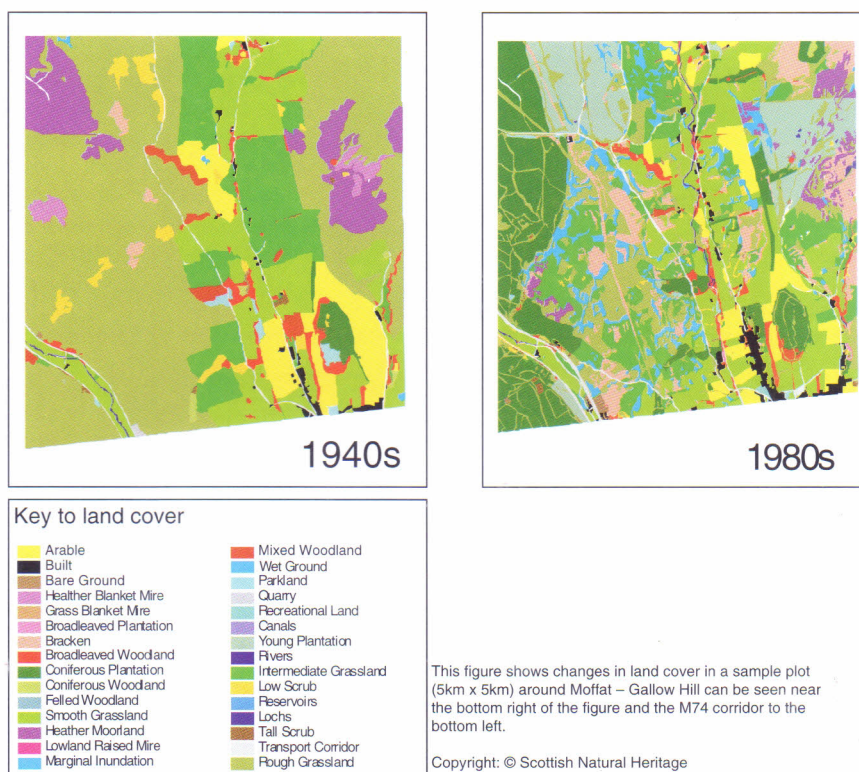
The Southern Uplands have witnessed profound changes in land use, land cover and landscapes over the last 50 years. Some of these changes occurred before the production of any strategic guidance or policy on land use, but there are now a considerable number of strategies which have direct relevance to land-use in the Southern Uplands and which will guide future changes. However, they are largely focussed on sectoral land use issues, such as development planning, forestry, agriculture, recreation, biodiversity, tourism and so on, and whilst they might make some reference to one another, there is currently no single document which addresses integrated land use in the south of Scotland.

It is this lack of integration which led, in part, to the establishment of the SUP, one of whose key policy objectives is to: "Guide and encourage the integration of environmental, social and economic land use policies, the sustainable use and management of land and water and other relevant activities so that they are compatible with considerations of the environment and local communities within the Southern Uplands"

Integral to achieving this objective is the Partnership's specific aim of "informing an integrated rural land use strategy for the Southern Uplands". The Partnership is now working to identify the common goals within the various documents referred to, but also to identify any gaps, and bring them together into a 'Shared Agenda for Land Use in the Southern Uplands'. This 'shared agenda' serves to set out the Partnership's hopes and aspirations for future land use in the Southern Uplands.

The document essentially looks at land use changes over the last 60 or so years, together with the underlying causes

Land cover changes around Moffat - 1940s to 1980s



of these changes and tries to make some predictions of where future pressures on land use in the rural south of Scotland may come from. It then sets out some policy objectives and actions to achieve a vision of what the Southern Uplands might look like in the future. The Southern Uplands Partnership does not wish to see an attempt made to return to the imagined 'golden era' of the past, but our overall vision is for the Southern Uplands to be a consciously diverse landscape supported by a similarly diverse economic base.

A draft document has been discussed and amended by the Partnership's Directors and will be circulated widely amongst members, interested groups and individuals in the coming weeks. Anyone wishing to obtain a copy should contact the office or visit the website www.sup.org.uk.

Convenors Comment

You will read in this edition of the launch of the Leader+ programme across 5 Scotland. This is good news for our small communities. The schemes lay emphasis on the need for new ideas and the development of a range of new partnerships. SUP can play an important role in encouraging applications. We can also act as a catalyst for the development of cross-border joint projects between D&G, the Borders, 5 Lanarkshire and other areas.

Watching the unfolding of European Structural Funds through Objective 2, I have a concern that exciting cross-border projects have not been forthcoming in this part of Scotland. The economies of scale and the tackling of shared problems which would derive from a co-operative approach to problem solving are not happening. There is still time for such bids for Objective 2 funds in the remaining 2 application rounds. Lets get to it!!

Barbara Kelly, Convenor

Tweed Trails/South Scotland Countryside Trails



is well underway with work already completed on a section of route in the Cheviots. This will restore part of the old drove road that linked the Borders with Northumberland. Work is due to start soon on the Minch

Moor and in the Forest of Ae. Vyv Wood Gee is responsible for co-ordinating the work and she is working closely with the project partners to ensure the works are delivered on time and to budget. The potential for equestrian tourism will grow as the network of routes develops and it is now proposed that a conference be held, perhaps in Spring next year, to highlight the opportunities that riders and their horses can bring to the rural economy. We would hope to invite speakers with experience in Equestrian Tourism from elsewhere in the UK and perhaps Europe. The SUP is working with the British Horse Society and others to take this forward. More news next time.

ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH INQUIRY INTO FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

A presentation to the Southern Uplands Partnership and rural business leaders by Professor Ian Cunningham who chaired the independent report

In easy to understand terms, Prof Cunningham set out the facts behind the Foot and Mouth crisis and then explained the recommendations his committee had made. He praised the authorities who had handled the crisis last year in both Dumfries and the Borders but considered that there were many lessons which must be learned. The existence of a contingency plan in Dumfries was vital to the prompt response that had been made here in contrast to the difficulties faced by several parts of England. He called for the establishment of a Scottish Contingency Plan that should be reviewed regularly in the light of changing technology.

The Royal Society Report also recommended that:

- **all movement of stock should cease as soon as a FMD case is identified**
- **local knowledge of vets should be used to determine the need to cull "contiguous" stock**
- **Scottish vets should be guided by a Chief Veterinary Officer based in Scotland, linked to SEERAD**
- **there was an urgent need to speed-up development of a cheap on-farm diagnostic test for FMD**
- **vaccination should be used to isolate outbreaks of disease using technology to distinguish between vaccinated and infected animals**
- **that the public needed to be made aware that vaccinated meat was fit for consumption**
- **the import of meat products needed to be much more tightly controlled across Europe**

He also emphasised the need to relax restrictions on access to the countryside as soon as the source and spread of disease were known to minimise the impacts on non-agricultural businesses. Accurate records allowing easy tracking of stock movements were vital to allow this early lifting of restrictions and such records needed to be maintained.

In a lively discussion that followed the talk a number of other issues were raised. These included the need to use rendering as the preferred method of disposal, followed by burial and only then burning. Prof Cunningham felt that clear guidelines on compensation payments should be drawn-up and regularly reviewed so that they were in place if another outbreak occurred. This would reduce some of the critical delays in slaughtering that had occurred in 2001. The use of computer modelling was questioned and it was agreed that, while a valuable tool, local knowledge was also vital in predicting likely spread of disease. It was pointed out that clear information was needed to assist the public and the non-specialist to understand what was happening and what was being done. Good communication was vital.

It seemed likely that there would almost certainly be another outbreak of the disease at some point but it was hoped that next time we would be much better prepared. If the recommendations were adopted we would not have to tolerate the mass-slaughter and huge economic damage that had occurred in 2001. It was suggested that there was an ongoing need for the RSE to monitor official take-up of its recommendations.

The Government's 3 independent reports were:

The Royal Society report on Infectious Diseases in Livestock
(www.royalsoc.ac.uk/inquiry/)

The Ian Anderson Inquiry into the Lessons to be Learned from the
Foot and Mouth Disease Outbreak of 2001
(www.fmd-lessonslearned.org.uk/index.htm)

The Report of the Policy Commission on the
Future of Farming and Food
(www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/farming/pdf/PC%20Report2.pdf)

Did You Know? . . . British Trust for Ornithology Scotland is looking for more volunteers for their Garden BirdWatch project.

Details and an information pack on the project are available from GBW, BTO Scotland, University of Stirling Campus,
3A125 Cottrell Building, Stirling, FK9 4LA or Room R6, BTO, FREEPOST, IP24 2BR.

The Partnership website has been upgraded. Please visit www.sup.org.uk and let us have comments on the new format. Note there is now a discussion forum so you can comment on the newsletter or anything else. There are also links to our partners sites. If you have a site and wish to be included, please let us know.

LOGO

It is becoming clear that the Partnership would benefit from its own logo. If anyone has an inspired idea for a logo that captures the idea of sustainable land use and an integrated approach to the future of rural South Scotland, we would love to hear from you . . .

Partner News

Glencairn Environmental Audit Project

In 1910 local Historian and Naturalist, John Corrie, published 'The Annals of Glencairn' which included lists of the wildlife and flora in Glencairn Parish. Almost three years ago the Glencairn Environmental Audit was set up to compare Corrie's findings with the present day position. This published report identified threatened and lost species and proposed a number of projects to maintain and increase the biodiversity of the landscape and wildlife of Glencairn Parish together with plans to boost the local economy through nature-based tourism projects.

The John Corrie Wildlife Garden on the outskirts of Moniaive, Dumfries and Galloway, is one of a number of the Project's initiatives towards this aim. The garden was officially opened this summer. The opening was a great success with many activities for all ages including dipping for freshwater animals, hedge planting, collage making and just sitting and admiring the garden. As well as providing an amenity for local people and tourists the garden will also provide a plant and seed bank for replanting areas of the parish with native flora.

The Project overall continues to be very successful and owes much to the strong support of the local community, local landowners and farmers, volunteers, local businesses and the assistance of professional colleagues in statutory bodies. The Project is funded by Scottish Natural Heritage, Solway Heritage through the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme, Dumfries & Galloway Council and the Community Fund. Other supporting groups include the Scottish Wildlife Trust, Crichton College, Barony College, Scottish Agricultural College, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group and Forest Enterprise.

Contacts for further information:

Project Officer: Emma Ahart Tel: 01848 200171

*Chair: Giles Dearden Tel: 01644 430008 (day) or
01848 200339 (eve)*



FUNDING NEWS



LEADER+ Dumfries and Galloway

In October 2002, a new development fund was launched in Dumfries & Galloway. LEADER+ is a European funded community initiative, which aims to assist new experimental approaches to local rural development. It will support and encourage rural communities to develop the potential of environmental and cultural resources, local know-how, heritage and entrepreneurial spirit in the promotion of sustainable development.

It compliments the existing larger more strategic Structural Fund programmes such as Objective 2 and Objective 3, by supporting smaller, locally focused actions that are of a high quality, ambitious and innovative in their nature. The emphasis is on testing new ideas that may be adopted later on a wider scale.

The key themes of the LEADER+ programme are 'Making the most of natural and cultural resources' and 'Improving the quality of life' and projects which specifically involve or target women, young people, small and micro businesses or the under-employed will be encouraged.

The LEADER+ programme is co-ordinated by a Local Action Group representing the region's key social and economic partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors and is managed by Ros Halley, who is based at the community centre in Castle Douglas. Groups or individuals with an interest in the natural or cultural environment are encouraged to apply. Information Packs are now available.

Please contact Simone Tyrie, Programme Assistant

Post: Community Centre, Cotton Street, Castle Douglas, DG7 1AJ

Tel: 01556 504906 E-mail: leaderplus@dumgal.gov.uk

Very similar schemes are running in both Borders and S Lanarkshire.

For further information in the Borders please contact Sam Smith, Programme Officer:

Scottish Borders Council, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA.

Tel: 01835 824000

For S Lanarkshire please contact Lesley Arnott,

S Lanarkshire Council, Montrose House, Montrose Crescent, Hamilton, ML3 6LL

Tel: 01698 455101

NEW: COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL RENEWAL GRANTS

The Scottish Executive announced on 16 October 2002 that Community Environmental Renewal Grants are available in 2002-03 and 2003-04. Half of the funding available from the Aggregates Levy in Scotland has been allocated for this – £1.5 million each year.

Further information about applying for the grants: www.sustainable.scotland.gov.uk/grants/aggregate.html

'MAKING TRACKS' NATURE-BASED TOURISM PROJECT

The last SUP newsletter signalled the imminent launch of a new programme of support for nature-based tourism in the south of Scotland. This has now taken place, in the form of 'Making Tracks', the Sustainable Nature Based Tourism Project for the South of Scotland, and the appointment of a new project officer, based in Dumfries.

'Making Tracks' is being funded by VisitScotland and is run by the tourist boards for Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders. However, the partnership which is overseeing the project includes the councils for both regions alongside Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Enterprise and the NFUS as well as a range of conservation and land management organisations, including the SUP.

'Making Tracks' aims to encourage groups of farmers and land-based businesses to work with mainstream tourism businesses and attractions to develop a network of sustainable nature-based tourism products (ie. specific visitor attractions or other businesses providing nature-based tourism facilities and services) across the region. A grant scheme has been developed as part of the project to assist businesses with the capital and start-up costs associated with such ventures.

The project defines nature-based tourism' quite widely as tourism which is located in and based upon an enjoyment of the natural heritage. It encompasses a broad range of tourism, from specialist nature study tours to more general guided trips on foot, bike, boat or car or visits to natural attractions.

The emphasis of the grant scheme is on:

- sustainability (ie. demonstrating financial viability, avoiding detrimental environmental impacts and benefiting the local community and other businesses);
- collaboration between businesses;
- and improvements in the quality of visitor facilities and customer care.

By supporting such measures, the 'Making Tracks' partnership hopes to benefit the local and regional economies and demonstrate best practice in this field which can be applied elsewhere.

For more details of the grant scheme criteria, plus advice on eligibility and further sources of assistance, contact:

Iain Wilson 'Making Tracks' Project Officer

c/o Scottish Enterprise, Solway House,

Dumfries Enterprise Park, Tinwald Downs Road Heathhall, Dumfries, DG1 3SJ

Tel: 01387 245267 e-mail: iain.wilson@scotent.co.uk



Rural Voices: Action Research Competition

The Scottish National Rural partnership is launching a pilot initiative to encourage rural communities to be directly involved in consultations on rural services. The scheme will fund "community action research projects" which will enable communities to consult locally on rural issues. Funding for up to 10 such studies will be available from the Scottish Executive. A Community Development expert has been appointed to work with the successful communities and to assist them with the use of "community action research".

To find out more contact:

juliet.harvey@scotland.gsi.gov.uk on 0131 2446631

ousmane.diallo@scotland.gsi.gov.uk on 0131 244 4180.

Project News and Snippets



MOORLAND REGENERATION

A working group has met several times to look at how to improve and restore heather moorland on the Southern Uplands. They have come up with a proposal which will be put to the Heritage Lottery Fund later this year in the hope that a three year project can start in 2003.

Renewable Energy

A very successful seminar took place in Clovenfords on the 5th September. Chaired by Cllr Alastair Hewat and hosted by James Pringle, both SUP Directors, the seminar heard from a number of experts from across Scotland (a note of the meeting is available from the office if you are interested). Woodchip-powered boilers are now very efficient and can compete on price terms with other fuels, although mains gas is still the "cheapest" option at present. The meeting agreed that there was a need to examine other costs and benefits such as environmental impacts, pollution, transport, business development and jobs. The outcome of the event was an agreement that a study was needed to collate information relevant to the Borders context. This would allow the "full picture" to be presented to those making key decisions such as the Council, Housing Associations and private developers. The SUP is now seeking financial support to allow this study to be commissioned. In the meantime, interest in renewable energy schemes is growing with a number of local community initiatives getting underway.

Squirrel News

Zoe zooms in as Robin flies the nest . . .

After two years as the Red Squirrel Conservation Officer for Dumfries and Galloway, Robin Fuller has left the project for pastures new, to be replaced by Zoe Smolka, who started in post in mid-September.

Zoe has a background in conservation work, both in Scotland and further afield. Prior to joining the project, she was working in Yellowstone National Park as a Park Ranger. Following her appointment as Red Squirrel Conservation Officer for Dumfries and Galloway, Zoe explained: "This is a fantastic opportunity to work with one of Scotland's best-loved species in a real hands-on project."



Black Grouse

A change in the HLF guidelines has made it more likely that "Biodiversity on the Edge", our black grouse project can be supported. A positive meeting was held with HLF staff and the steering group is now completing a "project planning" grant application. If this succeeds, further development work will be commissioned early next year.

THE SITKA SPRUCE

is not many people's favourite tree but there are some true fans and a strong case can be made for making better use of a species which clearly loves our upland climate! Biggar resident Elizabeth Roberts has written a book on the tree and has a long list of known and potential uses for it. These include: toiletries, beauty aids, perfume, stationery, furniture, beer, fragrant firewood and buildings. If you want to know more you can contact Elizabeth through the SUP office.

Local Heritage Initiative Scotland

There were 18 "expressions of interest" from the Southern Uplands and many of these were considered strong candidates making the decision on which ones to support a difficult one! Many projects have been invited to apply in full and it has been agreed that those which meet the appropriate criteria but cannot be supported by LHS will be passed for consideration by the Heritage Lottery Fund under their "Our Heritage" scheme. This way it is hoped that many more than just two projects will get funding.

Crichton Campus Students join Nature Based Tourism project

Five honours students from the University of Glasgow Crichton Campus have agreed to undertake their honours degree project on the potential of nature-based tourism in South Scotland. They will work over the next two terms to audit the existing sites in Dumfries & Galloway

and develop a methodology that can be easily applied to the rest of S Scotland. We hope that they will also be able to raise awareness of the opportunities that exist for new business – bringing in examples of best practice from elsewhere in the UK and beyond.

Heritage Lottery Fund Press Trip

The high regard that the HLF have for the Tweed Rivers Heritage Project was demonstrated on a recent press trip when Tweed Forum was asked to escort journalists around the catchment in a pair of helicopters. Such is the scale of the project that this was the only realistic way of getting a feel for the diversity of projects spread across such a wide area. The group flew the length of the Tweed, and some of the tributaries, viewing the constituent projects from the air (of which Tweed Trails is one) and landed at various points to meet and talk with some of the people and organisations delivering the work on the ground.



Soapbox

from

Mr Jamie Carruthers

"In your Summer 2002 Edition Roy Carlaw stands on your Soapbox to denounce the "begging bowl syndrome" which he believes pervades the farming industry in this area as epitomised by my article that appeared in the previous edition.

Many billions of pounds of public money have been used over many decades to support agriculture in this country, and lesser sums, over an equally long period to support the forestry industry. Initially these were to encourage increased primary production of food and timber. There has been some debate from time to time about the role this money plays in securing food and timber supplies, the price increases to the consumer that may result and the environmental damage that may arise as a by-product. However there has never been any great demand from the public that this flow of money should be stemmed. By and large the public seem content to continue to throw money at these industries, and who are we to argue with that – that's democracy.

However, in recent years, there has been a swing in emphasis, with money increasingly being switched from the support of primary production to the support of environmental initiatives. Because the same money is now expected to perform two tasks, it is no longer clear just what the money is being spent on nor, and more importantly in my view, is it clear what benefits flow from this expenditure.

The purpose of my article was therefore an attempt to suggest a way in which greater clarity and transparency could be brought to the distribution of public money to these two

great industries and, because both depend on the management of rural land for their success, perhaps even merging this support into a single scheme. At the same time, the opportunity would be taken to separate out the support given to primary production from the support given to the provision of environmental benefits. No other sector of industry in this country is expected to provide pure public benefits at pure private cost. If the public want the landscape to remain unchanged, the countryside teaming with wildlife, free recreation in our woods and glens, they must pay for it – the whole of it, and not just a contribution towards it. If this means diverting money from the support given to primary production so be it.

I did not advocate in my article that the size of the pot should be increased. I support the contention that we should follow the New Zealand example and let both forestry and agriculture stand on their own feet. I find it depressing that this is unlikely ever to happen so long as we are dependent on EU politicians for setting the agenda. But I believe that what I was proposing would be a start, on a domestic level, at enabling the redistribution of public money so that not only would those who were providing public benefits see their costs reduced but the public would be able to see more clearly how their money was being spent and, in so doing, decide how they think it should be spent in future."

We would welcome further contributions to this debate. Note that you can also express an opinion on the SUP website www.sup.org.uk

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 do not pay by Standing Order please renew your subscription now for 2003. 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.

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Please make cheques payable to the SOUTHERN UPLANDS PARTNERSHIP.

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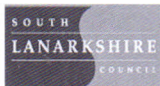
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The Southern Uplands Partnership

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: piptabor@sup.org.uk



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE



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