



southern uplands partnership  
*living land, living community*

# SPRING NEWSLETTER

## *Project updates...*

Welcome to the latest projects update from the Southern Uplands Partnership team. It feels like it has been a long, damp winter, rather than one with a more seasonal carpeting of snow, but we hope you are now enjoying the early signs of spring – snowdrops, catkins, and skeins of geese migrating back north.

Over the next few pages you can read all about our various projects, including, among other things, funding for a black grouse project, wildlife recorder gathering, golden eagles and south-west coastal way.

We'd also like to extend a big welcome to our newest Patron - David Lintott.

## *IN THIS EDITION...*

### *SUP led/hosted project updates:*

- *Restoring the Sound of the Uplands*
- *Connecting Threads*
- *South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project*
- *South West Scotland Coastal Way*
- *Loch Ken Alive/ Loch Ken Trust*
- *SWSEIC*

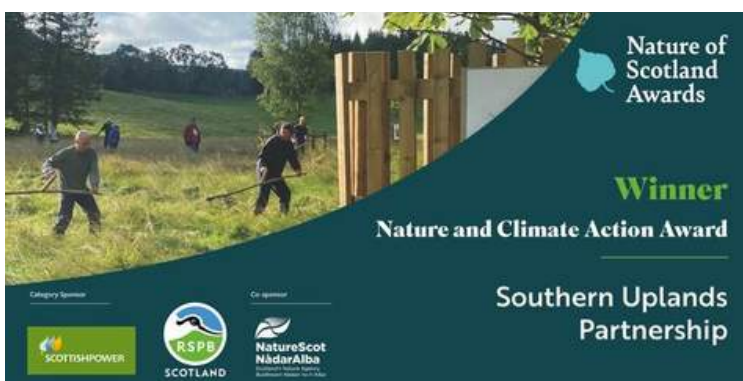
### *What is SUP?*

*Core Team Updates: Pip, Sheila, Katy, Darren*

### *Funding opportunities*

### *Support us*

### *And finally...*



*Keeping in touch*

- [www.sup.org.uk](http://www.sup.org.uk)
- [southernuplandspartnership](https://www.facebook.com/southernuplandspartnership)
- [southernupland1](https://twitter.com/southernupland1)
- [southernuplandspartnership](https://www.instagram.com/southernuplandspartnership)

## *Restoring the Sounds of the Uplands - Black Grouse Project*

[WWW.SUP.ORG.UK/PROJECTS/BLACK-GROUSE-RECOVERY-PROJECT/](http://WWW.SUP.ORG.UK/PROJECTS/BLACK-GROUSE-RECOVERY-PROJECT/)

**We are pleased to announce that we have received development funding from the Scottish Government's Nature Recovery Fund towards this southern Scotland partnership project to restore upland habitats for black grouse and other iconic upland species.**

'Undoing the Silence of the Uplands' has been awarded £33,000 to develop the project theme of improving habitats for black grouse with landowners across five core areas - Galloway Forest Park, Lowther hills, Tweedsmuir/Moffat hills, Langholm moor and Moorfoot Hills. This is one of 31 projects that NatureScot has approved to receive funding as part of a national drive to transform nature in Scotland. The development phase will complete May 2023 with a significant funding bid for a multi-year delivery project being submitted and hopefully started autumn 2023.



Managed by NatureScot, The Scottish Government's £65 million Nature Restoration Fund supports projects that help Scotland's species, woodlands, rivers and seas, as well as improving the health and wellbeing of local communities. These projects take practical steps to help against the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, and restore Scotland's natural environment.

This major upland landscape regeneration project spans over 20 stakeholders and landowners/managers, and will deliver practical, on the ground habitat restoration.

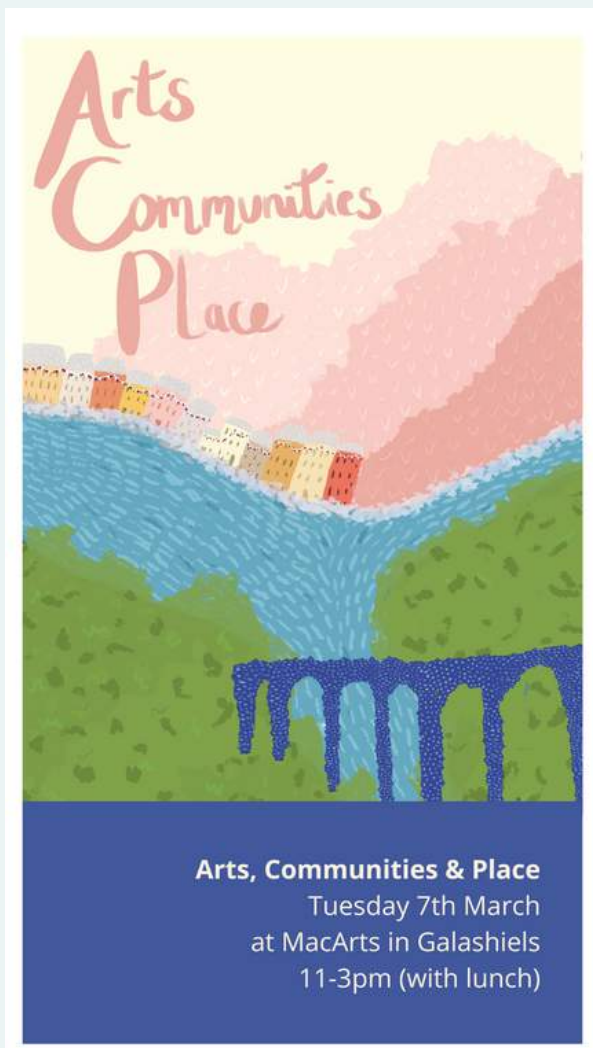
We are also starting to look at ways for inspiring local communities about the wonders of our upland species through activities like becoming a tree champion, community engagement, arts and cultural projects - hopefully something to get everyone excited. Watch this space for more details. If you live in or near any of the core work areas, please do let us know if you'd like to be involved - [darren@sup.org.uk](mailto:darren@sup.org.uk)

Images: courtesy of Malcolm Stott

## *Connecting Threads*

[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/TWEEDRIVERCULTURE](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/TWEEDRIVERCULTURE)

**Connecting Threads is the cultural strand of Destination Tweed, a landscape-scale project that aims to conserve and celebrate the River Tweed from source to sea.** The project is now moving into its next phase of delivery and we have been busy recruiting a number of posts, including a River Messenger and two River Culture Animateurs that will be working alongside the existing River Culture Animateur and River Cultural Curator . Through independent and collaborative working, our team will share, communicate, promote and record the Connecting Threads project activities, plus develop and deliver an evolving programme of cultural activity along one stretch of the River Tweed. The positions are part-time and run for the next 4-years. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for more information.



Earlier this month we held a workshop at MacArts in Galashiels that brought people together to discuss art and culture's important contribution to place-development and regeneration, and how we can better support the creative freelance sector. There is some brilliant and foregrounding work happening in Dumfries and Galloway and The Borders using arts practice as a catalyst for community-led change and placemaking but there is also a need for greater support and understanding of this work. The South of Scotland Enterprise, and other funders, are encouraging more joined up working and thinking between the two regions, particularly between groups and organisations working in this way.

## *South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project*

[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/EAGLESINSOUTHERNSKIES/](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/EAGLESINSOUTHERNSKIES/)

**Eagle Schools** has recruited its first schools in Ayrshire with some help from the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere who linked us up with several primary schools including Ballantrae and Colmonell who have recently completed the programme. Pupils learned about the golden eagle and its hunting prowess as well as **other local birds of prey**. Additional sessions focused on habitat and challenges the golden eagle faces whilst also looking at what the South of Scotland project is doing to help this iconic species. Well done to both Ballantrae and Colmonell pupils. Both schools were very engaged and showed impressive knowledge of their local environment and some brilliant creativity in the tasks we set them.

Anyone interested in our Eagle Schools Programme should contact us via our website: [goldeneaglessouthofscotland.co.uk](http://goldeneaglessouthofscotland.co.uk)



## *South West Scotland Coastal Way*

RICHARD CLARKE

Winter is not always my favourite time of the year, with the long dark nights, wet and windy weather, but I try to explore as much as I can during the little light that we do get. The freezing temperatures experienced in December made for some very dramatic scenes allowing for views that you don't get at any other time of the year.



The project has been developing well, with two new successful funding streams. The first was awarded by the Robin Rigg Community Fund, to work with D&G Criminal Justice Scheme to remove overgrown vegetation off the breath-taking Sandyhills to Rockcliffe path. This will be an on-going task throughout the Spring and Summer, which will allow users to enjoy this path without battling through the encroaching gorse.

The second was awarded by Paths for All, Ian Findlay Path Fund, which will go together with the funding from Ewe Hill 16 that was secured at the end of last year. It is hoped that the final funding will be successful by the end of March, to allow for the first set of capital works to begin.

Finally, but not any less important, is that the project is working in collaboration with Dumfries and Galloway Council, who have set out on a connecting villages feasibility and concept design, with the aid of Sustrans. This project is looking at connecting Gretna, Eastriggs, Annan and Powfoot by safe and traffic free routes that will assist with active travel, improve the current NCW 7 and will assist with the development of the SW Scotland Coastal Way. This study will be completed by the end of this year, with hopefully some exciting outcomes, so watch this space.

Partnership between:



## *Loch Ken Trust Officer*

[WWW.LOCHKEN.ORG.UK](http://WWW.LOCHKEN.ORG.UK)

### STUDENT VISITS

**We have had two visits this month from students studying at the Scottish Rural College (SRUC). The first group are studying National Certificate Rural Land Use Module.** SUP employed Loch Ken Trust Officer Barney Fryer, and Loch Ken Ranger Leanne Pumpur welcomed the group to Loch Ken and spoke about factors influencing rural land use and the interaction of different land users. The weather was kind and we received great feedback from the students.



The second group were in their third year and studying 'Community Project Management' We held a question-and-answer session by the Loch and took an enjoyable walk up to the Red Kite Viewpoint. We hope everyone gained a valuable insight into the work and the projects of the Loch Ken Trust.



# *South West Scotland Environmental Information Centre*

WWW.SWSEIC.ORG.UK

## **SWSEIC Spring Wildlife Recorders' Gathering Book your place now!**

Bookings for SWSEIC's Spring Wildlife Recorders' Gathering are now open. This year's event will take place at **Ernespie House Hotel in Castle Douglas on Saturday 22 April**, and will also be streamed live via Zoom for those who can't make it in person. Topics include Golden Eagles, Glow Worms, flora of Wood of Cree, mammal trapping in the Galloway Glens, Willow Tits and the Species on the Edge project. We are grateful to the Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership who are kindly supporting the event.

### **Cost**

In person - £6

Virtual (via Zoom) - Free

### **Excursion**

The following day, Sunday 23rd April, there will be a guided excursion to the nearby Threave Estate, led by National Trust for Scotland and SWSEIC staff. There will be a chance to hear about recent habitat management, and to see a demonstration of some of smartphone recording apps. Places are open to all Saturday attendees (in person or virtual) though numbers are limited. Please book a place when making your booking for the conference.

Further details about the event and an online booking form are available via the link - <https://swseic-spring-conference-2023.eventbrite.co.uk>



## *What is the Southern Uplands Partnership?*

A RURAL DEVELOPMENT CHARITY, STARTED IN 1999 BY LOCAL PEOPLE KEEN TO KEEP THE COMMUNITIES AND COUNTRYSIDE OF THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ALIVE AND HEALTHY

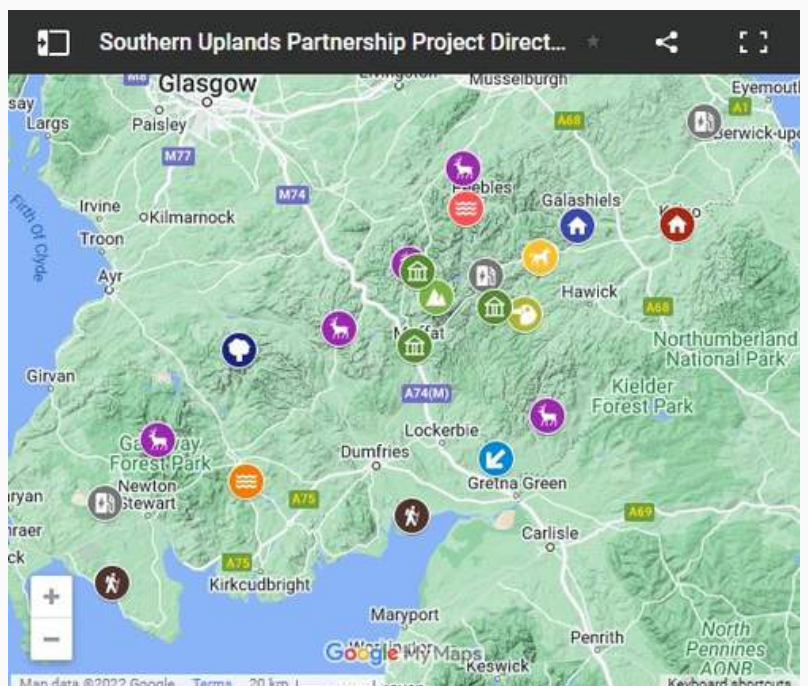
### What is SUP all about?

**Short video...** If you have ever asked this question then this short video gives a flavour of the range of SUP's activities. This compilation video was made by Carlos Hernan for the RSPB Nature of Scotland Awards 2022, and features snippets and images kindly supplied by the Talla-Hartfell Wild Land Area project, Connecting Threads: Tweed River Culture and South Of Scotland Golden Eagle Project.



Go to YouTube and search for the Southern Uplands Partnership page or visit [www.sup.org.uk](http://www.sup.org.uk) and scroll down the homepage

**SUP Google Map...**We've also created a SUP Google map which features all the current live projects, each with a geographical tab and, when you click on it, a few more details – image, brief description and link for more info. Hope you like it - <https://tinyurl.com/bddcr4p4> We've also placed it on the home page ([www.sup.org.uk](http://www.sup.org.uk)), so you can always access the most up to date version as new projects come along.





## *Southern Uplands Partnership Core Team Updates*

PIP TABOR / SHEILA ADAMS / KATY EWING / DARREN FLINT

### **Pip's news...**

#### **There's plenty going on!**



*MilanB/shutterstock.com*

SUP is now a partner in the Red Squirrel Revival Network project which has just submitted an application for just shy of £5m lottery funds to support a 5-year red squirrel conservation (and grey squirrel control) across northern England and Southern Scotland. It was a mad rush to get the project outline finalised, but it was submitted by the deadline and we will hear the result this summer.

We have also been busy planning this Springs' black grouse lek survey thanks to some additional funding from SoSE. This year we are extending the approach to include some searching of specific areas in the hope we may find some additional leks. The birds will be starting to lek soon.

The Community Action Plan we have been developing for Stow and Fountainhall is nearing completion and we are now being approached for help by a number of other communities who are interested in developing Place Plans.

SUP has also been in discussions with Tweed Forum and Borders Forest Trust and NatureScot on the potential for new funding streams for large scale nature recovery projects. There does seem to be interest from the private sector, but we still seem to be some way from being able to benefit from this.

Finally, SUP is now hosting three self-employed consultants who are exploring the future of the Creative and Arts Business Network – a Scottish Borders organisation which supports the creative sector. This work links nicely to the work of Connecting Threads which is now in the process of recruiting three additional workers.



## *Southern Uplands Partnership Core Team Updates*

PIP TABOR / SHEILA ADAMS / KATY EWING / DARREN FLINT

### **Pip's news cont'd...**

#### **SUP Services Ltd**

Our work for SoSE on the Regional Land-Use Partnership (RLUP) pilot is nearing completion. We held 18 live events before Christmas and another 8 since then. Thanks to all those who came along to share your views and ideas. The findings from these events, plus 4 on-line events and a few additional meetings will feed into a report we have to submit at the end of March and this in turn will shape the development of the Regional Land-Use Framework which will appear by the end of the year. It has been a lot of work – but the discussions have been fascinating.

**South of Scotland Regional Land Use Partnership Pilot Project Events**

**Round 2 Workshop Sessions**

Building on feedback from earlier consultations, we invite you to explore scenarios for land use change from a Natural Capital perspective.

**Tuesday 28th February 6pm-7:30pm Process Session (Online)**

The Regional Land Use Partnership (RLUP) pilots are to help develop Scotland's approach to land use in support of our green recovery and the Just Transition to net zero.

Help shape this in the South of Scotland!

**Everyone Welcome**

Scan the QR code to book your place or go to:  
<https://SoSRLUPOnlineProcess2.eventbrite.co.uk>

SOUTH of SCOTLAND ENTERPRISE Scottish Borders COUNCIL Dumfries & Galloway

We are also continuing with the Energy Efficiency Supply Chain work with Scottish Borders Council. The Borders Construction Industry Forum which we are managing is hoping for ongoing support from the Shared Prosperity Fund. We are hoping a conference on the subject will take place at Borders College later this year. You can read the reports that have been generated by this work on the website - [www.sup.org.uk/projects/scottish-borders-construction-forum/](http://www.sup.org.uk/projects/scottish-borders-construction-forum/)

## *Southern Uplands Partnership Core Team Updates*

PIP TABOR / SHEILA ADAMS / KATY EWING / DARREN FLINT

### **Katy's news...**

I am continuing to work with Dumfries and Galloway Council's Events team on their upcoming 'Greener Events Toolkit' that Southern Uplands Partnership Services Ltd has been commissioned to help produce. This toolkit aims to be a unique document that can help voluntary events organisers consider carbon reduction and other environmental actions in their events planning.

So far, the project has involved researching best practice in sustainable events planning and advice; locally, nationally and internationally to ensure that the toolkit is both relevant to the Dumfries and Galloway voluntary events sector, and also up to date with national and international standards. We've also met with the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere team to discuss how best to incorporate the Biosphere and Wider D&G Sustainable Events Charter into our advice, and we're currently undertaking two workshops with the Dumfries and Galloway Events Sector to explain our work so far and ask for feedback.

We hope that the end product is a useful document that contains helpful information to increase understanding of the environmental impacts of events and guide organisers to minimise these wherever possible so that we can all continue to enjoy the huge benefits of festivals and events within our beautiful rural backdrop long into the future. Keep watching this space!



## *Southern Uplands Partnership Core Team Updates*

PIP TABOR / SHEILA ADAMS / KATY EWING / DARREN FLINT

### Darren's news...



These cracking images of black grouse were taken by Malcolm Stott in the Moorfoot Hills, one of the project five focus areas

Since the last newsletter I've been practically dreaming of black grouse, with all of my part-time hours taken up with the development phase of this landscape scale uplands project – see the full black grouse project update above. This has included working closely with our partner, Julia Gallagher of the RSPB, to talk to landowners and stakeholders across five core areas in southern Scotland, identify and agree habitat works, with a view to mapping and costing these by the end of May, ready for the delivery stage of the project.

This has included meetings and site visits the Tarras Valley, Borders Forest Trust, Forestry & Land Scotland, Buccleuch, National Trust for Scotland, Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere, tree nurseries, RSPB reserve managers and John Muir Trust. With the last one we had a perfect winter day, all crisp and bright out on the Tweedsmuir Hills to see the habitat works underway at JMT's Glenlude site. Also got to meet the very charming Charlie the collie and have a cup of tea by their very toasty stove.



## *Dumfriesshire East Community Benefit Company*

### THE EWE HILL 16 FUND

The Ewe Hill 16 Fund will receive an annual contribution from ScottishPower Renewables of at least £184,000 (index linked over the operational life) to be distributed to worthwhile projects and initiatives which benefit the people living and working in the area of East Dumfriesshire, and includes the following communities:

- North Milk area,
- Tundergarth
- Middlebie and Waterbeck
- Langholm, Ewes and Westerkirk
- Canonbie and District
- Springfield and Gretna Green
- Gretna and Rigg

The Ewe Hill 16 Fund will be awarded to projects through an Open Grant Application process. The Grants process is administered and initial assessments of applications made by The Southern Uplands Partnership.

#### **Deadlines for applications to the Ewe Hill 16 Fund are:**

- [www.decbg.org.uk/the-ewe-hill-16-fund](http://www.decbg.org.uk/the-ewe-hill-16-fund)
- 31st January (for applications to be decided at the March Board meeting. Projects should not start before 1st April.)
- 31st July (for applications to be decided at the September meeting. Projects should not start before 1st October.)
- Application forms and guidance can be downloaded from the website [www.decbg.org.uk](http://www.decbg.org.uk) or email [decbgscio@gmail.com](mailto:decbgscio@gmail.com).
- For assistance with project ideas or applications, contact Jamie Dent at [jamie@decbg.org.uk](mailto:jamie@decbg.org.uk) or 07391 618359 or your local Community Council



## *Dumfriesshire East Community Benefit Company*

### **THE SOLWAYBANK WINDFARM COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND**

Solwaybank Windfarm Community Benefit Fund will receive an annual contribution from Solwaybank Energy Ltd of at least £60,000 (index linked over the operational life) to contribute to community activities in the following areas:

- Langholm, Ewes and Westerkirk
- Canonbie and District
- Kirkpatrick Fleming and District
- Kirtle and Eaglesfield
- Middlebie and Waterbeck

The Solwaybank Windfarm Community Benefit Fund will be awarded to projects through an Open Grant Application process.

Application Forms are available to download from the DECBG website [www.decbg.org.uk](http://www.decbg.org.uk) or obtained by emailing [decbgscio@gmail.com](mailto:decbgscio@gmail.com) or telephoning 01750 725154 or phoning or texting 07741 076997.

### **Deadlines for applications to SOLWAYBANK WINDFARM COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND are:**

- [www.decbg.org.uk/the-solwaybank-windfarm-community-benefit-fund/](http://www.decbg.org.uk/the-solwaybank-windfarm-community-benefit-fund/)
- 31st January (for applications to be decided at the March Board meeting. Projects should not start before 1st April.)
- 31st July (for applications to be decided at the September meeting. Projects should not start before 1st October.)
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- For assistance with project ideas or applications, contact Jamie Dent at [jamie@decbg.org.uk](mailto:jamie@decbg.org.uk) or 07391 618359 or your local Community Council

The Grants process is administered and initial assessments of applications made by The Southern Uplands Partnership. The Solwaybank Windfarm Advisory Management Panel of DECBG will make the decisions on all applications to Solwaybank Windfarm Community Benefit Fund.



## Become a Patron

AND SUPPORT ALL THE ACTIVITIES IN THIS NEWSLETTER

  
southern uplands partnership  
*living land, living community*

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**PATRON**

*annual subscription £500*

**[www.sup.org.uk/support](http://www.sup.org.uk/support)**

### WHY BECOME A PATRON?

- be part of a strategic rural charity with 20+ years experience
- help communities make sustainable use of their natural and cultural heritage
- join a partnership that includes projects such as Tweed River Culture, the development of an 85-mile Solway trail, EV Recharge in Nature, Scottish Borders Construction Forum, a Wild Land Area and boosting the golden eagle population...

*Email: [contactus@sup.org.uk](mailto:contactus@sup.org.uk)*

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AND FINALLY...

It won't be long now until winter is long forgotten and there are signs of spring all around - these are some of the things to look out for...



Our Current Patrons



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