



southern uplands partnership
living land, living community

SUP NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2026

Hello and welcome to our October newsletter.

It is all go at Southern Uplands Partnership! At the strategic level, we are delighted to see the recent launch of the State of Nature Report for South Scotland, which we undertook for the Regional Land Use Partnership and Regional Economic Partnership. We are also busy completing Dumfries & Galloway Council's Local Biodiversity Action Plan Review.

Our delivery in communities continues apace too. In Dumfries and Galloway we recently completed the East Dumfriesshire Nature Connections programme, supported by National Lottery Awards for All. We'll share our final report soon. We were pleased that the D&G Coastal Benefit Fund awarded us funding to deliver a winter Coastal Nature Connections programme and we are now busy planning delivery of an exciting series of events on the Solway Coast.

Meantime, further coastal walks are now available for booking through the SCAMP Landscape Connections programme- see below.

Over in the Borders, we're getting ready for the second Tweed River Festival and our SBCAN team held a successful Green Gathering in Galashiels on the 30 September.

Read on for more about our work supporting nature, climate, culture and community resilience across the south of Scotland.



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State of Nature

A mixed picture of the state of nature in the South of Scotland emerges in a landmark new study published this week. The Southern Uplands Partnership (SUP) has developed the State of Nature report, which is a first for the South of Scotland.

Presented in two parts, a summary and a more detailed data report, State of Nature South of Scotland reports on biodiversity across the Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway, drawing on the best available evidence and charting the changes that have taken place across the region over the 25-year period since the year 2000.

Working with South of Scotland Enterprise, the Regional Economic Partnership and the South of Scotland Regional Land Use Partnership, NatureScot, alongside Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway Councils, the report produced by SUP, with support from the South West Scotland Environmental Information Centre and The Wildlife Information Centre, as well as many other partners, shows some notable positive trends for biodiversity including the recovery of important seagrass beds in the Solway Firth and Loch Ryan, both of which are increasing in extent.

However, the overall picture, based on the data available across eleven metrics, indicates a decline in biodiversity across the South of Scotland. The report also reveals the arrival of new species due to climate change, alongside losses and gains in biodiversity due to changing land-use, human introductions and pollution.

The picture created by the study is complex, with different trends in evidence across habitats and species. The report also highlights significant gaps in consistent monitoring. The report will be used to help plan future biodiversity and land use policy and can be updated as new data becomes available.

Read the reports here: <https://www.southofscotlandrep.com/stateofnature>



Image: discussion at SBCAN's first Green Get-Together held at Cafe ReCharge (a pay-what-you-can cafe which makes use of surplus food) in Galashiels on 30 September.

Project News



SBCAN has just announced a call out for applications to its latest round of seed funding. Their Act for Change fund provides grants of between £500 and £1500 for constituted groups in the Scottish Borders to undertake projects linked to climate change and the environment. Applications are open until 11.59 pm on 8 November.

Visit SBCAN's website to find out more: www.sbcan.co.uk/funding

SBCAN also hosted its first Green Get-Together on 30 September, with a second edition already planned for the new year. The event offered the opportunity for people to hear about several inspiring projects taking place in the Scottish Borders linked to climate action and the environment, alongside networking with others actively engaged in promoting action on climate change in the Borders.



SWSEIC's highly successful Nature Connections project in East Dumfriesshire has come to a close this autumn. Working alongside Southern Uplands Partnership staff and several external partners, SWSEIC delivered 21 activities this year in the Boreland, Eskdalemuir, Langholm, Brydekirk, and Eaglesfield areas.

221 people took part in a range of events including community moth trapping, bat talks and walks, wildlife recording workshops, local wildlife talks, nature walks, camera trapping and a range of artistic activities and artistic sessions.



SWSEIC has produced two fantastic compilation videos of the trail camera findings for Boreland and Eskdalemuir (including a sighting of a Goshawk and Otter among other species) which you can view on the SWSEIC YouTube channel via the following links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSh2R-ijeqc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pGITG-hWmRs>

A big thanks to all the partners and volunteers involved in the events, and to the project funders at The National Lottery Awards for All.



Connecting Threads are gearing up for the second edition of its Tweed River Festival, which takes place from 30-31 October 2026. This year the festival has moved downriver to Melrose, in the Middle Tweed.

The team invite you to join them for a two-day creative celebration of the river, responding to the theme 'Under, over, round and through'; this was Connecting Threads' 2026 programming theme, which borrows its title from group dance warm-ups encouraging participants to focus on their relationships to the surrounding space and to each other.

This year's festival includes a host of river-focused creative activities: from collective net-making to riverside listening; costume-making to screen-printing; circus performances to photography workshops; films, food, wild swimming, a parade, and more!

Head to Connecting Threads' website to see the full programme:

<https://www.tweedriverculture.org/journal/trf-2026-full-programme-live>





Image: SUP staff members recently attended the Scottish Sustainable Agriculture Conference at Guardswell Farm in Perthshire. The theme was farming for a better future.

Upcoming Events

SCAMP Landscape Connections

Look out for four autumn coast path walks and talks taking place this month. Coastal access is a key element of the ambitious SCAMP landscape conservation project, these sessions have the goal of learning more about how coastal access works for the communities on the Solway Coast, so please join us for the walks or share your views at the accompanying drop in sessions.

Auchencairn Walk & Talk:

22 Oct, 1.30 - 4 pm

Wigtown Walk & Talk:

27 Oct, 1.30 - 4 pm.

Borgue Walk & Talk:

28 Oct, 1.30 - 3.30 pm.

Kingholm Quay Walk & Talk:

29 Oct, 1.30 - 4.00 pm.

Book your spot: <https://tinyurl.com/SUP-eventbrite>

If you cannot make one of the walks but would like to respond to the survey you can do so here:

<https://tinyurl.com/SUP-access-survey>

Autumn Coast Paths Walk & Talk Series

Join the SCAMP coastal access team to explore and celebrate the Solway Coast and local coastal access, share stories about history, nature and landscape, let us know about how and why you access the coast, and any barriers you face.

All events are free to attend: to take part in one of the walks, please book via Eventbrite

Gretna Walk and Talk Thur, 17 Sep • 2PM - 4PM Drop-in at the Richard Greenhow Centre • 4PM - 7PM FREE	Sandhead Bird walk and litter pick with RSPB Tues, 22 Sep • 2PM - 4PM Drop-in at Sandhead Bowling and Community Club • 4PM - 7PM FREE	Borgue Brighthouse Bay Walk and Talk Wed, Oct 28 • 1.30PM - 3.30PM Drop-in at Borgue Public Hall • 4PM - 7PM FREE
Kingholm Quay Walk and Talk Thur, 28 Oct • 1.30PM - 4PM Drop-in at Kingholm Quay Community Centre • 4PM - 7PM FREE	Auchencairn Walk and Talk Thur, 22 Oct • 1.30PM - 4PM Drop-in at the Murray Hall • 4PM - 7PM FREE	Wigtown Walk and Talk Tues, 27 Oct • 1.30PM - 4PM Drop-in at The Merse • 4PM - 7PM FREE

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/SUP-eventbrite> to book, or scan the QR code

SCAMP - Landscape Connections is one of the most ambitious coastal conservation projects in Scotland. With lead funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, it seeks to restore the coastal and shallow sea habitats of the North Solway, covering the entire Dumfries and Galloway coastline from Gretna around to the Rhins of Galloway, working with nature, local people, sustaining the economy and delivering health and wellbeing benefits.

Coastal access is key to delivering the project, and this series of coastal walks and drop-in sessions has been arranged to better understand from communities how coastal access works for them. If you can't make it to any of these sessions but want to feed in your views, we would love to hear from you. Please respond to our questionnaire online (<https://tinyurl.com/SCAMP-access-survey> - or scan the QR code) and leave your contact details if you would like the team to follow up.

Dumfries and Galloway

If you would like to support the work that Southern Uplands Partnership does, you can donate at the button below:



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[SUP mailing list sign-up form \(mailchi.mp\)](https://mailchi.mp/southernuplands).

