

Tweed matters

The newsletter of the Tweed Forum



Cover image: A remeandered section of the previously channelised Eddleston Water, restored as part of the wider Eddleston Water Project, see pages 21-22

Tweed Forum 30th Anniversary

Tweed Forum has been celebrating 30 years at the heart of land and water management on Tweed. From our beginnings in 1991 - where the informal 'Forum' met to address a single issue (the removal of gravel from a river channel) – we have developed into an award-winning, cross-border environmental partnership, focusing on getting practical work done on the ground, as well as advising government bodies, policy-makers, landowners and farmers on a range of land and water management issues. Our approach has always been to work closely with farmers, foresters, landowners and other relevant organisations to introduce measures that deliver a range of important benefits for the Tweed catchment: enhancing habitat for wildlife (including salmon and otter), delivering improved soil and water quality, helping to combat the effects of the climate and biodiversity crises and providing tourism and recreation opportunities in the surrounding areas.

In the 20 years that Tweed Forum has been undertaking practical works to restore, conserve and enhance the Tweed catchment we have planted over 1.3 million trees, created/restored 267 ponds and wetlands, enhanced 300 miles of river, improved 4920 ha of peatland



Tweed Forum Director, Luke Comins, marking 30 years of Tweed Forum

and created 209 miles of stock exclusion fencing to address riverbank degradation. Several miles of channelised river have also been remeandered and over 400 ha of floodplain and wetland have been restored, with 236 engineered log jam structures installed to reduce flooding. Our extensive campaign targeting invasive non-native plant species across the catchment is in its 20th year and has led to very significant reductions in the growth of giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed on the main river channel and tributaries. ►

□ TWEED FORUM 30

► When Tweed Forum was first formed, climate change was just beginning to register in the public's consciousness and our work was either opportunistic or concentrated on single issue problems. Since the creation of our Catchment Management Plan in 2003, our focus has been on developing a coordinated and targeted programme of nature-based solutions that allow us to address a multitude of issues - protecting nature as well as unlocking its power to tackle the effects of climate change and deliver numerous

environmental, economic and social benefits for local people. With scientists now estimating that nature-based solutions could contribute around 20% of the mitigation needed between now and 2050 to keep global warming below 2 degrees, our work has never been more important. We look forward to continuing to work for the benefit of people and nature, and know that Tweed Forum will continue to grow and adapt to the challenges of the next 30 years.



Tweed Forum staff gather together on the banks of the River Tweed to celebrate 30 years



Tweed Forum River Champion

We were delighted to recognise the work of Teviothead farmer John Tullie with the 2021 Tweed Forum River Champion Award. A sheep and cattle farmer for over 45 years, John has developed a number of water, wetland and woodland initiatives on his land at Teviothead, near Hawick, for over a decade. In addition to conservation work on land he owns and tenants at Heronhill near Hawick, John was also an early

adopter of habitat creation for natural flood management at his tenanted Buccleuch Estates farm of Bowanhill in the upper Teviot catchment. This is the second time in its six-year history that the River Champion Award has been given to a farmer, emphasising the importance of the farming community in working together to protect the land and waters of the Tweed catchment.



Farmer, John Tullie, receives the 2021 Tweed Forum River Champion trophy from Tweed Forum Chair, Debbie Playfair

Tweed Catchment Management Plan

The Tweed Catchment Management Plan (CMP) is currently undergoing a period of review and revision to ensure it is up to date and relevant to the challenges which face the Tweed and its tributaries over the next five years. This will be our third review since the CMP was launched in 2002 and, once complete, the newly revised document will provide a comprehensive plan of action for conserving, enhancing and

restoring the Tweed catchment, as well as an informative background to the catchment management planning process. We ran a public consultation in December 2021 to encourage a wide range of stakeholders to get involved in the CMP review process and we have also been engaging extensively with the Tweed Forum Membership over the last few months on the content and direction of the new CMP.



Image © Jim Gibson

Staff update

Joining the Tweed Forum team are new staff members Lucy Ramsay, Phil Kearney and Hugh Martin. Lucy joins us as Administrative Assistant, with a background in rural business management and a passion for her local Borders environment. Phil, another native Borderer, will be overseeing our diverse and exciting portfolio of river restoration projects in his new post of River Restoration Project and Contracts Manager. Phil has over 20 years of experience in environmental project management, including fisheries, woodland and access work. Our newest addition, Hugh, comes to us with a background in arboriculture and will be helping deliver our native woodland creation programme, as well as assisting with peatland restoration initiatives.



From top:
Phil Kearney, Hugh Martin, Lucy Ramsay

□ FALLAGO

Tweed Forum is coordinating this important Fund on behalf of Roxburghe Estates and EDF Renewables

Fallago Environment Fund

Moving into its eighth year, the main Fund has now supported a total of 80 projects, amounting to £1.4 million. In the most recent rounds, the Fund has committed support towards restoration of the historically significant A-listed "Pavilion" and "Furnace House" at Abbotsford House; upgrade of the C-listed Eyemouth Parish Church to ensure that the town's largest indoor space can continue to sustainably serve the local community; the creation of nearly 1 km

of all-access footpaths and interpretation at Maldesheugh Community Wood, near Selkirk; Roxburgh Federation Scottish Women's Institute (SWI) which supports 21 SWI groups across Roxburghshire, and has a strong focus on reducing social isolation and the advancement of education and skills amongst girls and women; a project to create wildflower habitat in Hawick; the Great Borders River Clean, which brings communities together from throughout the region to



Ancrum Community Council's Karen Briggs (right) and local resident Rosie Hunt (left) visit the new bridge over the Witch Burn. Safer access to this valued walking route was made possible by the Covid-19 Footpath Repair Fund.

□ FALLAGO

remove rubbish from their local rivers; feasibility works for Yester Castle, near Gifford; and preservation works for the 12th century St Dionysus Church in Ayton.

In addition to the main Fund, another limited-lifetime fund has been successfully delivered, specifically aimed at local access networks which were under unprecedented pressure during Covid-19 lockdowns. The £30,000 Covid-19 Footpath Repair Fund has supported eight community groups in the Scottish Borders to

carry out important improvements to local walking routes. This is in addition to 38 initiatives already supported by last year's limited-lifetime £100,000 Covid-19 community recovery fund.

APPLY NOW!

The next round of Fallago Environment Fund applications is open until 12 noon on the 1st September 2022 (and the following round of applications due by 12 noon on the 1st March 2023). The aim of the Fund is to enhance the quality of life for local communities, and visitors to the Borders, through investment in the protection, enhancement and appreciation of the natural, built and cultural heritage of the Scottish Borders environment.

Apply online at:

www.tweedforum.org/fallago

(Detailed application guidance notes are also available online.)



The Great Borders River Clean

Tweed Matters — Prefer a digital copy?

To save trees and costs, please join the people who have asked to receive future Tweed Matters updates via email.

Visit: **www.tweedforum.org/newsletter** to sign up or use the QR code opposite



□ RIVERWORKS

This long-term strategy aims to improve the River Till SSSI and SAC

River Till Restoration Strategy

We are moving into an exciting new phase of the River Till Restoration Strategy (RTRS). Looking forward over the next five years, our focus will be on updating some of the ten-year-old RTRS document and creating case studies of completed projects (such as the River Glen Restoration Project). We will also be looking beyond the river channel for new opportunities to improve the Till SSSI/

and has been particularly successful in leveraging additional funding and developing the early stages of large projects. These projects include the River Glen Restoration and Flood Risk Management Project which features on the opposite page; and Reconnecting the Wooler Water, which will remove a major barrier to salmon migration on the Wooler Water whilst creating a new



A stretch of the Till SSSI/SAC in 'good condition'

SAC (such as native woodland creation within the wider Till catchment) as well as monitoring past projects, which will allow us to add to the evidence base for river restoration measures.

From its publication in 2013, the RTRS has become well-established

heritage trail, improved habitat, and education and recreational programmes. A restoration initiative for the River Breamish is also in development and we look forward to continuing our work with our partners and communities within the Till catchment.

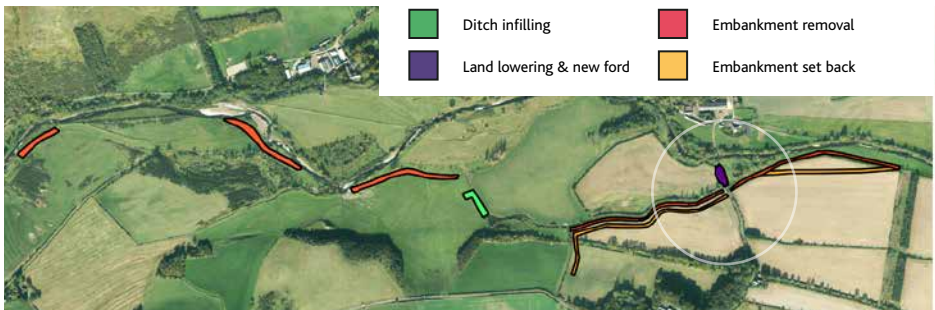
□ RIVERWORKS

This high-energy and dynamic river is being restored to reduce the risk of embankment failure and sudden channel change, while benefiting people and wildlife

River Glen Restoration & Flood Risk Management Project



River Glen in flood, pictured before restoration works to reduce the risk of embankment failure and sudden channel change



Aerial view of restoration works along 2.5 km of the River Glen (encircled area is enlarged in image below)



Detailed look at the restoration works around Coupland Bridge on the River Glen



□ RIVERWORKS

► **Supported by the Water Environment Grant, the ambitious River Glen Restoration & Flood Risk Management Project is the culmination of many years of development work with four adjoining estates.** Working with contractors, Cubby Construction Ltd, and designers, Dynamic Rivers, we have removed over 1500 m of flood embankment to improve the 'connection' between the river channel and its floodplain, thereby encouraging flood water to spread out over the wider floodplain area and 'slowing the flow'.

We have also set back almost 1000 m of flood embankment with the aim of improving protection for arable farmland and providing more space for flood water, and several ditches have been filled in to slow down erosion at 'erosion hotspots'. Finally, a major bottleneck for floodwater was eased by lowering a track (and surrounding land) and replacing Coupland Bridge with a new ford. These measures will improve the condition of the river (which is part of the Till/Tweed SSSI and SAC designated site) and increase flood resilience for nearby farmland, properties and infrastructure.

□ HABITATS & SPECIES

Delivering improvements for river, intertidal and marine habitats within the Tweed catchment and along the Northumberland coast

LIFE WADER

This collaborative five-year project will tackle local issues under four main themes: improving water quality, controlling macro algae, tackling invasive non-native species and protecting wildlife from recreational pressures. We are looking forward to working with project partners Natural England, the Environment Agency and Newcastle University on LIFE WADER (Water and Disturbance Environmental Restoration), delivering our catchment-based approach from the headwaters of the Tweed to the Northumbrian coast. Over the next five years, Tweed Forum will be addressing diffuse pollution issues through targeted

riparian tree planting, controlling invasive non-native species throughout the Tweed catchment, embarking on a new education programme, and taking part in a pilot project that aims to improve water quality through river restoration and floodplain reconnection. You can read more about this new project at <https://tweedforum.org/our-work/life-wader/>.



LIFE WADER (LIFE20 NAT/UK/000277) is financially supported by LIFE, a financial instrument of the European Commission

□ HABITATS & SPECIES

This innovative pilot project will create a web portal to facilitate targeted peatland restoration

CivTech®: Prioritising Peatlands for Restoration

In collaboration with environmental and agricultural data consultancy, Environment Systems, and Scottish consultancy, Land & Habitats, we have been working on this innovative, high-tech pilot with the aim of prioritising areas for peatland and wetland restoration. The project will create a Peatlands Web Portal - a digital tool aimed at enhancing peatland restoration efforts across Scotland. Peatlands have a major role to play in the fight against the effects of climate change by storing carbon, acting as a flood water store, filtering clean water, and providing a rich habitat for wildlife but around 80% of Scottish peatlands are damaged and in need of restoration.

This work has been supported by the Scottish Government's CivTech® programme, a competitive process

whereby private sector innovators offer "solutions" to a suite of public sector "problems". Working with Environment Systems and Land & Habitats, on "How can technology help us identify peatland restoration sites that will optimise costs and benefits?", our proposal for the Peatlands Web Portal was selected out of three bids, winning through to the next stage in the process – producing a pilot version of the Portal. As well as mapping peatland and its suitability for restoration, it is hoped that the portal will also model carbon "values" and other ecosystems benefits including biodiversity, water quality and flood mitigation. This information will be extremely valuable for land managers and policy makers, in targeting and prioritising peatland restoration work.



Peatland restoration on Peel Fell in the Scottish Borders

□ HABITATS & SPECIES

Our long-term control of invasive non-native species giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed continues

Tweed Invasives Project

This year, the Tweed Invasives Project will have been running continuously, without interruption, for 20 years. The focus for the future will be to build on the success of our targeted control programme and continue to remove target invasive non-native species (INNS) or manage them at a level where they

stands, however years of persistent control has meant that these stands are now small and fragmented - the largest stand, on an island in the lower Tweed, is now virtually non-existent.

American skunk cabbage sites which have been under active control are now very low in abundance, however further



Emily Iles, our Tweed Invasives Project Officer, removing American skunk cabbage from an infested site

are not affecting biodiversity. In May, we conducted walkovers throughout the Tweed catchment and our contractors, plus our cohort of 23 volunteers, who control giant hogweed along the Tweed all reported minimal sightings of the plant - a testament to the success of the project. Japanese and giant knotweed used to be found throughout the catchment in large

sites where the species has been planted for ornamental purposes have started to filter through and these will be added to the list for removal. We are also trialling new methods of control which will allow us to move away from using chemicals within the protected designations of the Tweed catchment (see opposite for details of our rust fungus bio-control) ▶

□ HABITATS & SPECIES

► trial for Himalayan balsam). We will be redoubling our focus on biosecurity measures to prevent reestablishment, or new occurrences, of these damaging INNS. To achieve this we need to identify the various pathways by which these species enter the catchment and put in appropriate measures to keep them out, such as signage for river users. Making use of new technologies will also help

in the battle to keep these species from spreading, and we will be teaming up with Newcastle University to use drone technology to rapidly survey areas of concern.

Please keep reporting sightings to us at info@tweedforum.org. Please include a photo and a grid reference, if possible.

Rust fungus bio-control for Himalayan balsam

Since 2015, Tweed Forum have been working with scientists at CABI to trial a rust fungus biological control for Himalayan balsam. It is hoped that the rust fungus will reduce the vigour of Himalayan balsam, allowing native vegetation to coexist in a new balance with this invasive non-native species. Over time, the methodology of this project has evolved and we are now seeing positive results at our release sites. Surveys in spring 2021 discovered that the rust fungus had successfully survived the winter and infected emerging Himalayan balsam seedlings. At one site, seedling infection survived to the adult leaf stage, and then spread out to other adult plants around 40 m away, a first for the project. From our preliminary data it seems that shade might be a limiting factor for

successful rust infection, and site monitoring will continue throughout the project area to further refine our knowledge on this front. This year we will also be expanding the trial to a further 5 sites thanks to support from the EU LIFE WADER project.



Emily Iles, Tweed Invasives Project Officer, inoculating Himalayan balsam plants with rust fungus

□ HABITATS & SPECIES

Tweed Forum are carrying out peatland restoration in the Scottish Borders in collaboration with NatureScot's "PeatlandACTION" programme



PeatlandACTION Project Officer, Rachel Coyle, at one of our peatland restoration sites

Our collaborative peatland restoration project at Carrifran, Talla and Gameshope got going again last autumn (following some delays due to wintry conditions in 2020) and is now complete. Across the project area, a total of 105 ha of damaged peatland have been restored using techniques such as peat hag reprofiling, bare peat revegetation and gully blocking. This work ensures that the integrity of the peat is once again safeguarded by a protective layer of peatland vegetation, and that the natural ability of peatlands to store water is reinstated by removing the draining effect of gullies. Restored peatlands will keep the carbon within the underlying peat safely stored (carbon emissions being a primary concern for

climate change), as well as acting to slow the flow of flood waters and enhancing habitat for biodiversity. The multiple benefits offered by restored peatlands makes a strong case for the restoration of this key habitat.

Restoration works on Grey Mares Tail and the neighbouring Wemyss and March Estate also started in early autumn 2021, with the Grey Mares Tail site proving extremely challenging in terms of access and ground conditions. Work on this site is now completed and we have started survey work for a second phase of restoration at Grey Mares Tail which is likely to include peat hag re-profiling across approximately 90 ha of eroding peatland habitat on Watch Knowe. ►

□ HABITATS & SPECIES

► Hag re-profiling works on Wemyss and March estate are also now complete with a total of 38 km of eroding peat hags re-profiled during this second phase. A further

450 ha have been surveyed at Wemyss and March and we are currently working on a funding application for phase 3, which will see hag re-profiling and ditch blocking across a 250 ha area.



Before (left) and after (right) restoration works (hag-reprofiling and turving) at Little Firthhope, Carrifran

This project aims to create and manage wetland habitat for wading birds

Borders Wading Bird Initiative

Building on the 175 ha of wading bird habitat currently being managed by Scottish Borders farmers under a biodiversity offset agreement secured by Scottish Borders Council and NTRplc, Tweed Forum has secured a further 50 ha of wet grassland for wader-friendly grazing management. This has been done in association with Scottish Borders Council and Community Windpower Ltd as part of the biodiversity offset agreement secured for the Aikengall2a wind farm. Allanshaws farm is part of the Lauderdale Farmers Wading Bird group and the group are keen to do what they can to help breeding wader populations. At Allanshaws, lapwing and snipe are the target species but curlew also breed on the farm. In addition to the 50 ha of wet grassland grazing



Lapwing are a key species for the Borders Wading Bird Initiative

management, 15 shallow scrapes will be created, which will help provide the insect habitat which is vital for wading bird chicks in spring.

□ HABITATS & SPECIES

This scheme offers funding for small-scale tree planting throughout the Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway

South of Scotland Tree Planting Grant Scheme

The South of Scotland Tree Planting Grant Scheme was launched in April 2021 with the aim of planting landscape trees across the south of Scotland countryside. The grant helps facilitate the planting of individual landscape trees, hedgerow trees, field margin trees, parkland trees, tree lines, small copses and orchards. The idea came from a desire to see the highly successful Borders Tree Planting Grant Scheme (which ran for 6 years) expand across the south of Scotland, into Dumfries & Galloway. During its first year, the scheme has received 123 applications with 20,523 landscape trees planted.

Tweed Forum has been working with Borders Forest Trust and Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership to offer guidance and support to applicants. The scheme is administered centrally by Tweed Forum. Grants of up to £1,000 are available to help with tree planting costs. Application forms can be completed online and can be accessed on the Tweed Forum, Borders Forest Trust and Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership websites.



Carlops Community Orchard - recipients of a South of Scotland Tree Planting Grant



SOUTH OF SCOTLAND
TREE PLANTING GRANT

[www.tweedforum.org/our-work/
projects/south-of-scotland-tree-
planting-grant/](http://www.tweedforum.org/our-work/projects/south-of-scotland-tree-planting-grant/)

□ HABITATS & SPECIES

Making the Scottish Borders an exemplar for strategic tree planting through collaborative action



Building on last year's work, our collaboration with Borders Forest Trust on the Borders Treescapes Project continues - planting native trees along river corridors to provide multiple benefits such as wildlife habitat creation, cooling of rivers and carbon capture. The Scottish Borders has been identified as one of the Woodland Trust's Treescape areas: an area where wildlife and people will benefit from strategic, sustainable planting of new native woods and trees. The main thrust of our Treescapes work over the last year has been the creation of over 65 ha of strategic riparian planting in the Leader, Gala, Ettrick and Teviot Water catchments.

One particular project of note is Lauder Common's Community Woodland. The woodland has now been planted after six years of discussion and planning and is spread across six "compartments" totalling 20.7 ha, featuring a range of native broadleaved species (along with a small 2 ha block of diverse conifers which will

diversify the species on the Common and enhance the local Rideout). These woodlands will enhance the biodiversity value of the area, reduce diffuse pollution, aid natural flood management and capture carbon, as well as boosting the Common's amenity and natural beauty.

This planting has very much been a team effort - from Lauder Common Good and Scottish Borders Council in the initial discussion and design process, Scottish Woodlands in overseeing and implementing the capital works, to Forest Carbon in quantifying and selling the carbon associated with the future woodland to fund the planting. The planting has not been without its issues, however. One week after the compartments had been fenced, Storm Arwen claimed one of the woodland fences. Thankfully this has been repaired and fingers crossed this will be the last hiccup for the newly planted area for at least a few years!

Community planting day

On behalf of the local Lauder community, Tweed Forum applied for and was granted 420 Queen's Green Canopy trees. The Queen's Green Canopy is a unique tree planting project that celebrates Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee by inviting people from across the UK to

"plant a tree for the Jubilee". A variety of tree species were planted on 26th March 2022 in a great turnout from Lauder in Bloom and other local residents. The new Jubilee Wood is adjacent to the newly planted Lauder Community Woodland.



Local residents planting at Lauder Common



Planting supplies ready to go

His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester completes Lauder's new Jubilee Wood

The woodland also received a grand opening from His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester who planted the final tree – a rowan – during his visit, alongside pupils from Lauder Primary School.



Pupils from Lauder Primary help His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester (left) plant the final tree in the Platinum Jubilee Wood, alongside Tweed Forum Director, Luke Comins (right)

□ HABITATS & SPECIES

This partnership initiative aims to create native woodland habitat in the upper Teviot catchment

Upper Teviot Riparian Woodlands



Riparian woodland planting in the Linhope valley will enhance biodiversity

This project builds on the work carried out on seven farms within the upper Teviot Catchment over the last four years and aims to work cooperatively with Hawick Flood Scheme in reducing the impact of flood water downstream. 80 ha of native woodland has already been planted and, over the last year, a further 19 ha has been planted at Linhope Farm. This takes the total to approximately 100 ha of native riparian woodlands.

The multiple benefits derived from planting riparian woodlands are now more widely recognised, and worth the

extra cost compared to more traditional forestry plantations (riparian woodlands can be relatively high-cost items per hectare due to the requirement for deer fencing to protect the newly planted trees). Extra monies from biodiversity offsets and carbon payments help make planting schemes more viable for land managers and this programme was facilitated through the Langhope Rig Wind Farm development, a biodiversity offset scheme secured by Scottish Borders Council from the developer SSE Renewables.

□ HABITATS & SPECIES

Creating a network of riparian woodland and healthy river systems throughout Scotland by sharing knowledge, building capacity and identifying innovative funding

Riverwoods



Working with the Scottish Wildlife Trust and Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS), we will be using our experience and expertise to encourage and support partners to increase and deliver riparian woodland throughout Scotland through knowledge transfer, building capacity, and identifying funding and blended finance opportunities. Two workshops have been delivered to predominantly FMS

opportunities available for riparian planting schemes.

There have been significant discussions with several Trusts, including the Deveron, Findhorn and the Kyle of Sutherland, which are looking to expand riparian woodland at the landscape scale. With the latter Trust, preliminary walkover surveys have been carried out, leading to over



A hardy group of Riverwoods enthusiasts enjoying a site visit to Glen Banchor in some lovely Spring weather!

member Trusts from all over Scotland, as well as staff from other NGOs, national parks and interested parties such as Trees for Life. These workshops have mainly focused on the practical considerations in identifying and delivering riparian woodland, along with the finance

250 ha of potential riparian woodland being identified in the Upper Oykel. Looking forward, we will continue to develop opportunities by identifying potential partners, carrying out initial scoping surveys and looking at potential delivery options.

□ FLOOD MANAGEMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

Funded by Scottish Government, Interreg and SEPA, this project aims to restore natural habitats and reduce flood risk in Peebles and Eddleston village

Eddleston Water Project

The Eddleston Water Project is now 10 years old and our extensive monitoring programme is beginning to yield some impressive results. The catchment-wide monitoring programme has been evaluating various natural flood management (NFM) measures which have been installed throughout the Eddleston catchment. These include large-scale riparian and headwater tree planting, engineered log structures, remeandering, flood storage pond creation, reintroduction of large woody material and flood embankment removal.

A network of hydrometric, groundwater and water quality monitoring equipment, as well as various ecological and geomorphological surveys, have been collecting this monitoring data. Analysis is showing that the NFM measures are reducing the number of high flow events and significantly increasing lag times or, in other words, the time elapsed between rain falling and the river rising. Remeandering has increased the quantity and diversity of instream habitat which, in turn, has positively impacted fish numbers as well as the abundance and diversity of aquatic invertebrates. The measures also provide a range of other ecosystem services which, together with flood damages avoided, provide significant, positive cost-benefit gains.

We have also completed a further 375 m of remeandering and floodplain reconnection at Nether Kidston, 3 km north of Peebles, with the 2.4 ha



floodplain being restored to a mosaic of natural wetlands and native woodland. A flood attenuation pond has also been created and will “slow the flow” of flood waters during high flow events, while providing key wetland/marsh habitat during low flow events. By relocating, remeandering and increasing its length by 95 m, the river is now reconnected to its floodplain and, over time, a more natural riffle and glide dynamic will begin to form within the river channel. This new diversity of channel structure will also, in time, create excellent habitat for spawning salmon and other key river species, as well as slowing the flow of flood waters. The floodplain will be planted with species such as willow, alder and birch to create a carr woodland that will naturalise over time, and will also, in maturity, slow the flow of flood waters in high water events.

□ FLOOD MANAGEMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE



The site at Nether Kidston, prior to restoration works



The restoration works at Nether Kidston get underway



The completed restoration works at Nether Kidston after a small flood

Image © Colin McLearn

This multi-million-pound, landscape-scale project is based around the concept of a 100-mile source-to-sea Tweed trail

Destination Tweed

Destination Tweed will celebrate and share the nature, history and stories of the River Tweed, one of the UK's most important, highly designated and inspirational river corridors. A five-year, partnership led investment, beginning in 2022 will deliver a source-to-sea trail, which respects its special status, and connects communities and attractions with sensitive, impactful and innovative interpretation. The landscape and river habitats will be enhanced and better understood; new and existing audiences will be meaningfully and actively engaged; and we will curate opportunities to celebrate, care for, enjoy and promote the river sustainably whilst achieving health, wellbeing and economic development ambitions.

A vision statement for Destination Tweed, 2022

It's been a very busy year for the Destination Tweed project, culminating at the end of February 2022 with the submission of our final application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). We are delighted with the work that has been carried out by our team, partner organisations and project consultants, and the subsequent recommendations have provided us with a fantastic framework of 13 interlinked Destination Tweed subprojects. The assistance and insights from our stakeholders during our range of extensive consultations has also been invaluable, with a special mention to the all the landowners who have cooperated constructively to make the trail possible.

During the NLHF assessment process we will be focusing on further developing key subprojects, including better understanding some of the technical challenges we will face in delivery. We will also be continuing our ongoing dialogue with landowners with regards to the source-to-sea trail route and how to integrate the trail into a working landscape whilst, at the same time, giving a good 'user experience' for those using the route. We continue to raise awareness of Destination Tweed through both consultation and networking, and this has already resulted in around 4,500 individual interactions across all the Destination Tweed subprojects.

□ TOURISM & RECREATION



► Much work has been done on how we will 'tell the story of the Tweed' both physically (in a way that is sensitive to a special landscape like the Tweed catchment) and digitally. This includes work on branding and marketing as well as developing a 'house' style that will project a clear identity. We are also actively looking at

other sources of funding, with potential project cost increases a distinct possibility in the current challenging economic environment. Alongside our funding bid to NLHF, the next stage of our 'Business Case' has been submitted to the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal and if successful, will provide key support for our tourism subprojects.



Image © VisitScotland/Kenny Lam

Connecting Threads is the cultural strand of the Destination Tweed initiative

Connecting Threads

Connecting Threads is a key project within Destination Tweed, encouraging local communities and visitors to the area in engaging, learning and connecting with the river and the wider catchment, as well as each other. Connecting Threads is being led by the Southern Uplands Partnership, with support from Tweed Forum, and is a creative placemaking project, focusing on the river rather than a centre of population. It will connect creative practitioners, conservationists, environmentalists, scientists and river specialists, and communities (of place and purpose) to celebrate and protect the River Tweed through cultural activity which seeks to effect positive change.

Since November 2020, Rachel Hunter and Emily Cropton have been exploring how this might work by conducting a year-long period of research, consultation



Mini-festival of Food, Foraging and Art pilot event, July 2021

and pilot activity. This has resulted in a 5-year Handbook, which shows how the development work has formed the foundations for a set of principles and proposed activities. The cultural events, art works and activities generated by Connecting Threads will invite communities and visitors to make deeper connections to the river environment, stimulate new relationships, strengthen cultural leadership and contribute to a sustainable, locally driven economy. Connecting Threads will develop projects relating to the river that are relevant to the needs of the communities that they work with. In this way, an ecosystem of cultural activity will be created that will include a dedicated cultural programme, art installations and residencies, creative projects, events, workshops, internships, conferences and celebrations.



'River Portrait No. 1', a pilot professional development event, June 2021

Tweed Forum reels in generous donation from Fishpal angling community



Tweed Forum Director, Luke Comins (right), receiving the donation for £4,572 from FishPal CEO, Mark Cockburn (left)

A donation of £4,572 from the Fishpal angling community will support riparian native woodland creation throughout the headwaters of the Tweed catchment.

Targeted in key riverside locations to help provide vital shade for juvenile Atlantic salmon populations, the correct trees planted in the right place will reduce water temperatures and give fish the best chance of survival in a changing climate. As water temperatures rise, the amount of oxygen in the water is reduced and the salmon become stressed and unable to thrive, which can lead to fatalities in hot, dry summers. We are currently working in partnership with the Tweed Foundation to identify the optimum locations for riparian tree planting

for fish stock protection. The trees will also help to improve water quality, stabilise riverbanks, capture carbon and form vital habitat for other wildlife.



Spreading the word – a national role in promoting Natural Flood Management

As restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic have eased, we've been able to resume some face-to-face elements of our outreach programme. Over the last 12 months, we've hosted over 200 students from various higher education establishments at our Eddleston Water Project demonstration sites, with the students learning about our catchment-based approach, with particular emphasis on our programme of natural flood management. Although the resumption of some level of normality allowed for site visits this year, we also continued with our online lecture series for university-level

students. These have proved very popular, allowing us to engage with students who might otherwise be unable to travel.



Bangor University Forestry students visiting one of our Eddleston Water Project sites

Visit by the Royal Estates



Senior management from the Duchy of Cornwall, Sandringham and Balmoral Estates and the Prince's Countryside Fund joined us for the day to hear about our work. We visited Crookston Farm, hosted by the tenant farmers Jim and Graham Sinclair and the owner Georgina Borthwick, to see the extensive riparian planting that has been carried out in recent years.

Tweed Forum Funding

Due to the complexity and number of project funders we are unable to list all the contributing bodies in the relevant sections of the newsletter. However, the following have contributed to Tweed Forum, and associated projects, over the last year:

- Agri-Environment Climate Scheme/RPID
- Branch Out Fund (Northumbrian Water)
- British Geological Survey
- Catchment Partnership Action Fund
- Donations from individuals
- Dumfries and Galloway Council
- Dumfries and Galloway Regionwide Community Fund
- Dundee University
- EDF Renewables
- Environment Agency
- Fishmongers Company Charitable Trust
- FishPal
- Forest Carbon
- Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership
- Green Recovery Challenge Fund
- Hermes
- Interreg North Sea Region Building with Nature European Regional Development Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Natural England
- Nature Restoration Fund
- NatureScot
- Northumberland National Park Authority
- Northumbrian Water Limited
- River Tweed Commission
- Roxburghe Estates
- Scottish Borders Council
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Scottish Forestry
- South of Scotland Enterprise
- Sustrans
- The Scottish Government
- The Rivers Trust
- The Water Environment Fund
- The Water Environment Grant
- The Woodland Trust
- Tweed Foundation

and a large number of farmers and landowners

Tweed Forum Trustees and Staff

TWEED FORUM TRUSTEES:

Tweed Forum is guided and supported by a board of trustees who give their time, knowledge and experience freely, and we are extremely grateful for their input.

Debbie Playfair (Chair)

Andrew Brough

Adrian Dolby*

Patricia Glennie

Simon Henderson

James Hepburne Scott

Paul Jardine

Prof. Chris Spray

Kevin Stewart

Andrew Wallace

*to be formally elected at AGM

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Key achievements to date

1,352,452

trees planted
(1037 ha)



47,653

people engaged
in over 1,329 events



4920 ha

of peatland improved



267

ponds & wetlands
created/restored



440 ha

of floodplain
& wetland restored



236

engineered log jam
structures installed



209 miles

stock exclusion fencing

300 miles

of river enhanced



20+

listed buildings
& monuments restored



1195 miles

of paths upgraded/created



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AT THE HEART OF LAND & WATER MANAGEMENT ON TWEED