

The LINK Newsletter

Update from Scottish Environment LINK
Autumn 2011



Economics and the Environment

LINK held a seminar for members on 30 August to provide an overview of environmental economics, in particular The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), concept, the Carnegie Trust 'More than GDP' agenda, and the findings of the [UK National Ecosystem Assessment](#). There were sixty people from the network participating, plus colleagues from Scottish Government, SNH and SEPA. Simon Pepper, LINK Honorary Fellow, chaired the proceedings and summed up the morning's presentations as follows:

"The presentations offered very valuable insights into ways of making the values of nature more 'visible' to a decision-making culture which is bound to be economics-dominated for the foreseeable future."

"



Richard Aspinall speaking at the seminar

Dr Salman Hussain (Scottish Agricultural College and Edinburgh University) gave an overview of TEEB which has achieved

enormous acclaim as a tool for integrating nature's values into economics. The power of this approach is illustrated by the impressively positive cost:benefit ratios attributable to protection of ecosystems compared with losses if we continue to over-exploit and degrade them. These are well researched numbers, of great relevance to decision-making. They don't tell the whole story of nature's array of values, but they are a big step forward."

"Dr Dan Barlow offered a neat critique of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and its inadequacy as a measure of progress other than crude economic flows. The SNP's [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF) is a welcome innovation, setting out the goals of government in much more meaningful terms, but he pointed out room for improvement here too."

"Professor Richard Aspinall (author of the 'Scotland' chapter of the UK National Ecosystem Assessment) outlined this first-time-ever catalogue of ecosystems, their condition and the range of services they provide. It is a mine of information on which to draw as we make the case for greater consideration of the value of these services in policy-making. This was the only semi-public airing that the author has given of this world-

leading report, illustrating the need for much more public debate of this topic."

"Charles Stewart Roper (Scottish Government, Natural Resources Division) chose not to quarrel with us about 'sustainable economic growth', but encouraged us to look below the headlines of the NPF where we could find any number of 'hooks' for us to hang our advocacy for improved care of nature's resources. It was pointed out that 'sustainable economic growth' in the headline purpose of the NPF is expressed there as a means, not as an end in itself."

"For the LINK audience, it may be shocking that we have to spend so much time and effort demonstrating the blindingly obvious ('we'd all be dead without the environment' – Ian Bateman), but we do. Economics has persistently failed to incorporate these values into its accounting methods, and this has led directly to decisions which degrade rather than protect natural capital. As TEEB puts it, "sustainable management of ecosystems is an economic opportunity, not a constraint on development".

"How to achieve full recognition of nature's values in the economy is not simple; there is no silver bullet. No method captures all the values, especially the spiritual/emotional/

subjective, and this was recognised as a real danger. But politicians listen to these arguments too, if they are compellingly expressed, and this is an area in which the NGO movement excels.”

“There is always the danger too that these principles will be hijacked (just like ‘sustainable development’) by opportunists using simplistic interpretations. This highlights another of the voluntary sector’s roles - as guardian of the long term public good, free of vested interests, defending the integrity of ideas in the public debate.”

Members agreed to set up a new LINK Economics taskforce to take forward work this agenda. We are very grateful to the speakers for their participation.

Annual General Meeting



Dan Barlow and Andy Fairbairn at the AGM

LINK’s 24th AGM was held on 30 August. Dan Barlow and Andy Fairbairn stepped down as trustees after many years’ service. Both were presented with cycle equipment tokens in thanks for their work. Dan has served as Vice-Chair, latterly leading a sub-group responding to funding challenges ahead. Andy, since 2004 a member

Scottish Government’s refresh of the National Performance Framework over the summer has been, so far, a closed process. In August LINK [wrote to ask](#) about this and encouraged Government to address some of the shortfalls in measuring progress towards sustainable development. LINK subsequently [submitted suggestions on biodiversity indicators](#), agreed by former members of the Biodiversity taskforce. Additionally members of LINK’s Local Governance taskforce, and other member organisations, supported a [joint briefing on revising the National Performance Framework](#) prepared by FoES, WWFS and Oxfam published on 13 September.

of the funding sub-group, helped form and implement the current funding strategy whereby membership subscription income, which underpins essential services, has assisted LINK through this period of considerable uncertainty about future core funds.

After two years without an increase to subscriptions, a modest 1% rise has been made for 2011-12, and the Chair has alerted members that future increases will need to be in line with inflation. The [annual report and accounts](#) has for the first time calculated the value of members’ ‘in-kind’ contributions to LINK which, with subscriptions, comes to more than 50% of ‘effort cost.’

Eila McQueen succeeds Dan as Vice-Chair supporting Deborah

LINK’s Members’ Congress on 17 November will build on the seminar, including international aspects. The working title is *Scotland’s place in the world: sustainability and success in leaner times*. Dr Hans Friederich, IUCN’s Regional Director for Europe, will speak about development of future priorities for IUCN Europe and hear members’ views.

Dr Alison Elliot, member of the Christie Commission Inquiry into the Reform of Public Services, which submitted its [report](#) in July, will speak about the opportunities for preventative spend, and there will be discussion chaired by Stuart Brooks, head of the John Muir Trust. The Environment Minister, Stewart Stevenson MSP will also join us for part of the day or the evening.

Long who continues as Chair. Angus Yarwood was elected a trustee. Alastair Lavery and Helen Zealley have been appointed LINK Honorary Fellows. Alastair has a long association with LINK, as a member of the early management team from his days with the Scottish Field Studies Association and as an education policy guru. His support continued during his career with RSPB from which he has now retired. Helen will be shortly standing down as LINK President after three years and there will be a reception to celebrate her tenure at the Members’ Congress on 17 November.

LINK’s [carbon accounts for 2010-11](#) have been published.

More Network News

Agriculture Katrina Marsden stepped down as taskforce (TF) convenor in June to take up a secondment from RSPB with the Scottish Parliament Information Centre. Jonathan Wordworth (Archaeology Scotland) has temporarily taken over and continues to coordinate a steady stream of work: contributing TF views to discussions within the CAP stakeholder group on the future of CAP and SRDP, liaising with sister Links on a [briefing on the future requirements of the CAP and EU budget](#), and updating the agriculture section of LINK's manifesto in readiness for local government elections.

Freshwater The TF [responded](#) to *Flooding in Scotland: A Consultation on Potentially Vulnerable Areas and Local Plan Districts* broadly welcoming the proposals. The TF plans to meet SEPA soon for further discussions. Discussions were held with SEPA and Scottish Government in May about plans to take forward the Better Regulation Agenda.

Landscape At its August meeting members agreed to focus on the financial incentives driving onshore wind development. The combination of high targets for renewables with changes to the planning system since 2006 has led to frustration amongst members contesting individual applications in areas of high landscape value. There are some welcome signs that landscape is rising on the agenda though it still rarely survives against economic considerations.

Marine Project officers Sarah Archer and Lindsay Roberts have

had a busy summer preparing MTF responses to consultations from Marine Scotland and developing the MTFs campaign strategy; a new *Save Scottish Seas* website is coming soon. In June the TF responded comprehensively to the [National Marine Plan pre-consultation](#), and will be submitting a detailed response to the consultation itself. The TF was pleased to see that marine conservation being treated as a cross cutting theme through inclusion of an environmental section in each sector's chapter.

MTF responded to the consultation on the [extension of Permitted Development Orders and changes of use to finfish and shellfish developments](#), cautioning that PDOs can be extended in certain circumstances but not to allow any increases in biomass production.

LINK's response to the consultation on [seal haul-out sites](#) in July questioned the rationale of protecting just 50% of known haul-outs sites for grey and harbour seals, both Priority Marine Features with populations declining in several areas. The consultation paper suggests that this is the "optimum balance between maximising protection for the largest number of seals while minimising possible impacts on other sustainable activities." The MTF disagrees with that approach.

The TF's response to the discussion document, [Pentland Firth and Orkney waters wave and tidal projects: Cumulative Impacts](#) supports the deployment of renewable energy technology as a

vital part of the transition to a low carbon Scotland and supports the collaborative approach of the Crown Estate. As many of these technologies are new and there is limited understanding of impacts and baseline conditions, LINK believes a precautionary approach must be adopted in order to ensure the development of the sector is sustainable.

The TF responded to the [Scottish Marine Protected Area project](#) assessment of least damaged / most natural sites and will be meeting with the nature conservation agencies and Marine Scotland as work continues to develop an ecologically coherent network of MPAs in Scotland.

National Parks On 7 September Deborah Long chaired a meeting of members with a shared interest in how the National Parks are achieving the aspirations of the founding legislation in 2000. In the absence of an overview strategic group, mooted by Parliament after its review of the Act in 2009, members have formed a National Parks TF. Members of the new TF will work to raise awareness of the wild land and biodiversity values of Scotland's Parks, and encourage debate on how they are delivered against their founding objectives.

Liaison meetings The first meeting with the new Environment Minister is scheduled for late October, where LINK's agenda will include funding for the environment. The annual chair level meeting with SEPA in August discussed priorities and agreed further topical discussions needed.

There has been much useful liaison with SNH. Ian Jardine and senior staff met LINK Chair, Deborah Long and trustees in September to discuss Access, Landscape and Biodiversity. Several LINK TFs, including Deer, Freshwater, Landscape, Marine, Wildlife Forum and Fundraisers' Forum have met SNH staff over the period.

Deborah, with trustees and staff met Cairngorms National Park Authority Board members and staff to discuss eNGO input to the CNPA, amongst other issues, which the Authority wishes to encourage. As a result a meeting for LINK members with the Park, on issues including the new draft Park Plan and Local Plan is being organised for the autumn.

Parliamentary In July Rea Cris joined LINK as Administrator in Edinburgh working three days per

week. She has met many members already, at the annual Advocacy Training day and at the Greening Economics seminar (see page 1). Advocacy Training on 17 August was an informative and enjoyable event for members with Andy Myles (LINK Parliamentary Officer) assisted by Angus Yarwood (WTS), Julia Harrison (RSPB) Francis Stuart (FoES) and Lindsay Roberts (LINK Marine Project Officer).

The LINK meeting on 3rd June identified network priorities post election and meetings are being organised for LINK TFs with the main political parties. Andy Myles has been working with members to follow up some of the barriers to effective implementation of environmental legislation outlined in Tamsin Bailey's report to LINK *Scotland's Environmental Laws— from Rhetoric to Reality* (December 2010). Many relate to problems of

environmental governance and LINK plans to publish proposals for improving outcomes shortly.

As a result of the Local Governance TF's briefing on recent SOAs work for new MSPs LINK was invited to submit evidence to the Local Government and Regeneration Committee's current Inquiry on planning, local government and regeneration. Andy compiled the written evidence and gave LINK's oral evidence on 14 September.

[Scottish Environmental Fundraisers Forum](#) The meeting on 7 September included a presentation and discussion on LEADER funding. Members also considered the future of the Landfill Communities Fund in Scotland, and the benefits of that fund for biodiversity (see Bumblebee Conservation Trust's project on page 3).

LINK Further Information

For information about reports and initiatives referred to in this newsletter please visit the [LINK home page](#) Task Force outputs are listed under 'Work Areas'.

HQ Address:	2 Grosvenor House, Shore Road Perth PH2 8BD	Parliamentary Office	3rd Floor, Gladstone's Land 483 Lawnmarket Edinburgh EH1 2NT
Phone:	01738 630804	Phone:	0131 225 4345
Fax:	01738 643290	Email:	parliamentary@scotlink.org
Email:	enquiries@scotlink.org		

Marine policy and Advocacy Officers: Sarah Archer [email](#) & Lindsay Roberts [email](#)

News and Views from Members

The following are articles from LINK member bodies and guest contributors

Caithness Bumblebee Champions

Bob Dawson, Bumblebee Conservation Trust



Great Yellow Bumblebee, pic Bob Dawson

Farmers and volunteers in Caithness have teamed up with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT) to help one of the UK's rarest bumblebees – now a Scottish speciality – the great yellow bumblebee *Bombus distinguendus*. The eleven participating farms are spread between Thurso and Wick, an area about three times the size of Edinburgh.

The Caithness Biodiversity Group was awarded £10,000 from the Landfill Communities Fund. The

project is managed by BBCT, building on substantial research and combining the skills and enthusiasm of farmers and volunteers. A specially designed mix of flowers, mainly agricultural legumes, was sown in spring 2010 to ensure a supply of nectar and protein-rich pollen. The availability of flowers is crucial for colonies to develop and rear new queens in summer, particularly for great yellow bumblebees as nest sizes are small.

A team of volunteers carries out regular counts of the plots between June and September and results to date have exceeded expectations. Great yellow bumblebees have been recorded on all but one farm, with the UK BAP moss carder bee *B. muscorum* also noted. The 0.25ha plots were sown at a modest rate in order to assess the benefits for arable wildflowers.

The project has also supported an Open Day delivered by SAC and BBCT, as well as annual end of season 'thank you' events, allowing farmers and volunteers

involved in the project to meet up and share their experiences.

The actions of the participating farmers and volunteers have already provided compelling evidence of the benefits of this approach, a candidate for inclusion in a future agri-environment scheme in Scotland. However, it should be recognised that in a wider context, these valuable, short term, 'pollen and nectar mixes' are very much secondary 'booster packs' to the number one priority for supporting bumblebee populations: the long-term benefits provided by appropriately managed wildflower communities



Cows graze the plots in late autumn taking off the bulk vegetation

National Path Demonstration Sites

Ian Findlay, Paths for All Partnership



Founded as a Scottish charity in 1996, Paths for All is a partnership of more than twenty national organisations committed to promoting walking for health and the development of multi-use path networks in Scotland. Paths for All encourages the planning, construction, maintenance and promotion of paths close to communities. Paths are good for people – they provide proven benefits in terms of health and well-being, reducing our carbon footprint, enhancing community cohesion and bringing people closer to nature.

Part of our work is to support high quality decision making in the planning, construction, maintenance and promotion of paths, enabling people - from grassroots to professionals – to design and build the right paths in the right places.

We are keen to disseminate existing good practice, develop innovative and sustainable techniques and share learning with as wide an audience as possible. To help deliver this support, two National Path

Demonstration sites have been developed and built recently with funding support from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), West Lothian Council and gate and sign suppliers. These sites are based at Oatridge College and SNH's Battleby Conference and Training Centre near Perth.

Oatridge College, to the west of Edinburgh, is the main demonstration site. It is centrally located and easily accessible, making it ideally situated. The site has tremendous potential for demonstrating a range of path construction work in a relatively small and accessible area. The conference facilities at Oatridge College also enable training providers to use the site as part of their courses.

Oatridge College has a number of paths which have been upgraded to demonstrate a variety of traditional and new path construction techniques and surface finishes. The paths cross a golf course, pass through steep sided woodland and agricultural ground. Two bridges have been installed to show options available

and an area adjacent to the Scottish Equestrian Centre has been developed to display a number of different gates and access controls.

The National Demonstration Sites are the foundation for a raft of training and interpretation resources, available to everyone working and participating in outdoor access and recreational site management. A range of interpretative material will be available soon on [Paths for All's website](#)



[Oatridge College demonstration site](#)

If you would like more information on the demonstration sites or to arrange a visit then please contact Paths for All's Technical Officer, [Kevin Fairclough](#) 01259 222330

RAFTS: 3 Years of Biosecurity Planning and Invasive Non-Native Species Management

Callum Sinclair, RAFTS



The first Rivers and Fisheries Trusts of Scotland (RAFTS) Biosecurity Planning Project supported by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) Scottish Government and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation finished in May 2011. The project, now extended, began in October 2008 and in addition to achieving its agreed objectives and outputs, its implementation has had a major impact in promoting more strategic approaches to Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) management in Scotland and other parts of the UK. In Scotland, the project has supported the production of biosecurity plans for twenty of RAFTS Member Fishery and River Trusts and Foundations and has assisted in the production of a further two plans for the Nith and the Annan in South West Scotland. These plans link local management of INNS undertaken by fisheries trusts and other partners to national and GB policies and strategies and target action to invasive species prioritised elsewhere through, for example, the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and Species Action Framework.



American signal crayfish

The production and implementation of these plans has:

- raised awareness of the threats and impacts of INNS;
- identified and implemented actions for prevention of their introduction and spread; established local surveillance and reporting networks;
- established monitoring protocols and data management that link to and support WFD classification systems;
- identified the need for agreed local rapid response protocols especially for problematic species such as American Signal Crayfish; and,
- identified actions for the strategic eradication and/or control of a number of INNS.

A number of the identified actions in the biosecurity plans, particularly those for strategic control and/or eradication and local capacity building, are now being implemented as part of the developing and expanding RAFTS INNS and Biosecurity Programme that consists of over £4.5m of approved projects being delivered now and with some continuing until the end of 2014.

These projects are supported by a range of organisations including the SEPA WFD Restoration Fund, SNH, EU Interreg IVA, Tubney Charitable Trust, Cairngorms National Park and the Scottish Government, RAFTS' member

Trusts, University of Aberdeen and the European Community Cairngorms, Highland, Moray, Rural Aberdeenshire and Rural Tayside Local Action Groups LEADER 2007-2013 Programme. These implementation projects tackle a range of INNS from the suite of invasive riparian plants including Giant Hogweed, Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam, to American signal crayfish and from locally important action to large scale schemes such as the mink control work being delivered through "The Scottish Mink Initiative."



Japanese knotweed control by stem injection

In addition, there are now pilots of biosecurity planning being implemented in partnership with the Association of Rivers Trusts in Cumbria (South Cumbria Rivers Trust) and the south west of England (Westcountry Rivers Trust) and further pilots are planned in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland during 2012. A further three biosecurity plans are now being formulated for the three new fishery Trusts in Skye, the Ythan the Findhorn, Nairn and Lossie as well as the first marine biosecurity plan that is being

undertaken by the Firth of Clyde Forum.

The range of partner bodies now supporting INNS projects financially and practically has expanded quickly since the start of the original project and preparation of the first Biosecurity Plans and has, undoubtedly, been a major success of the scheme.

The enthusiastic take up and interest by partners confirms both the need for such schemes and that there was, and is, an important co-ordinating and enabling role to be performed to make these projects happen. The management of INNS is complex and difficult in some instances but the progress made to date confirms this complexity should

not be a barrier to taking effective practical action.

For further information on the RAFTS Biosecurity Planning and INNS programme or if you are interested in supporting this work contact [Chris Horrill](#) or visit our [central website](#) or project websites (www.invasivespeciesScotland.org.uk and [Scottish Mink Initiative](#)).

Access to Environmental Justice

Mary Church, Friends of the Earth Scotland



In June this year, Friends of the Earth Scotland became the first Scottish NGO (and the first environmental NGO in the UK) to intervene in a case at the UK Supreme Court. The case relates to insurance claims by victims of asbestos exposure who suffer from pleural plaques – scarring of the lungs – an apparently asymptomatic condition. The insurers are challenging the validity of a 2009 Act of the Scottish Parliament that ensures individuals can sue for damages if they contract the condition. An interesting case, but what on earth has it got to do with FoES, you might think?

The insurers are challenging the ‘title and interest’ of a number of individuals with pleural plaques to argue against the case. Title and interest is the Scots law test of standing, or the right to have your case heard by the court. Title and interest is problematic because in practical terms it has been interpreted as having a demonstrable private interest –

for example property – making it very difficult to take a public interest case, which many environmental cases are.

It is this particularly restrictive test that makes it so difficult for individuals, communities and NGOs to challenge poor decision-making by public authorities and general breaches of environmental law. That, and of course, the impossibly high costs of litigation.

Title and interest has reared up in a number of high profile environmental cases in the last couple of years: in Road Sense’s case against the Aberdeen bypass the campaign group was forced to drop out of the action leaving it’s chair as sole petitioner because Ministers confirmed they would challenge the group’s standing; Mrs Forbes was found by the court not to have title and interest to sue Donald Trump and Aberdeenshire Council despite her home being under threat from Trump’s golf course development; and Marco McGinty’s challenge

against the inclusion of the coal fired power station at Hunterston in the National Planning Framework saw Scottish Ministers challenging his title and interest to sue.

The Scottish Government has already indicated its willingness to consider introducing a simpler test of ‘sufficient interest’, as recommended by Lord Gill in his review of the civil courts, but it could be some time before this happens. We hope that by intervening in this case at the UK Supreme Court, a precedent could be set that enables people to go to court to fight environmental cases that are in the public interest sooner, rather than later.



MAVERICK Photo Agency

Easy, affordable access to the courts to challenge poor decisions – as required under the Aarhus Convention – is an essential part of a healthy democracy. Not only

can poor decisions be over turned, but simply the threat of such challenges tends to ensure public authorities make better decisions in the first place. To find out more

about FoES's Access to Environmental Justice campaign, which also tackles the financial barriers to accessing justice visit the [website](#).

Cairngorms Legal Challenge: Appeal for Funds and Support

Tim Ambrose, Cairngorms Campaign

The Cairngorms Campaign, with The Scottish Campaign for National Parks and The Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group, has launched an Appeal to the Court of Session against certain housing development policies within the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan 2010. These bodies are disappointed by numerous aspects of the CNPA's performance, but the legal challenge focuses upon its

proposals for major housing developments in woodland at Nethy Bridge, at Carrbridge, and for a New Town of up to 1500 houses at An Camus Mór. They hope the Court Case will force the CNPA to focus on the Sandford Principle and put conservation, rather than housing development, at the heart of its management.

The Hearing is set for 10 January 2012 and will be a major test of

the Scottish model for National Parks. This legal action is very expensive, and The Cairngorms Campaign is seeking funds (£50,000) to support the Court Case. All contributions, which will be acknowledged and much appreciated, should be sent to the Treasurer, Tim Ambrose, "Gowan Court", Little Brechin, Brechin, Angus, DD9 7QY. [Tim](#), will answer any queries or provide more information



Tribute to Alan Blackshaw OBE VRD, 7 April 1933-4 August 2011

Dave Morris & Helen Todd, Ramblers Scotland

Alan Blackshaw was an outstanding influence, over many decades, in the development of mountaineering both within the UK and further afield and, within Scotland, was a key figure in many access and conservation issues. He played a vital role in the delivery of the right to roam legislation passed by the Scottish Parliament in 2003, while internationally Alan spent twenty years leading many aspects of the work of the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (UIAA), including negotiations with UN agencies and the International Olympic Committee.

From a high level career in the civil service Alan understood how the machinery of government operated, which was invaluable in his later board positions with SNH and the Scottish Sports Council. This understanding, combined with a deep founded commitment to protecting the integrity of the democratic process and the wise use of public funds, strengthened his ability to question public bodies on their actions. So the Crown Estate Commissioners came under challenge over their attitude towards ownership of the Cuillin in Skye, while HIE found their

financial support for the Cairngorms funicular project under intense scrutiny with Alan arguing that alternative development options would deliver better value for skiers and other recreational interests, with less environmental impact.

Alan delivered a lasting legacy for all who value the enjoyment of Scotland's outdoor environment, something we should all give thanks for. For more information on Alan's life see the [Ramblers website](#)

