



Scottish
Environment
LINK

Still Delivering the Goods

Case Study **15**



PLANNED

Riverwoods Scottish Wildlife Trust



Photo: Alan Anderson/Scottish Wildlife Trust

Read the full report, with the 15 case studies here:
<https://www.scotlink.org/publication/still-delivering-the-goods/>



Background

Improving the habitat alongside Scotland's rivers, streams and lochs will substantially contribute to building a much-needed Scottish Nature Network, helping to make Scotland's wildlife and communities more resilient for the future.

The Scottish Wildlife Trust leads this initiative and has been working with SEPA, Forestry and Land Scotland, Tweed Forum, Woodland Trust, NatureScot (previously SNH), Centre for Sustainable Forests and Landscapes, James Hutton Institute, Forest Research, Confor, Buglife and Scottish Water. NFUS is also keen to become involved.



Project aims

The overriding aim of the project is to create a network of riparian woodland and healthy river systems throughout Scotland delivering a range of environmental, socio-economic and financial benefits.

The following specific objectives have been identified:

- > A wide range of partners supported to deliver Riverwoods projects
- > A Blueprint for Scotland-wide delivery, underpinned by strong evidence and open data
- > A Centre of Excellence promoting knowledge exchange from existing leaders
- > A variety of traditional and innovative funding mechanisms available for Riverwoods

It is hoped that the network of riparian woodlands protected and expanded as a result of this project will be seen as a key part of the Scottish Nature Network.



Project Timescale

The Scottish Wildlife Trust has been working with a range of stakeholders and interested parties to shape the initiative since 2019. Timescales for implementation will be funding dependent.



SBS Objectives

The aims from the *2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity*:

1

To protect and restore biodiversity on land and in our seas, and to support healthier ecosystems.

By seeking to protect, expand and connect Scotland's riparian woodlands, this project will protect and restore a wide variety of biodiversity, as well as improve several terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

2

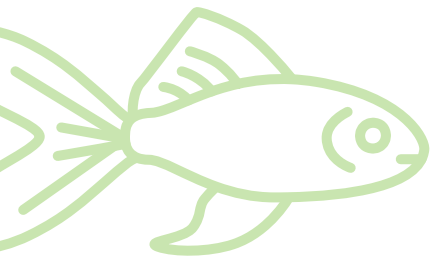
To connect people with the natural world, for their health and wellbeing and to involve them more in decisions about their environment.

The partnership nature of the project, as well as its focus on engaging and involving land managers and local communities will connect a wide range of key audiences with nature and involve them in decisions.

3

To maximise the benefits for Scotland of a diverse natural environment and the services it provides, contributing to sustainable economic growth.

The aim of involving land managers and the focus on innovative financing will ensure that the woodlands protected or expanded will be recognised for their ecosystem services, be economically sustainable and support employment.





Project Summary

Many organisations, including private landowners, public agencies, and conservation charities are involved in riparian restoration projects in Scotland. The Riverwoods project aims to bring these individual projects and activities together to:

- Build an evidence base and showcase what can be done.
- Effectively communicate the benefits of a Scotland-wide network of riparian woodland.
- Secure future support (financial, social, political) for riparian woodlands in Scotland.

Scotland's streams and rivers cover 125,000km, 12.5 times the length of the country's coastline. Improving and restoring the riparian zone would make an important contribution to the Scottish Nature Network and deliver for biodiversity in addition to mitigating the impacts of climate change.



Climate Impacts

Carbon sequestration through tree planting, soil improvement and increased sediment. Adaptation through water management preventing flooding and regulating during drought, water cooling through increased shade. There will also be an important element of local empowerment in relation to tackling climate change.



People Information

This project is currently at the scoping stage and further information will be available in the short to medium future. This project will 'link together' other work that is already underway by various partner organisations. At the time of writing, recruitment for a Project Manager was underway.



Successes and achievements

It is too early to claim any specific success, but indicators of success will be :

- **Ecological restoration of river systems.**
- **A focus on use of innovative finance, job creation and income generation.**
- **The involvement of local community and landowners/managers.**



Issues and challenges

This is a complex project focusing on transformative change at scale and, as such, is unlikely to deliver progression in a linear fashion. One of the challenges has been taking a concept that is new, particularly on the innovative finance front, and building in these principles from the ground up.

On a more practical level, the pandemic led to a pause in the development of the project while other projects that were already in delivery had to be prioritised.



Funding

This is yet to be determined and will involve a number of sources, including traditional philanthropic support alongside innovative conservation finance approaches.

The Riverwoods project was identified as a "spotlight" project in the **Route Map to £1 Billion** published jointly by SEPA and SWT in May 2020.



Further information

<https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/our-work/our-projects/riverwoods/>