



The River South Esk
Catchment Partnership

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Newsletter

In this issue...

South Esk 'Pearls in Peril' Work Shortlisted for a Prestigious Engineering Award

Pow Burn Restoration Works Well Under Way

Brechin Flood Prevention Scheme Now Complete

Tayside has a New 10 Year Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Tay Estuary and Montrose Basin Flood Risk Management Plan Published

Last year was a busy year in the catchment. We'd like to share some of these exciting projects with you in our first newsletter of the year. Ongoing schemes and funding streams provide opportunities to work together to improve the health of the catchment. We hope this newsletter may stimulate ideas and we look forward to working with you in 2017.

Tony Andrews – Chair RSECP

South Esk 'Pearls in Peril' Work Shortlisted for a Prestigious Engineering Award

In summer 2015 Pearls in Peril LIFE + started work to re-profile sections of river bank in the upper South Esk catchment. In total 900m of boulder bank protection was removed from sections of the River South Esk and its White Water tributary within the Cairngorms National Park.

The aim of the work was to improve habitat for freshwater pearl mussel, Atlantic salmon and trout. Removing the bank protection has allowed the river to naturally re-meander and in Glen Doll a stretch of the White Water has already changed route. The process was aided by three infilled connections to old channels being re-opened as part of further slowing water flow.

The work has proved very successful and was shortlisted for a prestigious Saltire Award in 2016. Presented by the Saltire Society and the Institute of Civil engineering, the awards showcase the vital contribution civil engineers make to Scottish life. The winner was the Forth Road Bridge truss end links repair.

The work done as part of the Pearls in Peril LIFE + project, was also in partnership with the Esk Rivers and Fisheries Trust and land owners in Glens Clova and Doll. Marshall Halliday of the Esk Rivers and Fisheries Trust, said: "This is a welcome recognition of the innovative approach towards restoration of natural processes in the upper catchment of the river South Esk. It harmonises with the objectives of the Trust to restore the South Esk catchment and enhance the key species in the aquatic environment."

■ More information on the Pearls in Peril LIFE + project can be found at www.pearlsinperil.org.uk



Restored section in White Water ©Jackie Webley

Pow Burn Restoration Works Well Under Way

The Pow Burn, a tributary of the River South Esk found in the lower catchment near Farnell has been subject to historic alterations in the form of straightening, dredging and the construction of raised flood embankments.

These alterations have reduced the quality of the river habitat, identified by SEPA as a priority area for restoration. In 2016 phase 1 of the restoration project was successfully delivered. Phases two and three will begin in spring 2017. The restoration of the burn will provide positive benefits including improvements to the management of local flood risk and to local biodiversity.

These improvements will be achieved through the creation of 915m of second-stage channels, the removal of 350m of embankments in places, and the setting back of 350m of existing river bank to provide reconnection of relict meander features currently cut off from the channel. The biodiversity of the local habitat will be enhanced by providing a greater range of depth and width to the burn, allowing the burn to flow onto the new excavated second-stage floodplains resulting creation of wet woodland areas. A further measure, the placement of 41 in-channel deflectors (see image) to encourage small scale variations in water flow, will enhance natural variations in the bed of the burn improving the local habitat for a range of species. These were formed from timber arising from targeted tree felling in forming the channel modifications adding to the sustainability of the project.



Timber channel deflectors ©Kelly Ann Dempsey

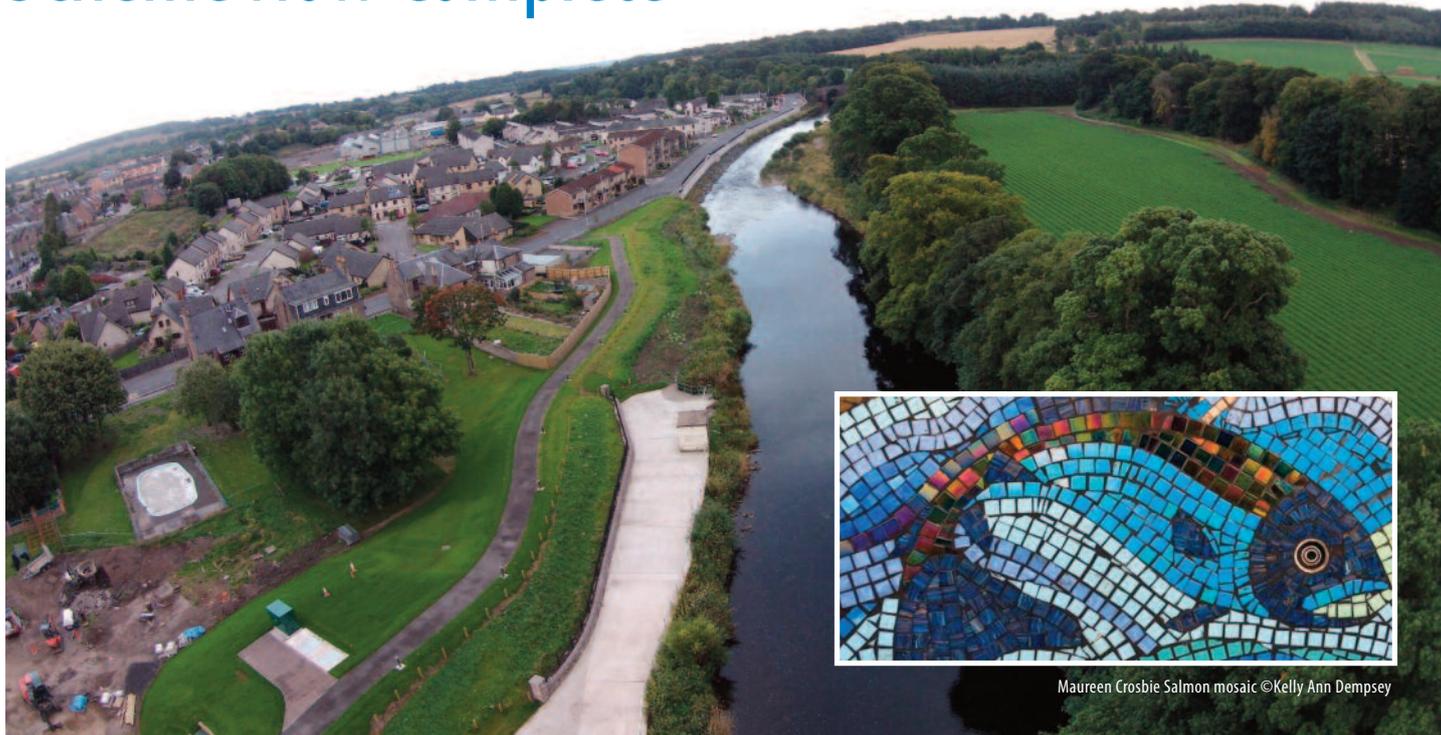


Creation of 2nd stage channel ©Kelly Ann Dempsey

■ If you would like to see some of the works in phase one watch this great SEPA video www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TGKyb496mw

Brechin Flood Prevention Scheme Now Complete

BFPS works in progress ©Angus Council



Maureen Crosbie Salmon mosaic ©Kelly Ann Dempsey

Brechin's multi-million pound flood prevention scheme was officially opened in October 2016. Marking the completion of the works was Councillor Jeanette Gaul, Angus Council's vice-convenor of Communities and Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Scotland's Cabinet Secretary for Environment.

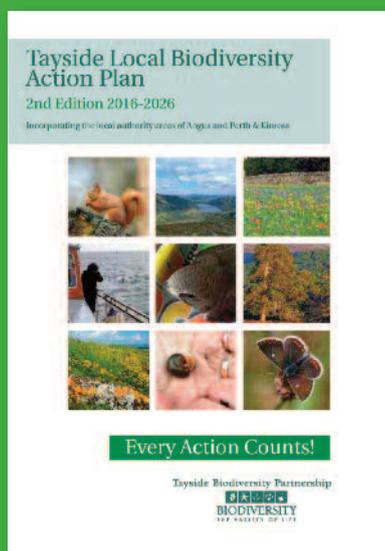
Funded by the Scottish Government and Angus Council, the Scheme got underway at the start of 2015, with Morrison Construction appointed to carry out the work. It will provide a 1 in 200 years' current-day standard of defence.

The integrated flood and drainage scheme will protect the town from flooding and consists of: direct defences, flood embankments, flood walls, upgrades to the existing surface water drainage system, work on the Denburn Culvert and the installation of three submerged pump stations.

As well as new road surfaces, footways and new lighting and seating areas, environmental enhancements included: landscaped and grassed embankments, the installation of bird and bat boxes and upgrades to the play park facilities at the Inch.

The primary task of the scheme is to provide increased safety and security for homes and businesses at times of severe weather. The project has also brought welcome environmental improvements to the riverside area, new access opportunities and community involvement in projects such as the stunning murals that have been created by the community and displayed along the River Street improvements.

- More information can be found at www.angus.gov.uk/info/20397/flooding/621/brechin_flood_prevention_scheme



LBAP cover ©Tayside Biodiversity Partnership

Tayside has a New 10 Year Local Biodiversity Action Plan

The new Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan published in 2016 will, for the next decade, help shape the delivery of biodiversity projects and community engagement in the catchment area.

The plan that has more than 144 overarching objectives which amounts to hundreds of individual projects that anyone can get involved in. Many public sector agencies and NGO's are committed to delivering action and The River South Esk Catchment Partnership is named as a partner in delivering 25%. These actions are in the wetland, coastal, upland, farmland, woodland and people and communications sections. The Rottal Burn and Glen Clova Contour Planting project developed by the Esk Rivers and Fisheries Trust are included as case studies. The action plan will act as a great tool for focussing our biodiversity related projects and will assist in sourcing future funding.

- If you would like to get involved more information on the plan can be found at www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk/action-plan/action-plan-new-lbap-2015/

Scottish Government Decision on Beaver Reintroduction Issued

An announcement was made in November 2016 on the future of beavers in Scotland by the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Roseanna Cunningham.

The Scottish Government is minded to allow beavers to remain in Scotland and the species is set to receive protection, but will require careful management. It will be the first time a mammal has been officially reintroduced to the UK and work has now begun to ensure beavers can be added to Scotland's list of protected species as soon as possible.

Scottish Ministers have agreed that:

- Beaver populations in Argyll and Tayside can remain
- The species will receive legal protection, in accordance with the EU Habitats Directive
- Beavers will be allowed to expand their range naturally
- Beavers should be actively managed to minimise adverse impacts on farmers and other land owners
- It will remain an offence for beavers to be released without a licence, punishable by up to 2 years imprisonment and an unlimited fine

Research has shown beavers, which were native to Scotland before being hunted to extinction in the 16th century, provide important biodiversity benefits. However, the animals can also cause significant difficulties for farmers and land managers in vital agricultural areas.

The River South Esk catchment sits in close proximity to family groups and individual animals recorded in West Angus and in time, the catchment will no doubt be colonised. Scottish Natural Heritage and Angus Council will be providing training

sessions and guidance for staff and the wider community on management developments and legislative changes in 2017.

Forfar Loch and the Dean water are home to some animals captured in the camera trap image below provided by the Forfar Loch Rangers at Angus Alive.

■ An online copy of the Beavers in Scotland report is available at www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/beavers/beavers-in-scotland/



Beavers at Forfar Loch ©Angus Alive

Explore Community and European Funding Opportunities in 2017

Now is a great time to investigate the range of funding sources available for local environmental projects in 2017. These can be explored on the Angus Council Community and European Funding pages at www.angus.gov.uk/info/20377/community_and_european_funding



Giant Hogweed control © Marshall Halliday

Angus Environmental Trust

A tax credit scheme, linked to Scottish Landfill Tax. Funds may support community and environmental projects. There are six types of project that qualify for SLCF funding, an example being: Object D: The conservation or promotion of biological diversity through the provision, conservation, restoration or enhancement of a natural habitat or the maintenance or recovery of a species in its natural habitat.

Projects must be in the vicinity of a landfill or transfer station and a useful tool is available allowing you to explore eligibility.

For more information visit <http://angusenvironmentaltrust.co.uk/home/> or email aet@angus.gov.uk

Angus LEADER Programme

LEADER is a rural development programme which aims to improve the quality of life and prosperity in rural communities through locally driven initiatives and projects.

LEADER will be delivered through the Angus Local Action Group (LAG) which will oversee a grant fund of approximately £2million and assess and recommend projects for approval based on the delivery of the outcomes of the Local Development Strategy.

The outcomes are: build community capacity, improve connectivity, develop community assets and facilities, and strengthen the local economy. The available fund is £2million. Ring fenced allocations are:

- £275,000 for farm diversification projects
- £275,000 for projects supporting small/micro rural businesses
- £275,000 for co-operation projects with LEADER areas elsewhere

For further information visit www.ruralnetwork.scot/funding/leader/local-action-groups/angus-leader or contact the LEADER team at ruralleader@angus.gov.uk

Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding is a new way for people to raise money, awareness and support for great ideas.

Crowdfunding allows individuals to take their ideas forward to make them a reality by promoting projects and giving away rewards in return for pledges of money. Crowdfund Angus showcases the best crowdfunding projects in the county. If you have a community group, business, charity or other great idea you can add your project today.

For more information visit the Crowdfund Angus portal www.crowdfunder.co.uk/angus



Partnership Presents at Norwich IFM Conference

In October 2016 our chair Tony Andrews and project officer Kelly Ann Dempsey were invited to present at the 47th Annual Institute of Fisheries Management (IFM) Conference held in Norwich.

The 2016 theme was 'Fisheries in Partnership from Saltwater to Headwaters' The South Esk presentation entitled 'Source to Sea, the River South Esk, a Catchment Management Approach' allowed the work of the partnership's members from our headwaters to the estuary to be showcased.

The conference followed a 'river zone' concept, with sessions beginning with Headwaters, then running through Mid-reaches, Lowland, Transitional and finally Coastal Fishery Management.

The conference aimed to provide a forum for discussion and networking for people working in all aspects of fisheries management in both the freshwater and marine environments. It is a chance to showcase investigations and great partnership projects throughout the aquatic environment.

■ Read more about the IFM at <https://ifm.org.uk>

Source to Sea River South Esk, Angus




The River South Esk
Catchment Partnership

A Catchment Management Approach

Adoption of the Angus Local Development Plan

The Angus Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted on 23 September 2016 and provides the planning framework for the Angus Council area and the policy context for the determination of planning applications.

The Angus LDP along with the TAYplan Strategic Development Plan and Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan now comprise the Statutory Development Plan in Angus.

The Angus LDP sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development as well as a development strategy, policies and land allocations to guide development to the most appropriate sustainable and accessible locations. The LDP includes specific policies to protect and where possible enhance the areas rich and varied natural environment and biodiversity by minimising the impact of new development on designated sites, important habitats and protected species.

■ For more information visit www.angus.gov.uk/downloads/download/425/angus_local_development_plan_adopted_september_2016



January 2016 flood, Dun © Kelly Ann Dempsey

Tay Estuary and Montrose Basin Flood Risk Management Plan Published

The Tay Estuary and Montrose Basin Local Flood Risk Management Plan is an important mechanism in the South Esk catchment area for implementing the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009.

Legislation is translated into actions in the plan which aims to reduce the damage and distress caused by flooding. In total, 19 areas have been identified as being potentially vulnerable to flood risk across the Tay Estuary and Montrose Basin local plan district. The first implementation cycle runs from 2016 to 2022 and incorporates actions that will protect people and communities in these potentially vulnerable areas. It will also enable them to prepare for flooding events and protect their homes and business to the best of their abilities. It is estimated there are approximately 3490 residential and 1210 non-residential properties at risk from flooding in these localities. The estimated average damage of these flood risks is approximately £13.6million per year.

Catchment management approaches such as natural flood management and adaptive land management are identified as means of complementing hard engineering solutions. These approaches will also aid in climate change adaptation projects and there is great scope to involve local communities in innovative approaches to managing flood risk.

■ More information can be found at www.angus.gov.uk/downloads/file/2396/tay_estuary_and_montrose_basin_local_flood_risk_management_plan

South Esk Catchment Management Plan Progress Reporting

Our first catchment management plan was published in 2009 and collectively our members have delivered or are delivering almost 88% of the actions to date.

Later this year we will produce a summary of the main achievements over the life of the plan so far, including more detailed information on on management plan (CMP) delivery. Of the approx. 88% of actions in the plan in progress or complete activity has been focused in the flowing areas (approximates - water resources 50%, flood management 100%, river engineering 75%, habitats and species 88%, social and economic 88%, delivering the plan 78%). Many projects fulfil many actions in the plan e.g. The Rottal Burn Restoration (see pic).

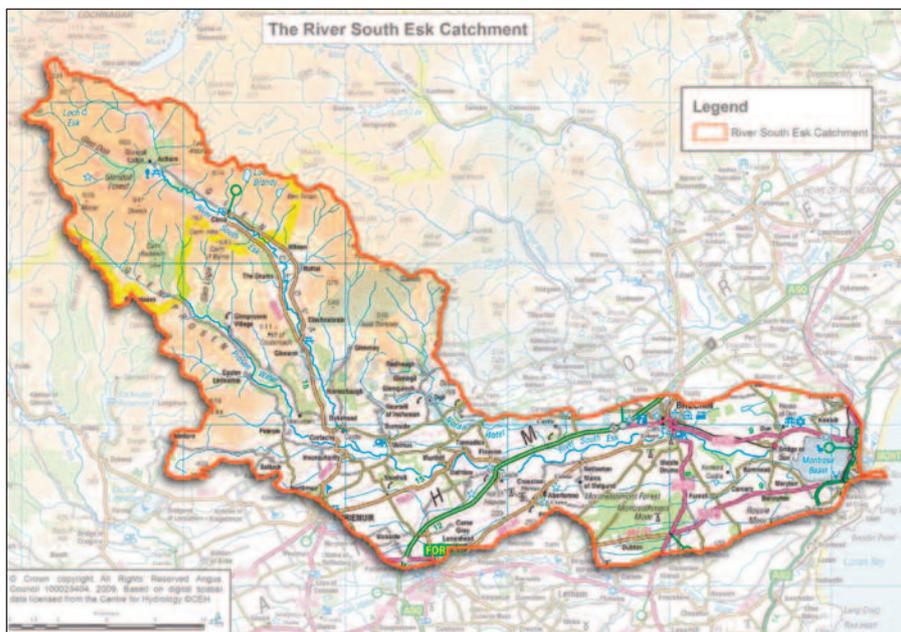
It is hoped that a more detailed review of the actions already carried out together with some new stakeholder and community consultation will allow a review of the CMP later this year. Since publication in 2009 the policy and legislative landscape has changed considerably e.g. Wild Fisheries Review, Climate Change Public Body Statutory Reporting, Scotland's Land Use Strategy 20-2021, Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 and the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2105. More information to follow.



The Rottal Burn, Glen Clova ©Kelly Ann Dempsey

Rottal Burn Restoration Student Seminar

Marshall Halliday and the Esk Rivers and Fisheries Trust have worked very closely with Rebecca Wade at Abertay University over the last few years at the Rottal Burn restoration site. Students have been monitoring the Rottal Burn since the restoration works were carried out. The Partnership and Abertay University are keen to hold a short seminar showcasing the student findings. More information to follow in the spring.



It's good to share... Publications and Events

IUCN River Restoration and Biodiversity

Nature-Based Solutions for Restoring the Rivers of the UK and Republic of Ireland

<https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2016-064.pdf>

There are two South Esk catchment case studies and some great examples of work from neighbouring areas e.g. Spey and Dee.

The effect of natural flood management in-stream wood placements on fish movement in Scotland

www.crew.ac.uk/publication/nfm-wood-fish

This new CREW publication on fish movements in rivers relative to woody structures and includes a set of guidelines for good practice for the use of woody structures for flood management.

Managing Flood Risk in the Context of Change

7-8 February at Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh

Contact info@sniffer.org.uk for more information
FREE

Conservation in the Cairngorms – Capercaillie, Catchments and Connections

Montrose Natural History and Antiquarian Society

14 February 2017 at 7.30pm Montrose Museum

Visit <http://montrosethory.com/contact.html>

Cost: £3

Scottish Wildcats - Development, Forestry and SRDP

Scottish Natural Heritage - Sharing Good Practice event
24 February 2017

Contact sgp@snh.gov.uk for more information
FREE

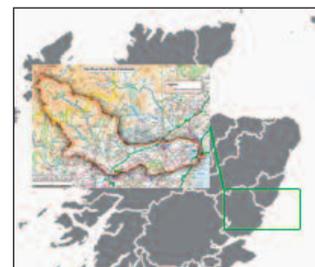
Beneath the Waves: the Storegga Tsunami at Montrose

Montrose Natural History and Antiquarian Society

14 March 2017, 7.30pm at Montrose Museum

Visit <http://montrosethory.com/contact.html>

Cost: £3



For any comments or to join our mailing list, please contact:

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