

Perth & Kinross Nature Restoration Fund 2022-23 Report

In May 2022, the council received £176,000 from the Scottish Government Nature Restoration Fund (NRF). The purpose of the fund is to address the biodiversity crisis and its causes - habitat loss and fragmentation, and invasive species - while recognising the need to address both climate change and biodiversity crises at the same time. Perth and Kinross Council also applied to the Helping Nature funding stream to receive an additional grant of £13,000 for Community Greenspace projects. The total NRF grant received by the Council in 2022-2023 was £189,000.

Application of the fund demonstrates the Council's commitment shown in declaring a climate emergency and the signing of the Edinburgh Declaration and provided an opportunity to deliver on the PK Offer both through community involvement and in making Perth and Kinross a better, greener place.



Beautiful Perth volunteers restoring riparian habitat



Tree planting at Jeanfield

Community Greenspace had several projects ready to implement including forest plan works, investment in equipment for maintaining wildflower areas, clearance of scrub at grassland and heathland sites, removal of invasive non-native species, tree planting, and pollinator friendly planting at closed cemeteries. The additional grant through the Helping Nature funding stream funded invasive non-native species removal at the Tay & Craigie Burn and forest plan works at Alyth Den.

Funding was then open for community partners and other internal partners to apply to. Great work was carried out by the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership, Rewilding Denmarkfield, Beautiful Perth, Crook and Drum Growing Together, Glassie Bike Park, Kinross-shire Civic Trust, Comrie Primary School and Parent and Friends Association, Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust, Loch Rannoch Conservation Association, and Luncarty Primary School. Their hard work included introducing native trees and hedgerows, wildlife ponds and scrapes, beebanks, and pollinator friendly plants in schools, creating and enhancing SuDS ponds and wetlands for amphibians and dragonflies, restoring riparian habitat through landscape-scale invasive non-native species control work, creating a species rich grassland corridor, extending a community orchard, lots of pollinator friendly planting and native tree planting across greenspaces.

"Thanks to the NRF, we have restored a 3.15ha Species Rich Grassland (SRG) corridor, connecting our pollinator-friendly community orchard to the semi-ancient oak woodland. We look forward to using the SRG area to engage and educate people with the enhanced habitat and increased diversity of pollinators and plants through our Friends of Denmarkfield community group and our education sessions for local primary school children." *Ellie Corsie, Rewilding Denmarkfield.*

A special note should be made of:

- the involvement of Rewilding Denmarkfield, Royal Highland Education Trust, teachers, pupils, and local community members in the delivery of Comrie Primary Schools "*Rewilding Comrie*" project and Luncarty Primary Schools "*Rewild my school*" project.
- the wetland restoration works of the Kinross Raingardens trail.

- the partnership project between Tayside Biodiversity, Scottish Invasive Species Initiative, and Perth and Kinross Council that recruited 35 volunteers to undertake catchment wide giant hogweed control at the river Almond.
- the wide involvement of volunteers who helped deliver many of the projects.

Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) 2023/2024

In late June 2023, Perth and Kinross Council received our NRF allocation of £353,000. This year the theme of the fund remains the same - catalysing action at scale to protect and restore Scotland's biodiversity on land and sea, with a focus on outcomes which address the main drivers of the decline in biodiversity. However, at least half of this funding is to be spend on developing nature networks. Effectively functioning nature networks will connect existing nature rich areas through habitat corridors, habitat 'stepping stones', or habitat restoration. On receipt of 2023/2024 funding, the NRF application process will reopen early July with applications invited across the Council area for capital funding for projects. The application process will close on Sunday 20th August. For further information please go to www.pkc.gov.uk/naturefund.

This year, all applications are to be reviewed against set scoring criteria. Once the application deadline has passed, the highest scoring applications will be recommended for approval to the Executive Director of Communities. This year there will be no proposed split between Community Greenspace and Community projects, as those that best support outcomes for nature, in line with scoring criteria, will be recommended for approval. Once recommendations have been approved by the Executive Director of Communities, successful applicants will be notified of their grant funding award.

2022-2023 Nature Restoration Projects List

Community Greenspace

Forest Plan Works at Aberfeldy, The Knock, Alyth Den, Blackspout Woods, and St Magdalenes Hill, Lady Mary's Walk

Enhancing six sites across Perth and Kinross by removing non-native and invasive species, enhancing the natural ecosystem. Works to restore our natural forest habitat included the removal of beech and sycamore saplings, removing broom to re-establish heathland habitat, coppicing trees, and ring-barking trees to create standing deadwood, a rare and important habitat for biodiversity.



Removal of Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed from the Craigie Burn and Tay

Invasive non-native plants out-compete native species and cause stream bank erosion in riparian areas when the large shading plant dies back late in the year leaving riverbanks exposed to the elements. By bringing these plants under control we reduce negative environmental and human health impacts, increase our native floral biodiversity, and restore our riparian habitats.

Investment in Machinery

Purchase of pedestrian machinery with interchangeable flail head & scythe attachment. This will be made available to path groups for maintaining the core path network with the flail head and the scythe attachment for emerging meadow management groups.



Kinnoull Hill SSSI

Scrub and trees were removed from heathland areas to improve the habitat. Scrub and trees were also removed from meadow areas at Barnhill & Rosehill to keep previously cultivated areas from succession. This involved scraping back of Blaeberry, broom and gorse.



Meadows and Grassland – St Magdalenes Hill

Scrub was removed from meadows and other grassland areas. Removing scrub protects the meadow and grassland areas from progressing into a woodland. These areas are hugely important for biodiversity, supporting a diverse range of plant and animal species.



Jeanfield Flood Prevention

Tree planting to help with flood prevention, using nature-based solutions to mitigate the ever-increasing flooding issues at this location. These trees will help to increase water absorption, catch rainfall and slow down surface water run-off.



Closed Cemeteries Management

Works undertaken at 4 closed cemeteries and 1 new extension cemetery (Kinross North Cemetery). This involved the selective removal of invasive species and the creation of new areas for pollinators.

Education Services

Rewilding Comrie, Comrie Primary School and Parent and Friends Association

Planting of a variety of plants and seeds to support biodiversity. With wild grass/flowers seeds spread, the area has been rejuvenated. The scrape built into the centre will also collect water naturally to help further support the plants and animals around. Two volunteers from RHET came along on the planting day for children and members of the community to learn about soil and planting, helping to put knowledge into practice with creating the rewilding area.



Rewild Our School, Luncarty Primary School

In conjunction with Rewilding Denmarkfield, Luncarty Primary developed an outdoor space to create opportunities for wildlife and to encourage biodiversity. They created a pond with aquatic planting, planted two vast wildflower beds, created a willow tunnel for exploration, a bee bank and planted a hedgerow around the perimeter of the playground area. Bringing nature and wildlife into the school grounds has provided nature connection opportunities through unstructured, creative play and curriculum-based environmental education sessions.

Community Organisations

River Almond Giant Hogweed Project, Tayside Biodiversity Partnership

This partnership project brought together Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI), the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership and Perth & Kinross Council to put a programme of control in place to remove invasive species from the Almond. This conservation work is restoring the riparian habitat and increasing biodiversity. Time and support were invested into building a network of enthusiastic local volunteers, providing them with skills, training and qualifications to help undertake control work. Control work started from the source in Buchanty, and continued all the way down the river to where the Almond meets the Tay.





SuDS Pond Enhancement, Tayside Biodiversity Partnership

Five Ponds were cleared of non-native or invasive vegetation to create areas of open water and improve conditions for toads, frogs and newts, dragonflies, and pollinators; native wildflowers were planted as food for pollinators. Help was provided from many local volunteers, the PKC Biodiversity Ambassadors, community groups, developers and schools.

Wildflower Meadow Creation, Rewilding Denmarkfield

Restoring a 3.15ha Species Rich Grassland corridor along the northern boundary of Rewilding Denmarkfield, connecting their pollinator-friendly community orchard to the semi-ancient oak woodland. This 3.15ha of SRG will act as a “seed island” in that it will facilitate other areas of the site to be colonised by native flowering plants in the future. Rewilding Denmarkfield will also continue to conduct weekly butterfly, bee and amphibian transect surveys to determine the positive impact on pollinators and amphibians.



Riverside Heather Garden Riparian Restoration, Beautiful Perth

The stream in Riverside Heather Garden was devoid of marginal planting for a strip of approximately 1.5m width. This project restored planting in this area to create a more diverse riparian habitat. Native species that are good for pollinators were planted by Beautiful Perth volunteers to enhance the biodiversity of the area.

Crook of Devon Community Orchard and Pollinator Project, Crook and Drum Growing Together

Expanding a community orchard with mixed fruit trees and underplanting with wildflowers and bulbs with the aim of creating a pollinator corridor. All the planting and associated works were carried out by volunteers of Crook and Drum Growing Together.





Kinross Rain Gardens Trail, Kinross-shire Civic Trust

Wetland restoration was conducted in three areas to continue the Kinross Raingardens Trail, which will ultimately stretch all the way to Loch Leven. The creation of new pools creates habitat for amphibians as well as carbon sinks and increases water storage capacity in flood events. Volunteers from the Kinross-shire Civic Trust and Kinross in Bloom helped to plant native aquatic plants and a wildflower meadow for pollinators.

Glassie Bike Park Rewilding, Glassie Bike Park

With the woodland previously devastated from storm Arwen, this area was planted up with native tree species to help restore the habitat and enhance biodiversity. The new woodland area will also make a good wind break and sheltered areas for walkers and bikers on the new paths created. Some standing dead trees were left to let more light into the woodland floor to assist its natural regeneration.



Dun Coillich Wetlands, Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust

An ecological report was conducted advising on the best ways to improve wetland habitats at Dun Coillich. It contained recommendations to increase water levels through the construction of a series of hand-built dams and extend the existing wildlife ponds/scrapes. The existing scrapes were enhanced by volunteers clearing encroaching vegetation and raising water levels by blocking channels draining the scrapes. This work means that this wetland habitat, which is important for dragonflies and amphibians, will be maintained for years to come.

Rannoch and Tummel Firepit and Scorch Mark Restoration, Loch Rannoch Conservation Association

Planting native trees to replace those cut down by visitors to burn on fires, restoring the native loch shore woodland. Ash contaminated soil was removed from the scorch marks and replaced with sterile soil and native grass seeds and wildflowers were sown to restore the woodland undergrowth. Small areas were temporarily fenced off, preventing footfall and further damage.

