



Press Release: 28 September 2015

North Sutherland schools are film stars for the day

Tongue Primary school pupils are to star in the new film of The Flow Country being created as part of the Flows to the Future Project. Last week they were filmed in action on the peatland by, Glasgow-based film producers, Maramedia.

Tongue Primary School was selected to star in the film as part of their “prize” for winning the 2015 Alan Joyce Young Environmentalist Competition. This bi-annual competition is held in honour of the late charismatic biology teacher Alan E Joyce, from Talmine. It is run by the Strathnaver Museum and this year was organised in conjunction with the Flows to the Future team with a peatlands theme. Keen not to miss out, five pupils who had since moved up to Farr High School returned to take part in the day.

Out on The Moine near Tongue, the weather was ideal for a day out, with a little breeze to keep the midges away and not a drop of rain. The pupils selected a patch of peatland in which to imagine their own mini nature reserve and through a range of activities learned about the peatlands and the animals that live there. This had the pupils thinking about what made this environment special to them, and whether their

'reserve' needed rules to help preserve it. The location of each mini-reserve was marked with a colourful picture created earlier by the children back in the classroom during an afternoon of drawing, guided by Sjoerd Tel and Angela Simpson from the Flows to the Future Project team. Each unique picture depicted a scene within a peatlands environment.

Throughout the time on the Moine, the film team shot from different angles and talked to all the pupils. The children showed no signs of camera shyness, as they readily explained about the artwork and what they believed to be special about the peatlands. The close of the afternoon saw the bringing together of the pupils and their drawings to create, to everyone's surprise, a large panorama of the Moine landscape in technicolour.

Another Farr High School student, Chrisanne McCulloch, got to work with the camera crew, for an afternoon of work experience. She got immediately involved, and soon received responsibility for recording the sound and the conversations taking place.

Chrisanne McCulloch said that "being part of the filming team was really interesting and wasn't what I expected at all. I really enjoyed it, everyone was really friendly and welcoming, it would be great if there were more chances to participate in similar projects."

Sjoerd Tel, Learning Officer for the Heritage Lottery Fund supported Flows to the Future project, was glad the student got this hands-on experience. "Through contact with schools I know there is a further interest in work experience possibilities like this. It is important that local young people can benefit from valuable opportunities such as having a professional filming team working in the area."

Maramedia have been up in the Flow Country for a number of weeks over the spring and summer, capturing footage of the special wildlife and landscape of the peatlands in different seasons and weathers. Besides working with the young people, they have also been filming activities such as sheep farming, fishing and peat cutting, and interviewing local people involved in managing the peatlands. They will be back in the area in the Autumn to film the deer rut and ongoing peatland restoration work by the RSPB near Forsinard.

The planned release date of the film is February 2016.



NOTES TO EDITORS

The Peatlands Partnership includes Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission (Scotland), Highland Council, RSPB Scotland, Plantlife Scotland, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, The Highland Third Sector Interface, The Flow Country Rivers Trust, The Northern Deer Management Group and The Environmental Research Institute. It liaises with local community groups, the Scottish Government's Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate and the North Sutherland Community Forest Trust. It is independently chaired by John Henderson of Scrabster Farm, Caithness.

RSPB Scotland is the lead partner in The Flows to the Future project, a Peatlands Partnership project, which gratefully acknowledges funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and from the following funders and supporters; Environmental Research Institute, European Regional Development Fund, Forestry Commission (Scotland), Peatland Action, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, The Highland Council, RSPB, WREN, Scotland Rural Development Programme, Scottish Government, Scottish Natural Heritage and The Tubney Trust.

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