

## What is the Peatlands Partnership?

The Peatlands Partnership is a group of organisations who work together with land managers and communities to maintain and enhance the peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland. The Partnership includes the Environmental Research Institute (North Highland College), the Flow Country Rivers Trust, Forestry Commission Scotland, the Highland Third Sector Interface, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Northern Deer Management Group, The Flow Countries Rivers Trust, Plantlife International, RSPB Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage and The Highland Council. It is chaired by Professor Stuart Gibb of the Environmental Research Institute in Thurso.

### Flows Field Centre Official Opening

The Field Centre at Forsinard was opened on 7th August by Roseanna Cunningham MSP, the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform. The Centre includes accommodation and facilities for volunteers, staff, education groups and visiting researchers. You can find out more on our website.

### The Flow Country on tour!

We think everyone deserves to experience the Flow Country – there's nowhere quite like it in the whole world. So, to give everyone that chance, we have produced an exhibition which is travelling around the country.

It started at the Royal Botanical Garden in Edinburgh, before moving to the Glasgow Science Centre until the end of 2017. It will start 2018 at the Smith Art Gallery and Museum in Stirling, before going to Aberdeen, Inverness, Hamilton and Annan, with other venues still to be confirmed.

There will be a programme of accompanying events. Please do call in if you are nearby, or share this with others.

### Interested in volunteering?

We've really loved seeing how our volunteering has developed during this year: we have many more local volunteers now as well as launching "Working Holiday Volunteering Weeks" for people from around the UK.

Volunteering is a great way to get involved in the Flow Country – there are outdoor and indoor roles, and you could even work from home. Your travel expenses will be paid and training and support given.

Whatever it is you would like to do, we would be thrilled to hear from you. Why not read on our website what other volunteers have thought about their experiences. Your time will be invaluable to us.

### Join us at an event

We put all our events up on [www.theflowcountry.org.uk](http://www.theflowcountry.org.uk), twitter and facebook. Look out for our first events from Jonathan, our new Communities Officer!

### Contact Flows to the Future project staff:

**Caroline Eccles**  
Project Manager  
[Caroline.Eccles@rspb.org.uk](mailto:Caroline.Eccles@rspb.org.uk)  
07590 441 475

**Jonathan Ford**  
Communities Officer  
[Jonathan.Ford@rspb.org.uk](mailto:Jonathan.Ford@rspb.org.uk)  
07860 927 839

**Judith Crow**  
Finance & Administration Officer  
[Judith.Crow@rspb.org.uk](mailto:Judith.Crow@rspb.org.uk)  
07525 921 809

**Sjoerd Tel**  
Learning Development Officer  
[Sjoerd.Tel@rspb.org.uk](mailto:Sjoerd.Tel@rspb.org.uk)  
07912 774 587

**Gearoid Murphy**  
Peatland Management Advisory Officer  
[Gearoid.Murphy@rspb.org.uk](mailto:Gearoid.Murphy@rspb.org.uk)  
07766 500 364

 @TheFlowCountry

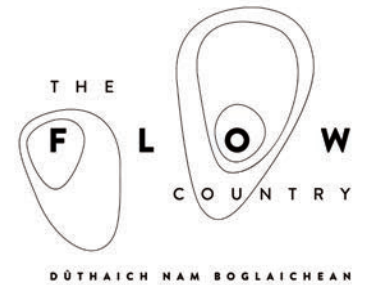
 The Flow Country

[www.theflowcountry.org.uk](http://www.theflowcountry.org.uk)



THE MORE YOU LOOK THE MORE YOU SEE

# THE FLOW COUNTRY



## Hello!

We're pleased to bring you our second annual newsletter. The work to promote the Flow Country and carry out restoration goes on, with some fabulous developments this year that we can't wait to share with you.

Please read through the newsletter and then do get in touch, whether it's to volunteer or suggest an event, or follow us on facebook or twitter. Flows to the Future is a Peatlands Partnership initiative and is made possible by the Heritage Lottery Fund and many other supporters.

## Happy reading!

Caroline Eccles  
Project Manager  
December 2017

## Natural Food and Fabulous Music at Forsinard

Hosting Scotland's Natural Larder and young musicians from the Fèis Rois Ceilidh Trail was a highlight this summer, thanks to support from Scottish Natural Heritage. The traditional music performance was part of a summer tour of Scottish National Nature Reserves. Scotland's Natural Larder enabled visitors to taste and find out more about food made from wild ingredients, such as venison and pesto from wild garlic. It is just one more example of how we are working with partners to create exciting events across the Flow Country that cater for a range of different interests. For great recipes, try: <http://scotlandsnaturallarder.co.uk>





## Displaying the Flows

### What and Where?

Fantastic new displays are now in place across the Flow Country. Strathnaver Museum (Bettyhill) focuses on the traditions of peat in the community. Caithness Horizons (Thurso) and RSPB Forsinard Flows Visitor Centre (on the A897 between Helmsdale and Melvich) show the importance of the peatlands for people and the environment. This includes hands-on displays, interactive technology, and our film about the Flows. Caithness Horizons also has floor jigsaws and costumes for kids (and maybe adults too!) to enjoy.

### Why?

We're passionate about the Flow Country and we love to share that. Now visitors and locals can enjoy finding out more about this fabulous environment.

### When?

Caithness Horizons is open 10am-5pm from November to March (closed on Sundays). From April to October, it's open 10am-6pm on Mondays to Fridays, with reduced hours at the weekend.



Photo by Arran Sinclair

Strathnaver Museum is open 10am-5pm from April to October (closed on Sundays).

The RSPB Forsinard Flows Visitor Centre is open 9am-5pm from April to October.

### Who?

The displays have been created with help from the team at Strathnaver Museum and both staff and the "Peter's Pals" youth group at Caithness Horizons. A lot of the information and pictures were provided by RSPB and SNH.



Graeme Dey MSP, Convener of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee, and Rob Gibson, former MSP for Caithness, Sutherland and Ross.



Photo by Robert MacDonald

## Free advisory service for land managers in the Flow Country

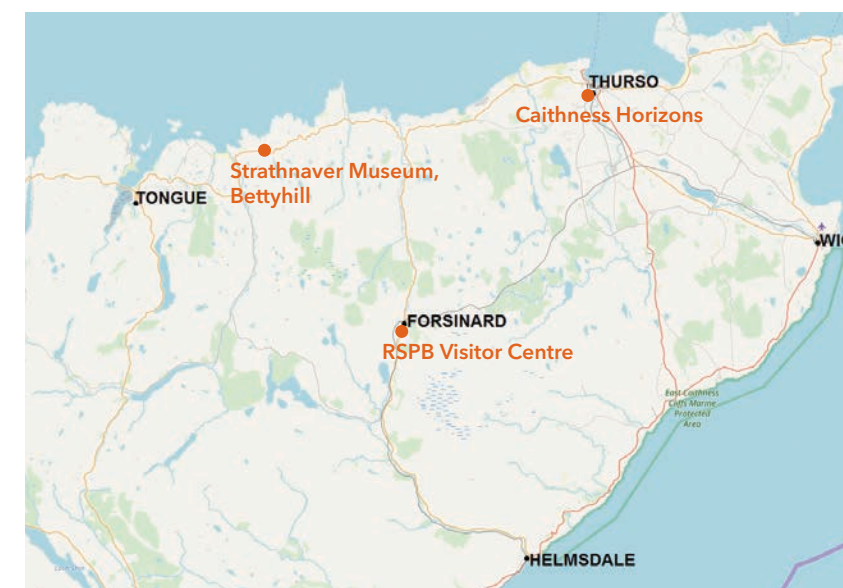
The Flows to the Future Project offers free advisory support to farmers, crofters and estate managers who wish to sustainably manage or restore their peatlands using a number of current funding opportunities including:

- Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS) which can provide funding for blanket bog and heath used for deer stalking or rough grazing in the Flow Country.
- Peatland Action (a Scottish Natural Heritage administered fund) which can provide funding for peatland management not funded through AECS, including gully blocking, hag reprofiling and bare peat restoration.



Paul Turner, Warden at RSPB Forsinard, monitoring the ongoing peatland restoration work at Forsinard.

Photo by Lorne Gill, SNH



www.openstreetmap.org

Whether you're wanting support with habitat condition surveys, putting together an application, procurement of contractors, or a final report on the project, our Advisory Officer, Gearoid Murphy, is keen to help.

Please contact him directly at [gearoid.murphy@rspb.org.uk](mailto:gearoid.murphy@rspb.org.uk), or phone **01641 761322** or **07766 500364**.



Photo by Lorne Gill, SNH

## Restoration

The Flow Country stores three times as much carbon as all the UK's forests, making it a vital carbon sink, but this can only happen when the peatlands are healthy and still forming peat. By removing some badly sited plantations and restoring the habitat to peatland we are not only helping biodiversity, but also doing our bit to address Climate Change.



Photo by Neil Cowie

*"In Primary 3 we went to Forsinard by train. We really liked playing the food chain game. We also liked the walk and the games on the walk. We all liked climbing to the top of the tower too. The view from the top was amazing even though we didn't see any animals. Our favourite part was seeing a lizard and playing a game in the Visitor Centre. It was a good computer game. We had a great time!"*

Written by Mount Pleasant P4

