



Press Release: August 2019

Flows to the Future conference: five years of conservation success and the future of the Flows.

On the 12th September 2019, in Eden Court Theatre, Inverness, the Peatlands Partnership will celebrate the conservation achievements of The Flows to the Future Project and look forward to the future of the Flow Country at a one day conference in the Highland capital.

The Flows to the Future Project has been a five-year National Lottery Heritage funded project and is due to come to an end in September this year. The project, initiated by the Peatlands Partnership with RSPB Scotland as lead partner, has been restoring vast areas of damaged peatland in Caithness and Sutherland and raising awareness of the Flow Country locally, nationally and internationally.

Blanket bog in good condition is an essential habitat in the face of global climate change storing carbon in the peat and so preventing it from being released into the atmosphere as a greenhouse gas. To understand just how important the Flow Country is, in terms of militating against global climate change, the amount of carbon locked up in the peat of the Flow Country is five times more than in all the forests in Scotland.

Notable successes in raising awareness of the Flow Country and its global importance have been the creation of The Flows Lookout - an award-winning viewing tower at Forsinard Flows National Nature Reserve, a five-year programme of schools and community activities, and a novel and exciting arts installation at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh, currently on during this year's Festival Fringe.

The conference will not only take stock of the Flows to the Future Project's achievements and the challenges faced along the way, but it will look to the future of the Flow Country as a potential UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Speakers include a range of experts in their field such as Professor Des Thompson, Principal Advisor on Biodiversity at Scottish Natural Heritage, Dr Roxane Andersen Senior Research Fellow at Environmental Research Institute and Hanna Imlach, a sculptor informed by environmental research.

The conference will take place on Thursday 12th September in Eden Court, Inverness, with an optional field trip to Forsinard Flows National Nature Reserve the day before (Wednesday, 11th September).

Full details of the conference programme and ticket information can be found at <http://www.theflowcountry.org.uk/calendar/the-flow-country-conference/>

Images

1. The Flows to the Future project draws to a close, but it's legacy will live on
2. Hazel Anemometer by Hannah Imlach, a project-funded commission. Credit Hannah Imlach
3. Forsinard's award winning lookout tower, funded by the project. Credit Paul Turner
4. Project-funded restoration work. Credit Neil Cowie



The Peatlands Partnership includes Scottish Natural Heritage, Forest and Land Scotland, Scottish Forestry, The Highland Council, RSPB Scotland, Plantlife Scotland, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, The Highland Third Sector Interface, The Flow Country Rivers Trust, and The Environmental Research Institute. It is chaired by Professor Stuart Gibb from the Environmental Research Institute/University of the Highlands and Islands.

RSPB Scotland is the lead partner in The Flows to the Future project, a Peatlands Partnership project, which gratefully acknowledges funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and from the following funders and supporters; Environmental Research Institute, European Regional Development Fund, Forest and Land 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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