



## The Peatlands Partnership

### **Peatlands Partnership issues first tenders for multi-million pound Flow Country restoration work**

The Peatlands Partnership is inviting contractors to tender for the restoration of 307 hectares of damaged peatland within the Flow Country. The restoration work is part of the multi-million pound Flow to the Future programme that recently received confirmation of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The project has been endorsed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Clifton Bain, director of the IUCN Peatland Programme, said, "I welcome this announcement. The restoration work already carried out in the Flow Country is recognised around the world as one of the finest examples of peatland conservation. The work done here has stimulated peatland conservation work across the globe. I am delighted that this next round of work is now underway."

The tenders are for the initial phase of work which will start the tree harvesting and the restoration of water tables in the Dyke and Forsinain plantations in Sutherland. These areas are part of RSPB's Forsinard Flows Nature Reserve.

Norrie Russell, the RSPB's manager of the reserve said, "Although the Flow to the Future project covers a wide range of different activities such as working with schools, and promoting tourism, the core of the project is the restoration of seven square miles of blanket bog.

"Local contractors have been upgrading the bridges and forest roads over the last year in readiness for the extraction of timber which will come from the felling areas. The felling work will be open to competitive tender via the Public Contracts Scotland website ([www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk](http://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk)) and we know from past experience that there are many capable contractors based in Caithness and Sutherland. One of the great aspects of this project is that it runs for 5 years and so offers good

opportunities for continuity of employment for that period. This is great news for the local economy.”

The Flow Country is one of Europe’s largest blanket bogs. It is of international importance for its wildlife but it is also plays an important role in helping us to mitigate the impacts of climate change. A healthy blanket bog is a huge store of undecayed vegetation that has grown there over thousands of years and stores huge amounts of carbon. Damaged peatland has lost much of its growing surface and instead of storing carbon, it emits carbon dioxide. This is one of the gases that contributes to climate change. By restoring the surface vegetation and raising the water level, the peatland will start to work again as a carbon store and many of the special plants and animals that lived there will return.

Ends

## **Notes**

This is one in a series of articles and press releases where the Peatlands Partnership explains the details of the £9.6 million Flow to the Future project.

The Flow to the Future project is a Peatlands Partnership project, with RSPB Scotland acting as lead Partner. The Partnership 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), Green Stimulus Package, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Highland Council, RSPB, Scotland Rural Development Programme, Scottish Government, Scottish Natural Heritage and The Tubney Trust.

The Peatlands Partnership includes Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission (Scotland), Highland Council, RSPB Scotland, Plantlife International and The Environmental Research Institute. It liaises with local community groups, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, 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.

## **Contact details**

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