



Press Release: 4 June 2015

Thurso pupils take their classroom out into the peatlands

Children from Pennyland Primary School, Thurso, have put on their wellies and taken the classroom outside to learn about the peatlands. The children were taking part in the Alan Joyce Young Environmentalist Competition which this year is being organised by Strathnaver Museum in partnership with the Heritage Lottery-funded Flows to the Future Project.

Sjoerd Tel, Learning Officer with the Flows to the Future Project, has already led pupils from six local schools out on to the bog for an afternoon of fun and environmental education. He explained, "It's great to have the children out in their own local area. They might be familiar already with peatlands because they play there or take the dog for a walk. But now, hopefully, they will better understand what the soggy stuff is really all about"

Christopher Pearson, teacher from Pennyland Primary, said "The pupils enjoyed the outdoor activities. For some it was even their first time up on Thurso moors".

During the learning session the children thought about climate change and the important role played by the peatlands on their doorstep. Many of them have entered the competition by sending in a photograph and caption which represents what the peatlands mean to them.

The Alan Joyce competition is dedicated to the late biology teacher and keen environmentalist from East Sutherland. The winners will be announced later this month and the children's work will form part of a display at Caithness Horizons on 27 July 2015.

Following these events Sjoerd Tel is planning the further development of a Flow Country Learning Programme that seeks to connect more school children to peatlands in a fun and inspiring way. The Strathnaver Museum and the Flows to the Future project also plan to keep working closely together in future. Looking further ahead the project team believes that the planned Field Centre with a classroom and residential facilities at Forsinard will greatly expand the learning opportunities available to school children and others in the area.

The Flows to the Future project gratefully acknowledges funding support from the Heritage Lottery Fund



PHOTOGRAPHS

- 1) Pupils from Pennyland Primary holding peat probes which are used for measuring peat depth**

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,

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