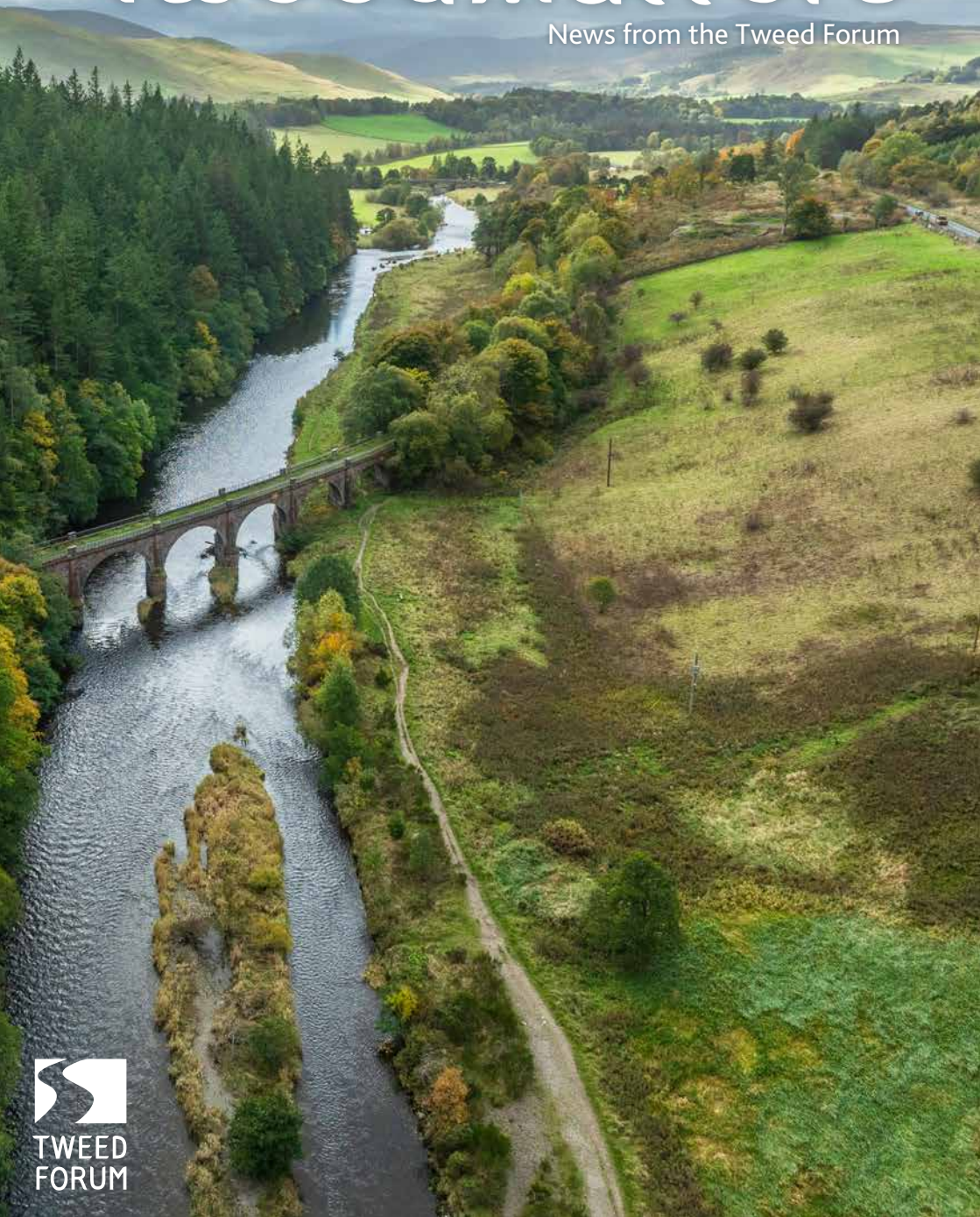


Tweedmatters

News from the Tweed Forum



BBC Countryfile showcases riverbank woodland creation work



We were delighted to share our riverbank (riparian) tree-planting work with BBC Countryfile presenter Matt Baker and his team earlier this year as part of a special feature about the River Tweed. Tweed Forum staff member Jane Gibson (pictured) spoke with Matt about our riparian tree planting programme, explaining how we plant the right native trees in the right riverside locations, and at the right scale, to provide a range of benefits for nature and local communities.

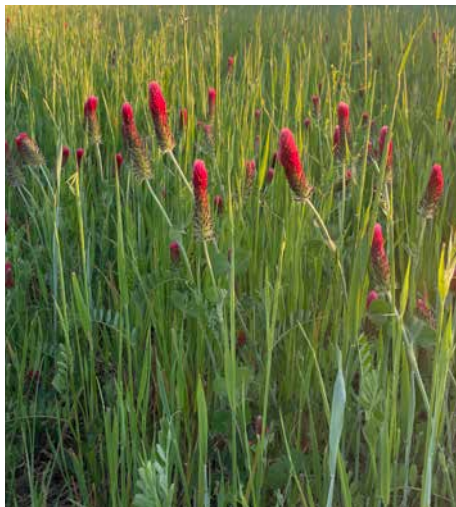
These benefits include boosting survival rates for young Atlantic salmon as well as stabilising riverbanks, preventing soil erosion, improving habitat and capturing carbon, with riparian trees and their roots also helping reduce flooding and improve water quality. In the past two decades, we've planted over 1.6 million trees as part of one of the UK's biggest riparian tree planting programmes and we'd like to thank Matt and the brilliant Countryfile production team for taking the time to hear about this important work.

A LENSs for the Tweed catchment

The aim of Landscape Enterprise Networks (LENs) is to create a more resilient landscape in the face of biodiversity loss and the climate crisis.

By bringing together organisations with a common cause, across public and private sectors, LENs aim to co-fund and implement regenerative agriculture and nature-based solutions to address issues such as soil health, water quality, conservation and biodiversity, and climate change mitigation. Crucially, these solutions are also measured, reported and verified by external experts. A LENs for the Tweed catchment has been in discussion for several years and support from the FIRNS programme (The Facility for Investment Ready Nature in Scotland) has enabled 3Keel and Tweed Forum to successfully bring together several private and public sector funders and make it a reality.

The Tweed LENs launch took place on the 24th of February this year and was well attended by both funders and farmers. Funding for the LENs has been provided by beverage company Diageo, Northumbrian Water, South of Scotland Enterprise and Scottish Borders Council, and is likely to focus on land management practices such as cover crops and minimum tillage, as well as



Land management which reflects regenerative agriculture practices, such as cover crops (shown) and minimum tillage, is a feature of the LENs approach

habitat restoration measures. The LENs model is very much demand-led around what funders want to see happen on the ground and what will make their business more resilient. Diageo, for example, is a major supporter and has a strong focus on their supply chain and farms that grow barley and wheat for their whisky and vodka production. Likewise, with the Northumbrian Water contribution, the Tweed LENs is also working across the border with farms in and around the Fell Sandstone Aquifer area, where Northumbrian Water operate a borehole that supplies Berwick-upon-Tweed with drinking water.

Staff Update

Last autumn, Tweed Forum welcomed **Julia Henschel to the post of River Till Project Officer**. Julia's role has a strong focus on delivering core elements of the River Till Restoration Strategy by facilitating woodland creation and river restoration throughout the Till catchment.

Julia will also be collaborating with the Great Northumberland Forest on tree planting opportunities across north Northumberland as part of their ambitious woodland creation initiative. With a background in environmental auditing, climate adaptation, and nature-based solutions, Julia is bringing valuable expertise to Tweed Forum's programme of habitat creation and restoration throughout the Till catchment.



Tweed Matters — Prefer a digital copy?

To save trees and costs, please join the people who have asked to receive future Tweed Matters updates via email.

Visit: www.tweedforum.org/newsletter to sign up or use the QR code opposite.





Tweed Forum River Champion



Peeblesshire farm manager, Matt Griffin receives his 2025 Tweed Forum River Champion trophy from Tweed Forum Chair, Debbie Playfair, in recognition of his nature-inspired approach to agriculture. Managing four upland farms across 980 ha, Matt has introduced a series of measures that put soil health first, enhancing biodiversity and improving the quality of water flowing into the Tweed.

Tweed Catchment Biosecurity Plan

Following a comprehensive review process, the 2026-2031 Tweed Catchment Biosecurity Plan was published earlier this year, with the continuing aim of preventing the introduction of invasive non-native species (INNS) and fish diseases across the Tweed catchment. The updated Plan represents a significant step forward in strengthening biosecurity across the catchment, bringing together the latest data, mapping tools and best practice guidance into a single, coordinated framework. A key outcome of the revision has been the inclusion of spatial mapping to identify high-risk areas and priority pathways where INNS are most likely to spread.

Building on previous versions, the new Plan also places greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention, with clear, practical measures for land managers, fisheries, contractors and river users. The Plan also aligns closely with wider initiatives such as the AQUA biosecurity accreditation scheme (you can read more about this over on page 21), helping to ensure a consistent, catchment-scale approach to reducing the spread of INNS and aquatic pathogens. This updated and accessible resource provides a strong foundation for coordinated action and we'd like to

thank members of the Tweed Biosecurity Group for their valuable input. You can access the 2026-2031 Tweed Catchment Biosecurity Plan at <https://arcg.is/OP10KC0>



Programmes to control invasive non-native species such as giant hogweed are featured in the newly updated Tweed Catchment Biosecurity Plan

Tweed Forum is coordinating this important Fund on behalf of Roxburghe Estates, Federated Hermes and EDF Power Solutions

Fallago Environment Fund

Tweed Forum coordinates this important natural, built and cultural heritage Fund on behalf of Roxburghe Estates, Federated Hermes and EDF Power Solutions. The main Fund has now supported a total of 125 projects, amounting to over £2.3 million. Recent support includes assisting the Scottish School of Harp Making with the purchase of essential tools, specialist and raw materials; restoration of the Sir Walter Scott Statue in Selkirk; enhancement of woodland and wetland habitats at Gala Policies, and supporting the World Sheep Dog Trials 2026 which will be held in the Scottish Borders (see overleaf).



The Scottish School of Harp Making will preserve and pass on the rare skills of heritage harp making to the next generation, and create a pool of professional-quality harps to support young players



With support from the Fund, Primary 5 children from schools throughout the Scottish Borders enjoy a wide range of activities relating to farming, food production and rural life at the annual BUAS Schools Countryside Day



The World Sheep Dog Trials 2026 will be held in the Scottish Borders, thanks to support from the Fallago Environment Fund

APPLY NOW!

The next round of Fallago Environment Fund applications is open until 12 noon on the 1st September 2026 (with the following round of applications due by 12 noon on the 1st March 2027). The aim of the Fund is to enhance the quality of life for local communities and visitors to the Borders through investment in the protection, enhancement and appreciation of the natural, built and cultural heritage of the Scottish Borders environment.

Apply online at:

www.tweedforum.org/fallago

(Detailed application guidance notes are also available online.)



FALLAGO
ENVIRONMENT
FUND
Federated
Hermes



□ WATER QUALITY

Delivering improvements for river, intertidal and marine habitats within the Tweed catchment and along the Northumberland Coast over a five year period

LIFE WADER

The aim of the EU LIFE WADER initiative is to deliver improvements for river, intertidal and marine habitats in four key Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and two Special Protection Areas (SPAs) along the Northumberland Coast and within the River Tweed catchment, by tackling local issues under four main themes: improving water quality, controlling macroalgae, tackling invasive non-native species and protecting wildlife from recreational pressure.

With the initiative now in its final year, we have been reflecting on the success of various projects which have been based here at Tweed Forum, as well as across the wider project partnership. Our Riparian Woodlands for Diffuse Pollution project has created more than 65 ha of riparian woodland with the aim of reducing the impact of diffuse pollution and improving water quality within the River Tweed SAC, and the Tweed Story education project has delivered key support to educators and learners throughout the Tweed catchment through its bespoke outreach programme and accompanying resource packs.

We have also delivered an ambitious programme of restoration on the River Breamish at Harehope Estate which you can read more about over on page 14 as well as work on Tackling Invasive Non-Native Species which is included in our Tweed Invasives Project article over on page 18.



Read more here:
tweedforum.org/life-wader/



LIFE WADER (LIFE20 NAT/UK/000277) is financially supported by LIFE, a financial instrument of the European Commission

This long-term strategy, working in partnership with the Environment Agency and Natural England, aims to improve the River Till SSSI and SAC

River Till Restoration Strategy

The River Till Restoration Partnership continues to support nature recovery across the River Till catchment, working within the framework of the long-standing River Till Restoration Strategy.

The last year has seen significant progress in several major landscape-scale restoration projects across the catchment, including a large-scale programme of restoration along 1.5 km of the River Breamish at Harehope Estate, which you can read all about over on page 14. Another key focus has been developing the River Breamish and Pow Burn Restoration Project at Hedgeley Estate, one of the most ambitious river restoration schemes undertaken within the catchment to date. Over the past 12 months, the Partnership has worked closely with the landowner, the Environment Agency and Natural England to complete feasibility, modelling and detailed design work, alongside planning and permitting requirements.

The restoration programme on the River Breamish and Pow Burn will restore over 7 km of river channel and help to reconnect up to 150 ha of floodplain by re-establishing natural river processes through measures such as chute channel

creation, floodplain reconnection and the removal of historic modifications. Once delivered, the scheme will enhance floodplain and riparian habitats, improve water quality, support priority species including Atlantic salmon and increase resilience to a changing climate.

Alongside this, the Partnership has been progressing the development of a multi-estate restoration plan for the upper Breamish, located within the headwaters of the catchment. This is a strategically important area, where channel form, sediment processes and land management practices all strongly influence the health of the River Breamish downstream. Currently at the outline design stage, this project will work with natural processes and locally sourced materials to restore channel form and function, reconnect the river with its floodplain, slow down flows and re-establish natural sediment dynamics. These improvements are expected to enhance spawning and juvenile habitat for salmonids, whilst also delivering wider benefits for water quality and climate resilience throughout the Till catchment. ►

□ HABITATS & SPECIES

► We are also continuing to support the Environment Agency in developing solutions for the removal of Haugh Head Ford, which should reinstate the natural functioning of the Wooler Water and improve access for migratory fish. The project team have just completed additional geotechnical work to inform the design process and construction works as well as hosting a community engagement drop in event in Wooler to update stakeholders on project progress to date and also outline next

steps. We hope to see work commence on site later in 2026 and anticipate this work being phased over two years with completion in late 2027.

These projects continue the positive momentum of the River Till Restoration Partnership and represent a continued shift towards catchment-scale, partnership-led restoration, working closely with landowners to deliver long-term improvements to the River Till and its tributaries.

The River Breamish and Pow Burn Restoration Project will restore over 7 km of river channel and help to reconnect up to 150 ha of floodplain by re-establishing natural river processes



□ HABITATS & SPECIES

On the lower Wooler Water, hardstone rip-rap was installed by Northumbrian Water in 2012 following flood damage to pipework, under emergency measures to protect critical infrastructure.

1. Over time, this temporary fix was failing, with boulders washing out and damaging the riverbed.
2. In 2024, Northumbrian Water commissioned Tweed Forum to deliver a long-term, green engineering solution to the erosion and flood

damage. All rip-rap was removed, the bank reprofiled and over 100 timber root wads (trees with the root ball still intact) were installed alongside a live willow mattress structure (a layered, living structure made from freshly cut willow that is designed to root, grow and stabilise eroding banks).

3. After 18 months the live willow mattress structure has successfully established, providing additional protection to the bank face from the erosive pressures of the Wooler Water.





The River Breamish at Harehope Estate has been the focus of one of the largest river restoration programmes in the UK

Harehope Restoration Project

During the very dry summer months of 2025, Tweed Forum successfully delivered an ambitious programme of restoration along 1.5 km of the historically straightened River Breamish at Harehope Estate. Following a careful design process, the floodbanks created when the river was straightened were breached, allowing the river to reconnect with its floodplain and follow its previous route. The design process involved detailed survey work using sophisticated Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) 3D modelling of the terrain to help trace the river's exact original meanders, which were then checked for accuracy against historic mapping of the area from the 1600s, sourced from the archives at Alnwick Castle.

The restoration work also involved the excavation of 700 m of new river channel across the floodplain and the transformation of 500 m of existing channel into the main river channel. In addition to this, two large leaky dam structures were constructed using timber sourced from the estate. These have been designed to raise the water level in the existing channel during periods of high rainfall, and push water out onto the floodplain and into the new river

channels, thereby slowing the flow of water flowing downstream when rainfall is high.

Other measures designed to 'slow the flow' by capturing and storing water on the floodplain have directed overland water flows into a new swale, excavated along with a series of silt traps. These will create new areas of wetland, and trap silt and pollution, before overland water flows into the new river channels. Six large multi-level floodplain scrapes have also been excavated, further increasing the natural flood management benefits of the restoration measures, and creating new wetland habitat in a boost for biodiversity.

We have produced a short film documenting the Harehope Restoration Project – you can view 'A River Set Free' on our website <https://tweedforum.org/harehope-restoration-project/> or by using the QR code below.





Historic maps from Alnwick Castle archives provided valuable insight into where the River Breamish would have naturally flowed before human intervention



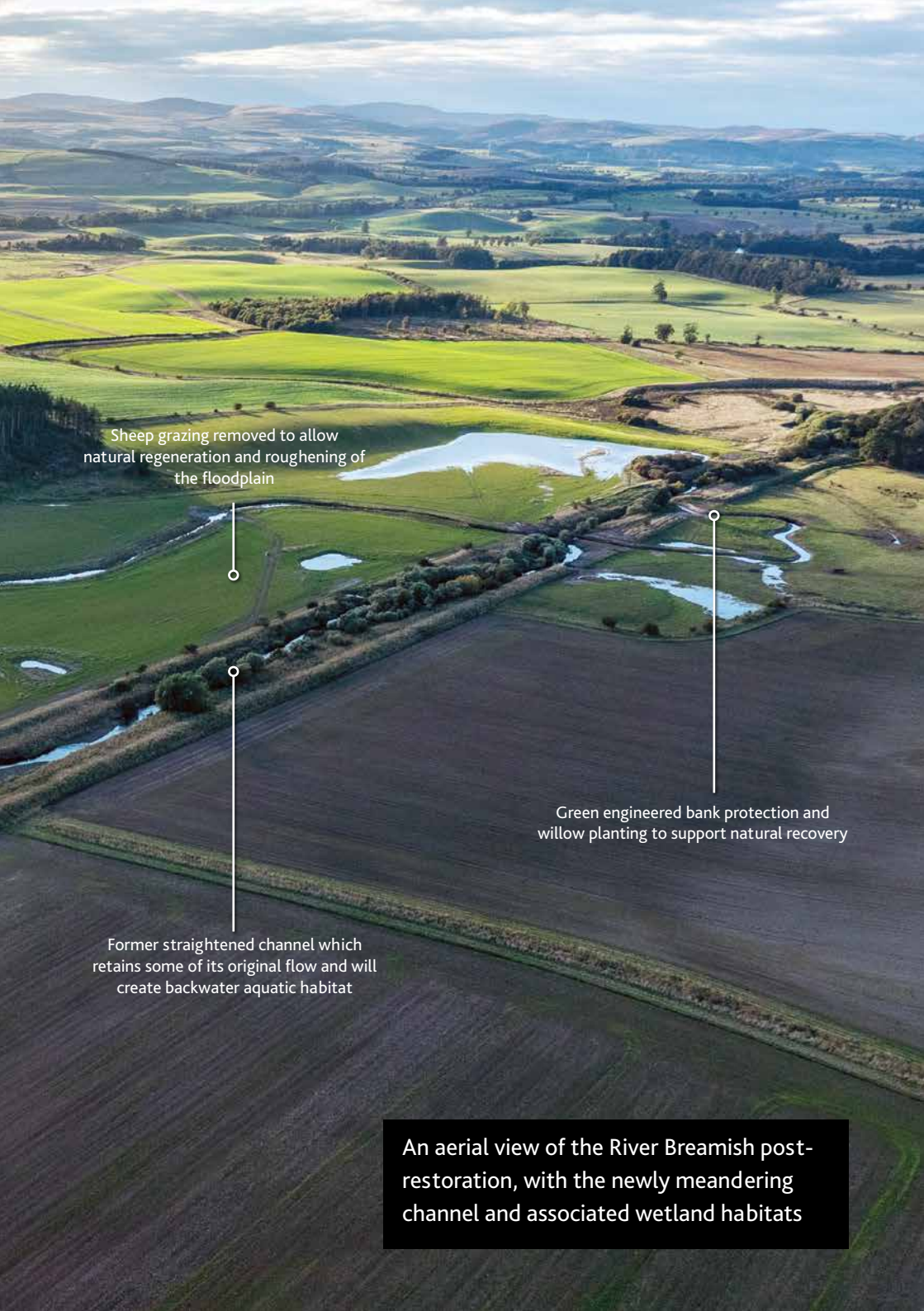
Restoration work gets underway on the River Breamish



New river channel following the original
course of the Breamish from ca. 200
years ago

Large woody dam structure to encourage
flows into the new channel. The structure is
permeable and allows continued fish passage

Floodplain scrapes to seasonally hold
water for increased habitat diversity

An aerial photograph showing the River Breamish after restoration. The river has been re-meandered, creating a winding path through a landscape of green fields and dark brown plowed earth. Several small, irregular ponds and wetland areas are visible along the river's course. In the background, rolling hills are visible under a cloudy sky. Three white lines with circular endpoints point from text labels to specific features in the landscape: one points to a meandering section of the river, another points to a straightened section, and a third points to a bank area with vegetation.

Sheep grazing removed to allow natural regeneration and roughening of the floodplain

Green engineered bank protection and willow planting to support natural recovery

Former straightened channel which retains some of its original flow and will create backwater aquatic habitat

An aerial view of the River Breamish post-restoration, with the newly meandering channel and associated wetland habitats

Our long-term control of invasive non-native plant species across the Tweed catchment continues

Tweed Invasives Project

The Tweed Invasives Project continues to deliver targeted, catchment-scale management of invasive non-native species (INNS), with 2025 marking our 22nd year of coordinated control. The 2025 season began in April using detailed historic datasets to identify priority sites for key species, particularly giant hogweed, so that plants could be treated early in their growth cycle. This targeted approach ensures that plants are controlled when leaf size is small - reducing herbicide use, improving operator safety and increasing overall efficiency.

Favourable weather conditions enabled full coverage of priority areas and, encouragingly, many long-term management sites are now showing clear recovery of native vegetation. Control of other INNS has also progressed well, with American skunk cabbage continuing to respond positively to treatment, and Japanese knotweed along the Tweed now largely confined to smaller, fragmented patches.

Community involvement remains central to the success of the Tweed Invasives Project. This year, 28 trained volunteers contributed 299 hours ►



One of our rust fungus biological control sites pre- and post-treatment; the dense stand of Himalayan balsam (left) has disappeared and a mixture of native vegetation has been restored (right)

□ HABITATS & SPECIES

► to control efforts, supported with equipment, herbicide and personal protective equipment. Additional partnership work with local organisations has helped extend coverage and raise awareness, particularly in preventing the downstream spread of species such as Himalayan balsam.

Trials to assess the use of a rust fungus biological control for Himalayan balsam are now in their 10th year. In partnership with project lead CABI (Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International) over the past decade, this work has provided valuable insights into the complexities of potential biological controls for invasive non-native species. Results from the Tweed catchment and across the UK have

shown that establishment of the rust fungus is variable, largely due to regional differences in Himalayan balsam populations and differing climatic conditions. However, where conditions are suitable the rust fungus can establish, survive the winter and spread naturally within Himalayan balsam stands, where it weakens the plant enough to prevent it crowding out native vegetation.

While biological control remains a long-term approach, it offers a potentially sustainable solution compared with the sole use of traditional control methods. We will continue to support research in partnership with CABI, helping to improve understanding and refine this approach as part of a long-term strategy for managing Himalayan balsam.



Please keep reporting sightings to us at info@tweedforum.org. Please include a photo and a grid reference, if possible.

Agroforestry arrives in the Tweed catchment

We've been working with Neidpath Farms, near Peebles, to deliver an innovative agroforestry project which, at over 1,700 native trees, we believe is among the largest of its kind in Scotland. The agroforestry approach is seen by many as the future of sustainable farming where, instead of separating agriculture from nature, trees are carefully integrated into farmland alongside crops, within grazing fields, or along rivers. This approach supports the farm business while delivering significant benefits for biodiversity and climate resilience.

At Neidpath, 65 apple, pear, cherry and plum trees will eventually produce high-quality organic fruit for local markets and 1,000 willow trees have also been planted to provide nutritious forage for cattle and sheep, supplying essential minerals such as cobalt and zinc that support animal health. A diverse mix of native alder, aspen, oak, downy birch, rowan, Scots pine and bird cherry trees have also been planted to enhance wildlife habitat, improve soil health and provide shelter and shade in pastures, including a lambing field where the trees will protect young lambs from the elements.

The saplings will be protected from grazing livestock using methods such

as specialist cactus guards, and wool from the farm has also been used as mulch around the base of the trees to suppress weeds and retain moisture. Agroforestry isn't about taking land out of production - it's about managing the land more effectively for multiple benefits, and we look forward to exploring the possibilities for more agroforestry projects within the Tweed catchment.



Hamish Robertson (Senior Project Officer, Tweed Forum) inspects one of the cactus guards around a newly planted tree

First AQUA Biosecurity Award for a Wild Fishery in Scotland



Congratulations to Craig Burman-Duke on achieving a nationally recognised Bronze AQUA Biosecurity Award at the Upper Mertoun fishing beat - the first award of its kind in Scotland, and the first for a wild fishery. The AQUA scheme supports fisheries in reducing the spread of invasive non-native species and aquatic diseases. Accreditation involved Craig, a long-term volunteer with the Tweed Invasives Project,

identifying key risk pathways at Upper Mertoun and introducing practical measures, including improved washdown facilities, clear signage and promotion of the "Check, Clean, Dry" approach. This milestone highlights the important role of volunteers within the Tweed Invasives Project community and hopefully inspires wider uptake of this scheme across the Tweed catchment.

This scheme offers funding for small-scale tree planting throughout the Scottish Borders

Borders Tree Grant Scheme

The Borders Tree Grant Scheme (delivered in partnership with Borders Forest Trust) was launched in July 2024 with the aim of encouraging farmers, landowners and non-profit organisations, such as schools and charities, to plant native landscape trees across the Scottish Borders.

The grant helps support the planting of parkland trees, hedgerow trees, small copses, riverside (riparian) trees and orchards.

Over the last 2 years, the scheme has approved 130 applications and facilitated the planting of over 24,000 individual (mostly broadleaved) trees which will add landscape and biodiversity value

to the Scottish Borders for the benefit of communities and nature. Loss of landscape trees due to disease and old age is an issue across the whole British countryside and the scheme aims to mitigate this loss and safeguard the role these trees play across the Scottish Borders region.

The Borders Tree Grant Scheme is limited to £1,500 per applicant/organisation per year and more details can be found on our website <https://tweedforum.org/our-work/projects/borders-tree-grant-scheme/>. Subject to confirmation of funding, we anticipate the scheme will re-open for applications towards the end of July 2026.



**BORDERS TREE
GRANT SCHEME**

tweedforum.org/our-work/projects/borders-tree-grant-scheme/



Tweed Forum is carrying out peatland restoration in the Scottish Borders in collaboration with NatureScot's 'Peatland ACTION' programme

Peatland ACTION

Our Peatland Team have been exploring the use of drones to improve how we survey peatland in what are often remote, wild landscapes. We've found that high quality drone imagery significantly improves the accuracy and efficiency of our restoration design work, giving us far more precise mapping of key restoration features. The team have also found that drone images can be useful in assessing sites pre- and post-restoration; these images below/opposite of one of our project sites at Score Head, Roxburghe Estates, provide important insights into what happens after the restoration works end and nature recovery begins.

The team have also been collaborating with local landowners over the last year to deliver restoration projects at Larriston Fell (Esk catchment)

and Garvald Farm (Gala Water catchment). The restoration works at Larriston Fell involved blocking drainage ditches across approximately 70 ha of blanket bog, and at Garvald Farm over 223 ha of blanket bog were restored using measures including a mixture of drain and gully blocking and re-vegetation of bare peat hags. These various restoration techniques are all designed to allow the bog to re-wet and a wide range of plants and animals to thrive in the newly restored habitats. The restored bog habitats will also both slow the flow of water from the uplands during periods of intense rainfall - reducing flood risk for downstream communities - and reduce the carbon emissions that occur when peatland dries out and peat becomes exposed (one of the key aims of the Peatland ACTION programme).



Restoration works at Garvald Farm included reprofiling peat hags and blocking gullies with peat bunds



Peatland restoration works at Score Head, Roxburghe Estates, are imaged using drone technology; comparing pre- (above) and post- (below) restoration imagery can provide important insights



Delivering strategic native woodland creation along rivers and throughout the wider catchment landscape

Native Woodland Creation

Enhancing riparian (riverbank) areas with new native woodlands brings a wealth of benefits to ecosystems, local communities and businesses and Tweed Forum remains committed to expanding this vital habitat throughout the Tweed catchment. During the 2025/2026 tree planting season we have helped create over 64 ha of native riparian woodland and agroforestry, woodlands which have been designed to integrate with the landowner's business interests whilst also delivering on our strategic goals of reducing diffuse pollution and soil loss, increasing native habitat cover and connectivity, shading watercourses and capturing atmospheric carbon.

In the last year we have also created our first woodland via voluntary biodiversity net gain, planting 2.42 ha of native woodlands and 3.24 km of hedging thanks to SP (ScottishPower) Energy Networks' "Use It Or Lose It" fund. In another first, we also delivered a large-scale agroforestry scheme in the upper Tweed, with 1,754 trees planted at low densities across just over 13 ha to create grazable pastures and strip agroforestry (see opposite).

In addition to woodland creation within the Tweed catchment, we also continue to deliver knowledge-sharing, professional advice and policy feedback across various areas. Notably we have now delivered the first seven out of nine sessions in a webinar series that focuses on our delivery model for riparian woodland creation. This series has been attended by 60+ individuals involved in river restoration from organisations across Scotland. We hope to continue to grow our delivery of native woodland creation projects across the Tweed catchment, as well as increase our engagement in knowledge exchange and national policy debates around woodlands, for the benefit of rivers and catchment landscapes over the coming years.





We have been exploring how AI visualisations can bring native woodland creation options to life for farmers, landowners and land managers; at this location, an AI tool provides a visual representation of how native woodland might look at two potential planting areas



Tree planting on the Halter Burn

Earlier this year, some of the Tweed Forum team spent an extremely cold and soggy day planting trees on the Halter Burn deep in the Cheviot hills. Building on SEPA's recent weir removal on the Halter Burn, the newly planted 300 native broadleaf trees and 200 willow stakes will help cool the water (thereby reducing thermal stress), stabilise banks and improve habitat for the migratory fish that now have access to this part of the catchment again.

Clockwise from left: the Tweed Forum team pose for a group shot; tree planting gets underway on the Halter Burn; willow stakes in situ between coir matting which initially stabilises the bankside before the willows establish.



Exploring the use of nature-based solutions to increase climate resilience at the catchment-scale

Lyne Water Catchment Resilience Pilot

The climate crisis is having increasingly detrimental effects on agriculture, businesses and communities, with the frequency and severity of droughts and floods becoming a serious concern. Last year (2025), the River Tweed reached "Significant Water Scarcity", the highest-level alert in Scotland, following more than 30 consecutive days of low flow. The Lyne Water Climate Resilience Pilot is an initiative funded by South of Scotland Enterprise which aims to assess whether nature-based solutions might increase the climate resilience of a river catchment.

Delivered through the Rural Land Use Partnership and the South of Scotland's Natural Capital Innovation Zone funding, this pilot is creating a climate resilience framework for the Lyne catchment that could be expanded into the wider Tweed catchment and beyond. The Lyne Water catchment was chosen as the pilot area for a number of reasons. It has a large catchment area of around 17,500 ha, existing known diffuse pollution and water quality issues, two freshwater reservoirs, and accounts for around a fifth of any floodwaters reaching Peebles. It also has a diverse mixture of productive land-uses, making it an ideal location

to test the effectiveness of various interventions.

The Lyne Water Catchment Resilience Pilot is currently in its second year, with the initial phase identifying landowners and assessing current land-use pressures and drivers of decision making. Phase 2 has seen the creation and development of a nature-based solutions visualisation tool, a detailed hydrological technical note, further landowner and stakeholder engagement and a community event in West Linton in conjunction with the Southern Uplands Partnership.

This second phase has also allowed for some capital works to be undertaken within the catchment between January and March 2026. So far, this has included the creation of 37 wildlife and flood alleviation ponds, the installation of 1.2 km of cross-contour hedgerows, 120 m of riverbank protection, the erection of 2.3 km of stock exclusion fencing, and the planting of over 1,600 native and riparian broadleaved trees with help from the Riverwoods development grant. Future efforts will be made to secure and diversify funding streams in order to expand on the work that has already been undertaken.



Stonypath pond and wetland network for flood mitigation and biodiversity

Funded by Scottish Government, this project aims to restore natural habitats and reduce flood risk in Peebles and Eddleston village

Eddleston Water Project

The UNESCO-recognised Eddleston Water Project has had another busy year, with community engagement, research and monitoring, and installation of further natural flood management (NFM) measures all taking place. This winter, Tweed Forum attended a Scottish Borders Council engagement event at Burgh Town Hall in Peebles to discuss residents' concerns around water levels and flooding in the town. Scottish Water and SEPA were also in attendance to provide expertise on current and future predicted flood levels, the role of reservoirs in flood events and

wider water security. The event was well attended with almost 100 participants over the full day and it was great to be able to meet with such a wide range of stakeholders.

Tweed Forum's presence at this engagement event helped raise awareness of the work being done throughout the wider Eddleston Water Project, which has now seen the creation of 209 ha of riparian woodland, 40 flood alleviation and wildlife ponds, 2.9 km of river channel remeandered and the installation of 136 leaky barriers along with many other NFM measures ►



The Eddleston Water in high flows – we can clearly see where the river wants to be but for the last 200 years it has been pinned behind the railway line to the right

► in the Eddleston Water catchment. Discussions with the event attendees were overwhelmingly positive around the work being done by Tweed Forum and the understanding that NFM measures are primarily best used in combination with other methods, helping to slow the flow of water through the catchment during lower-level floods and thereby reducing flood risk. Discussions were had with residents and councillors on the current efforts by Tweed Forum to replicate and expand on the measures used in the Eddleston Water project elsewhere in the upper Tweed and Lyne Water catchments, to further reduce the effects of flooding in Peebles and beyond.

This last year has also seen the continuation of the detailed hydrological and ecological monitoring that underpins the Eddleston Water Project. With an increasing focus on resilience and the impact of climate change, we have undertaken a major review of the Eddleston catchment Surface Water Hydrological Monitoring Network. This is one of the densest and most extensive of such networks for a catchment of this size anywhere in the UK, and it was originally designed to help us track precipitation falling on the catchment, river levels and any subsequent generation of floods.

In order to provide a baseline against which we could observe any resulting changes, two years of data were also gathered by the monitoring network before any NFM measures were implemented in the catchment. Whilst the monitoring network has worked

well over the last 15 years, an increasing focus on water scarcity has highlighted the need for a review of the network's relevance and capacity for measuring low flows and the potential impacts of droughts. Other recent research studies have found that temporary flood storage ponds created for NFM purposes are providing important habitat for dragonfly populations, and also that ecological recovery of the once-straightened Eddleston Water (200 years ago) is underway due to the remeandering and realignment of the channel as part of the Eddleston Water Project's programme of works.

Over the last year Tweed Forum also facilitated the creation of 2 large flood alleviation and wildlife ponds within the Eddleston Water catchment as part of the South of Scotland Enterprise Natural Capital Innovation Zone. These ponds will help capture and slow overland flows while creating valuable habitats for local wildlife (within a few hours of excavation, the ponds were being enjoyed by a raft of shelducks and oystercatchers!). This funding also supported the construction of a large flood attenuation bund on the Middle Burn within Cloich Forest. This giant leaky barrier was constructed on the site of an old mill pond with the intention of capturing up to 5200 m³ of water in the case of a 1 in 200-year flood event. In addition to the bund, 2 scrapes were created and 125 native broadleaved trees planted at the site to create a range of habitat types and improve biodiversity.



Flood attenuation and wildlife ponds at Chapelhill, north of Peebles

Installation of the flood attenuation bund on the Middle Burn



Destination Tweed

Destination Tweed is a unique river revitalisation partnership initiative led by Tweed Forum that will enhance, celebrate and share the nature, history and stories of the River Tweed. The initiative will deliver significant economic, environmental and social benefits to South Scotland and North Northumberland through a wide range of actions and activities delivered across 13 individual projects.

Destination Tweed is a unique river revitalisation partnership initiative led by Tweed Forum that will enhance, celebrate and share the nature, history and stories of the River Tweed.

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Over the last 12 months, Destination Tweed has continued to make a positive

impact across the region, working with our partners to care for the river by restoring habitats, supporting biodiversity and celebrating the Tweed's rich natural and cultural heritage. Almost 105,000 native trees and shrubs have now been planted across our three major landscape projects - Woodlands for Wildlife and Water and Designed Landscapes (Tweed Forum), and Reviving the Wild Heart of Southern Scotland (Borders Forest Trust). Together, these initiatives are helping to restore a mosaic of historic



Getting "hands on" at the Newstead Sundials Festival



Fairnilee excavations underway as part of our community archaeology project, 'Uncovering the Tweed'

▣ DESTINATION TWEED UPDATE

► landscapes, pioneer innovative agroforestry approaches, reduce flood risk, improve habitats, and protect water quality downstream.

Meanwhile, the Pollinators Along the Tweed project (Buglife) has created 21 ha of wildflower-rich habitat, strengthening B-Lines across the Tweed and offering vital food and shelter for some of the river's smallest - and most important - inhabitants. Our Community Grants Scheme has supported 28 grassroots community projects across the upper, middle and lower Tweed. These include the first Newstead Sundials Festival; 'Billy Gerard Frank: Palimpsest' exhibition and events programme at Paxton House; and biodiversity enhancements, events and upgrades at Greener Peebles' much-loved community garden. We're delighted to be able to support such a wide range of inspiring and impactful projects.

Over the past year, Uncovering the Tweed, our community archaeology project (AOC Archaeology Group), has worked with local groups, schools, and volunteers at 44 events, including excavations, workshops, and surveys. The discovery of a medieval moated site on the banks of the Tweed at Fairnilee, not previously documented, was a



Construction underway on the Crook Inn Bunkhouse at Tweedsmuir

significant find for the project and an exciting addition to the archaeological record. In November, work began to construct the Crook Inn Bunkhouse at Tweedsmuir, an exciting community-led project developed by the Tweedsmuir Community Company. Sleeping 22 guests, the new accommodation will offer walkers, cyclists and outdoor adventurers a unique base from which to explore the region.

Progress on the River Tweed Trail continues at pace, with major improvements already taking shape between Moffat and Peebles. Recent works include substantial path upgrades, new fencing, improved drainage, ►



Out in the water with Connecting Threads at the inaugural Tweed River Festival

□ DESTINATION TWEED UPDATE

► and the installation of ramps and self closing gates, helping improve the trail's condition and accessibility. Designed to provide an immersive experience, the route will showcase the region's remarkable landscapes, distinctive character, and the rich stories of its history, culture and natural environment. As the trail develops, work will continue steadily downstream, strengthening connections between communities, local businesses and visitor experiences along the River Tweed.

Visit <https://youtu.be/5W1eELh2jrk> or scan the QR code to watch our short film and discover the vision behind the trail.

Looking ahead, a key focus of the next phase is the design of the trail's waymarking and interpretation. In late 2025, Berwick-upon-Tweed design practice NEON was appointed to lead this creative work, developing landscape sensitive structures that reflect the Tweed's character and bring its heritage to life. Alongside this, Tweed Stories, a growing digital archive of community voices, will celebrate the people and places shaped by the river, inspiring future interpretation along the trail.

To find out more about the River Tweed Trail, our wider projects, and upcoming news and events, visit destinationtweed.org.



Launching in 2028, the River Tweed Trail will be one of the UK's newest walking and cycling routes, following the course of the river from Moffat to Berwick-upon-Tweed



The new creative team appointed to deliver interpretation for the River Tweed Trail, pictured alongside Destination Tweed's Luke Fisher and Marina Piper: (left to right) Annie Watson, Southern Green; Luke Fisher; Ed Green, Southern Green; Marina Piper; Mark Nixon and Viliina Koivisto, Neon; Robin Howie and Tilia Bertrand, Fieldwork Facility

□ DESTINATION TWEED UPDATE

An environmental education and outreach programme, led by Tweed Forum, to inspire people to care for, and appreciate, their environment

TweedWATCH

TweedWATCH has been very busy inspiring young people across the Borders - over the last 12 months our Engagement and Education Officer, Jenny, has delivered 60 workshops, engaging 731 learners and providing nearly 1,000 hands-on learning experiences. Most sessions have involved primary schools, with others delivered to secondary groups, a nursery, a Junior Rangers team and an Enhanced Provision Class. A key highlight has been the expansion of our Advanced Higher Biology and Geography fieldwork days, run in partnership with RHET and the Tweed Foundation. Through these sessions, students have gained real world experience using field survey techniques, analysing data and exploring how these skills support conservation and land management.

Schools have continued to make great use of the Old Melrose Woodland Classroom, with St Boswells Primary enjoying regular visits to explore local habitats. Earlston High School's support class joined us for a wellbeing-focused outdoor session and Swinton Primary pupils took part in archaeology-themed learning linked to a local dig, with Edenside Primary investigating water quality and invertebrates for Maths Week Scotland.

Another standout moment was a sonic pond dipping session at the



Jenny Holmes, TweedWATCH Engagement and Education Officer, celebrates the launch of the TweedWATCH Education Pack on the banks of the River Tweed

SCHLOSS Roxburghe Hotel with underwater sound recordist David de la Haye, giving children a unique way to connect with local wildlife through sound. This year the project also hit an important milestone with the launch of the TweedWATCH Education Pack, designed for KS2/Second Level learners (aged 7–12). The pack covers themes such as river wildlife, woodlands and pollution, supporting meaningful outdoor learning while nurturing care for the environment, and is available as a printed or digital resource via our website.

Spreading the word –

a national role in promoting Natural Flood Management

Over the last 12 months, we've shared our experience of championing integrated catchment management with over 6912 individuals across 120 events. We've hosted site visits at various Eddleston Water Project demonstration sites in addition to knowledge sharing at conferences, meetings and other events. Participants at these events have ranged from fellow environmental professionals to students to government officials, with natural capital experts, river restoration specialists, River Tweed enthusiasts, local communities, over 300 higher education students and more than 4200 primary/secondary students engaging with us.



Tweed Forum's Emily Iles exploring how land management choices influence environmental outcomes with young learners at the 2025 BUAS Schools Countryside Day



Members of the River Restoration Centre enjoying a rather damp visit to the Eddleston Water catchment

Tweed Forum Funding

Due to the complexity and number of project funders we are unable to list all the contributing bodies in the relevant sections of the newsletter. However, the following have contributed to Tweed Forum, and associated projects, over the last year:

- Clark Woodlands Trust
- Crichton Carbon Centre
- Donations from individuals
- EDF Power Solutions
- Environment Agency
- EU LIFE WADER
- Federated Hermes
- Fishmongers' Company's Charitable Trust
- Forest Carbon
- Great Northumberland Forest
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Jim Clark Rally
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Natural England
- Nature Restoration Fund
- NatureScot
- Northumberland National Park Authority
- NWG Living Water
- River Tweed Commission
- Roxburghe Estates
- Scottish Borders Council
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Scottish Forestry
- Scottish Wildlife Trust
- Shared Prosperity Fund
- South of Scotland Enterprise
- Swire Charitable Trust
- The Scottish Government
- The Water Environment Fund
- The Woodland Trust
- Tweed Foundation
- Tyne Rivers Trust

and a large number of farmers and landowners

Tweed Forum Trustees and Staff

TWEED FORUM TRUSTEES

Tweed Forum is guided and supported by a board of trustees who give their time, knowledge and experience freely, and we are extremely grateful for their input.

Debbie Playfair (Chair)

Adrian Dolby

Andrew Wallace

Catherine Maxwell-Stuart

Eck Gordon

Kevin Stewart

Mark Whitehead

Patricia Glennie

Paul Jardine

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Key achievements to date

1,623,187

trees planted
(1301 ha)



80,507

people engaged
in over 1,965 events



5,754 ha

of peatland improved



313

ponds & wetlands
created/restored



282

engineered log jam
structures installed



495 ha

of floodplain
& wetland restored



300 miles

of river improved by invasive
non-native species control



218 miles

stock exclusion fencing



20+

listed buildings
& monuments restored



1,203 miles

of paths upgraded/created



**TWEED
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AT THE HEART OF LAND & WATER MANAGEMENT ON TWEED