

## The Upland Solutions Project Summary Report

**A report by Scotland's Moorland Forum**

Based on workshops and information collected from Study Areas at  
Muirkirk, East Ayrshire and Tomatin, Inverness-shire



River Findhorn close to Coignafearn

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## Scotland's Moorland Forum – Member Organisations

Association of Deer Management Groups  
Association of Salmon Fishery Boards  
British Association for Shooting & Conservation, Scotland  
British Deer Society  
British Trust for Ornithology, Scotland  
Cairngorms National Park Authority  
Centre for Ecology & Hydrology  
Crofters Commission  
Deer Commission Scotland (until September 2010)  
Forestry Commission Scotland  
Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust  
Game Conservancy Scottish Research Trustees  
Heather Trust  
Highland Birchwoods (until 6 July 2011)  
James Hutton Institute (from 1 April 2011)  
John Muir Trust  
Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority  
Macaulay Institute (until 31 March 2011)  
National Farmers Union Scotland  
National Trust for Scotland  
Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors  
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Scotland  
Rural Directorate, Scottish Government  
Scottish Agricultural College  
Scottish Association of Countryside Sports  
Scottish Countryside Alliance  
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency  
Scottish Estates Business Group (until June 2011)  
Scottish Gamekeepers Association  
Scottish Land & Estates (from June 2011)  
Scottish Natural Heritage  
Scottish Raptor Study Groups  
Scottish Rural Property & Business Association (until June 2011)  
Scottish Water (from October 2010)  
Scottish Wildlife Trust

# Upland Solutions Project Summary Report

## Introduction

- 1 This report has been produced to provide a high level summary of the key findings from the Upland Solutions Project. The full details of the project are contained in the Final and Supplementary Reports.
- 2 After listing the key findings from the project, this report suggests some legacy issues that reflect the Forum's views of the concept of the Upland Solutions project based on the experience gained through developing and running this project over the last 2½ years.

## Project Summary

- 3 During 2010, Scotland's Moorland Forum, with its broad range of expertise in the land management and policy sectors, investigated two different and contrasting areas of Scotland to establish what was working well and what changes, if any, were needed if the areas were to fulfil their potential.
- 4 The two areas selected were an area surrounding Muirkirk in East Ayrshire and the area to the south-west of Tomatin in Inverness-shire.
- 5 There are two outputs from this work:
  - 5.1 A distillation of the views of local people obtained through two workshops, supplemented by the responses local people provided to individual questionnaires; and
  - 5.2 In keeping with the title of the Project, the Forum has proposed some **Upland Solutions** to the most significant **Upland Barriers** that were identified during the workshops.
- 6 Five barriers were identified as being common to both areas:

The lack of a shared vision or objectives for the future of these areas from within the community;

Poor communication and coordination between Government Agencies and NGOs with local landowners, land managers and other community interests;

Bureaucracy and risk-averse regulation;

The lack of understanding of the government's imperative to manage carbon; and

The persecution of raptors that sours the relationships between key stakeholders; in some areas this restricts the level of agency / NGO input and limits private investment.

- 6.1 The full report has proposed solutions to these barriers, and addressed other issues that were identified in the workshops and from the questionnaires.

## Key Findings

### **7 The concerns and views of communities need to be heard intelligently.**

- 7.1 The Forum is uniquely placed to provide this service and act as an ‘intelligent filter’.
- 7.2 The Forum's collective wisdom should be used to identify the appropriate issues to take forward and ensure that links are established to the appropriate organisations or agencies.

### **8 There needs to be engagement with all parts of the community.**

- 8.1 The Forum is uniquely placed to bring all interests together in an informed but non-partisan format.
- 8.2 There needs to be a good level of dialogue between different interests within a community. Dialogue would be improved as part of producing an inclusive, local development plan that would also be an aid to identifying the needs and wishes of the community as a whole.
- 8.3 The development plan needs to embrace all potential initiatives in the study areas, whether these be generated by the communities or external organisations (e.g. CADISPA at Tomatin) and agencies.
- 8.4 The aim is to produce an integrated plan for the study area with endorsement from all parts of the community.

### **9 Every area is unique and solutions to issues must be sought that are tailored to the needs of the whole community.**

- 9.1 The issues identified at Muirkirk are thought to require a more strategic approach, while the issues at Tomatin could be addressed at an operational level.

### **10 Both the Study Areas had opportunities that were already being exploited or had potential for development.**

- 10.1 Examples were the wind farm at Tomatin and the income this provided to the community, or the opencast coal mining at Muirkirk that brought employment and income to the area.
- 10.2 Tomatin benefited from substantial inward investment from landowners attracted by the sporting enterprises.

## Legacy Issues

- 11 The provision of a mentoring service that provides an intelligent filter to the issues concerning upland communities would be beneficial. The Forum could provide this service.
- 12 The Forum should not aim necessarily to provide solutions itself but should seek:
  - 12.1 To facilitate further discussion that involves all interests at a local level, and
  - 12.2 To facilitate the engagement between communities and other bodies and organisations as appropriate.
- 13 The aim would be to engage with communities and leave them better able to work together, to understand and develop their own opportunities, and to understand and address tensions and barriers.
- 14 The Forum should be able to offer a permanent facility to engage with communities that have issues that should be heard.
- 15 The work of the project should be seen to be:
  - 15.1 Supporting community development;
  - 15.2 Connecting with the self-help, localism & Big Society agendas;
  - 15.3 Encouraging a spirit of partnership;
  - 15.4 Ensuring the better use of all local resources;
  - 15.5 Increasing knowledge levels;
  - 15.6 Retaining and enhancing local knowledge and land management skills;
  - 15.7 Developing local enthusiasm; and
  - 15.8 Attracting more funding from the public and private sectors.

## Conclusions

- 16 The Upland Solutions project has been a valuable experience for the Moorland Forum.
- 17 It has provided an opportunity for the Forum members to gain experience of working together and review issues in a practical setting.
- 18 The concept has proved valuable to the communities in the two Study Areas.
- 19 Establishing a permanent facility for the Forum to continue to provide a mentoring service would have great value.
- 20 The Forum looks forward to further discussion with the Scottish Government about how best to make use of the experience gained in developing the Upland Solutions concept.