

Landscape Scale Conservation Case Study

Inner Forth Futurescape

Delivering big for wildlife and people

Summary

The Inner Forth landscape is a special place for nature right in the heart of industrial Scotland. It provides a home to thousands of migrating and wintering birds as well as a range of other wildlife. It is also a landscape under pressure, with historic land claim causing the loss of important habitats, and future climate change threatening both the wildlife and the livelihoods of local people. The Inner Forth Futurescape is tackling these pressures by working with a range of partners to create and restore habitats that give nature a home but also deliver services, such as flood risk management, for local people.



“What makes this area so unique is the way that our nature reserves and cultural heritage sit comfortable side-by-side with large industrial works like Grangemouth”
Derek Abbot, Fife Coast and Countryside Trust

Challenges

The Inner Forth landscape is changing. Rising sea levels due to climate change not only threaten the inter-tidal habitats that are so vital for our special wildlife, they also threaten the way of life for local people through increasing the risk of coastal flooding. It is not an option to do nothing; NGOs, land managers, local councils and residents need to work together to create a sustainable future for the Inner Forth in which we create habitats that produce a landscape flourishing with biodiversity, while also delivering vital services such as flood risk management.

Inner Forth Futurescape Goals:

- Recreate, restore and enhance inter-tidal habitats throughout the Inner Forth that contribute to sustainable flood management
- Develop a network of linked habitats that deliver multiple benefits for the Inner Forth area
- Create new opportunities for people to engage with the natural world.

“From the viewpoint at Clackmannan Tower I can see the results of landscape scale conservation in an inter-connected network of restored monuments, woodlands, wetlands and meadows, all accessible from the doorstep of local people”

Andy Macpherson, Clackmannanshire Council

The solution

The Inner Forth is facing big challenges, and for big challenges you need a big solution, which is exactly what the Inner Forth Futurescape is. The traditional approach of buying small parcels of land and managing it for wildlife was never going to be enough to tackle the challenges we face. We needed to be bigger and bolder and look for opportunities that we would never normally consider when using a site based approach.

This way of thinking has enabled us to develop strong partnerships with a range of organisations including local councils, other NGOs and landowners. This then catalysed the development of the [Inner Forth Landscape Initiative](#), an HLF funded programme that enabled on-the-ground delivery of some of our Futurescape ambitions and integrate these with wider cultural and community benefits. In addition, we have been able to work with landowners to plan a large scale inter-tidal habitat creation project that will, if we can secure funding, be the biggest of its kind in Scotland.

None of this would have been possible if we had simply focused on land that we own. Working on a landscape scale has enabled us to look at projects which, prior to the Futurescape, would have seemed out of reach, and work with different partners from a range of sectors. This has also created challenges as we adapt to this new way of working, however the ambition of the Inner Forth Futurescape has enabled us to highlight wider issues around the Inner Forth landscape and open the door towards a more sustainable future for both its people and wildlife.

Outcomes

The Inner Forth Futurescape is focussed on long term sustainable change in the estuary, but already we have seen the development of exciting projects and the changing of attitudes of local people. We are working with local councils to improve wetland sites at [Black Devon Wetlands](#) and [Kinneil Lagoons](#), we have developed partnerships with the managers of historic buildings to create [wildflower meadows](#) in their grounds, and we have worked with a private landowner to develop detailed plans for what would be Scotland's biggest managed realignment.



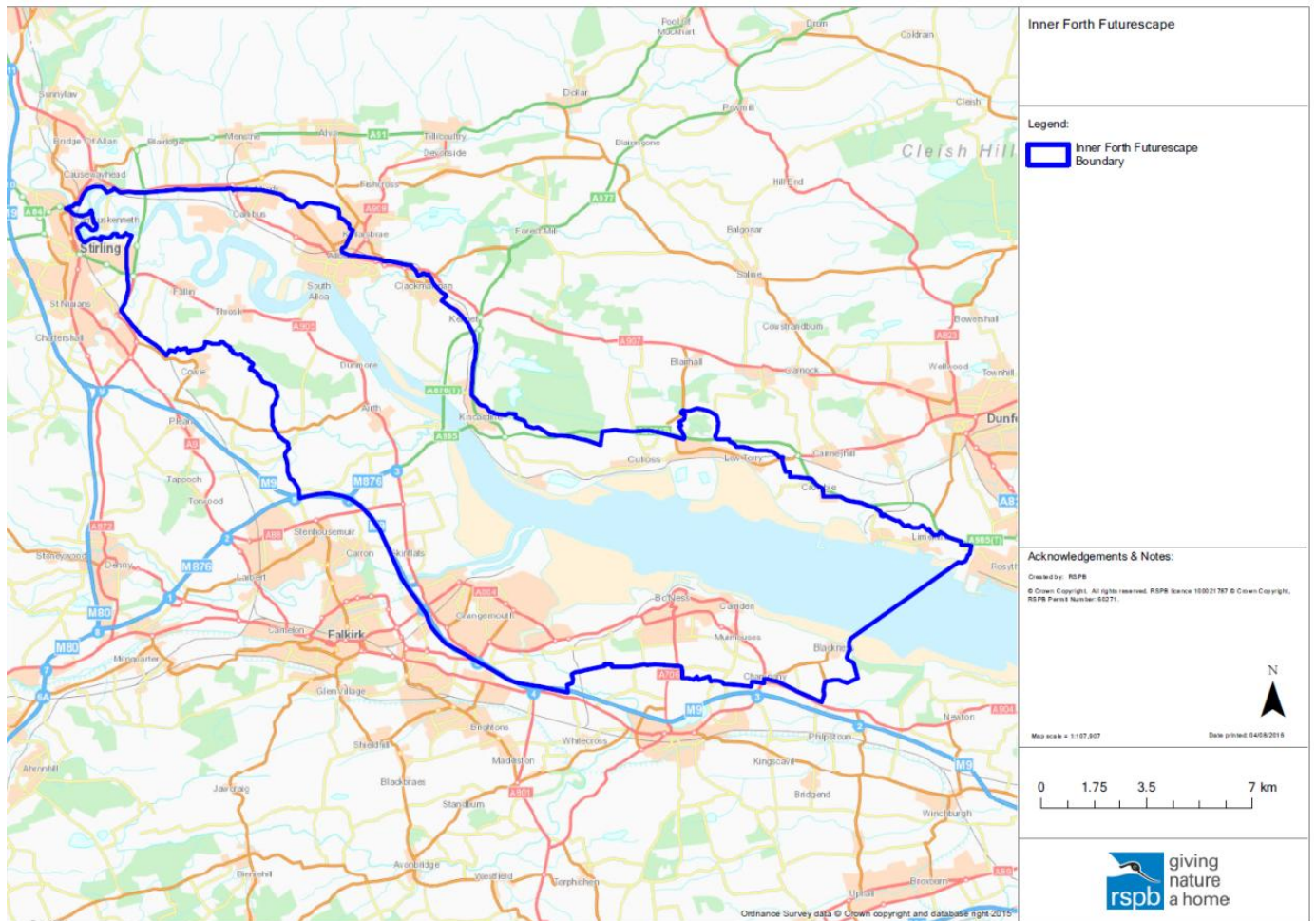
However that is not all, we have also been working hard to change perceptions about the Inner Forth from its traditional image as an industrial landscape, to one where people can experience fantastic wildlife on their doorstep. To achieve this we have worked with two local schools, [Airth Primary](#) and [St Mungos Primary](#), to create films about the

Inner Forth that show how interesting the area and its wildlife is. We have followed this up with our [Future Tides](#) project where we have worked with three schools each year since 2014 to introduce them to the Inner Forth landscape and what makes it special.

There are also now more opportunities to actually get to the River Forth with new paths being installed and new viewing structures planned. This will mean the river is far more accessible than it ever was before and will provide local people with the opportunity to experience the wildlife that is right on their doorstep.

Facts and figures

- 38 ha of habitat enhanced for wildlife.
- 42 volunteer work parties have assisted with habitat creation projects.
- 1 fully costed plan in place for Scotland's biggest managed realignment project.
- Over 300 school pupils engaged in the Future Tides project
- 5 km of new footpaths created as part of the [Inner Forth Landscape Initiative](#) enabling access to wild places.



The partnership:



Clackmannanshire Council



Falkirk Council



Butterfly Conservation Scotland
 Saving butterflies, moths and our environment



Scottish Wildlife Trust



Scottish Natural Heritage
 All of nature for all of Scotland



giving nature a home



Central Scotland Green Network Trust

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