

# Landscape Scale Conservation Case Study

## Strathard Initiative

A landscape to live, work and play

### Summary

This project aims to improve land and water management decisions in Strathard, a rural area of western Scotland located in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. In order to develop more sustainable and resilient land and water management plans, an ecosystems approach is being used. In its most basic form, an ecosystems approach is the acknowledgement that natural and human systems are interconnected. Nature provides many goods and services, from the food that we eat to natural flood management. By improving the way the land is managed we can increase the benefits we get from nature now and into the future.



***“This is a great opportunity for people in Strathard to tell us how the landscape affects their lives and how they affect the landscape. They can tell decision makers exactly what the issues are for them.”***

Fran Crumley, the Community Partnership

## Challenges

- 

*“By working in partnership, we are able to take account of multiple land management objectives and consider the full range of benefits we derive from the landscape”*

*Louise Bond, SEPA*

## The solution

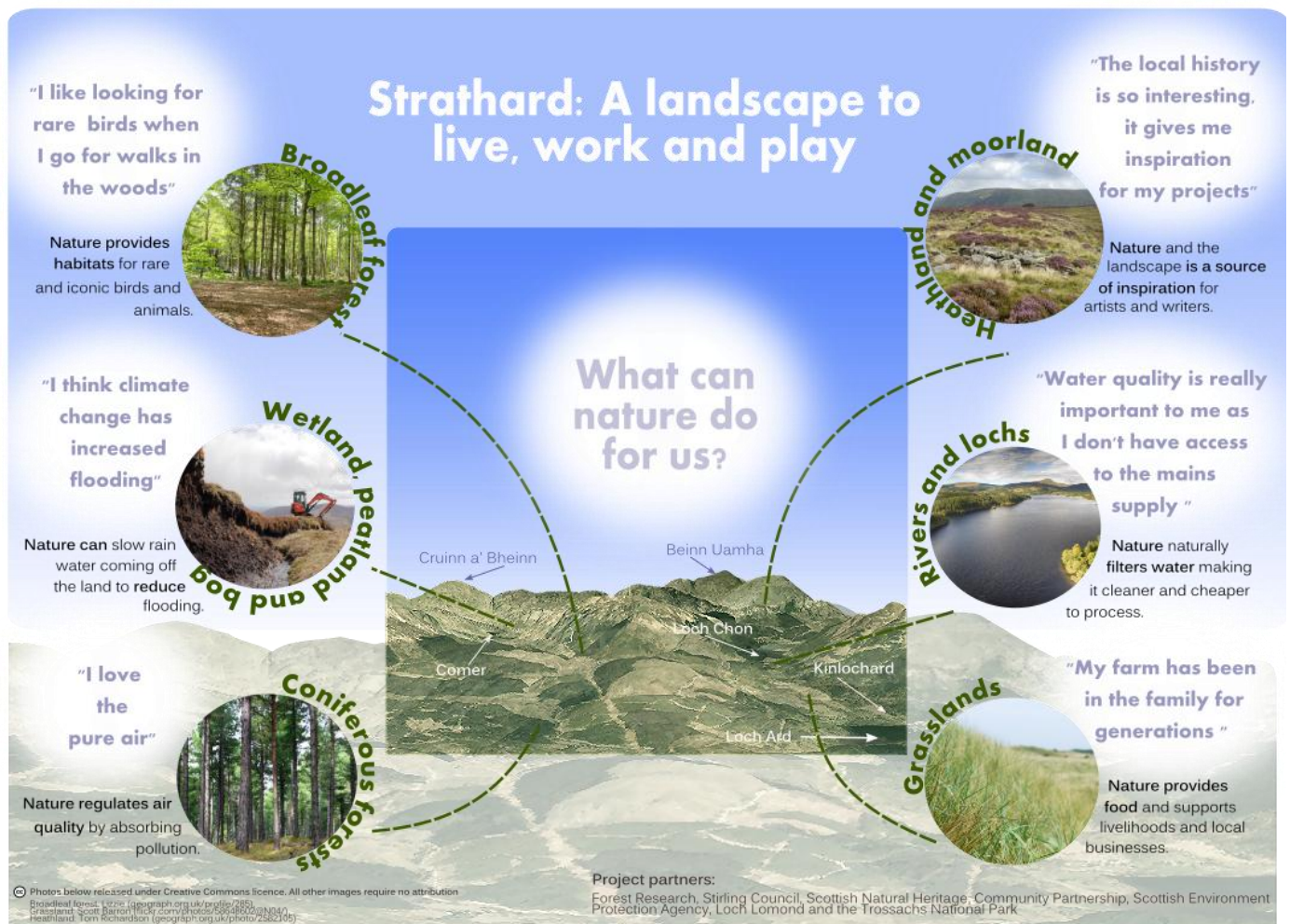
In order to improve land management decisions an assessment of what benefits we currently gain from our surroundings is needed. Working with a number of project partners this project aims to achieve this using a range of techniques to gather information on ecosystems and their services. An important part of the ecosystems approach is taking into account the views of different stakeholder groups and local communities.

The results will be used to evaluate and compare the effects of different land and water management actions. By considering the wider impacts and benefits of these actions, improved management decisions can be made which address the needs of the local communities whilst promoting sustainable use of the land.

The initiative has the following objectives:

- **Create strong working relationships and dialogue with local communities** to help identify and trial land management and natural flood management solutions.
- **Carry out a standardised, transferable assessment** of ecosystem services using standardised approaches
- **Collect data on ecosystem services** that are currently provided in Strathard
- **Collate and analyse data on service provision and ecosystem condition:** The ability of an ecosystem to provide a service depends on both the type of ecosystem and its condition. Therefore, in addition to assessing the type of services different habitats provide we will evaluate the extent to which these services are provided and how the delivery of services might be affected by condition of the ecosystem.
- **Identify locations in the study area with high run-off** to help understand the potential use of Natural Flood Management measures, such as woody debris dams.
- **Combine the ecosystem service assessment with hydrological study.** The intention is to trial land and natural flood management measures in the Duchray catchment from 2017.
- **Provide guidance on future management options:** The results will be used to direct other land and water management in the area, to better take into account ecosystem service

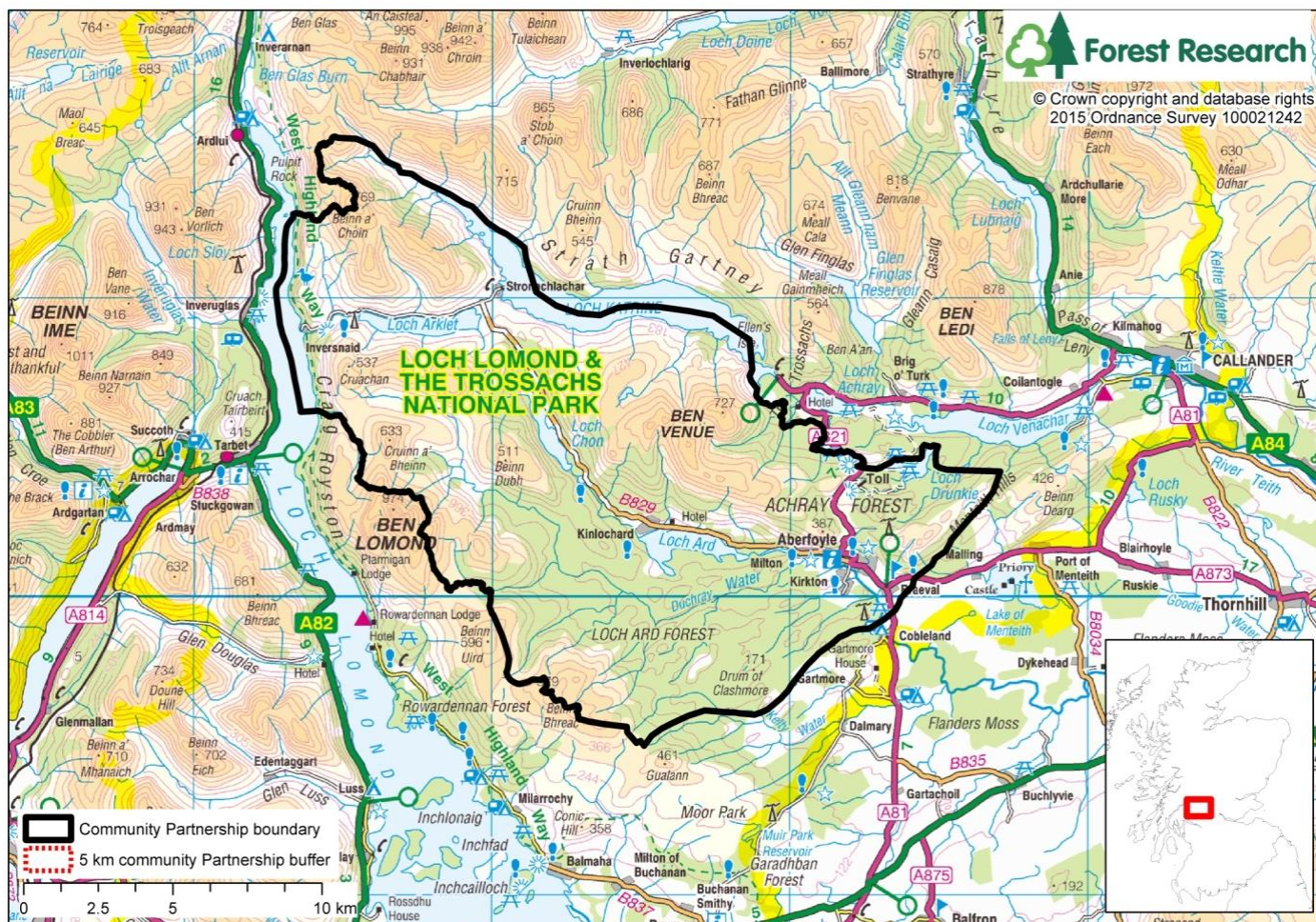
provision, which will contribute to forest design plans with multiple economic, environmental and social benefits.



## Outcomes

A partnership approach to align environmental objectives and identify the land and water management solutions has resulted in agreement on shared goals and project objectives. The process has allowed partners and the community to better understand the roles and responsibilities of the different partners.

Looking at pressures at a landscape scale has allowed us to consider interactions of management regimes and identify more holistic solutions. Forest Research are currently producing 'opportunity maps', which will help us visualise which locations in the landscape may deliver project objectives and multiple benefits for the environment.



## The partnership



## Contacts

Louise Bond, Senior Ecologist, SEPA

Tel: 01786 452604

Email: [louise.bond@sepa.org.uk](mailto:louise.bond@sepa.org.uk)

Website: [www.thecommunitypartnership.org.uk/project/strathard-a-place-to-live-work-play](http://www.thecommunitypartnership.org.uk/project/strathard-a-place-to-live-work-play)