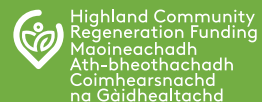




Highland Nature Restoration Fund Maoin Ath-leasachadh N^dair na G^idhealtachd

Grants Scheme Review 2021-24



Delivered by The Highland Council Community Regeneration Team & Environment Team



Foreword Facal-tòiseachaidh



Councillor Ken Gowans,
Chair of The Highland Council's
Economy and Infrastructure
Committee

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this brochure, which showcases the positive impact of the Nature Restoration Fund across the Highland region.

The Highlands are renowned for their breathtaking landscapes, rich biodiversity, and deep cultural connection to nature. Yet, like many places, we face growing pressures on our natural environment - from climate change to habitat loss and species decline. In response to these challenges, the Nature Restoration Fund has played a pivotal role in helping us protect, restore, and enhance our natural heritage.

Supported by the Scottish Government and delivered locally through The Highland Council, the Fund has enabled a wide range of initiatives - from woodland expansion and wetland creation and restoration to pollinator-friendly planting and removal of invasive species. What unites these projects is a shared commitment to restoring nature and building long-term resilience in the face of environmental change.

Equally important is the way the Fund has empowered local communities, landowners, and many third sector organisations to lead the charge. Over 1,700 volunteers have contributed to the delivery of these projects which is a phenomenal number and a testament to the can-do attitude here in Highland. By encouraging local stewardship and collaboration, we are not only regenerating landscapes but also strengthening the bond between people and place.

The Fund has also fostered invaluable collaboration within the Council itself. The Community Regeneration Team successfully led the delivery of the NRF programme, implementing a robust and transparent application process that ensures strong governance throughout. Crucially, they worked closely with the Environment team drawing on specialist knowledge and expertise to support well-informed decision making and delivery of projects with meaningful environmental impact.

As Chair of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee, I am proud of what our Nature Restoration Fund team has helped accomplish over the last 3 years, and I look forward to seeing its legacy continue to flourish in the years ahead.

I hope this helps to inspire everyone to value, protect, and invest in our natural environment - because a thriving Highland means thriving nature, which means a better future for us and future generations.

Background Cùl-fhiosrachadh

Introduction

Established by the Scottish Government, the Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) is a capital fund designed to help support projects that will deliver nature restoration, protect wildlife, and address the causes of biodiversity loss, including climate change. While NatureScot delivers the main component of the fund, discrete allocations were made to Local Authorities to support locally driven projects. Since 2021, The Highland Council has issued several competitive open calls to external organisations to access the funding. Of the 129 project proposals received, 67 were approved for funding, each showing clear and meaningful biodiversity benefits in line with the fund's objectives.

Application Process

- Grant awards were available from a minimum of £2,000 up to a maximum of £25,000
- An intervention rate of up to 100% was possible, however a good level of in-kind contribution was expected
- Projects had to demonstrate how they met at least one of the Strategic Key Themes set for the fund

NFR Funding Themes

Five Strategic Key Themes



Habitat and species restoration



Freshwater restoration



Coastal and marine restoration, recovery & enhancement



Control of invasive non-native species (INNS)



Urban 'Nature Networks'

Eligible Applications

Applications were welcomed from:



Constituted community groups



Public sector bodies



Charities



Voluntary and social enterprises



Co-operatives and community ownership initiatives



Development trusts

Projects were required to demonstrate that they will deliver:

Robust project delivery plan

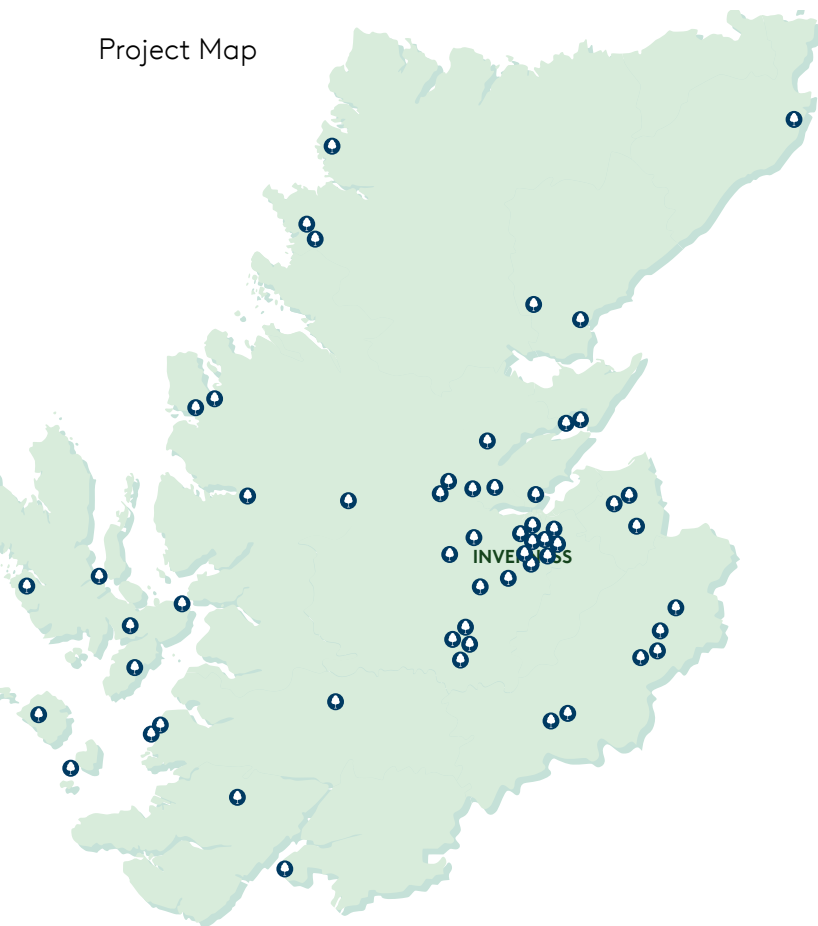
Positive environmental impact

Biodiversity enhancement

Value for money

Legacy

Project Map



Total Number of Projects Supported **67**

Total Funding Awarded **£633,061**

Overall Funding Leveraged **£835,207**

Average Funding Award Level **£9,448**



Project Type List

Number of projects delivering against project type

Woodland creation

29

Rain garden creation

2

Improving urban greenspace

6

Improving/creating wildflower areas/verges/hedgerows

20

Improving Local Nature Reserves

2

Planting of wildlife corridors/
removing barriers to movement

5

Natural flood management
actions

2

Pond/wetland creation/
improvement

8

Removal of INNS

10

Habitat and species
enhancement works

25

Creation of nature networks

3



Funding Impact



Over **25,000**
trees planted

8.9 hectares of
wildflower planted
(equivalent of 11 football pitches)



1,635 meters of
hedgerow planted

33.7 hectares of
non-native and invasive
species removal



1.9 hectares of
wetland/pond creation
(equivalent of 19 Olympic
swimming pools)



35 wildlife boxes installed



1,709 volunteers involved
across Highland



Nature Restoration in Action

Ath-leasachadh Nàdair ann an Gnìomh



Species and their importance

Each community project has enhanced local spaces and improved existing or created new habitat. These habitats will, in turn, function to support a wide variety of species.



Wildflower meadow planting

A standout enhancement was the planting of native wildflower meadows, which greatly benefit's Highland biodiversity - especially in upland and marginal areas where hardy native species thrive. These meadows provide vital shelter and food for pollinators, insects and small mammals, offering nectar and pollen throughout the growing season. Species like **kidney vetch**, **bird's-foot trefoil**, and **devil's-bit scabious** support rare and declining pollinators such as the **Great Yellow Bumblebee**, **Northern Mining Bee**, and butterflies like the **Small Blue** and **Dingy Skipper**.

Native wildflowers support Highland insects by serving as larval host plants - e.g. **violets** for the **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary Butterfly** and **bird's-foot trefoil** for the **Six-spot Burnet Moth**. A diverse meadow structure offers essential egg-laying sites, overwintering shelter and feeding areas, all reliant on proper management.

These meadows also attract insect prey for upland birds like **Skylark**, **Twite**, and **Lapwing**, while autumn seed heads feed species such as **Goldfinch** and **Meadow Pipit**. Using locally adapted wildflower mixes preserves Scotland's floral identity and prevents the spread of invasive species. Highland low-nutrient soils suit these meadows, as fertiliser-free conditions favour native flora.



Wildflowers - The Highland Council



Rowan Tree Berries



Fruit tree planting

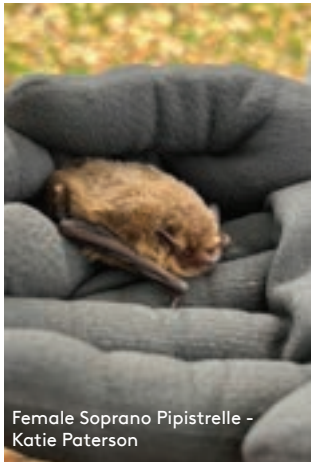
Many projects enhanced nature through planting native fruit trees like **apple**, **pear**, **plum**, and **damson**. These orchards not only improve local food access but also act as vital mini-ecosystems. They provide early spring blossom for pollinators such as **bees**, **hoverflies**, and **butterflies**, and support diverse wildlife - from **lichens and mosses** on ageing bark, to birds and mammals that feed on fruit or nest in the trees.

Traditional orchards mimic woodland edge habitats with their mix of trees and wildflowers, provide a variety of habitats for different bee species and can be an important refuge for declining species. These orchards also provide important food sources for foragers; fallen fruit feeds mammals like **badgers**, **foxes**, and **hedgehogs**, as well as birds such as **thrushes**, **blackbirds**, and migrating species such as the **Redwing**.

As fruit trees age, they develop features like rot holes and cavities that provide long-term habitats for **rare fungi**, **bats**, and **nesting birds** - particularly in unmanaged orchards where the decaying wood and fruit attracts **insects**, **amphibians** and **birds**.



Dingy Skipper - Butterfly Conservation Scotland



Female Soprano Pipistrelle - Katie Paterson



Goldfinch



Hedgehog



Native tree planting

Many projects boosted biodiversity through native tree planting, using species like **aspen, oak, birch, hazel, rowan, and Scots pine**. These trees, adapted to local conditions, support thousands of species offering habitat and food for **birds, mammals, insects, fungi, and decomposers**. Oak trees alone can host over 300 insect species, which in turn feed **birds and bats**. Native trees also provide seasonal resources like spring nectar, autumn fruit, and year-round leaf litter.

Once mature these native trees will be vital in supporting many species including **woodpeckers, owls, and bats** that nest in tree cavities, while **Red Squirrels and birds** use branches for dreys and nests. They foster rich understorey growth, enhance habitat complexity, and build soil through leaf litter. Their roots improve drainage, reduce erosion, and support **mycorrhizal fungi**, benefiting both wildlife and people.

Some wildlife depends exclusively on native trees (e.g. the **Scottish Crossbill**, which only breeds in Scots pine forests). A unique environment for Scotland is its native Caledonian pinewoods, one of the UK's rarest habitats which supports rare species like **Capercaillie, Pine Marten, and twinflower**.

Another key enhancement has been the removal and replacement of diseased native trees, such as those affected by **ash dieback**. This fungal disease is severely impacting ash trees and the species they support, including **bats, lichens, and insects**. Replanting with healthy and resilient native species is essential for nature restoration.



Japanese knotweed - Paul Gorvett



Invasive non-native species removal

Some projects enhanced nature by removing invasive non-native species, allowing native biodiversity to recover. Species like **Rhododendron ponticum, Japanese knotweed, and New Zealand pygmyweed** were targeted for their harmful impacts - crowding out native plants, blocking light, hindering tree regeneration, and reducing oxygen in water bodies. Their removal has been a vital step in restoring healthy ecosystems, leaving room for native species to thrive.

These projects all play a key role in creating **wildlife corridors - whether through orchards, meadows, or native trees - helping connect fragmented habitats and allowing species to thrive and move across the landscape.**



6 Spot Burnet Moth - Erik Karits



Case Studies

Cùisean Sgrùdaidh



Avoch Primary Parent Council

Where The Wild Things Are:

Rewilding Avoch Primary

Area: Black Isle

Within the school grounds of Avoch Primary, an area previously unused and unloved was transformed into a vibrant outdoor learning and biodiversity area. Pupils and a band of volunteers planted native fruit and nut trees, hedgerows, and wildflowers to attract pollinators and support local wildlife. Further steps were taken to encourage solitary bees, with features like bee bricks, towers, habitat piles, and carved log hives. Work also included improving the wetland area beside the burn which now provides vital habitat for amphibians, and invertebrates. Bat boxes, bird boxes, and hedgehog

houses were added to the woodland, while otter holts were built along the riverbank. The result is a thriving habitat that enhances biodiversity and offers pupils a hands-on, nature-based learning experience that contributes to building awareness and connection with the natural world.

"All of these activities have had a positive impact on nature by creating a space for wildlife. The site was not very diverse before, it was dark, full of butter burr and had lots of spindly birch trees. Our work has diversified the area in terms of plant and animal species and we have already noticed an increase in the use of the area by birds, bats, bees and bugs! The children have been regularly using the space and the adjacent areas we have seeded and planted, and they have been noting the number of species they spot." Ruth Edmonds, Avoch Primary Parent Council



Total cost: £11,507.00

NRF award £10,506.75

Beaully Fishery Board

Lower Beaully Japanese Knotweed Eradication

Area: Inverness-Shire

The Lower Beaully River suffers from a Japanese knotweed (JK) infestation, which affects the biodiversity of the riverbank and access for local residents. The group had tried to tackle this themselves, but the task was too big and required input from a contractor. The project set out to eradicate 1.45km of JK from the Lower Beaully as part of a wider coordinated effort to remove other invasive non-native



species in the catchment. Beaully Fishery Board wanted to take steps to tackle it now, to prevent the spread of JK and its detrimental impact on the in-river ecology and species that depend on a healthy river system before it becomes unmanageable and financially unfeasible. The Board's other work includes treating JK and skunk cabbage in the wider catchment and supporting the 'Beaully Balsam Bashers' (a group of local volunteers) to eradicate Himalayan balsam from the Lower Beaully through the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative. Some of the species benefiting from this work include native plant species to Atlantic Salmon and Seatrout, to name but a few. The works have restored approximately 2 hectares of freshwater habitat.

"The Highland Nature Restoration Fund has enabled us to get on top of the Japanese knotweed problem on the Lower Beaully and we are extremely grateful for their support. As the path is important to local residents we are pleased that we have been able to help bring benefit to the local community as well as the native biodiversity". Ruth Watts, Beaully Fishery Board



Total cost: £9,000.00

NRF award £9,000.00

Butterfly Conservation

Scotland

Restoring Small Blue and Dingy Skipper

at Logie Quarry

Area: Easter Ross

The Quarry is home to two rare butterflies - the Small Blue and Dingy Skipper. Their survival depends on maintaining a habitat with short, flower-rich areas and bare ground for larval plants, specifically bird's-foot trefoil and kidney vetch. However, encroaching scrub and overgrowth had been shading out these essential plants, putting the butterflies at immediate risk. Volunteer efforts, including work by local students had helped manage the scrub, but more extensive action was needed. A butterfly habitat plan designated key areas for clearing, linked by paths widened to create "butterfly corridors," enhancing both butterfly connectivity and community access. A Butterfly Day was held to raise local awareness of the project's significance. Regular monitoring will assess butterfly population health and the impact on the project.





"Without any intervention the habitat of both Dingy Skipper and Small Blue would have progressively reduced at Logie Quarry, threatening their continued presence. This funding, therefore, has undoubtedly saved both species from local extinction. As the butterflies respond to the positive change in their habitat their populations will increase which in turn will allow colonisation of new sites in the landscape as well as a beneficial exchange of adults between neighbouring colonies, so improving the resilience of both populations. We have set up monitoring of both butterflies at the quarry by establishing timed counts in many of the newly created clearings. This will allow us to determine the success of the work through annual monitoring."

Tom Prescott, Butterfly Conservation Scotland

Total cost: £8,976.00

NRF award £7,976.00

Culbokie Community Trust

Culbokie Green Pollinator Bed

Area: Black Isle

The project involved creating a 100m² pollinator bed with native shrubs and plants to support pollinators around the Culbokie Green, a dedicated community greenspace in the village. Situated on formerly agricultural land lacking ecological diversity, the abandoned field has been



transformed into a vibrant space with species-rich meadows, native trees, a community orchard, natural play areas, and gathering spaces. In summer 2023, the meadow thrived, attracting lots of pollinators including all six common bumblebee species, along with a busy bug hotel. Over the course of the project, 20 volunteers contributed a total of 250 hours to make the project happen. The "Green Team" volunteers continue to maintain the meadow and will do so for years to come.

"This has been a brilliant project. The volunteers worked so hard to get the bed prepared and planted, we've had a great level of plant survival and it's been amazing how quickly the plants have become established and started flowering. Even better, lots of bees were spotted during a recent bumblebee ID course. It all bodes well for the long-term success of the project. A big thank you goes to the Highland Council Nature Restoration Fund." Penny Edwards, Culbokie Community Trust

Total cost: £9,413.00

NRF award £5,453.00

Culloden Community Council

Culloden Eco-initiative

Area: Inverness-shire

Through planting of trees and native grasses to create "wee forests" this project aimed to provide habitat for birds, bees and pollinators to thrive at Culloden Park, as well as creating a greenspace for people to enjoy and support outdoor learning initiatives. Prior to the project, the park was mowed in its entirety, now there are no-mow areas allowing wildflowers the chance to flourish including bird's-foot trefoil and yellow rattle. The trees were chosen for their pollinator friendly blossom and fruit but also to add colour to the park. The lilacs and viburnum were chosen for their scent and with picnic benches nearby created a 'sensory corner' in the park.



"The Culloden Park Planting Crew (CPPC), have transformed Culloden Park from a green desert into an area of biodiversity, in terms of both flora and fauna. Not only is this a pleasing spectacle for people who are enjoying the park and its transformation, but it has provided new habitats for wildlife and, in particular, pollinators. We know this due to the number of people who pass on their thanks as we continue to work in the park and from the increasing numbers of bees and butterflies we have witnessed, the frogs and fish in the pond, the ducks living there and the visiting herons and bats." Barbara Lennox, Culloden Community Council

Total cost: £3,500.00

NRF award £3,500.00



Fornightly Hall

Wildflower Meadow Planting at Village Hall

Area: Nairn

Fornightly, in East Nairnshire, sought funding to establish a wildflower meadow around the building to support local biodiversity. The project involved the community in meadow design, planting, and maintenance, hoping to inspire residents to create pollinator-friendly garden spaces themselves. Covering 180m², the meadow used local seed mixes, with flowers like sorrel and devil's-bit scabious to attract Small Copper and Scotch Argus butterflies. A paved seating area was interplanted with fragrant natives, water features, and bug hotels, making nature accessible to all visitors. The project planted over 180m² of wildflowers, six trees, and had 18 volunteers involved throughout the process, with the Fornightly Wildlife group caretakers there for its upkeep and maintenance. To further Fornightly's hopes to inspire the local community to create their own wild places they held workshops to teach attendees how to create insect habitats to enhance the local nature corridor.



"We are hoping that not only will our own wildflower meadow flourish and be teeming with pollinators and insect life, but it will have inspired and given confidence to others in the community to create their own wild places. We hope to share learning through a variety of workshops from how to create and manage your wildflower meadow, insect hotel workshops, barrel planting, fruit tree pruning along with butterfly and pollinator talks to name a few." Alison Dummer, Fornightly Hall

Total cost: £4,700.00

NRF award £4,000.00

Highlife Highland

Highland Wildflower Meadow Mosaic

Area: Highland Wide

Led by High Life Highland Countryside Rangers in partnership with the Highland Environment Forum, this project created a network of small wildflower meadows across the Highland Council area. Working with local community groups, the project transformed intensively managed grassland into vibrant, biodiverse spaces that supported pollinators and insect life. From Caithness to Lochaber, suitable sites were identified with community input, necessary permissions were secured, and ground preparation was completed through turf removal, seed planting, and watering. These colourful meadows have enhanced local ecosystems while fostering community engagement and stewardship of green spaces.

Total cost: £7,500.00

NRF award £6,500.00



"The project emphasised community engagement, with 351 volunteers involved in meadow creation, 292 school children participating, and over 500 individuals attending workshops and events. The project created a sustainable patchwork of wildflower meadows, enhancing local biodiversity and supporting pollinator populations. The initiative fostered community ownership and environmental stewardship, contributing to social cohesion and ecological awareness." Imogen Furlong, High Life Highland Countryside Ranger Manager

Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust

Isle of Eigg Tree Nursery

Area: Lochaber

The Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust applied to the Highland Nature Restoration Fund to up-scale their existing tree nursery, seeking to increase production while maintaining species diversity. The purchase of new galvanized wooden framing with mesh tops supported plant hardening-off, promoting airflow and resilience to high winds. The expansion included root trainer trays to improve plant quality and root health, and a biosecurity station to enhance standards and sustainability. These activities provided the growth needed to support the nursery as a self-sustaining enterprise producing 22 different species, including priority species such as: Aspen, Hazel, Oak, Birch and Scots Pine. The site is managed by a Tree Nursery Manager and supports many short and long-term volunteering opportunities.



"Sincere thanks to the NRF, we are so grateful of your support! It is an exciting time for the Eigg Tree Nursery, with trees grown being planted into the ground both here on Eigg, as well as our first exports going into other schemes in our local region. The newly created outside area is transformative for the nursery, allowing us to start the process of hardening off at a much better time to promote strong, healthy trees. This will allow us to carry more stock overall within the nursery and a diversity of species, as we continue to work towards the nursery as a self-sustaining enterprise and an asset to our island." Rebecca Long, Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust

Total cost: £4,928.00

NRF award £4,928.00

Kingussie and Vicinity Community Council

Glebe Ponds Habitat Restoration

Area: Badenoch & Strathspey

Kingussie & Vicinity Community Council carried out a hydrological survey that suggested poor water quality with little flow and some pollutants at the Glebe ponds. The report recommended further sediment analysis to develop a plan to restore the water quality. The planning phase included assessing techniques and measures to increase flow, to treat or remove anaerobic sediment build-up, and aerate the water with pumps. Undertaking these actions encouraged native biodiversity, such as damselflies, to flourish. Another aspect of the project was the removal of non-native species to make space for a wildflower meadow, positively impacting pollinators and complementing similar work in other parts of the town. The project involved significant volunteer time and engaged with the Royal Navy and SSE to help clear up the neglected site along with local community volunteers.

"The Nature Restoration Fund has been instrumental in allowing KVCC to take this project one step further along. It has meant we have been able to engage a professional tree surgeon for the removal of non-native trees as well as scrub. Without the Nature Restoration Funding, the sediment analysis could not have been undertaken, which has allowed the organisation to maintain a healthy pond area, enhancing and protecting biodiversity in the future." Janet Kinnaid, Kingussie & Vicinity Community Council



Total cost: £12,900.00

NRF award £12,900.00



Kyle and Lochalsh Community Trust

Re-wetting the Western Plock

Area: Skye

The Plock, a 30-hectare site near Kyle of Lochalsh, is home to diverse habitats supporting species like otters and the European eel. However, climate change and past human activities have threatened its freshwater ecosystems. To restore the wetland area, ditches were reshaped to enhance water retention, a new central pond created, and overgrown ponds cleared. The new reedbeds, wet woodlands, and scrapes will attract species like snipe and oystercatcher. Community involvement, including education workshops and volunteer days have ensured long-term support for the project, making The Plock a model of climate-friendly conservation.

"We held a celebratory event once the digger work was complete, which saw local people coming onto the Plock to discover more about our freshwater habitats. The banks were carefully reseeded by volunteers, and children built beaver dams in the ditches to slow the water flow and create pools for wildlife. Engagement has been high, with people being able to observe the tadpoles in one of the ponds, and the Forest School still love to come and check out 'their' ponds. Many people have asked questions regarding the project and it's been so interesting to hear such positivity about the new ponds. In future, we would like to install benches at each of the ponds as they are such peaceful places to be." Fiona Welling, Kyle & Lochalsh Community Trust

Total cost: £22,184.00

NRF award £12,592.66





Nairn River Enterprise 'Operating as Green Hive'

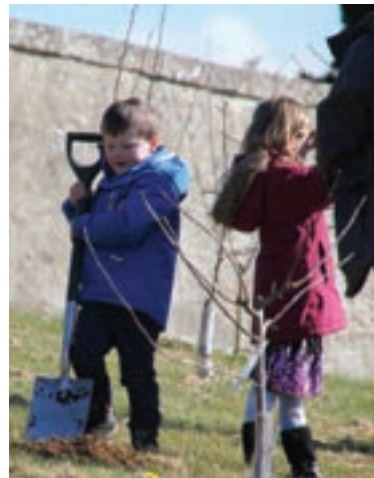
Nairn Apple Network

Area: Nairn

This project expanded the community orchard on the brae by planting more apple and fruit trees, with a focus on heritage and local varieties. Local residents and volunteers played a key role in planting, strengthening the community's connection to the orchard. The project worked with the Nairn community to identify new areas for fruit trees, planters, and orchards. Wildlife-friendly spaces were maintained while still allowing community access, including trimmed paths through wildflower meadows and seating in the orchard.

Usage of the Viewfield community orchard was tracked to highlight its value to the local community. The project also continued its partnership with the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative, managing invasive plants in Nairn's waterways as part of the Taking Root initiative.

"This project would not have been possible without the amazing contribution of our volunteers - members of the community, volunteers from the Nairn Orchard Group and Green Hive have all contributed their time, skills and knowledge to this project. The 40 fruit trees that have been planted will establish themselves in the existing orchard, needing minimal maintenance, which when needed will be carried out by volunteers from the Nairn Orchard Group and Green Hive. With the community orchard now containing over 200 fruit bearing trees, there will be an abundance of free fruit available to the Nairn community, as well as a safe, bountiful meadow for pollinating insects and wildlife." Caroline Woods, Nairn River Enterprise



Total cost: £9,404.00

NRF award £2,457.66

RSPB Scotland Black-throated Diver Conservation in the West Inverness Glens

Area: Inverness-Shire

The project aimed to support the successful breeding of Black-throated Divers in the West Inverness glens through the installation of three diver rafts. These floating rafts will provide safe breeding sites for the birds in an area where previously their nests were being flooded during rapid water level changes. Recolonisation of this area, which has been lost as a breeding site, will boost the population in what is a designated Special Protection Area. As a result of the project the RSPB successfully nested three pairs of Black-throated Divers, a red-listed Schedule 1 species whose range in the UK is mostly restricted to the Highland region. This will also result in an increase in chick productivity from zero to up to six per year. A total of six volunteers were involved in the project, assisting with cutting turfs, dressing, launching, and installing the rafts.

"RSPB Scotland is delighted to have been able to provide floating islands for three pairs of Black-throated Divers with support from the NRF. Nesting close to the water's edge these rare, beautiful birds are vulnerable to nest flooding when water levels suddenly rise after the increasingly frequent summer storms that come with climate warming. The floating islands will greatly increase their chance of rearing young successfully."

Alison MacLennan, RSPB



Total cost: £7,200.00

NRF award £6,700.00

Scourie Community Development Company

Natures Enclosure

Area: Sutherland

This project followed on from a successful Phase One, which saw Scourie Development Company plant 420 hedgerow saplings supported by the Woodland Trust. Phase Two, funded by NRF, allowed the purchase of a further 840 saplings along with the creation of wildflower areas and the installation of bird and bat boxes. The planting of the hedgerows has created living fences, providing shelter, food, and safe havens for local wildlife. Additionally, the project enhances the site's visual amenity and contributes to slowing soil erosion, supporting biodiversity and improving the overall environment.

"This was a very enjoyable project to work on. With 909 trees and 432 wildflower plugs now planted we feel in our own way that however small our project was, we have taken great strides in enhancing the local biodiversity and providing space for nature to thrive. Rather like the acorn and the oak, with a little time and effort great things can be achieved." Kristine MacKenzie, Scourie Community Development Company

Total cost: £10,021.00

NRF award £3,000.00



Speyside Fields for Wildlife

Habitat Creation, Enhancement and Maintenance

Area: Badenoch & Strathspey

This is a multi-year project where the group initially worked with landowners to establish two wildflower meadows. The second phase addressed habitat restoration and management, including the purchase of a mini baling machine, essential for the on-going maintenance of the extensive meadows. Speyside Fields were then able to support crofters to provide species rich grassland sites or winter farmland bird feeding sites and summer pollinator areas. The project particularly wanted to encourage devil's-bit scabious to flourish to support the rare Scabious Mining Bee, a solitary bee that depends on this flowering plant. The entire project involved volunteers in various capacities and much of its success owed to the co-operation from landowners and crofters who engaged positively with the initiative.

"The Nature Restoration Fund is an essential and significant resource dedicated to furthering the restoration of the Scottish countryside. This fund addresses the decline of species, carbon sequestration, climate change and habitat loss and crucially empowers organisations large and small to realise their biodiversity targets." Aileen Fox, Speyside Fields for Wildlife

Total cost: £18,300.00

NRF award £11,700.00



Visit Inverness Loch Ness

Improving Biodiversity on the South Loch Ness Trail

Area: Inverness-shire

This project aimed to enhance local ecosystems and promote biodiversity by creating space for nature. The plan involved purchasing and planting trees across 1-2 hectares of currently unused land, establishing small, forested areas. By transforming this land, the project will provide new habitats that support a variety of species, contributing to an increase in local biodiversity and improving the overall health of the ecosystem.

"There were three species planted, downy birch, silver birch and wild cherry. Downy birch (Betula pubescens) grows further north than any other broadleaf species. This tree species provides a light, open canopy, providing perfect conditions for grasses, mosses, wood anemones, bluebells and violets to grow. The Downy Birch also gives food and habitat for more than 300 insect species, including ladybirds and caterpillars. A year from now, the trees will start to establish and hopefully the site becomes a spot of reflection for walkers. It will also make space for nature by providing habitat for many animals. The planting of trees also contributes to our organisation's efforts in our climate action plan which we have recently launched." Bryony Beck, Visit Inverness Loch Ness

Total cost: £10,100.00

NRF award £8,000.00



Wick Development Trust

Wick Riverside Biodiversity Improvements – Phase 1

Area: Caithness

Wick Development Trust in collaboration with the Caithness Countryside Rangers came up with a project plan for a series of biodiversity improvements along Wick riverside. The first was to undertake judicious thinning of unproductive spruce and overbearing sycamore trees, allowing more light into the established woodland area to support a growing understory. The planting of native trees, particularly fruit-bearing ones, along with the creation of wildlife boxes at various locations around the riverside, has and will continue to significantly benefit biodiversity and local ecosystems. Throughout the project, Wick Development Trust successfully planted 450 trees, 100 wildflower plugs, and 150m of hedgerows. The project involved collaboration with multiple organisations and a total of 29 volunteers from primary schools, youth clubs, and countryside rangers.

"We are incredibly grateful to the Nature Restoration Fund for funding towards our Wick Riverside Biodiversity Improvements project. To undertake the planting Wick Development Trust worked in collaboration with the Caithness & Sutherland Ranger Service, Step Forward Wick Youth and Noss Primary pupils. Every one of the young volunteers showed great enthusiasm and teamwork, and all their hard work will have a lasting legacy by creating new habitats for the wide variety of species we see around the Wick riverside area." Sarah Lamb, Wick Development Trust

Total cost: £6,319.00

NRF award £6,319.00

Projects Funded

Pròiseactan Maoinichte



Organisation Name	Total Project Cost	Grant Amount Approved	Project Type
Abriachan Forest Trust	£16,200.00	£14,750.00	Habitat and species enhancement works, woodland creation, wildflower planting
Abriachan Forest Trust	£17,500.00	£17,500.00	Woodland creation and habitat and species enhancement works
Aigas Community Forest	£40,000.00	£7,000.00	Woodland creation and wildflower planting
Assynt Field Club	£16,138.00	£16,137.00	Habitat and species enhancement works
Aultnaskiach SCIO	£4,213.00	£2,500.00	Woodland creation
Avoch Primary Parent Council	£11,507.00	£10,506.75	Woodland creation and wildflower/hedgegrow planting
Balvonie Park Association	£11,796.00	£11,796.00	Habitat and species enhancement works
Beaully Fishery Board	£9,000.00	£9,000.00	Removal of INNS
Boleskine House Foundation	£32,917.00	£9,100.00	Woodland creation, wildflower planting
Broadford & Strath Community Council	£14,000.00	£10,750.00	Wildflower planting and wetland creation
Butterfly Conservation Scotland	£27,800.00	£23,800.00	Habitat and species enhancement works
Butterfly Conservation Scotland	£30,731.00	£24,730.00	Habitat and species enhancement
Butterfly Conservation Scotland	£8,976.00	£7,976.00	Improving local nature reserves, wildlife corridors, and habitat and species enhancement
Butterfly Conservation Scotland	£16,115.00	£16,115.00	Habitat and species enhancement works
Camuscross & Duisdale Initiative	£14,041.00	£14,041.00	Woodland creation and wildflower planting
Clan Mackenzie Charitable Trust (CMCT)	£12,000.00	£10,000.00	Woodland creation, wildflower planting
Culag Community Woodland Trust	£2,515.00	£2,515.00	Removal of INNS
Culbokie Community Trust	£9,413.00	£5,453.00	Improving urban greenspace
Culduthel Woods Group	£6,680.00	£4,980.00	Improving urban greenspace & wildflower areas, habitat and species enhancement
Culloden Community Council	£3,500.00	£3,500.00	Woodland creation, wildflower planting, and wetland creation
Dalneigh Primary School	£5,500.00	£3,232.00	Wildflower planting
Dingwall Community Woodland	£3,330.00	£3,330.00	Woodland creation, improving wildlife corridors, pond improvement, habitat and species enhancement
Fornightly Hall	£4,700.00	£4,000.00	Wildflower planting
Friends of Merkinch Local Nature Reserve	£5,250.00	£4,750.00	Woodland creation, wildflower planting
Friends of Merkinch Local Nature Reserve	£7,678.00	£2,000.00	Removal of INNS
Gairloch Area Development Ltd	£16,550.00	£13,250.00	Woodland creation, wildflower planting and removal of INNS
Gairloch Area Development	£7,005.00	£6,000.00	Woodland creation, wildflower planting and removal of INNS
Golspie Community Council	£4,200.00	£3,000.00	Woodland creation and wildflower/hedgegrow planting
Grantown Health Woodland	£2,731.00	£2,731.00	Rain garden creation, wildflower/hedgegrow planting, flood management action, wetland creation
Highland Council	£12,000.00	£10,000.00	Improving urban greenspace
Highland Council	£14,590.00	£11,720.00	Removal of INNS
Highland Council	£18,000.00	£18,000.00	Greenspace analysis
Highland Council	£19,729.00	£16,709.00	Wildlife corridors, pond improvements

Organisation Name	Total Project Cost	Grant Amount Approved	Project Type
Highlife Highland	£21,055.00	£7,755.00	Improving urban greenspace, pond improvement, habitat and species enhancement works and creation of nature networks
Highlife Highland	£7,500.00	£6,500.00	Wildflower planting
Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust	£4,455.00	£4,055.00	Woodland creation
Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust	£4,928.00	£4,928.00	Woodland creation, nature networks, habitat and species enhancement
Kentallen & Duror Community Centre	£20,000.00	£17,020.00	Woodland creation, wildflower/hedgegrow planting and habitat and species enhancement
Kentallen & Duror Community Centre	£23,700.00	£19,500.00	Rain garden creation, wildflower/hedgegrow planting, flood management action, wetland creation
Kentallen & Duror Community Centre	£9,960.00	£8,960.00	Woodland creation, improving wildlife corridors and pond improvement
Kingussie and Vicinity Community Council	£12,900.00	£12,900.00	Habitat and species enhancement works, pond improvement
Kinlochleven Community Trust	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	Woodland creation
Kyle and Lochalsh Community Trust	£22,184.00	£12,592.66	Pond and wetland creation
Lochardil and Drummond Community Council	£3,600.00	£3,000.00	Creating wildlife, habitat and species enhancement
Mallaig Community Council	£3,115.00	£3,115.00	Wildflower planting
Minginish Community Hall Association	£4,000.00	£2,500.00	Woodland creation and wildflower planting
Nairn River Enterprise operating as Green Hive	£9,404.00	£2,457.66	Woodland creation, removal of INNS
Raasay House Community Company	£30,000.00	£25,000.00	Removal of INNS, habitat species enhancement works
Raigmore Community Residents Association (RCRA)	£3,919.00	£3,919.00	Woodland creation, hedgegrow planting, creating wildlife corridors
Road to the Isles Facilities Group SCIO	£3,284.00	£3,000.00	Woodland creation, wildflower /hedgegrow planting
RSPB Scotland	£7,200.00	£6,700.00	Habitat and species enhancement works
Scotland: The Big Picture	£19,984.00	£14,984.00	Wildflower/hedgegrow, wetland improvements
Scourie Community Development Company	£10,021.00	£3,000.00	Woodland creation, wildflower/hedgegrow planting
Skye Connect	£50,000.00	£25,000.00	Habitat and species enhancement works
Sleat Community Trust	£20,720.00	£18,720.00	Removal of INNS, habitat and species enhancement works
Spey Catchment Initiative	£12,752.00	£10,202.00	Woodland creation, habitat and species enhancement works
Speyside Fields for Wildlife	£18,300.00	£11,700.00	Habitat and species enhancement works
Speyside Fields for Wildlife	£3,882.00	£2,500.00	Wildflower planting
Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust Limited	£17,900.00	£17,900.00	Habitat and species enhancement works
Strathpeffer Residents Association	£3,558.00	£2,500.00	Woodland creation and wildflower planting
The Boleskine House Foundation SCIO	£9,400.00	£9,400.00	Pond improvement
The Elsie Normington Foundation	£2,160.00	£2,160.00	Improving urban greenspace, wildflower and wildlife corridors
Torridon Glen Partnership	£5,600.00	£5,600.00	Woodland creation, improving local nature reserves, habitat and species enhancement
Visit Inverness Loch Ness	£10,100.00	£8,000.00	Woodland creation
Wester Loch Ewe Community Council	£2,682.00	£2,447.60	Removal of INNS
Wick Development Trust	£6,319.00	£6,319.00	Woodland creation, improving wildlife areas, planting wildlife corridors and nature networks



Highland Community
Regeneration Funding
Maoineachadh
Ath-bheothachadh
Coimhearsnachd
na Gàidhealtachd


Woodland photo by Wick Development Trust
Back Cover: Highland Council - Sarah Lamb

To find out more about the
Highland Nature Restoration Fund please visit
 www.highland.gov.uk/naturerestorationfund
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To find out more about the
Highland Community Regeneration Fund please visit
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