



Partner Newsletter

Issue 8
July 2025

LOCH LOMOND
& THE TROSSACHS
COUNTRYSIDE
TRUST





Image: Poplar Hawk Moth © Trust in the Park

Welcome

Thanks for joining us for our 8th newsletter edition, featuring updates from our team and partners.

In this issue, we catch up with our team role changes and reach out to land managers to take our **herbivore questionnaire** plus invite you to our next upcoming event (pages 4 to 5).

Marking twenty years of the **Land Reform Act** we hear from Don Milton, the National Park Authority (NPA) Local Access Forum on their support for land managers (page 9 - 10). Helping to tackle herbivore pressure in the National Park is a new **training grant** aimed at those who are actively and regularly involved or have arrangements in place to start deer management (page 5).

With survey season in full swing catchup on our '**Ecology Spotlight**' (pages 7-8) and our partners at Glenfalloch to learn about **the pinewood project**, one of the numerous nature restoration efforts underway within Wild Strathfillan (page 5).

Thanks for reading, and don't forget you can submit your own updates for our next issue – we'd love to hear from you (page 12).

With best wishes,

The Wild Strathfillan team

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Wild Strathfillan

Restoring nature in the National Park



Wild Strathfillan is a nature restoration initiative working across the north of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park to deliver **a resilient, dynamic and connected landscape where people and nature thrive together.**

The initiative is led by Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Countryside Trust and is underpinned by a diverse and committed partnership, bringing together land managers, communities, statutory bodies, educational institutions and businesses who share an interest in restoring nature across the landscape and supporting rural communities.

The initiative is currently delivering a series of ambitious activity programmes, grounded in the landscape's rich natural and cultural heritage. These are focused around three main themes:

- **Nature recovery**
- **Nature connectedness**
- **Sustainable livelihoods**

Our active projects are **'The People and Nature of Wild Strathfillan'**, funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund, and **'From Lochside to Mountain-top'**, funded by NatureScot through their Nature Restoration Fund, both of which run to 2026.

To find out more about the initiative and the work we are collectively delivering, visit the [Wild Strathfillan webpage here](#).

#WildStrathfillan

This project is supported by the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund, managed by [NatureScot](#) and, with thanks to National Lottery players, by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.





Image: Countryside Trust Team – Tree ID learning © Trust in the Park.

Notice Board

• Team Update

You might have noticed some small but important changes to our nature restoration team titles and roles since our last newsletter. The first of our recent role changes is Sophia Edejer who now as our **'Acting Programme Manager'** is responsible for the full programme management of our NRF elements of our nature restoration work. Now under the new title **'Nature Restoration Advisor'**, Ellie Mayhew will be providing guidance on our projects and nature restoration letting her increase her stakeholder liaison and managing more stakeholder delivery work.

• Land manager herbivore questionnaire

As part of the Wild Strathfillan initiative, we are reaching out to land managers across the area to help build a clearer picture of how herbivore populations and their impact are currently monitored.

We've developed a short 5-10 minute questionnaire to gather information on the techniques used to monitor wild and domestic herbivores, the frequency of those efforts, and any training or support needs. The aim is to better understand current practices and identify where resources or collaboration could strengthen monitoring across the landscape.



All information will be handled in accordance with GDPR regulations and used exclusively for the purposes of this project. Please [click here to complete the survey](#) or scan the QR code. We greatly appreciate your time, experience, and local knowledge. If you have any questions, comments, or would prefer to discuss your input directly, please contact Ophelie at ophelie@trustinthepark.org.

- **Deer Managers Training Grant**



Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority have just launched a **Deer Managers Training Grant** which aims to provide a skilled workforce to facilitate sustainable deer management in the National Park. Grants will be assessed on a first come first served basis, with a final **deadline of 13th February 2026** (scheme will close early if all funds have been committed).

Training courses must start before 31st March 2026. Further details of the grant conditions can be found **here** and who can apply for the grant **here**.

To find out more get in touch with: **Rebekah.Mayhew@lochlomond-trossachs.org**

- **Upcoming Events for Wild Strathfillan**

Please save the date for our upcoming events which you are invited to. We hope to see as many of you as possible there.

Wednesday 15th October 2025 – Wild Strathfillan All-Partner Annual Gathering

Following our successful all-partner event in September 2024, we would be delighted to invite you to join us for the annual Wild Strathfillan update and networking event. This will be an opportunity to hear from the team, including current Delivery Partners, about projects we're working on, as well as future plans and ambitions for Wild Strathfillan. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. Look out for further information.

As always, thank you for your continued support of Wild Strathfillan. If you have any questions or feedback, please email us at **info@trustinthepark.org**

Partner Update

Pinewood Project

Did you know that Glen Falloch Pinewood SSSI is not only the most southerly remnant of ancient Caledonian pinewood in the National Park, but also in the whole of Great Britain? Like many ancient pinewoods, this precious habitat is at risk of becoming an elderly tree home, dominated by so-called Granny pines: Lone wide-crowned Caledonian Pines hundreds of years old. In Glen Falloch, they are estimated to be between 160 and 400 years of age. Younger trees struggle to grow as they are quickly eaten by hungry herbivores or crowded out by faster growing plant species.

To improve the conditions of this precious habitat, a fence was installed in the 1990s and is regularly maintained to prevent access by various herbivores and to give young saplings a better chance of survival.



As part of Wild Strathfillan, action was taken to address the spread of Sitka Spruce. Sitka seeds are carried by the wind from nearby plantations and take root where they can. Left unchecked, these trees spread rapidly and can disrupt the delicate balance of the recovering pinewood. By removing the Sitka, the

Estate has helped preserve valuable open-ground habitats and other key areas that are important for other local plants and animals. After felling the trees, the branches were removed, and the logs were cut into sections to create habitat piles. These piles provide much-needed shelter and food sources for local wildlife, contributing to the overall health of the pinewood.

“ ..Thanks to these various efforts, the pinewood is on its way to becoming a healthier and more resilient habitat. These actions are essential to safeguarding the unique natural heritage of the region.”

Whether driving down the A82 or walking the West Highland Way, make sure to keep an eye out for this special pinewood, the next time you're in the area!

The pinewood project represents just one of the numerous nature restoration efforts underway within Wild Strathfillan, led by one of our many committed partners.



Images: (Left to right) Cuckoo flower, Melancholy thistle, Lesser celandine, Wood anemone © Trust in the Park

Ecology Spotlight

Survey season in full Swing

As we reach the middle of the year, it's a great moment to reflect on everything we have achieved so far and look ahead to what is still to come. In ecological terms this is the height of the survey season, with many activities already completed and plenty more still underway.

We started the season in April and May with black grouse surveys across two estates. It is always a pleasure to see the birds displaying at their leks and a great way to start the survey season! During spring, we also deployed AudioMoths across the project area to record bird song and calls, alongside traditional bird surveys. These devices have captured a large amount of data, which will be analysed later in the year. Alongside this, we began vegetation surveys within our monitoring plots to establish a baseline for tracking ecological changes over time.

“ This is the height of the survey season, with many activities already completed and plenty more still underway.”

As spring turned to summer, we also began moth trapping. These surveys are most effective on calm, clear nights, and we have already had some excellent trapping sessions. In parallel, trail cameras have been placed at key locations to monitor for signs of beaver presence. As part of the project, we're also aiming to propagate key herbaceous plant species, to support their recovery in the Scottish Highlands, and our recent walkover surveys have helped identify key areas for seed collection, particularly for Globeflower (*Trollius europaeus*) and Melancholy Thistle (*Cirsium heterophyllum*).



Image: Poplar Hawk Moth
©Trust in the Park



Seed collection has already started at some of these sites and will continue as the seed pods reach maturity, before being grown in our Specialist Plant Nursery. In June and July, students working on dissertation projects contributed to the wider monitoring effort by placing AudioMoths to record bat activity. Their involvement is adding valuable data to our growing dataset and strengthening links between research and practice.

“Globeflower and Melancholy Thistle will be propagated at our specialist plant nursery so we can get hands-on experience of propagating non-woody species before we look at supporting rarer species this way”.



Vegetation surveys and moth trapping are continuing through the summer, depending on the weather. In the coming weeks, we will focus on conducting walkovers to identify areas of montane scrub within the project area, as part of our montane scrub restoration projects. As we move into autumn, we'll also be increasing the use of camera traps to monitor mammal and herbivore activity in and around our monitoring plots.

“Students involvement is adding valuable data to our growing dataset and strengthening links between research and practice”.

All the data collected will be analysed and compiled into reports over the winter months, a substantial task that will keep us busy well into the off-season.

Thank you for your ongoing support and collaboration to make these surveys happen. We look forward to sharing further updates as the season continues.



Image: (Main) Loch Lubhair (Insert) Impact of visitors to area © Trust in the Park

Guest Article

Celebrating 20 years of the Land Reform Act

2025 is the 20th anniversary of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 coming into force. Most readers will have an understanding of the requirements of the Act and the guidance provided in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC).

Don Milton, Convener of the **Local Access Forum (LAF)** for Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park shares some useful guidance to assist land managers to help them understand their responsibilities and to those using access rights.

A “right to roam” is not actually referred to in the Act or SOAC, as we only have access rights if they are exercised responsibly. Land managers also have rights and responsibilities covered in SOAC.

The SAOC includes advice to the public and to Land Managers to encourage responsible access to Nature Reserves and other conservation areas. It advises the public to avoid damaging sites, interfering with their management or enjoyment by others and to follow local guidance on routes to safeguard the natural heritage. Land Managers are urged to provide information on the importance of the site, the best routes for people to follow and provide good paths to minimise damage and disturbance.

Wild Strathfillan is supporting awareness raising of responsible access, as promoted by the SAOC. Strathfillan contains several important conservation areas, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and a Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for Golden Eagles. These sites face various threats. Wild Strathfillan is currently delivering a project aimed at promoting behaviour change across four SSSIs identified as being particularly vulnerable to visitor impacts such as littering, toileting, irresponsible fires, and trampling.



As part of this initiative, we will install interpretive signage in early August at **Loch Lubhair**, located within the River Dochart Meadows SSSI along the A85. This signage is designed to raise awareness of the site's ecological value and to encourage responsible access and behaviour. Additionally, we are gathering further information to better understand behaviour change needs at three more sites along the West Highland Way, helping us tailor effective interventions for those areas.

You may be aware that the Park's Access Team is available to provide advice on issues that arise. It is sometimes less well known that the Land Reform Act led to the creation of Local Access Forums (LAFs) – independent groups that give advice on access rights. They're not part of the local or Park Authority, but they can advise them as well as individuals or organisations on matters to do with the exercise of access rights. A LAF may also help towards the resolution of an access dispute by offering impartial advice based on the Act and SOAC guidance.

The LAF bases its advice on the requirements of the Act and the SOAC guidance under its headings of: Respecting the Rights of Other People, Care for the Environment and Take Responsibility for your Own Actions.

“Local Access Forums (LAF's) offer advice on access rights”

The Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Access Forum members come from a wide range of backgrounds and interests including land managers and representatives of interests ranging from nature, communities, walking, horse riding to water sports. While LLTAF meetings are not public meetings, all meetings may be attended as an observer by anybody with an interest in access.

The Local Access Forum – we're here to help.



To observe a LAF meeting or to find out more, please contact Don Milton by email to:

accessforum@lochlomond-trossachs.org.

Further guidance on some specific access issues is provided by the National Access Forum and can be accessed at www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/act-and-access-code/national-access-forum-role/guidance-documents.

Invasive Non-native Species ID training

Around 2,000 non-native species are now established in Great Britain. Most cause no ecological problems, and many have positive effects, but around 10-15% can become invasive and harm our ecosystems and even our economy and our health. In fact, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has said these invasive species are recognised worldwide as one of the top drivers of biodiversity loss. Their ability to spread quickly and widely (in particular along waterways), together with an absence of predators that would normally control them means that they can outcompete native plants to dominate the habitat and drastically reduce the diversity of vegetation.



Image: Sharon presenting INNS ID training © Trust in the Park

As part of the **Wild Strathfillan** initiative, we are monitoring and managing the presence of Invasive Non-Native plant Species (INNS) to ensure that we can help to maintain and even improve biodiversity in the area. As well as this, these measures will help to improve the quality of our freshwater as many of these plants grow along rivers and burns.

“ ..The more people that can identify and report them,
then a quick intervention can be arranged..”

In June we held a training session for local residents to enable them to be able to identify 5 of the most common invasive species found within the National Park (*Rhododendron ponticum*, Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), American Skunk Cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*)). In partnership with the National Park and Strathfillan Community Development Trust there is now a system in place to be able to report sightings of these plants so that an appropriate and efficient response can be made which will help us continue to monitor and manage any appearance of these invasives. The more people that can identify them and report them the better.

So if you are interested in learning more and you live, walk, fish or work in the Strathfillan or Killin area then please get in touch with our Education and Engagement Officer, Sharon Cawston e: Sharon@trustinthepark.org

Get in touch!

If you'd like to get involved, volunteer with us or find out more about Wild Strathfillan, please contact us below:

Contributions to our next bimonthly Partner Newsletter

If you've got a local wildlife sighting, news story or opportunity you'd like to share with Wild Strathfillan partners, get in touch – the next issue is due on 30 September 2025.

Email: info@trustinthepark.org

To find out more about volunteering please email Sharon Cawston, Education and Engagement Officer:

Email: Sharon@trustinthepark.org



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