

Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere

Scotland's **First**

Dumfries and Galloway

Councillor Graham Nicol has welcomed UNESCO's decision to designate Galloway and Southern Ayrshire as a member of a prestigious network of Biosphere's. *"So far, we are Scotland's only Biosphere and I am sure the decision by UNESCO to approve our application will be a great asset. We have a wonderful environment in South West Scotland that is often overlooked in national tourism promotion and a whole range of quality small businesses linked both to tourism and the use of the land. UNESCO Biosphere status will be a powerful brand for marketing the whole area on the world stage. I am sure that working in partnership together we will be able to grasp the opportunity."*

The biosphere reserve concept compliments and helps to deliver our plans and policies by promoting sustainable economic development. They are places of cooperation, education and research where local communities, environmental groups, and economic interests can work collaboratively on conservation and development issues.

Giants in the Forest

This exciting project uses a new approach to involve people in arts events inspired by their surroundings. Evolving with the seasons over a nine month period a series of events and activities will be inspired by the family of living sculptures in the biosphere.



www.gallowayandsouthernayrshirebiosphere.org.uk



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere
member of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves

Giants in the Forest will also be online and will make full use of social networking technology to involve people and document the project from start to finish. Giant heads are also being erected in North Devon and Dyfi to make links with the two other biosphere reserves in the UK.

The Giants in the Forest was developed and managed by Vision Mechanics to be part of Creative Scotland 2012 and a way of involving people who don't usually participate in arts events. The activities are being co-ordinated locally by CatStrand with support from Dumfries and Galloway Arts Festival and the leader project Building opportunities in the Biosphere.

The three Giants which arrived in south-west Scotland's Biosphere, were planted up by three local groups and have been suspended from trees at the Otter Pool picnic site on the Raiders Road forest drive.

A website has been developed and a video of the heads being planted and hoisted into the trees is expected to be the first of many charting the changes in the forest.

Coordinating the local events Jodie Noble said, *"This is a new opportunity to promote and inspire others using an environmentally sustainable arts project to connect communities in the Glen Kens to other areas in the south-west Scotland biosphere".*



Rob Soutar, Forestry Commission Scotland's Forest District Manager for Galloway said, *"This is a fantastic achievement and great news for the region and for Scotland. Forestry Commission Scotland is delighted that the Galloway Forest Park will be making a significant contribution to the aims of the Biosphere. Receiving this global recognition is a fantastic marketing opportunity which should bring about positive social, environmental and economic benefits for the people who live and work in Galloway and southern Ayrshire."*

Sean Paul O'Hare, General Manager of The CatStrand said, *"This vast and remote part of southern Scotland will benefit directly from the Biosphere project as it will showcase the very best that our local natural environment has to offer the local resident or the visitor travelling to the area. The biosphere project has support from the local community and we envisage that this exciting development will enhance community partnerships and therefore regenerate this rural area through innovative and vibrant community, arts, environmental and business initiatives."*



UNESCO's decision to approve our application for Biosphere status provides global recognition for a very special area, together with South and East Ayrshire Councils, other statutory agencies, communities, businesses and other stakeholders we have been working towards this for several years now and we are delighted to achieve this recognition for the region. The Biosphere will support sustainable rural development whilst at the same time highlight the value and importance of this regions natural assets. The Biosphere will contribute and support several of the Council's Priorities as we move forward and we recognise the opportunities that the Biosphere will bring for local communities and businesses within and adjacent to the Biosphere.

*Ewan Green, Head of Economic Development
Dumfries and Galloway Council*