

Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere

Scotland's **First**

East Ayrshire

Councillor Robert McDill (East Ayrshire Council) welcomes the UNESCO designation *"This is great news for East Ayrshire but also our neighbours in South Ayrshire and Galloway. Now that UNESCO has made their decision, and we have our new Biosphere status we are interested in linking the Biosphere to our broader community regeneration objectives. Biospheres*

can only be nominated by national governments, but importantly their status imposes no additional restrictions in terms of the use of the land. Biospheres are intended to place development proposals within a wider, more integrated and sustainable context, very much in line with our thinking."

Ness Glen Volunteers

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) has been working with local volunteers to restore and enhance the Ness Glen river gorge pathway, which lies in the buffer zone of the Biosphere reserve. Ness Glen is a Site of Special Scientific Interest described by the Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland in 1903 as *'one of the finest examples in Britain of a true rock gorge, the stream having worn down a channel little more than its own width, with perpendicular sides into the rock to a depth of 100 to 200 feet.'* Several sections of the path have been subject to landslips, fallen trees and overgrowing vegetation.

At the request of local land owner Mark Gibson from Craigengillan Estate and with the support of members from the local community BTCV volunteers have been making the path safe and accessible by restoring several sections, installing waymarkers and signage. The group has strengthened the path, dug drainage ditches to help keep it dry and have reinforced the bank in places. The work has involved surfacing with gravel carried up from the car park area at the bottom bridge and stone found at the bottom of the gorge. The group have also repaired some of the decking on the walkways.



www.gallowaysouthernayrshirebiosphere.org.uk



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



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

The Ness Glen pathway serves as a link between other popular features and amenities in the area; Loch Doon and the Roundhouse Café, and the new Dark Sky Observatory. It's hoped that improved access will reinvigorate an old tourist attraction and will be another step towards welcoming new visitors into the area whilst helping to raise awareness and understanding about the Biosphere.

Mark Gibson owner of Craigen Gillan Estate said *"The volunteer work is fantastic and really opens up a spectacular riverside walk to a host of new visitors. I hope that alongside the opening of the Dark Skies Observatory later in 2013 and the refurbished Round House Cafe that this will prove to be another big step towards rejuvenating the untapped tourism offer that the Doon Valley has."*

Dave Donaldson from Dalmellington Partnership agrees saying *"I believe the granting of Biosphere Status to SW Scotland will raise the profile of the region and present opportunities to settlements within and on the periphery of the area. Biosphere status will give opportunities for investment in existing and new businesses, creating new jobs and helping with the regeneration of settlements that have suffered the effects of lack of investment and the decline of traditional industries."*

The owner of the newly refurbished Round House Cafe at Loch Doon, Brian Meechan is positive about the future and hopes the new Biosphere status along with the Dark Skies project, and improved access will all act as a major draw for new visitors to Loch Doon its wildlife and surrounding hills.

The Biosphere 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. Biosphere designation is seen as supporting existing initiatives and provides future opportunities to improve the region for local businesses and communities, raising awareness of the region both nationally and internationally; we are looking forward to working closely with the Biosphere Partnership in the future.

*Emma Fyvie, Principal Planning Officer,
East Ayrshire Council*



Fort Carrick Moor, Craigen Gillan Estate



River Ayr



Knockroon Estate



Cumnock Farmers Market