

# Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere

## Scotland's **First**

### South Ayrshire

South Ayrshire Council welcomes the Biosphere designation for Galloway and Southern Ayrshire. It has long embraced the strong, mutual relationship between its environment and the people who live and work within it; and the vital role of partnership working, knowledge sharing and education.

UNESCO Biosphere status formally recognises these values and the opportunity of joining an internationally recognised brand.

The UNESCO Biosphere is a huge resource that encompasses every aspect of the environment, our impact on it - and vice versa. Its location in Galloway and Southern Ayrshire is perfectly placed to help focus minds on develop opportunities and how we can better manage the abundance of local natural resources we often take for granted.

UNESCO Biosphere status provides a springboard to build our economy in harmony with our natural environment and invite visitors and investors to enjoy the special opportunities South Ayrshire presents.

Councillor Bill McIntosh, Leader of South Ayrshire Council welcomes the UNESCO designation: *"The Biosphere fits into our plans and policies for the region providing common purpose and opportunity for our community, local businesses and inward investors to drive forward sustainable economic and tourism development, while conserving our rich and diverse natural environment"*

Councillor Peter Convery, South Ayrshire Council, member of the Biosphere Board added:

*"We have already put in a lot of work to get this far and this is very welcome news. In reality although we have the Global status and Biosphere branding from UNESCO we can't relax and sit back. We are just at the start of a long journey which I am hopeful will see our area develop into a truly world class place for people and nature. What interests me is that a Biosphere is much more than just a protected natural environment. They are places which seek to reconcile economic and social development and environmental protection through a partnership with communities that live in the area. It gives communities and individuals a direct opportunity to get involved in the future of their area."*



[www.gallowayandsouthernayrshirebiosphere.org.uk](http://www.gallowayandsouthernayrshirebiosphere.org.uk)



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



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

## Wee ones warmly welcome the Wonderful World of Water!

A partnership between the Biosphere, SEPA, three fisheries Trusts and schools in South Ayrshire is making waves in education - literally!.

The 'Wonderful World of Water' (WWoW) project is led by Ayrshire Rivers Trust and is making a real splash, by using angling as the 'hook' to promote a better understanding of the environment. This is augmented with exciting interactive learning, linked to other water-themed ecological activities such as fish, plants and animals.

The project boosts young peoples' enjoyment of their local rivers or ponds and broadening their knowledge on how different parts of the water ecosystem fit together - of direct benefit to themselves and their environment.

But it's not just about learning! The initiative also offers the chance to get 'hands-on' experience by taking up a new outdoor activity (one of those being fishing) and seeks to further develop outdoor opportunities by promoting other related activities which they may like to consider.

The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve boundaries are based on the water environment that radiates from the Galloway hills, reflecting the value of clean water for wildlife, landscapes and people. The Wonderful World of water was a natural project for the leader funded project "Building Opportunities in the Biosphere" to support.

Councillor Margaret Toner, Portfolio Holder for Lifelong Learning at South Ayrshire Council commented: *"Lessons learned young are lessons learned for life. We are wholly conscious our young people need to be better prepared to live in harmony with and tackle the challenges that lie ahead in conservation, ecology, climate and the environment.*

*"The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve is centred on the water environment and its site in the Galloway Hills is perfectly placed to help focus minds on the value of clean water for wildlife, landscapes and people."*

Girvan Primary fishing at Girvan Pier



Gillian McIntyre from Ayrshire Rivers Trust added: *"Education is an important role for the Ayrshire Rivers Trust and we are pleased to have led on the delivery of the biology side, including lifecycles, food webs and various other topics concerning our local rivers.*

*"This new school project slots neatly into the new Curriculum for Excellence being delivered in local schools achieving a wide range of outcomes."*

SEPA's Anne Connick continued: *"There is a huge amount of evidence that shows the benefits of people connecting with nature, particularly from an early age. It can have many health benefits, but it can also encourage those children to grow up with respect and responsibility for others, and the environment around them.*

*"This project hopes to help demonstrate to everyone involved, that our water environments are of significant importance, have a huge amount to offer, and can provide interest for life!"*

It is hoped that the 'Wonderful World of Water' (WWoW) project will be the building blocks for an even bigger multi-organisational outdoor learning experience, in conjunction with Scottish Natural Heritage, SEPA and Education Services, who have all already shown a keen interest in developing this principal throughout South West Scotland.

Councillor Toner concluded: *"The 'Wonderful World of Water was a natural project for the biosphere to support and I'm thrilled our young pupils have taken to it so positively and with so much enthusiasm - like ducks to water, in fact!"*

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Girvan Primary School, after their bug hunt.

