

Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere

Scotland's **First**

UNESCO Announce Decision on Galloway and Southern Ayrshire 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

Key Quotes:

Christine Cuthbertson, Regional Manager, National Farmers Union Scotland said:

"It is very exciting that this will be the first UNESCO Biosphere area in Scotland and highlights the importance of the region and the desire by the local people to protect and promote the outstanding beauty and uniqueness of the Galloway Forrest and surrounding communities. It is an exemplar of how man has worked and looked after the environment over generations and this designation provides the platform to enhance the lives of the people within the area whilst looking after such a special environment well into the future."

Contact: Christine M. Cuthbertson, Regional Manager
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E-mail: christine.cuthbertson@nfus.org.uk

Peter Mason, Chair of the Carrick Community Councils' Forum said:

"The Carrick Community Councils' Forum is delighted by UNESCO's announcement of Biosphere status. This is a huge step forward for this part of South-west Scotland and will give added momentum to the socio-economic development work that our Forum is leading in the rural southern part of South Ayrshire. Over 1/5th of the population living within the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere live in Carrick, all of which is in the Biosphere's Transition Zone. We look forward to working with other communities to maximise the benefits of Biosphere status to our local environment and our local economy." Contact: Peter Mason, Chair of the Carrick Community Councils' Forum,

Contact: Tel: 01655 882660
E-mail: petermckmason@aol.com

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."

Contact: Rob Soutar, Forest District Manager, Galloway Forest District, Creebridge, Newton Stewart, DG8 6AJ
Tel: 01671 402420 VOIP: 25816
Email: rob.soutar@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Howard Wilkinson, Chair of the Ayrshire Food Network said:

"The Biosphere and in particular the Sense of Place initiative will allow the provenanced food, drink and crafts of the area to be seen and appreciated in their fullest Terroir context"

Contact: Howard Wilkinson, Chair, Ayrshire Food Network,
Tel: 07765 606848
E-mail: howard.wilkinson@btinternet.com

Mark Gibson, Director of Dark Skies Observatory said:

"The Scottish Dark Sky Observatory, opening in October this year, is a tremendously exciting project to herald the Biosphere. It will celebrate the beauty of the heavens, made visible by protecting natural dark skies. It will help to regenerate an area hard hit by unemployment and bring recognition and new-found confidence. It perfectly illustrates the mutual benefit to man and the natural environment that comes from us caring for the latter."

Contact: J Mark Gibson BSc MRICS, Craigengillan, Dalmellington, Ayr, KA6 7PZ
Tel: 01292 551818 Fax: 01292 551819
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Mark Gibson, Dalmellington Partnership

"Craigengillan and Dalmellington have worked hard over the last 12 years to realise a vision for a new future, based on nature and cultural tourism and outdoor activities. The enterprises developed are sustainable and are founded on a restored natural landscape and pristine wildlife habitats. Their success is encouraging further care of the natural environment. Our experience shows how the Biosphere can transform the future of south west Scotland and enhance the diversity of wildlife and the beauty of our natural landscapes."

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Dr Mary-Ann Smyth, Chair of Crichton Carbon Centre, said:

"We at Crichton Carbon Centre are excited by the prospect of carrying out carbon-related research in the core of the new Biosphere status. We warmly welcome the new status for the region, and the potential it brings for sustainable rural development."

Contact: Dr. Mary-Ann Smyth, Crichton Carbon Centre, Dumfries www.carboncentre.org

Dr. Mary Ann Smyth at RSK ERA and RSK Group, Environmental Management and Consultancy
Home office: Craig Farm, Balmacellan, Castle Douglas, Galloway, Scotland DG7 3QS
Home phone (best): 01644 420636 Mobile: 07824 314377

Joan Mitchell, Chair Newton Stewart Walking Festival said:

"The Galloway Hills is a wild and beautiful area with a wealth of natural history interest. It is very fitting that it should receive international recognition as a UNESCO Biosphere."

Contact: Joan Mitchell, Chair Newton Stewart Walking Festival

Tel: 01671820223

E-mail: joan@bagbie.co.uk

Chris Savage, Chair, Ayrshire LEADER Local Action Group said:

"We believe that the Biosphere offers significant 'hope and optimism' for an area of South West Scotland where such opportunities are rare."

Contact: Chris Savage

E-mail: chris@cassillisestate.co.uk

Councillors Peter Convery, South Ayrshire Council; Bobby McDill, East Ayrshire Council; and Graham Nicol, Dumfries and Galloway Council

"We are delighted by UNESCO's decision to approve our application for Biosphere status. Not just for the global recognition for a very special area but because of the potential benefits it can bring. Together with our partners in the agencies, communities, business and other stakeholders we have been working towards this for several years now and we are reassured that the hard work has eventually paid off. This international recognition puts a global spotlight on South West Scotland and provides us with a catalyst for bringing renewed hope, pride and opportunities to our area. The decision now provides us with a unique opportunity and shared purpose to take a lead in developing more sustainable ways of living that will benefit the environment, economy and community of the area and ultimately act as an example of best practice within UNESCO's worldwide network of Biospheres. Our shared aspiration is no less than for Galloway and Southern Ayrshire to be a World Class Place for People and Nature. It will require a lot of hard work and we do not underestimate the task but by developing our natural assets in combination with the skills and talents of the people and by working together in partnership we are hopeful and believe this will be possible. We are determined to help make this a success."

Contact: Councillor Peter Convery, South Ayrshire Council, County Buildings, Ayr

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Contact: Councillor Bobby McDill, East Ayrshire Council, Council HQ, London Road, Kilmarnock

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Contact: Councillor Graham Nicol, Dumfries and Galloway Council, English Street, Dumfries

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Tel: 030 33 33 3000

Councillor Peter Convery (South Ayrshire Council) said:

"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."

Contact: Councillor Peter Convery, South Ayrshire Council, County Buildings, Ayr

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Councillor Robert McDill (East Ayrshire Council) said:

"This is great news for East Ayrshire but also our neighbours in South Ayrshire and Galloway. Now that UNESCO have 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."

Councillor Bobby McDill, East Ayrshire Council, Council HQ, London Road, Kilmarnock

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Councillor Graham Nicol (Dumfries and Galloway Council) said:

"This decision by UNESCO to approve our application for a Biosphere in South West Scotland will be a great asset. We have a wonderful environment 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."

Councillor Graham Nicol, Dumfries and Galloway Council, English Street, Dumfries

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Chris Rollie, Area Manager, Royal Society of Protection of Birds said:

"It is fantastic that UNESCO are recognising the wild and rugged beauty of this wonderful area that is the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere, which provides such spiritual and emotional sustenance to visitors and surrounding communities."

"Biosphere status for Galloway and southern Ayrshire brings deserved world-wide status to a world class site for wildlife, landscape and peaceful recreation. I am looking forward to working with partners to maximise the benefits to this area through enhancing and promoting its attractions and potential."

Contact: Chris Rollie, RSPB Area Manager Dumfries & Galloway, RSPB Scotland, The Old School, Crossmichael, Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbrightshire, DG7 3AP.

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E-mail: chris.rollie@rspb.org.uk

Chris Miles, Area Manager, Scottish Natural Heritage said:

"I think for SNH the importance of the Biosphere approach is the opportunity to more closely align peoples and communities aspirations to the internationally significant environmental resources on their doorstep. The mountains, mires, woodlands, lochs and rivers and the special species that live at the heart of the Biosphere provide a life support system in terms of economic activity, clean water, flood mitigation, carbon capture, recreation and spiritual renewal and define the character of the area and its people. Local people are increasingly recognising that they have something of great value in these natural resources and that their future is bound up with their careful stewardship."

Contact: Chris Miles, SNH, Area Manager

E-mail: Chris.Miles@snh.gov.uk

Roger Crofts, Chair, Biosphere Partnership Board.

"Bringing communities and nature together is the most exciting and innovative project in Galloway and Southern Ayrshire. We look forward to bringing it to fruition for the benefit of everyone."

Contact: Roger Crofts

E-mail: rogerc@dodin.idps.co.uk

Maggie Gordon, Chair, Dumfries and Galloway LEADER Local Action Group (LAG) said:

"The LEADER programme focusses upon supporting projects that benefit rural communities. We look forward to helping community groups as they develop innovative solutions to living and working in Scotland's newest Biosphere."

Contact: Maggie Gordon

E-mail: barfilfarm@mac.com

Annique Armstrong, Regional Director, Visit Scotland, said:

"The UNESCO status will bring a new focus on southwest Scotland which should help lever further funding to assure the quality of the natural environment and the sustainability of the local economy. In the Year of Natural Scotland 2013, the Biosphere will help develop international marketing opportunities and help build a shared vision based on the natural and cultural assets and talents in local communities."

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