

Moffat & District Community Nature Reserve (MDCNR) – DG14

Leader Annual Report 2009-10

Ownership

Moffat & District Community Nature Reserve Trust bought the former gravel quarry at Dyke Farm in July 2009 from Patersons Quarries for £1. The 34 acre site comprises three distinct habitat areas: a large pond surrounded by trees and vegetation; a seasonally flooded meadow; and an agricultural field.

The MDCNR Trust comprises representatives from Moffat & District Community Council, The Moffat Wildlife Club as well as the Moffat & District Community Initiative. The objectives of the Trust are:

- **MANAGEMENT** - To manage the ongoing development
- **CONSERVATION** - To conserve, enhance and improve landscape, biodiversity and sustainable usage for the benefit of wildlife and people.
- **ENJOYMENT** – to improve access and to promote the reserve to encourage usage amongst the community
- **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT** – to involve the local community in environmental issues and action. Work in partnership with other voluntary groups, public agencies and individuals
- **EDUCATION** – to promote and secure the educational value of the reserve, along with its ecological, historical and landscape qualities

Funding

Dumfries & Galloway Council provided financial support to MDCI to develop a number of funding applications to support the future development of the MDCNR and this resulted in a successful Leader bid. The MDCI secured funding for two years from Leader Dumfries & Galloway, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Patersons Quarries through the LandTrust to implement a number of improvements to the site. The agreed project timescale is 1st July 2009-31st August 2011.

Funding Sources	%	£	Actual July 09 - Mar 10
Dumfries & Galloway Leader programme	45.97	19,100	
Scottish Natural Heritage	13.84	5,750	
LandTrust	33.69	14,000	
Moffat Wildlife Club (in kind)	6.50	2,700	
	100	41,550	



Management & Reporting

The Steering Group includes representatives from the Trust along with the countryside and environmental specialists from the Dumfries and Galloway Council (Stewart Cameron, Countryside Officer & Ross Gemmell, Annandale & Eskdale Ranger) and Scottish Natural Heritage (John Gibson).

The Steering Group is responsible for guiding the project and has met on average every second month; minutes/action points are recorded at each meeting. A Project Officer is in post one day a week to facilitate the project and decisions made by the Steering Group. The PO also reports the project progress to the MDCI Board on a bi-monthly basis.

The project progress is defined by a series of milestones:

1. Site ownership transferred – June 2009
 - ✓ This was completed in July 2010, MDCNR Trust are legal owners.
2. Disabled access complete – October 2009
 - ✓ An audit visit from an access specialist took place in September, a Recommendations Report was produced and circulated in January 2010. This has impacted in a number of ways in relation to the original plan for the project.
3. Viewing blind/sluiice bed/pond dipping area – Feb 2010
 - X This has been amended to reflect the recommendations from the access audit, suggestions from the Steering Group and local provision being available. The viewing blind has been upgraded to a bird hide. The sluiice bed has been replaced with a new pipe system, the pond dipping has been superseded by a minibeast trail. The changes have been agreed by each of the funders .
4. Disabled access work completed – April 2010
 - ✓ The work has been completed and includes a new bird hide, improved car park surface, picnic area and path to the hide offering access to all.
5. Publication of an education programme document – June 2010
6. Visitor accreditation/signage from VisitScotland approved – Sept 2010
7. Official opening to link to Southern Upland Way/ Annandale Way – Jan 2011
8. Official opening of site to wider range of visitors – March 2011



Project Activities

Setting up the project July – September

Legal ownership of MDCNR confirmed.

Recruitment of Project Officer took place and the PO took up the post in August. Numerous site meetings have taken place with steering group members to discuss activities and improvements, a briefing meeting for the access specialist and a disability audit visit took place.

Planning October – December

A minibeast trail has been devised by Ross Gemmell; this includes a wild flower meadow, magnification posts, habitat pile, wild area, fruit trees, insect hotel and educational resources to allow us to develop links with local pre-school nurseries and schools

The decision was taken by the group to upgrade the proposed bird blind to a bird hide. Specifications were circulated to contractors to provide an all access hide and costs presented to group.

Habitat Improvements January – March

The Recommendations Report was received and circulated. It outlined suggestions/guidelines for developments. This has influenced the decision-making process for the group. Invitations to tender were invited from local contractors to undertake ground works including: a new all access path to the west side of the pond, hide base and manoeuvring area, seating/picnic area, relocating north hide, car park surface improvements. Following receipt of costs, 3 areas of work were given the go ahead and the relocation of the north hide was put on hold due to cost constraints. The selected contractor is WJ Murray - based on cost and ability to do both ground works and the hide. The ground work was completed during the last week of April.



A number of habitat improvement activities have been undertaken by volunteers. The Moffat Wildlife Club have been busy down at the Reserve; erecting barriers to create 'sanctuary' area on the west and south area around the pond.; removing tree protectors; preparing nesting rafts to float in pond: collecting photographic evidence: transplanting reeds from the seasonally flooded meadow to the south end of the pond to create a 'marginal' habitat for wildlife Ross Gemmell the



Council Ranger has been cutting the path along the east side of the reserve and arranged/hosted a Volunteer day on February 26th. The area identified for the wild flower meadow has been cleared of vegetation in readiness for sowing seeds in the autumn.



Financial Position

This statement reflects the financial position as at end of March 2010 with the agreed budget now representing the expenditure profile for the project. The shaded areas show the areas of change.

Budget head	Approved budget	Leader Claims up to 31/12/09	Re-profile budget heads	Agreed New budget
VisitScotland Brown Sign	980.00	0.00	VisitScotland Brown Sign	980.00
Marketing design/ print leaflet + website presence	4,256.00	0.00	Marketing design/ print leaflet + website presence	4,256.00
Launch Event	1,000.00	0.00	Launch event	1,000.00
Site Signage	500.00	0.00	Site Signage	500.00
Links to SUW	2,204.00	0.00		
Project Officer (Including Recruitment Costs)	13,604.00	2,906.60	Project Officer (Including Recruitment Costs)	13,604.00
Eligible Office	4,400.00	1,114.62	Eligible Office	4,400.00
Other office costs	4,971.00	484.11	Other office costs	4,971.00
Legal costs (Transfer of Ownership)	800.00	779.71	Legal costs (Transfer of Ownership)	800.00
Larch Lap Blind	1,220.00	0.00		
Tree Planting	1,000.00	0.00	Tree Planting	1,000.00



Secondary Pond development	3,450.00	0.00	Secondary pond development	3,450.00
Pond Dipping area/walkway	1,000.00	0.00	Access improvements - paths, seating area, bird base, car park, & gates	3,789.00
Disabled access to North hide	500.00	0.00	Habitat works - bird hide, mini beasts trail, sluice pipe	2,800.00
Main gates and sluice	1,265.00	0.00		
TOTAL	41,150.00	5,285.04	ACTUAL TOTAL	41,550.00

Cash flow is a potential issue in the future as all the funders pay in arrears, with final tranche (25%) of Leader grant being withheld until submission of the final report. In the main the claims are made on a monthly basis to Leader. The SNH money has a 3 stage agreed claim schedule and the LandTrust accepts claims on request.

Project Outputs

The measurable outputs for the first year are:

Descriptor	Output
1 number of communities participating	DG10 location of nature reserve
0.2 FTE job created	Project Officer retained for 1 day a week for two years.
1 marketing activity undertaken	A number of presentations have been made at local events and an MDCI newsletter circulated.

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