



MORAY FIRTH PARTNERSHIP

UPDATE April 2006

MFP Community Grants Scheme - 2005

Twelve projects awarded funding under the 2005 MFP Community Grants Scheme are now complete and benefiting locals and visitors to the area.

Projects included a heritage trail at Whitehills, workshops and exhibitions at Kyle of Sutherland, boat restoration and reproduction at Portsoy; the provision of disabled access pontoons at Findhorn Pier and youth projects with Cromarty Action for Young People and the Moray Sea cadets. The total value of these projects to the Moray Firth area, including funding from other sources, is around £75,000.

Full details of the MFP Scheme, which was funded by Scottish Natural Heritage, can be found on the MFP website. Here are details of two of the projects supported :-

The form and design of the seats were based on drawings, stories and discussions with the nursery school children.



MFP Community Grants Scheme - 2006

Thanks again to funding from Scottish Natural Heritage, the MFP has been able to award £10,000 to thirteen local projects that benefit the coast or sea of the Moray Firth (from John O' Groats in Caithness to Fraserburgh in Aberdeenshire).

Projects supported in 2006 include Moray Firth cetacean and sea bird workshops, the provision of safety features at Sandhaven & Pitullie Harbour, an interpretation panel as part of the Rosemarkie Beach Refurbishment project, the provision of dinghy sailing at Nairn beach, Exploring Your Past - archaeological fieldtrips around the Moray Firth Coast, refurbishment to the inside of the Old Herring Mart at Wick, the purchase of a Moray Firth Inshore Rescue Boat, reproduction of the Spey Coracle and Fish Wives Creel, a marine and coastal themed mural, 'Under the Surface' exhibition, the Ardersier Environmental Improvements Phase II and Dolphin Space Programme Interpretation and Training.

Further info on the Projects and the Grant Scheme is available on the MFP website.



Wick South Head Path - Phase 3. Artists Fin Macrae and Brodie Nairn transformed the nineteenth century Ice Store by installing and illuminating metal gates. The photo shows the Ice House gates and the view from the path towards the gates.

Cromarty Action for Young People: The picture below (taken by Georgia Macleod) shows one of the wonderful educational seats created within the garden at CAYP's East Hall, inspired by the marine mammals of the Moray Firth.

Beach Guardians

Coming soon to a site near you will be a travelling exhibition about how the Beach Guardians project can help communities around the Firth to tackle problems of beach litter. Preparations are also underway for community beach cleans along the Moray Firth coastline.

A 'State of the Beaches' report for the Moray Firth has been produced setting out the current and historical status of Moray Firth beaches. You can contact us for a copy and it will also be available on www.beachguardians.co.uk

We will be working with a number of schools as part of Beach Guardians and gathering information for a web-based schools resource. Schools visits will take place during the summer.

For more information please contact Helen Smith on 01463 715225 or email beachguardians@morayfirth-partnership.org

"Harbouring Waste Safely"

Getting to grips with marine waste in the Moray Firth was the subject of a seminar organised as part of the MFP's Beach Guardians project in Inverness on 29th March. Delegates from local harbours met to discuss current best practice in waste management and to look at how local harbours might address the implications of forthcoming marine waste legislation.



(left-right): Capt George Dobbie, Moray Firth Partnership; Katherine Boor, The Green Blue Initiative; Duncan Bryden, Rowantree; and Captain Ken MacLean, Inverness Harbour Trust.

Captain George Dobbie of the Moray Firth Partnership said: " Research suggests that around 20% of beach litter in the Moray Firth comes from fishing and shipping. Marine waste can injure or kill wildlife as well as making beaches unpleasant, or even dangerous, for local people and visitors. With new marina facilities being proposed at a number of locations along the Moray Firth, and with new legislation placing a duty on harbours to reduce waste, marine waste management is an increasingly important issue for local harbours, boat owners and operators. The presentations and discussions at the seminar sparked off a number of ideas for local initiatives as well as providing participants with information and advice."

Beach Guardians is managed by the MFP and funded by Talisman Energy, LEADER+, Moray Council, SNH, Maritime and Coastguard Agency, RSPB and Visit Scotland, plus in kind support from Highland Council, the Big Picture.



For more information about the subjects and advice presented on the day, please go to the Beach Guardians website or email beachguardians@morayfirth-partnership.org

Moray Firth - Produce to be Proud of"

'The Moray Firth - Produce to be Proud' of conference will now take place on Friday 3 November 2006 at the Newton Hotel, Nairn. This groundbreaking conference will be the first step in a process to explore how we can build new opportunities to add value to our local marine produce - opportunities that will recognise its full potential within the local economy, and increase enthusiasm and demand for this high quality, diverse and very local produce.

To be successful, this process needs to involve everyone in the supply chain, from the fisherman to the consumer. If your interest is in fishing, marketing, retailing, catering, tourism, health

promotion, business development or any related business, we need your presence around the table, to help form the agenda and develop new ways forward.

We are working up an exciting programme and will send out details as soon as possible. All delegates who registered for the original conference last year (that had to be cancelled because of snow), will automatically be sent an invitation, but please feel free to contact us now to reserve a place.

For more information, please contact Kathryn Logan on Tel 01463 225530 or email info@morayfirth-partnership.org

Chevron Upstream Europe, The Highland Marine Resources and Communities Scheme (HiMaRCS), Moray Council and Scottish Enterprise Grampian are funding the conference.

Calling all traditional boat owners !!

The Moray Firth Flotilla 2007 is a really exciting project that will see a flotilla of traditional boats sail around the coast from Wick, calling at a number of ports over the course of a week, ending at Portsoy to mark the opening of the Scottish Traditional Boat Festival in July 2007. Already, over 30 boats are likely to take part, from around the Firth and beyond. These include well known boats such "the Reaper" from Anstruther, "The Swan" from Lerwick and the "Isabella Fortuna" from Wick. We also hope that boats from Norway and our other North Sea neighbours will take part.

We will be contacting Yacht Clubs round the Firth so that as many traditional boat owners as possible have the opportunity to take part. A leaflet with details about the Flotilla will be launched at this year's Portsoy Traditional Boat Festival in July.

As well as the flotilla itself, there will be a range of events at each port where the flotilla calls (Wick, Lybster, Helmsdale, Cromarty, Buckie and Portsoy) to help celebrate the arrival of the flotilla. These events will be organised by

local groups, not through the Partnership itself. However, the MFP will do all it can to encourage, support and promote these activities as part of the flotilla project, and will help to identify possible sources of funding if required.



We would be delighted to hear from anyone interested in taking part. **For further details contact Sinclair Young on 01349 877858 or email: ssyoung@msn.com**

Fisheries Action Group

The Moray Firth is benefiting from genuine local input into regional inshore fishery management. At a meeting of the Moray Firth Fisheries Action Group in Nairn, last December, members drew up an action plan that could see the introduction of a new fisheries management framework in the Moray Firth. MFFAG's members hope this will play a part in the setting up of an Inshore Fisheries Group (IFG) in the Moray Firth area. The Scottish Executive is to set up IFG's in coastal areas around Scotland which will be responsible for developing specific management plans to meet the needs of their local fisheries.

The MFFAG, which brings together local fisheries organisations interested in the Moray Firth, was established by the Moray Firth Partnership to provide a neutral forum to discuss a range of issues affecting fishing in the Firth, from seals to fisheries stocks and windfarms.

Roddy McColl Secretary of The Fishermen's Association Ltd (FAL) explained "FAL is delighted to be involved in the Fisheries Action

Group. It's great to see local people coming together for the benefit of each other and their communities. I urge anyone interested in fisheries in the Moray Firth to get involved with MFFAG. It's a tremendous opportunity to express your opinions on a number of major local issues and to work towards a constructive plan for the future of the Firth".

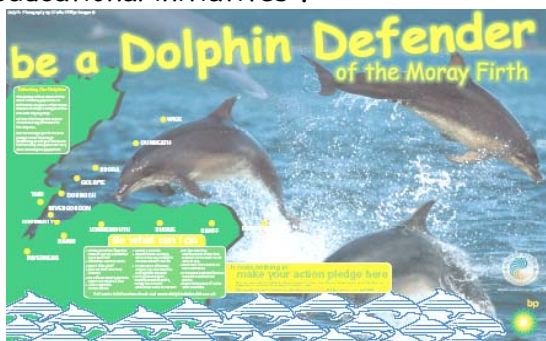
The full feasibility study report can be downloaded on <http://www.morayfirth-partnership.org/work-1-fisheries.html>

If you want to find out more or wish to become involved in the Fisheries Action Group, contact Rachel on 01463 225530 or email info@morayfirth-partnership.org

The Study was funded by Highland Marine Resources and Communities Scheme (HiMaRCS), Fish Industry Training Association (Highlands & Islands)Ltd, The Moray Council, The Scottish White Fish Producers Association, Fishermen's Association Ltd and the Spey Fishery Board.

Additional nomination for Dolphin campaign

The Scottish Executive have put forward the Partnership's Dolphin Defenders project as a possible nomination for the ASCOBANS (Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans in the Baltic and North Seas), award for 'cetacean conservation related PR/educational initiatives'.



We ran the Dolphin Defenders project last year to encourage local people to pledge to change something about their behaviour that could affect the dolphins and their environment.

For all project info log onto <http://www.morayfirth-partnership.org/dolphindefenders/>

Dolphin Echo



The third edition of Dolphin Echo has been published and is available to view or download from the MFP website. Funded by the BG group, the newsletter provides lively and current information about the Moray Firth's dolphins. Read your copy to find

out why there are going to be lots more cetacean watching opportunities along the Moray Firth, how you can get involved in a new Sea Watch Group in Inverness, and what Fort George has to offer the cetacean watcher!

If you would like additional copies of the newsletter, if you know someone who would, or if you would like to submit an article or provide information, please contact us.

June launch for The Moray Firth Trail

Spectacular scenery, great coastal walks and interesting things to see and do for all the family - the Moray Firth Trail looks set to become part of our "natural health service"!

The new Moray Firth Trail website www.morayfirth.org and leaflet will be launched week commencing 19th June. Full details of the range of events planned all round the firth will be on the MFP website and in your local press.

The Trail website will have details of more than 75 walks around the coast between John O' Groats and Cullen, plus information about our coastal heritage and links to local services. This will now include the existing "Moray Coast Trail" - around 50 miles long - which will be formally signposted with the Nortrail logo showing it as an official part of the North Sea Trail.

More walks will be added as information becomes available.

The Moray Firth Trail is part of the transnational North Sea Trail / NAVÉ Nortrail project, which is creating a network of around 6000 Km of paths and trails around the coast in six partner countries (UK, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands & Germany).



The UK section of the North Sea Trail continues from the Moray Firth around the Aberdeenshire coast, Fife, East Lothian, Northumberland and currently ends in North Yorkshire.

For more info. contact Kathryn Logan on tel: 01463 225530 or e-mail: info@morayfirth-partnership or log onto the new website.

Beatrice Windfarm Demonstrator project

The Beatrice Windfarm Pilot project Environmental Statement went out for consultation earlier this year. It can be found on www.beatricewind.co.uk/home/. Further details and an updated progress report for the project are contained within Talisman's newsletter 'Windward', which the Moray Firth Partnership distributes to Partnership members.



Learn about the Firth while 'surfing'!

People from all over the world keen on learning about Moray Firth can now find lots of interesting information while surfing, thanks to the launch of the Moray Firth Partnership's new-look website.

If you log onto www.morayfirth-partnership.org during April / May and send in a feedback form to help us improve the website still further, you could be the lucky winner of a boxful of delicious products from around the Moray Firth.

All this has been made possible through a grant from LifeScan Scotland Ltd., which also funded our new contacts database. This is already proving invaluable in streamlining our operations and making it easier for us to send information to you. Please let us know if your details are out-of-date so that we can provide the best service possible.

"Hands Across the Firth"

The Planning Phase for our "Hands Across the Firth Project" has taken another major step forward following the 6 community consultation meetings held all around the firth in early April. (Invergordon, Brora, Lybster, Inverness, Findhorn and Fraserburgh)

We have had a very encouraging response from a wide range of heritage groups interested in taking part in the main project to be put together by the MFP, hopefully with HLF funding.

The next step for us is to review the information from these community meetings and put together a first proposal of the kinds of projects / geographical areas / links between projects that would help make up a really innovative "Hands Across the Firth" project.

As part of the Planning Phase, we are preparing an "audience development plan", which will highlight many of the issues raised by you regarding problems in accessing local heritage. The main "Hands Across the Firth" project will then attempt to address a range of these issues, as an integral part of the various local projects.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Helen Smith at Rowan Tree Consulting, tel 01463 715225 email: helen@rowan-tree-scotland.co.uk

This phase has been financed by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Scottish Natural Heritage, Aberdeenshire, Highland and Moray Councils.

MFP Annual General Meeting

The 2006 AGM was held on Friday 17th February and we were delighted that over 20 members were able to attend. Business included one Special Resolution, to make a minor change to the Articles of Association and allow membership application forms to be submitted by email as well as by post. The Chairman's report outlined the range of activities undertaken during 2005 and highlighted some of our future plans. The minute of the AGM is on the MFP web site.

Save the Date!

The Moray Firth Partnership Annual Conference will be held on 24th November 2006 at the Highland Council Headquarters on Glenurquhart Road, Inverness.

Although our work first started back in 1991, when the Moray Firth Project was underway to develop the "Moray Firth Review", the Moray Firth Partnership was officially launched in 1996. As we will be celebrating our 10th anniversary this year, the annual conference will focus on this major milestone in our development, and look at what you want us to achieve over the next 10 years.

We will also be looking at ways to attract new members and to encourage more joint activities with members in projects around the Firth.

Many thanks to The Highland Council who have once again very generously provided the venue free of charge.

Future Work

We will be working with partners and potential funders to develop new projects including; yachting promotion; Small Harbours; Stakeholder Dialogues re water quality and

coastal developments; and membership / hands-on community involvement.

In addition, we hope that a number of the current projects will be extended, including the Fisheries Action Group, Nortrail, Added Value and the newsletter.

Funders

Many thanks to all our funders and supporters, who include: -

Aberdeenshire Council; BG Group; BP Oil UK; Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise; Chevron Upstream Europe; Cromarty Firth Port Authority; The Crown Estate; The Fishermen's Association Ltd.; Fish Industry Training Authority; HIE-Moray; The Highland Council; Highlands & Islands Enterprise; Highland Marine Resources and Communities Scheme (HiMaRCS); Heritage Lottery Fund; Interreg IIIB; Inverness Harbour Trust; Inverness, Nairn Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise; Leader +; LifeScan Scotland Ltd.; Marine Conservation Society; Moray Council; Ross & Cromarty Enterprise; R.S.P.B.; Scottish Enterprise Grampian; Scottish Natural Heritage; Scottish Water; Scottish White Fish Producers Association; Spey Fishery Board; Talisman Energy UK Ltd. and VisitScotland.

If you wish to receive future updates by email only, please let us know.

For more information about any of the Partnership's work, please contact Kathryn, Rachel or Vanessa :

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