

WETLAND, WET GRASSLAND AND FRESHWATER Spey Catchment Initiative

Two innovative restoration projects have been working to restore centuries of river channel straightening that were affecting river functioning and impacting on natural processes

Allt a'Mharcaidh

Restoration of an artificially canalised watercourse, the Allt a' Mharcaidh, was undertaken in 2014 in association with peatland stabilisation in the immediate catchment area and wet woodland regeneration on the reconnected floodplain. This multi-targeted approach was delivered through close partnership working between the Spey Catchment Initiative, Forestry Commission Scotland and SNH's Green Stimulus Peatland Action programme.

Over two centuries the straightened river channel had become incised, with undercut banks and scouring of sediment, leaving a poorly functioning river system of uniform morphology, largely disconnected from its floodplain. Large woody debris, in the form of whole trees secured by root balls, was placed at strategic points along the channel to encourage variations in hydrology, leading to the formation of morphological features such as riffles and pools, providing new, more varied habitat for aquatic life.

Sediment was reintroduced from local sources to assist the restored fluvial processes in forming a wide range of substrate types beneficial to invertebrate and plant species and for salmonid spawning. Embankments were lowered or removed to allow the burn to gradually widen its channel at points and overtop on to its floodplain under high flow conditions. Ditch blocking in adjacent drained peatland is also helping to rewet the area, creating favourable conditions for planting and regeneration of wet woodland tree species and reversing loss of peatland carbon storage.

Allt Lorgy

By similarly restoring the morphology and habitats of a 1 km stretch of the Allt Lorgy - a tributary of the river Dulnain near Carr-Bridge - this innovative restoration project has also kick started natural processes in order to allow the river to re-establish its own natural equilibrium.



Find out more ...

- **Spey Catchment Initiative**
- **Allt a' Mharcaidh river restoration poster**
- **Allt Lorgy** - finalist for Innovative Project, River Restoration Centre 2016 UK River Prize

