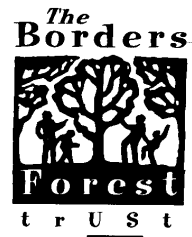


18th February 2009

A New Vision for The Devil's Beef Tub



Borders Forest Trust today announced further details of its ambitious plans to restore southern Scotland's lost Ettrick Forest and the natural habitats surrounding the iconic landscape feature, the Devil's Beef Tub.

The Trust has an opportunity to buy 1580 acres of land at Corehead, a stunning area in the Southern Upland hills of Scotland. This land was once a wild and lawless place where Border Reivers feuded, hiding stolen cattle in the cavernous Devil's Beef Tub. Since the days of William Wallace when the Ettrick Forest covered the land, the hills have been grazed bare, leaving natural habitats much reduced.

Borders Forest Trust aims to restore these lost habitats. This will increase biodiversity, contribute towards the Scottish Government's aim of 25% woodland cover in Scotland by 2050 and help to combat climate change.

Traditional Farming & Habitat Restoration

The Trust's plans go beyond tree-planting: traditional low impact farming, restoration of hay meadows, planting of community orchards, heather and blaeberry moorland and the planting of montane scrub will sit alongside the restoration of native woodland.

The impact on the area's biodiversity will be significant. Habitat restoration would protect and encourage the return of plants, birds and animals such as golden eagle, black grouse, otter, mountain hare, emperor moth, juniper, aspen and reindeer moss to the area.

Sir Walter Scott and The Devil's Beef Tub

Sir Walter Scott captured the dramatic appearance of the Devil's Beef Tub in his novel *Redgauntlet*: "It looks as if four hills were laying their heads together, to shut out daylight from the dark hollow space between them. A dammed deep, black, blackguard-looking abyss of a hole it is."

William Wallace is also associated with the site - his sister married the Laird of Corehead Tower and Wallace is reputed to have gathered men from the Ettrick Forest and the Border clans at Corehead to lead his first attack against the English in 1297.

Landscapes for People

Engaging the local community is at the heart of Borders Forest Trust's work, and it is envisaged that local people would be involved in the landscape restoration, through volunteering and education projects. The Trust will encourage access to the area, making this a landscape for both wildlife and people to enjoy.

Borders Forest Trust has a proven track record of making such ambitious projects a reality. Not far from Corehead is the **Carrifran Wildwood, the largest community-based ecological restoration project in Scotland**, where native woodland is being established by the Trust in an entire valley. Corehead and Carrifran will form building blocks in an ambitious wild and natural landscape project in the south of Scotland, the restoration of the Ettrick Forest.

To date the Trust has raised over £420,000 of the £700,000 required to buy Corehead and the Devil's Beef Tub. The deadline to raise the remaining funds is the end of May 2009, so the push is now on to meet this target.

Comments

Willie McGhee, Director of Borders Forest Trust said:

“Purchasing Corehead Farm gives BFT a huge opportunity to take a conventional hill farm and to work with the local community to manage a large and very visible piece of the Southern Uplands in a way that benefits wildlife and biodiversity by creating new habitats, using traditional and less intensive forms of agriculture. BFT will work to create more heather moorland on the hillsides and tops and to create native woodland in the valley bottoms. We will restore hay meadows and wetland areas and we will graze these areas with traditional cattle breeds and keep black face sheep in the Devils Beef Tub.”

Peter Norman, Biodiversity Officer, Dumfries & Galloway Council said:

“Corehead will significantly extend the area of the Moffat valley being managed with high priority for biodiversity. The proposals go well beyond preventing loss of priority habitats and species – they will lead to enhancement and restoration of several of them. I fully support Borders Forest Trust’s ambitious proposals for Corehead and wish them luck in securing the necessary funds to implement them.”

Alistair Moffat, author and broadcaster said:

“History gave the Devil’s Beef Tub its name. The beef was cattle stolen by the Border Reivers, and the devil was usually one of the Johnstones who had stolen them. But long before, it was an important and noted place. Agricola’s Roman legions marched up and past it as they invaded Scotland in AD80, and Walter Scott borrowed its drama for his historical novel, Redgauntlet. The Beef Tub is part of the weave of Scotland’s story and it deserves to belong to the Borders Forest Trust, people who care about our history.”

For further information, images and to arrange interviews, please contact Louisa Finch at Borders Forest Trust on 01835 830 750 or email louisa@bordersforesttrust.org

- To find out more about Borders Forest Trust and to donate to the Devil’s Beef Tub Appeal, visit www.bordersforesttrust.org email enquires@bordersforesttrust.org or call 01835 850 730.