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Riparian Woodlands

The Riparian Woodlands Network is part of a suite of exciting projects within a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) initiative, the Tweed Rivers Project, and it aims to regenerate and plant native woodlands adjacent to water courses in the upper Ettrick and Yarrow valleys. In doing so, habitat networks will be reinstated and will function as wildlife corridors.

Scattered and isolated remnants of birch and willow woodlands, located alongside burns and watercourses, are being fenced off from sheep and cattle, with some areas being planted with new native woodland, and other areas being allowed to naturally regenerate trees such as rowan and willow. Birch seed is being collected from large, old trees on ancient woodland sites, such as Hermanlaw and Muchra and then sown directly on to fenced riparian sites in the same vicinity e.g. in the St Mary's Loch catchment.

The Riparian Woodland Network is being carried out in partnership with the Forestry Commission, landowners and farmers, the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department and Scottish Natural Heritage. A total of 60 hectares of native trees are being planted and some 76 hectares of natural regeneration of native trees being encouraged. This programme of work has required the building of 17 kilometres of fences around nine sites.

In addition the project is managing non woodland habitat such as upland heath and bog, including an area of hill top totaling 450ha. Stock have been removed by the farmer from this hill land to allow the development of heather, cleuch woodlands and upland scrub. This will provide valuable habitat for the nationally scarce Black grouse, which are present in the area, and which thrive in a mosaic of scrub, heath and native woodland.

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