

# Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere

Scotland's **First**

**Building Opportunity in the Biosphere**



***“Developing a harmonious relationship between man and the natural environment”***





The Building Opportunity in the Biosphere project is a partnership being part-financed by the Scottish Government and the European Community Ayrshire and Dumfries & Galloway LEADER 2007-2013 Programmes; Dumfries and Galloway Council; East Ayrshire Council; South Ayrshire Council; Scottish Natural Heritage; Forestry Commission Scotland; Scottish Environment Protection Agency; Southern Uplands Partnership.

*Endurance riding, Glenluce Bay*

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and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere

*Cover Image: Storytellers at Culzean Castle*



## Background to the project

### How was the project developed?

The public agencies of SW Scotland started looking into the opportunities that UNESCO Biosphere status could bring to the region back in 2005. Following a long period of public consultation and extensive study into the regions challenges and the potential benefits that the UNESCO status could bring it was soon recognised that through a partnership approach a range of common issues being experienced by communities, businesses and other stakeholders in South West Scotland could be addressed. These included ageing and falling populations; low incomes; limited economic and housing opportunities; relative remoteness and poor tourist accessibility; development pressures on sensitive landscapes and the need to enhance degraded landscapes; the challenges of climate change/sea level rise.

Fundamental to the concept of a successful biosphere is the development of community and stakeholder partnerships so a broad range of public private, third sector and community organisations were brought together to pursue the goal. The partnerships first achievement ahead of gaining UNESCO Biosphere status was to develop and support the LEADER funded Building Opportunity in the Biosphere project.

The BOB project was designed to build awareness and support across the region ensuring that when the designation was confirmed there would be sufficient momentum of support for the opportunities it would bring to ensure that key funding partners would be committed to the continuation of the process.



*Ballantrae Farmers' Market*



## Who was involved in the project? Individuals and organisations

The project was line managed by Pip Tabor of the Southern Uplands Partnership (SUP) on behalf of the Biosphere Partnership Board. The Biosphere Partnership Board provided a framework for a smaller Biosphere Working Group that has led on the development of the biosphere and given guidance to the BOB project through the SUP project manager.

SUP recruited two project officers Ed Forrest and Nic Coombey to the Building Opportunity in the Biosphere team to lead on day to day development, networking and awareness raising across the 5268 sq/km that the proposed biosphere was to cover. The two officers started in post on 1st April 2011.

After 14 months Nic Coombey left the team and was subsequently replaced at the end of August / beginning of September 2012 by two part time officers Ruth Bowbeer and Nick Ward for the final 7 months of the project.

An extensive array of individuals and organisations were involved in the project in one capacity or another. These ranged from community councils to private businesses and individual members of the public.

Through running eleven small projects across the region, eleven networking conferences, attendance at fairs, events and talks the project officers generated over £30,000 of volunteer in kind equivalent to over 350 volunteer days in two years. There was formal contact with over 900 unique individuals and numerous more whose name and address details were not recorded. There were over 200 repeat contacts with a hard core of 30 or 40 individuals from across the biosphere who developed sufficient interest and support for the biosphere to want to attend multiple events.



Cycling at Gatehouse



## What were the aims and objectives of the project?

This Project was aimed at facilitating processes of awareness raising, understanding, capacity building and practical action during the period in which the UNESCO Nomination for Biosphere status for Galloway and Southern Ayrshire was progressing. With notification of Biosphere status not due until 2012 it was considered essential to maintain the momentum already developed and to avoid frustrating Biosphere stakeholders by beginning to develop and realise opportunities which the concepts underlying Biosphere status presented.



*Wonderful World of Water, Upper Nithsdale*

The focus was around bringing greater understanding of, enhancements to and benefits from Galloway and Southern Ayrshire's natural environment and the ecosystem goods and services that the area provides. The project sought to develop community and stakeholder processes to unlock the opportunities which existed in the assets and potential of the area in the form of ecosystem goods and services – visitor attractions (coast & country); natural environment; arts and crafts; renewable energy; food related SMEs; renewable energy; carbon trading; river basin management planning, forestry - and in the people and the strong sense of community and culture of the area. The ultimate goal being to work towards a model for regional development in South West Scotland which fully integrates people, communities, jobs, culture and nature in a way which is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

- The Project aimed to bring practical meaning and tangible action to South West Scotland's proposed Biosphere status by employing two Biosphere project officers.
- The Project had three discrete but inter-related components that were related to establishing a Biosphere in South West Scotland:
  - Support and develop processes and projects aimed at building awareness and understanding of natural values associated with the Biosphere. To support a small project fund managed by the Project staff and used to support small Biosphere projects. The mechanism of managing this fund had to be finalised with LEADER staff and all decisions on its use were approved by LEADER and representatives of the Biosphere Partnership Board.
  - Support the identification of assets and realisation of strategic opportunities deriving from an image of high environmental quality and sustainable development associated with the Biosphere.
  - Pro-actively engage with communities, business, schools and other organisations to bring forward projects which support the environmental, economic, cultural, educational and sustainable development aims of the Biosphere



Coastal footpath at Borgue

## How was the funding package assembled?

The total project cost was £290,008.

Leader Ayrshire	48.22%	£139,830.00
Leader Dumfries and Galloway	25.00%	£72,502.00
Dumfries and Galloway Council	9.17%	£26,591.00
SEPA	0.66%	£1,917.00
Forestry Commission Scotland	0.66%	£1,917.00
South Ayrshire Council	0.66%	£1,917.00
East Ayrshire Council	0.66%	£1,917.00
Scottish Natural Heritage	0.66%	£1,917.00
<b>Total Cash Income</b>	<b>85.69%</b>	<b>£248,508.00</b>
In Kind (Volunteers)	10.34%	£30,000.00
In Kind SUP	3.97%	£11,500.00
<b>Total In Kind</b>	<b>14.31%</b>	<b>£41,500.00</b>
<b>Total Project Value</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>£290,008.00</b>

## How much money did Leader provide?

Leader Ayrshire provided £139,830 which was 48.22% of the total project cost.

Leader Dumfries and Galloway provided £72,502 which was 25% of the total project cost.

*"To make life in our Biosphere better while caring for the natural environment"*



## The Project Experience

### When did the project take place?

The project began on April 1st 2011 with the start of contract for the two biosphere project officers and ran for two years up to March 31st 2013.

### What actually happened?

The two project officers initially appointed were all ready reasonably well networked with communities and organisations across Dumfries and Galloway but did not have the same range of contacts and knowledge in South or East Ayrshire. However few people had a clear idea as to what a biosphere was or the potential it could offer to the region. As a result the first few months of the project were spent on developing new contacts and rekindling old ones whilst going out and about talking to a wide range of people, communities and organisations about exactly what the biosphere was and how they could get involved. Over 200 meetings were held that varied widely from low key one to one discussions with individuals to attending organised meetings and giving both formal and informal presentations.

These meetings had a number of very positive spin offs;

- People who hadn't yet heard of the biosphere were made aware of it
- People who were aware all ready of the biosphere saw that something was happening
- They gave people the opportunity to find out exactly what it meant and didn't mean
- They engendered wide spread interest and support – as demonstrated by the number of people who subsequently attended multiple BOB events
- And most importantly they offered the opportunity for people to begin to get involved directly with making the biosphere work.





### Thematic Groups

One of the most successful aspects of Building Opportunity in the Biosphere was a series of themed events that were developed by the BOB officers that focused on particular issues and opportunities that Biosphere status offered. These events were well attended and generally followed a similar format of key note speakers from outside the area, followed by examples of best practice within the biosphere and workshops in the afternoon that explored specific issues in more detail.

These events offered fantastic networking opportunities for communities and organisations who traditionally just worked within their own very local areas to now meet and work together across arbitrary administrative boundaries in the name of the biosphere.

Perhaps the most inspirational of all the events was Tourism and Local Produce which touched on an issue that all present were familiar with on how we identify and promote the regions key assets. This event led to the development of a Sense of Place Toolkit for the biosphere.

Date	Event	Number of Attendees	Key Outcomes
30th June 2011	Challenges and Opportunities in the Biosphere – New Cumnock	30	The bringing together of academics, communities and agencies to start base lining the biosphere.
22nd September 2011	Tourism and Local Produce in the Biosphere – New Galloway	37	A small group went forward to develop the Sense of Place project for the biosphere
24th November 2011	Changes to Landuse, Policy to Practice – Dumfries	72	Led to a second conference at Maybole.
23rd February 2012	Sustainable Landuse in the Biosphere – Maybole	41	The successful trailing of a Landuse workshop exploring strategic challenges related to changing landuse.
12th September 2012	Revenue from Recreation – Gatehouse of Fleet	31	A group of activity providers got together to produce a leaflet promoting Adventure Activities in the biosphere.
14th and 15th September 2012	Landscape Perspectives – Gatehouse of Fleet	47	A new volunteer group was developed to survey and record designed landscapes in Galloway.
26nd September 2012	Learning from Experience – New Cumnock	85	A group expressed a desire to explore SDE in the biosphere further subject to funding.
8th November 2012	Water Voles in the Biosphere – New Galloway	32	A small group are exploring a biosphere water vole survey project
15th November 2012	Art in the Biosphere – New Galloway	24	A number of new Arts projects going forward as part of the year of Natural Scotland as a result of the inspiration the biosphere has offered.
6th March 2013	Business in the Biosphere – New Galloway	41	Presentation biosphere business case studies and networking opportunity.
26th March 2013	Sustainable Communities – New Cumnock	tbc	An international event that offered inspirational learning from other biospheres

The biosphere also played host in partnership with 'Assist Social Capital' to a study tour based in the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere designed to highlight how social

enterprise in the biosphere can benefit rural communities. A range of delegates from other biosphere around the world and in the UK attended and shared their experiences.



*Landuse Event Workshop, South Ayrshire*

### Small Projects

Within its budgets the BOB project had an allocation of £30k, to be matched with £30k of volunteer time, for work with communities, organisations or special interest groups in the development of projects that would further understanding, involvement and the wider aims of the biosphere.

This budget was used to develop and support a wide range of community projects across the biosphere. The details of the projects are shown in the table overleaf. Quite a few additional projects were also considered but due to timescales, funding or 'in kind' commitment

these didn't progress. However the discussion that took place with the various community groups did help to raise the profile of the biosphere and the potential it offered to the region.

A number of the projects highlighted an interest in specific areas that led to some of the more focused events mentioned previously such as Landscape Perspectives, Water Voles and Revenue from Recreation.

All of the projects brought people into contact with the biosphere many of whom would otherwise not have done.



Project	Location	Description	Partners	Key Outputs
<b>Ballantrae Farmers Market</b>	Ayrshire	To set up and trial the concept of a farmers market promoting jointly D&G and Ayrshire local produce in South Ayrshire	Ballantrae CC, Ayrshire Food Network, Savour the Flavours	Promoted local produce Promoted Biosphere Supported local economy Led to the development of future farmers markets
<b>Cally Temple</b>	Galloway	Involving volunteers in the survey and recording of our cultural heritage.	Gatehouse Development Initiative, Scottish Historic Gardens Society	Recording of historic site New Interpretation Conference on recording designed landscapes New volunteer group on recording landscape features
<b>Community Garden Dyking</b>	Ayrshire	Teaching of traditional skills whilst maintaining and enhancing community gardens.	Girvan Community Garden, Ballantrae CC	2 x Traditional skills courses 2 x communities involved
<b>Dalmellington School Badger Hide</b>	Ayrshire	An opportunity to involve the whole community in the creation of a local wildlife viewing spectacle.	Dalmellington Primary School, Craigengillan Estate, local community	Partnership between local school, community and estate New Badger Hide Educational Events New nature based tourism attraction
<b>Holm Wood Habitat Works</b>	Galloway	Volunteer involvement in the habitat works for water voles	Cree Valley Community Woodland	Widespread volunteer involvement New Interpretation Conference on Water Vole priority species Group to explore future Water Vole recording
<b>Mighty Mushroom Hunt</b>	Galloway Ayrshire	A series of public events focussed on creating greater understanding of the biosphere fungi, its association with good environmental management and its use as local culinary produce.	Dumfries Biodiversity Partnership, Scottish Mycological Society	8 public events run across the biosphere Raised the profile of fungi and its association with a well managed natural environment Promoted local produce through foraging
<b>Ness Glen Footpath</b>	Ayrshire	Footpath improvements that enable visitors to experience a site of special scientific interest, visit the new Dark Sky Observatory and support the new Round House cafe.	Conservation Trust Volunteers, Craigengillan Estate	Improved access down a historic pathway Provided access to a SSSI Formed an attractive partnership linking Dark Skies with the Biosphere, a local estate and a local business

Project	Location	Description	Partners	Key Outputs
<b>Newton Stewart Walking Festival</b>	Galloway	A programme of walks and talks that took visitors into the very heart of the biosphere	Newton Stewart Walking Festival	Over 20 guided walks An evening presentation on the biosphere Over 400 participants Revenue from Recreation Conference
<b>South West Scotland Landscapes</b>	Galloway	A programme of recording and restoring our historic landscape features	Gatehouse Development Initiative	Recording, clearing out and restoration of old landscape feature by volunteers
<b>Wild Spring Festival Celebrating Scotland's 1<sup>st</sup> Biosphere</b>	Galloway Ayrshire	A programme of events aimed at raising awareness of the wonderful wildlife of SW Scotland and the biosphere.	Destination Dumfries and Galloway, Wild Seasons,	Extended for the first time outside D&G to take in Ayrshire parts of the Biosphere Over 100 events being promoted and associated with Biosphere Dedicated page in brochure
<b>Wonderful World of Water</b>	Galloway Ayrshire	A programme of after school clubs aimed at introducing young people to the riparian environment through fishing.	Ayrshire Rivers Trust, Galloway Fisheries Trust, Nith Rivers Trust, SEPA	Involved 3 rivers trusts 3 ranger groups 3 communities Over 30 children





## Events and Fairs

The project officers took a travelling display with children's activities to a range of events and fairs that took place both inside and outside of the biosphere and served to raise the profile of the opportunities that it brought to the region.

Quantifying the value of attendance at these events can be very difficult as a large number of people are spoken to but few are prepared

to have their details recording for monitoring purposes. However despite this they do offer the opportunity to come into contact with a far greater cross section of individuals than would normally come to a formal meeting or presentation and that in itself definitely made them worth attending.

Date	Event	Location
August 2011	Galloway Country Fair	Drumlanrig Castle
October 2011	Day of the Regions	New Galloway
October 2011	Community Event	Girvan
March 2012	Environment Fair	Dumfries
June 2012	Celebrate Ayrshire	Culzean Castle
June 2012	Royal Highland Show	Edinburgh
June 2012	World Oceans Day	Port William
August 2012	Ayr Farmer Market	Ayr
August 2012	Galloway Country Fair	Drumlanrig Castle
October 2012	Ballantrae Farmers Market	Ballantrae

## Learning Journeys

In April 2012 a small group of artists, writers and designers from SW Scotland embarked on a learning journey to Slovakia that included the East Carpathian Biosphere Reserve and the Poloniny Dark Sky Park. The learning journey aimed to inspire those participating to share their experiences and to develop new approaches that would celebrate and engage us in the natural, cultural and celestial environment of the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere. On their return the participants re-enacted their Slovakian experiences with equivalent experiences that

are offered in the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere. The results of their Learning Journey led to an Art in the Biosphere event held in the Catstrand in November 2012 involving a mixture performances, exhibitions and installations inspired by the journey. A number of the participants involved have since gone on to develop other new projects inspired by their biosphere experiences that will further understanding and engagement by both the creative community and the general populace of the biosphere.

### Business Involvement

An important part of the success of the biosphere is for it to engage with local businesses and to help influence or celebrate changes in practice that result in a more environmentally sustainable approach that benefits both the natural environment and the local economy. The project officers have involved local businesses in various events and projects focussed on the sale and promotion of local produce, through attendance at farmers markets and speaking at local business gatherings.

One of the notable successes was through a group of businesses who all ready showed an enlightened and sustainable approach. They joined forces to write up case studies that highlighted their positive contributions to the social, environmental and educational ethos of the biosphere. The case studies which were launched at the Doing Business in the Biosphere Event attended by over 40 participants and designed to act as an inspiration to other businesses both large and small across the biosphere showing how they too can contribute and importantly how small changes can actually help them to both save money and reduce their impact on the environment.



### Education

Learning and education has been a key aspect of much of the BOB teams work. Project officers have led both classroom and field session with local schools, lectured on undergraduate courses at both Ayr and Dumfries University campuses, used the small project fund to develop a partnership after school club focused on 'water' and ran a major Learning from Experience conference involving the three LEA's, schools and environmental practitioners from across the biosphere. In addition project officers have worked with "difficult to reach" teenagers through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme by running "Navigating the Biosphere" focused on Cornish Hill at the Stinchar Bridge with the group using navigation as a means of learning about man's influence on the land, historical places, geology, topography, landscape, habitat and plant species in the biosphere.

### How was the project delivered?

The project was overseen by Pip Tabor of the Southern Uplands Partnership on behalf of the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere working group. Working alongside the Biosphere co-ordinator Nigel Wallace, they gave direction to ensure the BOB project achieved its original aims.

Implementation was initially through two full time project officers, and subsequently one full time and two part time. The project officers developed an extensive network of contacts through meetings, events and word of mouth who all had an interest in the biosphere. Of

particular note were the efforts made to break down the barriers of cross border working between the three local authority areas.

The biosphere partnership board and working group both used their own extensive network of contacts to help identify both individuals and organisation who could offer the biosphere either new partnership opportunities or examples of best practice that could be learnt from. Critical to the future success of the biosphere is maintaining and building on those relationships that have been developed over the last two years.



## What marketing was undertaken?

A number of different marketing opportunities were explored and implemented. Within the Biosphere website a section was developed to highlight the Building Opportunities in the biosphere project. Social media was used through the development of facebook and twitter accounts and an e-newsletter was circulated at intervals throughout the project.

A number of print publications were developed specifically a promotion on what the biosphere can offer that went into 14,000 accommodation providers bedroom packs across Dumfries and Galloway and Ayrshire. An Adventure Activities leaflet was developed that highlighted the opportunities for guided adventures with outdoor providers across the region. A series of business case studies were produced to show how businesses could gain from taking a more sustainable approach to their operations. Postcards were printed, some to raise awareness of the biosphere and what it was about, others to engender involvement specifically in the Sense of Place project.

The Sense of Place project led to the development of an online toolkit complete with photo library for use by communities and businesses to promote their association with the biosphere.

A number of the projects funded through the small project fund produced leaflets or interpretation boards that highlighted and marketed the BOB project, notably Newton Stewart Walking Festival, Holm Wood, Cally Temple, Wild Spring and The Mighty Mushroom Hunt. This involvement has helped ensure that the BOB project will continue to have a legacy after the funding runs out.

There have also been a number of press releases in the local media highlighting events and activities including pieces on BBC radio and BBC TV. The exact impact of these is very difficult to ascertain but its fair to say that it will have resulted in an increase in awareness raising.

## Who benefitted from the project?

The Biosphere has never been seen as being a quick fix to the issues that SW Scotland faces and the true benefits will take some years to truly materialise.

However since gaining the UNESCO designation and through the work of BOB officers highlighting the opportunities that it affords we are aware of a number of community, environmental and arts projects that are being pursued that make use of the biosphere designation to help highlight the strategic context of their project. Some of these include;

- The development of an International Environmental Arts Festival in D&G
- Three communities are hoping to take ownership of redundant buildings for future use as bunk houses with other associated commercial enterprises and see the biosphere as adding to the business case for their projects.
- 'Pollen' funded through Year of Natural Scotland is a series of performance events that are pollinated, grow and then move between SW Scotland, Provence Dark Sky Park and the Tatra Mountains Biosphere.
- East Ayrshire and D&G Councils are exploring the potential for a joint approach to 'outdoor learning' in upper Nithsdale as a result of the biosphere education conference.

We can also quantify the impact of the BOB project through the contact it has had with individuals and organisations which has helped address the key aim of understanding and involvement with the biosphere.

Almost 1200 records of contact with individuals were recorded by the BOB team through attendance at fairs, events, meetings or individuals taking part in questionnaires. Of those there were 900 unique individuals who recorded one contact only and a group of

around 40 who took a serious interest in the biosphere and as a result attended multiple events.

In addition there were a large number of volunteers who took part in the small projects generating over £30,000 worth of volunteer time, and as all ready noted an even greater number of individuals who were spoken in an informal context whose details were not recorded

The BOB officers have also been active in exploring the potential for future strategic partnership projects either in the name of the biosphere or building on the opportunities the designation brings. There is a willingness by a number of partners to explore these opportunities in more detail as time and funding allows.

### How did the final budget turn out?

The overall budget for Building Opportunity in the Biosphere was £290,008. The final project spend is on course to be within budget.

## What lessons have been learnt?

The project fund had one or two challenges.

Due to changes to EU umbrella funding requirement the BOB project was not able to hand a grant over to third parties for their project. Rather the third party had to request suppliers / contractors to invoice the BOB project direct, this created additional work for SUP in administering the funding.

The in kind was specifically identified as being volunteer time – the reality was that many community projects were put off involvement as they found the 50:50 match with volunteer hours onerous. Many suggested that they would have preferred to do a mix of other funding + volunteer time.

As a project funded through two different LEADER programmes there were challenges in how they both administered and interpreted aspects of the project. Both programmes used different grant intervention rates, used different grant claim forms and had different definitions for their outputs. One LEADER programme looked at the BOB project in its totality, the other only considered aspects that took place within its local authority area. At times with technical queries both programmes had different answers. In future a concordat between the two programmes enabling one programme to take the lead on advising, administering and auditing the funding through a shared claim form would be extremely useful.





## Will the project be mainstreamed or transferred?

From the earliest public consultations there has been strong feedback from the communities of the biosphere that they feel it should be administered in partnership with the public sector but not by them. This was one of the key reasons for the Southern Uplands Partnership hosting the BOB project on behalf of the working group and partnership board.

There is widespread interest in the opportunities the Biosphere designation brings to the region, demonstrated by the attendance of community, business and public sector representatives at the various events that have taken place over the last two years. As all ready detailed these groups are on the whole keen to see the BOB project continue as facilitators who can bring

together complimentary opportunities from around the biosphere without being tied to artificial administrative boundaries.

However the BOB project and biosphere designation has in some respects come at an unfortunate time with funding both from the public sector and otherwise at an all time low. However the BOB project has demonstrated the value of having project officers available on the ground to facilitate the understanding and development of opportunities between the public sector, private interests and community groups. A number of agencies are looking at the options for continuing this work and some discussion have been held with funding partners such as Heritage Lottery.



Cairnholy

## Detail the sustainability of the project and /or exit strategy

The BOB project has done much to lay the foundations for a future Biosphere organisation. The officers have developed a wealth of knowledge and contacts across the region and been instrumental in developing understanding and enthusiasm for the opportunities it brings. In the short term there is likely to be a lull in the

work of the BOB team, but the formation of the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation), which is currently with the charities commission, will we hope bring a new impetus for funding and the formation of a longer term strategic approach.

## Describe how the project has addressed the LEADER issues selected in the application

The BOB project set out to fulfil the following issues identified in the two LEADER programmes;

### Linking Communities and Land Together

The BOB project has been all about encouraging and helping communities and business to recognise and value the natural assets that the biosphere possesses. One of the key ways we have done this is through the development of an online Sense of Place toolkit which encouraged people living and working in the biosphere to identify their own special places, their favourite activities, local produce etc and to use this to promote their communities association with the biosphere.

Most of the smaller projects run through BOB have focused on getting participants to engage, or understand land management past or present better. From Cally Temple where volunteers were involved in archaeological surveys and looked at the designed landscape of predecessors, to the Mighty Mushroom Hunt which got people foraging for food and explained its associations with management of the land.

The wide range of talks and presentation that the BOB officers have given all ultimately focus on that harmonious relationship that we need to maintain between man and the natural environment.

### Building Rural Community Capacity

The thematic groups that the BOB project have developed and run have been a fantastic opportunity to encourage networking across the biosphere. They have been an opportunity to learn and exchange best practice from other organisations outside of SW Scotland but also to showcase the many positive things that are all ready happening within the biosphere. The number of 'regulars' that attended multiple events shows how useful and inspiring communities and community organisations found these events.

The final Sustainable communities event was an opportunity learn from other biosphere around the world and to bring together some of the different organisations operating across the biosphere and working with communities.

### Revitalising Rural Communities

The BOB project has strived to create a greater awareness of the opportunities the Biosphere offers for nature based tourism through projects such as Sense of Place, but we have also been instrumental in bringing together three different local education authorities to highlight the opportunity that the biosphere brings for outdoor learning to the young people of SW Scotland. Following the highly successful Learning from Experience event a project entitled Pathway to the Land was developed to build on the conference outcomes, only failing due to the challenges of identifying match funding. As previously mentioned the opportunities for joint working on Outdoor Learning in upper Nithsdale (NE corner of the biosphere) are currently being investigated by two LEA's also a result of the Learning from Experience event.







*Lochans in Galloway Forest Park*

