



FINDHORN WATERSHED INITIATIVE



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Bob Laughton
Director
**Findhorn, Nairn and
Lossie Rivers Trust**



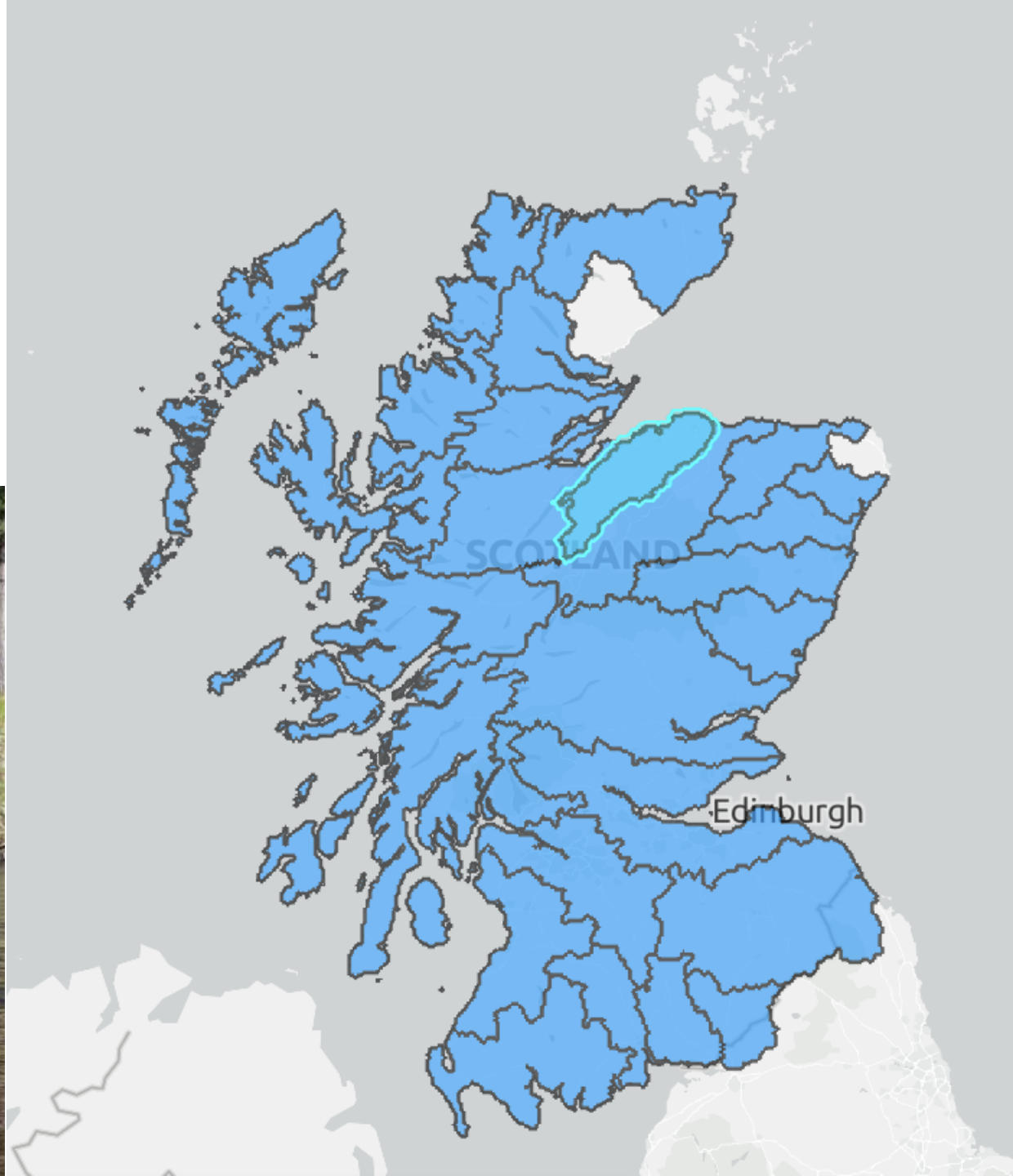
Elle Adams
Strategy Lead
**Findhorn Watershed
Initiative**



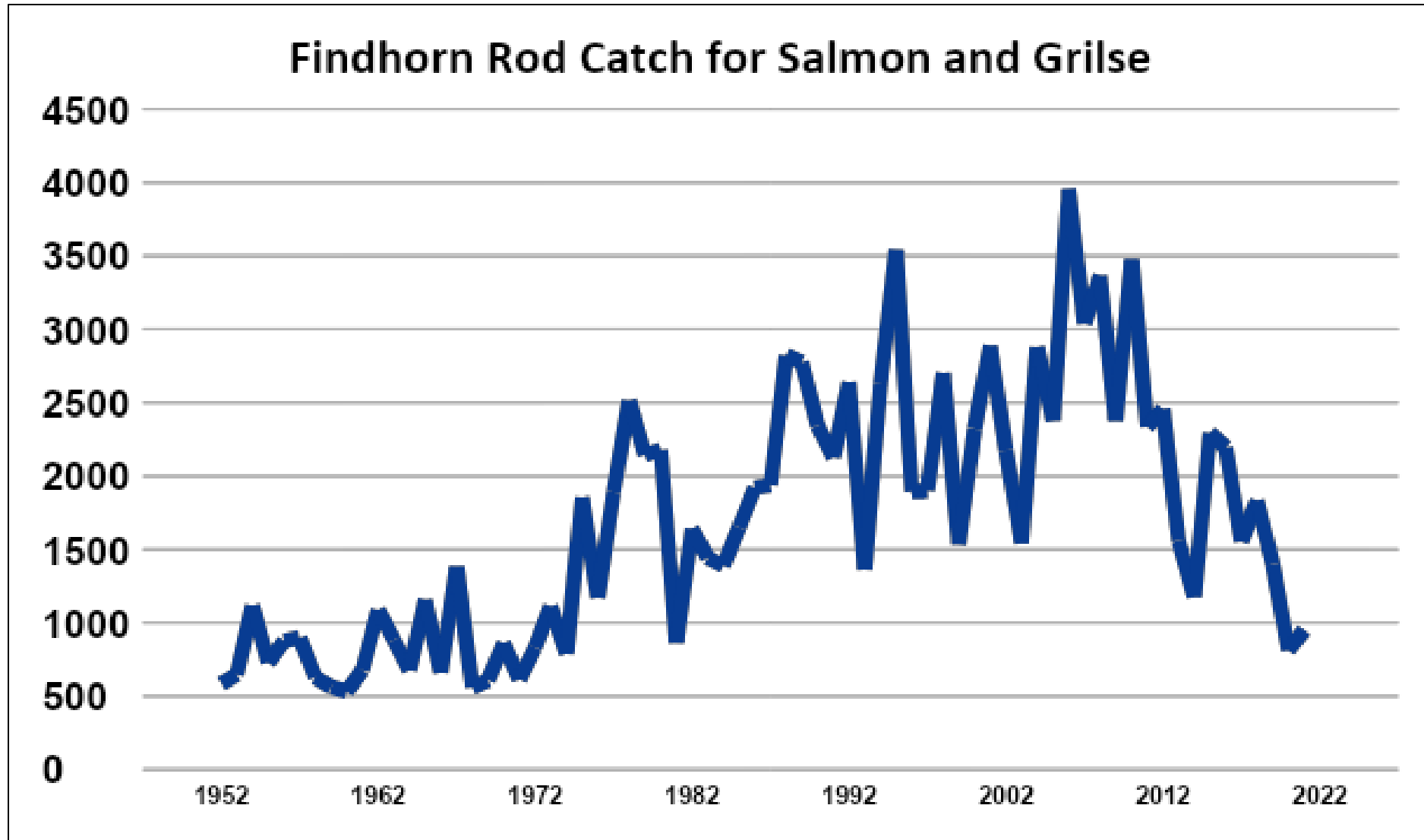
Guy Harris
Project Officer
**Findhorn Watershed
Initiative**



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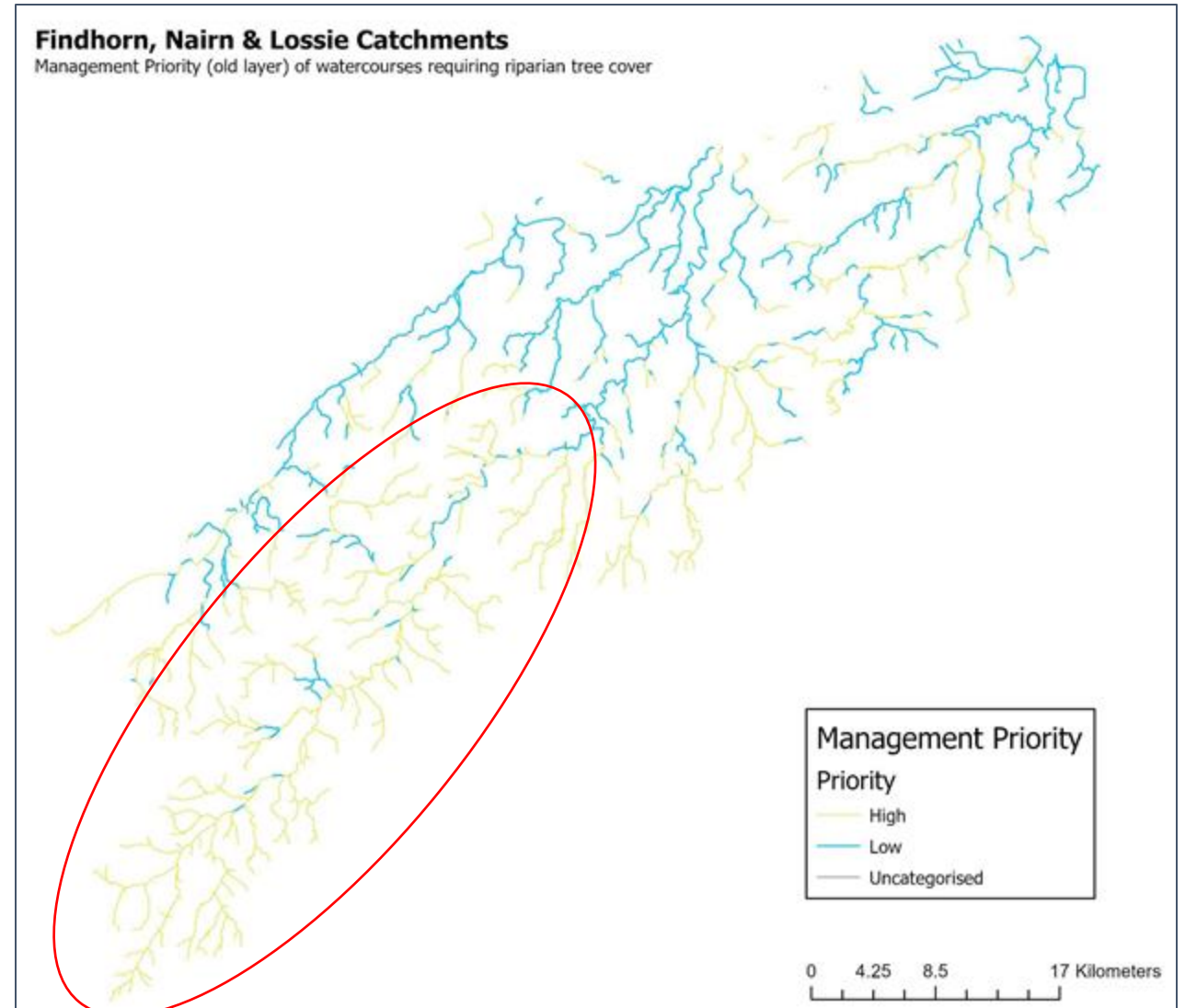


Salmon in decline – the survival of a species



Climate crisis and rising river temperatures

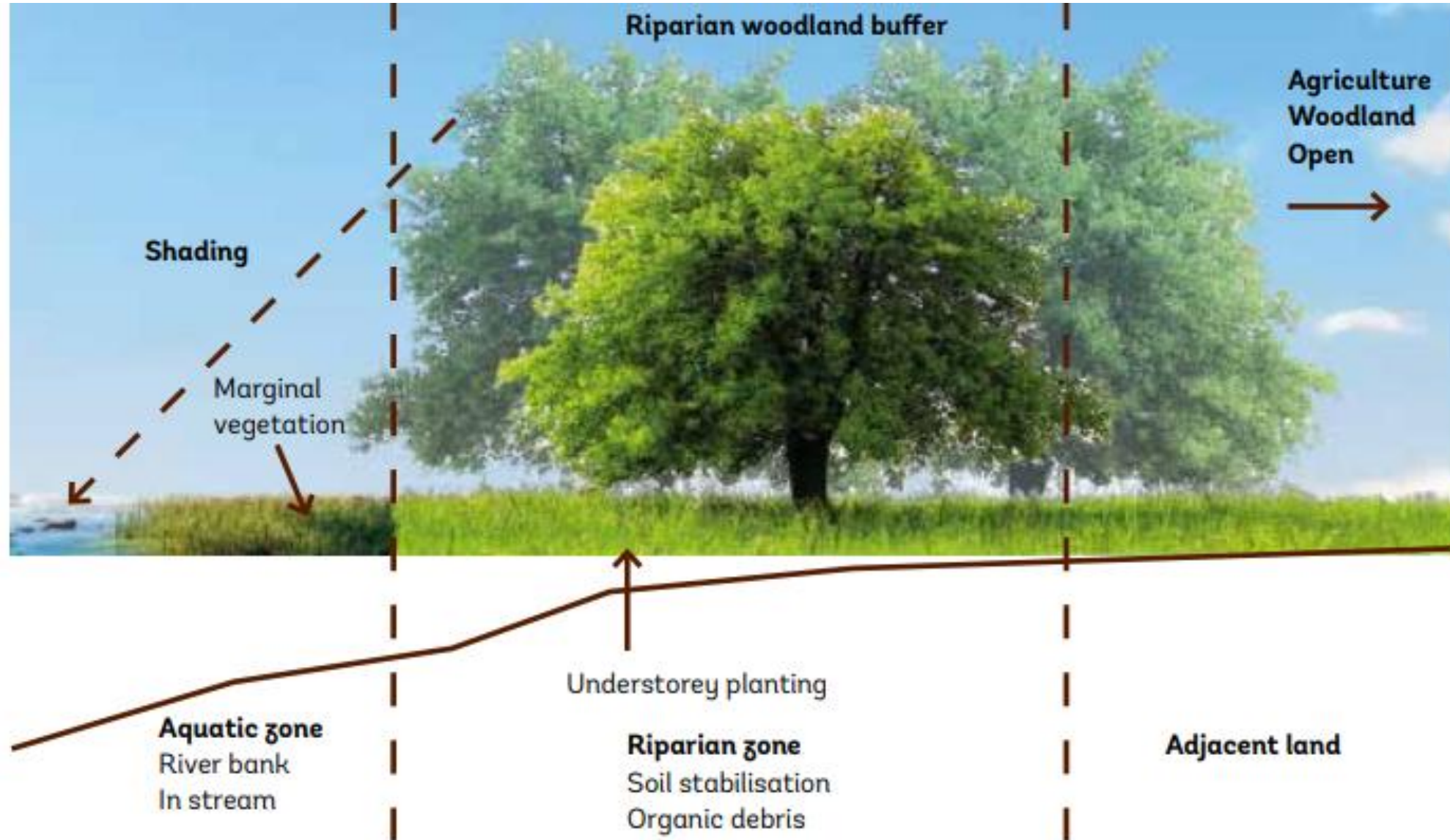
Scottish Government
river temperature maps
identify **Upper Findhorn**
as priority area for river
shading



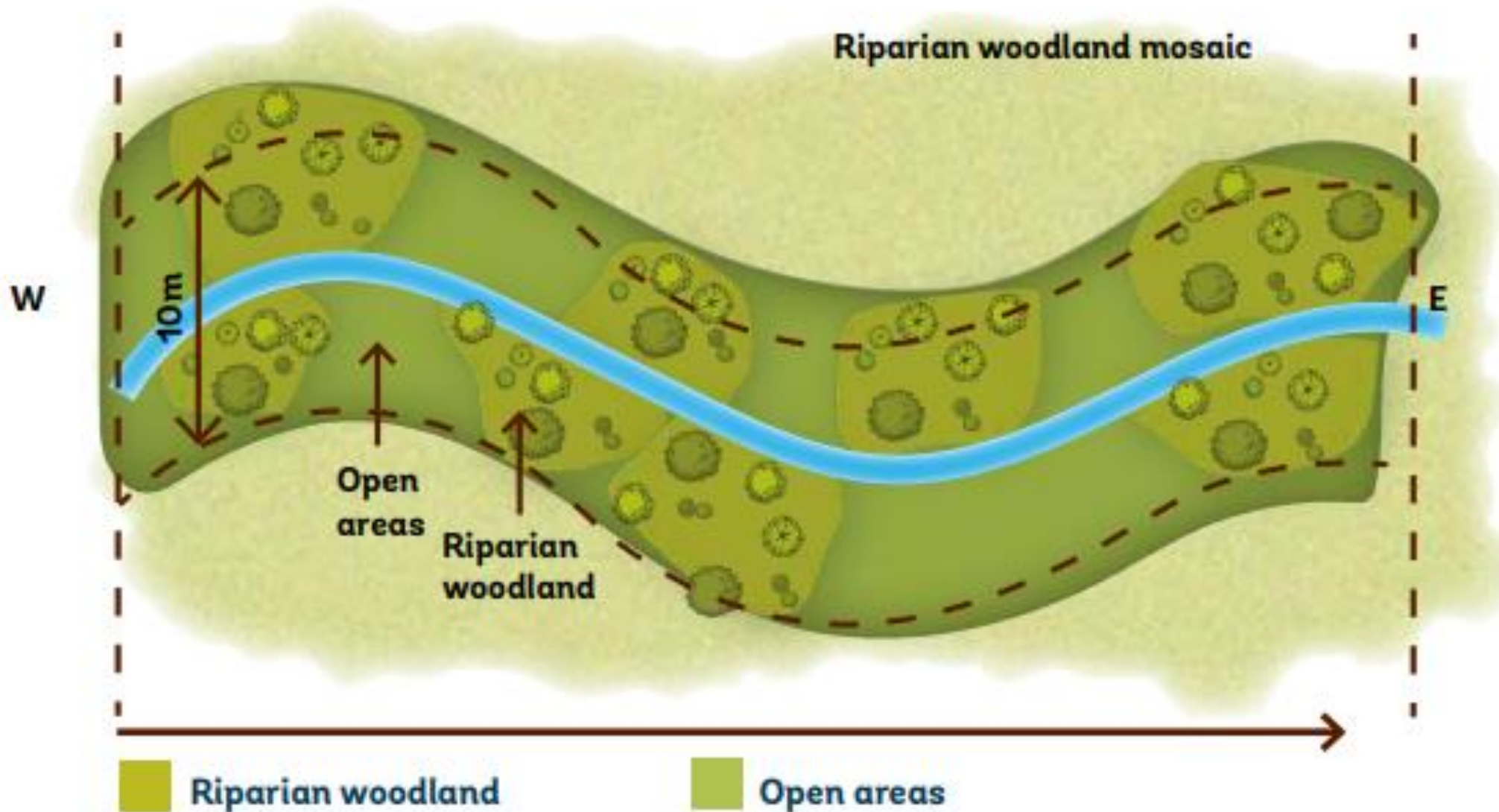
An aerial photograph of a lush green valley. A river winds through the center of the valley, surrounded by dense green trees and vegetation. In the background, rolling hills and mountains are visible under a cloudy sky. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

There is an urgent need to rapidly
restore native river woodlands
at a landscape- scale

How do river woodlands work?



How do river woodlands work?





A multi-generational vision to **restore** a mosaic of nature-rich habitats, **inspire** a culture of nature connection, and **enable** a thriving local nature-based economy.



Nature recovery

- Healthy, connected **river woodlands**, from the Monadhliath to the Moray Firth
- A landscape supporting an **abundance and diversity of life**
- Wilder rivers shaped by natural processes increasing **resilience to climate risks**
- A watershed fulfilling its **carbon-storing potential**, from peatlands to saltmarshes





Connected Communities

- Increased nature **connectedness** supporting wellbeing and quality of life
- People feeling a deeper sense of **pride and belonging** within their watershed
- Fostering a spirit of **stewardship** and hope through restoring the places we love





Regenerative rural economy

- Increased opportunities for high quality **training**, green **jobs**, and nature-based **enterprises**
- Income from **natural capital** investment **benefiting all inhabitants** of the watershed
- A river catchment accelerating Scotland's **just transition** towards a **wellbeing economy**

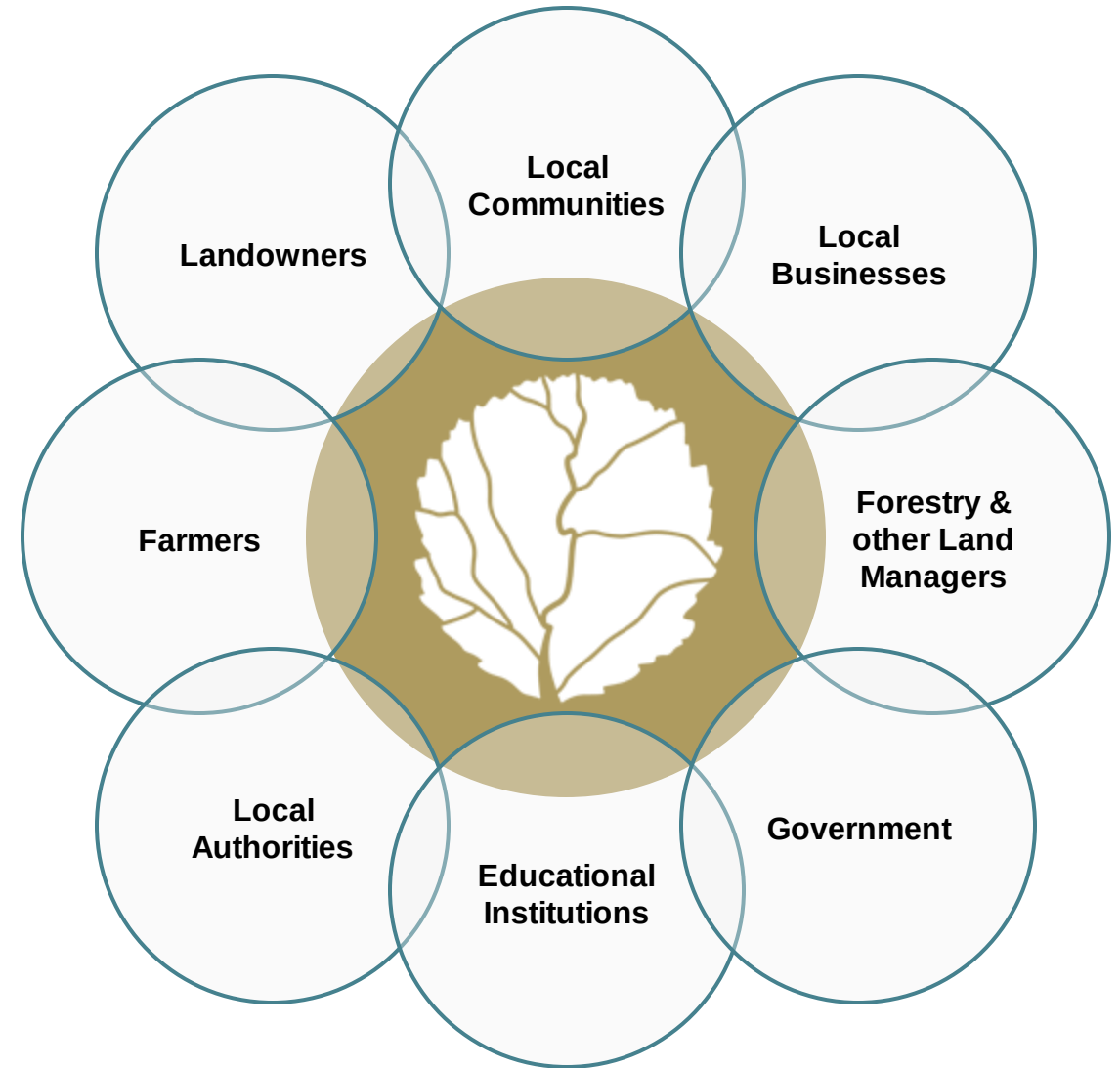




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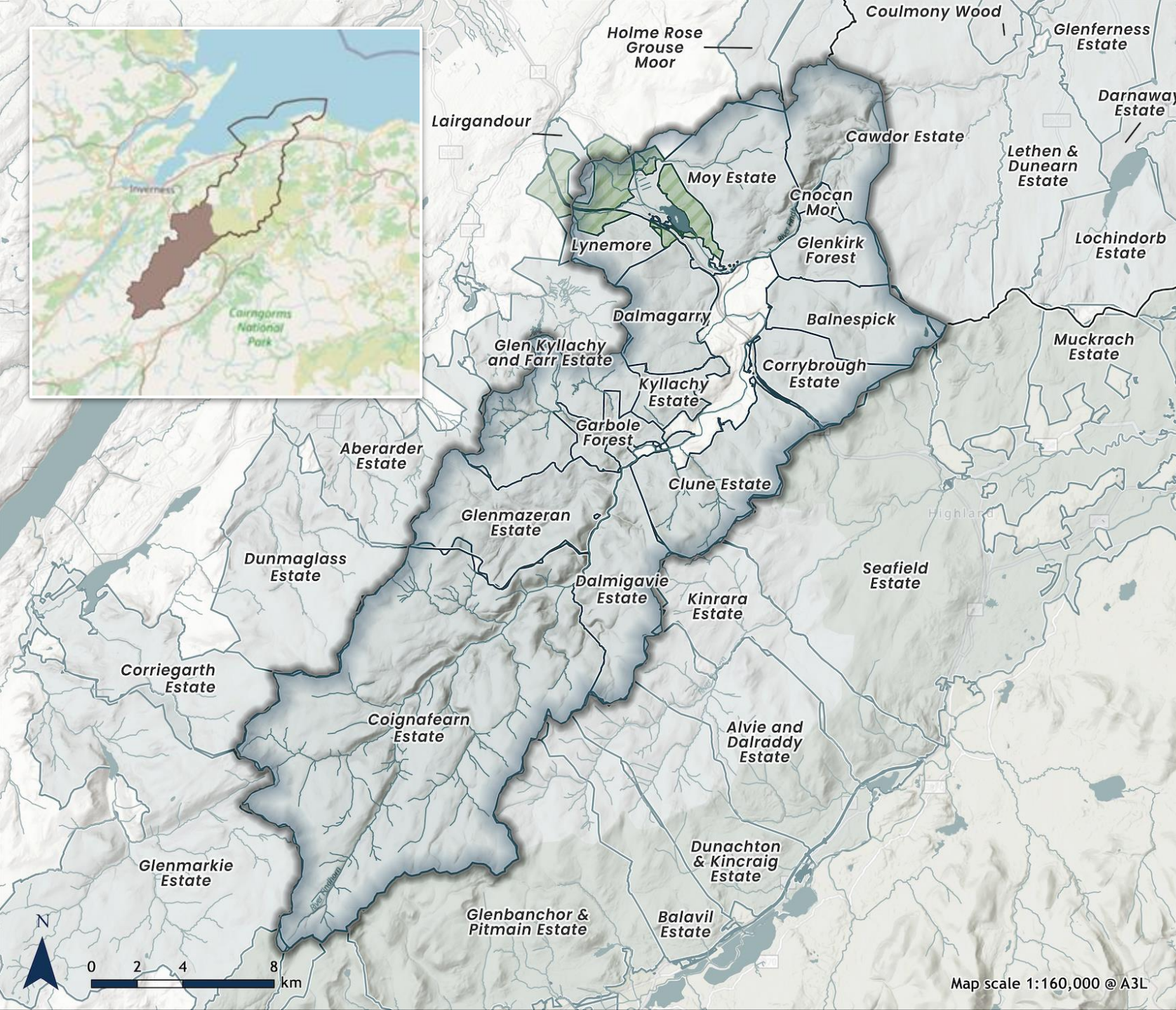
A trusted place-based
nature conservation
intermediary

Working across sectors and
with a range of key
catchment stakeholders



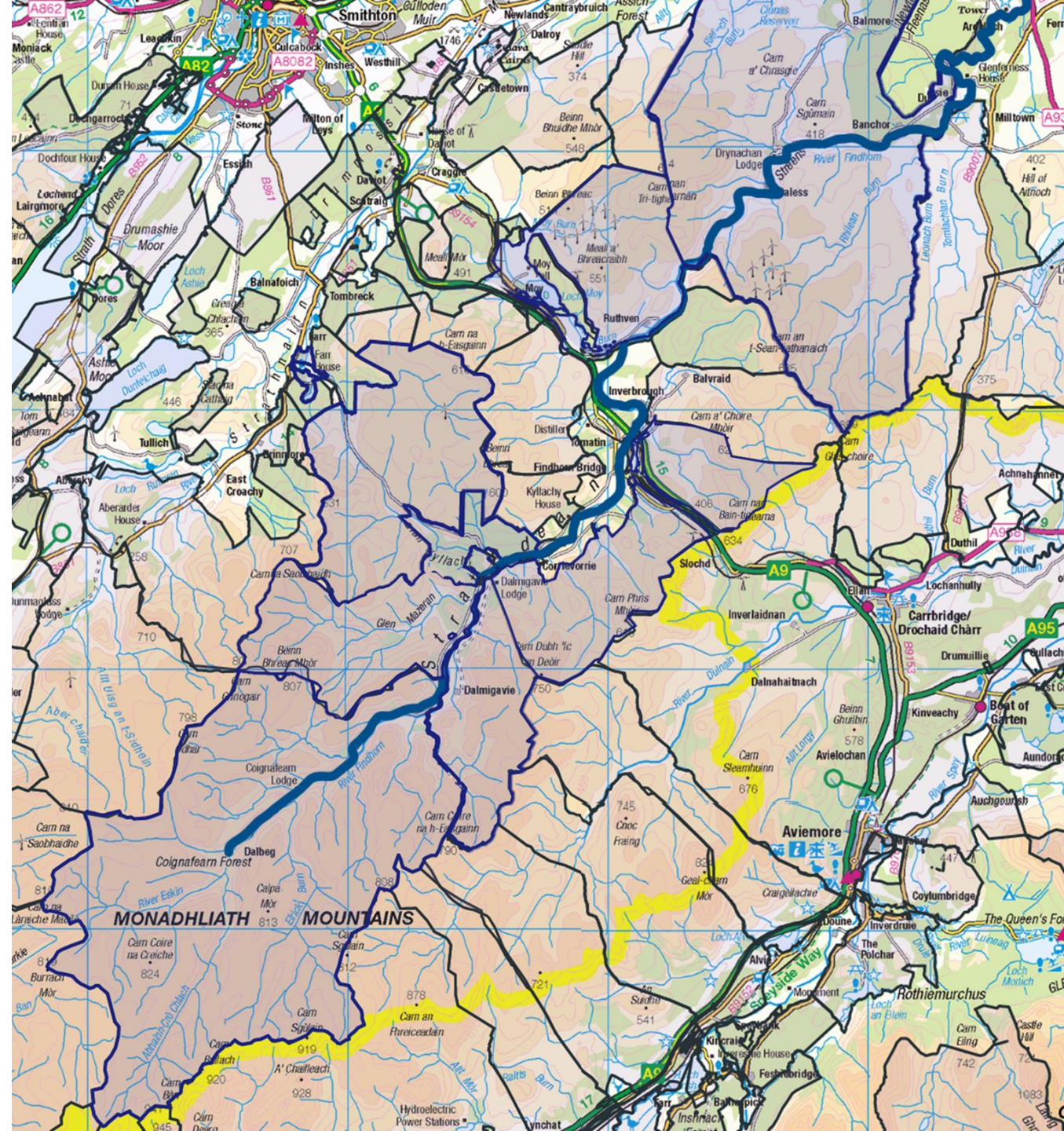
Beginning in the Upper Catchment

- In line with identified SG temperature map priority areas
- A collaborative approach to 'riverwoods' riparian woodland regeneration
- Engaging landowners, land managers, as well as the local community and other key stakeholders such as the deer management group



Progress so far:

- 10 estates met with and engaged
- 5 estates visited and plans developed
- Six contractors working on baseline:
 - FWPM
 - Aerial
 - Invertebrates
 - Hydromorphology
 - Woodland (including Ancient)
 - Herbivore management
- Approx. 250+ha woodland creation opportunities being developed (*excluding Coignafearn which requires its own approach*)
- Catchment deer management plan in development



An example: Glen Kyllachy

- Existing seed source
- Regen there but overgrazed
- Ideal topography
- Possibility of expansion



Funders for the first phase – until March 2024:



Scottish Government NE Just Transition Fund

- Large fund focused on full catchment area
- Capacity building the Rivers Trust to enable and drive place-based ecological restoration and decarbonisation
- Pilot of river woodland restoration at a watershed-scale
- Bringing together landowners, managers, communities and other river users in a coordinated approach
- Creating green jobs and training opportunities
- Linked to the Just Transition Outcomes

LNER Customer And Community Investment Fund

- Focused on upper catchment Strathdearn community
- Engaging the community in citizen science and monitoring
- Working with local schools
- Research into cultural heritage and 'human ecology' - peoples relationship with the landscape

Just Transition Communities Outcome:



"Citizens, communities and place: empower and invigorate communities and strengthen local economies"

We've started by listening and learning...

- Connected with Duncan Bryden (thank you Duncan!)
- 'Riverwoods' film screening with Q&A
- Learned about your ambitions for Hazelbank Wood
- Joined the Spring Fair and had some lovely conversations
- Making good use of the fantastic Strathtearn Hub
- Put out feelers through our survey
- Connected with Maureen McDonald-Cooke to learn more about Strathtearn Community Development's vision

Already turning into a few actions...

- ✓ Offering our support with woodland, river and deer management plans to support community woodland buy-out bid
- ✓ Exploring ways to create easier access to affordable local venison
- ✓ Raising subject of paths and access in our conversations with Estates

So what next over the coming 9 months?

Community engagement in the upper catchment



Raghnaid Sandilands & Mairi McFadyen
Human Ecology Researchers in Residence



Wild Things Environmental Education
Free nature connection trips and activities

So what next over the coming 9 months?
Community engagement in the upper catchment
Also exploring...



**Programme of events themed around
Venison:** stalking, butchery, cooking, eating



**Creating ecological restoration training
opportunities** – eg. Peatland restoration



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