

DESTINATION TWEED – A VISION STATEMENT

Destination Tweed will celebrate and share the nature, history and stories of the River Tweed, one of the UK's most highly designated and inspirational river corridors. A five-year, partnership-led investment beginning in 2022 will deliver a source to sea trail, which respects its special status and connects communities and attractions with sensitive, impactful and innovative interpretation.

The landscape and river habitats will be enhanced and better understood, new and existing audiences will be meaningfully and actively engaged, and we will create opportunities to celebrate, care for, enjoy and promote the river sustainably whilst achieving health, wellbeing and economic development ambitions.



The River Tweed is internationally significant, renowned as one of the most prolific salmon rivers in Europe and has been celebrated in literature, verse and on canvas by the likes of Scott, Buchan, Hogg, Wordsworth and Turner. The river is a protected Special Area of Conservation, famed not only for its salmon fishing and border role, but also great houses and castles, designed landscapes, designated habitats and species and the stunning National Scenic Areas that overlook the towns, villages and smaller communities that are found on the main stem.

Whilst the Tweed has an incredible array of natural, built and cultural heritage concentrated in and around its banks, it is little known at a national level. The rural economy is increasingly fragile, with traditional industries such as textiles, farming and fishing in decline and developments resulting in negative impacts on the landscape. This project will deliver multiple benefits at the catchment scale. It will focus on tackling environmental issues at source; enhancing the landscape; reconnecting local people with the river and the land; increasing their understanding of management challenges, whilst fostering a new sense of stewardship. Tourism has to be core to the region's future. This project will showcase the extraordinary assets and experiences on offer.

A shared use trail will connect Moffat to Berwick-upon-Tweed and beyond, providing a focal point for a wide range of conservation and enhancement projects throughout. Each year visitors will enjoy all or part of the 113-mile route, underpinned by an innovative interpretive experience. An ambitious activity programme will deliver events, learning, skills, employment, training and business development opportunities, supporting a comprehensive approach to place development and regeneration.

Destination Tweed will make the River Tweed and surrounding area a tourist destination of choice, becoming one of the UK's great long-distance trails. It will attract a year-round and growing audience with a focus on accessing and promoting the area's rich heritage. It will work with landowners, communities and visitor attractions to connect the Scottish Borders, Northumberland and Dumfries and Galloway in creating a strong brand and identity. It will reinvigorate local economies, help satisfy the increased demand for outdoor recreation and be an exemplar for responsible, low carbon tourism. Above all, Destination Tweed will benefit residents and encourage a greater number of visits to the area, providing the opportunity for all to immerse themselves in one of the richest environments in the UK, ensuring the whole area is a better place to live, work and visit.



Destination Tweed is made up of thirteen projects grouped under three headings of Sustainable Infrastructure; Landscape and Biodiversity; People and Activities. Project outputs will include:

- The **Tweed Trail** stretching from Moffat to Berwick upon Tweed with themed sections totalling 113 miles but made up of manageable parts each with their own identity and story. A mix of multi-use or braided paths prioritising walking and facilitating cycling that take users on a journey exploring the wealth of sites, attractions, landscapes, and communities that make this asset unique.
- A trail that will provide an



exceptional interpretive experience that meets the needs of the range of audiences that will be attracted to the route. Site specific and fixed information materials, mixed with digital resources that bring the landscape to life and showcase the natural, built and cultural heritage.

- The establishment of **dedicated hub/launch points** to facilitate easy navigation of the Trail and knowledge sharing. For example, the restoration of the **Crook Inn** can provide infrastructure like overnight accommodation, a café, volunteer base and interpretation in the more remote upper sections.
- **Landscape scale restoration projects** that create exemplar habitats, engaging and involving community sectors to address degradation, agricultural intensification and erosion of designed landscapes, by altering land use, planting native trees and creating pollinator corridors for the collective benefit of our natural resources.
- Restoration projects that enhance **the character and biodiversity** of the river by improving water quality, flood resilience, controlling invasive species, re-naturalising channelised stretches, thus helping to enhance the building blocks upon which a healthy river system and commercial fishery is based.
- **Community archaeology** projects that uncover stories of the past through digital mapping, excavation, surveys and tales, whilst providing a range of engagement opportunities and making a contribution to both the national and local record.
- A 5-year **creative placemaking project focusing on a river rather than a centre of population** with cultural projects and events that celebrate the **intangible heritage** of the Tweed including artist residencies, river celebrations and festivals to foster a shared ownership and vision that will protect the Tweed for future generations.
- **Dedicated staffing** and resources to promote and capitalise upon the **regeneration** idea of Destination Tweed with an **education**, outreach, knowledge sharing and awareness raising focus, actively involving schools and promoting **skills development, training, volunteering and employment** opportunities.



- The enhancement of existing relationships and progression of **new partnerships** and opportunities for the communities, businesses and stakeholders that live and work within and around the river catchment.
- **Economic** opportunities for local businesses to maximise the opportunity of the project, building awareness and confidence. Community grants, joint promotion and connectivity will make the **whole greater than the sum of the parts**.



Story so far: A development phase process to further refine and detail projects, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), Scottish Borders Council, Sustrans and the project partners, is reaching a conclusion, with the significant milestone achieved of a NLHF delivery phase award.

Timescale: Destination Tweed will be implemented over a five-year delivery period commencing in Autumn 2022, with completion anticipated in late 2027.

Funding: Destination Tweed is one of several projects within the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal that will invest in the five local authority areas that straddle the Scotland / England border.

Additional funding is anticipated from NLHF, Sustrans, South of Scotland Enterprise, EU Life and a range of Trusts and Foundations. In total it is anticipated that more than 30 funders will contribute to the delivery phase.



Management: The project is being developed by Tweed Forum on behalf of three Local Authority Partners (Northumberland County Council, Scottish Borders Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council). First established in 1991, Tweed Forum brings together every organisation, statutory, non-statutory and voluntary, with an interest in the river and its management. Project delivery leads are Borders Forest Trust, Buglife, Southern Uplands Partnership and Tweedsmuir Community Company.

Staffing: Luke Fisher and Marina Piper are employed in project management posts, hosted by Tweed Forum, to develop the scope and delivery plans for Destination Tweed. In total 9 FTE posts will be created during the next five years which will include Project Officers for Education (Tweed Forum) Pollinators (Buglife) and for Reviving Scotland's Wild Heart (Borders Forest Trust). Amateur engagement roles for the Connecting Threads project will be hosted by Southern Uplands Partnership and projects will recruit associated communications and destination development roles.

Next steps: The team would welcome further contact with all parties that have an interest in Destination Tweed. Discussions are continuing with landowners to discuss interest in hosting part of the route and other project and funding opportunities.

Luke Fisher | luke.fisher@tweedforum.org | 07377 267890
 Marina Piper | marina.piper@tweedforum.org | 07496 288055

