

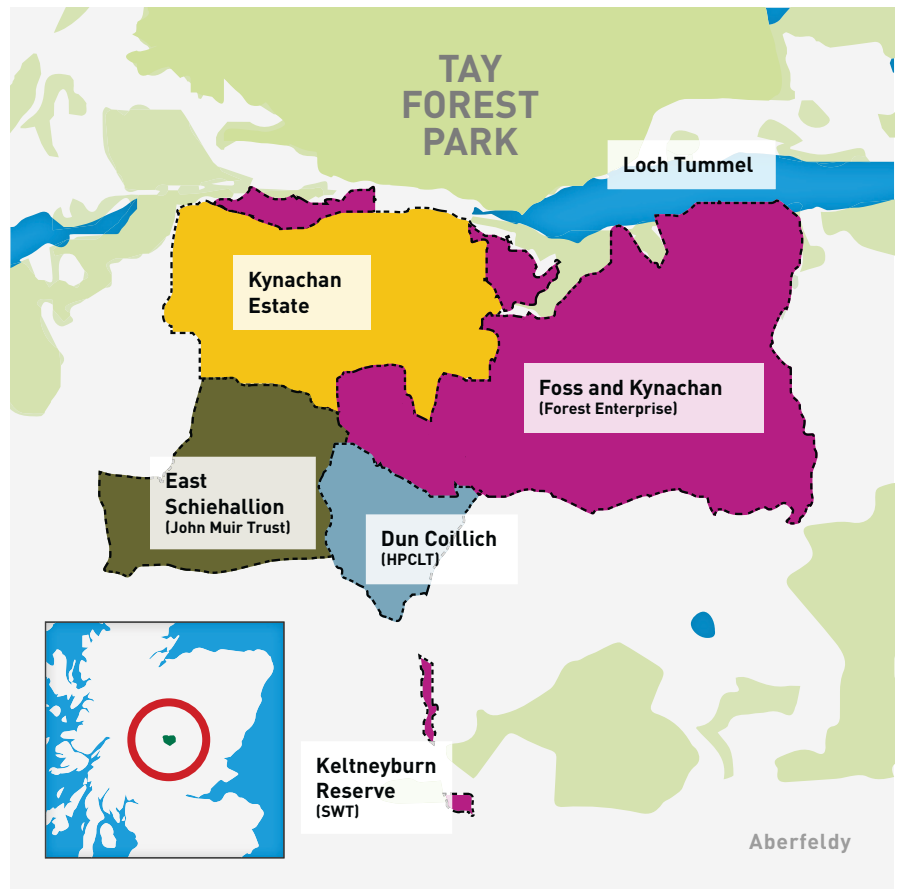
Breathing new life into the Heart of Scotland

The Trust has linked up with five partners to transform 50km between Loch Rannoch, Loch Tummel and Loch Tay

THE HEART of Scotland Forest Partnership is a collaboration between the Trust and five other organisations. The partnership will involve five neighbouring landowners – the John Muir Trust, Forest Enterprise Scotland, Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust, Kynachan Estate and the Scottish Wildlife Trust – plus Woodland Trust Scotland. It will begin working this summer on an ambitious new plan to connect woodlands across Highland Perthshire.

Dr Liz Auty, the Trust's property manager at East Schiehallion, and a key player in the formation of the partnership, commented: "We have a long term vision of this vast upland area as a living breathing landscape with native trees, woodland corridors, flourishing wildlife and picturesque footpaths.

"This project, we believe, can start to turn this landscape into a marvellous



asset for the local community and a precious legacy for our children and grandchildren."

Each partner will take forward different elements of the initiative. The Trust will replace non-native conifers with Scots pine and broadleaved woodland.

Seedling regeneration will be supported by sensitively sited fencing, allowing aspen, birch and rowan – currently held in check by browsing – to reach their potential. Regenerating willow scrub will provide additional habitat for black grouse, willow warblers, whinchats and other associated species.

A further aim of the partnership is to

bring locals and visitors closer to the land. Willie McGhee, Forest Manager of Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust, said: "From the start we believe this project will benefit the local community by bringing new funding into the area and creating training and employment.

"We want to encourage people to get involved, deepen their understanding of nature and learn new skills."

The partnership is set to be launched this summer, when we are likely to be launching a fund-raising appeal.

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Working together to create a vibrant landscape in the shadow of Schiehallion

The Heart of Scotland Forest project allows us to work with our neighbours to produce an integrated forest landscape across ownership boundaries. This will bring benefits by increasing native tree species, environmental diversity and an interesting collaboration between a range of partners.

Peter Fullarton, Tayside Forest Enterprise Scotland

We're proud to be part of this exciting partnership to extend native woodland cover in a much-loved scenic landscape. Our aim is to benefit the public, wildlife and the economy. Hopefully this work can inspire and encourage similar large-scale partnerships elsewhere. We can achieve more working together than we can separately.

Carole Evans, Woodland Trust Scotland

The Scottish Wildlife Trust is pleased to be part of this landscape-scale regeneration initiative, working with multiple partners. Such large projects, which bring about much needed woodland expansion and help connect existing habitats, is vital for Scotland's wildlife.

Robert Potter, Scottish Wildlife Trust

Kynachan Estate has worked closely with the John Muir Trust since 2011 to deliver effective deer management. Mutual respect and cooperation have been at the heart of this partnership, which will continue to deliver great benefits in this important and sensitive part of the Scottish Highlands for many years to come.

Jez Robinson, Kynachan Estate